

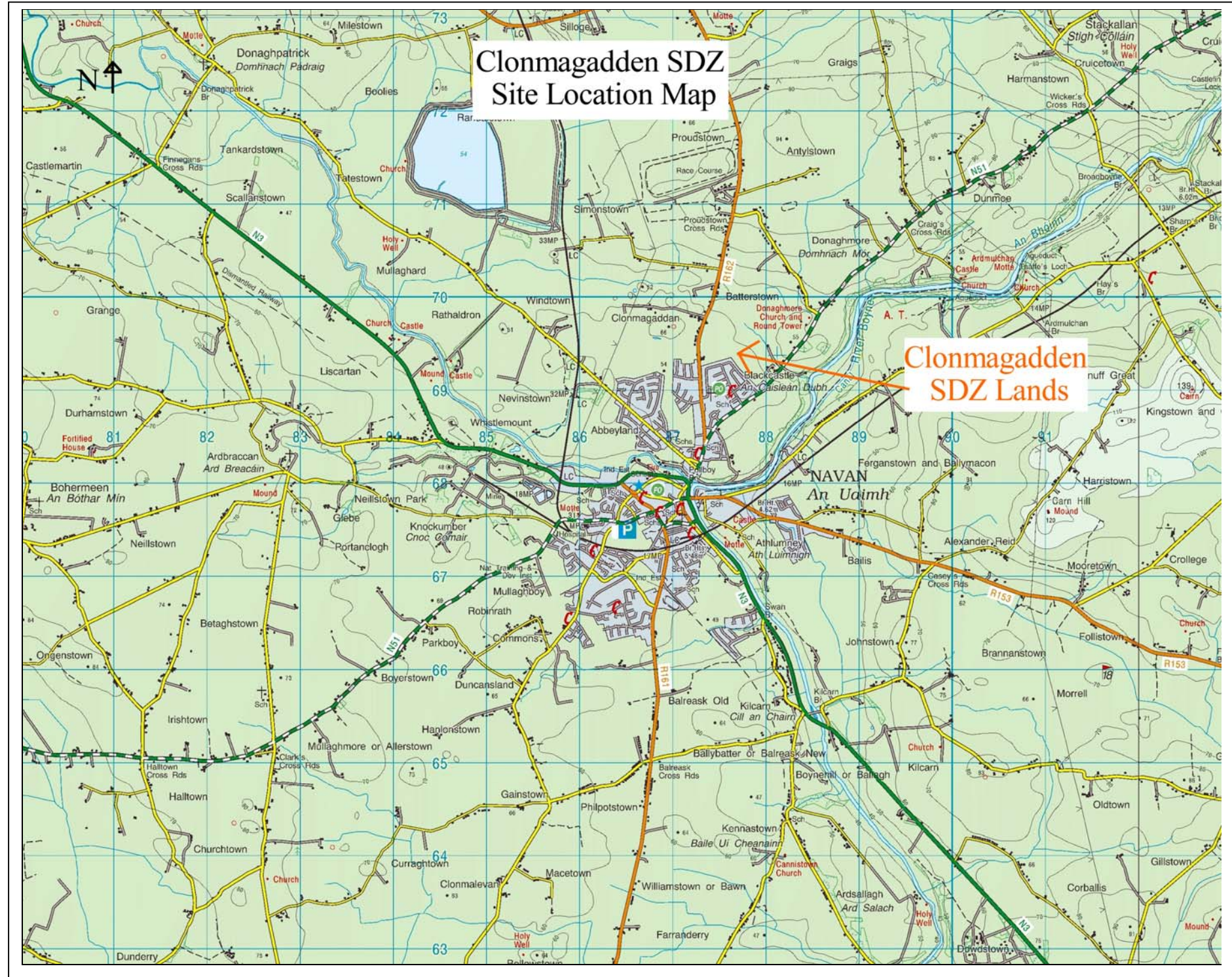
*finishes of structures and the general appearance of the design*

- (d) Proposals relating to transportation, including public transportation, the roads layout, the provision of parking spaces and traffic management*
- (e) Proposals relating to the provision of services on the site, 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*
- (f) Proposals relating to minimising any adverse effects on the environment, including the natural and built environment, and the amenities of the area, and*
- (g) Where the scheme provides for residential development, proposals relating to the provision of amenities, facilities and services for the community, including schools, crèches and other education and children services*

*The planning scheme shall also contain information on any likely significant impacts on the environment of the implementing the planning scheme in so far as it is relevant to the detail contained in the scheme.*

**1.3 Government Order for Clonmagadden**

The Government, following proposals made by the Minister for the Environment decided to designate Clonmagadden Valley, Navan as a residential SDZ under Part IX of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The Government Order designating the site at Clonmagadden came into force on 1 July 2001.



