

**Review of Economic Development Sites and Residential Lands regarding the
Proposed Variation No. 3 (Phase 3b) for Meath County Council – *Navan***

**Review of Economic Development Sites regarding the Proposed Variation No. 3
(Phase 3b) for Meath County Council -*Kells***

02 December 2016

This report has been prepared by John Spain Associates for Meath County Council. It provides an independent review of economic development sites and residential lands in respect of the proposed Variation 3 (Phase 3b) in Navan (the County Town) and Kells.

A separate report has been prepared by PMCA Economic Consulting setting out an economic assessment of development sites in Navan and Kells.

As instructed by Meath County Council, the scope of works for both this report and the report prepared by PMCA comprises the following:

- **Economic**
 - An analysis of all existing employment land banks in the settlements in terms of their
 - Suitability in terms of attracting end users
 - Sufficiency
 - Appropriateness in terms of providing choice of investment location
 - Constraints
 - Potential locations of any additional employment lands
 - An analysis of the potential impact of Brexit on employment development in the towns
 - Identification of opportunities/challenges in terms of development of the areas as employment hubs
 - In respect of Navan, the County Town, the following should also be specifically addressed: hospital site and food hub.
- **Planning**
 - In addition to planning inputs to the matters listed above, the following require specific planning inputs
 - Navan: In accordance with the Government's Action Plan for Housing (2016) and having regard to its status as a Large Growth Town 1 in the Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022), Meath County Council is seeking to identify and develop strategies to remove infrastructural blockages to delivery of residential development; an analysis will therefore be required as to how best to address this matter having regard to the Core Strategy
 - Navan: Opportunities for connectivity are presenting themselves in Navan in light of an ongoing public realm study and work by Retail Excellence Ireland, an analysis will therefore be required as to how best to address this matter
 - Kells and East Meath: Meath County Council is seeking to identify and develop strategies to remove infrastructural blockages to delivery of residential development; an analysis will therefore be required as to how best to address this matter having regard to the Core Strategy.

This report is focused on the planning considerations relating to the incorporation of the key recommendations of the Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014 - 2022 into the Navan Development Plan 2009 – 2015 and the Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019. This report seeks to advise on options for further facilitating sustainable employment development in Navan and Kells, should any such options be required.

In addition, having regard to the publication of the Action Plan for Housing the report also examines matters relating to delivery of housing, particularly in Navan given its status in the settlement hierarchy. In this respect, this report seeks to identify and best develop strategies to remove infrastructural blockages to the delivery of residential development in Navan in the context of the 2016 Action Plan for Housing and having regard to Navan's status as a Large Growth Town 1 in the RPGs, and given the Core Strategy of the Meath CDP;

Navan

As part of the terms of reference of this assignment, we were asked to identify and best develop strategies to remove infrastructural blockages to the delivery of residential development in Navan in the context of the 2016 Action Plan for Housing and having regard to Navan's status as a Large Growth Town 1 in the RPGs, and given the Core Strategy of the Meath CDP.

We have also been asked to advise on options for further facilitating sustainable employment development in Navan, should any such options be required.

We have identified the following lands as being of strategic importance to the economic future of Navan:

1. Nevinstown

- There is a Hospital Site located off the Rathaldron Road, at Nevinstown (identified as site FP1 within the Navan Development Plan Land Use Zoning Map; and

2. Farganstown

- These lands are located to the east of the town centre, situated between Boyne Road and the R153 Kentstown Road (identified as site FP1 within the Navan Development Plan Land Use Zoning Map).

3. Liscarton

- These lands are located to the east of the town centre and comprise of an existing employment area and cow plot. The lands proximate to the area present opportunities to facilitate the natural expansion of existing businesses at this location.

Nevinstown

The Meath County Development 2013 – 2019 contains an objective, SOC POL 31, which seeks *"To facilitate the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the provision of a new Regional Hospital in Navan."* This follows the identification of Navan as the optimum location for the development of a regional hospital for the north-east region in the Health Partnership Report published in 2008.

The Nevinstown lands are the Council's preferred site for the development of a new hospital facility.

