

KELLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013 - 2019



Volume 1 Written Statement

Adopted 7th October 2013



Ceanannas comhairle baile
kells town council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

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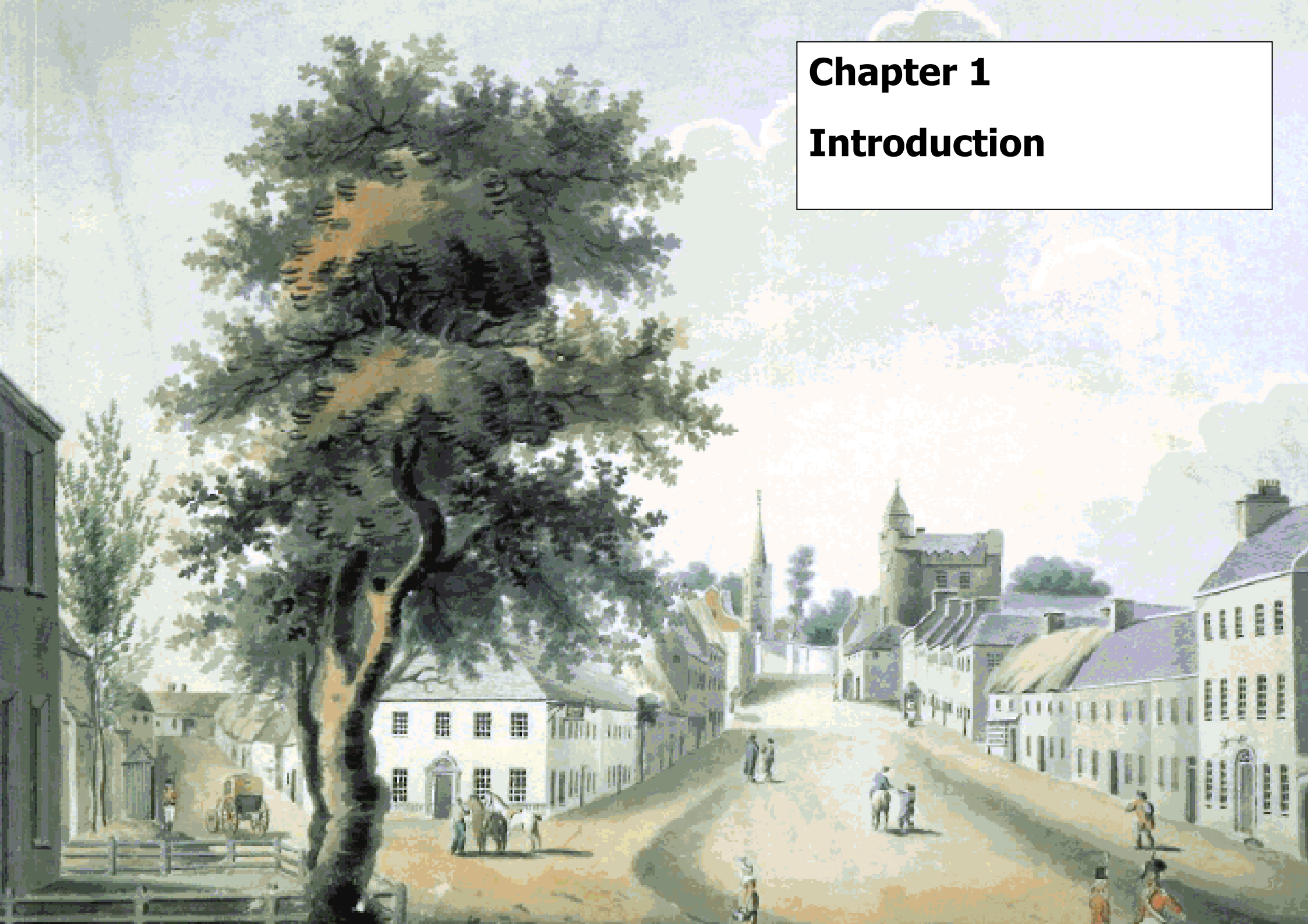
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Chapter 1

Introduction



1 Introduction to the Kells Development Plan

1.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the statutory context for the preparation of the new Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019, which, once adopted, will replace the preceding Kells Development Plan adopted by both Kells Town Council & Meath County Council in 2007. Having regard to the development envelop of Kells Town & Environs comprising of the administrative boundaries of both Kells Town Council and Meath County Council, the new plan has been prepared as a joint statutory planning document for both Local Authorities.

1.2 Statutory Context

Under the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013, each Planning Authority is required to prepare a Development Plan for its functional area setting out its strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013, which set out the matters that must be included in a Development Plan (mandatory objectives) as well as those matters that may be included (discretionary objectives) and the requirements for consistency with the aims and core strategies of higher level plans such as the National Spatial Strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the Meath County Development Plan. In preparing a Plan, consideration can only be given to matters that relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of the town of Kells.

1.3 Government Guidelines

The Development Plan must also be consistent with the planning guidelines issued by the Minister for the Environment, Community and

Local Government under Section 28 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013 and with such national plans, policies or strategies as the Minister determines relate to the proper planning and sustainable development. As required by Section 28, a statement outlining how Kells Town Council / Meath County Council have implemented these policies, objectives and guidelines of the Minister accompanies this Plan (see Appendix J).

1.4 Core Strategy

Following the enactment of the 2010 Planning & Development Amendment Act, the written statement of the plan must also now include a Core Strategy which shows that the development objectives of the plan are consistent with national and regional development objectives such as the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines and takes account of any policies of the Minister in relation to population targets. The Core Strategy needs to provide information on the projected population growth of the town, the amount of land zoned (hectares) for residential use and the proposed number of housing units to be included in the area, any areas designated for significant development during the period of the plan and the availability of public transport within the catchment of residential and commercial development. The Core Strategy also needs to provide information on retail development and be accompanied by a diagrammatic map. The Core Strategy for Kells is detailed in Chapter 2 and presented on Map No. 1.

1.5 Housing Strategy

The Development Plan is also required to include a Housing Strategy in accordance with Section 94 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 - 2013 and the preparation of the Housing Strategy needs to be informed by the Core Strategy and the requirements outlined therein with regard to the levels of future population growth and housing land requirements.

1.6 Conservation and Protection of the Environment

The Plan is also required to include a separate statement which shows that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent, insofar as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment (Planning & Development Amendment Act 2010, Section 10(1) (d) refers). A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment have both been undertaken as part of this Plan preparation which satisfies this requirement. These are available as Volume II of the Development Plan.

1.7 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Under Section 28 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 – 2013, statutory guidelines entitled “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities” were published jointly by the DoEHLG and OPW (November 2009). These guidelines require Planning Authorities to introduce flood risk assessment as an integral and leading element of the Development Plan process. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for County Meath was prepared by Meath County Council as part of the review of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-19. An area specific SFRA was also prepared to guide the future development of Kells as part of this Development Plan review. The approach to flooding is detailed in Chapter 7 of this Plan and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment report for the Kells Development Plan review is included in Appendix A.

1.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment (S.E.A)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (S.E.A) is the term which has been given to the environmental assessment of plans. It is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making similar to economic and social considerations.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I No. 435 of 2004) and the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I No. 436 of 2004). Consequently, the Kells Development Plan is required to undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment in order to improve the planning and environmental management of future development in the town. The S.E.A Environmental Report and S.E.A. Environmental Statement are separate documents which can be read in conjunction with this Plan and forms part of Volume II of same.

1.9 Habitats Directive Assessment/Appropriate Assessment (A.A)

In May 1992 European Union governments adopted legislation designed to protect the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. This legislation is called the Habitats Directive and complements the Birds Directive adopted in 1979. At the heart of both these Directives is the creation of a network of sites called Natura 2000. The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Together, SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 series. In Kells, the River Blackwater is designated as both a c.SAC and a SPA.

All land use plans are required to be ‘screened’ for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. In any case where, following screening, it is found that the Development Plan may have an impact on the objectives of a Natura site, or such an impact cannot be ruled out, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the EU Habitats Directive must be undertaken. The AA process comprises an assessment, based on scientific knowledge, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and the development, where necessary,

of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. The impacts must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of the Plan, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impacting on the site. It informs plans of the environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into plan making. This Plan has been subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and Stage II Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken. A Natura Impact Report has been prepared which can be read in conjunction with this Plan and forms part of Volume II of same.

1.10 Public Consultation

In addition to statutory requirements and provisions of higher level plans, this Plan has also been influenced by the views expressed to the Council during the initial period of pre draft public consultation held between October and November 2011. In addition, the views of the public and interested parties was also sought during the display of the draft Development Plan and proposed amendments to the draft Development Plan.

1.11 Status of the Plan

The Kells Development Plan 2013-2019 is the statutory land use framework for Kells Town Council & Environs. It was prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part II of the Planning & Developments Act 2000-2013. It replaces the Kells Development Plan 2007-2013.

1.11.1 The Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this Kells Development Plan is

- To promote the economic, social and cultural development of Kells and to give local communities the opportunity to participate in the planning process as it relates to their local area and their daily lives.
- To identify development demands likely to arise over the period 2013 - 2019.
- To provide a blueprint for the sustainable development of the plan area so it can realise its full potential for the benefit of the residents of the town and the county.
- To provide a detailed framework for the management and regulation of development and use of land that will guide day to day planning decisions.
- To include proposals for the development and use of land and to zone lands for specific purposes which will provide guidance and information for developers and the public.
- To ensure the optimum utilisation of State and Local Authority resources.

1.11.2 Monitoring, Review & Implementation

Once adopted, the Plan will remain valid for six years, unless it is varied or reviewed. In accordance with Section 15(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 - 2013, there is a duty on the Council to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of this Plan. While the achievement of many objectives will depend on the availability of finance from the State and other sources, Kells Town Council

/ Meath County Council will seek to implement the Plan in a proactive manner and will engage with all relevant stakeholders in this regard.

The Planning and Transportation Departments of Meath County Council are the main sections responsible for monitoring and implementing the Development Plan, mainly through the development management function. However, it is important to note that this Plan coordinates the work and objectives of other key departments within the local authority, such as Economic Development, Water Services, Environment, Housing and Community. In some cases, the body responsible for the implementation or assisting in the implementation of certain plan objectives may be external, such as the National Transport Authority, etc. The large number of objectives included in the Development Plan represents a significant challenge for both Councils. However, some of the Plan's objectives are set within a longer timeframe and may not be fully implemented over the lifetime of this Development Plan.

The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2013 provides under:

Section 15 (1) that it shall be the duty of a Planning Authority to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Development Plan, and;

Section 15 (2) that the Manager of the Planning Authority shall, not more than 2 years after the making of a Development Plan, give a report to the members of the Planning Authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives referred to in subsection (1)

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Chapter 2

Strategic Context & Core Strategy

2 Strategic Context and Core Strategy

Strategic Aims for Kells

1. To facilitate the growth of Kells as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town in line with its status provided for in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area.
2. To strengthen the economy of the town, attracting new investment in employment, services, administration, retail and tourism uses.
3. To build upon the Heritage Town status of Kells and to develop specific niche tourism products so as to create sustainable job growth in the tourism sector for the town.
4. To strengthen the role of the town centre as a primarily retail area and the centre of the community.
5. To secure investment in essential infrastructure including water services.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the strategic policy context for the review of the Kells Development Plan and to establish a Core Strategy for the future development of the town.

The purpose of a Core Strategy is to provide a medium to longer term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the town and in so doing to demonstrate that the development plan and development objectives contained therein are consistent with national and regional

objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 - 2022. This requires the presentation of relevant information demonstrating that the yield of lands identified to provide residential or mixed uses which include residential within the Development Plan are consistent with the national and regional population targets. The Core Strategy requires that the zoning proposals included in the development plan shall take place on a phased basis to ensure such consistency. The Core Strategy also requires demonstration that the setting out of retail objectives in the development plan has had regard to Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28.

The Core Strategy must provide a transparent evidence based rationale for the amount of land proposed to be zoned for residential and allied mixed use zoning in the development plan and associated compliance with relevant EU Directives (SEA, Habitats and Water Framework Directives). The Core Strategy must contain a written statement and a diagrammatic map indicating how the Planning Authority anticipates its area will develop out over the plan period and in line with the availability of infrastructure, services and amenities.

The Act further requires (for a development plan of a town council) the provision of details pertaining to:

- the town centre;
- the areas designated for significant development during the period of the development plan, particularly areas for which it is intended to prepare a local area plan;
- the availability of public transport within the catchment of residential or commercial development, and;
- retail centres in that town centre.

The DoEHLG issued "*Guidance Notes on Core Strategies*" in November 2010. The Guidance Notes indicate that while the legislation does not

expressly require core strategies to contain information concerning other land uses, it is recommended that the location of other significant land uses such as employment and commercial zones and amenity and community facilities and areas should be closely integrated with locations for future housing development. Information in this regard *"should be included in the Core Strategy"*.

The DoEHLG also issued *"Implementation of Regional Planning Guidelines Best Practice Guidance"* in December 2010. In relation to Core Strategies, the Guidance indicates that a Development Plan will have to include an evidence based rationale for future development:

- Why the land is being zoned;
- The basis of the decisions regarding the nature, scale and location of the zoned land;
- Any phasing proposed, and;
- Plans for providing public transport, roads, water / sewerage, schools and other facilities to service the land or the justification of the zoning in the absence of such plans.

The benefits of Core Strategies are that *"they will enable prioritisation and targeting of scarce public investment, in both hard infrastructure (transport, water and wastewater, communications) and soft infrastructure (schools, community facilities, amenities, public spaces and parks, etc.)"*.

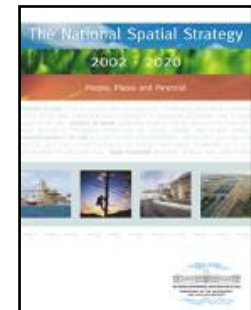
2.2 Strategic Context

The Planning & Development Act 2000 - 2013, requires that a Development Plan shall, in so far as is practicable, be consistent with national plans, policies or strategies as the Minister determines relates to the proper planning and sustainable development. In formulating the Core Strategy for Kells, regard has been had to the wider national, regional and local context. A number of relevant policy documents, issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government have also been taken into account. A brief summary of the relevant provisions

of the main national, regional and county level plans and policies as they relate to Kells and which have informed this Plan are now set out.

2.2.1 National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002-2020

This strategy sets out the strategic planning framework for the future development of the Country and proposes a more balanced pattern of spatial development for the state as a whole based on continued growth in Greater Dublin but with a significant improvement in the rate of development in nine 'Gateway' Cities and nine 'Hub' towns.



Kells is identified inside the Dublin & Mid East Regions of the NSS and categorised as a town with a population of 1,500 – 5,000 persons, presenting an urban strengthening opportunity. Kells is also positioned as a town where two national transport corridors intersect (N3 and N52).

The NSS provides that smaller towns, of which Kells is listed as one, should cater for local growth in residential, employment and service functions through enhancing the built environment, water services, public transport links and capacity for development in these centres. Accommodating such additional growth functions must however be balanced with protecting the character & quality of such towns.

2.2.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022.

These guidelines were prepared by the Dublin & Mid East Regional Authorities in 2010 and have the overall aim to steer the planned direction for growth within the Greater Dublin Area up to 2022 and to establish new and innovative policies to guide sustainable and balanced growth throughout the Greater Dublin Area. Kells is listed as a 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Town' in the settlement hierarchy of the RPGs within the hinterland area (such towns are generally 10km from a Large Town located on a public transport corridor and serve a wider rural hinterland as a market town). From an economic perspective Kells is identified as a 'Secondary Economic Growth Town' within the Navan Core Economic Area having a supporting and complimentary role to Navan which is on the same multi-modal growth corridor. Kells is also listed as a Level 3 Sub County Town in the Retail Hierarchy of the GDA. Potential exists to develop Kells as part of a tourism cluster and supporting the service and manufacturing role of the Navan and the northwest region of the county.



2.2.3 Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008 – 2016

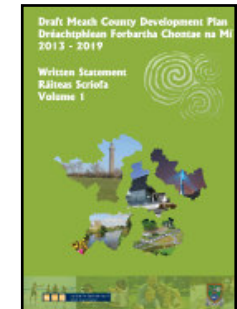
The purpose of the retail strategy is to guide the activities and policies for retail planning across the seven Councils which make up the Greater Dublin Area. The Strategy aims to set out a co-ordinated, sustainable approach to the assessment and provision of retail within the GDA. In broad terms, the Retail Strategy lists Kells as Level 3 Sub County Town in the Greater Dublin Area on a par with the towns of



Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Dunboyne¹, Trim, Laytown/Bettystown and Enfield in County Meath.

2.2.4 Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019

The aim of the County Development Plan 2013-2019 is to drive the present day evolution of the county and to establish a framework for the coordinated and sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of County Meath.



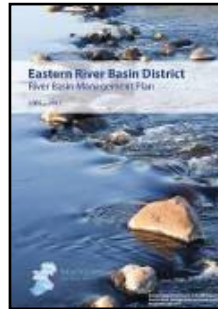
The Core Strategy outlined in the County Development Plan reiterates the identification of Kells as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town in line with its current RPG status, in addition to it being a Secondary Economic Growth Town in the county linked to Navan in a complementary & supportive role. Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns should develop in a self sufficient manner and levels of growth should be balanced to ensure that any increase in population will be in tandem with employment opportunities, capacity in physical and social infrastructure and will not be based on long distance commuting. Economic development and service provision will be an important factor in determining the appropriateness of new housing. These towns will need to provide a full range of services adequate to meet local needs, both within the town and in the surrounding rural catchment area, but not generate long distance travel patterns.

Tourism is also a major force for development in Trim and Kells with the centres to act as a tourism cluster with improvement in the connectivity between both centres identified for investment. Each town is to develop a strategy for niche tourism as an integral part of their overall development strategy.

¹ Dunboyne will gradually develop over the next 20 years towards Level 2 Status.

2.2.5 Eastern River Basin Management Plan 2009 – 2015

The Eastern River Basin District Project is one of eight river basin districts established in Ireland arising out of the legal requirements of the E.U. Water Framework Directive.



The Plan includes a programme of measures and a river basin management strategy designed to achieve at least good status for all waters and to maintain a high status where it exists. The river basin itself is split into a number of Water Management Units, within which Kells is located inside the Blackwater North Water Management Unit. The water quality is listed to be mostly of good quality (52%), with 30% being of moderate quality and 18% poor.

In the rivers within this District, Biochemical Oxygen Demand was above the acceptable limit which indicates an abundance of material absorbing oxygen. This can have a negative impact on river life that requires oxygen to live. Phosphorus was found to be above the acceptable limit in Meath. The river downstream of Lough Acurry was found to be at risk due to over-abstraction ('hydrology') from the Lough. The rivers are also at risk from dredging ('morphology'). Dredging is an important activity for flooding prevention but can destroy habitats. The pressures identified in Meath are similar to those identified in Cavan (Agriculture, Wastewater and Industrial Discharges). In Meath, the Kells Wastewater Treatment Plant has a significant impact and is due for upgrade.

2.2.6 National Climate Change Strategy 2007 – 2012

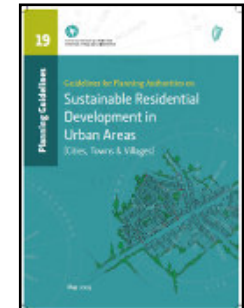
The Irish Government has agreed to legally binding limits to the production of harmful greenhouse gases in Ireland. The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-



2012 sets out a programme of action for achieving these limits. The Strategy recognizes that decisions by Local Authorities on the location, design and construction of domestic and commercial development and of related economic and social activity can have a significant effect on greenhouse gas emissions.

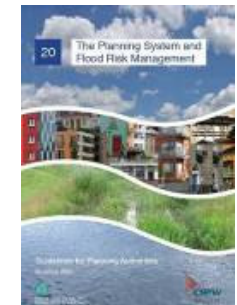
2.2.7 Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2008)

This guidance document revises and updates the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in 1999 and focuses on creating sustainable communities by incorporating the highest design standards and providing a coordinated approach to the delivery of essential infrastructure and services.



2.2.8 The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2009)

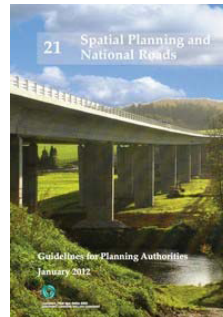
These guidelines require the planning system at national, regional and local levels to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding unless there are wider sustainability grounds that justify appropriate development and where flood risk can be reduced or managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The guidelines require that Development Plans address flood risk by having the necessary flood risk assessments, including mapping of flood zones, in place at the critical decision making phases and the consideration of any subsequent amendments. The guidelines require the adoption of a sequential



approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, substitution, reduction and mitigation of flood risk.

2.2.9 Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012)

The N/M3 is identified as a Strategic Radial Corridor in the National Spatial Strategy whilst the N52 is identified as a Strategic Linking Corridor. Government policy attaches particular importance to the network of national roads continuing to play their intended strategic role in the catering of inter-urban and inter-regional transport requirements, requirements that will serve Ireland's return to economic competitiveness by providing faster, more efficient and safer access to and from our major ports, airports, cities and large towns.



The Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines state that a plan-led approach is required to protecting the investment made in a strategic national road network. The key message of these guidelines is that investment in the capacity of national roads must be protected through appropriate policies and local planning and collaboration between Planning Authorities and the National Roads Authority. On the other hand, these guidelines are not designed to prevent investment and development at locations on or in the vicinity of national roads – rather that development is guided to the most appropriate locations by ensuring that transport and land-use planning considerations are taken into account at the development plan stage.

2.3 Core Strategy

The Core Strategy for Kells Town & Environs builds on the foundations provided by the previous Kells Development Plan 2007 - 2013 and the framework provided by the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022 and national policy and ministerial guidelines relevant to planning.

The Strategy outlined for Kells in the County Development Plan provides that the town should develop as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town. Such towns should develop in:

- a self sufficient manner;
- have balanced growth, in tandem with employment opportunities and the availability of physical/social infrastructure;
- not be based on long distance commuting;
- recognising the importance of its Heritage Town status and the development of a tourism cluster in conjunction with the town of Trim, and;
- the targeted economic sectors for Kells being Tourism, high value added manufacturing, retail (convenience & lower order comparison) and administration.

The Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019 will seek to provide the building blocks for the implementation of this strategy at the local level and the framework is detailed in the policies and objectives contained within the individual chapters of the Plan. The key goals of the Plan are to strengthen the economy of the town by attracting new investment in employment, services, retail and tourism uses in order to underpin the attractiveness of Kells Town & Environs as a place to live and work and thereby support an increase in the population of the town. For such development and growth to take place, significant investment is required in new infrastructure, particularly in upgrading the waste water treatment facilities and the public water supply serving the town. With the opening of the M3

motorway and completion of the Bypass route around the periphery of the town, this has improved the accessibility of the lands identified for employment uses and eased traffic congestion within the town centre.

Key challenges facing the town

The Kells Development Plan has a critical role to play in planning for the future needs of the existing population of the town. Following the years of the Celtic Tiger and the rapid expansion of urban centres including Kells, the economic downturn has allowed time to reconsider the role, balance and function of individual settlements. There are a number of key challenges that need to be addressed for Kells to reach its full potential:

1. Formulating and agreeing a planning and development strategy for Kells so that it meets its population target in order for the town to be a driver of balanced development within the north of the county and the wider region.
2. Promoting Kells as a Secondary Economic Growth Town within the Navan Core Economic Area by encouraging significant new economic development in the town and facilitating the combined development of both tourism and retail, and other strategic employment opportunities such as high value added manufacturing, logistical and general enterprises.
3. Reinforcing the town centre as the core of commercial, social and community activity in Kells through the re-use of existing underutilised or vacant buildings, promoting appropriate infill and backland development and setting out a clear development vision providing for the town centre's expansion which will address the significant retail leakage from the town.
4. Protecting the unique character and form of Kells as a designated *Heritage Town* steeped in centuries of history and heritage.
5. The town must capitalize on its significant cultural heritage appeal within the most densely populated region of the country and requires the preparation and implementation of a tourism strategy for Kells that will entice greater numbers of visitors to stay and spend.
6. Addressing the extent of commuting from the town by the resident workforce to find employment by ensuring the availability of sufficient local employment opportunities to cater for the existing and future resident population.
7. Ensuring the availability of community and commercial services, recreation and amenity facilities for the existing and future population of Kells within the development envelop and to resist the future provision of such services at a remove from the town.
8. Concentrating product intensive employment activities on the fringes of the town primarily at the Kells Business Park with easy access to the national road network (N3 and N52) and people intensive employment activities in the town centre / backland opportunity sites whilst focusing the provision of pedestrian/cycleway links on connecting residential and employment areas with the town centre and the 109 / 109 A bus service in particular.
9. Providing adequate water and wastewater infrastructure in the area thereby facilitating the development of the town whilst safeguarding the water quality and qualifying interests of the Blackwater River and Lough Bane as European Sites. The lack of adequate capacity in the short term presents a significant challenge in realising the development strategy presents in this development plan.
10. Develop and implement a traffic management plan for Kells as the existing regime is a significant disincentive to encourage tourists to this highly accessible Heritage Town. The town is dominated by car

movements and excessive on street parking to the detriment of pedestrian and cyclist movements.

11. Planning for the future development of primary and secondary educational facilities which sufficiently meet the needs of the town's future population.
12. Retaining the physical identity for the town by establishing a clear built edge, avoiding further sprawl and protecting the landscape character / setting of the town.

2.3.1 Development Strategy

As outlined previously, the strategy for the future development of Kells builds on the foundations established in the Kells Development Plan 2007 – 2013, the framework provided by the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019. However, the Development Plan Guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government requires Planning Authorities to move towards a stronger, more evidence-based planning system in which decisions are made based on the needs of our communities. This requires the reconsideration of certain aspects of the Kells Development Plan 2007 – 2013. This new Development Plan establishes the framework to guide the development of Kells for the next 6 years and beyond addressing the key challenges identified in the preceding section. This framework is set within a longer term development strategy of the town for the next 15 - 20 years, thereby framing the policies and objectives set out in this Development Plan.

It is envisaged that Kells will plan for consolidated growth rates over the short to medium term, achieving a critical mass which will support competitiveness, sustainability and create opportunities for local economic development. This growth pattern can also generate economies of scale to justify strategic investment into the town achieving sustainable levels of development through the provision of a range of residential, employment,

recreational, cultural, retail and educational facilities appropriate for a town of its size. The Core Strategy map presents the longer term (15-20 year) development strategy for the future development of Kells, which focuses on the following strategic objectives:

(i) Enhancing the Historic Town Centre

Kell's historic and cultural environment is a precious asset that has the potential to tell the town's story and evolution throughout its long and proud history. Most notable are the sites and monuments in state care, the buildings listed for protection due to their special architectural and historic interest, the areas of special architectural conservation and the outstanding natural beauty of the Blackwater Valley. Collectively these sites and their landscape setting provide a historic environment that creates the unique place that is Kells. By building on and promoting the town's unique heritage, Kells can realise its full potential as a heritage town and major tourism destination within the Boyne Valley. In combination with this, by enhancing and promoting a distinctive cultural and retail experience unique to Kells, increased levels of footfall can boost its vibrancy and vitality along with the associated economic benefits. Central to this will be the creation of strong, pedestrian friendly, linkages between sites identified on the Kells Heritage Trail, and between existing and proposed retailing areas and the town centre. This plan will promote policies and objectives in a coordinated manner which aims to achieve this goal. Key objectives include, the strategic extension to the town centre into the Backlands and / or Frontlands area consolidating the commercial core of the town, improving and promoting key routes that provide good and safe connectivity within and around the town, protecting and enhancing the town's unique architectural and archaeological heritage and promoting the development of a unique cultural and retailing experience within the town.

(ii) Planning for Town Centre Expansion & Addressing Retail Leakage from the Town

The town centre expansion lands to the east of the town centre (Backlands) present the preferred opportunity to create a new and vibrant urban expansion area that connects back to the historic core via pedestrian / cyclist connections to Bective Street, Farrell Street and Kenlis Place.

The Retail Evaluation undertaken by John Spain & Associates has recommended that the lands west of the town centre (Frontlands) also be retained as a suitable location for town centre expansion. The retention of the second site would provide choice for potential retailers and also acknowledges that there are constraints present in both sites which may affect the bringing forward of same for commercial development. It is considered that this approach is both reasonable and necessary.

The design of the town centre expansion areas will be centred on a well designed public realm that integrates a mix of new retail and commercial buildings and uses which are respectful of the town's existing urban grain. A careful balance between retail, commercial and residential development should be achieved which seek to establish a distinctive new area that connects to and enhances the historic town centre.

It is accepted that due to the economic downturn which prevails that this mixed use model may take some time to materialise but should be retained as the medium to long term vision of this area. Consideration to retail development, both convenience and comparison, in a format compatible with modern retailing needs whilst achieving the longer term vision for a new commercial quarter in Kells will be encouraged. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will consider the specific operational requirement of modern convenience retail providers and their associated car parking requirements. An urban design led solution will be insisted upon.

(iii) Development of Kells as a Major Destination in the Boyne Valley

Tourism is identified as being of critical importance to the future economic development of Kells and must capitalize on its cultural heritage appeal within the most densely populated region of the country. As presented in the Economy & Employment Section, Kells has a significant tourism offer centred on its historic urban fabric. The inclusion of Kells in the UNESCO Tentative List – Ireland 2010 is testament to the international significance of the monastic settlement from which the town grew.

A number of specific actions are required:

- The town suffers presently from the absence of a dedicated orientation point for tourism and the strategy seeks the reinstatement of the former Court House for this purpose. The proposal to develop Kells as one of two Orientation Points on the Boyne Valley Drive is welcomed.
- To undertake an agreed programme of further public realm enhancement to continue to improve the appearance of the town.
- Traffic management within the town is a significant disincentive to encourage tourists to this highly accessible Heritage Town. The town is dominated by car movements and excessive on street parking to the detriment of pedestrian and cyclist movements. The need for effective traffic management which must include rededication of road space to other users and traffic calming is integral to the overall tourism strategy.
- To develop a strategy to tackle the considerable extent of vacancy and creeping dereliction in the historic town core.
- The creation of a cultural quarter – a cluster of creative and cultural industries with galleries, craft shops, potteries, goldsmiths and jewellery designers, artisan foods, restaurants, cafes, etc. - in the Market Street, Church Hill, Church Street, New Market Street and Canon Street area.

- The Town Council land bank at Lloyd requires an overall development strategy looking at wider development potential of the site from a combined tourism and amenity perspective.
- Further expand the range of accommodation offer in the town – hotel rooms, approved guesthouses & B&Bs and the development of a caravan and camping / motor home site.

(iv) Development of Employment and Enterprise Areas

The Development Plan provides three main employment zones within Kells whilst seeking to ensure that employment uses at Climber Hall are retained and protected.

The existing town centre and town centre expansion area are identified for higher density uses to accommodate predominantly retail, commercial and office use. These uses are located adjacent to public transportation linkages reflecting the principles established by the Local Transport Plan. The development and phasing of these lands will be in accordance with the Framework Plan for the Backlands (Appendix E) which has incorporated many of the recommendations of the former Backlands Local Area Plan as still being practicable.

The lands adjoining Aldi on the Cavan Road are identified for retail warehousing and can also accommodate light warehousing / industrial use in keeping with the original intentions of the agreed Framework Plan. A specific qualification on the land use zoning objective as relevant to Kells shall be included.

The remaining employment zone at Kells Business Park is identified primarily for lower density employment uses such as industry, warehousing, logistics and distribution. The further expansion of the Kells Business Park has been identified adjacent to the high capacity vehicular transportation links of the M3 and N52. Further office use at this location will only be considered in close proximity to the public transport corridor to reduce dependence on the private car.

This park is well positioned in terms of access to the N3 and N52 bypasses of Kells although at a remove from the residential areas of the town and the town centre. Nonetheless, it has a significant critical mass and has the advantage of its own independent wastewater treatment plant. An overall development strategy for this area has been prepared and is incorporated into this development plan with a strong emphasis on quality of urban design and landscaping.

(v) Transportation Infrastructure and Development of Linkages

Following the provision of the M3 / N3 scheme and N52 bypass scheme which removed both national routes from the town centre, the urban structure will consist of a network of connected vehicular, cycle and pedestrian routes within the town. Kells is still a quite compact urban centre with the exception of the Kells Business Park and People's Park having developed on the outskirts. The provision of sporting facilities at Grangegoddan Glebe on the Athboy Road by Gael Colmcille's GFC and at Grange by Kells Blackwater Soccer Club & North Meath RFC whilst welcomed cannot be served by pedestrian or cycle networks linked to Kells. The failure to consider the integration of land use and transportation in the provision of such uses must not be replicated.

Central to this urban structure is the identification of key routes around the town which provide connectivity for all users. The proposed urban structure for Kells seeks to:

- Separate strategic and local traffic by maximising the use of the N3/M3 and N52 bypass of the town;
- Implement a traffic management plan for Kells which will include a HGV ban for the town, the introduction of a one way system on a phased basis and rededication of road space currently used for parking to cycle lanes where appropriate;
- Develop cycle routes and continuous footpaths connecting the main residential areas of the town to the peripheral employment

centre (Cavan Road), to the town centre and to the educational campus off the Navan Road;

- Develop a new urban quarter in the Backlands linking the Farrell Street / Bective Street area to the Navan Road inclusive of a new series of Local Distributor Roads, footpaths, cycle paths and bus priority measures;
- Develop a new urban quarter in the Frontlands linking the Bective Street area to the Oldcastle Road inclusive of a new series of Local Distributor Roads, footpaths and cycle paths;
- Provide pedestrian and cyclist connections between Gardenrath Road / Athboy Road and the educational campus off the Navan Road, and;
- Restrict the number of access points from expanded Kells Business Park onto the local road network.

(vi) Phasing Lands

The level of zoned lands in the Kells Development Plan 2007 – 2013 significantly exceeds demands as provided for in the Core Strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. The Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019 must be consistent with and adhere to the development strategy for the town as presented in the final adopted County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. A strong emphasis is placed on phasing lands sequentially thereby encouraging the better use of under utilised lands with options and opportunities for brownfield regeneration prioritised. This Core Strategy identifies the required quantum of land to be released for residential development including the incorporation of 50% headroom. A Strategic Reserve is also identified to indicate the intentions of the Planning Authorities for the longer term beyond the life of next Kells Development Plan. The same principle shall apply to the release of employment lands at Kells Business Park and the Backlands and / or Frontlands. It is not envisaged that any lands identified Phase II employment uses will be developed within the life of the current plan due to the anticipated timeframe for upgrading of the piped water services in the town and identified need for same.

(vii) New Gateway Entrance

Since the opening of the M3 motorway bypassing the town to the south inclusive of the N52 bypass of the town to west, the principal entrance to the town from the M3 is created by Junction 10. This area currently lacks the character and identity to reflect the principal entrance into the town, a designated Secondary Economic Growth Town. The plan will set out an objective to create a new gateway entrance into the town that reflects the new importance of this area whilst respecting the existing character of this approach to the town.

2.3.2 Population and Households

The overall population of Kells Town has increased steadily between the period 2002 and 2011. The most recent census information indicates that the current population of the town & environs is 5,888 persons which is an increase of 12.2% since 2006. As can be seen in the table overleaf, there are two distinct trends occurring in Kells Town & Environs over the three most recent census periods with the urban town boundary population decreasing and the environs area population significantly increasing in size.

Table 1 : Population of Kells 2002 - 2011

	2002	2006	2011	% Change 2002-2011
Kells Urban	2,522	2,257	2,208	12.5% decrease
Kells Environs	1,899	2,991	3,680	93.8% increase
Total Population	4,421	5,248	5,888	33.2% increase

The disparity in the overall growth rates between the town and environs reflects the strong supply of greenfield development land within the environs while there is very little such land within the town boundary. The brownfield and infill development opportunities available within the town are more challenging in comparison. In order to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre area, it will be an important challenge of this plan to address the steady decrease in population experienced in the Kells urban boundary. The population within the Town Council area needs to be sustained and expanded if possible through the development of infill schemes and the redevelopment of the upper floors of town centre properties for residential use.

In terms of household size, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2010-2022) indicates that the average household size for the GDA counties is 2.6 persons per residential unit. This will gradually decrease to an average of 2.4 by 2022. Based on this data, the existing household numbers in Kells would be approximately 2,265 housing units. The CSO Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) indicate that in April 2011 there were 2,222 households in Kells Town & Environs which is relatively consistent with the previous estimation.

Other population data available for analysis is the rate of natural population change via births and deaths data from the Central Statistics Office. The table below provides this information. Of particular note is the significant increase in natural increase rates for the latest years available (2009 and 2010).

Table 2 : Kells Natural Increase Rates

Year	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase
2006	118	69	+ 49
2007	131	69	+ 62
2008	167	79	+ 88
2009	260	102	+158
2010	291	50	+241

(Source: CSO Vital Statistics Section)

The average population increase of Kells between 2006 and 2010 on the basis of natural increase only is therefore 120 persons per annum.

The population of Kells in 2011 was 5,888 persons. Applying natural increase only, the population of Kells in 2019 would approximate 6,848 persons. Applying an average household size of 2.6 persons, the average household increase up to the year 2019 would be 369 units. If the average household size is calculated on projected RPG statistics for Meath in 2019 this would be 2.4, resulting in a household increase of approximately 400 units. However, it is not expected that the role of population growth will continue to be determined solely by natural increase over the 2013 – 2019 period.

Meath County Development Plan Core Strategy

Chapter 2 of the Meath County Development Plan provides a Core Strategy for the County. It also identifies Kells as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town. Table 2.4 of the CDP² provides an outline of the housing allocations & zoning land requirements for each settlement in the county between the period 2013 - 2019 based on Regional Planning Guidelines population targets for County Meath as a whole.

The main figures listed for Kells are as follows:

Housing Allocation: **518 Units**
 Average Density unit/ha: **35 units/ha**
 Quantity of Residential Land required: **18.6 ha**
 Available Land zoned for Residential Use: **75.7ha**
 Available Land Zoned for Mixed Use incl. residential: **7.1ha**
 Total Available Zoned Land: **82.7ha**
 Deficit/Excess Zoning: **64.2ha**

The Kells Development Plan therefore has been allocated 518 household units to be developed over its lifespan for the years 2013 – 2019 in addition to the extant planning permissions which provide for an additional 332 no. households. The 518 no. household allocation includes the 50% headroom recommended in the DoEHLG Development Plan Guidelines 2007 (i.e. the expected residential demand arising within the development plan period of six years and for the equivalent of 3 years demand beyond the date on which the current plan ceases to have effect).