#### **1.4 Making of Planning Scheme**

The Draft Planning Scheme was on public display for a period of eight weeks from 7 July to 5 September 2003. In total, 704 submissions were received by the planning authority relating to the Draft Planning Scheme. A Manager's Report was prepared and submitted to the members of Meath County Council for their consideration on 3 November 2003 including a number of modifications and amendments as proposed by the Manager. It was resolved at a meeting held on the 1 December 2003 to make the Draft Planning Scheme subject to a number of further modifications and amendments.

This decision to make the Draft Planning Scheme was subsequently appealed to An Bord Pleanala and a two day oral hearing was held in March 2004. On 18 May 2004, An Bord Pleanala decided to approve the making of the scheme, subject to a number of modifications and amendments set out in their decision. Modification No. 11 of the An Bord Pleanala decision required that a copy of the consolidated planning scheme hereby approved, incorporating the Draft Planning Scheme June 2003, the modification adopted on 1 December 2003 and the further modifications included in this approval shall be drawn up prior to the publication of the notice of the approval of the scheme.

This document is the consolidated Clonmagadden Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme. The Planning Scheme complies with statutory requirements and provides for the development of the site in accordance with the nature and scale required under the SDZ designation and for the comprehensive planning and development of the site and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## **2 PLANNING CONTEXT**

### **2.1 National Policy**

#### **2.1.1 National Development Plan 2000 – 2006**

The specific strategies and objectives of the National Development Plan are:

- Continuing sustainable national economic and employment growth
- Consolidating and improving Ireland's international competitiveness
- Fostering balanced regional development
- Promoting social inclusion

#### **2.1.2 An Economic Assessment of Recent House Prices – Bacon Reports**

As part of the Government's ongoing review of the housing market, Peter Bacon and Associates were commissioned in March 2000 to undertake an up-to-date assessment of short and medium-term projections on the demand and supply of housing and to make further recommendations for action required to bring supply more in line with demand and improve housing affordability, especially for first-time buyers.

The findings of the consultant's review, which was published on 15 June 2000, suggests that the current supply-demand imbalance and the expected increase in prices is fuelling demand and leading to housing market instability. There is also evidence of a significant element of speculative demand - i.e. investors seeking to make short-term capital gains, and demand is being brought forward to avoid anticipated future price increases. The report concludes that a significant increase in supply will be required to meet rising demand and gradually reduce the rate of

price increases, e.g. around 55,000 private houses per annum in the six years to 2005, after taking account of measures to reduce speculative demand.

#### **2.1.3 Residential Density Guidelines**

The Planning Guidelines on Residential Density give effect to government policy of encouraging more sustainable urban development through the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and the promotion of higher residential densities in appropriate locations, especially in conjunction with improved public transport systems.

In the context of outer suburban and greenfield sites, the guidelines suggest that to ensure the greatest efficiency in land usage, net residential densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare (14-20 per acre), should be encouraged.

Development at densities less than 20 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged in the interests of land efficiency, particularly on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares. On lands proximate to existing or proposed public transport corridors, densities in excess of 50 dwellings per hectare should be permitted.

The guidelines also indicate that where greenfield sites are to be served by existing or improved public transport corridors, as in the case in Clonmagadden, targets should be set for increased density yields.

## **2.2 Strategic Planning Context**

### **2.2.1 National and Regional Context**

Navan has been identified as a Primary Development Centre in:

- The National Spatial Strategy
- The Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area
- and, in the 2001 Meath County Development Plan

The National Spatial Strategy suggests that an ultimate population horizon of up to 40,000 people for Primary Development Centres.