The Nevinstown lands are zoned under the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 for 'G1 - Community and Infrastructure' and 'WL - White Lands' development purposes and is subject to Settlement Objective OBJ 16 within the NDP which states that the Council will seek:

"To prepare Framework Plan for lands designated FP1 (as outlined below) in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, and to actively secure the implementation of these plans and the achievement of the specific objectives indicated below. Development of these lands shall only proceed on the basis of an agreed overall Framework Plan, the availability of water and waste water services associated infrastructure including the phased provision of these services and the timely provision of the relevant sections of the Local Distributor Road network, where applicable:

FP 1 relates to lands off the Rathaldron Road at Nevinstown which are subject to a G1, H1 and 'White Lands' zoning objective. This area is intended primarily for community facilities to provide for the Regional Hospital and ancillary healthcare uses and shall also provide for inter alia the following:

- 1. The timely delivery of LDR 3 Local Distributor Road linking the Rathaldron Road to the Athboy Road*
- 2. A high standard of design, finish and layout;*
- 3. A comprehensive landscaping plan;*
- 4. Infrastructural requirements including access for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities, car parking and vehicle turning, and;*
- 5. Provision of adequate public lighting and footpaths throughout the lands.*

It shall be a requirement of the Planning Authority that all development proposals are in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Plan. It is noteworthy that there is an additional specific objective pertaining to these lands in relation to the proposed Regional Hospital. (Map No. 2 Development Objective refers). Regard shall be had to this objective as part of any Framework Plan for the subject lands."

The Nevinstown lands are identified in Figure 1 overleaf.

We have been advised by Meath County Council that discussions have taken place between the Council and the operator of Tara Mines, who have carried out further technical studies of the lands identified to accommodate the Hospital, and arising out of the study findings, further revision will be required to the zoning map in respect of the development site.

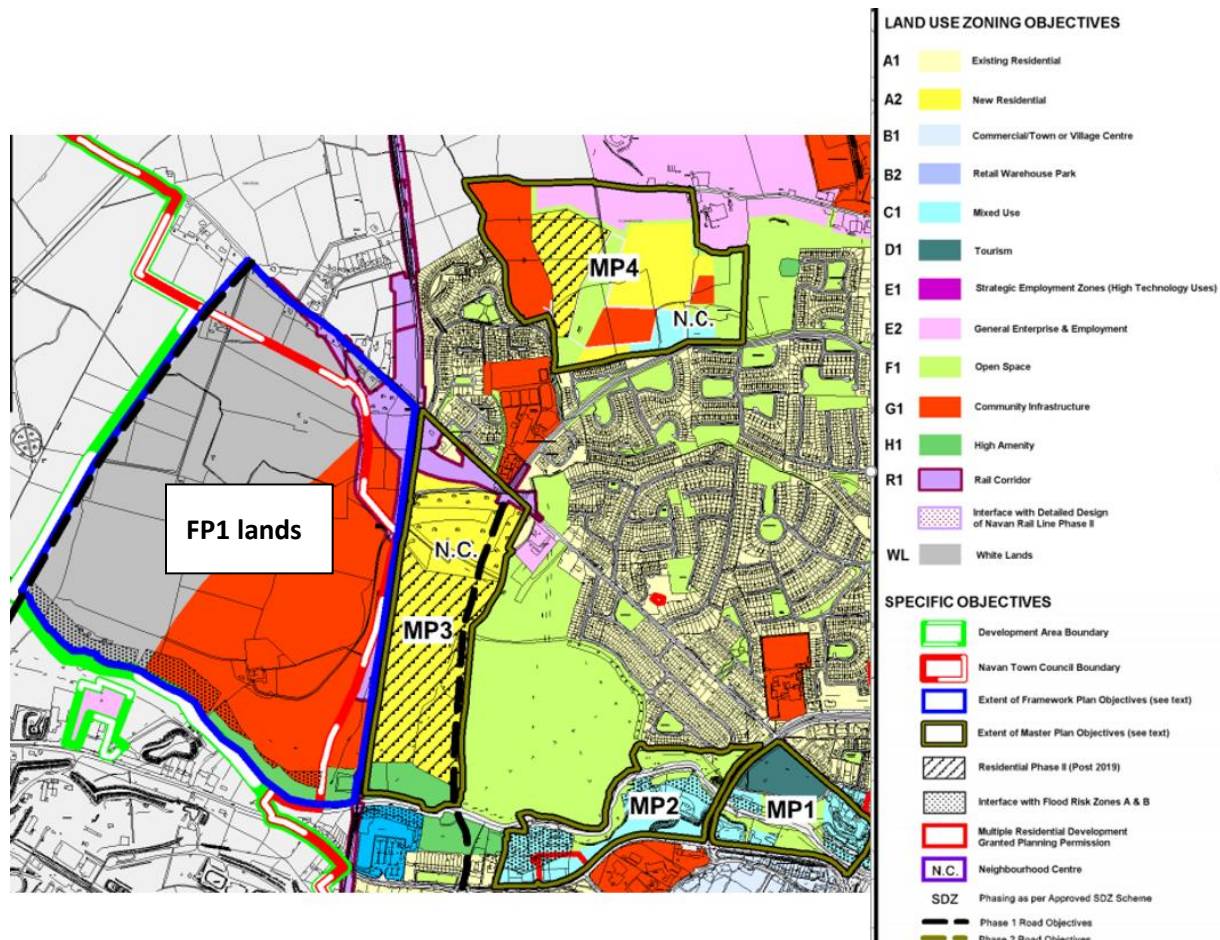


Figure 1: Extract of Navan Development Plan 2009 - 2015 Land Use Zoning Map with the Nevinstown lands identified

As has been stated, the Nevinstown lands are the Council's preferred site for the development of a new hospital facility. The lands are, however, currently constrained in terms of access and connectivity, especially to the south and the Town Centre. Poor access and connectivity are likely to impact on the future development of these lands.