2.3.3 Housing Demand and Land Supply

The average household size for Kells Town & Environs in 2011 was 2.64 in 2011³. The current RPGs for the Greater Dublin Area⁴ indicate that

² It is noted that the figure for Kells in the draft CDP was 650 units but was subsequently revised in the recommendations contained in the Manager's Report.

³ Census 2011 – Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS)

regional trends for household size are reducing by an average of 0.029 persons per annum suggesting that by 2019, the average household size for Kells could be down to 2.4 persons. Having regard to these statistics and the Core Strategy allocation for Kells, it is estimated that the target population for Kells Town & Environs over the plan period up to 2019 would be 7,368 persons (an increase of 1,480 persons on Census 2011).

There remained 82.7 hectares of land zoned in the 2007 – 2013 Kells Development Plan which allowed for residential development. Given that the Core Strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 allocates Kells Town & Environs an additional 518 households over the period of this Plan in addition to the extant planning permissions (322 no. units), it is evident that there is a significant over supply of residentially zoned lands in the town. As part of the Core Strategy of this new Kells Development Plan, it will therefore be a requirement to reduce the quantity of residential zoned land in the town in line with the requirements of the Meath County Development Plan Core Strategy.

For the purposes of estimating the amount of land required to accommodate the household allocation to Kells, an average density of 30 units per hectare across the development envelop is considered reasonable. This adheres to the guidance proffered for outer suburban / greenfield site contained in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (May 2009). It is noted that this deviates slightly from the assumed net density for Kells contained in the County Development Plan as is considered befitting to the Heritage Town status of Kells and the predominant form of housing in the town environs which constitutes primarily conventional detached and semi detached dwellings. Applying the lower average density per hectare of 30 results in a requirement of 17.3 hectares being required to accommodate the projected no. of households with a resultant excess zoning of 65.4

⁴ Regional Planning Guidelines for GDA 2010-2022, Tables 5 & 6 Population Targets and Housing Allocation

hectares remaining. This will result in the need to reduce the amount of zoned land which can accommodate residential development from 82.7 hectares to 17.3 hectares (a reduction of 65.4 hectares from the 2007 - 2013 Kells Development Plan).

2.3.4 Evaluation of Residentially Zoned Lands

An evidence based approach has been applied which has informed the overall Core Strategy. This included an evaluation of the remaining available sites which enable residential development proposals to be advanced. This includes consideration of lands with residential, mixed use and town centre / commercial land use zoning objectives. Such is the extent of lands zoned for these land uses, it has not been considered necessary to apply the Justification Test arising from the findings of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Both the planning policy context and the evaluation of the development areas have formed the basis for prioritising appropriate lands within the phasing strategy.

The evaluation of the development areas therefore excluded those areas within the identified flood risk mapping. The recommendation of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was to apply zones A & B (corresponding with the 1:100 year and 1:1,000 flood event) to the lands west of Bective Street and to the lands east of Bective Street and adjacent to the River Blackwater. All of the lands brought forward in the evaluation therefore excluded the extent of sites included in these maps (noting the revisions to the extent of maps arising from those shown at draft development plan stage).

The evaluation has excluded sites less than or approximating 0.5 hectares in extent as it is not considered necessary to include sites which could bring forward 10 - 15 no. units in the same manner as it has not been considered necessary to include small scale brownfield sites in the town centre / edge of town centre. It is not considered that a Core Strategy needs to be prescriptive to such a minute level of detail.

The evaluation has also excluded the consideration of the Climber Hall industrial area site which contains a land use that is unlikely to change over the course of the next Development Plan. The Plan proposes to revert to the existing land use on this site (i.e. General Enterprise & Employment).

The evaluation also excludes all sites with the benefit of an extant permission which includes that of the Backlands town centre expansion.

The following factors have been used to determine the suitability of specific lands for residential development which constitute the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

- Proximity to the Town Centre – maximise the utility of existing and proposed future infrastructure including public transport options;
- Regeneration / Renewal of residential areas or other brownfield "Opportunity Sites" (which have been identified separately);
- Environmental Constraints – proximity to and potential impact on the qualifying interests of the adjoining Natura 2000 sites;
- Physical Suitability – topography of the land;
- Availability of Public Transport - to maximise public transport investment, it is important that land use planning underpins its efficiency by sustainable transport patterns. This includes promoting higher densities within 500 metres walking distance of a bus stop and proximity to the R147 public transport corridor;
- Availability of community and social infrastructure facilities with particular regard to the proximity to the education school campus;
- The need to provide new roads infrastructure to facilitate development – Measure Road 1 of the draft NTA 2030 Vision must be considered in addition to the likelihood of residential development being able to absorb the additional costs involved, and;
- Consideration as to whether a site could be considered an infill opportunity as opposed to extending the urban footprint further from

the town centre. Leapfrogging beyond other available sites will not be considered favourably.

Following detailed discussions with the Water Services Section of the Environment / Water Services Directorate, it has been considered that whilst the availability of piped water services capacity will remain critical over the life of the Kells Development Plan, there are no particular issues regarding the networks. It is not considered that the addition of a further criterion would significantly affect the overall ranking of sites. The continual monitoring of available water services capacity will be undertaken as this may impact on the ability of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council to achieve the projected residential targets contained in this Development Plan. This may also affect the realization of other components of the Core Strategy as they relate to retail and commercial uses although representing a considerably reduced loading demand on such services.

Table 3 : Description of Individual Residentially Zoned Sites Evaluated

Site A	Lands to east of Backlands adjoining former rail line (after lands removed as per recommendations of Strategic Flood Risk Assessment)
Site B	Lands south of Maple Drive (Athboy Road)
Site C	Lands north of Towns Park Manor (Athboy Road)
Site D	Lands to south of Mullingar Road
Site E	Lands west of entrance to Balrath Woods (Mullingar Road)
Site F	Lands north of Mullingar Road / south of former rail line
Site G	Frontlands (adjoining Westfield)
Site H	Frontlands Commercial / Mixed Use
Site I	Lands south of Tobair Bán (Climber Hall)
Site J	Lands to west of Frontlands (Climber Hall)
Site K	Lands east of the Cloisters (Climber Hall)
Site L	Lands north of and adjoining Rochford Hall and Taylor Hall
Site M	Lands north of Archdeaconary View & Cherry Hill Court
Site N	Lands south of Archdeaconary View
Site O	Lands adjoining and east of The Glebe (Maudlin)
Site P	Lands east of Blackthorn & north of Headfort Woods
Site Q	Lands East of Headfort Glebe and south of Headfort Woods
Site R	Lands off Headfort Road adjoining Headfort Glebe
Site T	Lands off Headfort Road (South)
Site U	Pitch and Putt Club Lands

Note: The extent of Site H relates only to the extent of the lands identified for B1 land use zoning objective which are located outside of Flood Risk Mapping Zones A & B and which can accommodate vulnerable land uses such as residential.

The location of the various land parcels described in Table 3 are contained in each of the maps presented in Appendix H (Evaluation of Residentially Zoned Lands).

Note: Site S (lands at Rabbit Hill Wood off the Headfort Road) was removed from consideration during the course of preparing the Kells Development Plan and the resultant site has been identified as A1 "Existing Residential" and is subject to a specific development objective.

Table 4 : Evaluation of Residentially Zoned Lands

Site Name	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D	Site E	Site F	Site G	Site H	Site I	Site J	Site K	Site L	Site M	Site N	Site O	Site P	Site Q	Site R	Site T	Site U
Proximity to Town Centre	3	5	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Brownfield / Opportunity Site	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1
Environmental Constraints / Suitability of land to development	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	5	1	1	3	1	4	3	4	4	1	1
Proximity to Education	2	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	1	1	1	3
Served by Public Transport Corridor	3	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
New Roads Required	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	5	1	1	1
Infill Opportunity	5	5	1	5	2	5	1	1	2	5	1	2	5	1	5	2	5	2	2	1
Total	24	27	22	26	22	25	16	15	21	28	19	21	26	19	25	20	26	19	16	15
Rank	13	19	11	16	11	14	3	1	9	20	5	9	16	5	14	8	16	5	3	1

Notes:

1. The town centre is taken as John Street / Cross Street / Market Street / Castle Street junction.
2. The educational campus is taken as the entrance to Jim Brunnock Road from the Navan Road R147.
3. The 109 / 109A is the principal public transport corridor in Kells.

Table 5: Yield of Residential Lands

Site Name	Zoning	Land Area	Density	Yield	Rank
Site H The Frontlands	B1	7.84	15	118	1
Site U Pitch & Putt Club	A2	1.51	30	45	1
Site G Frontlands (adjoining Westfield)	A2	2.94	30	88	3
Site T West of Headfort Road	A2	0.86	NA	3	3
Site K East of the Cloisters	A2	1.28	30	38	5
Site N South of Archdeaconary View	A2	0.97	30	29	5
Site R Adjoining Headfort Glebe	A2	1.95	30	58	5
Site P East of Blackthorn	A2	3.68	30	110	8
Site I South of Tobair Bán	A2	1.4	30	42	9
Site L North of Rochford Hall	A2	0.96	30	29	9
Site C North of Towns Park Manor	A2	2.74	30	82	11
Site E West of Balrath Woods	A2	1.97	30	59	11
Site A Residential Backlands	A2	20	30	600	13
Site F North of Mullingar Road	A2	5.19	30	156	14
Site O East of The Glebe	A2	5.51	30	165	14
Site D South of Mullingar Road	A2	7.49	30	225	16
Site M North of Archdeaconary View	A2	8.93	30	268	16
Site Q South of Headfort Woods	A2	1.73	30	52	16
Site B South of Maple Drive	A2	1.52	30	46	19
Site J West of Frontlands	A2	3.93	30	118	20
Total		80.05		2,331	

Table 6 : Phasing Strategy for Residential Lands

Site Name	Yield	Rank	Phase
Site H The Frontlands	118	1	I
Site U Pitch & Putt Club	45	1	I
Site G The Frontlands (adjoining Westfield)	88	3	I
Site T West of Headfort Road	3	3	I
Site K East of the Cloisters	38	5	I
Site N South of Archdeac. View	29	5	I
Site R Adjoining Headfort Glebe	58	5	I
Site P East of Blackthorn	110	8	I
Site I South of Tobair Bán	42	9	I
Site L North of Rochford Hall	29	9	I
Site C North of Towns Park Manor	82	11	Remove Objective
Site E West of Balrath Woods	59	11	Remove Objective
Site A Residential Backlands	600	13	Remove Objective
Site F North of Mullingar Road	156	14	Remove Objective
Site O East of The Glebe	165	14	Remove Objective
Site D South of Mullingar Road	225	16	Remove Objective
Site M North of Archdeaconary View	268	16	Remove Objective
Site Q South of Headfort Woods	52	16	Remove Objective
Site B South of Maple Drive	46	19	Remove Objective
Site J West of Frontlands	118	20	Remove Objective
Total	2,331		

2.3.5 Prioritising Lands for Residential Development

There are a total of 332 no. residential units permitted within the Kells Development Plan boundary. In addition, the County Development Plan allocates a total of 518 no. residential units to Kells for the period 2013 – 2019 which also coincides with the life of the new Kells Development Plan. This includes the 50% headroom recommended in the DoEHLG Development Plan Guidelines (2007).

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council has identified, following the evaluation exercise, the extent of lands to be included in Phase I to coincide with new Kells Development Plan (2013 – 2019). The total no. of units which are likely to be brought forward during the life of this plan are 560. This is marginally more than the quantum provided for in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan noting that it is uncertain the exact quantum of units which will materialize on the Frontlands. It is proposed to remove the land use zoning objective from all of the remaining parcels of land which were zoned for residential purposes in the previous Kells Development Plan as there is no quantifiable or justifiable basis to retain such lands. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council have removed the residential land use zoning objective from 59 hectares of land which was previously identified for such uses in the Kells Development Plan 2007 – 2013.

The Core Strategy provides a sustainable approach to residential development up to and including 2019. The Core Strategy is a positive framework approach that will allow greater certainty among stakeholders as to where the focus of expansion of Kells is to be, and where the funding priorities will be directed, to ensure that the urban core is consolidated and that the towns growth is directed to those areas that can best accommodate and facilitate sustainable growth over the plan period.

2.3.6 Retail Development

Kells, along with Ashbourne, Laytown/Bettystown and Trim are identified as Level 3 Sub-County Town Centres in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. Kells is identified as a Secondary Economic Growth Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 and has strong links with Navan being on the same multi-modal corridor. Arising from the County Retail Strategy Kells has a noted deficit of retail convenience shopping for a Town Centre with a Level 3 status which needs to be addressed. The two main retail stores offering convenience shopping are located on edge of centre / out of town centre locations (Supervalu and Aldi). There are a number of brownfield or infill sites located close to the core retail area which can be developed to improve the retail offer in the centre of the town. The previous Development Plan identified the Backlands and Frontlands areas as suitable sites to allow for town centre expansion. A new Town Centre Health Check for Kells was carried out in the recently published Meath County development Plan 2013 - 2019 which defines the Core Retail area in Kells along with 5 no. retail opportunity sites potentially available for development. Regard is also had to level of extant planning permissions for large retail development in the town, particularly the Backlands development. A pragmatic approach will need to be taken in relation to any new development proposals in this area given the significantly changed economic circumstances which prevail compared to when the original scheme was prepared. Future retail development is likely to be developed at a reduced scale and on a phased basis reflecting current & realistic economic conditions.

2.3.7 Public Transport

The primary mode of public transport serving Kells Town is the No. 109 Bus Éireann regional bus service (Cavan-Dublin service) which links Kells to Dublin, in addition to the towns of Cavan, Navan & Dunshaughlin.

Core Strategy Policies

Core Strategy POL 1

To prioritise the sustainable development of Kells as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town within the Navan Core Economic Area and to ensure that Kells can support the level of growth to underpin its role within the Navan Core Economic Area as a “driver” of development in developing and sustaining strong levels of economic growth.

Core Strategy POL 2

To facilitate the development of new housing in accordance with the targets set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Settlement Hierarchy in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 - 2022.

Core Strategy POL 3

To consolidate and develop a sustainable town and avoid further sprawl.

Core Strategy POL 4

To support the sustainable development of Kells as a focal point in north Meath for economic development and employment growth.

Core Strategy POL 5

To provide for the future well being of residents and workers of Kells by facilitating economic development and the growth of employment opportunities in all sectors in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

Core Strategy POL 6

To address commuting patterns by building up the local economy to a more sustainable level.

Core Strategy POL 7

To support, protect, reinforce and extend the role of the town centre as the central retailing and service area of Kells through the intensification, consolidation and appropriate expansion of the town centre.

Core Strategy POL 8

To facilitate the provision of broad ranging uses and to continue to enhance and develop the urban fabric of the town centre whilst promoting the appropriate use and re-use of town centre backland and under-utilised sites to promote the regeneration of areas in need of renewal.

Core Strategy POL 9

To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities through land use planning, by providing for land uses capable of accommodating employment, community, leisure, recreational and cultural facilities in tandem with the delivery of residential and physical infrastructure to create quality environments in which to live.

Core Strategy POL 10

To ensure that developments are accessible to meet the needs of all individuals and local community groups.

Core Strategy POL 11

To seek the delivery of physical and community infrastructure in conjunction with high quality residential developments to create quality living environments.

Core Strategy POL 12

To consider planning applications for new residential development only in accordance with the Order of Priority set in Table 6 and the land use zoning objectives map whereby residential development, other than infill, brownfield or as part of a mixed use / commercial development (the latter within B1 or C1 lands only) shall only be permitted within the life of this Development Plan. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council shall

continually monitor the release of the identified lands for residential purposes and take corrective action if required.

Core Strategy POL 13

No extension of duration under Section 42 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 – 2013 permitted for multiple unit residential developments pursuant to Section 42 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 – 2013 shall extend the life of a planning permission beyond the 6 year period of this Development Plan.

Core Strategy POL 14

To require that planning applications for residential development submit a 'Phasing and Implementation Statement' to ensure compliance with the 'Development Objectives of the Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019'.

Core Strategy POL 15

To promote development of brownfield / infill sites or sites approximating or less than 0.5 hectares in extent by excluding such sites from the requirement to comply with the phasing strategy of this Development Plan.

Core Strategy POL 16

Any development proposed as a result of this Core Strategy will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

Core Strategy Objectives

Core Strategy OBJ 1

The development of new residential properties at Rabbit Hill Wood along the Headfort Road shall be linked to the opening of a publicly accessible river walk. This proposal shall be subject to a Framework Plan being agreed in writing with Meath County Council. The Framework Plan shall provide inter alia the following;

- The development of additional residential properties shall be subject to the opening of recreational trails / lands identified as H1 "*High Amenity*" land use zoning objective to the general public from the Headfort Road to the Mausoleum. The development of recreational trails shall seek to only use the existing available trails within the sensitive Natura 2000 site. No additional residential development shall be constructed prior to the entering into of a legal agreement between the landowner and the Local Authority satisfying this aspect of the overall development.
- The scale and number of additional residential dwellings which shall be considered within the area of the Framework Plan identified as A1 "Existing Residential" shall seek to minimise the loss of any existing mature specimen trees and seek to assimilative new development into its sensitive woodland setting. A consistent design theme shall be provided for all development. The location of new development shall primarily be located within the cleared area to the north of the site identified as A1 "Existing Residential" land use zoning objective to ensure that dwellings maximise available sunlight / passive solar gain.
- The permissible density shall be a maximum of 5 units per hectare and shall be on the basis of a qualitative assessment which demonstrates compliance with the remainder of this objective but also the setting of the site within the Headfort Demesne Architectural Conservation Area (please refer to Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019).
- Any development within the subject lands shall be subject to the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment pursuant to the Habitats Directive ensuring that the proposed development will not adversely impact upon the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites.

No application for development within the subject lands will be considered in the absence of the required Framework Plan having first being agreed in writing with Meath County Council. When prepared, all subsequent applications for development shall be accompanied with a design statement demonstrating compliance with the Framework Plan.

However, should a single application be lodged at any time over the life of the Development Plan seeking the replacement of the existing Rabbit Hill Lodge, it shall be assessed against the remaining policies in the Development Plan and shall not be subject to the requirements of the Framework Plan.

2.4 Development Management

Key Aims for Development Management in Kells include

1. To ensure a high quality and standard of design for all new and extended developments in the town & environs.
2. To provide for sustainable residential communities along with providing for and maintaining a satisfactory community and business environment.

2.4.1 Introduction

Development management is one of the main implementation tools of this Development Plan and its Core Strategy contained therein. The carrying out of development in accordance with the standards set out in this chapter is therefore critical to the achievement of the Development Plan objectives and the delivery of key infrastructure through the development management process will support the aims of the Core Strategy.

The purpose of development management guidelines and standards is to supplement the policies and objectives given in the other chapters of the Development Plan regarding appropriate form of new development and to ensure that new development is of a high quality and satisfactorily relates to the character, scale, layout and form of the area in question.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will be guided by national ministerial planning guidance on best practice where available on achieving sustainable development in line with national policy.

All standards and guidelines may be subject to review from time to time in light of alterations in national or other standards.

2.4.2 Ministerial Guidelines

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) has issued a number of planning guidance documents to assist Planning Authorities in their functions, with the majority of these being relevant to the development management process. Under the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013, Planning Authorities are required to comply with any such ministerial directives in the performance of their functions. Some of the main planning guidelines relevant to the Kells Development Plan include;

- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)
- Best Practice Urban Design Manual Parts 1 & 2 (2009)
- Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)
- The Planning System & Flood Risk Management (2009)
- Architectural Heritage Protection (2004)
- Development Management Guidelines (2007)
- Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)
- Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)
- Retail Design Manual (2012)
- Spatial Planning & National Road Guidelines (2012)

It will be a requirement for all planning applications to be consistent with the core principles set out in all ministerial guidelines.

2.4.3 Development Management Standards

Chapter 11 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 set out Development Management standards for new planning applications in County Meath. For the purposes of the Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019 and to ensure consistency with the county standards, please refer to Chapter 11 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-19 for development management requirements.

2.4.4 Land Use Zoning Objectives

The purpose of land use zoning is to:

1. identify the quantity of land for designated land uses needed over the plan period;
2. the best locations for such land, and;
3. the acceptability or otherwise of the various classes of land use within any particular zone.

The use of zoning objectives by Meath County Council and Kells Town Council indicates the planning control objectives of the respective Council for the lands in question. The Core Strategy has set out, inter alia, the quantum and location of residential units which will be accommodated in Kells over the life of the Development Plan. The Kells Development Plan must ensure that adequate lands will be available to meet anticipated development requirements such as housing, employment, retail, community infrastructure, etc. and that such uses will be developed in a sequential and co-ordinated manner.

The County Development Plan has determined the overall zoning objectives to be applied at the county wide level whilst the location of the

zoning objectives as relevant to and located within Kells will be determined in this Development Plan.

2.4.5 Zoning Strategy

The overall zoning strategy is based on the following principles:

- Adequate lands should be zoned to meet the anticipated development needs of the economy and society in Kells within the lifetime of the plan.
- Zoned land should be provided at appropriate locations in the town and serviced to accommodate the expected growth in population over the plan period and thus reposition the town as the key economic driver within the north Meath area.
- Zoning should be designed to promote particular classes of land uses in appropriate locations to give residents, businesses and developers a degree of certainty.
- Development should generally be encouraged in established centres promoting concepts of brownfield redevelopment, sequential approach and ensuring efficient use of urban lands.
- More intensive development should be permitted within centres in the upper tiers of the settlement and economic hierarchies adjacent or close to public transport nodes and corridors to maximise the use of public transport, minimise trip generation and distribution and to promote sustainable development. The zoning strategy advocates the movement to mixed use zones and away from the use of single or mono zoning in such circumstances.

2.4.6 Land Use Zoning Objectives

This section of the Development Plan sets out the land use zoning objectives applicable to the Kells Development Plan. It also provides an explanation of the land use categories which apply within each of the land use zoning objectives.

It is a statutory function of Development Plans to contain objectives for the zoning of land for the sole or primary use of particular areas for particular purposes, including the provision for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational or other, or any mixture of those uses, having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and where, in the opinion of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council, it is necessary that such uses should be indicated.

The land use zonings of this Kells Development Plan (2013 - 2019) are consistent with those set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019. Table 2.8 of the Meath County Development Plan (Chapter 2) lists the land use zoning objectives for the county, along with permissible and open for consideration uses for each type of zoning.

Land Use Zoning Objectives

A1 Existing Residential: To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.

A2 New Residential: To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy.

B1 Commercial / Town or Village Centre: To protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses.

B2 Retail Warehouse Park: To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park.

C1 Mixed Use: To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses.

D1 Tourism: To provide for appropriate and sustainable visitor and tourist facilities and associated uses.

E2 General Enterprise & Employment: To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.

F1 Open Space: To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.

G1 Community Infrastructure: To provide for necessary community, social and educational facilities.

H1 High Amenity: To protect and improve areas of high amenity

WL White Lands: To protect strategic lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly expansion of Kells.

2.4.7 Permissible and Non Permissible Uses

This section provides guidance on the acceptability in principle of various uses for each of the zoning objectives. Uses other than the primary use for which an area is zoned may be permitted provided they are not in conflict with the primary use zoning objective. Uses not listed under the permissible or open for consideration categories are deemed not to be permissible in principle and such uses will be considered on their individual merits. The expansion of established and approved uses not conforming to use zone objectives will be considered on their merits.

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

Permissible Uses

A "permissible use" is one which is generally acceptable in principle in the relevant zone, but which is subject to normal planning consideration, including policies and objectives outlined in the plan.

Open for Consideration Uses

An "open for consideration use" is one which may be permitted where the relevant Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposed development would be compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone, would not have undesirable effects on permitted uses, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Relaxation of Zoning Objectives for Protected Structures

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council actively encourage uses which are compatible with the character of Protected Structures. In certain limited cases to ensure the long-term viability of a Protected Structure, it may be considered appropriate not to stringently apply generic zoning restrictions, including site development standards, provided the Protected Structure is being restored to the highest standard, the special interest, character and setting of the building is protected and the use and development is consistent with conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Transitional Zones

The Kells Development Plan zoning objectives map outlines the boundaries between different zoning objectives. Whilst the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundaries of adjoining land use zones. In dealing with development proposals in contiguous zone areas, it is necessary to avoid developments which would be detrimental to the amenities of the more environmentally sensitive zone. For instance, in zones abutting residential areas, particular attention must be paid to the use, scale and density of development proposals in order to protect the amenities of these residential properties.

Explanatory Notes: In the listings which follow each zoning objective indicating whether certain uses are permissible or open for consideration, the following uses are defined hereunder:

A Convenience Outlet is a single level store selling food and other convenience items with a net sales area of not more than 200 sq. m.

A Health Care Centre is a stand alone premise (i.e. not connected with a dwelling) generally with multiple consulting rooms which may cover a variety of health disciplines.

A Healthcare Practitioner is a practice operated by the owner/occupier of a dwelling and which is ancillary to the primary use of the dwelling as a normal place of residence. There is normally only one practitioner operating from the premises.

Office uses referred to in the following sections exclude offices which provide a service for visiting members of the public e.g. solicitors, financial services, estate agents, etc. Reference to office in the following sections does not include office accommodation ancillary to the primary use e.g. office accommodation as part of a manufacturing facility.

Supermarket: Single level, self service store selling mainly food, with a net retail floorspace of less than 2,500 sq. m. net.

Superstore: Generally, single level, self service stores selling mainly food, or food and some non – food goods, with at least 2,500 sq.m. net retail floorspace but not greater than 5,000 sq. m. net retail floorspace and with integrated or shared parking.

A **Shop** is a comparison retail outlet excluding retail warehouse units.

Primary Land Use Zoning Categories

A1 - Existing Residential

Objective - To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.

Guidance

In A1 zones, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will be primarily concerned with the protection of the amenities of established residents. While infill or redevelopment proposals would be acceptable in principle, careful consideration would have to be given to protecting amenities such as privacy, daylight/sunlight and aspect in new proposals.

In all residentially zoned lands, no residential development shall be permitted on lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Community Facility / Centre, Home Based Economic Activities, Residential / Sheltered Housing, and Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Allotments, Bring Banks, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Education (Primary or Second Level), Halting Site / Group Housing, Healthcare Practitioner, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Petrol Station, Public House, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, and Veterinary Surgery.

A2 New Residential

Objective - To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy.

Guidance

The appropriate density will be determined on a site by site basis having regard to the DoEHLG Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the positioning of Kells as a 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Town' in the settlement hierarchy of County Meath.

It is envisaged in the interest of sustainability that the larger tracts of lands identified for A2 land use zoning objective could accommodate ancillary uses such as employment generating uses, community facilities, local shopping facilities, etc. provided they are appropriate in scale and do not unduly interfere with the predominant residential land use. A number of the uses open for consideration are qualified on this basis.

In all residentially zoned lands, no residential development shall be permitted on lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in

a planning application as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Bring Banks, Community Facility / Centre, Childcare Facility, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Education (Primary or Second Level), Halting Site / Group Housing, Home Based Economic Activities, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Allotments, Bank / Financial Institution, Betting Office, Caravan Park, Cultural Facility, education (Third Level), Enterprise Centre, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Offices <100sq. m., Offices 100 to 1000 sq. m. , Petrol Station, Place of Public Worship, Public House, Restaurant / Café, Supermarket / Superstore, Shop, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Veterinary Surgery.

B1 Commercial / Town or Village Centre

Objective - *To protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses*

Guidance

It is intended to accommodate the majority of new commercial and retail uses for Kells town within the B1 land use zonings. This includes the identified town centre expansion areas of the Backlands and the Frontlands.

This section of the Development Plan establishes the general principle of use within a given land use zoning objective. Nothing in this section shall confer an expectation that a particular scale of retail outlet is permissible

within an urban centre as other considerations as outlined in the County Retail Strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-19 and Chapter 4 (Town Centre) of this Plan will be taken into account by Kells Town Council / Meath County Council in the assessment of any new retail development proposals.

There shall be no restriction to the definition of office in B1 land use zones. Office shall include Class 2 and Class 3 as referred to in Part 4 Exempted Development – Classes of Uses contained in the Second Schedule of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Bank / Financial Institution, Betting Office, Bring Banks, Cinema, Community Facility / Centre, Conference/Event Centre, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Cultural Facility, Dance Hall / Night Club, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Funeral Home, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Home Based Economic Activities, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Offices <100sq.m., Offices 100 to 1,000 sq. m., Offices >1,000sq. m., Place of Public Worship, Public House, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Supermarket / Superstore, Shop, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Telecommunication Structures, Veterinary Surgery, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Agri – Business, Amusement Arcade, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Drive Through Restaurant, Enterprise Centre, Garden Centre, Hospital, Motor Sales / Repair, Petrol Station, Plant & Tool Hire, Retail Warehouse, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Science & Technology Based Enterprise.

B2 Retail Warehouse Park

Objective - *To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park.*

Guidance

The objective of the B2 land use zoning is to provide for the development of a retail warehouse park which in the case of Kells has been identified off the Cavan Road adjoining the Aldi Discount Food Store. The B2 zoning will also allow the displacement of motor car sales outlets from non compatible town centre and edge of town centre locations, subject to their suitable integration within an overall development proposal. Having regard to the agreed Framework Plan and extant planning permission for this site, light industrial/warehouse use will continue to be 'open for consideration' noting that this deviates from the Meath County Development Plan.

Permitted Uses

Cinema, Factory Outlet Stores, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Retail Warehouse, Telecommunication Structures, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Drive Through Restaurant, Garden Centre, Light Industrial / Warehouse, Motor Sales / Repair, Petrol Station, Restaurant / Café, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

C1 Mixed Use

Objective - *To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses.*

Guidance

C1 zones have been identified to encourage mixed use development and for this reason it will be a requirement to include at least 30% of a given site area for commercial (non retail) development.

There shall be no restriction to the definition of office in C1 land use zones. Office shall include Class 2 and Class 3 as referred to in Part 4 Exempted Development – Classes of Uses contained in the Second Schedule of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Community Facility / Centre, Convenience Outlet, Cultural Facility, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Enterprise Centre, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Home Based Economic Activities, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Offices <100sq. m. Offices 100 to 1,000 sq. m., Offices >1,000 sq. m., Petrol Station, Place of Public Worship, Public House, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Agri – Business, Amusement Arcade, Betting Office, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Cinema, Conference/Event Centre, Dance Hall / Night Club, Drive Through Restaurant, Funeral Home, Garden Centre, Hospital, Industry – Light, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Motor Sales / Repair, Offices >1,000sq. m., Plant & Tool Hire, Retirement Home / Residential Institution/Retirement Village, Science & Technology Based

Enterprise, Shop, Supermarket / Superstore, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Telecommunication Structures, Veterinary Surgery, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

D1 Tourism

Objective - *To provide for appropriate and sustainable visitor and tourist facilities and associated uses.*

Guidance

A D1 land use zoning has been identified along the Navan Road entrance to the town to provide for a tourism type use(s) such as accommodation and entertainment. A gateway type building design of appropriate scale and high quality finish to suitably mark a significant approach to the town is envisaged with this zoning.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Caravan Park, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Community Facility / Centre, Conference/Event Centre, Craft Centre / Craft Shop, Cultural Facility, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Restaurant / Café, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Amusement Arcade, Cinema, Convenience Outlet*, Childcare Facility, Cultural Facility, Dance Hall / Night Club, Offices <100sq. m., Public House, Shop*, Telecommunication Structures.

Note: * A convenience outlet and/or shop use will only be considered as part of an integrated tourism facility

E2 General Enterprise & Employment

Objective - *To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.*

Guidance

E2 lands constitute an important land bank for employment use which must be protected. The development of E2 lands seek to provide for the creation and production of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.

The majority of the E2 zoned lands in Kells are located in the Kells Business Park off the Cavan Road. A framework plan to guide future development in the undeveloped areas of the park is contained in Appendix G of this Plan.

No office type use shall be permitted on E2 zoned lands where the primary use of the office (or service) are provided principally to visiting members of the public e.g. solicitors, accountants, etc.

Kells is included in Category 1 – Primary and Secondary Economic Centres as identified in the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019.

E2 zones provides for industrial and related uses subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure. They allow the full range of industrial processes to take place within a well designed and attractive setting that provide employment opportunities. In established industrial areas, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will seek to ensure that non industrial uses are limited to prevent potential land use conflicts developing.

Permitted Uses

Agri – Business, Bring Banks, Builder's Providers, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), CHP / Waste to Energy Facilities, Domestic Fuel Depot, Energy Installation, Enterprise & Business Start Ups, Enterprise / Training Centre, Factory Shop, Furniture Showroom (only where product displayed is manufactured on site), Go Kart Track, Industry – General, Industry – Light, Heavy Vehicle Park, Logistics, Mart / Co-op, Motor Repair / Servicing, Plant & Tool Hire, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Telecommunication Structures, Transport Depot, Warehousing, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Abattoir, Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard, Childcare Facility, Construction & Demolition Waste Recycling Facility, Garden Centre, Motor Sales, Offices 100 – 1,000 sq. m., Petrol Station, Restaurant / Café, Veterinary Surgery, Waste Recycling / Transfer / Sorting Centre, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

F1 Open Space

Objective - *To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.*

Permitted Uses

Car Park for Recreational Purposes, Craft Centre / Craft Shop, Community Facility / Centre, Cultural Facility, Cycleways / Greenways / Trail Development, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Playing Pitches, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Allotments, Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Place of Public Worship.

G1 Community Infrastructure

Objective - *To provide for necessary community, social and educational facilities.*

Permitted Uses

Allotments, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Cemetery/Crematorium, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Childcare Facility, Community Facility / Centre, Cultural Facility, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Health Centre, Hospital, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Place of Public Worship, Playing Pitches, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Bring Banks, Funeral Home, Gymnasium, Halting Site / Group Housing, Healthcare Practitioner, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Telecommunication Structures.

H1 High Amenity

Objective – To protect and improve areas of high amenity

Open for Consideration Uses

Cycleways / Greenways / Trail Development & Open Space.

Note

The H1 Land Use zoning Objective in this Development Plan specifically relates to lands within the area of Rabbit Hill Wood adjacent to the River Blackwater. No other uses shall be considered as being open for consideration having regard to the location of the site within a Natura 2000 site.

WL White Lands

Objective - *To protect strategic lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly expansion of a strategic urban centre*

These are strategic lands and their designation is to allow for a long term, integrated approach to be taken to the expansion of an urban area. It is not generally envisaged that development proposals will be brought forward during the life of this Development Plan for such lands. No indication is therefore generally offered regarding the suitability or otherwise of individual uses on said lands within this Development Plan. The acceptability of specific proposals for development on the lands prior to that time (other than housing) will be considered on their merits. It is vital that such lands are protected against developments which would impede the orderly expansion of Kells.

2.4.8 Framework Plans

There are 5 Framework Plan objectives included as part of the Kells Development Plan. 3 of these Framework Plans were prepared as part of the previous 2007 – 2013 Kells Development Plan and have been revised as part of preparing the new Kells Development Plan 2013 - 2019. These are included in Volume III (Appendices) and relate to the Backlands (Appendix E), Cavan Road Framework Plan (Appendix F) and Kells Business Park (Appendix G). There are specific objectives in the plan which relate to these 3 Framework Plans.

In addition, TOWN CENTRE POL 5 requires the preparation of a new Framework Plan for the development of lands to the west of Bective Street / Bective Square / Suffolk Street whilst Core Strategy OBJ 1 requires the preparation of a Framework Plan for the development of residential lands

and publicly accessible walkways to the River Blackwater and mausoleum at Rabbit Hill Woods, Headfort Road.

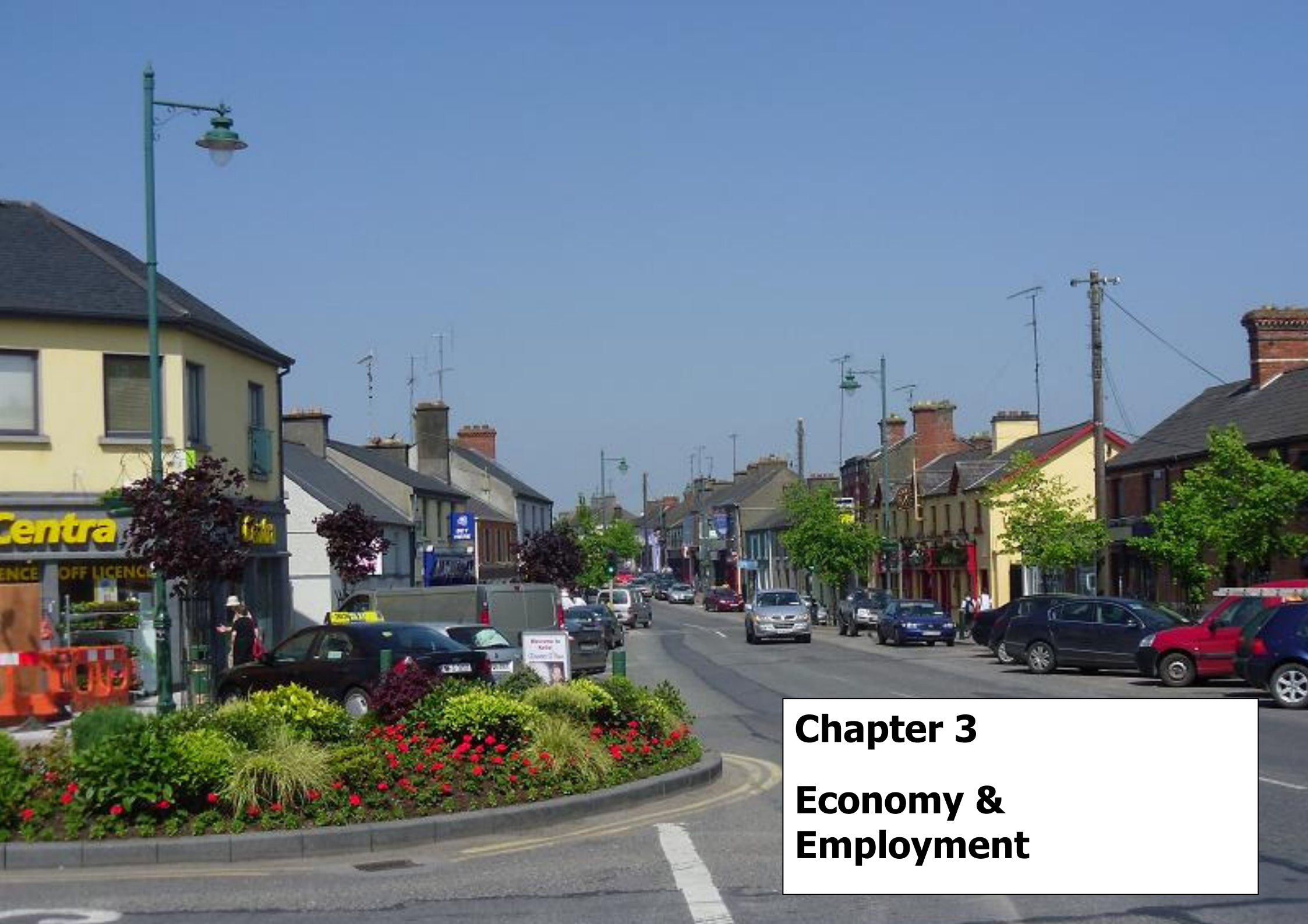
The preparation of Framework Plans will assist in achieving quality developments in terms of, inter alia, urban design, structure, delivery of community/amenity facilities and permeability. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council consider Framework Plans to be an effective means of guiding new development and providing essential social infrastructure in a phased and sustainable manner.