### **2.2.2 Navan Integrated Development Framework Plan 2002**

The key recommendations of the Navan Integrated Development Framework Plan include the following:

#### **2.2.2.1 Transportation**

##### **Rail**

- The reservation of a rail corridor and re-instatement of the rail line to Dublin with a central station located to the south of the town centre.
- A major public transport interchange will be created around the new central station to include local feeder buses.

##### **Bus**

- Existing local bus services are to be improved as a matter of priority with bus services to new developments to be provided from the outset.
- These proposals include the provision of two bus routes up both the Kingscourt Road and the Slane Road at either side of the Clonmagadden SDZ lands.
- Regional bus services will be provided for at the central station and proper pedestrian accessibility will be provided to public transport.

##### **Cycling and Walking**

- Proper cycling and pedestrian routes are to be integrated into all new developments and into existing and new green areas.
- Walking and cycling connections to the new central station and the town centre will be prioritised.

### 2.2.2.2 Land Use

#### Development Layout and Density

- Increased densities should be provided on new development land with a mix of residential type.
- New residential layout must incorporate pedestrian and cyclist accessibility between residential areas and linking to the town centre.
- Provide ancillary services within new large-scale residential developments. This should be in the form of local centres providing basic services and the planning authority should ensure that all residences are within easy walking distances of a local shop.

### 2.2.2.3 Urban Design

#### Environment and Ecology

- Open the town towards the rivers by implementing good quality design layouts in future developments.
- Link green features by proper cycle/pedestrian connections gateway sites.
- Develop identified sites with modern urban design solutions.

Specific proposals in relation to Clonmagadden include:

- Identification of two local bus routes, (Clonmagadden – Johnstown and Clonmagadden – Commons) which can be extended to serve the Clonmagadden SDZ.
- Identification of a gateway site within the Clonmagadden lands on the Slane Road frontage.
- Identification of Clonmagadden as Phase 1 of residential development in the town.
- Extension of the Distributor Road through Clonmagadden.

### 2.2.3 DTO – A Platform for Change

The final strategy consists of an integrated set of infrastructural and transport policy initiatives, involving a change in emphasis

towards public transport in the form of Light Rail (LRT), Quality Bus Corridors (QBCs), upgrading of suburban rail services, and development of park and ride facilities.

The aim of the DTO strategy is to reduce the attraction of commuting to work by private car and increase the modal share for public transport, cycling and walking.

#### 2.2.3.1 DTO Proposals for Navan

The DTO proposes the reservation of a rail corridor and re-instatement of the rail line from Navan to Dublin with a central station located to the south of the town centre.

### 2.2.4 GDA Retail Planning Strategy

The Retail Planning Strategy proposes the adoption of a retail hierarchy reflecting the different needs of the GDA - Metropolitan and Hinterland Areas. In Meath, short-term growth potential is recommended for concentration in Navan, as the County Retail Centre. The guidelines require that planning authorities prepare a retail strategy for inclusion in the development plan for the area which in the case of Meath has been adopted (Refer to Para. 2.3.2).

### 2.2.5 Population Statistics for Navan

The population of County Meath has been growing steadily, as has the national population of Ireland, especially the province of Leinster. The population of Meath was recorded as 133,936 persons in 2002. This was an overall increase of 22% from the 1996 census of population and an 86.7% increase since the 1971 census. County Meath was one of the counties that registered the highest rates of population growth over the last 6 years.

Population growth in Navan Urban District and Environs has varied over the past 15 years but has showed a marked increase over the last 5 years. From 1986 to 1991 population actually fell from 11,929 to 11,706, a decrease of 2%. The downward trend was reversed by 1996 when the population grew to 12,810, an

increase of 9.5% between 1991 and 1996. The current resident population of Navan is estimated at in excess of 22,000.

Based on the current patterns and strong demand for housing in the town, Navan is likely to continue to grow rapidly if allowed. Navan has a very high capacity for housing development and for population growth.