In order to address this significant constraint, the Council should give consideration to prioritising the implementation of the LDR 3 Local Distributor Road objective, which would link Rathaldron Road with the N51 and the Town Centre. Construction of this road will have the benefit of providing significant increased connectivity between largescale residential development at Rathaldron, to the north-west of the town, with the Town Centre, various schools and sports facilities including Pairc Tailteann GAA grounds, the existing hospital and a range of other services and facilities within the town, which are currently not easily accessible from this area. The proposed Local Distributor Road route runs through lands which are identified within the NDP as Residential Phase II, identified as site 'MP3', with the northern part running through Phase 1, New Residential, lands. The proposed Local Distributor Road will also serve the Nevinstown lands.

We have been advised that, having reviewed the Meath County Development 2013 – 2019 Core Strategy in respect of the quantum of zoned land within the town for residential development, Meath County Council has established that the Strategic Development Zone lands at Clonmagadden to the north of Navan Town Centre, whilst not included in calculations relating to the overall quantum of residential

zoned land at Navan within the CDP¹, were included in calculations relating to the distribution of new residential units under the Navan Development Plan 2009 – 2015. This situation gives rise to a requirement for alternative distribution of these 500 No. units to other zoned lands within the town.

The Council should give consideration to allocating some of these units to the MP3 lands in order to secure the following improvements for Navan:

- 1) to deliver the new Local Distributor Road, which will serve to significantly improve access and connectivity between the Rathaldron area and the Town Centre;
- 2) to provide a sustainable live work community in close proximity to the future hospital, which will itself become a major employer in Navan in the future; and

Navan is identified as a ‘*Large Growth Town 1*’ within both the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 (CDP) and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022 (RPGs). The town is identified within the CDP as the primary growth centre within Meath and, in this respect, the achievement of critical mass is vital to the delivery of sustainable growth within the county. The delivery of additional housing, as part of the prioritisation of the delivery of the LDR 3 Local Distributor Road will assist in achieving critical mass and will provide an appropriate means of access to the strategic Nevinstown development lands.

Navan is also identified as a Primary Growth Town in the RPGs, within the context of the Greater Dublin Area and is a main centre of activity outside of the core Dublin City area, within the region. It has been prioritised for population growth and serves a pivotal role in servicing the surrounding area with employment opportunities. The RPGs outline that in relation to the economic potential of Navan, *“Potential remains in developing and expanding business and technology such as manufacturing, international services and higher order retail in the town and its environs. Health and medical services together with the development of a digital economy also have potential as strong economic sectors in the region.”* With particular reference to the ability of Navan to accommodate an additional hospital, the RPGs set out that *“a HSE study has identified Navan as the optimum location for a new hospital to serve the northeast region.”* Prioritisation of the delivery of the LDR 3 Local Distributor Road is considered critical to the provision of an appropriate means of access to serve the Nevinstown lands, also providing additional housing in a close proximity to these strategic development lands, in a sustainable live/work community model.

The release of the MP3 lands represents an organic and sustainable extension of the town, particularly in the context of the delivery of key infrastructure to assist in delivering the economic potential of the town. The provision of the LDR 3 Local Distributor Road in conjunction with residential development will deliver a highly sustainable new residential community within the town centre. The Council has previously identified a sustainable live/work community opportunity at Dunboyne North, which will assist in addressing current unsustainable out-commuting patterns for people living in Meath and it is considered the MP3 lands would serve a broadly similar function, with new residential development providing residential accommodation options which will support the development of the Nevinstown lands and allow future employees of the new hospital to live in close proximity to their place of work. The provision of the LDR 3 Local Distributor Road will also serve to significantly enhance connectivity between these lands and schools, employment sites, the existing hospital and a range of services and amenities within the north end of the town centre. For this reason, the MP3 lands are considered to have significant

¹ In accordance with Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Circular PSSP6/2010 *Guidance Note on Core Strategies*, the SDZ lands at Clonmagadden were not included in the calculation of residential zoned land at Navan (see Table 2.4 of the CDP)

advantages terms of their ability to accommodate and deliver a sustainable residential community. The release of these lands for residential development as part of the Phase 1 residential development would ensure the overarching residential development strategy at Navan is maintained.