Each Framework Plan shall consist of a written statement and a plan or series of plans indicating the objectives in such detail, as may determined by Kells Town Council / Meath County Council for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies to include inter alia, the following details:

- Proposals in relation to the overall design of the proposed development including maximum heights, external finishes of structures and the general appearance and design, including that of the public realm;
- The types and extent of any proposed development indicating how these uses integrate with surrounding development and land uses;
- Proposals in relation to transportation including public transportation and non motorised modes, vehicular roads layout and access arrangements, loading/unloading provision, the provision of parking spaces and traffic management;
- Proposals in relation to the provision of services in the area including the provision of waste and sewerage facilities and water, electricity and telecommunications services, oil and gas pipelines, including storage facilities for oil and gas;
- The element of residential development shall include proposals relating to the provision of amenities, facilities and services for the community including crèches and other childcare services, community and resource centres, and;

- The facilitation of public access to the proposed amenity areas located within the Plan boundaries and beyond.

The above list is non exhaustive and the requirements for each Framework Plan shall be determined on a case by case basis by Kells Town Council / Meath County Council.



Chapter 3

Economy & Employment

3 Economy & Employment

Key Aims for Economy & Employment

1. To maximise the number of local job opportunities created over the life of the development plan befitting the Secondary Economic Growth Town status of Kells.
2. To reduce the dependence on commuting for access to suitable job opportunities for the growing resident population.
3. To develop the tourism sector of the town maximising the economic potential arising from the inclusion of Kells in the tentative World Heritage Site list and its designation as an Orientation Point in the Boyne Valley.
4. To maximise the economic opportunities arising from the synergies which can be developed between the heritage, tourism and retail sectors of Kells.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the spatial elements of economic development with particular reference to employment and business uses, retailing and tourism development in Kells. It seeks to further develop the role of Kells within the wider country and regional economic context and its role as a Secondary Economic Growth Town within the Greater Dublin Area.

3.1.1 Kells in context

The Kells Development Plan sits within a systematic hierarchy of land use and spatial plans which includes the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The County Development Plan is the primary statutory land use planning framework for Co. Meath

which utilizes national and regional frameworks to inform and structure land use policies at a county level. The Kells Development Plan sits at the lower end of this hierarchy with increased emphasis on detailed issues rather than focusing on strategic issues. In essence, the strategic positioning of Kells with regard to population growth, economic development, retail development and major infrastructural investment is established by other plans higher up in the spatial hierarchy. The role of the Kells Development Plan is to provide detailed guidance for developers, the public and those involved in or responsible for making planning decisions within Kells Town Council / Meath County Council. The primary role of the Development Plan from an economic and employment perspective is to ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for sustainable large scale and general industry, commercial and retail use.

Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019

The spatial dimension to the Economic Strategy contained in the County Development Plan supports the growth of the National Gateway and Primary Economic Growth Towns in the Hinterland Area of the Greater Dublin Area linked by multi-modal corridors and focused on identified Core Economic Areas. The stated centres include:

- The Navan Core Economic Area, which includes Navan as a Primary Economic Growth Town and Kells as a Secondary Economic Growth Town of Kells.

The Primary Economic Growth Towns will be promoted as anchors of regional enterprise and benefit from locational advantages in terms of access to strategic rail and road networks to gateways, ports and airports. These centres shall be prioritized for economic development and investment to redress the imbalance of residential development and jobs and the emergence of dormitory areas. These centres supported by the Secondary Economic Growth Towns, such as Kells, will continue to be the focal point for regional population growth and employment in order to

sustain and attract economic activity and build upon the significant investments made to-date in these areas.

Kells will therefore play an important supporting and complementary role in developing regional economic growth in tandem with Primary Economic Growth Town of Navan and its large hinterland areas.

Within the Primary & Secondary Economic Growth Towns, there are a number of key strategic, integrated and specialized employment centres, which provide different types of functions. It is acknowledged that Kells has a particular concentration of manufacturing facilities and is a centre of administration associated with the HSE NE. The employment sectors to be targeted for Kells are tourism, high value added manufacturing, retail (convenience & lower order comparison) and administration.

The main issues critical to the success of these major employment centres are the continued availability of suitable land, improved public transport services to relieve congestion and reliance on the main inter urban road network and comprehensive infrastructure, to include piped water services, broadband and power.

The stated high level economic development objectives for the Secondary Economic Growth Town of Kells were:

- Kells and Trim to develop as a tourism cluster with improvement in the connectivity between both centres identified for investment. Each town to develop a strategy for niche tourism as integral part of their overall development strategy e.g. culinary tourism, regional food hub, creative industries, etc.;
- Protection of the intrinsic built and natural heritage of Kells and Trim and their promotion as a basis of tourism must be dominant in the development strategies adopted for both "*Heritage Towns*".

- Kells, identified as a Secondary Economic Growth Town, benefitting from N3 and N52 bypasses, to further develop its retail and manufacturing bases.

The County Development Plan considered that the quantum of lands identified for employment generating uses in Kells appears disproportionate to the scale of existing industrial / enterprise development and the existing / projected resident population. This is further exacerbated by the scale of lands earmarked for town centre expansion and mixed use development. The County Development Plan requires that the review of the Kells Development Plan should question the extent of lands identified for employment and enterprise on the basis of established need and the ability to service such lands from a water services perspective within the life of the next Kells Development Plan (2013 – 2019).

3.1.2 Employment

Over the past decade, job creation in Kells has focused on the service industry, administration and the Kells Business Park at Lloyd. The 2006 Census indicated that there 2,435 people living within Kells and environs who were 'at work' with a further 254 people looking for their first regular job or unemployed (2,689 people in total). The POWCAR⁵ data indicated that there were 2,024 jobs within the defined town and environs. The 2011 Census is not yet available to the same level of detail although the Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) indicate that the number of people living within Kells and environs who were 'at work' had fallen to 2,122 with

⁵ Place of Work - Census of Anonymised Records. As part of the Census 2006 processing programme the place of work details of all employed persons who undertook a journey to work were geo-coded. A detailed file containing the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of these workers along with information on the origin and destination of their journeys to work has been made available for analysis.

722 people looking for their first regular job or unemployed (2,844 people in total). The Census data confirms that there are insufficient numbers of employment opportunities locally to satisfy the needs of the resident population with many people having to commute outside of the town and environs for work. It must also be borne in mind that people from outside of the town and environs also work in Kells. The way forward is to establish Kells as a self sustaining town with a mix of employment and business opportunities, reducing commuting numbers and encouraging further retail and tourism development in the town.

Kells Business Park is a first class business location for multi national and national companies. A variety of industrial, warehousing, wholesale, distribution and service companies are located on the fully serviced 80 acre site overlooking the River Blackwater and accessed off the R147 (former N3) with unrivalled access to the N3 and N52 bypass.

Occupiers within the Kells Business Park include

- An Post – Collection Service & Depot
- Arc Royal - manufacturer and distributor of single-use medical products and custom procedure trays
- Bective Precision – precision sheet metal fabrication
- Best O Matz – Children’s play and party centre
- HDS Energy - designer and manufacturer of industrial boiler plant and ancillary equipment and customization and engineering of turnkey energy projects.
- Health Services Executive North East – administration centre.
- Irish Cooling Towers - cooling tower supply, sterilization service and maintenance contractor.
- Kellglass - toughened glass, laminated glass, fire resistant glass, glass processing and mirrors specialists.
- Kells Enterprise Centre – office / call centre space



Kells Enterprise Centre

- Larsen Water Management – water leak detection and conservation surveys
- Lynn Group - publishing
- Masita – manufacture of sportswear
- MDI Medical – supply, installation and service of medical devices and systems
- Meath Partnership - community organisation responsible for the design and implementation of local, rural and community development programmes in Meath
- Midland Engineering and Construction – construction specializing in commercial construction sector
- National Car Test Centre
- Smurfit and News International - contract newspaper print works.
- Stainless Pipeline Supplies - supply of stainless valves, pipe fittings and pipelines.

- Young' s of Kells – bakers and confectioners

Climber Hall is the other traditional industrial estate in Kells although its occupants have diversified in more recent years. The occupiers include

- Kells Stainless Ltd. - specialists in the manufacture of stainless steel tanks, process, storage and modular equipment for home and export markets
- The Door Depot – timber flooring, door furniture, garden furniture and stairs
- HSE NE – health services

2011 Census of Population

The key findings from the Census of Population (Small Area Population Statistics) for Kells and its environs were as follows:

Table 7: Population aged 15 years + by principal economic status

Principal Economic Status	Kells	%	Co. Meath %
At work	2,122	47.2	54
Looking for first regular job	44	1	0.8
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	678	15.1	11
Student	418	9.3	10
Looking after home / family	441	9.8	10.3
Retired	556	12.4	10.1
Unable to work (permanent sickness / disability)	226	5	3.5
Other	7	0.2	0.3
Total	4,492	100	100

Table 8: Persons at work by industry and sex

Industry	Males	Females	Total	%	Meath %
Agriculture / Forestry	39	31	70	3.3	5
Building & construction	124	6	130	6.1	6.3
Manufacturing industries	222	78	310	14.1	11.8
Commerce & trade	239	268	507	23.9	26
Transport & communications	140	35	175	8.3	9.4
Public administration	69	92	161	7.6	6.7
Professional services	102	376	478	22.5	21.5
Other	143	158	301	14.2	13.3
Total	1,078	1,044	2,132		

Table 9: Persons at work or unemployed by occupation and sex

Occupation	Males	Females	Total
Managers, Directors & Senior Officials	124	94	218
Professional Occupations	115	208	323
Associate Professional & Technical Occupations	155	99	254
Administrative & Secretarial Occupations	51	225	276
Skilled Trades Occupations	442	36	478
Caring, Leisure & Other Service Occupations	38	198	236
Process, Plant & Machine Operatives	236	47	283
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	54	138	192
Elementary Occupations	192	119	311
Not stated	113	116	229
Total	1,520	1,280	2,800

The Census data demonstrates a number of interesting facts about the resident population

- Kells had a significantly higher percentage of the resident population aged 15 and over unemployed having lost or given up their previous job (15.1%) than that recorded in the county as a whole (11.1%);
- Kells (12.4%) has a slightly higher proportion of the resident population retired than the county wide average (10.1%) reflective of the demographic profile of the town;
- 24.1% of the population had ceased education by the age of 16 years compared to the County average of 20.3%;
- 21.4% of the population have attained ordinary bachelor degree or national diploma or higher compared to the County average of 27%;
- Kells has a higher proportion of the resident workforce employed as carers, leisure and other service occupations; process, plant and machine operatives, and; elementary occupations than the county wide average;
- Kells has a lower proportion of the resident workforce employed in professional occupations; associate professional and technical occupations, and; administrative and secretarial occupations than the county wide average;
- The principal occupation of men in Kells is skilled trade occupations (29.1%) followed by process, plant and machine operatives (15.5%), followed by elementary occupations (12.6%) whereas the principal occupation of women is administrative and secretarial occupations (17.6%), followed by professional occupations (16.3%) and followed by caring, leisure and other service occupations (15.5%);
- Kells has less (35.4%) of the resident population leaving home before 8.00 a.m. each morning to attend work, college or school than the county average (39.8%), and;
- Almost 23% of the population in Kells aged 5 years and older travel to work, school or college by foot compared to the county wide average of 13.2%.

It is clear that the way forward is to establish Kells as a self sustaining town with a mix of employment and business opportunities, reducing commuting numbers from the town and encouraging further retail and tourism development in the town. The analysis of the Census of Population SAPS would confirm that the appropriate sectors have been targeted for Kells in the County Development Plan building on the strong tradition of high value manufacturing, retaining and further developing the administrative base centred on the HSE NE, providing the requisite level of retail focusing on convenience and middle order comparison and exploiting further the considerable cultural tourism asset of the town conscious of the tentative World Heritage Site status conferred on the town.

3.1.3 Employment Land

In the 2007 – 2013 Kells Development Plan, two areas were identified to accommodate employment generating uses; one representing a significant expansion of the Kells Business Park at Lloyd (40.0 hectares) subject to the preparation of KS2 Framework Plan and the other on the Navan Road opposite from Headfort Golf Club (28.64 hectares) subject to the preparation of KS1 Framework Plan. The combined extent of these two land banks identified for E2 land use zoning objectives was 68.64 hectares.

It is also noted that there remains a further 10.5 hectares remaining within the original Business Park adjoining the Kells Enterprise Centre and either side of Kells Pipeline Supplies Ltd. The total remaining undeveloped employment land bank from the previous 2007 – 2013 Kells Development Plan is 79.34 hectares.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council estimate that a total floor area of 16,750 sq. m. for manufacturing, warehousing, assembly of light industrial products has been developed in Kells Business Park since the existing Kells Development Plan was adopted in 2007 with a further 6,000 sq. m. permitted but not yet constructed. The land take required to accommodate this quantum of development (constructed and permitted)

was approximately 6 hectares. The majority of this new development has taken place in Phase II of the Business Park and the rate of occupancy in the new build element is encouraging to date. Nonetheless, there are a number of vacant units within the existing Business Park which should be occupied before permitting further speculative development. It is having an adverse effect on the vitality of the Park until addressed.

The approved Framework Plan for KS2 lands at Kells Business Park indicated that a conservative estimate would yield a floor area of 85,000 sq. m. at single storey level only whereas a mixed use development form (warehouse and distribution, light industry and offices) could yield 170,000 sq. m. of floorspace (28,333 sq. m. of warehouse and distribution, 56,666 sq. m. of light industry and 85,000 sq. m. of office space). For the purposes of this exercise, the lower yield will be applied.

It is possible to calculate the indicative number of jobs which this land bank and assumed uses could yield as follows:

- Warehousing and distribution is based on a factor of 50 – 100 m² per job;
- Office floorspace is based on a factor ranging from 20 m² – 34 m² per job;
- Light industrial floorspace is based on a factor of 34 - 50 m² per job.

These jobs to floorspace ratios are assumptions and therefore the floorspace and resultant land requirement figures are indicative only. On the basis of the projected yields contained in the agreed Framework Plan, the number of jobs which could be created and the required land take are as follows:

Table 10 : Yield of KS2 Framework Plan lands at Lloyd

Type	Indicative Jobs	Indicative Floorspace (m ²)	Site Coverage	Height	Land Required (ha)
Warehousing & Distribution	142 - 283	14,167	40%	1	3.54
Office	1,250 - 2,215	42,500	40%	2	5.31
Industry	566 - 833	28,333	40%	1	7.08
Total	2,366 - 3,076	85,000			15.93

It is clear that the extent of lands currently zoned in Kells Business Park (10.5 hectares in the original Park and a further 40 hectares for which the Framework Plan has been prepared) are significantly in excess of that required to accommodate the projected workforce of the town and environs over the life of the next Development Plan and beyond. There is no justification for any other lands to be identified for general enterprise and employment in the Kells Development Plan. It is proposed to alter the land use zoning objective of the lands previously zoned for E2 land use on the Navan Road to F1 active amenity use. This is discussed at a later stage in the Development Plan.

Having reviewed the lands which were zoned in the previous Kells Development Plan between the N52 bypass and the existing Business Park, it is considered that the topography of the lands adjacent to the bypass do not readily lend themselves for development. The area adjoining the R147 / N52 roundabout is quite elevated noting that the bypass is in significant cut at this location. Similarly, the lands adjoining the Moynalty Road fall significantly towards the Blackwater River. It is considered preferable to remove the land use zoning objective from these lands in the interest of visual amenity and to protect the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites. It is proposed to reduce the quantum of land which was previously identified (40 hectares extension) to 25

hectares. It is also proposed to phase the remaining available lands at Lloyd as identified in the land use zoning objective map. It is considered that 12 – 14 hectares would be more than sufficient to accommodate the enterprise and employment needs of Kells over the life of this development plan. Future planning applications on the subject lands will be subject to a Traffic & Transport Assessment (TTA), where appropriate, in relation to the likely impact on any specific development on the national road network in the area. Meath County Council has prepared a revised Framework Plan for the expansion of the employment lands at Lloyd as part of this Development Plan (Appendix G Kells Business Park Framework Plan).

The land use zoning objective applicable to Kells Business Park from the County Development Plan is E2 General Enterprise & Employment (Category 1). The development of E2 lands seek to provide for the creation and production of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.

In order to promote the overall sustainable development of Kells and retain local employment opportunities, it is considered important to retain a range of commercial / business activities within the core area of the town and provide a convenient central location for such uses where they are accessible to those doing business / shopping in the town centre.

Opportunities for new employment uses, including office uses, are available within infill / backland sites in the town centre as well as the significant number of under utilized / vacant properties. It is contended that sustainable transport options can be provided to such central sites in preference to locating people intensive uses in Lloyd. A good example of the potential for reusing redundant buildings for office use is the proposed move of the HSE NE offices from Lloyd to the former McKeon car showroom at Bective Street.

Economy & Employment Policies

ECON POL 1

To promote and provide for employment and enterprise creation opportunities and initiatives, in line with the designation of Kells as a Secondary Economic Growth Town within the Navan Core Economic Area.

ECON POL 2

To protect and enhance the special character of Kells town centre and to provide for and improve retailing, residential, commercial, office, cultural, tourism and other appropriate uses in the town centre.

ECON POL 3

To promote and facilitate synergy between heritage, retail and tourism developments that enhances the economic profile of Kells town.

ECON POL4

To continue to consolidate the centre of Kells as the focal point of the town for cultural, social, retail and commercial facilities.

ECON POL 5

To continue to support and promote existing industries and enterprises in Kells.

ECON POL 6

To provide for the location of high-density employment uses, such as offices, in locations within or close to the town centre and within 500m of the 109 / 109A bus service thereby minimizing the demand for private car based travel.

ECON POL 7

To provide for and facilitate the orderly phased development of enterprise and employment uses at Kells Business Park generally in accordance with the Kells Business Park Framework Plan 2013 (Appendix G). Further

development can only be facilitated subject to the availability of adequate piped water services. Meath County Council shall seek to achieve a high standard of layout, landscaping and design of the overall site, buildings and groups of buildings. In addition, future development proposals will be subject to a Traffic & Transport Assessment (TTA), where appropriate, in relation to the potential impact on any specific development on the national road network in the area.

EMP POL 8

To encourage predominantly lower density employment uses (industrial, warehousing, distribution, logistics and associated uses) on lands zoned for E2 "*General Enterprise & Employment*" land use zoning objective at Kells Business Park.

ECON POL 9

To facilitate the sustainable development of commercial, office, incubator units, light industrial and warehousing development on appropriately zoned and serviced lands in co-operation with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the County Enterprise Board.

ECON POL 10

To encourage the provision of a number of incubator units for enterprises, as part of larger light industrial or office developments.

EMP POL 11

To apply a flexible approach to the assessment of entrepreneurial start up business and small scale industrial and employment generating activities, where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use would have minimal impact on adjoining uses, primarily residential property.

EMP POL 12

Any land development proposed as a result of Economic and Employment policies and objectives will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

Economy & Employment Objectives

ECON OBJ 1

To carry out further environmental improvements, public realm enhancements and traffic management in the town centre area which will assist in generating a positive ambience in the town thus creating a positive impact on potential employers/employees locating in, and for shoppers/ tourists visiting the town.

EMP OBJ 2

To provide landmark commercial buildings of significant architectural merit and within a landscaped setting on lands identified on the Navan Road opposite the entrance to Headfort Golf Club.

EMP OBJ 3

To monitor the release of land zoned for employment generating uses and the progress made in providing the necessary piped water services capacity to service such lands. Further development can only be facilitated subject to the availability of adequate piped water services. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will seek to ensure that sufficient land is available to cater for the development of retail, commercial, industrial and enterprise uses to match the needs of the town's growing population.

EMP OBJ 4

To prepare a commercial profile for Kells as a significant element of the promotion and marketing of the town by the Economic Development & Innovation Unit of Meath County Council for employment and enterprise development targeting tourism, high value added manufacturing, retail (convenience & lower order comparison) and administration.

3.2 Tourism

3.2.1 Background

Kells or Ceannanas Mór, meaning 'Great Fort', was known to be a royal residence before St. Colmcille established a religious settlement in Kells in 550 AD. The monks from his community on the Scottish island of Iona fled to Kells in 806 AD in order to escape savage Viking raids and it was here that they completed their illuminated manuscript of the Four Gospels, the Book of Kells.

The circular street pattern which the Norman walls followed, and is still respected today, went back to the more peaceful surrounds of the famous monastery. Inside the walls of St. Columba's Church are some of the finest High Crosses of the High Christian era. The High Crosses, with biblical scenes and Celtic patterns, represent decorative artefacts of Celtic Christianity. Five premier examples can be found in Kells including the famous Market Cross. The Round Tower dates from Viking times, each of its 5 windows pointing to one of the town's gates in anticipation of attack from Norse raiders. Nearby is St. Colmcille's Oratory, built in the 10th century and part of the Monastic foundation. Other features of interest in the outskirts of the town include St. Colmcille's well, the Spire of Lloyd within the Peoples Park, the Victorian Water Works and Headfort House and Bridge.

The Town Hall and Tourist Information Point houses a facsimile of the Book of Kells. While the original is on display at Trinity College Dublin, this book represents one of a very small number of copies ever made of this famous manuscript. A copy of the Kells Crozier (late 9th century – 11th century AD) is also on display in addition to a number of panels and audio visual information on Kells Town. The Kells Historic Trail, with 15 points of interest, is a recent development which showcases the influence of both a pre-Norman monastic enclosure and a walled Anglo-Norman settlement. The Kells Historic Trail guides you on a journey of 14 historic points of interest all around the town. The trail commences at the Town Hall and

Tourist information point (located beside the Headfort Arms Hotel at Headfort Place). Kells is recognized as an official heritage town of Ireland.



Figure 1: Kells Historic Trail

Kell's historic and cultural environment is a precious asset that has the potential to tell its story and evolution throughout its long and proud history. Most notable are the sites and monuments in state care, the buildings listed for protection due to their special architectural and historic interest, the areas of special architectural conservation and the outstanding natural beauty of the Blackwater Valley. Collectively these sites and their landscape provide a historic environment that creates the unique place that is Kells. It is this historic environment that is also attractive to those living elsewhere and who may wish to visit, invest, or

come to live here. The inclusion of Kells in the UNESCO Tentative List – Ireland 2010 is testament to the international significance of the monastic settlement from which the town grew.

It is estimated that there are 55,000 people living within a 15 minutes drive of Kells, 155,000 within a 30 minute drive and following the opening of the M3 Motorway, over 1.5 million people within an hour's drive of the town. Tourism is identified as being of critical importance to the future economic development of Kells and this sector must capitalize on its cultural heritage appeal within the most densely populated region of the country. The historic environment is an important and undervalued asset in Kells which contributes to the social and economic well being of the town's inhabitants. However, for cultural tourism to be of economic value to a town such as Kells, it must, more often than not, be packaged with a tourism product that will entice the visitor to stay and spend. Therein lays the extent of the challenge ahead.

3.2.2 National Tourism Development Strategy 2010-2012

The Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland marketing strategies for international and national markets seek to develop, promote and market the key destinations within the country as the main attractors to entice visitors. Fáilte Ireland, through the Discover Ireland marketing campaign, is implementing a strategy to develop up to 10 world class tourism destinations in Ireland. The Boyne Valley has been identified as one of these 10 destinations with Kells and Drogheda identified as orientation towns within the region. This places Co. Meath and Kells in particular, in an advantageous position to attract significant visitor numbers.

3.2.3 Louth and Meath – Tourism Development Study 2010

Fáilte Ireland commissioned the '*Louth and Meath – Tourism Development Study*' (2010) which examined the performance of tourism in each county, the strength and depth of its tourism products and infrastructure, and highlighted the potential for further tourism development. The Study

provides a series of recommendations for the future development of the tourism product, marketing and investment to maximise the economic returns from tourism. The Boyne Valley is identified as the project with the greatest opportunity and potential to drive significant new tourism business to the counties of Meath and Louth. The continued collaboration between both counties will ensure a strategic and targeted approach towards the creation of a world class tourism destination.

Figures collated by Fáilte Ireland outline that in 2010, 135,000 overseas visitors came to Meath with more than half from Britain and approximately a quarter from mainland Europe and from North America respectively. The overseas revenue was estimated at €54 million. It is estimated that an additional 126,000 domestic visitors also visited the county. The absence of an individual orientation point or destination makes the collation of accurate annual tourist figures for Kells difficult.

3.2.4 Past Now Future - Meath Tourism Strategic Review 2005 – 2010 and Strategic Plan 2011-2013

The Strategic Plan recommends that Meath Tourism channels its focus of activity into two main areas to make a national and international impact:

1. Heritage and Culture Tourism as Ireland's Heritage Capital – regard to the Boyne Valley Development Plan & the Louth and Meath Tourism Development Strategy.
2. Business Tourism – using the 'Meet in Meath' brand as a communication vehicle which ties into 'Meet in Ireland' business proposition. 'Meet in Meath' is acknowledged as the 'business tourism' arm of Meath Tourism.

All promotional activities should fall under these two main headings to ensure Meath achieves greater penetration in the heritage and culture arena and the concervative (conference and incentive) market, Ireland's two most lucrative visitor areas.

The Strategy advocates the retention of the single brand proposition namely 'Meath, Ireland's Heritage Capital'. However, it is timely to review and strengthen the county's heritage proposition and also to build and showcase the culture proposition, thus increasing the value of the overall experience. It is considered that Meath's cultural offering is as strong as its heritage, which it should be packaging to showcase its strengths.

3.2.5 Audit of Current Cultural Tourism Product in Meath

This audit was commissioned to support and to raise the profile of County Meath's position as Ireland's Heritage Capital. The publication of the audit gives Meath Local Authorities and Meath Tourism an opportunity to highlight the vast cultural offering that we currently hold, to package it in a more attractive way for the holiday maker and to identify new opportunities to enhance this offering.

Cultural tourism embraces the full range of experiences visitors can undertake to learn what makes a destination distinctive – its lifestyle, its heritage, its arts, its people – and the business of providing and interpreting that culture to visitors.

The findings for Kells were as follows

1. Lifestyle - Residential

Perception	Not happening
Gaps	Employment and Disused Buildings
Opportunities	Showcase for Monastic Ireland

2. Heritage - High crosses and association with Book of Kells

Perception	Very strong heritage legacy but unused opportunities.
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Gaps	Showcase of Monastic settlement to include town tour, with actors and trained guides.
Opportunities	Remould the town around the monastic settlement and showcase this similar to Bunratty but with greater authenticity.

3. Arts - Exist on an amateur level – no professional showcase for artists in Kells

Perception	Not visible
Gaps	Link the arts with the inspiration for the Book of Kells – its reputation and name is a sufficient link.
Opportunities	Employ actors to support town Monastic theme park – to be applied for via Boyne Valley funding as "interpreting tourism" and "marketing funds".

4. Interpretation of culture to visitors – Well signed and multi lingual interpretation offered

Perception	Wall plaques and self guided leaflets exist but are not actively promoted.
Gaps	The information within the guides needs to be brought to life by trained actors and monks who walk among the people of Kells.
Opportunities	Bring the history of Kells to life via daily street theatre.

It is further noted that the audit states that the exploration of vacant buildings should be investigated in relation to community short term leases, which would allow them to be used by approved arts / music / craft groups. This would also have the added benefit of keeping historic buildings used and active as well as supporting a new lease of life for Kells in the current challenging economic conditions which prevail.

FEACH – Furthering Enterprise, Arts, Culture & Heritage is a Meath County Council initiative intended to assist artists and those involved in the creative industries enhance their professional skills and ability to deliver in today's highly competitive marketplace. It is also intended to highlight the importance of the creative industries in terms of economic development and employment opportunities across a wide range of sectors. The creative industries encompasses a very wide range of activities and disciplines including the fine arts, craft, the audio visual sector (film and broadcasting) as well as computer gaming and the recording industries.

It is considered that arising from the findings of the audit, that the area closest to the Monastic Settlement could be developed as a cultural quarter – a cluster of creative and cultural industries. This would achieve other urban regeneration objectives close to the main visitor attraction of the town and also in tandem with the development of other initiatives such as the "Town of Books" and the "Artisan Food Centre".

3.2.6 Infrastructural Audit

Brady Shipman Martin was appointed by Fáilte Ireland to undertake an assessment of the standard of infrastructural facilities available at selected destination sites on the Boyne Valley Drive. Kells (Monastic Site) was classed as a Category 3⁶ site. These were classed as sites that provide some services, usually on a community level standard, that facilitates access to the artefact or point of interest. The Hill of Slane, Slane Castle, Tara and Loughcrew Cairns are also in this category. The Tower of Lloyd is

⁶ A category 1 site provides a full range of activities to a high standard and have the capacity to cope with significant visitor numbers, have well managed prime tourist centres, open throughout the year and of a national / international standard – Brú na Bóinne and Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centres. Category 2 provide essential facilities and are of a good regional standard but may operate on a seasonal or unstructured basis and may not have the capacity or full range of facilities of prime tourist sites – Millmount Museum, Old Mellifont Abbey, Newgrange, Knowth, Loughcrew Gardens and Trim Castle.

classified as a Category 4 site, namely those which provide very little or no facilities, and where presentation and maintenance standards can vary considerably.

No major constraints were identified for the Monastic Site in Kells although the poor sightlines at the entrance and below standard presentation of paths, car park and site details were noted for the Tower of Lloyd.

The specific findings arising from the study are as follows;

Kells

Site Approach

- Advance signage to Kells is good however signage to Monastic site is poor.

Access & Parking

- No designated visitor / tourist parking – pay & display.
- Reserved coach space outside southern gate.
- No cycle facilities in the town.

Facilities

- Access to graveyard, crosses and tower from town – generally good but disabled access is restricted and excludes gallery museum space.
- Poor pedestrian facilities at main entrance.
- The site does not have public lighting.
- Small converted gallery in Church is seasonal whilst grounds are open all year around.
- No public toilets, seating, litter bins, picnic areas, etc.

Characteristics & Features

- Monastic ruins set in an attractive rural town.
- Includes spectacular round tower, several examples of High Crosses and an attractive graveyard.
- No tourist facilities on site.

- Entrance to site does not co-ordinate with access route.

Recommendations

- Pedestrian priority area outside the main gates (Market Street / Church Street) – increase car driver awareness.
- Entrance off Cannon Street needs to be open at all times for coach parking.
- Review management regime which could co-ordinate opening of this gate with normal visiting hours.
- Improve access through churchyard (uneven surfaces and changes in level and materials) by introduction of small ramps within graveyard to overcome small but restrictive level changes.
- Access to the church (step at entrance) does not give access to the museum which is on the first floor gallery.
- Consider providing seating at accessible points within the graveyard.
- Provide litter bins.
- Consider feature illumination of Kells Round Tower.

Hill of Lloyd

Site Approach

- Advance signage to Kells is good but poor to the Tower of Lloyd.
- Entrance is undefined and safety is poor due to the restricted sightlines at the entrance.

Access & Parking

- Access for coaches is by arrangement only and requires a key to overhead barrier from Kells Tourist Office but not advertised at site.
- Car parking is undefined and caters for 25 no. cars, no coach or bicycle parking provided for.
- No dedicated disabled car parking provided.

Facilities

- No visitor centre and tower access is on Bank Holidays and Christmas Day or by arrangement only with local archaeological society.

- No public toilets.
- Picnic Facilities provided but their quality is poor.
- Paths – surfaces poor and not accessible to all.
- The site does not have public lighting.

Characteristics & Features

- Remarkable “lighthouse” folly set on elevated ground incorporating a ring fort and paupers graveyard.
- Great view over adjacent landscape.
- Short walk around park.

Recommendation

- Enhanced presentation of entrance could ‘signal’ the entrance to visitors in conjunction with the provision of improved sightlines.
- Demarcation of roadway outside of main entrance area to improve driver awareness and improve pedestrian safety.
- Single lane access with passing bays which are frequently blocked by people using allotments. Consider separate car parking area for allotment users.
- Presentation and management of car park needs to be improved – barriers prevent coaches, camper vans, cars with roof boxes, etc. from gaining entry. Revise car parking layout and presentation to include removal of barrier by providing access to all, dedicated disabled parking and bicycle parking spaces, proper consistent boundary treatment, surfacing and definition of spaces.
- Improve the pathways; relocate seating along them and to revise the tree planting to a layout that is more appropriate to the setting of the tower and one that provides shelter.
- Consider making access to the tower generally available to visitors.
- Presentation at the top of the hill between the tower and the pauper’s graveyard is very poor.
- Provide toilet facilities.
- Improve picnic facilities including provision for disabled access.
- Provide litter bins.

- Playground, whilst a welcome facility, has minimal seating, bins and shelter. Pathways are rough and access to the facilities from them is across grass in almost all cases.

3.2.7 Tourism Route Interpretation Plan for the Boyne Valley Drive

CHL Consulting in association with FW Design were commissioned by Fáilte Ireland to prepare an interpretative plan for the Boyne Valley Drive. The promotion of this touring route forms part of Fáilte Ireland's destination development strategy for the Boyne Valley area. The Boyne Valley Drive is a networked route which extends from Drogheda in the east to Oldcastle at its western extremity. The drive includes a number of settlements, the most prominent being Drogheda, Navan, Kells, Slane & Trim. The Drive will connect with the heritage trails in these towns, to encourage the visitors to explore them and spend time in them. There are 26 stopping points along the Drive with Kells Monastic Site and Tower of Lloyd both identified.

The goal of the project is to devise content and delivery methods that will enable visitors to develop an authentic sense of place and to enjoy a memorable experience / set of experiences. The focus is on engaging with visitors of all types, on entertaining and educating them to enrich their visit, and on encouraging them to return and to spread a positive message to others. The brief of the consultants included the preparation of an overarching interpretative plan for the identified sites and attractions along the Drive, preparation of detailed specifications for the interpretative solutions recommended for each of the identified locations, the preparation of a broad interpretative framework for 4 identified towns (which included Kells), conduct a detailed examination of each site and a consideration of how existing interpretation might be enhanced.



Although slightly confusing, they have applied a hierarchy which differs from that used in the Infrastructural Audit by Brady Shipman Martin. Category 1a are important sites with extensive visitor facilities (Brú na Bóinne and Battle of the Boyne sites) whilst Category 1b are important sites with extensive visitor facilities in the immediate environs but requiring further improvement (Trim Castle, Millmount Museum & Martello Tower). Kells Monastic Site is included as a Category 2 site which is defined as sites that are important and at which there is potential to enhance the visitor experience significantly. Tower of Lloyd is included as a Category 3 site which are defined as being of lesser importance, or which are important but at which little intervention is possible or required (for reasons of access, visibility, etc.).

The audit undertaken noted that whilst there are information panels in place at Kells Round Tower and High Crosses, they are poorly located and ranked the interpretation rating of this site as poor. The recommendations include the removal of the existing Meath Tourism panels, the provision of new interpretative panel (detailed text provided) accompanied by stories of the site referring to the Book of Kells, Colmcille and monasticism in Ireland and to link the site to Monasterboice and Donaghmore Round Tower. The attraction should be an important part of the town trail which should start at the Visitor Centre as the planned new exhibition would make this the ideal stopping point for visitors to Kells and the large Market Cross is also located there. The audit noted the absence of visitor facilities other than litter bins, no information on overall visitor numbers and that disabled access was provided for.

With regard to the Tower of Lloyd, the audit noted that whilst there is a site marker in the car park and interpretative panels at the Tower, the interpretation rating of this site was considered poor. The recommendations include the removal of the existing panels and the provision of new interpretative panels at the Tower (detailed text provided) accompanied by stories of the site to include details of the paupers graveyard. The audit noted that the existing visitor facilities consisted of a car park (accessible to cars only), litter bins, picnic area, playground and viewing area but disabled access to the overall site is limited. The inability for visitors to gain access to the Tower itself is seen as a major disappointment.

The Interpretation Strategy involves a combination of print media (detailed guide and map), digital (website, audio guide, Boyne Valley Drive App and Sat Nav) and proposed on-site installations which comprise a suite of interpretive furniture which will be uniquely designed for the Boyne Valley route and uses a combination of materials, specifically stone, stainless steel, bronze and glass.

The components of the suite of interpretive furniture and their distribution on the route (as relevant to the 2 Kells sites) are:

Site-marker: a distinctive, branded marker to be located at the car-park or entrance to each site on the route; the marker will include the site name, a schematic map showing site location and next site in each direction with travel distance and time. They are proposed at the Heritage Centre (former Courthouse) and at the entrance to the monastic site and in the car park of the Tower of Lloyd.

Interpretation Point: a panel containing written and illustrative interpretive content. They are proposed at the Heritage Centre (former Courthouse) and at the entrance to the monastic site the Tower replacing the existing panels at both locations respectively.

[illegible]

3.2.8 Interpretative Plan for Boyne Valley Orientation Points at Kells & Drogheda.

The interpretative plan currently being undertaken by Scroope Design on behalf of Fáilte Ireland and Boyne Valley outlines a creative directive for two visitor orientation points at Kells & Drogheda on the Boyne Valley Touring Route. The final report will describe the presentation at both sites, provide budgets for taking the proposal to a final design and construction, the rationale for these budgets and the programme and skills required.