## 2.3 Local Planning Context

### 2.3.1 Meath County Development Plan 2001

The County Development Plan identifies three prime development corridors in the County, one of which is focused around Navan/Trim/Kells, the core of the County. Objectives to be pursued in this corridor are:

- *Maintenance of each centre's distinct identity with particular emphasis on the heritage and special urban character of both Trim and Kells. It will be critically important to ensure that the direction of development into these centres is on the basis of balance i.e. expanding the residential and employment sectors.*
- *The provision of new and/or upgrading of existing road links such as the N2, N3 and regional roads that link these towns to each other and to the county at large.*
- *The provision of high-quality public transport links including the re-instatement of a direct rail link from Dublin to Navan.*
- *The development of Navan as a regional shopping node.*
- *The protection of transportation corridors between centres from inappropriate development and to direct housing into designated development centres.*

The key role for Navan as the primary growth and self-sustaining centre in County Meath can be identified as:

- *Navan is the administrative, retail/commercial and transportation hub of the county. It is proposed that it continues and develops in this role with a particular emphasis on expanding its employment base.*
- *Navan can accommodate the most significant share of future residential development in the county having regard*

*to sustainability issues such as the availability of services and its central location on existing and potential rail lines.*

- *The development area for the town will largely be dictated and influenced by future bypass alignments and water catchments.*
- *The development of both active and passive amenity resources utilising natural assets such as the River Boyne will be critical in attracting investment and residency of employees in an expanded employment base.*
- *Given the scale of population growth envisaged, the availability of central sites and its future potential role as a rapid transit hub, Navan should be developed as the primary retail centre in the county.*

In Meath, 28% of zoned lands lie in Navan (Town Council and Environs) with services available or in train. There is a developing shortage of water supply due to a constriction on the maximum abstraction rate possible from the River Blackwater at the Liscarton works. This will be addressed through provision of a new supply on the River Boyne.

### 2.3.2 County Meath Retail Strategy

In relation to Navan, the strategy identifies the significant retail potential due to the town's expansion and attraction. Its findings show that approximately 93% of convenience expenditure by the resident population is spent in retail outlets located in Meath. The adopted retail strategy continues to emphasise and promote Navan's role at the top of the county's retail/shopping hierarchy.

### 2.3.3 Navan UDC Development Plan 1996

It is the intention of the planning authority to facilitate the development of Navan as the county's principal administrative, service, commercial and cultural centre. Sufficient land will be zoned in this and succeeding plans to satisfy primarily long term commercial needs of the town. Other land uses such as residential and industrial will be mainly catered for on lands outside the UDC boundary and thus will be the subject of the Environs Plan for Navan.

### 2.3.4 Navan Environs Development Plan 1997

The SDZ lands lie within the area identified as Navan Environs. The Navan Environs Development Plan relates to the area directly outside of Navan Urban District Council. The residential zoned lands at Clonmagadden lie within the Navan Environs Development Plan.

It is the policy of the development plan to ensure that adequate serviced lands are available for housing development in both public and private sectors. In the 1997 plan for Navan Environs, a further 280hectares of lands were zoned residential in addition to the 480hectares zoned residential in the 1989 plan. This level of provision is geared towards facilitating the expansion of Navan within and beyond the five year period of the plan.

In relation to estate type development, the planning authority intends to implement the policies outlined below:

- To ensure a high standard of design and layout facilitating pedestrian movement and controlling vehicular traffic
- To co-ordinate and facilitate the development of an efficient road network system within and between residential areas (existing and proposed)
- To ensure the linkage of adjoining housing estates by pedestrian access ways. Where possible such links should run through public open space, and avoid the use of long narrow alleys
- To encourage the provision of shared open spaces
- To avoid a monotonous pattern in house type through diversity and variations. Such variations should be within an overall theme

**Public Open Space:** It is the policy of the planning authorities to ensure that public open space provides visual amenity and is overlooked for supervision reasons by as many houses as possible. It is policy that open space shall be integrated into the overall design of the housing layout and form part of a

hierarchical framework, ranging from children's playlots to larger active areas.

**Roads:** In order to facilitate the anticipated growth of the town, it is the policy of the plan to improve the urban road network and to establish a road system designed to serve the projected land use pattern.

An important consideration in land use planning and decision-making for the Navan area will be the minimisation of the need to travel by car so as to moderate future traffic growth and minimise the environmental impacts of transport. The proportion of pedestrian and cycle routes will form part of this policy.