The delivery of the LDR 3 Local Distributor Road will also act as a catalyst for the delivery of subsequent phases of housing development at the Clonmagadden SDZ site. The Clonmagadden SDZ was approved by An Bord Pleanála in 2004. No construction activity has taken place since and its eventual full delivery requires the completion of the distributor road from Rathaldron Road to N3. The delivery of Phase 2 of the SDZ planning scheme requires prior delivery of the LDR 3 Local Distributor Road, including a bridge. The LDR 3 Local Distributor Road provides key linkages from the north Navan area to the R147 and through to the M3.

Farganstown

The Farganstown lands are zoned under the NDP for a mix of 'E1 – Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)', 'E2 – General Enterprise and Employment', 'A1 – Existing Residential', 'A2 – New Residential', 'Residential Phase II', 'G1 – Community Infrastructure' and 'F1 – Open Space' development purposes. The Farganstown lands are identified in Figure 2 below.

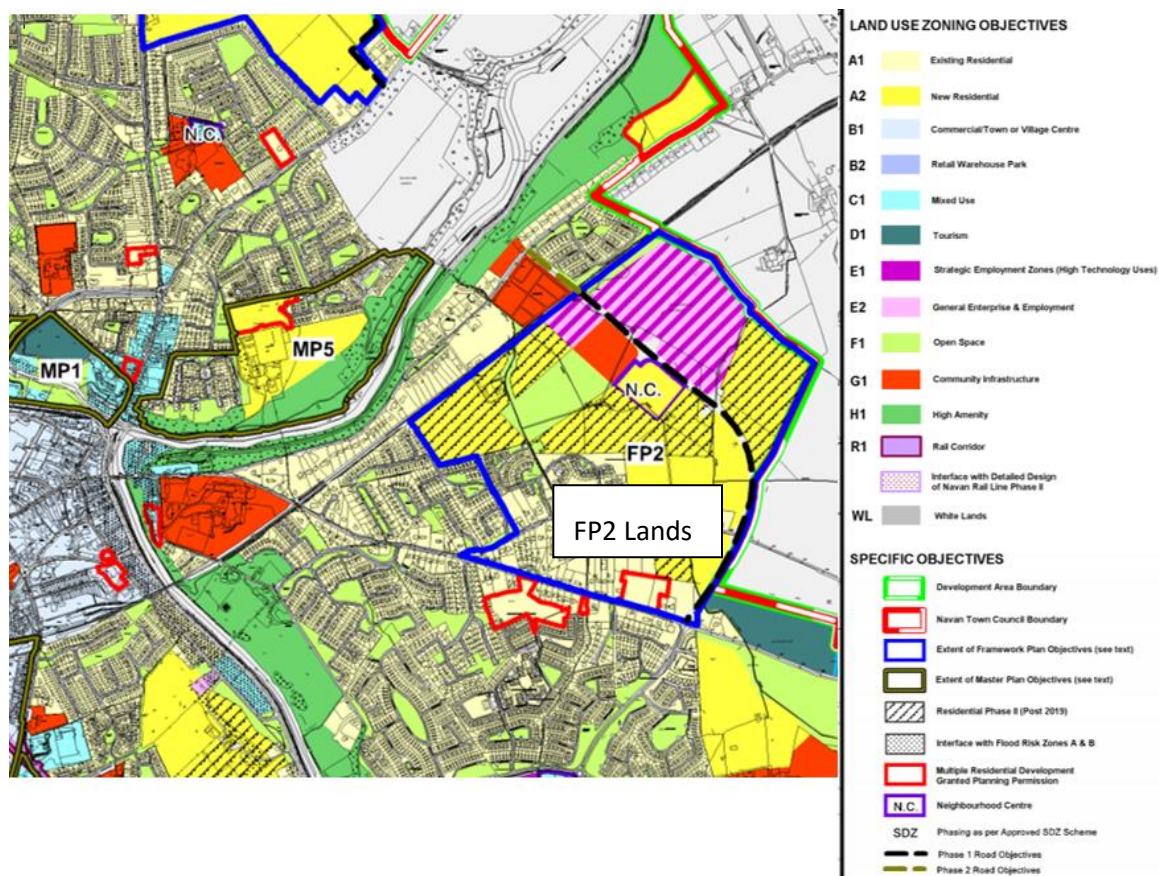


Figure 2: Extract of Navan Development Plan 2009 - 2015 Land Use Zoning Map with the Farganstown lands identified

The lands are subject to a Framework Plan, *'Framework Plan 2 - Lands at Athlumney, Alexander Reid, Bailis and Ferganstown and Ballymacon'*. The Framework Plan provides an effective means of guiding new development on these lands, also outlining essential social infrastructure requirements and ensuring the delivery of these services in a phased and sustainable manner.