There are two aims for the interpretation at both Kells and Drogheda. Firstly, to inform visitors of the range and breadth of things to see and do along the Boyne Valley Touring Route. Secondly, to promote specifically and separately Kells & Drogheda and their immediate surround sites. The target visitor to both sites is 20,000 per annum and access to both sites shall be free of charge. The presentation shall be housed on the ground floor of the former Courthouse building.

The Kells "our Town" is made up of 5 elements:

- A new 10 minute long film production "Welcome to the Splendour of Ireland" – Pangur Bán (associated with Book of Kells and character in the animation The 'Secret of Kells') will present the story of the sites and history of Kells up to the present day. The existing model of the town would be displayed with a dedicated panel describing the original wall boundary and early maps.
- Book of Kells – facsimile would be displayed in an existing showcase with a touch screen interactive mounted in front.
- The Kells Crozier – Replica would be displayed in an existing showcase with a dedicated panel.

- "Reading the Crosses" – exhibit comprising 4 information graphics displayed with sections of the designs cut from the existing replicas in the former Courthouse.
- Pangur Ban information pack – take away branded information pack containing leaflets on the various sites.

3.3 Tourist Infrastructure

Managing the provision of tourist accommodation is essential to ensuring the delivery of a sustainable tourism strategy. The provision of new tourist facilities should respect the outstanding quality and variety of the natural and built environment in Kells and should not damage the resource or prejudice its future tourist value in any way. The provision of such accommodation can contribute to the economic performance of Kells. The important role that the town and the appearance / experience of the town plays as a tourist centre and the facilities and services they can provide are duly recognized.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council recognise that in a sensitive landscape such as Kells, where development must be carefully managed, there may be a need, exceptionally, for a 'one-off' unique facility to meet a particular tourist need. Such unique proposals will be considered on their merits taking into account need, location, siting, the need for an Appropriate Assessment and an assessment of potential environmental impacts. In assessing such proposals regard will be had to the Landscape Character Assessment for the County as it pertains to Kells.

3.3.1 Town Enhancement

Kells Town Council has continually sought to improve the overall appearance of the heritage town with the work completed in Headfort Place an exemplar of best practice within an Architectural Conservation Area. This is the primary entrance to the town from Dublin for most

tourists and visitors and the first impression created is most impressive. Other initiatives such as Pride of Place, Tidy Towns and through policies contained within the previous Development Plan allied to effective development management and enforcement enhance the appearance of the town for all to enjoy.

3.3.2 Hotels & Accommodation

It is an objective of Fáilte Ireland to increase overnight stays in Meath and the wider Boyne Valley. The Meath Tourism Strategic Review 2011-2013 states that Meath has satisfied its need for quality hotels and recommends that the county should now actively promote this accommodation. It is generally accepted that a high quality hotel stock with many new rooms have been developed in the last number of years. In addition, the County has a range of other options ranging from high quality B & B's and Guesthouses to more budget conscious options including hostels.

The Headfort Arms Hotel offers 45 bedrooms, spa facilities and corporate conferencing facilities which can cater for up to 500 delegates. There would appear to be a shortfall of approved B & B's and guesthouses in Kells.

3.3.3 Caravan and Camping Sites

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council recognise that the provision of sites for caravans, motor homes and camping is an important element in the overall accommodation provision of all holiday makers satisfying all price ranges and for a variety of lifestyles. However, caravan sites can be visually obtrusive features in the landscape detracting from its scenic quality and amenity and for this reason Meath County Council & Kells Town Council will ensure that the design, operation and impact of such tourist and visitor accommodation does not unreasonably affect the amenity of the surrounding sensitive landscape.

3.3.4 Artisan Food Centre

The provision of an Artisan Food Centre in Kells is aimed at addressing the need of the growing Artisan Food Sector by providing them with a location in which to base, market and showcase their food production. It is envisaged that the centre would host food and ingredient testing, time share small production units and present a prime location to sell goods. The centre could also act as a visitor centre for potential customers from the catering, wholesale, retailing and specialist consumer market. A feasibility study is currently being carried out to identify the actual needs of the sector, how such a centre can address those needs and the financial viability / sustainability of such a venture. The feasibility study will also seek to identify a preferred location having regard to functional and operational considerations. It is contested that the provision of an Artisan Food Centre presents an ideal opportunity to reuse a vacant building of considerable architectural importance close to the monastic settlement of Kells. This would provide an additional niche tourism attraction complementary to the historic and cultural tourism asset of the town.

3.3.5 Tourist Signage

Improvements to the roads infrastructure over the past decade have made Meath more accessible. However, if unmanaged, it also offers the opportunity for tourists to pass through Meath even quicker with the threat that Meath could become a '*corridor county*'. The County must continue to be vigorously marketed and promoted as a quality tourist destination. This can be achieved in association with the NRA through the provision of service signs, heritage signage and attraction signage. Once off the primary routes, the signage must continue to be clear, concise, uniform and easily followed. This should not necessarily mean more signs in rural areas as it is considered that a proliferation of signage detracts from the rural character.

The "*Louth Meath – Tourism Development Study*" (2010) recommends a number of actions to be carried out with regard to signage within the Boyne Valley.

- 1) Develop and implement a common look and feel to the interpretation at all sites around the Boyne Valley. This will require investment in an audit of sites requiring interpretation and signage to determine gaps, the development of common interpretative story, and the need for signage and display panels
- 2) Re-signing of the 120km Boyne Valley Driving route. This requires an audit of the requirements for signage of the Boyne Valley driving route and investing in signage and determining gaps on the route in terms of stop off points for visitors and addressing these.

Fáilte Ireland provided funding to allow the commissioning of consultants to undertake these actions and their work is nearing completion.

3.3.6 Tourism Strategy

The Tourism Strategy for Kells, which supports the Boyne Valley Drive, is primarily based on the further enhancement of the heritage and cultural tourism assets of the town. Given the direct and indirect benefits of tourism for the town, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will encourage the development of the tourism and retail sectors in Kells to further enhance the experience for those who visit the town. The tourism industry relies on the quality and attractiveness of the built and natural heritage and the objectives of this development plan are underpinned by the concept of sustainable tourism. This product provides a high quality product, based on, and in harmony with, a high quality built and natural environment while at the same time maximizing the economic benefits accruing to the town. In general however, it should be noted, that the demands of tourists and shoppers are broadly similar in that both require

easy and safe pedestrian access, a diverse and concentrated core area and a well presented and attractive environment.

A number of specific actions arise:

- To implement the recommendations of the Boyne Valley Drive Infrastructure Study, Tourism Route Interpretation Plan for the Boyne Valley Drive and Interpretative Plan for Boyne Valley Orientation Points as they apply to Kells. These recommendations have been outlined already in this section of the plan.
- The monastic site with the impressive round tower and high crosses is being marketed as the primary destination with the Tower of Lloyd as the secondary destination at a slight remove from the town. However it is the town itself which presents the overall tourism product. There is only one opportunity to create a first impression and presently the Navan road entrance to the town, following the significant work on Headfort Place public realm and landscaped institutional buildings / Headfort Golf Club achieves the desired effect. However, the experience deteriorates after this impressive entrance to the town. The Town Council should undertake an agreed programme of further public realm enhancement to continue to improve the appearance of the town.
- Re-establish the former Courthouse as the Heritage Centre and orientation / destination point for tourism in Kells. It is likely that the Market Cross will remain in its current location unless a suitable indoor display area protecting the cross from the elements can be developed similar to that in Clonmacnoise. Consideration should be given to move the cross indoors within the Heritage Centre and to erect a replica at Cross Street. This will require assistance in the form of funding from Fáilte Ireland.

- Traffic management within the town is a significant disincentive to encourage tourists to this highly accessible Heritage Town. The town is dominated by car movements and excessive on street parking to the detriment of pedestrian and cyclist movements. The town has been affected by years of relentless traffic before the opening of the M3 Motorway and N52 bypass. Kells has benefitted more from the M3 Motorway than any other town in taking 2 national routes from the town centre. This is developed further in the Local Transport Plan which accompanies this Development Plan. The need for effective traffic management which must include rededication of road space to other users and traffic calming is integral to the overall tourism strategy.
- A strategy needs to be developed to tackle the considerable extent of vacancy and creeping dereliction in the historic town core. This is critical to the success of the tourism product. Consideration of community short term leases, which would allow them to be used by approved arts / music / craft groups and “pop up shops”, should form part of this strategy. A vibrant town is an attraction in its own right and the development of an active and vibrant town centre encourages visitors and shoppers to linger in an area and thus boost retail spend.
- Create a cultural quarter – a cluster of creative and cultural industries with galleries, craft shops, potteries, goldsmiths and jewellery designers, artisan foods, restaurants, cafes, etc. - in the Market Street, Church Hill, Church Street, New Market Street and Canon Street. This is the area where tourists will travel to on their way to the monastic site from the Heritage Centre and the streets immediately adjoining same where they will spill over after visiting the monastic site. The development of other initiatives such as the “Town of Books” and the “Artisan Food Centre” would further enhance the tourism appeal of this area as a destination in its own right. This area needs to be significantly traffic calmed so that tourists and other visitors can ramble in a safe manner through the historic town centre away from the busy streets of Headfort Place, John Street, Farrell Street and Bective Street.
- The Town Council land bank at Lloyd requires an overall development strategy. This would seek to implement the recommendations contained in the Boyne Valley Drive Infrastructure Study & Tourism Route Interpretation Plan for the Boyne Valley Drive but also look at wider development potential of the site from a combined tourism and amenity perspective. It is recommended that this strategy be undertaken by the joint authorities within 2 years of the adoption of this Development Plan, subject to funding. It is proposed to zone the publicly owned land bank at Lloyd for open space / tourism use accordingly.
- Further expand the range of accommodation offer in the town – hotel rooms, approved guesthouses & B&Bs and the development a caravan and camping / motor home site.

Tourism Policies

TOUR POL 1

To support the development of Kells as a significant tourism centre in the county, a gateway to the Boyne Valley and a bridge between Dublin and the North West regions.

TOUR POL 2

To improve the visitor experience to the town and to co-operate with all stakeholders and appropriate agencies in promoting tourism and securing tourist based enterprises and facilities in the town.

TOUR POL 3

To develop the sustainable tourism potential of Kells through targeted initiatives remedying the identified infrastructure and interpretation deficiencies.

TOUR POL4

To protect and conserve those natural, built and cultural heritage features that form the principal assets of the town's tourism asset and in particular, to protect the medieval area of the town from inappropriate or visually intrusive development.

TOUR POL 5

To ensure that new tourism facilities, including accommodation and other facilities, are provided where they can best support the provision of services and the general economic vitality of the town.

TOUR POL 6

To co-operate with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Meath Tourism, Louth County Council, Boyne Valley and any other relevant bodies in the implementation of the Boyne Valley Destination Development Strategy.

TOUR POL 7

To ensure that the provision of dwellings, which form part of an integrated tourist development, will not be occupied as permanent places of residence.

TOUR POL 8

To facilitate the development of high-quality tourist accommodation such as hotels, hostels, B&Bs / Guesthouses, etc. at suitable locations, subject to ensuring a high standard of architecture, the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations.

TOUR POL 9

To consider the provision of caravan, camping and motor home sites at suitable locations. In all instances, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will seek to ensure a high standard of layout, design and amenity in such proposals whilst safeguarding the landscape character in sensitive areas.

TOUR POL 10

Any land development proposed as a result of Tourism policies, particularly in relation to development at Lloyd or adjacent to the River Blackwater, will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

Tourism Objectives

TOUR OBJ 1

To implement the recommendations of the Boyne Valley Drive Infrastructure Study, the Tourism Route Interpretation Plan for the Boyne Valley Drive and the Interpretative Plan for Boyne Valley Orientation Points as they apply to the town of Kells and its environs.

TOUR OBJ 2

To facilitate the creation of a cultural quarter – a cluster of creative and cultural industries with galleries, craft shops, potteries, goldsmiths and jewellery designers, artisan foods, restaurants, cafes, etc. - in the Market Street, Church Hill, Church Street, New Market Street and Canon Street. Flexibility of land use zoning considerations shall apply whereby proposals can demonstrate consistency with this policy and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

TOUR OBJ 3

To implement an agreed programme of public realm enhancement during the life of the Development Plan to continue to improve the appearance and presentation of the town. This shall also include the removal or screening of unsightly elements at historically sensitive locations within the town centre such as inappropriate advertising, poles, telecoms, power boxes and wirescapes. Such improvements should respect the unique heritage of Kells and promote this where practicable.

TOUR OBJ 4

To implement the Traffic Management Plan for Kells and in particular introduce significant traffic calming and pedestrian / cyclist priority measures in the medieval and cultural quarter of the town.

TOUR OBJ 5

To prepare and implement a strategy to address the considerable extent of vacancy and creeping dereliction in the historic town core.

TOUR OBJ 6

To prepare and implement an overall tourism and amenity development strategy for the Town Council land bank at Lloyd which would, inter alia, implement the recommendations contained in the Boyne Valley Drive Infrastructure Study & Tourism Route Interpretation Plan for the Boyne Valley Drive. The preparation of the development strategy shall be completed within 2 years of the adoption of this Development Plan,

subject to funding. In addition, future development proposals will be subject to a Traffic & Transport Assessment (TTA), where appropriate, in relation to the potential impact of any specific development on the national road network in the area.

TOUR OBJ 7

To create a design brief for shop fronts and streetscapes that would offer a suggested complementary palette of colours, designs, signage and lettering for property owners.

TOUR OBJ 8

To identify a high quality and appropriate design and style of civic furniture that will consistently be adhered to befitting the Heritage Town status of the Kells.

TOUR OBJ 9

To develop and enhance the roundabouts and entrances to the town as effective gateways into a Heritage Town.

3.4 Prevention of Major Accidents

The Seveso II Directive, 96/82/EC (and extended under Directive 2003/105/EC) relates to the prevention of major accidents that involve dangerous substances and the limitation of their consequences for humans and the environment. It applies to establishments where dangerous substances are provided, used, handled or stored. The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations S.I. No. 74 of 2006 transposes this Directive into Irish Law. The National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety has been designated as the central competent authority for enforcement of these regulations.

The Directive aims to prevent major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and chemicals and the limitation of their consequences for

both people and the environment. These objectives must be pursued through the control of the following;

- The siting of new establishments
- Modifications to existing establishments, and;
- Development in the vicinity of an establishment which, by virtue of its type or siting, is likely to increase the risk or consequence of a major accident.

Article 12 of the Directive (2003/105/EC) provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place to ensure that before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of relevant establishments. The Health and Safety Authority (or the National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety, NAOSH) provides such advice where appropriate in respect of planning applications within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites. The distance varies depending on the nature of the activity at the site. Such technical advice will be taken into account in the consideration of applications for such planning permission.

At present there are no identified SEVESO sites within close proximity of the Kells Town & Environs Development Plan area. However, in the event that such SEVESO type development intends to locate within the plan area, the following policies shall apply:

Prevention of Major Accidents Policies

PMA POL 1

To comply with the Seveso II Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents.

PMA POL2

To permit new Seveso development only in low risk locations within acceptable distances from vulnerable residential, retail and commercial development.

PMA POL 3

To have regard to the advice of the Health & Safety Authority when proposals for new SEVESO sites are being considered or modifications to existing SEVESO sites are being considered.

PMA POL 4

Attach to any grant of permission for new warehouse or similar industrial buildings, a condition to exclude use/storage of SEVESO substances (or require a separate permission for it).



Chapter 4

Town Centre

4 Town Centre

Key Aims for the Town Centre in Kells

1. To strengthen and protect the role of the town centre as the primary retail area and centre of the local community.
2. To address the significant retail expenditure leakage from the town by providing the means to strengthen the range and quality of its retail offer in line with its status as a Level 3 Retail Centre serving a large rural hinterland.
3. To facilitate the orderly expansion of the town centre commercial core into the Backlands and / or Frontlands.
4. To enhance the physical appearance and attractiveness of the town centre over the period of this development plan.

4.1 Introduction

Kells, along with Ashbourne, Laytown/Bettystown, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Trim and Enfield are currently identified as Level 3 Sub-County Town Centres in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008 – 2016 and in the County Development Plan 2013-2019. In addition, Kells is identified as a Secondary Economic Growth Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022 and its strong links with Navan are noted.

4.2 SCOT Analysis

Strengths

- Attractive historic and heritage town enriched by buildings and structures from the Monastic, Anglo-Norman and Georgian periods.
- Significant potential as a tourist destination.
- Heritage is a significant attraction in Kells with the monastic enclosure proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Extent of through traffic has been alleviated by completion of the M3 motorway which bypasses the town inclusive of the N52 bypass of the town.
- Car parking provision in the town generally appears to be sufficient to meet demand.
- Kells has a large number of Protected Structures and archaeological sites which together will constrain the potential for development of particular areas close to the town centre. There are two Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) designated in the town.
- Parts of the town, and particularly Headfort Place, are notable for recent urban enhancement works which increase the attractiveness of the town and present an attractive entrance to the town.



Photo 1 Farrell Street

Challenges

- Retail offer of Kells is limited to a number of small independent traders with a limited range of convenience and comparison goods. As a retail destination, Kells' retail offer is weak.



Photo 2 John Street

- The town centre generally lacks vibrancy and has a low footfall. As a Sub-County Town Centre, it should have a greater and better convenience offer. The only major convenience offer is Super Valu and Aldi, both located in an edge of centre location near the junction of the R147 and N52.
- It is also apparent that the town lacks a full range of supporting facilities, such as cafes, restaurants and gift shops.

Opportunities

- Kells is designated as a Level 3 Sub County Town, and together with its tourism attraction, this represents an opportunity for Kells to grow in retail terms to meet its function.
- There are a number of vacant / derelict town centre properties which could be utilised for new retail development.
- Farrell Street has the potential to be a particularly attractive shopping street. The width of the street offers the potential for additional public spaces to be included. The street is currently utilised on both sides for on-street car parking. The removal of some of this parking and the introduction of soft landscaping, high-quality street furniture, traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossing facilities would significantly improve the appearance of the street.
- The completion of the M3 and N52 bypass of the town has reduced the level of through traffic in the town, thus creating the potential for a higher quality retail location and pedestrian environment.
- There are two designated Architectural Conservation Areas in Kells (the Historic Core ACA and the Headfort Place ACA). Consideration will be given to the introduction of a Special Planning Control Scheme on key streets which would provide greater control over signage and land uses. This could help enhance the retail experience within the town centre.

Threats

- Due to the absence of an appropriate range and level of retail offer, Kells fails to retain expenditure and leakage to competing

centres such as Navan, Oldcastle, Ardee, and Blanchardstown is a threat to the retailing sector in Kells.



Photo 3 Vacant properties at prominent junction of John Street / Castle Street

- The historic nature of the town centre means that it is difficult to accommodate large floorplates, which may be a deterrent to large convenience and comparison retailers locating in the town centre.
- The completion of the M3 improves accessibility to the town but also allows residents of the Kells to travel to competing centres such as Blanchardstown in less time.

4.2.1 Definition of Core Retail Area

Kells has a historical background and its street pattern and layout is determined by an old monastic enclosure and more recently as an 18th century planned town. The town centre is fairly compact and can be broadly defined as the area focused on Farrell Street, Cross Street, Market Street, New Market Street, Castle Street, John Street and Bective Square.

The core retail area of Kells extends across a number of streets, and although the town centre can be considered to be compact, the core retail area is quite dispersed. For a centre of Kell's size this dispersion could create difficulties in attracting new retailers and creating a more vibrant retail core. In this context it is considered appropriate to differentiate between primary and secondary retail streets as follows:

- Primary Retail Area- Farrell Street and Cross Street
- Secondary Retail Area- Suffolk Street, New Market Street, Market Street, Castle Street and John Street

The differentiation between primary and secondary streets is beneficial in terms of distinguishing between town centre and edge of centre sites. It will also allow Kells Town Council to concentrate investment in public realm improvements in the primary retail area in the short term. The designation of Farrell Street and Cross Street as the primary retail area has regard to the existing retail profile of these streets, which currently contain the higher order retail uses and the likely future development of the "Backlands" site. Traffic calming or pedestrianisation of Cross Street would also further enhance the retail environment of the town centre.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will promote higher order convenience and comparison uses in the primary retail area. However, due to the requirement of modern retailers it is likely that these retail formats will be more easily accommodated in the areas identified for town centre expansion.

The secondary retail area is considered more suitable for middle and lower order uses and non-retail service uses, in particular those which would complement the considerable tourism potential of the town. The Core Strategy also includes an objective to provide a cultural quarter in the Market Street, Church Hill, Church Street, New Market Street and Cannon Street area (see Figure 3). This could be a significant attraction for the town centre and would be complementary to the primary retail area.

Having regard to the above, a key focus of the retail strategy for Kells will be to encourage and facilitate the diversification of the retail profile of the town centre. This can be achieved by identifying areas, as suggested above, for targeted investment in order to provide for a greater range of retail and service uses in the town centre. Retail development should be directed into the Core Retail Area and to the 'Backlands' and 'Frontlands' sites in order to:

- Ensure a vital and viable town centre;
- Encourage regeneration of areas with scope for improvement;
- Increase the environmental attractiveness of the centre, and;
- Achieve the quantum and quality of retail formats necessary to minimise convenience and comparison outflow of expenditure.

It is envisaged that as Kells develops over the life time of the retail strategy, that the retail offer of the primary retail area will improve, that cultural and tourism related uses will develop in the secondary streets in the area identified as a cultural quarter and that the core retail area will expand into the 'Backlands' and / or the 'Frontlands' site.

4.2.2 Attractions

Kells is a significant tourist attraction owing primarily to its heritage status. There are a number of heritage attractions in the town centre and on the outskirts of the town which makes Kells a destination in itself. These attractions have been outlined in considerable detail in the preceding chapter.

However, Kells is not currently recognised as a shopping destination and will not attract visitors from outside its immediate catchment area for this purpose without significant enhancements of the quality of the retail offer, associated range of complementary uses such as cafes and restaurants, the ease with which to travel within the town centre as a pedestrian and the general appearance of the public realm within the town.



Photo 4 Entrance to St. Columba's Church off Market Street Accessibility

4.2.3 Accessibility

Kells has excellent accessibility by private car, being served by the N3 / M3 network, which connect with Dublin to the south-east and Cavan to the north. This national road network also serves the towns of Navan, Dunshaughlin, Virginia and Cavan.

Kells is also accessible by bus, with Bus Éireann operating a number of services through Kells, most notably the service between Dublin and Cavan, with services operating every half hour, with a travel time to Dublin of approximately one hour and twenty minutes. This service also serves Navan and Dunshaughlin.

Figure 3: Kells Town Core Retail Area

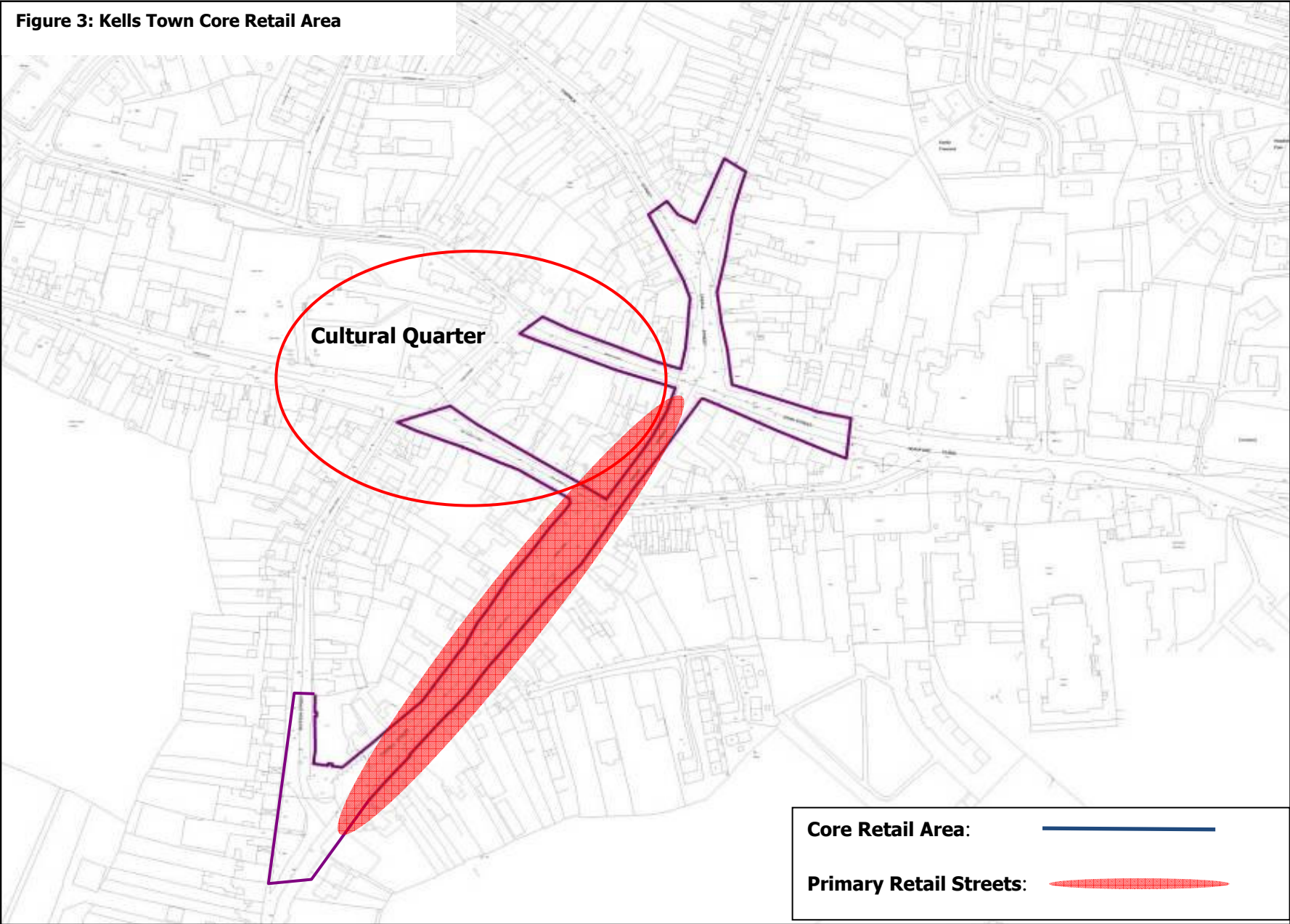




Photo 5 Round Tower and High Cross

Kells has a relatively good pedestrian network in the town centre, assisted by the attractive historical layout. Footpaths are of a relatively good standard albeit with some exceptions. However, there is generally a lack of pedestrian crossing facilities throughout the town centre and there remains a dominance afforded to the car and other motorised vehicles over the pedestrian.

4.2.4 Environmental Quality/Amenity

The town centre generally has a traditional appearance. Whilst the appearance of the town centre is assisted by a number of historic

buildings, such as St. Columba's Church and grounds, including the Round Tower, the appearance of the town is not helped by a number of vacant and derelict properties scattered throughout the town centre.

In terms of its heritage function, the town is generally well provided for in terms of directional sign-posting, tourist information boards and the Kells Heritage Trail plaques. This has been dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 3 Economic Development.

4.2.5 Diversity of Uses

Retail provision in the town centre is dominated by independent retailers. There is generally a good range of independent retailers, offering a full range of services. The main centre of activity is Farrell Street which displays a good mix of uses including ladies and men's fashion boutiques, children's fashion boutiques, a grocery store, a butcher, a florist, a pharmacy, a number of newsagents, barbers, a health and beauty outlet, and a number of public houses, restaurants and take-aways.

New Market Street, connecting with Farrell Street at its southern end, is also an attractive town centre street providing a number of services such as a charity shop, an international convenience food outlet, a health and beauty store, a handmade soap shop, a gift shop, a footwear shop, a dry cleaners and a coffee. Other town centre core streets include Market Street, Cross Street, John Street and Castle Street and these provide additional retail and retail service outlets such as an art studio, a ladies fashion boutique, opticians, bookmakers (all on John Street), gift shop, motor factors (Castle Street), butchers, electrical appliances outlet, estate agent (Market Street), a drapery shop and a pharmacy (Cross Street). The town centre also contains a number of financial institutions, a library and a Credit Union, as well as a number of restaurants.



Photo 6 Attractive Street Furniture and Landscaping, Headfort Place, Kells

The town centre has a very limited range of convenience shopping facilities. There are a number of newsagents, butchers and grocers in the town centre, together with a number of small convenience stores, for example an independent convenience store on Headfort Place, a Centra convenience outlet to the west end of Farrell Street and an independent convenience store on the corner of Cross Street and New Market Square. With the exception of Super Valu and Aldi located in an edge of town location at the junction of the N3 and N52, there is poor provision of convenience shopping facilities in the town. The Supervalu store is circa. 1,400 sq. m. net floorspace and anchors a small Shopping Centre which also includes 4 no. additional

retail units, including a pharmacy, a hair studio, and a butchers shop.

Furthermore, whilst there are a number of independent comparison outlets, the town generally lacks an appropriate range of such facilities which would increase the attractiveness of the town and reduce leakage to surrounding centres. The presence of the Headfort Arms Hotel on Headfort Place is also an important attraction for the town.

It is also notable that there remain a number of residential properties, in many instances occupying ground floor units, in the town core and on the periphery of the town core.

The main area of commercial / industrial activity is centred on Kells Business Park at Lloyd, located approximately 1 kilometre from the town centre. The business park accommodates a range of business / commercial / industrial premises.

4.2.6 Multiple Representation

The town generally lacks multiple representation. In terms of convenience provision, both Super Valu and Aldi are present to the north of the town. There are no comparison multiples present in the town.

4.2.7 Rates of Vacancy

The vacancy rate in Kells is estimated at 11.5%⁷. Vacancy is generally concentrated around the western end of Farrell Street and also on Castle Street and Market Street in particular.

⁷ Ground floor units within defined town centre core area only

Figure 4 overleaf shows the locations of vacancy in Kells.

There are a number of former commercial properties now vacant in prominent locations

4.2.8 Significant Changes to the Retail Environment Since 2003

The only significant changes identified in the retail environment in Kells since 2003 has been the redevelopment of Kells Shopping Centre, anchored by Supervalu, and the adjacent Aldi development. The Aldi store has a gross floor area in the region of 1,125 sq. m net floorspace.



Photo 7 Recent town centre development, Bective Square

Development in the town centre has generally remained stagnant. The only notable development in or close to the town centre since 2003 has been development on Suffolk Street (Kells Town Reg. Ref: KT/30022) comprising the construction of a three storey building to include 2 no. ground floor retail units with residential above. The ground floor units are now occupied by Centra and a carpet outlet. These provide for circa. 200 sq. m. of retail floorspace each. The health check has not identified any other significant developments in the retail environment in Kells since 2003.

The Retail Planning Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2008) indicates that 1,811 sq. m. of net convenience floorspace and 3,450 sq. m. of net comparison floorspace was present in Kells. These figures do not account for the recent Aldi and Bective Square developments.

The only notable significant pipeline development relates to development granted permission by An Bord Pleanála under reference PL49.234285 in March 2010 (KT/800014) for development of a backland area bounded to the north by established development fronting to Kenlis Place and Headfort Place, to the west by established development fronting to Bective Street and Farrell Street, to the east by playing fields associated with the Secondary School, and to the south by undeveloped zoned lands. The approved development comprises of 199 no. residential units, 3,100 sq. m. gross convenience and 8,853 sq. m. of comparison floorspace, commercial uses, a civic square of 4,100 sq. m. and a total of 951 no. car parking spaces. The permission has a life of ten years and construction has not commenced at the time of preparing this Development Plan.

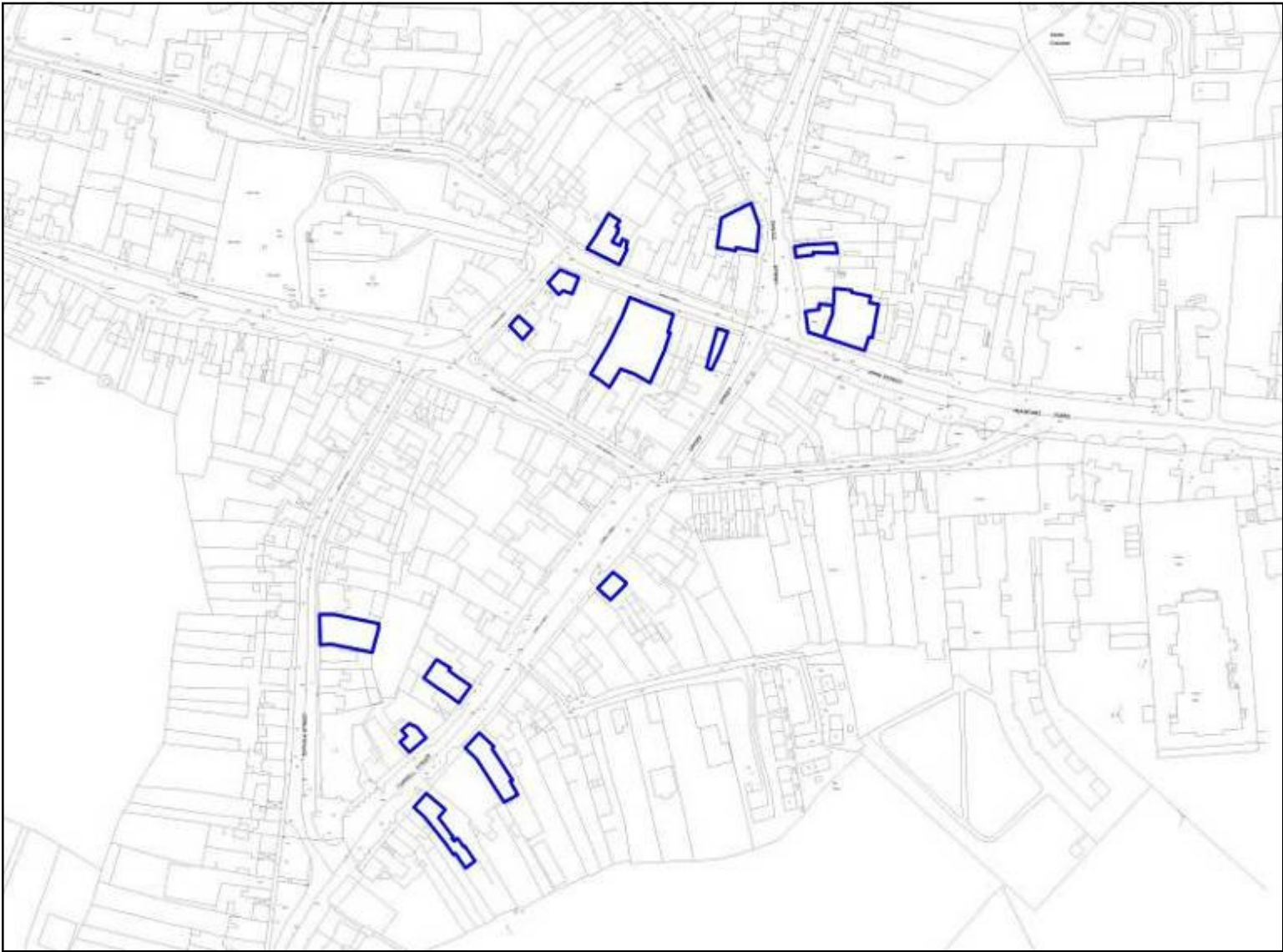


Figure 4: Vacant Commercial Properties in Kells

4.2.9 Retail Opportunity Sites

As can be seen from the vacancy survey outlined above, there are a number of opportunities for retailers to locate in Kells town centre. Furthermore, the implementation of the permission for the development of the "Backlands", to the rear of Bective Street / Farrell Street, would be a significant contribution to the retail sector in Kells. There is also a large backland area to the rear of Suffolk Street and Cannon Street which could be utilised for retail development. These areas were identified as potential expansion areas in the Kells Retail Evaluation Study 2006 that conformed to the Sequential Approach. The development of one or both of these areas would provide the much needed boost in both quantity and quality of floorspace to the town. The sites also provide the ability to integrate the new retail areas with the existing town through vehicle and pedestrian linkages. In this regard, they are key opportunity sites.

Notwithstanding the existence of a number of vacant units in the town centre, there are a number of key town centre opportunity sites which could be investigated for the provision of new retail development. The location of these sites is outlined on the map overleaf and they are described opposite. Town centre opportunity sites are limited due to the historic nature and layout of the town. Therefore, opportunities to locate new retail development in existing vacant buildings in the town centre should be pursued.

The identified Opportunity Sites are identified on Figure 5 overleaf and comprise of the following:

- OS 1** Former 'Millers' Centra supermarket on Market Street.
- OS 2** Former National Irish Bank building and adjoining Fitzsimons Bakery at junction of John Street and Castle Street.
- OS 3** Former cinema on Suffolk Street last used as a carpet warehouse.
- OS 4** Backlands site to the west of Suffolk Street and south of Cannon Street / Climber Hall. This site is known locally as the "*Frontlands*".
- OS 5** Backlands site to the east of Farrell Street and south of Kenlis Place. This site is known locally as the "Backlands". There is an extant planning permission on the lands pursuant to planning register ref. no. KT/80014 for a mixed use development including approximately 15,800 sq. m. of retail and commercial uses.