### 2.3.5 Review of Navan and Environs Plan 2003

The review of the Navan UDC 1996 Development Plan and 1997 Navan Environs Development Plan was substantially underway when the Draft Planning Scheme was placed on public display. The Navan Draft Development Plan was placed on public display in late July 2003. The Navan Development Plan was adopted on 27 November 2003 just before the planning authority made the Draft Planning Scheme on 1 December 2003. The SDZ Draft Planning Scheme was prepared in a manner consistent with the draft, and subsequently adopted, Navan Development Plan 2003. This was acknowledged in the reasons and considerations of the An Bord Pleanála decision whereby the Draft Planning Scheme had regard to the Navan Development Plan 2003 - 2009.

### 2.3.6 General Planning and Other Statutory Requirements

#### 2.3.6.1 Social/Affordable Housing

All planning applications for the site will comply with the County Housing Strategy under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The housing strategy for Meath County Council was adopted on 3 November 2001. In respect of the Navan area, Part V housing requirements were reviewed as part of the development plan process and as such any SDZ planning

application will comply with any future adopted amendments to the housing strategy.

The guidelines state that the planning scheme should include objectives such as:

- To provide for an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to cater for the range of housing needs
- To encourage mixed and balanced communities in order to counteract undue social segregation
- To provide for the provision of social and affordable housing as allowed for under Section 96 of the Planning and Development Act

### **2.3.7 Development Plan Standards**

The provisions of the Clonmagadden SDZ Planning Scheme shall apply to consideration of applications for permission in the SDZ. Where matters are not directly covered in the Clonmagadden SDZ Planning Scheme itself, the provisions of the Navan Development Plan shall apply.

**3 DESCRIPTION OF LANDS**

**3.1 Location and Extent of Lands**

The planning scheme covers approximately 38 hectares (94 acres) of lands zoned for a residential Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) located to the north of Navan between the Kingscourt Road and the Slane Road. The lands lie directly to the north of the existing Blackcastle housing estate.

The northeastern boundary of the lands is delineated by a hedgerow and stream, which runs to the River Boyne. The northern boundary to the west cuts through an existing field.

The southern boundary of the site comprises back gardens of an existing and well established housing estate named Blackcastle.

The western boundary that runs along the Kingscourt Road, comprises of one existing farmhouse. On the opposite side of the Kingscourt Road, there are a number of detached dwellings and some existing business. The eastern site boundary has a road frontage onto the Slane Road of 100 metres.

This portion of the site is surrounded on both sides by detached dwellings.

Currently, the lands within the SDZ are predominately under

agricultural use.