Whilst there is an area of land zoned E1/E2 at Ferganstown, current land use zonings in this area do not provide a sufficient area of land for the delivery of significant employment uses. Development of these lands is contingent on the delivery of Phase 1 of a new Local Distributor Road, which will ultimately connect Boyne Road and the R153 Kentstown Road. Phase 1 of its construction will service the Ferganstown lands from the R153 Kentstown Road and run northwards from the R153 as far as the railway line.

The Council should give consideration to prioritising the delivery of Phase 1 of the proposed Local Distributor Road 6, which will service the lands from the R153 Kentstown Road. The Framework Plan for the lands outlines the importance of this new road to the development of the area, confirming that *"Critical to the development of the area is the development of LDR 6 as indicated in the Development Plan. This main distributor will provide for vehicular access of an appropriate standard and open the area for development. Given the unsuitability of the existing roadways serving the Framework Plan area, which are narrow throughout most of their length, it is evident that traffic will be redirected via the proposed Local Distributor Road LDR 6. Its development, will, of necessity, be a priority."* The proposed road route bisects the FP2 lands, with Residential Phase II and E1 / E2 zonings on its eastern side and a mix of uses on its western side. As part of the process of identifying additional Phase I residential lands, it is recommended that the Council should allocate surplus residential capacity to the Ferganstown lands on the western side of the Local Distributor Road 6 in order to secure the following:

- The provision of a vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access of an appropriate standard to allow and serve for the development of the area;
- to provide a sustainable live work community.

The Council should also consider rezoning the Residential Phase 2 lands on the eastern side of the Local Distributor Road LDR 6 for a mix of E1 / E2 development, similar to the zoning of the north-adjointing lands, in order to provide the 20-acre quantum of land required to accommodate a significant employment use.

Having regard to the extent of residential zoning in this area east of the town centre, and the comparably low provision of employment zoned lands, the Council should also give consideration to zoning additional lands for employment development, on the eastern side of the Local Distributor Road 6. The provision of additional employment (E1/E2) zoning in this respect will serve to extend the availability of land for employment development in Navan, in a strategic location, benefitting from synergies with in tandem residential development in the area.

As has been set out previously, as part of the assessment of options for the Nevinstown lands, Navan is the primary growth centre within Meath and, in this respect, the achievement of critical mass is vital to the delivery of sustainable growth within the county. In the context of its Primary Growth Town status in the GDA within the RPGs, there is a need to respond positively, where possible, to potential sustainable economic developments which will enhance economic performance within Navan. The site is at present dependent on the delivery of Phase 1 of the Local Distributor Road LDR 6 as it will provide the means of access to the lands. The release of the Residential Phase II lands will assist with the delivery of the Local Distributor Road LDR 6.

Releasing the Residential Phase II lands will also provide for a sustainable live/work community model, similar to that envisaged at to the west of the town, on the MP3 lands. The Residential Phase I and Phase II lands in this area provide one of the largest overall parcels of residential zoned land in the town and it is anticipated that delivery of a substantial amount of new housing in this area, in tandem within the gradual evolution of the BVFH vision will offer a number sustainable development synergies.

Liscarton

The lands at Liscarton Industrial Estate are zoned for 'E2 – General Enterprise & Employment' development within the Navan Development Plan 2009 - 2015. The Liscarton lands are identified in Figure 3 below.

The Council should give consideration to additional 'E2 – General Enterprise & Employment' zoning at this location, in order to facilitate opportunities for sustainable extension of the range of business uses provided on the lands. The lands benefit from a high degree of connectivity to both Navan and Kells, as they are situated directly fronting the R147 Navan / Kells Road, a short distance north of Navan. The lands are also in close proximity to the M3 Motorway, via the N52.