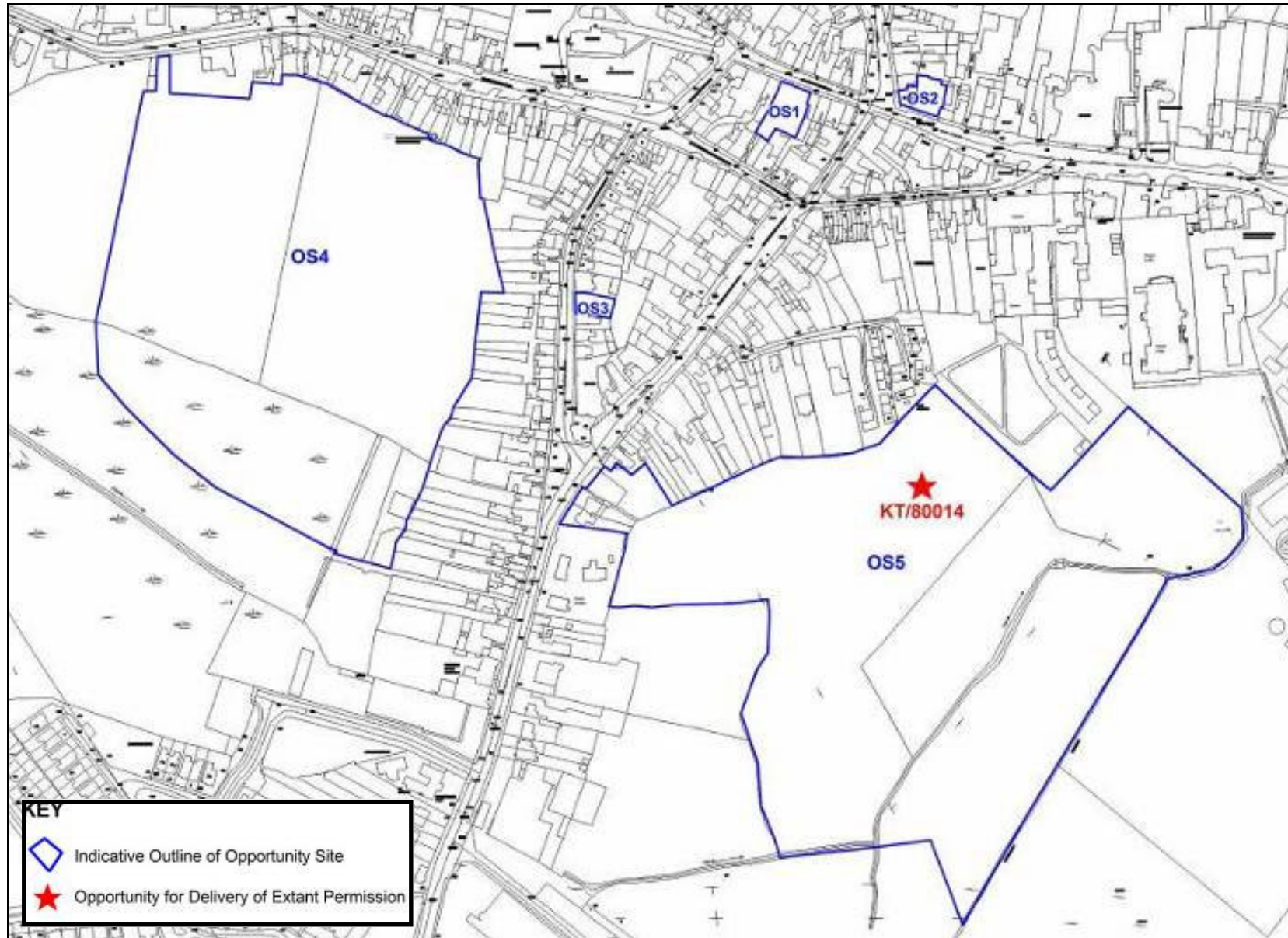


Figure 5 Opportunity Sites in Kells

It is noted that the extent of OS 4 broadly corresponds to the extent of B2 land use zoning objective in the 2007 – 2013 Kells Development Plan whilst for OS 5 corresponds with the extent of the planning application site in the permitted mixed use development scheme by Kells Development Company Ltd. No significance shall be apportioned to the extent of either site depicted in Figure 5. They are merely depicted for graphical purposes. As the determination of land use objectives is an iterative process which considers the recommendations of the Retail Evaluation which include the identified Opportunity Sites, it will also take the recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and suitability of lands for development (topography, deliverability, connectivity, etc.) into account in fine tuning the boundaries of same.

The identified sites are considered to represent potential retail development sites on the basis of the application of the sequential approach to retail planning. The identification of a site as an opportunity site should not be taken as an assumption that the site is acceptable in principle for retail development as any development proposal would also have to satisfy a range of other relevant development management criteria such as access, design, quantitative justification of floorspace proposed, car parking, public transport, etc.

Having regard to its proximity to the primary retail area and the potential benefits the development of these lands will bring in terms of revitalising the town centre of Kells, it is considered that the Backlands site presents the most suitable site for town centre expansion in the short term. However, it is acknowledged that significant constraints exist in bringing this town centre expansion area forward for development having regard to the submission made at pre draft stage reflecting the changed economic circumstances which now prevail and issues pertaining to the accessing of the site. Whilst it is considered that Kells Town Council / Meath County Council have put forward potential solutions in relation to access, it is also important to allow for choice in order to cater for all potential retailers and therefore the identification of the 'Frontlands' site for town centre

expansion is being retained in the Development Plan. The extent of both sites has been reduced considerably having regard to the recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment notwithstanding the recommendations of the Kells Stormwater Study. It is not considered necessary to prioritise the "Backlands" site over the "Frontlands" site from a policy perspective whilst noting that the former has water services capacity secured by virtue of the extant planning permission to the subject lands and that any application for development on the "Frontlands" will have to take the quantum of permitted retail development into account in their Retail Impact Assessment.

Encouragement will also be given to smaller scale retail development on infill sites where it can be established that such development will add to the vitality and viability of the retail core.

4.3 Quantitative Assessment & Floorspace Capacity

The Retail Strategy prepared to inform the 2013 - 2019 County Development Plan review includes an assessment of the likely capacity in quantitative terms for addition retail floorspace across a number of selected urban centres in the county which included Kells. This assessment took into account the revised population projections contained in the new County Development Plan for the period up to 2022.

The figures set out in this section are not intended to be prescriptive thresholds but rather minimum floorspace targets that need to be achieved in order to ensure that the retail function of the town is reinforced and strengthened.

The County Retail Strategy noted that:

- there are significant extant planning permissions in place for town centre schemes including Kells which have not been implemented;
- Kells is one of the centres which are under provided in terms of convenience provision and that further convenience development will be promoted in Kells in order to improve competition, choice and diversity in the retail market;
- Additional demand for comparison retail floorspace will be promoted in Navan and the sub county centres which include Kells.

The indicative potential for additional floorspace (net) for Kells by 2022 has been estimated as follows:

- Convenience 3,300 sq. m.
- Comparison 1,169 - 4,666 sq. m.

These estimations have had regard to the role of Kells within the County Retail hierarchy, its existing and projected populations and trends observed from the household survey and existing retail floorspace provision.

The range indicated for comparison floorspace reflects the 2 scenarios presented in the Kells Retail Review. In both scenarios, the level of retention of convenience expenditure will increase from its existing level of 70% to 80% by 2019. The 1st scenario (low growth scenario) assumes that the existing level of retention and inflows of comparison expenditure to the catchment will remain at 14.2% over the lifetime of the retail strategy and that there will be no improvement in the comparison retail offer of the town up to 2022. The 2nd scenario estimates that the level of retention of comparison expenditure within the catchment area will increase in line with improvements to the retail offer and trade draw of the town. It is assumed that the expenditure retention will increase to 30% by 2019 with an inflow of expenditure between 2019 – 2022 as a

result of the planned enhancement in comparison retail offer and improvements to the tourism role of the town.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council are satisfied on the basis of that adequate lands have been identified within the commercial land use zoning objectives which include the town centre expansion sites to accommodate the convenience and comparison floorspace requirements identified in the County Retail Strategy (2012) and Kells Retail Review (2012).

Applications for bulky goods floorspace within the County will be considered on their merits having regard to the extent of existing retail warehousing in Navan and Ashbourne in particular. It is noted that a Bulky Goods Floorspace of 1,431 sq. m. is identified as being required in Kells by 2022. The Retail Evaluation considered that the bulky goods floorspace can be accommodated on the former "*KS6 lands*" which are identified for retail warehouse use in the 2007 – 2013 Kells Development Plan. However, having regard to the topography of the site and the additional expense in excavating beyond the Aldi discount foodstore, it has been considered necessary to revise the extent of the land use zoning objectives for retail warehouse use at this location as presented in the land use zoning objectives map.

4.3.1 Pipeline Permissions

The figures set out in the preceding section do not include for "pipeline" floorspace – floorspace which is included in extant planning permissions which have not yet commenced or may not commence construction. It is noted that the permitted town centre development in the "Backlands" greatly exceeds the indicative potential floorspace required in the previous section. The permitted scheme comprised of 4,402 sq. m. of convenience floorspace, 5,658 sq. m. of comparison floorspace and 2,064 sq. m. of non retail services (cafes, restaurant, etc.). There is no certainty regarding the delivery of this permitted scheme. The situation should be reviewed and assessed in considering future applications having regard to the

circumstances which prevail at that particular time. A pragmatic approach must be taken and it should be recognised that the implementation of this permission is likely to be on a much reduced scale and altered form from that originally approved, and / or on a phased basis.

4.4 Design Guidance for Town Centre Expansion Sites

The development of either of the areas identified for town centre expansion will require a carefully crafted urban design rationale which successfully integrates their respective site into the tight urban grain of the existing Heritage Town. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council have prepared a Backlands Framework Plan (Appendix E) for the Backlands town centre expansion site which incorporates to a large extent the former guidance contained in the 2005 Backlands Local Area Plan.

The Kells Retail Review considered that given the current economic climate, observed retailing trends and the position of Kells in the regional and county retail hierarchy, it is likely that the only significant retail floorspace to be delivered in Kells in the short to medium term will be supermarkets. It would be appropriate to locate this new convenience floor space in the town centre expansion sites in order to comply with the sequential approach to retail development and to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. It is generally acknowledged that supermarket operators require large floor plates with associated surface car parking. Due to the economic downturn it is no longer realistic to assume that a supermarket development will be delivered as part of a multi-level mixed use scheme, however, ancillary café, retail and retail service units can be expected and will help provide the necessary integration into the existing streetscape. In any case a high quality urban development will be insisted upon.

Any future applications on the 'Backlands' or "Frontlands" site shall be required to show compliance with the 'Retail Design Manual- A Good Practice Guide' published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in May 2012. Such compliance shall

seek to provide a planning framework for future development of the retail sector in a manner which meets the needs of modern shopping formats while contributing to protecting, supporting and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of Kells town centres as places to live, work, shop and visit.

It is recommended that the following design guidance should be followed for any future development of the town centre expansion sites.

4.4.1 Access & Connectivity

Access and connectivity will be key to the delivery of retail floorspace on the town centre expansion lands to ensure that such development enhances the vitality and viability of the existing town centre. The development of these lands shall facilitate and encourage the delivery of appropriate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access routes and connectivity onto the surrounding road network in the interests of permeability and creating strong connections between the town centre expansion area and the established town centre.

The land use zoning objectives map recognises the importance of access and connectivity for both sites and indicates the vehicular and pedestrian accesses from the town centre into both town centre expansion Opportunity Sites. This is elaborated upon for each site separately.

The provision of good connectivity between either town centre expansion sites with the existing town centre will require a proactive approach from Kells Town Council / Meath County Council and may require the compulsory purchase of lands.

4.4.2 "Backlands" Site Access Arrangements & Connectivity

The preferred long term vehicular access arrangement to serve this strategic site remains as previously identified in the 2007 – 2013 Kells Development Plan and 2006 Kells Backlands Local Area Plan. This involves the creation of a new vehicular and pedestrian / cyclist entrance through the roadside petrol filling station and adjoining semi detached dwellings. The removal of the existing roadside petrol filling station and associated buildings (Hethertons) would be considered a positive contribution to the Architectural Conservation Area. This would require a reconfiguration of the existing Farrell Street / Bective Street / Suffolk Street / Bective Square junction including a rearrangement and reduction of the existing surface car parking arrangement adjoining same.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council appreciate that due to changed economic conditions which prevail that this option may take time to realise. A proposed one way system has been identified to provide vehicular access to the "Backlands" site in the short to medium term. The proposed access will be through the 2 no. semi detached dwellings immediately adjoining Hetherton's garage and Presbyterian Church. It is considered that a satisfactory access can be provided including right turn lane into this Opportunity Site. As in the preferred long term solution, this will require a reconfiguration of the adjacent junction and car parking area. Two options are presented for an egress onto Farrell Street with the preferred option between the former FBD building and Smith Foley veterinary practice as this would not necessitate the removal of a building from the streetscape allied to the opportunity to improve the urban setting of both adjacent Protected Structures whose roadside curtilages are dominated by car parking / hard surfacing. The Backlands Framework Plan (Appendix E) presents an illustration of the proposed interim accessing arrangements. The access and egress arrangements shown in the Framework Plan (Appendix E) are indicative only and consideration would also be given to the reverse arrangement, namely the accessing of the site

from the locations shown on Bective Street and providing the egress onto Bective Square through the existing semi detached cottages located between the Presbyterian Church complex and Hetherton's garage.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council and any prospective developer shall proactively seek to deliver new pedestrian access points from Farrell Street, Bective Street, Kenlis Place and Headfort Place to the "Backlands" area. Providing good pedestrian connectivity between the 'Backlands' and Farrell Street, which is a primary retail street, and also Bective Street and Kenlis Place, will be key to ensuring that the development of the 'Backlands' for retail uses enhances the vitality and viability of the town centre. This shall be a requirement of any proposal for the 'Backlands' site.

4.4.3 "Frontlands" Site Access Arrangements & Connectivity

Vehicular access will be provided by the existing Local Distributor Road which formerly served the McKeon car showrooms and accesses the Westfield residential development. The required Framework Plan shall satisfy Kells Town Council / Meath County Council regarding the need to upgrade the existing junction with Bective Street and the delivery of the Local Distributor Road onto Climber Hall on a phased basis. It is considered that the continuation of the tight urban grain presented by the former car showroom would be the preferred design solution of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council whilst acknowledging the specific operational requirements of convenience retail outlets. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council would support alternative car parking being provided to serve the former car showroom noting that planning permission has been recently granted to change of use of this building into office use for the HSE NE. An opportunity exists to enhance the entrance to the proposed town centre expansion site by the redevelopment of the car parking area to the rear of the former car showroom building and demolition of the functional single storey structure located therein.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council and any prospective developer shall proactively seek to deliver new pedestrian access points from Bective

Street and Bective Square to the "Frontlands" area. It is the considered opinion of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council that 2 possible opportunities exist in the form of archways to foster linkages with the town centre expansion area.

4.4.4 Built Heritage & Urban Design

The Backlands Framework Plan indicates that Kells Town Council / Meath County Council shall also have regard to the need to preserve and enhance the alignment of the medieval town wall when facilitating pedestrian access between the town centre and the 'Backlands'. Similar principles should underlie the preparation of the Framework Plan for the 'Frontlands' site prior to planning applications being progressed.

An indicative 10 metre buffer of F1 land use zoning objective (Open Space) is identified between both development sites and the conjectured alignment of the medieval town wall. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council shall have regard to the recommendations of the National Monuments Service in the consideration of development proposals with regard to the appropriateness of this indicative buffer and the manner in which the alignment shall be protected and or preserved. A similar approach will be provided with regard to the management of the archaeological remains (both known and unknown) in the field of the Frontlands site which adjoins the upstanding remnants of the town wall and mural tower. It is not considered that adequate information has been made available at development plan preparation stage to amend the underlying land use zoning objective which is being proposed. It is considered that a specific requirement of the Framework Plan shall be the carrying out of detailed archaeological testing which shall be carried out prior to the lodging of any planning application with regard to this area of the Frontlands site. The outcome of such testing and the recommendation of the National Monuments Section shall be considered at this time.

It is considered appropriate to provide design guidance for the two identified town centre expansion sites in this Retail Strategy. Significant

urban design guidance was previously provided for the 'Backlands' site in the Kells Backlands Local Area Plan and the relevant guidance has been extracted from same and is included as Appendix E of this Development Plan. Any future development of this area for town centre expansion should have regard to this guidance.

It shall be an objective to prepare a Framework Plan for the 'Frontlands' site prior to any planning application proceeding. The preparation of the Framework Plan for the "Frontlands" shall be consistent with and incorporate the design guidance for the future development of these lands presented in this section of the Development Plan.

4.4.5 Urban Form

The built form, scale and mass of development proposed on the town centre expansion sites should contribute to a high standard of urban design and quality in the built environment. The prospective applicants shall demonstrate, in an urban design statement, how the urban form of the proposed development has regard to the character and context of Kells and enhances the built environment. The built form should have regard to the historic streetscape, narrow building plots and Georgian character of Kells. Streets with active ground floor uses should be provided on the new pedestrian and vehicular links to the historic town centre.

The Retail Design Manual provides guidance for supermarket developments and states that *'in 'big box' situations, negative streetscape impacts can be avoided by wrapping the large floorplates with complementary streetfront units such as hairdressers, cafes, bookshops, and suchlike. This also has commercial advantages; the smaller traders feed off their adjacency to the anchor stores that, in turn, benefit from the streetscape activity that the specialist shops generate.'* Thus, even if it is no longer viable to provide a broad mix of uses on the subject sites, the possibility for providing varied streetscape with active ground floor uses shall be insisted upon.

Surface parking, and servicing, should ideally be located to the rear of supermarkets so as not to impact on the quality of the streetscape, and attractively landscaped with planting and lighting adding to the quality and character of the development. The incorporation of supermarket retailing into the town centre must be achieved in a manner that is sensitive to its social and physical context, and unique sense of place of this historic town centre.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will also encourage the appropriate redevelopment of underutilised sites to the rear of Farrell Street and Kenlis Place which adjoin the 'Backlands' site.

The development of either of the town centre expansion sites shall adhere to the following requirements:

- To respect skyline views of Kells town centre and in particular the Columban monastery / round tower within new development layouts;
- To incorporate existing ecological and natural features such as the existing Newrath stream in new development layouts;
- To utilise potential linkages between the existing town and the town centre expansion areas;
- Demonstrate an awareness of the town's historical features as the development of the identified town centre expansion sites provides an opportunity to highlight the archaeological and architectural heritage of Kells. Such awareness will promote a sense of unique place, unique identity and connectivity between the town's historic past and future progression.

4.4.6 Design Quality

A high level of design quality can make an important contribution to the future health of a town centre and therefore shall be insisted upon in the future development of the town centre expansion sites. The Retail Design Manual acknowledges that *'achieving a high quality of architecture and*

urban design in new retail development can be a key ingredient in delivering sustainable development in urban places'.

High standards of design which are cognisant of and complementary to the heritage status of the town shall be promoted. Well-designed elevations, shop fronts, signage and active ground floor uses will be required to ensure that the development contributes to the vitality and viability of Kells town centre. An urban design statement should be prepared at an early stage to indicate how the design of the proposed scheme has regard to the character and evolution of Kells and its status as a Heritage Town.

4.4.7 Public Realm

The development of the town centre expansion sites for retail and other mixed uses will present the opportunity to provide well-designed and well-used open spaces which contribute to the quality of the public realm in Kells town centre. A high quality appropriately sized civic space shall be incorporated in the development of these sites. The design of the new access points will be of particular importance in terms of ensuring safe and attractive linkages from the town centre to the town centre expansion areas are provided.

It may be appropriate to provide temporary public spaces on underutilised areas of the site, in the short term, which can be developed for retail or other uses in the longer term when the market becomes more favourable.

The Retail Design Manual advises that successful urban spaces have regard for adjacent building lines and heights and contribute to the continuity and enclosure of the streetscape in their locations.

Surface and boundary treatments should be of a high quality, avoiding left over spaces and the exposure of the unsightly backs of adjacent development. This is particularly important in the identified town centre

expansion areas both of which have a common boundary with the line of the medieval town wall.

Furthermore, both sites identified for town centre expansion have an interface with lands identified as being subject to flood risk. There may be scope to incorporate these areas of the site as an important natural asset and deliver a landscaped open space, thereby protecting its ecological value and delivering a new open space for the town centre.

4.4.8 Phasing

A phasing plan shall be submitted by the prospective applicants for the respective town centre expansion sites which ensure that the delivery of retail development in this location accords with the sequential approach and provides the necessary infrastructure, including vehicular and pedestrian access, to ensure the vitality and viability of Kells town centre is enhanced. This should provide details of phasing for different parcels of land in this location, the proposed uses and the infrastructure required to deliver each phase of development on the subject lands.

4.4.9 Environmental Responsibility

The proposed development shall also reflect good practice in environmental responsibility. This should include the use of passive design principles to reduce the energy load from non-renewable resources. The development should utilise renewable energy technologies to reduce carbon emissions and lower fuel consumption. The proposed development should incorporate measures to enhance the biodiversity of the receiving environment. Any future development on the subject lands should incorporate the principles and practice of sustainable construction in its materials and technologies.

Town Centre Policies

TOWN CENTRE POL 1

To create a vibrant and commercially successful retail sector for the town of Kells and its hinterland.

TOWN CENTRE POL 2

To encourage the development of the retail and service role of Kells as a self sustaining Moderate Sustainable Growth Town in accordance with the policies contained in the County Development Plan, the County Retail Strategy and the Greater Dublin Area Retail Planning Guidelines 2011.

TOWN CENTRE POL 3

To protect and enhance the vitality of Kells town centre and to promote the orderly expansion of the town centre in a manner which provides permeability between the existing town centre and designated expansion areas.

TOWN CENTRE POL 4

To facilitate the development of lands to the east of Farrell street / Bective Street / Kenlis Place, known locally as the "Backlands", as the preferred area for retail led mixed use expansion of the town centre in accordance with the design guidance set out in Section 4.2 of this plan and the Backlands Framework Plan contained in Appendix E. Any proposed scheme shall provide a mix of uses within the overall agreed phasing programme and an overall design and layout that provide strong connectivity / linkages to the historic town centre. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will consider retail and other commercial development as part of Phase I with other uses being included in subsequent phases. All subsequent applications for development shall be accompanied with a design statement demonstrating compliance with the design guidance contained in this Development Plan.

TOWN CENTRE POL 5

To facilitate the development of lands to the west of Bective Street / Bective Square / Suffolk Street as an alternative area for retail led mixed use expansion of the town centre subject to the preparation of a Framework Plan and adherence to the design guidance set out in Section 4.2 of this plan. Any proposed scheme shall provide a mix of uses within the overall agreed phasing programme and an overall design and layout that provide strong connectivity / linkages to the historic town centre. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will consider retail and other commercial development as part of Phase I with other uses being included in subsequent phases. No application for development within the subject lands will be considered in the absence of the required Framework Plan having first being agreed in writing with Kells Town Council / Meath County Council. When prepared, all subsequent applications for development shall be accompanied with a design statement demonstrating compliance with the Framework Plan.

TOWN CENTRE POL 6

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will consider the substitution of flood risk / plain to adjoining lands with the written consent of the relevant land owner to facilitate the creation of more regular shaped development sites. In such instances where accompanied by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and subject to the written agreement of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council at pre planning consultation stage, the incorporation of additional lands in such circumstances within the town centre expansion areas within development proposals shall not be considered to constitute a material contravention of this Development Plan. There shall be no net increase in development site area arising from such compensation measures.

TOWN CENTRE POL 7

To facilitate the appropriate expansion of the lands adjoining the Aldi Discount Foodstore on the Cavan Road for the provision of retail warehousing / car showrooms / service areas generally in accordance with

the agreed Framework Plan for the extent of lands now zoned (Appendix F refers). In addition, future development proposals will be subject to a Traffic & Transport Assessment (TTA), where appropriate, in relation to the potential impact of any specific development on the national road network in the area.

TOWN CENTRE POL 8

To encourage and work with landowners, retailers and developers to realise the considerable potential of existing vacant premises in the town centre core area and identified "*Opportunity Sites*" in the town centre and edge of centre locations for retail and other town centre uses.

TOWN CENTRE POL 9

To ensure that no more than 50% of comparison retail development permitted over the life of the Development Plan occurs outside of the existing town centre included within the designated retail core area (in order to ensure that the existing levels of vacancy in the commercial core will reduce and not be further exacerbated).

TOWN CENTRE POL 10

New retail and commercial development shall be integrated with the traditional retail areas of the town and should be sympathetic to the heritage and character of Kells.

TOWN CENTRE POL 11

To promote and facilitate the provision of additional cafés, bars, restaurants and gift / tourist shops in the town centre, particularly in the proposed Cultural Quarter (See TOUR OBJ 2) in order to attract tourists to the town centre and provide a link with the retail provision in the town.

TOWN CENTRE POL 12

To encourage and facilitate the development of a combined and unique heritage, retailing and tourism experience within Kells that enhances the economic profile of Kells Heritage Town.

TOWN CENTRE POL 13

To encourage and facilitate the development of independent / individual speciality or niche retail outlets in the town centre that will create a strong and unique sense of character and shopping experience for visitors.

TOWN CENTRE POL 14

To assess all planning applications for large retail developments in accordance with the criteria set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and the Retail Planning Guidelines (2012).

TOWN CENTRE POL 15

To encourage the further diversification in the retail offer in Kells and ensuring that the assessment of planning applications allows flexibility to allow for the expansion or creation of larger floorplate retail units to accommodate the demands of retailers within the defined retail core area whilst respecting the built heritage and form of the town.

TOWN CENTRE POL 16

To require the creation of high quality retail and commercial units with attention to the public realm in order to enhance the visual appearance of Kells.

TOWN CENTRE POL 17

"Living over the shop" or other commercial use in upper floors shall be encouraged in the town centre to enhance its overall vibrancy.

TOWN CENTRE POL 18

Non retail uses at ground floor within the identified Primary Retail Streets of Farrell Street and Cross Street will be discouraged in order to strengthen the shopping function of Kells and to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the primary retail area.

TOWN CENTRE POL 19

Any land development proposed as a result of Town Centre policies and objectives will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

Town Centre Objectives**TOWN CENTRE OBJ 1**

To assist in the delivery of the identified town centre sites which will include the use of all statutory powers bestowed to Kells Town Council / Meath County Council including the use of compulsory acquisition of sites to facilitate access to or the creation of the pedestrian / cyclist connections identified on the land use zoning objectives map.

TOWN CENTRE OBJ 2

To undertake a comprehensive upgrade of Farrell Street and Cross Street over the life of the Development Plan to include the enhancement of the public realm, the provision of public spaces, high quality landscaping and street furniture, reconfiguration of car parking spaces including the discontinuation of angled spaces and other measures which would attract shoppers and visitors to the Primary Shopping Streets of the town.

TOWN CENTRE OBJ 3

To incorporate design guidelines for shop frontages and upper floors of buildings into the Kells Development Plan within 1 year of the plan coming into effect. The design guidelines should include the promotion of a range of high quality styles, materials and finishes which contribute to an aesthetically pleasing streetscape. Careful consideration of signage is required to protect signature buildings along the street and to reduce visual clutter. The retention and upgrade of existing traditional shop fronts and timber sash windows in upper floors should be encouraged.

TOWN CENTRE OBJ 4

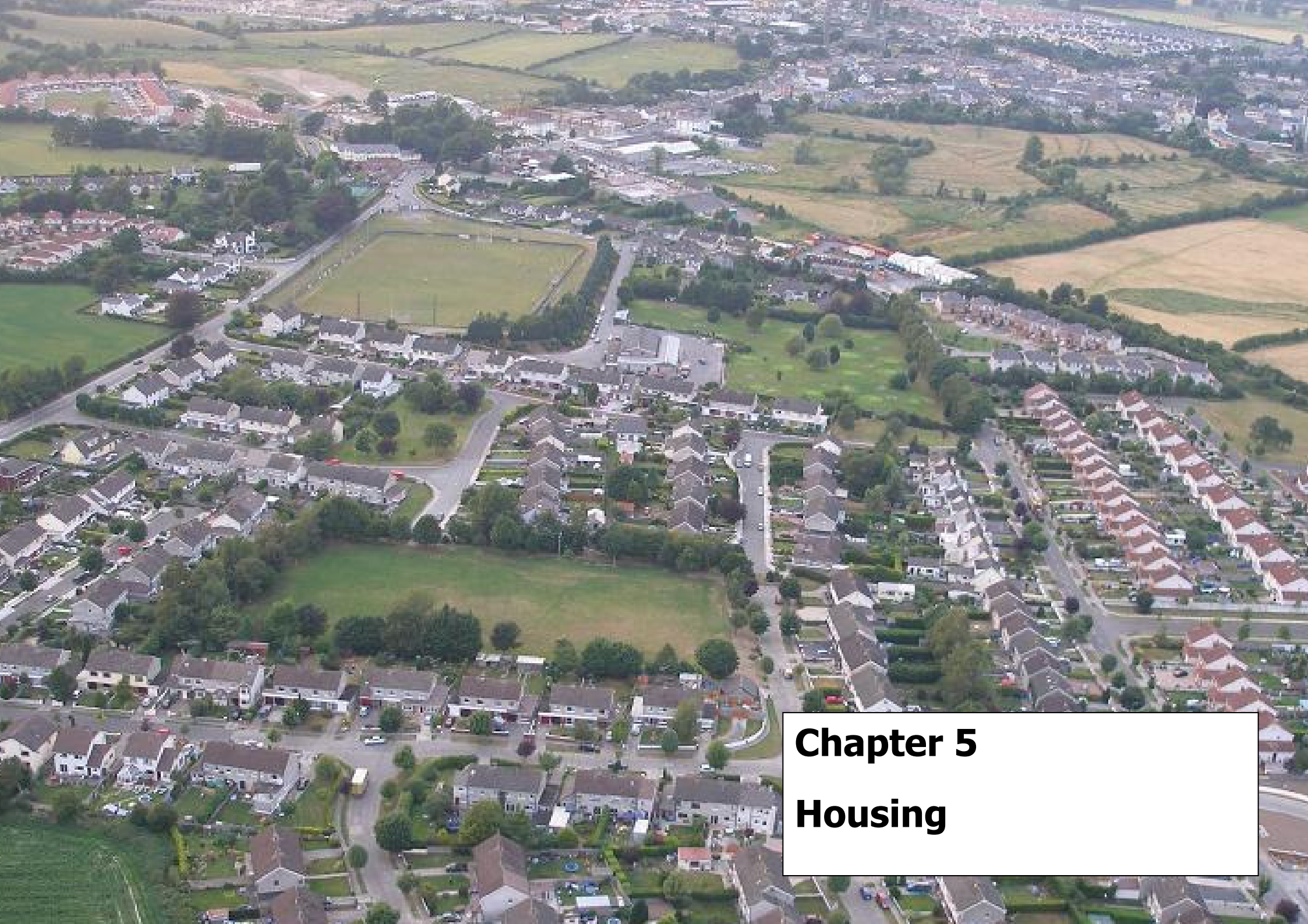
To undertake a feasibility study regarding the development of a town centre management initiative for Kells involving local business owners. This may include the setting up of a town centre management committee or a local 'BID' or Business Improvement District.

TOWN CENTRE OBJ 5

Pedestrian facilities and connections shall be enhanced to encourage greater pedestrian movement within the town's retail core.

TOWN CENTRE OBJ 6

To enhance the pedestrian and cyclist linkages between the existing retail developments (Kells Shopping Centre, anchored by Supervalu and Aldi) at an edge of centre location to the north of the town and the town centre.



Chapter 5

Housing

5 Housing

Key Housing Aims for Kells

1. Promote the development of sustainable residential communities to cater for a range of housing needs and tenures and avoiding social segregation.
2. Promote residential uses on upper floors of buildings within the town centre.
3. Promote the consolidation of the existing built up areas by facilitating high quality appropriate infill development.
4. Protect the amenities of existing residential areas and ensure new development has access to appropriate amenity space so as to ensure that these areas are attractive places to live.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the main policy issues relating to the provision of housing along with the development of sustainable communities in Kells Town & Environs in the context of the Councils role as a Housing Authority in addition to a Planning Authority.

5.1.1 Housing Function

i) As Planning Authorities, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council, have a statutory obligation to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the projected housing requirements of Kells Town & Environs over the period of this Plan. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council are also in a position to influence the location, nature and quality of new housing development within their administrative areas and

have a statutory obligation to ensure such development complies with government guidelines.

ii) As Housing Authorities, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council functions include the provision/management of rented Local Authority housing for those unable to provide housing from their own resources; promotion of home ownership through tenant purchase schemes for those who fulfil certain criteria and facilitating approved voluntary or non profit housing organisations in the provision of rented accommodation and facilities within the town.

5.1.2 Kells in Context

The 2011 Census results indicated that there were 2,222 households currently in Kells Town & Environs catering for 5,864 persons. The average household size in Kells during 2011 was therefore calculated to be 2.6 persons per housing unit. This average household figure would be consistent with the county and regional (RPG) averages.

As of summer 2012, there are 337 no. persons on the Local Authority Housing Waiting list where Kells town is listed as their first preference. 18 no. applicants have been housed under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S) within Kells.

5.1.3 Strategy

The approach to housing development in this plan is guided by National Guidance in general, the provisions of the Housing Strategy and the overall Core Strategy for the development of Kells which envisages moderate sustainable growth within the town and environs by 2019.

The main aims of this Plan in relation to housing are:

- Promote the development of sustainable communities by ensuring new development includes a mix of house types to cater for a range of housing needs and tenures and to facilitate the creation of balanced communities.
- Promote residential uses on upper floors of buildings within the town centre.
- Promote balanced tenure developments to avoid concentrations of rental housing and counteract social segregation.
- Promote the consolidation of the existing built up areas by facilitating high quality appropriate infill development.
- Protect the amenities of existing residential areas so as to ensure that these areas remain attractive places to live.
- Ensure that both new and existing housing enjoy access to appropriate amenity space especially where higher densities are proposed and also enjoy good connectivity to the town centre and transport services through pedestrian or cycle facilities in particular.

5.1.4 Future Population Growth and Availability of Land

As detailed in the Core Strategy for Kells outlined in Chapter 2 of this Plan, population growth in the town for the period 2013 – 2019 is estimated at 1,802 persons, giving a target population of approximately 7,690 persons by 2019. In turn it is estimated that this will give rise to a target household requirement of 518 units for the period of the Development Plan (2013-2019), in addition to the 332 no. of units provided through extant planning permissions.

5.1.5 Supply of Residential Land

In terms of future housing provision, a number of sites are available that should be capable of delivering a significant portion of the target 518 housing units over the lifetime of this plan either as residential development or as part of a mixed use scheme. These are outlined in the Core Strategy and accompanying phasing map.

5.2 Housing Strategy

The Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013, requires each Planning Authority to include the provisions of its Housing Strategy in its Development Plan. A new Housing Strategy for County Meath has been prepared as part of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. The Housing Strategy is guided by the following vision;

"To facilitate and promote a robust and sustainable housing strategy that plans and provides for the housing needs of all citizens, thereby promoting equality, social inclusion and ensuring the delivery of quality outcomes for the resources invested".

The Housing Strategy intends that those who can afford to do so should provide housing for themselves through the range of options available to them, and those unable to do so should have access to social housing/accommodation provided by Meath Local Authorities. There are 5 principal options open to Local Authorities to deal with the demand for, and delivery of, social housing.

1. Provision of Social Housing under Part V of the Planning & Developments Acts 2000 – 2013;
2. Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Leasing Initiatives and Housing Assistance Payment;

3. Provision of Social Housing in partnership with Voluntary Bodies and Housing Co-operatives;
4. Casual Vacancies, and;
5. Purchase of New or Second Hand Dwellings.

5.2.1 Planning Permissions & Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2013

Section 96 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2013 provides that the objectives of the Housing Strategy in relation to social and affordable housing shall be implemented by means of conditions attached to planning permissions for residential development. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will require a 16% quota of social/affordable housing to be provided from each housing development within the town and environs, on lands zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses. This is based on identified social and affordable housing requirements. This requirement will be included as a condition of development, with the exception of an application for development of 4 or less houses, or for housing on land of 0.1 hectare or less as provided for under the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013. Therefore, all residential developments in excess of 4 housing units or any proposed site for residential development in excess of 0.1 hectare is to be subject to the provision of "Social/Affordable" Housing.

5.2.2 Methods of Providing Affordable/Social Housing

The Housing Strategy requires that housing developments can comply with their Part V requirements by the following methods or by a combination thereof at the discretion of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council:

- a. Financial contribution (as provided for under Section 96(3)(b)(vi) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013)
- b. Direct provision of the housing units on completion as determined in accordance with the Strategy, integrated as part of the overall development of a site.
- c. The transfer of a portion of the site or the disposal of a number of fully or partially serviced sites within the subject site to the Council which will enable the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Housing Strategy or the transfer to Kells Town Council / Meath County Council of the ownership of any other land within the functional area of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will, in reaching agreements under Section 96 of the Planning and Developments Acts 2000 - 2013, have due regard to the Housing Strategy and the Development Plan objectives.

It is imperative that the requirements of social and affordable housing are met in a manner which satisfies existing and potential future demand in Kells Town & Environs.

The ratio of social to affordable housing to be provided shall be assessed on a case by case basis, having regard to local housing needs, but at all times the 16% requirement shall be met. In so far as it is known at the time of the agreement, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will indicate to the developer its intentions in relation to the provision of social/affordable housing. This will include a description of the proposed houses, on the land or sites to be transferred, where such lands form part or parts of the lands which are subject to the application for permission as is, or are specified by the agreement as being parts required to be reserved for the provision of housing.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will in making such agreements, have regard to the following:

- The Development Plan, in particular the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy;
- The need to ensure the overall coherence of the development to which the planning application relates;
- The views of the developer in relation to the impact of the agreement on the proposed development;
- The need for social integration, and;
- The needs and obligations of Kells Town Council/Meath County Council in respect of housing.

Meath County Council/Kells Town Council will encourage housing developers to whom the 16% quota applies to discuss the likely terms of the Part V agreement as part of pre-planning consultations. The relevant Planning Authority should thus have a common understanding of the nature of the likely agreement before a decision to grant planning permission is made. Meath County Council/Kells Town Council will endeavour to finalise the agreement within two months at the latest following the grant of permission. All social housing provided under Part V of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 – 2013, in accordance with this strategy shall be allocated to persons on the waiting list for that allocation area in accordance with the Council's Allocation Scheme for the Provision of Social Housing Support. All affordable housing provided under Part V of the Act in accordance with the terms of the Housing Strategy shall be allocated in accordance with the Allocations Scheme for affordable housing as adopted by the Council.

5.2.3 Traveller Accommodation

Meath County Council adopted a Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 in March 2009. Meath County Council plans to operate a comprehensive accommodation programme for travellers involving a range of integrated measures to meet their accommodation needs and includes direct provision of standard local authority housing. The 2011 Census of Population recorded six members of the Travelling Community normally resident in the town. In accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013, the housing needs of the Travelling Community are presently adequately met through the private rented sector. There is no identified need to provide specific traveller accommodation (group housing, permanent, etc.)

5.2.4 Older Persons

The national trend towards an ageing population in Ireland poses strategic challenges for society in general and more specifically for the development of responsive health and social policies. As a key social policy area, the provision of suitable housing for older persons to meet their specific needs, will inform the provision of housing in Kells noting the demographic analysis contained in the Core Strategy.

Older people have a range of housing needs relating to access, medical care, security and personal safety amongst other issues. The location of housing is an important issue for older persons particularly those who live alone and are reliant on public transport and local services. Dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes. There is a move away from traditional nursing home care to a 'semi-supported' or 'assisted living' concept which is considered a preferred option for many older people as it enables them to continue to live relatively independently in their own homes.