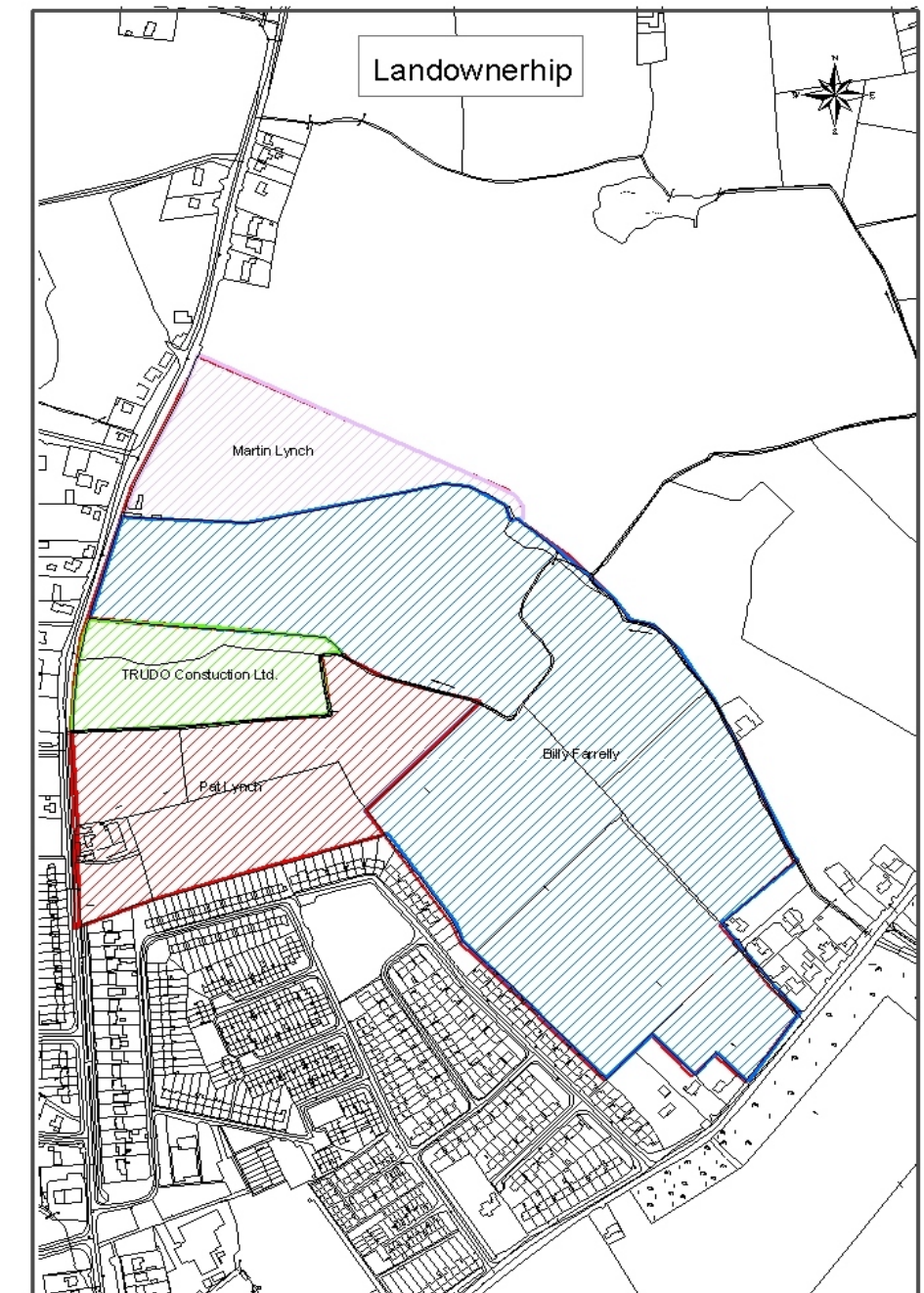
The natural features on the site are indicated on the Ecological Site Characteristics Map.

**3.2 Land Ownership**

The lands are in the ownership of four landowners - see Map below.



Aerial Photo of Clonmagadden SDZ lands



**4 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**4.1 Biodiversity and Ecology**

The natural features on the site are indicated on the Ecological Site Characteristics Map.

Biodiversity is a global term, referring generally to all aspects of biological diversity especially including species richness, ecosystem complexity and generic variation. It is generally accepted that the ‘precautionary principle’ should apply in cases of loss of biodiversity. Quite apart from the risk that the potential value of different species for human use may be lost, we simply do not know the long-term effects of such damage on our own environment. The impoverishment of human environment and risk of malfunction within the whole ecosystem must also be considered with regard to the damage being more of less permanent in human time-scales. On this basis the more significant ecological areas identified within the SDZ will be retained as far as possible.

**4.1.1 Habitat**

Habitat is the name given to the living place of an organism, or community of organisms. The objective of the Clonmagadden SDZ is to ‘conserve the extent and variety of habitats’. This emphasises the need to consider flora in terms of plant communities, which have symbolic relationships with each other, and with the fauna, that all together make up a viable system. Loss of a single species may have implications for all the others. Similarly, the extent of an animal’s habitat may be very significant in terms of there being sufficient space and resources for feeding and breeding.

**4.1.2 Development**

Nature conservation is not contentious in principle, but when ‘balanced’ against need for development, tends to be

marginalised in reality. Sustainable development takes more account of the intrinsic value of the natural capital, and requires that any proposed development - one justified in terms of actual human need - respects the natural environment as the context within which it should fit. In particular development should be integrated with ecology rather than ignoring it or actively destroying it.

The following points are essential practical measures that can provide an explicit spatial framework at site scale within the Clonmagadden SDZ.