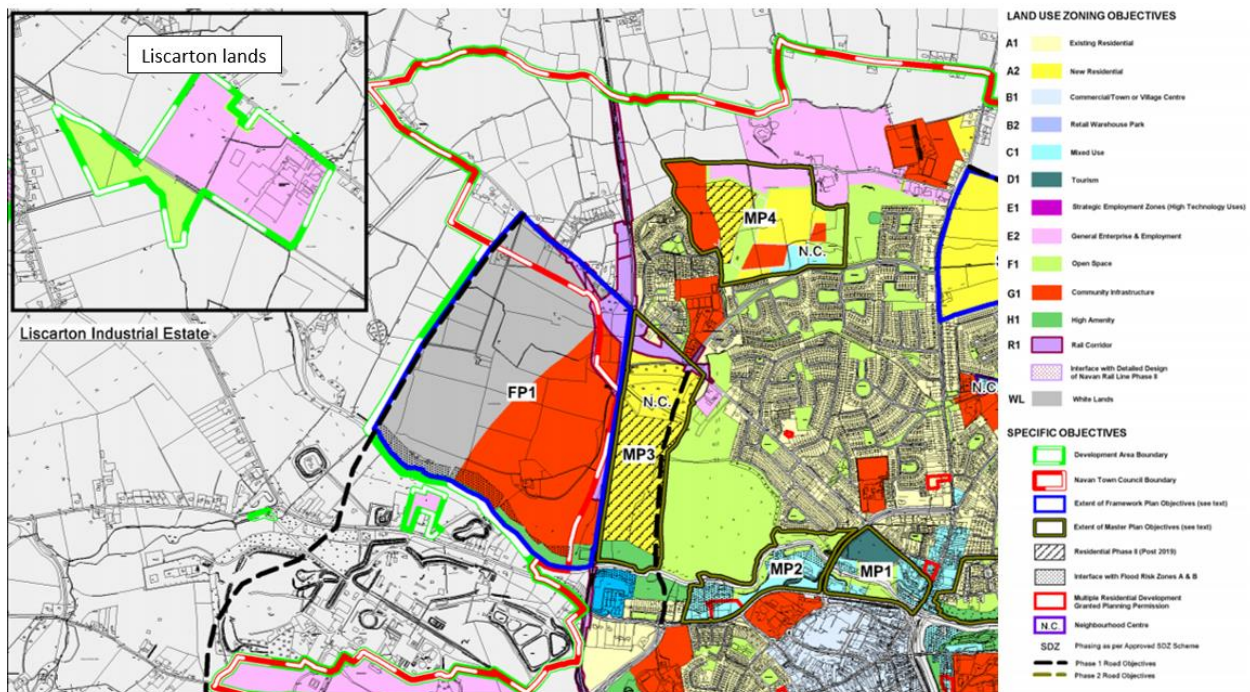


Figure 3: Extract of Navan Development Plan 2009 - 2015 Land Use Zoning Map with the Liscarton lands identified

Trim Road South

The Council should give consideration to zoning a parcel of land to the south of the town centre as 'White Lands' in order that should any sustainable economic development proposal be brought forward, the Council would be in a position to facilitate such a development, where possible. The lands in question are identified in Figure 4 overleaf.