For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller or single storey dwelling or apartment unit). Assessment of housing mix needs to consider this in appropriate developments and locations.

Kells Town Council figures for Older Person Accommodation requirements indicate that there are 40 no. applicants currently over 55 years of age and 4 no. applicants over the age of 65. In addition, the sale of the Old Fire Station site on Carrick Street is nearing completion, where planning permission has been previously granted for four housing units earmarked to meet the accommodation needs of older persons.

5.2.5 Special Needs Housing

In considering housing for people with special needs, location is critical, particularly to those with a mobility related disability. The importance of access to public transport, local community services, and facilities is a significant factor for a mobility-impaired person in improving quality of life. In terms of house design, compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations expands options available to people with a disability.

There is currently a low demand in Kells for Local Authority housing for special needs purposes with one applicant having listed Kells town as their first preference.

5.3 Design of Residential Development

The primary aim of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council in relation to residential development is to deliver high quality living environments to serve the needs of residents. Residential schemes should deliver a range of housing units which vary in size, type and tenure, within an overall scheme design to accommodate a broad population profile including single households, couples, and households with children, older people and people with a disability.

Housing developments should generally be designed with the aim of creating walkable neighbourhoods which facilitate as a priority travel for pedestrians and cyclists.

At the level of individual house, the "Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas" outline design considerations regarding the home and its setting, including daylight, sunlight and energy efficiency; privacy and security; car and bicycle parking; private and communal open space; residential density; access for all and communal services. In planning for its own development and in assessing future development proposals through pre-planning consultations and the development management system, the Council will seek to implement the recommendations of the "*Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*" and accompanying Urban Design Manual.

In order to assist in the evaluation of development proposals relative to the various provisions of the Guidelines/Urban Design Manual, Design Statements will be required with applications which include housing. The design statement should be a relatively short document comprising of text and graphics and should be tailored to reflect the complexity and importance of the site in question. As a general guide, design statements should include the following;

- A character appraisal of the local area including any heritage issues;
- Consideration of all relevant development plan policies and objectives (and specifically those in relation to protecting the amenities of the area);
- House types and mix and public realm/safety issues;
- Relevant government guidance - relating them to the site, consideration of the requirements of any design brief prepared for the site, and;

- An explanation of the design approach adopted and why it is appropriate for this site, etc.

Housing Policies

HS POL 1

To encourage and foster the creation of attractive mixed use sustainable communities which contain a variety of housing types and tenures with supporting community facilities, public realm and residential amenities.

HS POL 2

To require a high standard of design in all new residential schemes that are built in a style and scale that is appropriate to the landscape setting.

HS POL 3

To promote residential developments which:

- Support public transport, walking and cycling;
- Provide for well designed neighbourhoods of high architectural quality with dwelling sizes and layouts which provide good quality liveable homes, and;
- Ensure that open space, health and recreation needs are met.

HS POL 4

To recognise the need for people with special needs to enjoy a decent living environment in Kells and to support local communities, health authorities and other agencies involved in the provision of facilities to people with special needs including supporting the voluntary sector in the development of housing.

HS POL 5

To encourage the provision of adequate small, self contained living units within a complex of facilities for persons with special needs to maintain

privacy and independence whilst having the protection of a more sheltered environment.

HS POL 6

To promote social inclusion and take account of the needs for older people and people with disabilities in the design of new residential developments.

HS POL 7

To permit the suitable extension of an existing dwelling to accommodate older persons or people with a disability in the family home, subject to normal planning requirements.

HS POL 8

To ensure that all new housing is designed in a way that is adaptable and flexible to the changing needs of the homeowner, with regard to the Lifetime Homes guidance contained in Section 5.2 of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government '*Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes for Sustaining Communities*, (2007)'.

HS POL 9

To require as part of all new residential and commercial developments, and in existing developments, where appropriate, provision to be made for facilities including local/neighbourhood shops, childcare facilities, schools and recreational facilities and to seek their provision concurrent with development.

HS POL 10

To ensure that new developments are permeable for walking and cycling and that parking or servicing arrangements do not compromise walking or cycling.

HS POL 11

To require that developers comply with Part V of the Planning & Development Acts, 2000 - 2013, through the following options or by a combination thereof at the discretion of Kells Town Council/Meath County Council:

- (a) Financial contributions (as provided for under section 96(3) (vi) of the Planning & Development Act, or;
- (b) Direct provision of the housing units on completion as determined in accordance with the strategy, integrated as part of the overall development of a site.

The transfer of a portion of the site or the disposal of a number of fully or partially serviced sites within the subject site to Kells Town Council / Meath County Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Housing Strategy or the transfer to Kells Town Council / Meath County Council of the ownership of any other land within the functional area of Kells Town Council/Meath County Council.

HS POL 12

To provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of older persons and to encourage the provision of a range of housing options for older persons in central, convenient and easily accessible locations and to integrate such housing with mainstream housing where possible.

HS POL 13

To provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of those with disabilities through the provision and/or adaptation of appropriate accommodation.

HS POL 14

Development proposed as a result of Housing policies will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

Social & Affordable Housing Objectives**HS OBJ 1**

It is an objective, on lands zoned for residential use or lands zoned for a mixture of residential/housing and other uses, to require 16% of all new residential developments, to be reserved for social and affordable housing in accordance with the principles, policies and programmes for action set out in the Housing Strategy. This figure may be modified in line with any revision of the Housing Strategy carried out during the period of this Development Plan.

HS OBJ 2

To provide appropriate accommodation for Travellers through the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 and any subsequent Programme adopted during the life of this Development Plan.



Chapter 6

Community, Recreation and Open Space

6 Community Facilities, Recreation and Open Space

Key Aims for Community Facilities, Recreation and Open Space in Kells

1. Pursue a policy of appropriately locating services with regard to the needs of the town's community.
2. Ensure that new developments meet requirements for the provision of community infrastructure.
3. Implement policies with regard to the provision of childcare, educational and healthcare facilities.
4. Develop a comprehensive Green Infrastructure strategy for Kells which will seek to protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure and to seek to develop additional Green Infrastructure where possible.

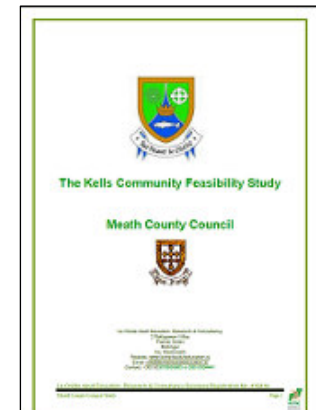
6.1 Social & Community Infrastructure

The proper provision of community infrastructure of a high standard, in the most appropriate locations and in tandem with housing and other development is important for all age groups and sectors of society and is an essential component of building sustainable and properly planned communities. The recently published "*Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*" highlight the need to phase and appropriately locate development in line with the availability of essential social and community infrastructure such as schools, amenities and other facilities. Where appropriate, facilities should also be capable of adapting to changing needs over time. The timely delivery of such facilities to meet the needs of communities is a key priority of this Plan.

Community infrastructure is an all-embracing term that should be taken to include buildings and other facilities, which provide community, educational, social, health, childcare, cultural, religious, recreation and leisure facilities that serve the needs of the public. It includes facilities and services that are publicly provided and those which are privately funded and developed. Community infrastructure also includes more traditional local services such as local shops and post offices, which in addition to a primary commercial function, can help maintain and nurture a sense of community at local level.

6.1.1 Kells Community Feasibility Study

Meath County Council commissioned a Kells Community Feasibility Study in 2009 (prepared by Le Chéile Consultancy) which carried out an independent audit of existing community structures in place for Kells town.



The study had the benefit of a number of public consultation events to establish the various strengths and weaknesses of the local community sector. The study found that there are a variety of facilities in Kells in use by community groups; however it is clear that the groups work singularly and are 'fragmented'. The study also indicated that a number of the community groups are not fully aware of the work being done by other groups in the town and would benefit from being brought together to consolidate their work. The Study concluded the following;

- Kells is the only urban centre in County Meath that does not have a Community Centre.

- A variety of groups & organisations use facilities that are less than satisfactory or adequate. More importantly, there is no facility in Kells capable of holding any sizeable event.
- While there is a healthy volunteering ethos in Kells, nevertheless, community groups and voluntary organisations in the community work independently of one another.
- A strong need was established for the development of a community centre in the town. The community building would act as a focal point of the community where all groups be invited to participate.

Community Facilities – Policies

SOC POL 1

To encourage and support the work of community groups in Kells.

SOC POL 2

To ensure that all developments make adequate provision for community, recreational and amenity facilities that are located where they can best meet the needs of the entire community that the facility is intended to serve and to seek their provision concurrent with development.

Community Facilities – Policies & Objectives

SOC OBJ 1

To ensure that provision is made for such community facilities as Kells Town Council / Meath County Council deem appropriate in consultation with relevant local interested parties and to assist in the provision of community and resource centres by identification and reservation of suitable sites including land banks within Local Authority ownership.

SOC OBJ 2

To utilise Kells Town Council / Meath County Council powers under the Development Contribution Scheme to fund investment in community facilities, which will form a basis for the improvement of existing facilities and the funding of new community facilities.

Childcare Facilities

Government policy seeks to increase the number of places available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community. The provision of childcare facilities, in various forms, is recognised as a key component of social infrastructure, integral to economic and social well-being and Government Policy seeks to increase the number of places available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community.

The provision of childcare facilities should be implemented in a sustainable manner, compatible with land-use and transportation policies contained elsewhere in this plan. The Guidelines for Childcare Facilities identify a range of appropriate locations for the provision of childcare facilities including work places, schools, new communities/larger housing development, community centres, town and neighbourhood centres and adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

Where appropriate, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will encourage the provision of a broad range of childcare facilities (i.e. childminding, sessional service, full day care and after school care). Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will resist the conversion or loss of childcare facilities to other uses unless it is clearly demonstrated, that having regard to the existing geographic distribution of childcare facilities, the emerging demographic profile of the area or other extenuating circumstances prevailing, that this level of childcare provision is not required.

Consultation with the Meath County Childcare Committee identified that in 2012, the following types of childcare facilities are available locally in Kells

- 4 no. full-time childcare facilities;
- 4 no. part-time childcare facilities, and;
- 13 no. sessional childcare facilities.

Overall, there are 277 no. childcare places available within the town (all childcare types), with spare capacity available in a significant number of them.

In accordance with Government Guidelines, one of the more important locations for childcare facilities will be large new housing developments. Here, normally provision should be made for well-located, purpose built childcare facilities in developments of 75 no. dwellings or more in tandem with proposals for residential development. The size and number of the facilities should be determined in relation to local needs and likely future demand from the immediate locality.

Childcare Policies

SOC POL 3

To encourage, promote and facilitate the provision of quality affordable childcare facilities in accordance with national policy and relevant guidelines.

SOC POL 4

To permit childcare facilities in existing residential areas provided that they do not have a significant impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbances. Where proposed facilities relate to properties which have been designed and built as dwellings, and are surrounded by other houses, a significant residential element should be retained.

SOC POL 5

To require the provision of childcare facilities of an appropriate type and scale in suitable locations within Kells. In particular, the development of childcare facilities at the following locations will normally be required and supported:

- Areas of concentrated employment and business parks
- Neighbourhood centres
- Large retail developments and retail warehouse parks
- In schools or major educational facilities
- Adjacent to public transport nodes, and within new and existing residential developments

SOC POL 6

Planning permission for childcare facilities should, where appropriate, include a condition that allows for the flexible expansion of childcare numbers at the facility commensurate to its size.

Childcare Objective

SOC OBJ 3

To monitor and assess in conjunction with the Meath County Childcare Committee, the continuing needs of children and related facilities and review progress on the provision of same, during the period of this development plan.

6.2 Healthcare Facilities

Healthcare and medical facilities are provided by public, private and voluntary agencies within Co. Meath. The Health Service Executive (HSE) – North Eastern Area is the primary body responsible for the management and delivery of health and personal social services. The increased role of the private sector in the provision of health services is also recognised.

Public healthcare facilities currently provided for in Kells by the HSE include the following:

- Kells Health Centre (Headfort Place) includes for general nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy services, etc.
- Kells Mental Health Day Services (Climber Hall, Oldcastle Road) includes for disability and mental health care services.
- The ambulance service for Kells is catered for from the Navan station.

The HSE North East have indicated that although the above are adequate for the short-term needs of the local population, there is an identified medium to longer term need for the development of a new Primary Health Care building within the town. Planning Permission was previously granted for Primary Care Medical Centre to 'PriMed' (consortium) under planning register ref. no. KA900280. No works have however commenced on site to date. Given the evidence based need for such a facility, it will be an objective of this plan to reserve the G1 "*Community Infrastructure*" land use zoning objective at this 0.73 hectare site along the Navan Road which facilitates a primary care medical centre use.

The HSE NE have also indicated that they propose to relocate their current regional administration office from the Kells Business Park to the former car showroom at Bective Street. This would involve the relocation of approximately 180 no. staff to this single town centre site. A planning application has been granted for this change of use.

Through the objectives of this Development Plan, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will seek to facilitate the provision of built facilities to meet the operational requirements of the agencies that provide healthcare services in the town. The trend away from traditional hospital based care towards a strategy that will require an increased number of built facilities in other locations is recognised with particular reference to

Primary Care Facilities. The first choice of location for future health care facilities, including nursing homes, is within or adjoining the town centre where facilities can be integrated within existing communities and can be readily accessed, preferably by public transport, in conjunction with other services.

Healthcare Policies

SOC POL 7

To co-operate with the Health Service Executive and other relevant agencies in the provision of appropriate health care facilities to serve the population of Kells.

SOC POL 8

To encourage the integration of healthcare facilities with new and existing communities and to discourage proposals that would cause unnecessary isolation or other access difficulties, particularly from the disabled, older persons and children. The preferred location for healthcare facilities is within or adjoining the town centre.

SOC POL 9

To encourage, support and facilitate the provision of services for older persons. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council are committed to accommodating the needs of older people by the facilitation of nursing home developments in appropriate locations and on appropriately zoned lands.

SOC POL 10

Any land development proposed as a result of Social policies will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

Healthcare Objectives

SOC OBJ 4

To facilitate the development of a new Primary Health Care Facility on the designated sites (permitted Pri Med development site or lands within HSE NE ownership) along the Navan Road which have been identified with a G1 "*Community Infrastructure*" land use zoning objective. This accords with the designation of Kells as a location for the provision of a primary care centre under the Government's 2012 Stimulus Package.

6.3 Education

Kells has a notable provision in terms of educational facilities with 3 primary schools and 2 secondary schools in the town. The primary schools are St. Colmcille's Boys National School, Our Lady of Mercy Primary School and Kells Parochial National School. The secondary schools are Eureka Secondary School and St. Ciaran's Community School. In addition, the Headfort School is a private boarding & day pupil's school offering both primary & first year of secondary education.

The Eureka Secondary School site on the Navan Road currently accommodates 740 pupils, with a significant rise in student's being experienced year on year. The school have indicated that they are finding it increasingly difficult to accommodate the pupil numbers due to the limited size constraints of the school site. The school have indicated that a new school site is required to satisfactorily accommodate their current & future needs. The Department requested, as outlined in their pre-draft submission, to zone their site on the Cavan Road to facilitate the relocation of the Eureka Secondary School in a new 800 pupil purpose built school.

Having consulted with the Department of Education & Skills, it is considered that there is adequate space within the lands available within existing national school sites to accommodate the projected increase in

national school going population over the plan period. It is estimated that 8 additional classrooms will be required.



Kells does not have any third level provision but has potential to accommodate an out reach type premises.

Education Policies

SOC POL 10

To ensure that adequate lands are zoned and serviced to meet the educational requirements of Kells. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will continue to support the concept of multi campus educational facilities.

SOC POL 11

To support and encourage the development of Gaelscoil facilities in Kells.

SOC POL 12

To continue to work closely with the Department of Education & Skills to identify existing and future educational requirements, identify and reserve suitable sites for educational purposes if required for future school provision in order to ensure that the necessary increased capacity in school provision is provided in a timely manner and as an integral part of the development of an area.

SOC POL 13

In identifying new sites for educational needs, regard shall be had to the *"Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas"* as they relate to education provision and the Joint Code of Practice on Provision of Schools and the Planning System (August 2008).

SOC POL 14

To encourage, support and development opportunities to open up new and existing educational facilities to wider community use, subject to normal proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

Education Objective

SOC OBJ 5

To facilitate the relocation of Eureka Secondary School to a new purpose built site on the Cavan Road or other suitable site identified and acceptable to the Department of Education & Skills such as adjoining the existing educational campus at Jim Brunnock Road.

6.4 Open Space and Recreation

The main areas of public open space & park land areas in Kells include the Fair Green along upper Carrick Street and the People's Park at Lloyd which is now intended to be included as a zoned recreational area of this plan. There is a noticeable deficit of public open space provision in Kells to serve the existing and future population of the town which needs to be addressed in this plan.

From a natural amenity viewpoint, Kells town does benefit from its proximity to the River Blackwater along the northern edge of the town, with opportunities existing to develop an attractive river walkway and trail. Kells Town Council also own 320 acres at the Tower of Lloyd and is one of the most vital recreational assets which the town has access to in order to accommodate passive and some active recreational facilities. However, the general topography of the site allied to it's out of town location and sensitive landscape does not lend itself for development of sports playing pitches. The Backlands Local Area Plan identified the need for a new Town Square/Civic Plaza within the central area of the town along with a network of public open spaces. Phase 1 of the Backlands Scheme was granted planning permission in 2010, however due to the significantly changed economic conditions currently prevailing from when the scheme was designed; it is unlikely that the Phase 1 plan will proceed in its current format.

Other open spaces available for use but in private ownership include the extensive landscaped grounds in the ownership of Headfort Golf Club positioned to the east of the town, the Kells GAA club grounds to the south of the town along the Athboy Road, the Pitch & Putt Club at Gardenrath, the Tennis Club grounds south of Bective Street and the Soccer Club on the Navan Road.

As Kells is intended to develop in a moderate growth fashion over the coming decade, this will place additional burden on the open space hierarchy. In particular, there is an opportunity to create an integrated pedestrian and open space network leading between the town's available & planned future green spaces.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council are committed to the provision of recreation and amenity facilities, including sports and arts/cultural facilities, to serve, so far as possible, the recreational needs of the populations they serve. This may include direct provision of facilities by Kells Town Council / Meath County Council and the facilitation of other providers, whether community groups or sports clubs, in their efforts to provide recreation and amenity projects.

Where development is proposed on lands adjoining a river, the area immediately adjacent to the waterway should be retained as a linear park, walkway and cycleway, which links into the wider open space network (e.g. parks and other open spaces) and be accessible to the general public. The criteria used for selecting the preferred locations should include avoiding disturbance to birds, preservation of natural landscaping features, accessibility and gradient. Suitable pedestrian linkage between open spaces should be identified and where appropriate cycle lanes also be provided.

6.4.1 Rabbit Hill Wood

An opportunity exists as part of this Development Plan to provide an accessible river walk open to the public from the Headfort Road to the

Blackwater River and Mausoleum (associated with Headfort House Demesne) at Rabbit Hill Wood. The development proposal represents a significant community gain to the people of Kells and would provide a ready made access to an established woodland walk along the riverbank. The ceding of this land to Meath County Council is linked to the development of a small number of residential units towards the front part of the Rabbit Hill Wood site (1.88 hectares in extent) adjacent to the Headfort Road. The remainder of the lands representing approximately 2.5 hectares (including the Mausoleum) are zoned for H1 "*High Amenity*" land use zoning objective with the corresponding objective seeking "*To protect and improve areas of high amenity*". The 'Open for Consideration' uses within this area would be cycleways / greenways / trail development & open space. No other uses should be considered as open for consideration having regard to the location of the site within the Natura 2000 site. The overall development proposal shall require a Framework Plan to be agreed with Meath County Council (Core Strategy OBJ 1 refers).

Open Space & Recreation Policies

SOC POL 15

To ensure that high quality open space is provided to serve the active and passive recreational needs of the population of Kells.

SOC POL 16

To support and encourage local sports and community groups in the provision and development of outdoor and indoor community facilities.

SOC POL 17

To maintain free from development lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning permission as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

SOC POL 18

- i) To protect and improve existing recreational facilities and public open space, for which Kells Town Council / Meath County Council have responsibility, and to protect such areas from development or change of use, and to improve linkages between such facilities and new development.
- ii) To have regard to the recommendations contained in the Meath Children's Service Committee "Children and Young People's Plan 2012 – 2015" inclusive of any detailed actions arising therefrom or any replacement strategy adopted during the life of this Development Plan. Physical structures or uses shall be directed to appropriately zoned lands in all instances.

SOC POL 19

To seek opportunities to improve the quality and capacity of existing recreation and amenity facilities, through initiatives with both the public and private sector (sports governing bodies, local community partnerships and private development proposals) and where appropriate, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will use its powers under Section 48 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013 to require development levies to achieve the enhancement of these facilities and the provision of new facilities.

SOC POL 20

To reserve the lands identified with F1 "Open Space" land use zoning objective on the Navan Road in order to facilitate the provision of sports playing fields required to serve the population of Kells and to desist from allowing sporting organisations to relocate such facilities outside of the town development plan envelop.

Open Space & Recreation Policies & Objectives**SOC OBJ 6**

To develop the lands in Kells Town Council's ownership at the Tower of Lloyd for passive and active recreation purposes whilst acknowledging that the topography does not lend itself to be developed for sports playing pitches. This shall also require the investigation and provision (subject to finances permitting) for the extension of the existing wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure along the Oldcastle Road to the People's Park area.

SOC OBJ 7

To develop a walking trail from the Tower of Lloyd via Clavin's Bridge along the Blackwater to Mabes Bridge and to explore the extension of a linear riverside walk from Mabes Bridge to the Headfort Road.

SOC OBJ 8

To develop river corridors as natural amenity corridors, connecting the different parts of the town and linking up with established amenity areas whilst ensuring that the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites are protected.

6.5 Library

The existing library facility to serve Kells town is insufficient to meet the current needs of the existing & projected population. In April 2005, Meath County Council approved 'A Development Plan 2005-2009 for the Library Service' which set out a number of measures to be implemented including a new library for Kells. This facility was to be accommodated in one of the identified town centre expansion areas. No progress has been made so far in realising this objective. Minor works are currently proposed for the existing Kells library on Maudlin Street. Meath Local Authorities intend to a commence a review of the Five Year Development Plan in the near future

coinciding with the review of the National Plan 'Branching Out – Future Directions 2008 – 2012'.

Library Policy

SOC POL 21

To continue to expand and improve the library service in Kells to meet the needs of the community in line with the objectives and priorities of the Library Development Plan for County Meath and subject to the availability of finance.

6.6 Graveyards

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide for burial facilities, although the majority of facilities in Meath are provided by religious bodies. Under the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council can include objectives to reserve land for burial grounds.

There are currently 2 no. graveyards within Kells which adequately meet the current and projected needs of the town.

Graveyard Objective

SOC OBJ 9

To continue to reserve lands adjoining the existing graveyard on the Navan Road to ensure that sufficient lands are available to accommodate necessary expansion.

6.7 Fire Service

Fire fighting and other rescue services is an important public safety service provided by Meath Local Authorities. The Fire Service Station serving Kells is a modern station located along the Oldcastle Road. It will be the policy

of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council to reserve sufficient lands to cater for its future expansion should it be necessary.

Fire Service Objective

SOC OBJ 10

To continue to reserve lands adjoining the existing Fire Station at Climber Hall to ensure that sufficient lands are available to accommodate necessary expansion.

6.8 Arts and Culture

Public art can assist in developing a sense of place and provides an identity and character to a community that is distinctive and unique. Public art has many advantages – increasing environmental quality, enhancing the built environment/public realm, creating a sense of place, nurturing civic pride, promoting tourism and providing additional employment opportunities for artists. Kells being a designated Heritage Town along with its name being synonymous with the 'The Book of Kells' and a tourism product in itself, exhibits significant potential to create an Arts & Craft type micro-industry in the town. It will be the policy of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council to draw on that potential and to work closely with local agencies and community groups in exploring the development potential for such facilities.

Arts & Culture Policies

SOC POL 22

To support the development and provisions of arts and cultural facilities in Kells.

SOC POL 23

To liaise with the County Arts Officer on any development proposal that is likely to have a significant impact on the Arts in Kells.

6.9 Public Rights of Way

The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2013 (Section 10(2) (o)) state that a Development Plan shall include an objective for 'the preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility which public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the development plan and indicating their location on a list appended to the development plan'.

As part of the review process of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019, a public right of way (ARU 1) was identified at the lands at Lloyd under the heading of 'Public Rights of Way to Places of Natural Beauty or Recreational Utility'. The following description is given;

From the north west corner of the Peoples Park at the Tower of Lloyd, Kells across the Commons of Lloyd to Clavins Bridge on Regional Road R147; Along the south bank of the waterworks canal from Clavin's Bridge to the Victorian Waterworks in the Kells Business Park; and from the Victorian Waterworks in the Kells Business Park to and including the Peoples Park at the Tower of Lloyd, Kells.

It will be the objective of the Kells Development Plan to preserve this identified public right of way.

Public Rights of Way Objective

SOC OBJ 11

To preserve and protect for the common good, existing public rights of way which give access to lands at Lloyd and to the Blackwater riverbank as identified in the map contained in Figure 6.

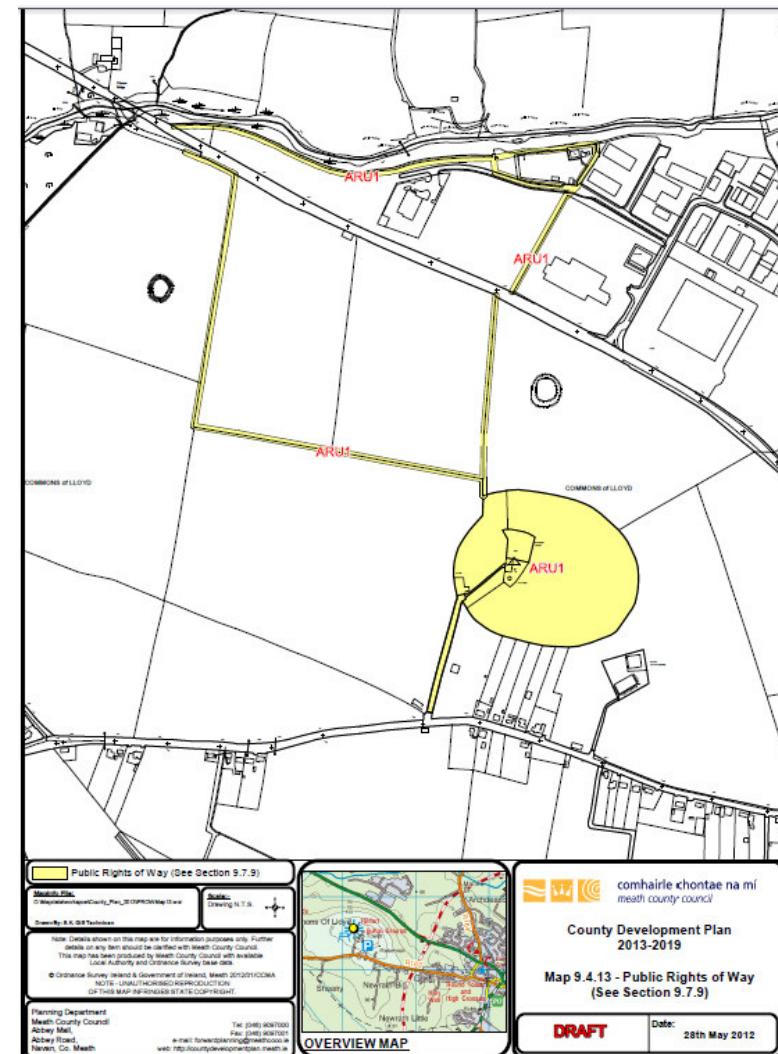


Figure 6 : Public Rights of Way

6.10 Green Infrastructure

'Green Infrastructure' can be defined as '*an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations*'. In a similar way to other aspects of planning, such as housing and industry, green infrastructure needs to be planned to serve its purpose to society and the environment and this can be achieved by developing a green infrastructure plan.

Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. It is the open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside. Green infrastructure provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people. The concept of multifunctional areas of land is a key feature of green infrastructure. Individual spaces may have many functions, such as:

- Providing recreational space for healthy exercise, play and a relatively tranquil environment for outdoor relaxation;
- Providing a place in which wildlife can live and thrive;
- Contributing an attractive green element to the overall image of an area;
- Raising the quality of people's everyday living and working environments;
- Providing flood storage space in times of flood;
- Providing a transport corridor for walkers and cyclists;
- Helping areas to cope with the impacts of climate change;
- Providing areas for local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture, and;
- Increasing environmental awareness particularly for the youth within the community.

It is a policy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019:

"To require that all Land Use Plans protect, manage and provide where possible green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner (GI POL 3)"

In light of the requirements of the County Development Plan, a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Kells Town & Environs has been prepared as part of this Plan.

6.10.1 Green Infrastructure Strategy for Kells

Green Infrastructure is a relatively recent concept in Irish planning, which allows us to examine and plan for the relationship between the network of green spaces, habitats and ecosystems within a defined geographic area. Green Infrastructure has both spatial and operational dimensions. Synergies exist between Green Infrastructure and engineering systems in terms of their contribution to surface water management through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and sustainable transportation through its promotion of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

Green Infrastructure provides an integrated approach to spatial planning by linking land-use, landscape, services, ecology, heritage and transportation. The Green Infrastructure approach assists in meeting statutory obligations under EU Directives and national legislation, such as the Water Frameworks Directive, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Birds and Habitats Directives (particularly under Articles 6 and 10). Green Infrastructure can also be a mechanism for identifying mitigation and compensatory measures required under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Connectivity is also a vital component of Green Infrastructure. Each individual green space should link where at all possible into a larger network that incorporates other public and private green/open spaces

within the defined geographical area. Physical linkages lie at the heart of green infrastructure, but other linkages are also important. Green infrastructure provides multiple social, environmental and economic benefits, which reinforce the character or “genius loci” of a place and underpin the quality of life.

Within the preliminary Green Infrastructure Strategy for County Meath, Kells is identified as a ‘Hub’ settlement with interesting heritage and river corridor features. A local Green Infrastructure Strategy is to be prepared for all key settlements in the county.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Kells Town & Environs will provide:

- The protection and enhancement of the natural and built heritage;
- The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity;
- The provision of accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities;
- The sustainable management of water incorporating SUDS features, and;
- The maintenance of sensitive landscapes.

Kells being a Green Infrastructure ‘Hub’ may be connected to other ‘Hub’ areas by existing and proposed corridors such as river corridors, walking/cycling routes and the disused railway line. These already act as natural biodiversity networks of habitats and spaces.

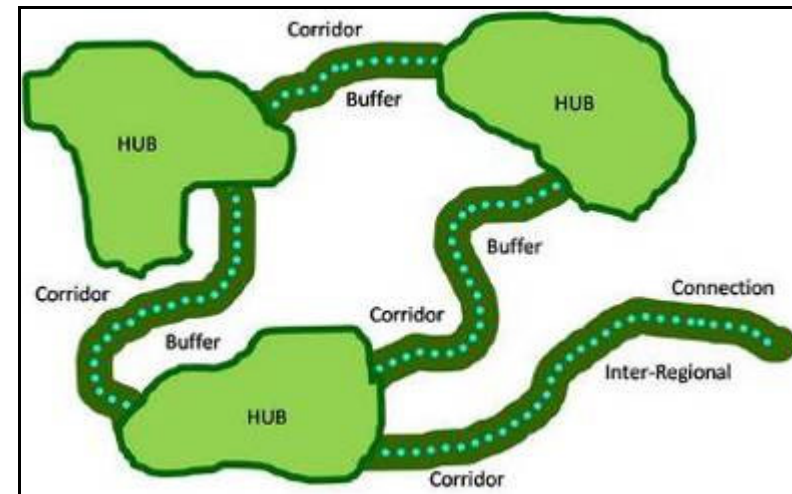


Figure 7 : Green Infrastructure Concept

6.10.2 Analysis of Green Infrastructure in Kells

As part of the preliminary Green Infrastructure Strategy for County Meath, an analysis of existing Green Infrastructure within Kells was carried out. A significant finding from the initial analysis is that Kells has few publicly accessible green spaces currently available. Whilst the River Blackwater flows close to Kells, it does not provide a public amenity. The Blackwater River is presently visible to the public at bridges or within the Headfort golf course (but only to members). The area within the Headfort golf course boundary is very rich in Green Infrastructure assets as it incorporates large expanses of wetlands and woodlands. There is also a public park on the Oldcastle Road surrounding the Tower of Lloyd, known as the ‘Peoples Park’. However, this is located at a remove from the town. A small green space of local biodiversity value surrounds the Round Tower. In common with other towns in County Meath, Kells has many mature trees, some of which are protected by the planning system.

The River Blackwater is viewed as the key Green Infrastructure asset available to the town. However it is currently of low value as a public amenity with limited access available. The river also receives the discharge from the Kells Wastewater Treatment Plant to the east of the town. Any proposals to develop the river for recreational use should be informed by focused biodiversity surveys to ensure appropriate development recognises biodiversity values present.

The town has some small Green Infrastructure features which are privately owned and could be developed sustainably. They include wetland areas within the 'Frontlands' & 'Backlands' boundaries (shallow eutrophic ponds and wet grassland) and the abandoned railway line to the south of Bective street. The wetlands are threatened by infilling to allow for development or/and agricultural intensification. They require further study to examine their potential as focal points for amenity uses, and as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. The abandoned railway now acts as a corridor for terrestrial wildlife. It has particular potential to be developed as a pedestrian/cycling route linking the town not only to the surrounding countryside but also to nearby settlements.

Spatial planning in Kells will support Green Infrastructure development by building upon 4 Key Themes for Green Infrastructure. These are outlined in the following section of this Green Infrastructure Strategy for Kells.

6.11 Green Infrastructure Strategy for Kells

1. Water Resources

The natural water resources that are available to Kells include the River Blackwater, the Newrath Stream, watercourse floodplains, and the wetland areas associated with the 'Frontlands' and 'Backlands' areas of the town.

The lack of public access to the River Blackwater is a significant deficit in the towns Green Infrastructure. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will over the lifetime of this Plan explore the possibility of

developing a publicly accessible linear park with provision for walking/cycling between Mabes Bridge and Maudlin Bridge and to the Headfort Road. There is also an established public right of way between the Tower of Lloyd to Clavin's Bridge and the Victorian Waterworks along the back of the Kells Business Park which adjoins the River Blackwater.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will also encourage the development of the identified wetland and flood zone areas of the Frontlands / Backlands areas as attractive landscaped water features forming part of the overall public open space & Green Infrastructure network in Kells.

2. Biodiversity

These include the Natura 2000 sites of the River Boyne & River Blackwater c.SAC & SPA European sites, ecological buffer zones, river corridors and hedgerows.

The accompanying Green Infrastructure Map includes an outline of the existing Natura 2000 sites along the River Blackwater, with the Newrath Stream (that traverses the town) being a tributary watercourse. The map outlines that there are significant ecological connections by both water courses and hedgerows between the various parts of the town and the Natura 2000 sites. In addition, the remnants of the old Railway Line route acts as a significant ecological corridor for wildlife with hedgerow connections across a much wider network of local habitats. Although such hedgerows are not protected statutorily under this Plan, it is important where possible that any future developments take into account the importance of such features in the overall Green Infrastructure network in Kells and seek to retain them where practicable. Where all alternatives have been exhausted and removal is required, compensatory measures for hedgerow loss shall be provided taking into account the overall Green Infrastructure network.

There is also particular potential to develop the Old Railway Line as a walking and cycling route to provide access to the surrounding countryside in an off-road setting and possibly linking to other settlements. This would be a significant public recreational facility that the entire population of Kells would benefit from in addition to developing potential tourism & economic synergies.

3. Landscape, Recreation & Amenity

Features include parks, land zoned for open space and/or in use as public open space, and formal sports facilities.

The People's Park at Lloyd is the most significant publicly-owned park serving the residents of Kells. However it is positioned at a distant location on the western edge of the town along the Oldcastle Road. The Fair Green area along Carrick Street/Circular Road does have a small landscaped public park which is an attractive feature in the town. There is however a noted deficit of public open space in the town centre area which needs to be addressed as part of this Kells Development Plan. The development of either the "Frontlands" or "Backlands" areas will present a good opportunity to address this Green Infrastructure weakness. The presence of the Newrath Stream which traverses both sites will provide the opportunity to develop an attractive Linear Path along the buffer zone of the stream which must be reserved free from development.

In terms of sporting facilities, the green spaces available in the town are the GAA and Pitch & Pitt Club grounds on the Gardenrath Rd, the sports playing pitches towards the rear of the school campus area at the Jim Brunnock road, and the Kells Athletics Club running track / field along the Navan Road. These are all located on the southern and eastern sides of the town. There is a noted deficit of sports facilities along the northern area of the town where the majority of the residential areas of Kells are positioned. Should the relocation of the Eureka Secondary School site along the Cavan Rd be realized, this area will be sufficiently sized to cater for additional sports pitches along this part of the town which is needed.

The Headfort Golf Club grounds positioned to the east/northeast of the town, although privately owned and operated, does provide a significant green lung to this part of the town, with views of the River Boyne & Blackwater c.SAC/SPA corridor and offers a gentle scenic transition between the built up area of Kells and the open countryside. It would be beneficial if walking routes along the periphery of the golf courses were developed similar to Carton House golf courses in Maynooth.

4. Built Heritage & Culture

Due to the historic monastic settlement origins of Kells, the town is fortunate to possess an abundance of built heritage and cultural assets. These include the historic Columban monastic site and round tower (along with high crosses & historic graveyard) which is put forward on the tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status in Ireland, the significant list of Protected Structures in Kells, the 2 no. Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) within the town (Historic Core ACA & Headfort Place ACA), in addition to the Headfort Demesne ACA situated in the Meath County Council administrative area to the north east of the town and outside of the development plan envelop.

The settlement structure and built form of Kells has developed in a compact manner over the years with many, if not all, of the above features being within walking distance of each other for public access. A new walking and cycling route for Kells is planned as part of the Local Transport Plan for the town (See Appendix D) which will provide easier & safer movement between the features listed above.