**4.1.3 Refuges**

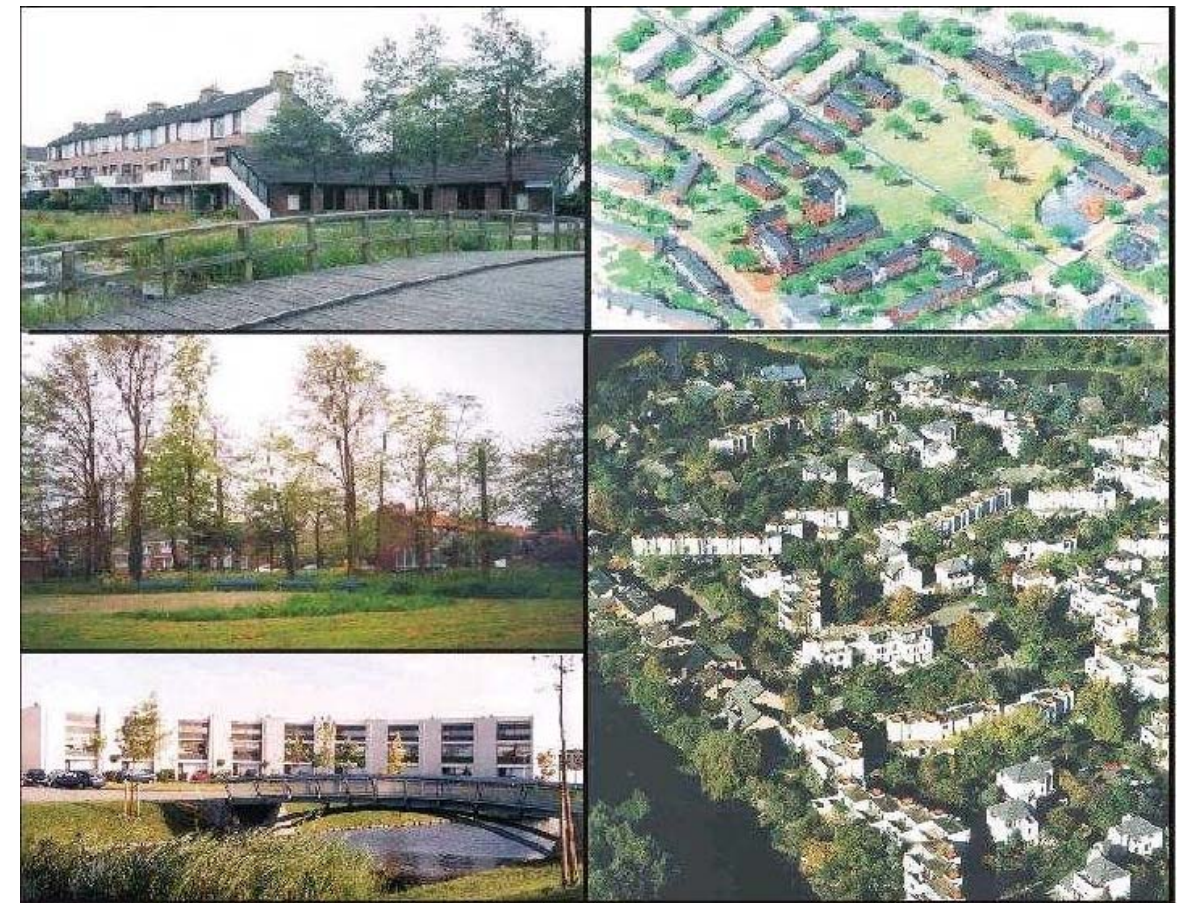
Within Clonmagadden SDZ some areas of existing semi-natural ecology will be maintained. In particular it is proposed to maintain as many ecological and existing landscape features (e.g. hedgerows, streams, ponds, etc.) as are consistent with the development of the area.

**4.1.4 Corridors**

To permit the potential movement of wildlife within the plan lands, and indeed to provide a sense of continuity between town and county ‘green corridors’ of indigenous vegetation (with a minimum width of, say, 4 metres) are proposed. Existing streams can provide potentially useful linear features in this respect.