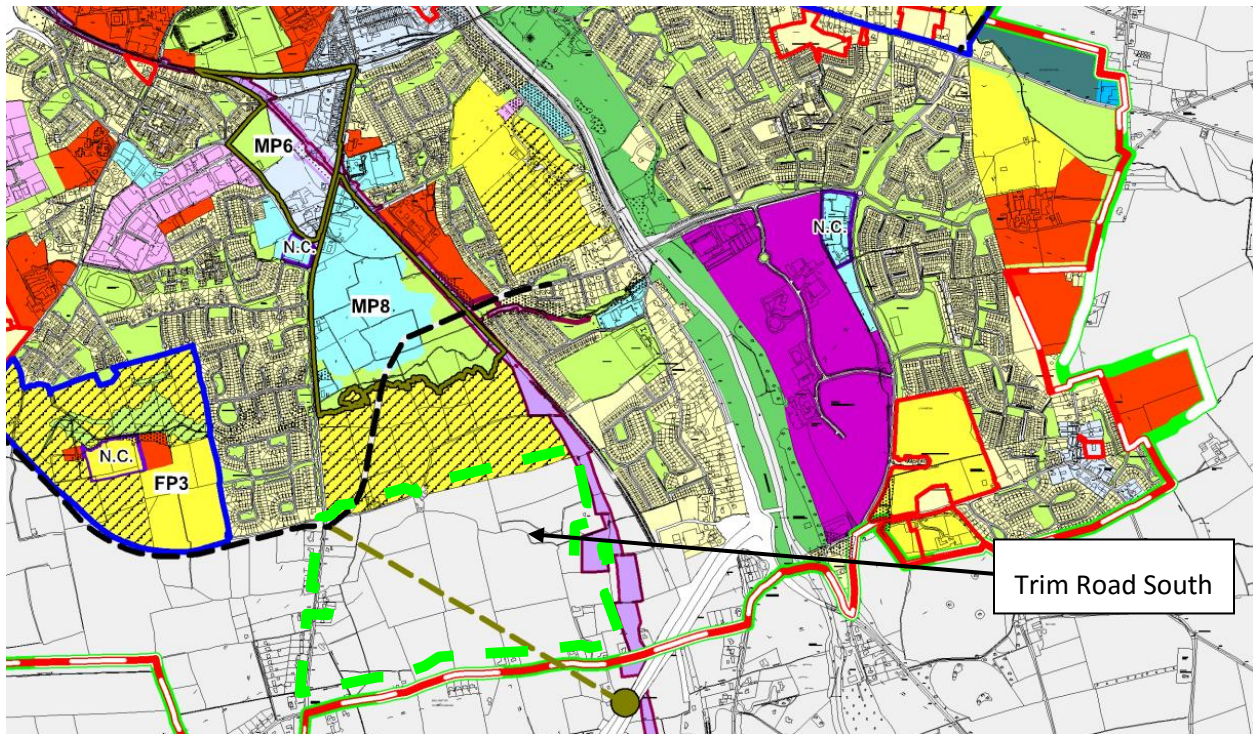


Figure 4: Extract of Navan Development Plan 2009 - 2015 Land Use Zoning Map with the Lands south of Navan town centre, which provide an opportunity for sustainable employment development, identified

The lands are strategically located on the Trim Road, close to the link road between Navan and the M3 motorway and are provided with a high degree of regional connectivity, via the motorway network. The lands also benefit from the objective within the NDP to provide a road connection from the M3 link road to the planned outer ring road. The delivery of this road connection in the future will significantly enhance connection between the subject site and other locations to the south and west of the town centre. The lands are also closely related to the Navan rail corridor reservation, which passes to the east. These lands have the potential to address the strategic needs of the town in the future

Trim Road/Railway Street (Town Centre)

We were also requested by Meath County Council to consider opportunities for new employment creation on the site currently occupied by County Hall.

Meath County Council's Railway Street offices are considered to present a key employment development opportunity, following the planned relocation of the Council to Buvinda House. The Council should give consideration to zoning the Railway Street offices for employment development and, in particular, offices, to facilitate inward investment in the town. The lands are located in a key location between the emerging cultural quarter of the town, the town centre to the north and the town centre expansion area, the MP 6 lands, to the south. The MP6 lands currently have planning permission (Reg. Ref. NT900002) for a substantial town centre development, including a significant quantum of retail development. They also have the benefit of an approved Masterplan.

The redevelopment of the Council lands as a key employment development in this location has the potential to significantly enhance linkages between the town centre, the cultural quarter and the town centre expansion area. The Council's Railway Street offices are identified in Figure 5 overleaf.