6.11.1 Green Infrastructure Measures

This Development Plan seeks to create a green infrastructure or network of high quality/amenity green spaces that permeates through the Plan area while incorporating elements of heritage and potential biodiversity value.

These following measures will aim to realize this goal;

1. To establish public open space provision that adheres to a hierarchy of soft and hard landscaped spaces whilst retaining the informal and formal character of the town.
2. To explore the possibility of providing a publically accessible linear park/pathway between Mabes Bridge and Maudlin Bridge and the Headfort Road in order to open the significant recreation and amenity asset of the River Blackwater to the north of the town.
3. To encourage the development of the identified wetland and flood zone areas of the Frontlands/Backlands areas as attractive landscaped water features forming part of the overall public open space & Green Infrastructure network in Kells.
4. To consider the feasibility of developing the old railway line as part of a walking and cycling route to provide access to the surrounding countryside in an off-road setting and possibly linking to other settlements.
5. To incorporate and reinstate the boundaries of the historic burgage plot field system, where possible, into streetscapes, gardens and parks in a manner that retains biodiversity corridors, provides routes for sustainable drainage of water, softens the impact of new development and ensure that the Plan lands are permeated by 'Green Fingers'.
6. To combine the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with the maintenance of biodiversity and the creation of amenity and landscaped areas through the utilization and incorporation of existing



hedgerows, streams and natural swales with open parkland.

7. To combine the protection and enhancement of built and natural heritage items with the Green Infrastructure.
8. To promote green buffers and lower density development along the outer edges of the Plan area in order to achieve a gentle transition between the town and the countryside.
9. To identify and promote opportunities to enhance existing habitats and to create new corridors/linkages of biodiversity interest.

Green Infrastructure Policies

GI POL 1

To recognise the economic, social, environmental and physical value of Green Infrastructure.

GI POL 2

To protect existing Green Infrastructure within the town and environs and to provide additional infrastructure, where possible.

GI POL 3

To seek a net gain in green infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of existing assets, through the provision of new green Infrastructure as an integral part of the planning process, and by implementing the measures included in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Kells.

GI POL 4

To require all new development to contribute positively to the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure and the delivery of new green infrastructure, as appropriate.

GI POL 5

To require all proposals for major developments in Kells to submit a Green Infrastructure Plan as an integral part of the planning application detailing how any Green Infrastructure proposed as part of the development such as open spaces, hedgerows, tree lines shall contribute positively to the development and protection of Green Infrastructure assets.

GI POL 6

To seek to enhance connectivity for people through the provision of parks, open space and recreational facilities.

GI POL 7

To provide attractive and safe routes linking key green space sites, parks and open spaces and other foci such as cultural sites and heritage assets as an integral part of new green infrastructure provision, where appropriate and feasible.

GI POL 8

To ensure that any proposed walking and cycle routes along the River Blackwater are sited and designed to ensure the protection of the river corridor's heritage including its biodiversity and landscapes.

GI POL 9

To ensure that the creation of SuDS features and associated enhancement of wetlands reflects and enhances landscape character.

Green Infrastructure Objectives**GI OBJ 1**

To implement, where practicable, the Green Infrastructure measures set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Kells.

GI OBJ 2

To encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

vic
Site



WARNING
FIRE PREVENTION
AND PROTECTION
ALERT



Chapter 7

Infrastructure

7 Infrastructure

Key Infrastructure Aims for Kells

1. Seek the upgrade of the existing Kells Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant to cater for the towns anticipated growth levels.
2. Ensure that adequate water supply is available to serve the growing needs of the town.
3. Ensure that all waste discharges are adequately treated.
4. Ensure new development complies with the requirements of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009'

7.1 Introduction

This chapter centres on the water services infrastructure required to meet the future development needs of the town and comply with environmental standards, and Kells Town Council / Meath County Council policies with regard to dealing with flood risk.

7.1.1 Water Services

The following are key issues for the plan period in respect of water services

- Reservation of remaining water and wastewater capacity for town centre expansion in Kells and employment creation;
- Addressing current deficiencies in water and wastewater, and;
- Implementation of the Kells Stormwater Drainage Study

7.2 Drinking Water

The public water supply serving Kells town is sourced primarily from Lough Bane and is augmented by extraction at Clavin's Bridge (old plant re-activated). It is operating as a joint Kells/Oldcastle water supply which serves extensive geographical areas including the centres of Crossakiel, Oldcastle and Carlanstown and the general rural area between such settlements.

Up to 2006, the water supply was sourced solely from Lough Bane; however there were issues with the water level dropping at the lake due to the extent of extraction, so an additional supply was required.

The total combined capacity is 27,500 P.E. with:

- Existing and committed usage accounting for 25,000 P.E.
- Remaining: 2,500 P.E



There is approximately 2,500 P.E of capacity remaining. This remaining capacity is for the entire catchment area.

Water Conservation Measures have reduced leakage rates from approximately 58% to 41% in Kells.

Upgrade works as part of the Remedial Action List are included in the current Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) for the Kells/Oldcastle water supply scheme (water filtration works to prevent cryptosporidium). It is expected that following approval of the Preliminary Report and advancement through the detailed design phase that

contractors could be appointed within a calendar year with a construction timeframe of 9 months anticipated. However, the provision of water supply will remain critical over the life of this Development Plan.

7.3 Wastewater

The Kells wastewater treatment facility located on the Headfort Road is the treatment plant for municipal wastewater arising from Kells town & environs. The plant was constructed in the 1980s with a design capacity of 8,000 population equivalent (P.E.). The plant has an EPA discharge license for 8,221 P.E. The plant discharges the treated effluent to the River Blackwater which is a designated Natura 2000 European site.

The wastewater treatment plant is nearing capacity and the Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012 includes the Kells Sewerage Scheme to advance to planning stage. The provision of wastewater capacity continues to be constrained with approximately 1,300 P.E. available, although most of this is consumed by extant planning permissions in the town. Based on this, it is expected that the wastewater constraint in Kells will remain for the vast majority of the next plan period, 2013 - 2019.

Optimisation works at the Kells Wastewater Treatment Plant were carried out in 2009/2010 to improve the performance of the existing facility. As part of the optimisation works a new storm water tank and new outfall to the River Blackwater was provided. In addition, 2 no. "Salsnes Units" were installed to reduce the biological loading on the plant and provide an additional 1,000 P.E. of available capacity.

In addition to the municipal wastewater treatment plant serving the town on the Headfort Road, the Kells (Lloyd) Business Park area, located c.2km to the west of Kells, is served by its own separate wastewater treatment plant and serves non-domestic users only. It has a Certificate of Authorisation from the EPA. It is estimated that the treatment system is designed on the basis of a population equivalent of approximately 400 P.E.

The 2009 water quality results analysed by Meath County Council indicate that the quality of water within the Blackwater River is presently meeting the standards upstream and downstream of the discharge point from the Kells Business Park Wastewater Treatment Plant for BOD, Dissolved Oxygen and Annual Orthophosphates. This Wastewater Treatment Plant is currently operating with significant spare capacity (circa 200 – 250 P.E) and it is envisaged that the treatment plant can cater for additional hydraulic and organic load with its design capacity without posing an environmental risk to the receiving waters.

7.3.1 Planned Investment

An upgrade of the Kells Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant is included in the current 2010-2012 Water Services Investment Programme (Scheme at Planning Stage) and hence is subject to Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government Funding. This scheme has now been extended to cover the period 2010 – 2013. The planned upgrade works will cater for a 12,000 P.E capacity plant. This would include the decommissioning of the independent wastewater treatment plant located at the Kells Business Park to be served by the upgraded plant. There is no definite timescale for the provision of this investment in the wastewater treatment plant and the provision of adequate wastewater capacity to serve the projected household and employment growth over the plan period may remain a constraint. In September, 2012, the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government have however given approval to the Local Authority to proceed with the competition for the appointment of consulting engineers for the scheme.

Water Services Policies

INF POL 1

- (i) To continue the development and upgrading of the water supply system serving Kells to ensure that an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of safe and secure piped water of suitable quality is available for the sustainable development of Kells as finances

permit. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council shall ensure that adequate and appropriate water supply is in place prior to the granting of future development in the plan area.

- (ii) To promote and require the use of water conservation techniques, where practicable, in new developments within the town so as to provide for the sustainable investment and continued availability of water supply for the ongoing population and business needs of the town.

INF POL 2

To continue the development and upgrading of the waste water system serving Kells to ensure that an adequate treatment capacity is available for the sustainable development of Kells as finances permit. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council shall ensure that adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment capacity is in place prior to the granting of future development in the plan area.

INF POL 3

Any development proposed as a result of Infrastructure policies will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment according to Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive

7.4 Surface Water Drainage

Surface water in Kells is disposed of by a mixture of combined foul sewers and separate surface water piping. The combined systems often become overloaded in periods of high rainfall. Inadequate protection of the rivers and tributaries can reduce the capacity of adequate storm water runoff along these rivers.

It is a requirement of this Development Plan that all new developments should be based on sustainable drainage systems (SUDS). This will help to achieve environmental improvements to the County's water resources.

Regard is also had to the recommendations for sustainable drainage systems set out in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS).

The overall principle behind the SUDS process is to minimise runoff. Therefore the extent of impermeable surfaces such as road surfaces, parking areas, driveways, patios, etc., should be minimised by careful attention to site layout and the specification of porous surfacing materials where practicable. The management of storm water drainage should emphasise retention and infiltration at source, which reduces runoff volumes and slows the rates of runoff as well as providing partial treatment. The latter requirement reduces the pollution threat to watercourses and groundwater.

Surface Water Policies

INF POL 4

To protect, maintain and improve the natural character of all watercourses, tributaries and streams within the Plan area.

INF POL 5

All development in the Newrath Stream catchment shall comply with the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS). Surface water drainage infrastructure shall be provided by the developer/s as the initial phase of development in this area, to facilitate orderly development and to ensure that the 'developed state' is properly served. Developers shall submit maintenance and management plans for their surface water drainage proposals as part of relevant planning applications.

INF POL 6

To ensure that all new developments should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) and sufficient storm water attenuation will be required for all such developments to

ensure that the rate of run-off equates to predevelopment greenfield run off rates.

Surface Water Objective

INF OBJ 1

To generally provide support for the funding of, and to improve and extend, surface water disposal infrastructure to serve the planned levels of growth, during the lifetime of this Plan, in order to facilitate development and subject to the availability of funding.

Development Management Guidelines

Pre-planning consultation is advised regarding surface water drainage requirements for all development in the Newrath Stream catchment area so that potential applicants are fully aware of their requirements.

7.4.1 Kells Stormwater Drainage Study (2006)

'Carl Bro Ireland' was commissioned by Meath County Council in 2006 to carry out a Stormwater Drainage Study relating to the catchment area of Newrath Stream in Kells. This study related to special objective KS5 as was listed in the Kells Development Plan 2001.

KS5: To prepare a comprehensive environmental study, incorporating a flood detail/relief study of the area of potential development, within the vicinity of the Kells Town Centre. This study will be required to be undertaken prior to any development taking place.

The study involved the examination and definition of the study area, i.e. catchment boundary, analysis and the projection of stormwater runoff prior to and following the development of the zoned lands around Kells town centre within this catchment, and the recommended remedial measures and factors to be taken into consideration. The recommended strategy contained in this Study requires the construction of a new

1,500mm diameter culvert along the swimming pool access road, along the footpath in front of Eureka School, crossing the former N3 west of the Kells Visitor Centre and through the green area of the Headfort Housing Estate before discharging to the open channel of the Newrath Stream. The total culvert length required was 480 metres. The Study provides that lands between this culvert and Bective Street could potentially be raised. These conclusions are predicated on the fact that the Kells Stormwater Drainage Study was completed and subsequently reviewed prior to the publication of the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' in 2009.

A series of recommendations are made in the Study which include the following:

- The Backlands Local Area Plan should refer and comply with the recommendations of this study. Meath County Council/Kells Town Council should require that the recommended surface water drainage infrastructure should be provided by the developer/s as the initial phase of development, to facilitate orderly development and to ensure that the 'developed state' is properly served.
- Developers who propose to provide infrastructure that differs from the recommendations of this report shall update this report and hydraulic model accordingly to the satisfaction of the Sanitary Authority.

As part of the Backlands planning application, a follow up study was prepared by 'Grontmij' which updated the 2007 Kells Stormwater Drainage Study to include specific channel diversion assessment for the lands east of Bective Street (but assuming all recommendations from the 2006 study are implemented).

The application of the sequential approach to flood risk management and Justification Test in accordance with the 'Planning System and Flood Risk

Management Guidelines' must now be adhered to in the determination and extent of land use zoning objectives notwithstanding the presence of a known engineering solution. The Kells Stormwater Drainage Study included a clear definition of existing flood risk for the Newrath Stream, highlighting areas of significant potential flooding both up and downstream of Bective Street for the 1 in 200 year return period only. The flood risk mapping produced as part of the Kells Stormwater Drainage Study have now been superseded by the more extensive Flood Zone Mapping contained in the 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment' for Kells which forms part of this Development Plan. The information contained in the earlier flood studies was analysed as part of the new SFRA modelling exercise for Kells.

Kells Stormwater Drainage Study Policy

INF POL 7

To ensure that the potential of flood risk in the identified flood risk areas associated with existing development in the general Headfort Road area (downstream of the preferred town centre expansion area) are not exacerbated by any new surface water drainage works required pursuant to the recommendations of the Kells Stormwater Drainage Study.

Kells Stormwater Drainage Study Objective

INF OBJ 2

To facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Kells Stormwater Drainage Study as provided for in the adopted Section 49 Supplementary Contributions Scheme to facilitate the permitted mixed use town centre development in the Backlands.⁸

⁸ The permitted mixed use development to Kells Development Company Ltd. (planning register ref. no. KT800014 / An Bord Pleanála PL49 .234285) requires the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Kells Stormwater Drainage Study, 2006. The Kells Stormwater Drainage Study demonstrated how

7.5 Groundwater Protection

Groundwater is a natural resource with both ecological and economic value and is of vital importance for sustaining life, health, agriculture and the integrity of ecosystems. Groundwater in Kells is classified as being of "good status". It is an objective of this plan to protect the good status of these water bodies.

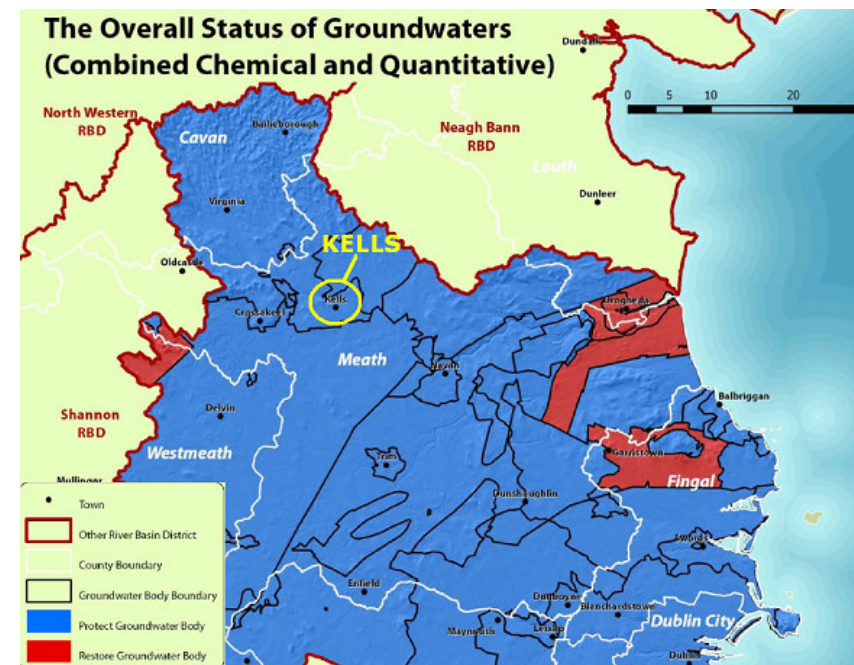


Figure 8 : ERDB Eastern River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015

this area could be developed having regard to the extent of town centre land use zoning objective which then applied.

Groundwater Protection Policies

INF POL 8

To protect groundwater resources having regard to the County Meath Groundwater Protection Plan.

INF POL 9

In assessing planning applications for development, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will consider the impact on the quality and quantity of ground water and will have regard to the recommended approach 'Groundwater Protection Schemes' (and the Response Matrices) published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Geological Survey of Ireland.

Groundwater Protection Objective

INF OBJ 3

To ensure through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans and their associated programmes of measures, and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters within the development plan envelop and beyond. The implementation of this Development Plan shall not conflict with the aims and objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

7.6 Waste

Development will generate demand for domestic and commercial waste disposal and collection services. The construction phases of developments will also produce significant volumes of waste. Developers are obliged under the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) to submit a

construction and waste management plan prior to the commencement of any proposed construction activities. All waste material generated during both the construction and operational phases of development must only be collected by appropriately licensed waste contractors and disposed of at a licensed waste collection facility.

A civic amenity site including an education facility to serve the needs of Kells is located at the Kells Business Park. The civic amenity site was developed during the period of the last Kells Development Plan 2007 – 2013.

Waste Policies

INF POL 10

To implement the policies and objectives of the North East Waste Management Plan 2005-2010 or any replacement waste management plan for the north east region as relevant to Kells.

INF POL 11

To promote education and awareness on all issues associated with waste management, both at industry and community level. This will include the promotion of waste reduction by encouraging the minimization, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste within the town and environs.

INF POL 12

To encourage the development of waste infrastructure and associated developments in appropriate locations, as deemed necessary in accordance with the requirements of the Regional Waste Management Plan as relevant to Kells.

INF POL 13

To facilitate the provision of appropriate waste recovery and disposal facilities in accordance with the principles set out in the appropriate Waste Management Plan applicable from time to time made in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996.

INF POL 14

To require developers to prepare construction and demolition waste management plans for new construction projects over certain thresholds and such plans shall meet the relevant recycling/recovery targets for such waste in accordance with the national legislation and national and regional waste management policy.

INF POL 15

Any waste infrastructure proposed will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment according to Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive.

7.7 Flood Risks

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council in preparing their strategy for the management of flood risks, (prepared as an integral part of this Development Plan) has had regard to its obligations under Section 28 of the Planning & Development Acts in relation to Guidelines for Planning Authorities '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*' in November 2009. To comply with the EU Floods Directive introduced on 26th November 2007, and in line with the Planning Guidelines cited above, an assessment of flood risks in Kells Town & Environs has been formally taken into account. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Kells is included in Appendix A of this plan which was prepared by JBA Consulting on behalf of Kells Town Council/Meath County Council.

The Flood Zone Maps produced (see Appendix A) provide information on two main areas of flood risk:

Zone A – High probability of flooding (coinciding with the 1:100 year flood occurrence). Most areas of the town that are subject to flood risk fall into this category. Here, most types of development would be considered to be inappropriate. Development in this zone should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances, such as in the town centre, or in

the case of essential infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere. A Justification Test set out in the Ministerial Guidelines applies to proposals in this zone. Only water compatible development, that require a waterside location, amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation would be considered in this zone.

Zone B: Moderate probability of flooding (coinciding with the 1:1000 year flood occurrence). In the town, this designation applies only to limited areas of land. In only a few locations do significant sites fall into this category. Here, highly vulnerable development, such as hospitals, residential care homes, Garda, Fire and ambulance stations, dwelling houses and primary strategic transport and utilities infrastructure, would generally be considered inappropriate. Less vulnerable development such as retail, commercial and industrial uses, sites used for short-let for caravans and camping and secondary strategic transport and utilities, and water compatible development might be considered appropriate in this zone.

Elsewhere, localised flooding from sources other than rivers/streams can still occur and may need to be taken into account at the planning application stage.

7.7.1 Flood Risks and 'Zoning'

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*' require Planning Authorities to ensure that development is not permitted in areas of flood risk, particularly floodplains, except where there are no suitable alternative sites available in areas at lower risk that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Where such development has to take place, in the case of urban regeneration for example, the types of development has to be carefully considered and the risk should be mitigated and managed through location, layout and design of development to reduce flood risk to an acceptable level.

Having regard to the approach to flood risk set out in the Guidelines and the extent of the areas shown to be at risk in the SFRA mapping for Kells Town & Environs, a number of areas which were zoned for development in the 2007 Kells Development Plan are no longer zoned in this Plan. In most cases the zoning has been removed because the lands have been identified as being at risk of flooding. Lands which have been dezoned include:

- Areas of the Backlands to the east of Bective Street
- An area to the rear of McKeons garage off Bective Street
- Residential Lands to the northeast of the town close to the Blackwater River

This change of zoning status does not alter the validity of any existing planning permissions on these lands but will be a material consideration in the assessment of any future planning applications.

In some parts of the town, it has been considered appropriate to retain the zoning objective of some lands, notwithstanding the fact that they have also been identified as being at risk of flooding. Such zonings have been retained subject to the requirement for more detailed assessment at project stage, on the basis that they are located within the centre of the town where development is generally desirable and necessary to facilitate the regeneration and expansion of the town centre.

In relation to the identified town centre expansion areas, in the event that the permanent engineering solution, namely the provision of a 1,500mm surface water sewer and associated works is provided, a revised Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will be undertaken. However as there are no definite plans by either Local Authority or by a developer working in conjunction with either Local Authority to provide these works within a known timescale, the flood zone mapping has been adhered to in accordance with the overarching precautionary principles. Having regard to the quantum of retail floor space required to satisfy the existing and

future population within the Kells catchment and to the availability of sufficient lands unaffected by the flood zones, the application of the Justification Test was neither necessary nor warranted.

Flood Mitigation Measures at Site Design Stage

Any development proposal in an area at moderate or high risk of flooding that is considered acceptable in principle must demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place and that residual risks can be managed to acceptable levels.

Flood Mitigation Policies

INF POL 16

Where practicable, and particularly in areas of new development, floor levels shall be a minimum of 300mm above adjacent roads and hard standing areas to reduce the consequences of any localised flooding.

INF POL 17

To ensure that adequate measures are put in place to deal with residual risks, proposals shall demonstrate the use of flood-resistant construction measures that are aimed at preventing water from entering a building and that mitigate the damage floodwater causes to buildings. Alternatively, designs for flood resilient construction may be adopted where it can be demonstrated that entry of floodwater into buildings is preferable to limit damage caused by floodwater and allow relatively quick recovery.

7.7.2 Applications for Planning Permission in Areas at Risk of Flooding

Development proposals in areas which are identified as being at risk of flooding on the SFRA Maps will need to comply with the provisions of the Ministerial Guidelines – The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, and in particular, a 'Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment' will be required.

A site specific flood risk assessment can be undertaken in three stages comprising of

1. Flood Risk Identification
2. Initial Flood Risk Assessment
3. Detailed Flood Risk Assessment.

(See Technical Appendix P.7 of the Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines).

The initial stage in the process is intended to be capable of being carried out relatively quickly and at modest expense involving a desk-top review of relevant flood risk information, where applicable the preparation of site levels or cross sections, the preparation of a commentary on site specific issues including the nature of any localised uncertainty in existing sources of information and, finally, a recommendation on the appropriate course of future action.

Where the completion of the Stage One assessment indicates that further study is required then only development proposals that can satisfy the 'Justification Test for Development Management' should proceed to a more detailed site specific flood risk assessment. Formal consideration that a proposal meets the requirements of the 'Justification Test for Development Management' shall be sought from Kells Town Council / Meath County Council as the pre planning stage.

If the proposal passes the 'Justification Test for Development Management' and a detailed site specific flood risk assessment is prepared which demonstrates to the satisfaction of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council that the proposed development, and its infrastructure, will avoid significant risks of flooding in line with the principles set out in the Ministerial Guidelines, then, subject to other relevant proper planning considerations, permission may be granted for the development.

Where there are significant residual flood risks associated with the proposed development, conflicting with the approach recommended in the Ministerial Guidelines, it is unlikely that permission will be granted unless all of the following are satisfied.

- The development of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the town and, in particular:
 - Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of Kells;
 - Comprises significant previously developed and/or under utilised lands;
 - Is within or adjoining the core of the town.
 - Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and
 - There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.

7.7.3 Minor Developments in areas of Flood Risk

Applications for minor development, such as small extensions to houses, and most changes of use of existing buildings and or extensions and additions to existing commercial and industrial enterprises, are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues, unless they obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk area or entail the storage of hazardous substances. However, a commensurate assessment of the risks of flooding still needs to be undertaken and should accompany such applications for development in order to demonstrate that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a

watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities. These proposals follow best practice in the management of health & safety for users and residents of the proposal.

Any proposal in an area at risk of flooding that is considered acceptable in principle must demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place such that residual risks can be managed to acceptable levels. Additional guidance on addressing flood risk management in the design of development is given in Appendix B of the Guidelines.

Flood Risk Policies

INF POL 18

To have regard to the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009) in the assessment of development management proposals and in the preparation of any Framework Plans required during the period of this Plan.

INF POL 19

To ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue, in accordance with the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development.

Flood Risk Objectives

INF OBJ 4

In areas where there is a high probability of flooding – Zone A refers – it is an objective of this plan to avoid development other than ‘water compatible development’ as described in Section 3 of the ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ issued in November 2009 by the DoECLG.

INF OBJ 5

In areas where there is a moderate probability of flooding – ‘Zone B and Residual Risk Scenarios refers – it is an objective of this plan to avoid ‘highly vulnerable development’ described in Section 3 of ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ issued in November 2009 by the DoEHLG.

7.7.4 Development Management Guidelines

The following outlines the key requirements relating to the management of development and flood risk by Kells Town Council / Meath County Council;

- (i) All development proposals, regardless of their location, will require an appropriately detailed flood risk assessment. As a minimum this will include a “Stage 1 - Identification of Flood Risk”. Where flood risk is identified a “Stage 2 - Initial Flood Risk Assessment” will be required and depending on the scale and nature of the risk a “Stage 3 - Detailed Flood Risk Assessment” may be required.
- (ii) Under the Flood Risk Assessment, the impacts of climate change (SFRA Appendix B map) as well as the specific residual risk relating to culvert blockage (SFRA Appendix C map) should be considered and re-modelled where necessary, using an appropriate level of detail, in the design of Finished Floor Levels.
- (iii) All development proposals will require the Flood Risk Assessment to consider surface water management.
- (iv) All development proposals, within or incorporating areas at moderate to high flood risk, that are vulnerable to flooding will require the application of the development management justification test in accordance with Box 5.1 of the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management” Planning Guidelines.
- (v) Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will explore opportunities to include flood alleviation proposals and upgrades

that benefit the wider Kells area, as part of specific development applications.

Any proposal that is considered acceptable in principle shall demonstrate the use of the sequential approach in terms of the site layout and design and, in satisfying the Justification Test, the proposal will demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and management measures are put in place.

7.7.5 Protecting Biodiversity in areas at Risk of Flooding

Inappropriate development in flood plains which results in increased river flows, increased erosion and alteration of river channel morphology or flooding of property or lands may have a significant adverse impact on fisheries leading to habitat modification and degradation. This Development Plan seeks to protect water courses, banks and bank side vegetation from interference by inappropriate bridging, draining, culverting or other works which could be detrimental to fisheries and biodiversity. Flood Risk Assessments and in particular, any proposals for mitigation measures need to be mindful of the need to protect fisheries and biodiversity.

Flood Risk & Biodiversity Policies

INF POL 20

To have regard to the recommendations of the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study when finalised and approved.

INF POL 21

To protect water courses, banks and bankside vegetation from interference by inappropriate bridging, draining, culverting or other works which would be detrimental to fisheries, biodiversity and the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites.



Chapter 8

Traffic & Transportation

8 Traffic & Transportation

Key Traffic and Transportation Aims for Kells

1. To promote the concept of modal change to more sustainable forms of public and private transportation in the town such as walking and cycling.
2. To enhance the town centre experience for locals and visitors alike whereby traffic which doesn't require to access the historic town centre area is discouraged from doing so.
3. To improve facilities for bus usage in the town, and encourage the development of adequate park and ride facilities.

8.1 Introduction

An efficient, sustainable and safe transportation system is essential for economic growth and prosperity and for maintaining a high quality of life for the local population. Kells is located at a crossing point of two national routes (former N3 and N52) and its growth has its origins as a regionally important market town serving a wide rural catchment. Since the summer of 2010 a significant infrastructural change has occurred when the N3 National Primary Road [linking Ballyshannon-Enniskillen to Dublin] was replaced by the M3 Motorway that includes a new bypass of the town. The scheme also provided a bypass of the N52 which previously traversed the town. As a result, the former N3 route has since been reclassified as a regional road R147.

8.1.1 National Transport Policy – SMARTER TRAVEL

The government's position on future transport goals is outlined in the policy document "Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future, A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020" where it is aimed to achieve an overall target of a 20% reduction in work related commuting by car from the current modal share (65% to 45%).

One of the overarching goals of the policy is to take actions aimed at ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through radically improved public transport service and through investment in walking and cycling. The document contains a number of specific actions in relation to public transport provision.

8.1.2 Regional Transport Strategy

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has published a Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2011 – 2030. The policies and objectives contained in this Strategy are required by legislation to be consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the area. One of the key influences that this Strategy will have on the Kells Development Plan will be the requirement to prepare a Local Transport Plan. Kells is listed as a designated town and thus requires the preparation of a Local Transport Plan. This is contained in Appendix D of this Development Plan.

8.2 Integration of Land Use & Transportation

National and regional policy emphasises the need to reduce the demand for travel and the reliance on private car in favour of public transport, walking and cycling. The concept of an integrated transport policy encompasses not only integration within and between different modes of transport, but also integration with environmental, social, recreational, economic, and educational and health policies and objectives. No longer can the provision of transport facilities be considered or decided upon in isolation.

It is a strategic aim of this Development Plan to co-ordinate transport and land use planning. This places a requirement on both the transport and settlement strategies to be mutually consistent, not only with each other, but with national direction contained in the National Spatial Strategy, the Smarter Travel policy and the NTA's draft Transport Strategy. Decisions on land use and development must take account of existing and public

transport networks and support the emergence and development of new integrated transport systems. The effective integration of land-use and transportation will generate and reinforce sustainable settlement patterns that make the most efficient use of land, and that minimise the need for travel by private car. The preparation of a Local Transport Plan for Kells as part of this Development Plan has these principles in mind.

8.3 Kells Traffic Management Plan

A preliminary Traffic Management Scheme for Kells town centre was prepared by '*Burroughs Consulting Engineers*' in association with Transportation Planning International (TPI) in 2010. Although not formally adopted by the Town Council at the time, the Traffic Management Scheme and analysis previously carried out sets out a blueprint to provide a scheme that will enhance the safety, capacity and overall environment of the town centre streets for all users.

This Development Plan has re-examined the traffic management proposals identified in the previous Burroughs report and outlines a new one-way system flow for traffic entering the town centre in order to improve the overall environment particularly from a walking and cycling perspective. The streets that would most benefit from the traffic management proposals would be the area centred around the new 'cultural quarter' adjacent to the historic monastic site settlement comprising of Church St., Market Street and Cross Street, in addition to Castle Street. Traffic flows along John Street would also be significantly reduced.

With the opening of the M3 motorway and the N52 bypass route, it is considered important that other aspects of town centre environmental improvements are looked at in combination with the traffic management improvements set out in the Kells Traffic Management Plan. Specific objectives for Road Safety Improvements such as pedestrian crossings, signalisation of junctions, cycleways, etc. are set out in the Local Transport Plan.

8.4 Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Ban

The opening of the M3 Motorway in 2010 has provided a bypass route around the town of Kells of the former N3 & N52 which gives an alternative (non-tolled) route for passing traffic to avoid the town centre of Kells. In order to enhance the environmental setting of the town, to encourage improved road safety and increase the modal share of walking and cycling, it is considered that the introduction of a HGV ban through the town centre should be implemented. The relevant routes include strategic HGV traffic using the N52 (Dundalk-Mullingar Rd), R147 (Cavan-Dublin road), R163 (Oldcastle-Slane road), and the R164 (Kingscourt-Athboy N51 road). The implications of the HGV ban and alternative routes have been examined and form part of the Kells Local Transport Plan.



8.5 Future Development and the National Road Network

Taking into account the need to enhance the safety of National Roads for all users and the need to secure the proper planning and sustainable development of Kells, where traffic movements associated with a development proposal will have a material impact on the safety and free flow of traffic on a National or Regional Route, this plan will require the submission of a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) and Road Safety Audit as part of the proposal. In addition, developments resulting in a material increase in the demand for transportation in a locality by pedestrians, cyclists or motor vehicle users will be required to prepare a Transport and Mobility Management Plan addressing these issues, as part of the proposal.

Developers of land adjoining or close to National Roads will be required to include measures to protect their development from future traffic noise.

8.6 Walking/Cycling

The vast majority of the built up area of Kells Town & Environs is within a 15 minute walk from the town centre. However, the existing environment for pedestrians is poor with few direct pedestrian connections to the town centre. Most pedestrian routes follow, or are secondary, to the vehicle routes, making it difficult to cross streets and junctions. This is particularly evident in Castle Street, Cross Street, John Street, Kenlis Place, Headfort Place and Farrell Street areas. The lack of pedestrian friendly junctions has resulted in people choosing to drive to work or carry out school drop-offs rather than to walk.



The Kells Local Transport Plan has set out ambitious but achievable proposals of improving walking and cycling routes throughout the town, with primary and secondary connectivity routes between the environs area

and the town centre outlined. There will be significant benefits in implementing the local transport plan which will enhance the attractiveness of the town as a place to work, live and socialise.

In particular, it is proposed to develop a new dedicated cycle and footpath linking the Mullingar/Athboy/Gardenrath roads through to the educational campus at the Jim Brunnock Road/Navan Road.

8.7 Public Transport

The principal mode of public transport available in Kells is the no. 109 & 109A bus service to Dublin City Centre and Airport connections respectively. This is the main public bus service connecting Dublin to Cavan which services Kells, in addition to providing connections to Virginia, Navan, Dunshaughlin and Dunboyne/Clonee. The frequency of the service is good operating every half hour at peak business hours. Other less frequent bus services available in Kells is the 108 service to Baileboro, and the 187 service to Virginia & Oldcastle.



An interesting finding from the 2011 Census of Population (SAPS⁹) was that for trips to work/school/college bus usage in Kells dropped by approximately 4.5% between 2006 and 2011. This may be partially explained by the economic recession and loss of work opportunities in Dublin and elsewhere, but remains a statistic to be aware of. It will be an aim of this Development Plan to support and enhance, where possible, the use of public bus services and connectivity to other towns as a sustainable mode of transport for the local population. The Local Transport Plan

⁹ CSO Small Area Population Statistics

provides further details on bus services in the town, the bus routes and their stops. It will also be an objective of this plan to provide for a bus park & ride facility within the Plan area in co-operation with the National Transport Authority and Bus Éireann. It is also considered that the long stay component of the Fair Green car park may have a role in this regard, mindful of the need to have bus stops in close proximity to same.

8.8 Mobility/Workplace Travel Plans

Mobility or Workplace Travel Plans are an effective instrument used within the planning process to promote and support sustainable travel patterns to work at a site specific level. It consists of a package of actions and measures to promote more sustainable and cost effective travel habits among employees, clients and visitors. Workplace travel plans are applicable to all work places, colleges and hospitals. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has published a guidance document on the preparation of workplace travel plans. It is expected that a standard Workplace Travel Plan will be required for existing or proposed developments that have the potential to employ over 100 persons. This is in line with the threshold indicated in other government policy documents. A Workplace Travel Statement may also be required for developments which employ less than 100 persons. Further guidance on Workplace Travel Plans is set out in the Kells Local Transport Plan.

8.9 Kells Supplementary Development Contributions Scheme

A Supplementary Development Contributions Scheme was adopted in late 2009 by Meath County Council and Kells Town Council to provide for the N3 – N52 Urban Collector / Distributor Road Link and Newrath Stream Culvert Replacement Scheme. The scheme may be viewed at

[http://www.meath.ie/CountyCouncil/Publications/PlanningandDevelopment/Publications/Development Contributions/File,40038,en.pdf](http://www.meath.ie/CountyCouncil/Publications/PlanningandDevelopment/Publications/Development%20Contributions/File,40038,en.pdf)

Arising from revisions to the land use zoning objectives which have occurred as part of the Kells Development Plan review and in particular the removal of the land use zoning objective which extended to residential and employment lands, the basis for the Supplementary Development Contributions Scheme has been altered significantly.

It is considered necessary to review the existing Section 49 Supplementary Contributions Scheme following the adoption of the new Kells Development Plan.

Traffic & Transport Policies

TRAN POL 1

To promote land-use planning measures which aim for transportation efficiency, economic returns on transport investment, minimisation of environmental impacts and a general shift towards the use of public transportation.

TRAN POL 2

To require the submission of a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit as part of a development proposal, where expected traffic movements will have a material impact on the safety and free flow of traffic on a national or regional route. Developers should refer to the NRA's "Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines" in the preparation of TTA's in this regard.

TRAN POL 3

To require the preparation of a Mobility/Workplace Travel Plan with planning applications for proposed trip intensive developments including retail and business/industrial proposals. Workplace Travel Plans will be required if an existing or proposed development has the potential to employ over 100 persons. A Workplace Travel Statement may also be required at the discretion of Kells Town Council / Meath County Council for developments which employ less than 100 persons.

TRAN POL 4

To ensure that in the design of new development adjoining or near National Roads, account is taken of the need to include measures that will serve to protect the development from the adverse effects of traffic noise for the design-life of the development.

TRAN POL 5

To support, improve and enhance, where feasible, the existing public bus services and infrastructure serving Kells Town & Environs.

Traffic & Transport Objectives**TRAN OBJ 1**

To implement the sustainable transport measures set out in the Kells Local Transport Plan subject to finances.

TRAN OBJ 2

To implement a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) through traffic ban from accessing the town centre area on selected routes. Such strategic traffic should utilise the existing alternative by-pass routes outlined in the Kells Local Transport Plan.

TRAN OBJ 3

To implement the specific Traffic Management measures for the town centre as outlined in the Kells Local Transport Plan in order to significantly improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and to prioritise public transport movements. The National Transport Authority shall be consulted on the introduction of the revised traffic management measures outlined in the plan.

TRAN OBJ 4

To facilitate the provision of a bus park & ride facility within the plan area in co-operation with the National Transport Authority and Bus Éireann.