**4.1.5 Hedgerows**

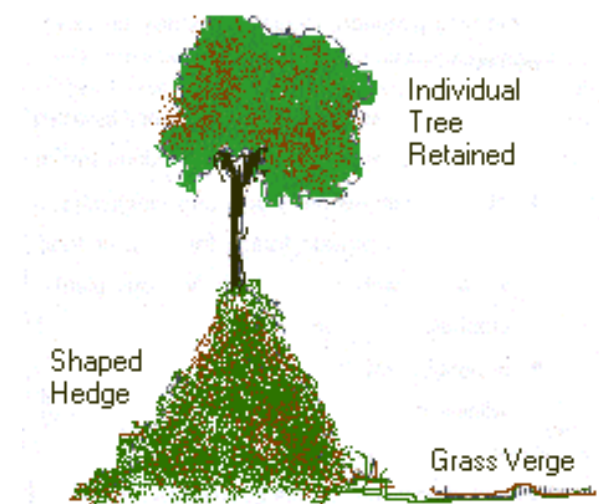
These are traditional Irish landscape features, unfortunately much reduced as a natural resource by uncontrolled removal.



**Integration of Ecology and Development**

With adequate clearance on one or both sides, they have the valuable qualities of a corridor, as described above. Hence existing hedges within the Clonmagadden SDZ area will be regarded as ‘critical capital’, subject generally to modification but not complete destruction. New hedges can be planned, with attention given to species selection and appropriate management regime.

**Management of Hedgerows**





#### 4.1.6 Stepping Stones

While it may sometimes be impractical to join refuges together with corridors, small areas of vegetation are proposed within the Clonmagadden SDZ to provide shelter for wildlife in transit between them. Rear gardens also contribute to a network of natural open space, provided that the garden enclosures are sufficiently open, especially at low level.

#### 4.1.7 Water Habitat

It is a truism that 'water is life'. In the case of the Clonmagadden SDZ, it is proposed to provide a water feature at the north of the site within an existing wetland area. The Clonmagadden Stream and a number of field drains (which can be kept as part of the retention of hedgerows) will run into this pond.

#### 4.1.8 Conservation Strategy

Planning in the past century has been much concerned with the relationship between town and country. While it is not necessarily desirable to blur the distinction between them - thereby losing the advantages of both - it is useful as in the case of Clonmagadden to provide for green corridors of open space that pass from the countryside into the SDZ site area.

### 4.2 Soil and Geology

#### 4.2.1 Soil

Reference to the generalised Soil Map of Ireland (An Foras Taluntais, 1980) indicates that the site is underlain by Luvisol. Luvisol is equivalent to grey brown podzolics, which have a leached soil with strongly developed horizons. The presence of Luvisol soil is considered an indicator of a clay enriched subsoil.

#### 4.2.2 Subsoils

Reference to the Quaternary Map, contained in the Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Meath (GSI, 1997), indicates that

the majority of the Clonmagadden site is underlain by till derived from Lower Palaeozoic rocks. This classification indicates that the unconsolidated material is composed of fine material, i.e. predominantly clay, which resulted from the erosion and breaking of Lower Palaeozoic aged rocks.

The material to the extreme north and north-east of the site is classified as Gravels derived from Lower Palaeozoic Rocks.

This was the limit of the excavator utilised in the pitting programme. The excavation of the trial pits was terminated for various factors.

#### 4.2.3 Bedrock

Two distinct rock formations are recorded underlying the site. The northern portion of the site is underlain by the Britstown Formation (BW), which is the oldest rock type within the Grangegeeth Block. It is composed of well bedded volcanoclastic and volcanic rocks interbedded with siltstone and shale. The southern portion of the site is underlain by the Navan Group (undifferentiated) (NAV). The Navan Group incorporates a tight lithological sequence comprising a mixture of mudstone, muddy limestone, shale and calcareous sandstone.

### 4.3 Groundwater

Reference to the Groundwater Protection Scheme (GWPS) for County Meath indicates that the aquifer potential beneath the site varies from Poor to Locally Important. The northern half of the site is underlain by bedrock that is classified as a Poor Aquifer Resource, which is generally unproductive except in localised zones (PI). The southern half of the site is underlain by a Locally Important Aquifer, which is moderately productive only in localised zones (LI).

### 4.4 Topography

In general the site slopes significantly downwards in a northerly direction from 56 metres O.D. at Blackcastle to 46 metres O.D. at the northern edge of the site, a drop of 10 metres. Advantage has been taken of this to provide higher buildings in the northern area generally below the 52 metre OD level and lower buildings on the higher ground adjoining the Blackcastle estate.