TRAN OBJ 5

To provide, in co-operation with other agencies, bodies and developers/landowners, an integrated network of designated walking and cycling routes to provide safe, convenient and pleasant routes between the town's main residential areas, schools, the town centre and business park areas.

The network will, wherever possible, be developed as a segregated, traffic free, sustainable transport facility incorporating best practice design and shall be integrated with the network of Green Infrastructure.

TRAN OBJ 6

Any proposed new cycle paths in the vicinity of the River Blackwater will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment according to Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive.

TRAN OBJ 7

To review the existing Section 49 Supplementary Contributions Scheme (N3 – N52 Urban Collector / Distributor Road Link and Newrath Stream Culvert Replacement Scheme) following the adoption of the 2013 – 2019 Kells Development Plan



Chapter 9

Telecommunications & Energy

9 Telecommunications & Energy

Key Aims for Telecommunications & Energy in Kells

1. Facilitate the development of a modern, cost effective, high quality telecoms system.
2. To promote energy conservation through appropriate land use and building standards and to reduce the demand for energy and fossil fuels.
3. Encourage a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport.
4. Support the development of renewable energy facilities where appropriate.

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will set out Kells Town Council / Meath County Council policies and objectives with regard to ensuring the provision of a competitive, high quality telecommunications network for the town and encouraging more efficient and sustainable use of energy.

It is widely accepted that energy efficiency is paramount if Ireland is to assist in mitigating its vulnerability to climate change. The dependence on diminishing fossil fuels is likely to be costly and environmentally unsustainable as the world faces the potential depletion of these non renewable energy resources. The combustion of non renewable sources also results in emissions to the atmosphere. It is therefore important that the use and dependence on fossil fuels is reduced. It is further recognised that the availability of high quality telecommunications infrastructure is vital in enabling Kells to remain competitive in the context of an ever changing technological sector and thus reach its full economic and social potential.

9.2 Telecommunications

The importance of the telecommunications sector to the local economy is acknowledged. In particular, it is recognised that the availability of a quality and price competitive telecommunications service promotes industrial and commercial development, improves personal security and allows for better communication and networking in the business and commercial sectors and offers a competitive advantage in attracting economic development and inward investment. The vast growth in the use of the internet requires infrastructure investment to accommodate this growth. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will have regard to the DoEHLG guidelines "Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures" (1996), and the provisions of Circular Letter PL 07/12 and to such other publications and materials as may be relevant in the consideration of planning applications for such structures.

9.3 Broadband

The availability of broadband infrastructure enables high speed access to information for industry, public and private sector organisations and domestic users. It facilitates international e-commerce and is essential for all aspects of business including Small and Medium Enterprise (SME's) and multinationals. Fixed line broadband is available in Kells. A map identifying the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) network in Kells is provided overleaf. The MANs are networks of ducting, sub-ducting and high capacity fibre optic cable, typically laid in urban areas. The objectives of the MANs are to address a market failure in the provision of broadband services. The MANs operate on an open-access basis meaning that all authorised operators can have access. This model is contrary to traditional operators' exclusivity of network, and allows for competition in a way that has not previously happened.

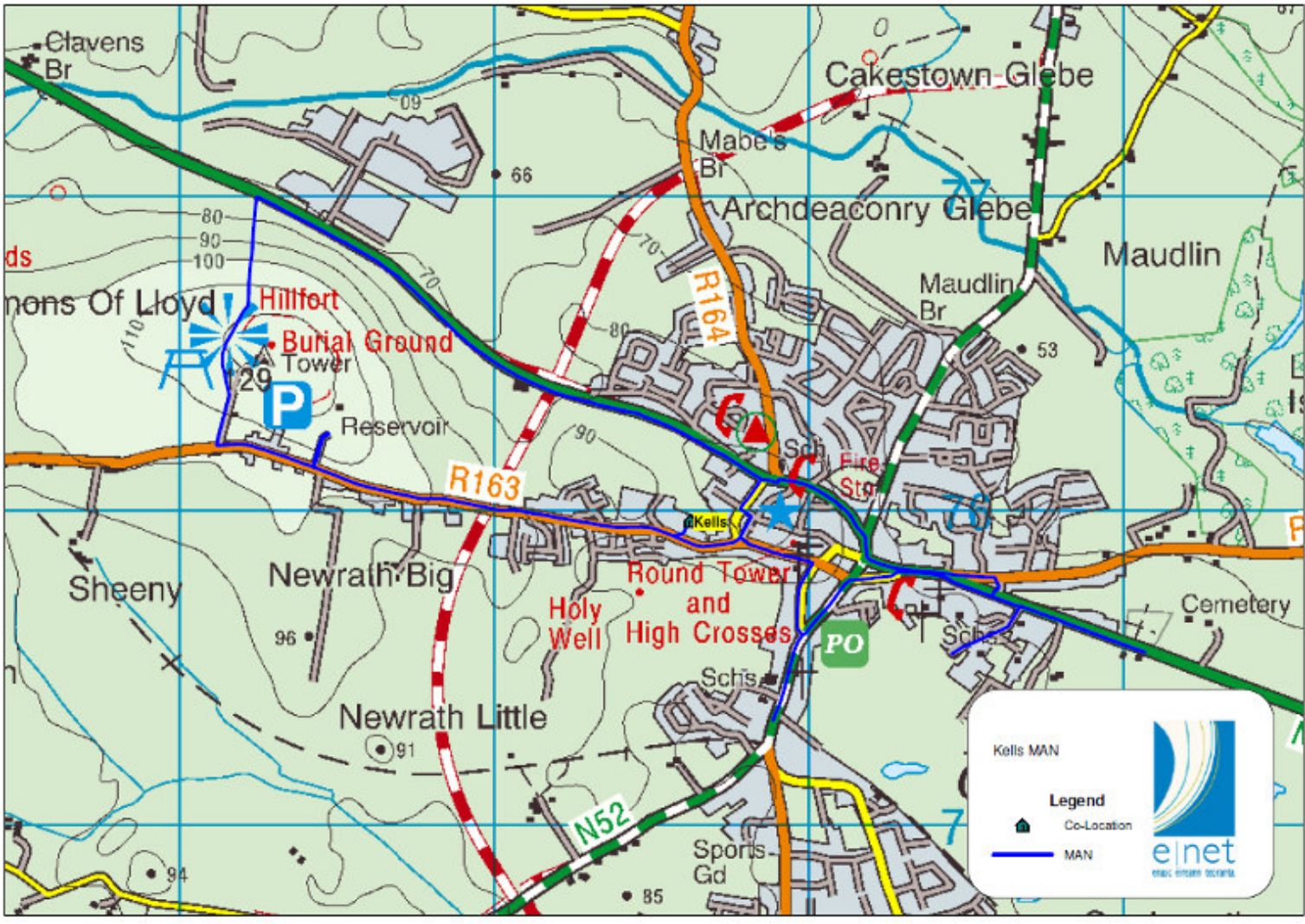


Figure 9: Map of the Local MAN Network in Kells Town and Environs

(Source E-Net Website)

9.3.1 Satellite Dishes

Satellite dishes, if inappropriately sited, can adversely impact on the overall character and appearance of historic buildings and important townscapes. While some satellite dishes can be erected as exempted development under Planning Legislation, where permission is required, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will generally permit their development except in the following cases:

- On Protected Structures where the special character would be harmed;
- On the front side of buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas, and;
- In other areas where they would cause unacceptable harm to the visual amenities of the area.

9.3.2 Energy

The development of renewable energy sources is a priority at National and European level for both environmental and energy policy reasons. The Government's primary policy on energy is set out in the Energy White Paper "Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework (2007-2010)". It sets out a broad energy policy framework for the long-term development of the energy sector, including power generation, energy efficiency in transport and the built environment. It seeks to make a substantial contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency improvements, changes in fuel mix and the increased use of renewable energy. The documents sets out a number of strategic goals which together act as a road map for the delivery of a highly efficient, competitive energy sector characterised by innovation and driven by research and technology-led development. The document sets out the Government's ambitious target,

which requires that, by 2020, 33% of electricity consumption will come from renewable resources including Wind Energy, Ocean Energy Technologies, Micro Hydro power, Solar Energy and Bio Fuels.

The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 also focuses on encouraging renewable energy sources. A more recent document entitled "*The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2009-2020)*" also seeks to improve energy efficiency across a number of sectors to ensure a sustainable energy future.

9.3.3 Renewable Energy

Renewable energy can be defined as energy generated from resources that are unlimited, rapidly replenished or naturally renewable and not from the combustion of fossil fuels. Kells has limited capacity to generate wind energy. Therefore, the main sources of renewable energy may include solar energy from the sun, geothermal energy from below the surface of the earth and biomass from wood, waste crops and through the built environment.

9.3.4 Solar Energy

Solar Energy can provide a source of energy for buildings and reduces demand for electricity supply from the national grid. Three basic techniques are used today to harness solar energy and gain maximum benefit of solar energy in buildings include passive solar heating, active solar heating and solar photovoltaic (PV) systems.

9.3.5 Wind Energy

The potential for generation of wind energy in the urban area of Kells is limited and is likely to be confined to smaller scale domestic and/or local level wind energy production in conjunction with other renewable energy sources. In the event of development proposals, the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2006 (DoEHLG) will be taken into consideration.

9.3.6 Ground Source Heating Systems

The provision of ground source heat pumps, also known as geothermal heat pumps is encouraged. These are used for space heating and cooling, as well as water heating for both residential and commercial developments.

9.3.7 Small-Scale Renewable Energy

The classification of small-scale energy sources are in line with the Planning & Development Regulations (Exempted Development) 2008. The provision of each of the following for domestic use only may be exempt from planning permission, subject to certain conditions;

- Stand-alone wind turbines;
- Building mounted wind turbines;
- Building mounted solar panels;
- Ground source heat pumps, and;
- Biomass (includes fuel storage tanks/structures).

Planning and Development Regulations came into effect in July 2008 which provide exemptions for wind turbines, met masts, combined heat and power (CHP) plants, solar panels and biomass boiler units, subject to certain conditions for industrial, commercial and public buildings.

9.3.8 Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Research has indicated that Co2 emissions from buildings across the European Union (EU) may be reduced by some 22% through improved energy efficiency measures. Revisions to Part L of the Building Regulations in 2008 have raised the standards to which buildings are to be designed and constructed with regard to heat loss and Co2 emissions. The EU Performance of Building Directive (EPBD) contains a range of provisions aimed at improving energy performance in residential and non-residential buildings both new build and existing. Good design is considered as being

the key in achieving optimum energy performance of buildings. Developers should have regard to the following:

- Site Layout & associated bioclimatic/passive solar design measures;
- Enhanced levels of insulation in walls, floors, glazing and doors;
- Heat recovery systems;
- Use of sunlight;
- Water Conservation measures;
- Suitable building materials;
- Efficient provision of domestic hot water;
- Use of low Co2 emitting fuels;
- Energy efficient lighting systems;
- Incorporation of renewable energy systems, e.g. solar, heat pumps, and;
- Provision of group or district heating systems.

9.3.9 Non-Renewable Energy

Non-renewable energy refers to energy that can be used only once, e.g. burning of fossil fuels. Most non-renewable sources of energy produce greenhouse gases when they are used. Non-renewable energy sources include gas, oil, peat, etc. It is the general aim of this Plan through related policies and objectives to reduce the dependency on non-renewable energy.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will support initiatives aimed at reducing the level of energy consumption within the town. The governing national policy in this regard is the National Climate Change Strategy published in October 2000.

Land-Use strategies and policies that reduce the need to travel and mixed use developments that provide an appropriate balance of residential, employment, recreational and retail uses, will be supported as they promote a more sustainable, energy efficient pattern of living.

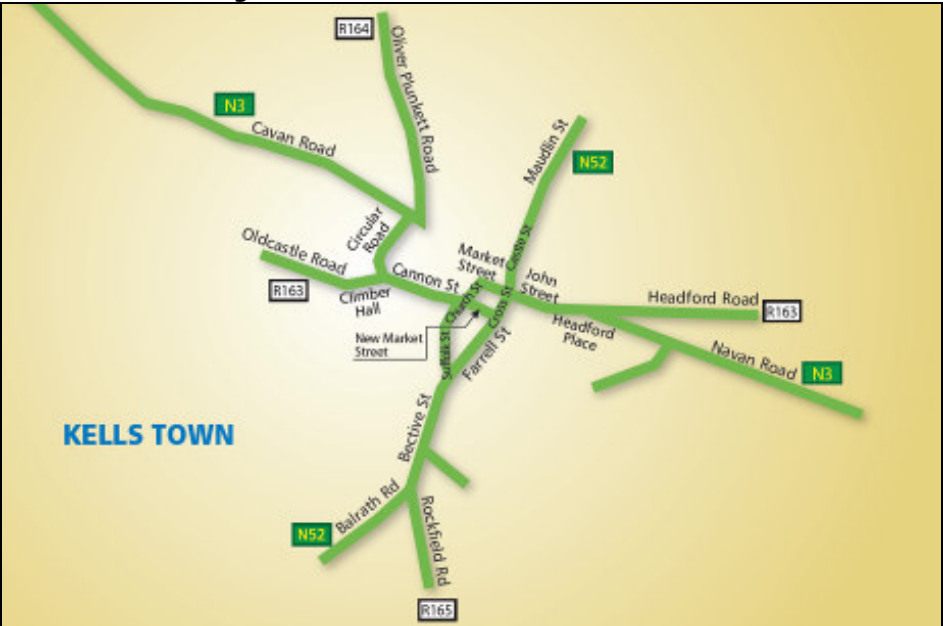
9.3.10 Electricity Supply

Electricity generation installations (other than small scale projects) require grid connection. The electricity infrastructure of Kells comprises of 10kV, 20kV and 38kV lines serving the town, with 38kV stations located along the Navan road and at the Kells Business Park. Both stations consist of 2/5MVA transformers and spare capacity currently exists at these stations. The nearest high voltage electricity transmission line is a 110kV line located approximately 3km south of the town.

9.3.11 Gas Supply

Since 2011, Kells has been connected to the Bord Gáis Network natural gas supply from Virginia AGI (above ground installation) at Burrencarragh. The Kells project involved the laying of 13.6km feeder main pipeline along the N3 to the edge of Kells Town and laying 9km of distribution pipeline throughout the town. The initial areas to be serviced by natural gas in Kells are identified opposite.

Figure 10 : Bord Gáis Network in Kells



Source: Board Gáis Networks

Balrath Road (Part)	Climber Hall (Part)	Market Street
Bective Street	Cross Street	Maudlin Street (Part)
Cannon Street	Farrell Street	Navan Road (Part)
Castle Street	Headford Place	New Market Street
Cavan Road	Headford Road (Part)	Oliver Plunkett Road
Church Street	John Street	Rockfield Road (Part)
Circular Road	Suffolk Street	

Telecommunications & Energy Policies**TE POL 1**

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will seek to provide a framework for sustainable development through the provision of quality telecommunications infrastructure and energy use efficiency and encourage the facilitation of an increase in the use of renewable energy in buildings.

TE POL 2

To promote energy conservation and efficiency measures and facilitate innovative building design that promotes energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources in accordance with national policy and guidelines.

TE POL 3

To support the National Climate Change Strategy and, in general, to facilitate measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

TE POL 4

To seek to improve the energy efficiency of the town's existing building stock and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in Kells, in accordance with the Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel & Energy).

TE POL 5

To support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of Kells.

TE POL 6

To support the review and implementation of the actions of the Meath County Council Climate Change Strategy and Energy Management Action Plan 2011-2012 'Think Globally Act Locally'.

TE POL 7

To co-operate and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future needs of Kells.

TE POL 8

To ensure that energy transmission and communications infrastructure follows best practice with regard to siting and design, particularly to ensure the protection of all important recognised views and prospects.

TE POL 9

To have regard to the following in considering proposals for the development of telecommunication masts, antennae and ancillary equipment:

- The visual impact of the proposed equipment on the natural, built and historic environment;
- The removal or modification of features of architectural/archaeological importance;
- The impact any such development may have on protected structures or their setting;
- The potential for co-location of equipment on existing masts, and;
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government "Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, July 1996".

TE POL 10

To generally avoid, where practicable, the location of overhead lines in Natura 2000 sites unless it can be proven that they will not affect the integrity of the site in view of its conservation objectives i.e. by carrying out an appropriate assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive.

TE POL 11

To require that all planning applications for significant new development provide for the delivery of broadband infrastructure in tandem with each phase of development.

TE POL 12

To normally require, save in exceptional circumstances, that the location of local energy and communications services such as electricity, telephone, broadband and cable TV be placed underground, where possible.

TE POL 13

To secure the expansion of high quality broadband and telecommunication infrastructure within the town and its environs, in the interests of promoting economic growth and competitiveness.

Telecommunications & Energy Objective

TE OBJ 1

To ensure that all plans and projects associated with the generation or supply of energy or telecommunication networks will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and those plans or projects which could, either individually or in-combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) undergo Appropriate Assessment.



Chapter 10
Heritage &
Environment

10 Heritage and Environment

Key Aims for Heritage and Environment in Kells

1. Protect and enhance the built and natural heritage resources of the town and its surrounds.
2. Ensure that the overall environmental impact of present and future development is sustainable and appropriate to the assimilative capacity of the receiving environment.

10.1 Introduction

The presence of our heritage is all around us. It is our countryside, our rivers, our woodlands, our seas, our ancient sites and monuments, our villages and townscapes and the buildings that make these. It is our history, our language, folklore and our customs. It is those special elements of our landscape that connect us to our home place, to our parish and to our town.

The responsibility of Local Authorities in relation to the care and protection of heritage is identified in both the National Heritage Plan and the National Biodiversity Plan in addition to other statutory functions as set out in the Planning & Development Acts, environmental legislation and EU Directives. Key actions outlined in these plans include the requirement on Local Authorities to prepare and implement Local Heritage and Local Biodiversity Plans in partnership with the main stakeholders in the area.

Since the adoption of the last Kells Development Plan in 2007, Meath County Council has developed and implemented its first ever County Heritage Plan. The Heritage Plan is a strategic 5 year plan which sets out a number of actions which aim to understand, protect, conserve and manage our heritage. Meath County Council has also adopted and is implementing its first County Biodiversity Plan and provides a framework

for the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage at county level. The Heritage & Biodiversity Plans were agreed in partnership with the County Meath Heritage Forum, and adopted by the elected members of Meath County Council, following extensive public consultation. This Development Plan will support the objectives and actions contained in the Heritage Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan.

Kells also has the prestige of being selected as part of the Heritage Towns of Ireland network which is a select group of 15 towns in Ireland identified as 'Heritage Towns'. Each town's selection was based on their unique character provided by a combination of architectural styles, often spanning many centuries, which gives them - and their visitors - a special feeling for the past. They were also chosen for their unique heritage resources and potential to achieve tourism development and growth given their Heritage Town status.



Heritage Policies

HER POL 1

To protect and enhance the quality of the natural and built heritage of Kells, to safeguard it as a resource in its own right and ensure that future generations can understand and appreciate their heritage.

HER POL 2

To interpret and promote the importance and cultural significance of natural and built environment and its potential in the promotion of tourism and enhancing the image of Kells as a place to live and visit.

Heritage Objectives

HER OBJ 1

To implement the County Heritage Plan and the County Biodiversity Action Plan, and any revisions thereof, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and the community as it applies to Kells.

10.2 The Natural Environment -Biodiversity

Biodiversity is a term intended to describe all of nature's variety. It refers to all aspects of variety in the living world, including a variety of species on the planet, the amount of genetic variation that exists within a species, the diversity of communities in an ecosystem, and the rich variety of landscapes that occur on the planet. Biodiversity comes under threat through habitat destruction, invasive species, and pollution and over harvesting of natural resources.

The natural heritage of Kells includes the Blackwater River Valley, Headfort Demesne Woodland, trees, hedgerows, uncultivated grassland within the town centre particularly in the Backlands area and to the west of Bective Street. The lands at Lloyd in Local Authority ownership are also a valuable recreational/amenity asset for the town.

The National Biodiversity Plan 2011-2016 promotes shared responsibility for environmental protection by public bodies, private enterprises and the general public. This principle of shared responsibility will be applied to all aspects of the conservation and protection of heritage in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the Plan. The Biodiversity Action Plan for Meath (2008) provides the framework for the protection and enhancement of Meath's biodiversity and is supported in this plan

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are a major threat to biodiversity (www.invasivespeciesireland.com). They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems

causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction works.

Heritage Policies

HER POL 3

- i) To protect and enhance the quality of the natural heritage of Kells and to safeguard it as a resource in its own right and ensure that future generations can understand and appreciate their heritage.
- ii) To promote best practice in the control of invasive species in the carrying out of development.

HER POL 4

To protect, interpret and promote the natural heritage of Kells and its potential in the promotion of tourism and enhancing its image as a place to live and visit.

10.3 European Sites (Natura 2000)

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are being or have been designated to conserve habitats and species of European importance pursuant to the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Such sites form part of the EU network of ecologically important sites known as Natura 2000.



In the context of Kells, the River Blackwater River positioned to the north of the town is designated as both a Candidate SAC and a SPA.

The River Blackwater forms part of the following Natura 2000 sites:

Table 11 : The River Boyne & River Blackwater c.SAC (Site Code: 002299) - Qualifying Interests

Annex I Habitats	Annex II Species	Other Protected Species
Alkaline fens	Atlantic Salmon	Round Leaved Wintergreen
Alluvial Forests	River Lamprey	Various Protected Mammals
	Otter	Common Frog

Conservation Management Objectives

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex 1 habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the c.SAC has been selected:

- Lampetra fluviatilis
- Salmo salar (only in fresh water)
- Lutra lutra
- Alkaline fens

- Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)

Table 12 : The River Boyne & River Blackwater SPA (Site Code: 004232) Qualifying Interests

Annex I Birds Directive
Kingfisher

Conservation Management Objectives

1. To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.
 - a. Alcedo atthis [breeding].

Supplementary information pertaining to these sites is contained in the Natura Impact Report (Volume II of this Plan).

Natural Heritage Objectives

HER OBJ 2

To protect the ecological integrity of all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation under National and European legislation. This includes Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas.

HER OBJ 3

All plans and projects which would be likely (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) to give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites having regard to their conservation objectives, shall not be permitted on the basis of this Plan unless imperative reasons of overriding public interest can be established and there are no feasible alternative solutions.

HER OBJ 4

To provide protection to all legally protected plant and animal species.

HER OBJ 5

To protect, and where possible, minimise the impact of new development on habitats of biodiversity value that are features of the town's ecological network. These features include tree lines, groups of trees and veteran trees, old walls, parkland, hedgerows, intertidal areas, rivers, streams and wetlands.

HER OBJ 6

In association with HER OBJ 2 - 5, the respective Planning Authority will;

- i) Carry out screening to determine the potential for all proposed plans and projects authorised by Kells Town Council / Meath County Council to impact (directly or through indirect cumulative impact) on Natura 2000 sites.
- ii) Carry out appropriate level of ecological/environmental assessment for all proposed plans and projects to ensure the implementation of the policies set out above.

HER OBJ 7

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will consult with the prescribed bodies and appropriate government agencies, when considering, undertaking or authorising developments or other activities which are likely to affect protected sites or species.

HER OBJ 8

To co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage designated nature conservation sites and protected species in order to achieve their conservation objectives.

10.4 Tree Protection

Trees within the setting of a town can be of significant importance, serving as features of ecological value and providing a strong visual element which helps to create a varied, interesting and attractive landscape. Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will seek to protect trees, groups of trees and woodland areas of particular importance because of their nature conservation value or their contribution to the overall amenity of the locality.

Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will give careful consideration to the potential impact of proposed developments upon trees. Landowners and developers will be encouraged to retain existing trees, where practicable and to plant additional trees. Wherever possible, existing trees, woodlands and important hedgerows will be protected by the imposition of conditions on the grant of planning permission. Opportunities will also be taken to secure new tree planting in development schemes.

Development proposals which are likely to result in the destruction or significant damage to any tree that makes a significant contribution to the ecology, character or appearance of the area, should be accompanied by a tree survey. Tree surveys should be carried out by a qualified arborist who shall record on site information independently before a specific site layout or design is proposed.

Tree Protection Policy**HER POL 5**

- (i) To preserve and enhance the general level of tree cover in the town, to ensure that development proposals do not compromise important trees and include an appropriate level of new tree planting and where appropriate to make use of tree preservation orders to protect important trees or groups of trees which may be at risk.

- (ii) Where practicable, to protect mature tree/groups of mature trees and mature hedgerows identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy map that are not formally subject to Tree Protection Preservation Orders in development management proposals.

10.5 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological heritage includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other kinds as well as their contexts where in land or underwater. An understanding of the archaeology of Kells is critical in assessing how best the character of the town can be preserved. The Urban Archaeological Survey of County Meath (OPW 1985) addresses the urban heritage of Kells and identified a Zone of Archaeological Potential which was included in both the 2001 & 2007 Kells Development Plans. This plan will continue to include the Zone of Archaeological Potential (See Map 3). The significance of Kells from an archaeological viewpoint is without question, the town is a recorded monument on the Record of Monuments and Places, (ME 017-044). Within this area are a number of archaeological sites and monuments. The town walls of Kells enclosed an area of circa 20 hectares. The medieval burgrave plot pattern is evident at Carrick Street, Maudlin Street, Farrell Street, Cannon Street and Suffolk Street. St. Columba's Parish Church, the Round Tower and the High Crosses all enjoy protection both as National Monuments in State or Local Authority care or subject to a Preservation Order require the written consent of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Under Section 12 of the National Monuments Act, any person intending to carry out works at or in relation to a Recorded Monument, or within the Zone of Archaeological Potential, must give the National Monuments Section of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht two months notice in writing.

Archaeology Policy

HER POL 6

- i) To protect (in-situ where practicable or as a minimum, preservation by record) all monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places (including those newly discovered).
- ii) To seek to protect, where practicable, the setting of and access to sites and in securing such protection Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will have regard to advice and recommendations of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- iii) To require archaeological assessment where it is considered a development could have an effect on a recorded monument, zone of archaeological potential or as yet undefined element of archaeological heritage or their setting.
- iv) Where remnants of burgrave plots remain intact, development proposals on such plots should reflect this character within the design and layout of proposals. In order to promote the renewal of such areas, design guidance will be provided, if necessary, for such sites at pre-planning stage.

Archaeology Objectives

HER OBJ 9

To protect the site of the medieval town wall alignment as an area of high archaeological sensitivity from new development through the implementation of a buffer zone which will be assessed on a site by site basis.

HER OBJ 10

To promote archaeological heritage as a resource for educational and tourism purposes and to increase public awareness about Kells archaeological heritage.

10.6 Architectural Heritage

Architectural heritage is a non-renewable resource and once lost it cannot be replaced. Ireland's historic built environment is a physical expression of the ongoing evolution of its towns, villages, buildings, monuments and landscapes which links the past with the present. These elements have changed and evolved over time to create

today's living and working environments. Architectural heritage should not be considered as stagnant or unchanging, and towns and villages have and will continue to develop into the future. Architectural heritage should not be viewed as an impediment to development, but seen as an asset to be protected and integrated into any future developments.

The town of Kells is very fortunate to retain such a large number of its historic building stock. Both the townscape/streetscape of Kells and its individual heritage assets such as the Columban Monastery including the Round Tower and St. Colmcille's Church, St. Columba's House, the town wall, the Courthouse, the Headfort Estate House and others all contribute to its unique and special interest. Within the grounds of the churchyard of St. Columba's Parish Church are some of the most important High Crosses in Ireland including West (or 'Broken') Cross, the South Cross (Cross of Saint Patrick and Columba) and the East ('or Unfinished') Cross. There are

several excellent traditional shop fronts intact, some of which are in good condition and some which require restoration. There are also intact sliding sash windows, fanlights above doors, and 18th, 19th and 20th Century dwellings.

Development has influenced the current form of the town and how it has evolved in the recent past. Changes in the use of buildings illustrate how the town has developed, not always in a manner which complements the character of Kells. There are some examples where modern intervention has been successful in Kells, for example a mixed use building at the junction of Bective Street, Farrell Street and Suffolk Street. Development can have a positive impact and can conserve, enhance and provide a new use for older structures. However, development can also threaten and damage the character of Kells both in the form of individual developments which may include demolition of buildings of architectural and historic interest and the cumulative impact of a number of small scale developments. Inappropriate alterations such as the removal of historic sash windows, traditional gutters and down pipes, and render, the addition of inappropriate signage and lighting all detract from the character of individual buildings and have a cumulative impact on the streetscape.



Figure 11 : Medieval Kells

Source Irish Historic Towns Atlas No. 4 Kells

Architectural Heritage Policy

HER POL 7

To conserve, protect and enhance the architectural heritage of Kells and to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the historic character of Kells

10.7 Kells' Architectural Conservation Areas

The Kells Development Plan 2007 – 2013 designated two separate Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's) in Kells, namely the Historic Core ACA and the Headfort Place ACA. Appendix I of this plan contains a description of each ACA.



View of Market Street – Forms part of the Historic Core ACA

Architectural Conservation Area Policies

HER POL 8

To preserve the character of the following Architectural Conservation Areas in Kells:

- i) Historic Core ACA;
- ii) Headfort Place ACA

HER POL 9

To support and encourage the refurbishment of buildings within the ACA's in accordance with good conservation practice.

HER POL 10

To retain where practical any structure which contributes in a positive manner to the character of the ACA.

HER POL 11

Within the Architectural Conservation Areas, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will have regard to the following:

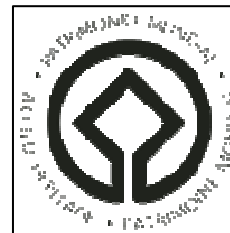
- i) The impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area in terms of the height, and massing of built forms, and the compatibility of design, materials, colour and finishes;
- ii) The impact of proposed development on the character and integrity of the area and the approaches thereto, and will promote compatible uses within compatible forms of infill development, and;
- iii) The need to retain important architectural and townscape elements such as shop fronts, sash windows, gutters and downpipes, decorative plasterwork, etc.

10.7.1 Implications of an Architectural Conservation Area for the Public

Any development which would materially affect the character of an Architectural Conservation Area will require planning permission, as set out in Section 82 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2013. This includes works to the rear of the buildings, within backland sites and gardens, and to boundaries. Where development takes place without planning permission, Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will require the owners or occupiers to restore the character of the building or site, if it is considered that the development is inconsistent with the character of the area.

10.8 World Heritage Status – Tentative List

The protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage is of high importance for present and future generations and to this end the State is committed to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of its World Heritage Sites to future generations in accordance with Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention.



A Tentative List is an inventory of those properties which a country intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List. The new Tentative List was approved by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and submitted to UNESCO in March 2010. The nomination of any property from the new Tentative List for inscription on the World Heritage List will only take place after consultation with relevant stakeholders, interested parties and local communities.

Two sites in Meath have been included on the Tentative List as part of larger assemblies of sites:

- The Royal Sites of Ireland (Cashel, Dún Ailinne, Hill of Uisneach, Rathcroghan Complex and Tara Complex), and;
- Early Medieval Monastic Sites (Clonmacnoise, Durrow, Glendalough, Inis Cealtra, Kells and Monasterboice)

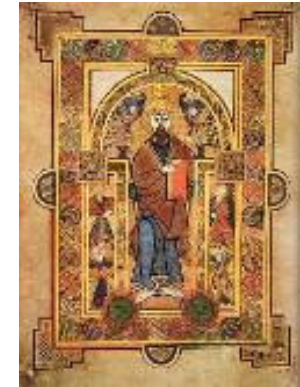
The six Early Medieval Monastic Sites chosen are the epitome of the Early Medieval Monastic Cities which derived their unique settlement patterns from the major sites of pre-Christian Celtic Ireland which themselves developed over the several centuries of the Iron Age.

The monastic site in Kells has been nominated by the Irish State in the draft new Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage Status grouped in a category of 6 settlements of *'Early Medieval Monastic Sites'*. The nomination acknowledges the significant potential that exists to showcase the historic Columban monastic site that developed in Kells from the 9th Century onwards as one of the finest examples of early medieval monastic settlements in Ireland. The monastic site at Kells, being the only urban monastic site, can offer a tangible reminder of the interconnectedness of the monastery, its educators, craftsmen and scribes within, the farming community within and around the enclosure, and the market town which grew around it.

The monastery's most precious relic was the superbly illuminated 8th to 9th century gospel book known as 'The Book of Kells'. At the time, a



substantial part of the population was employed not in agriculture but in education and highly artistic craftwork. The monastery possessed the Book of Kells and ran an important Scriptorium as well as employing stone-masons who produced the magnificent high crosses and the silversmith who made the shrine of the Cathach of St. Columba at the end of the 11th Century.



Having regarded to the significant tourism and cultural heritage benefits the nomination can bring to the town of Kells and wider afield, it will be Kells Town Council / Meath County Council strong ambition to support, promote and seek the designation of the Kells monastic site for full UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

Tentative World Heritage Site Policies

HER POL 12

To support, promote and encourage the nomination of the Columban Monastic Site in Kells for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

HER POL 13

To protect the tentative World Heritage Site in Kells from inappropriate development.

10.9 Protected Structures

A protected structure (unless otherwise stated in the Record of Protected Structures or RPS) includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structures and their interiors lying within the curtilage in addition to all fixtures which form part of the interior or exterior of these structures.

The Review of the Record of Protected Structures for the Kells Development Plan was undertaken as follows:

1. The 83 structures listed in Schedule 2 of the Kells Development Plan 2007-2013. (2 no. protected structures have been removed from the previous list contained in the last Kells Development Plan, namely KT017-041 (Farrell Street) and KT017-086 (Maudlin Street) with the latter being a building that was since demolished.
2. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage for County Meath. The NIAH sites have been inspected and considered by Kells Town Council / Meath County Council.

A full list of the Record of Protected Structures for Kells Town & Environs is provided in Appendix C of this Plan.



St. Columba's House

Protected Structure Policy

HER POL 14:

- i) To resist demolition of protected structures, in whole or in part;
- ii) To resist removal or modification of features of architectural importance;
- iii) To resist interventions that would negatively affect the character of a structure, either externally or internally, and;
- iv) To resist development that would adversely affect the setting of a protected structure.

10.9.1 Implications of Protected Structure Designation for the Public

Structures that are listed in Appendix C will not benefit from exempted development rights under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2013. Therefore, any alteration, extension or demolition of the building or within the curtilage of the building, that would materially affect the character of the structure, will require planning permission.

10.10 Views and Prospects

The built and natural heritage of Kells provides the town with significant views and prospects which Kells Town Council / Meath County Council will seek to protect. Many of these views are towards the historic Round Tower and Monastic Site which is on the tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

Views & Prospects Objective

HER OBJ 3

The following views shall be protected as illustrated on Map 3 in this Plan.

View No. 1: View from Headfort Place looking to the Round Tower and Church Yard.

View No. 2: View from the top of Church Lane looking east over Kells.

View No. 3: View from the junction of Bective Street, Farrell Street and Suffolk Street looking back towards the Round Tower.

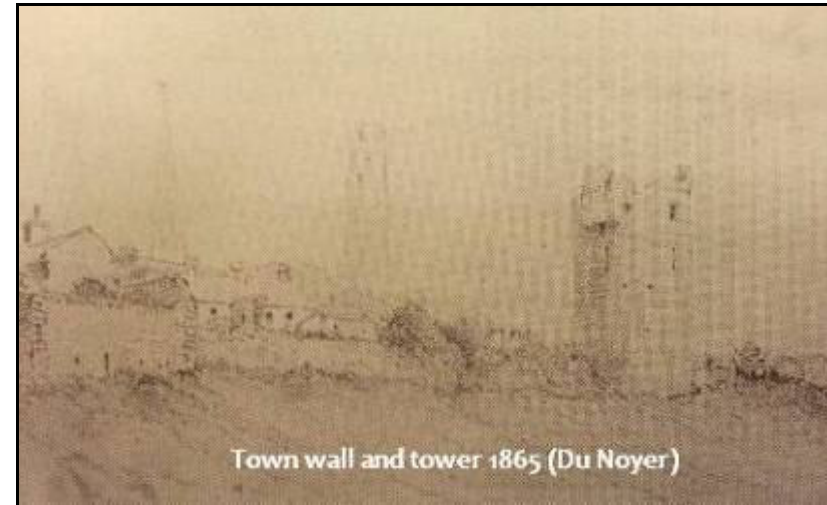
View No. 4: View from proposed town centre expansion in the Frontlands towards the Mural Tower of the Kells Town Wall, the Round Tower and St. Columba's Church. The manner in which this view shall be framed and protected shall be indicated in the agreed Framework Plan.

10.11 Town Walls

The Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government issued a National Policy document on Town Defences in November, 2008. This policy document demonstrates a strong commitment from the DoEHLG¹⁰ towards the protection and conservation of our historic urban defences.

¹⁰ Since 2011, the function for heritage has been transferred to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Photo 5 Kells Town Wall & Tower



Source: Irish Historic Towns Atlas - Kells

Kells being a medieval walled town has a mapped record of the location of the historic town wall defences (see Conservation Objectives map). An above ground section of the town wall still remains in place towards the rear of Cannon Street along with the last remaining mural tower. The illustration above provides a graphic of this section of the town wall in 1865.

The Town defences are "*monuments*" as defined in the National Monuments Acts 1930 - 2004 and are protected under the provisions of this legislation. Town defences are also protected under the Planning and Development Act 2000 - 2013 (where listed as protected structures or within Architectural Conservation Areas).

Town defences include all walls (whether ancient or on the line of ancient walls), gates, towers, earthen banks and fosses (ditches), bastions, outworks and other features.

All town defences are considered national monuments by reason of the historical, architectural, and archaeological interest attaching to them.

10.11.1 Ministerial Consent

All works that will impact on the fabric of town defences, or any ground disturbance in proximity to the defences in Local Authority or the Minister's ownership or guardianship, or that have been the subject of a Preservation Order, are subject to a requirement for Ministerial Consent from the Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It is advisable to consult with the National Monuments Service and the Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht at an early stage when planning works. Many structures associated with town defences may also be protected structures and/or located within an architectural conservation area and planning permission may be required. The Local Authority Conservation Officer should be consulted in advance where applicable.

Town Wall Policies

HER POL 15

To protect the integrity and setting of the Kells town wall defences to include all walls (whether ancient or on the line of ancient walls), gates, towers, earthen banks and fosses (ditches), bastions, outworks and other features.

HER POL 16

To encourage the enhancement of the setting of town defences and the improvement of signage and public utilities structures, etc. where these affect the visual amenity of the defences.