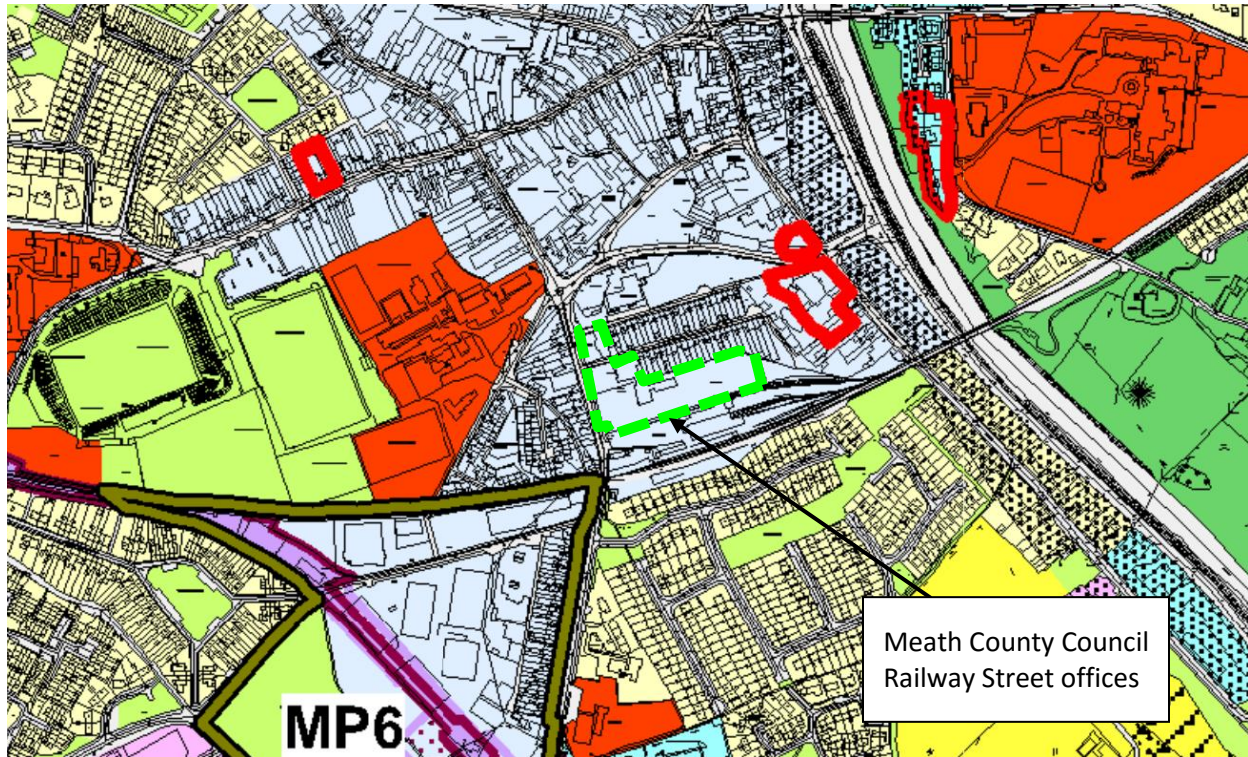


Figure 5: Extract of Navan Development Plan 2009 - 2015 Land Use Zoning Map with the Meath County Council's Railway Street offices identified

Kells

Meath Enterprise and Meath County Council have been awarded funding as part of the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) Pilot Initiative. Phase 1 of the scheme will include the development of high spec incubation and training facilities to attract and support established tech start-ups and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). In order to build on successes experienced by the REDZ initiative at Kells in the future, there is a requirement to identify additional lands, on which to facilitate additional enterprise and employment development. There is an opportunity, following the successful attraction of Facebook and Shire to other areas of the county, to target Foreign Direct Investment at the Kells area and, as such, there is a need to ensure that there is a sufficient quantum of zoned land in the area, to facilitate such FDI presence in the future.

Kells Business Park Expansion

In view of the funding and potential investment opportunities and Kells' other key attributes, including the fact that employment in the wider Kells area has grown since the recession, consideration should be given to removing the Phase II designation currently on the lands to the immediate east of Kells Business

Park. This suggested approach would serve to enhance the sufficiency of the park and its overall appropriateness as an investment location in the coming years. Figure 6 overleaf presents an extract of the Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019, identifying the Phase 1 and Phase 2 zonings at Kells Business Park.



Figure 6: Extract of the Kells Development Plan 2013 - 2019 Land Use Zoning Map identifying Kells Business Park

The lands south-east of Kells, which are currently zoned 'D1 – Tourism', along the R147 (the lands in question are part of large site zoned principally F1 Open Space) may also have economic/employment potential and should be considered in this light. Figure 7 overleaf identifies the lands in question.



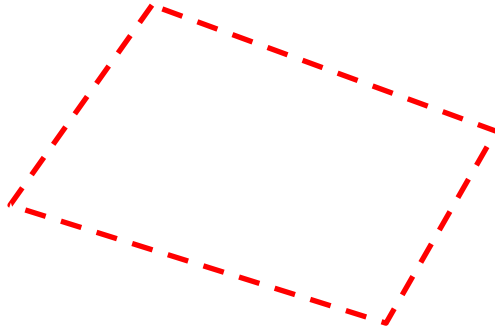


Figure 7: Extract of the Kells Development Plan 2013 - 2019 Land Use Zoning Map identifying lands to the south-east of Kells

The Council should give consideration to rezoning these lands as E1/E3 in order to provide an opportunity for location of FDI with significant land requirements. These lands are well-located, in terms of regional transport connectivity, situated as they are within approximately 2km of Junction 10 of the M3 motorway. The consequential loss of Tourism and Open Space and Tourism zonings is considered unlikely to present any barrier to appropriate tourism developments at Kells in the future, given the substantial amount of land zoned for this purpose to the west of the town.

Kells is identified within the RPGs as falling within the Navan Core Economic Area and it also benefits from being located on a multi-modal growth corridor, with the particular benefit of the close proximity of the M3 motorway to the south. The RPGs envisage that Kells will “*provide a supporting and complimentary role to Navan. Potential exists to develop Kells as part of a tourism cluster and supporting the service and manufacturing role of the County Town and northwest region of the county.*” The recommended rezoning of lands will assist in delivering on the overarching economic development strategy for Kells, within the context of its location within the Navan Core Economic Area.

Lands to the rear of Aldi, on R147 Cavan Road

The lands to the rear of Aldi, on R147 Road and which had been zoned previously, present an additional opportunity to accommodate employment development. The Council should give consideration to zoning these lands for ‘E2 – General Enterprise & Employment’ development purposes. The lands in question are identified in Figure 8 below.

The lands are serviced with an entrance onto the R147 which currently serves the Aldi Discount Foodstore on the lands immediately to the north. The lands are situated adjacent to the N52, which in turn connects onto the M3/N3 at Cloverhill, which then offers a high degree of regional connectivity. The lands are within the established built envelope of Kells and would provide an excellent opportunity for further enterprise and employment development.

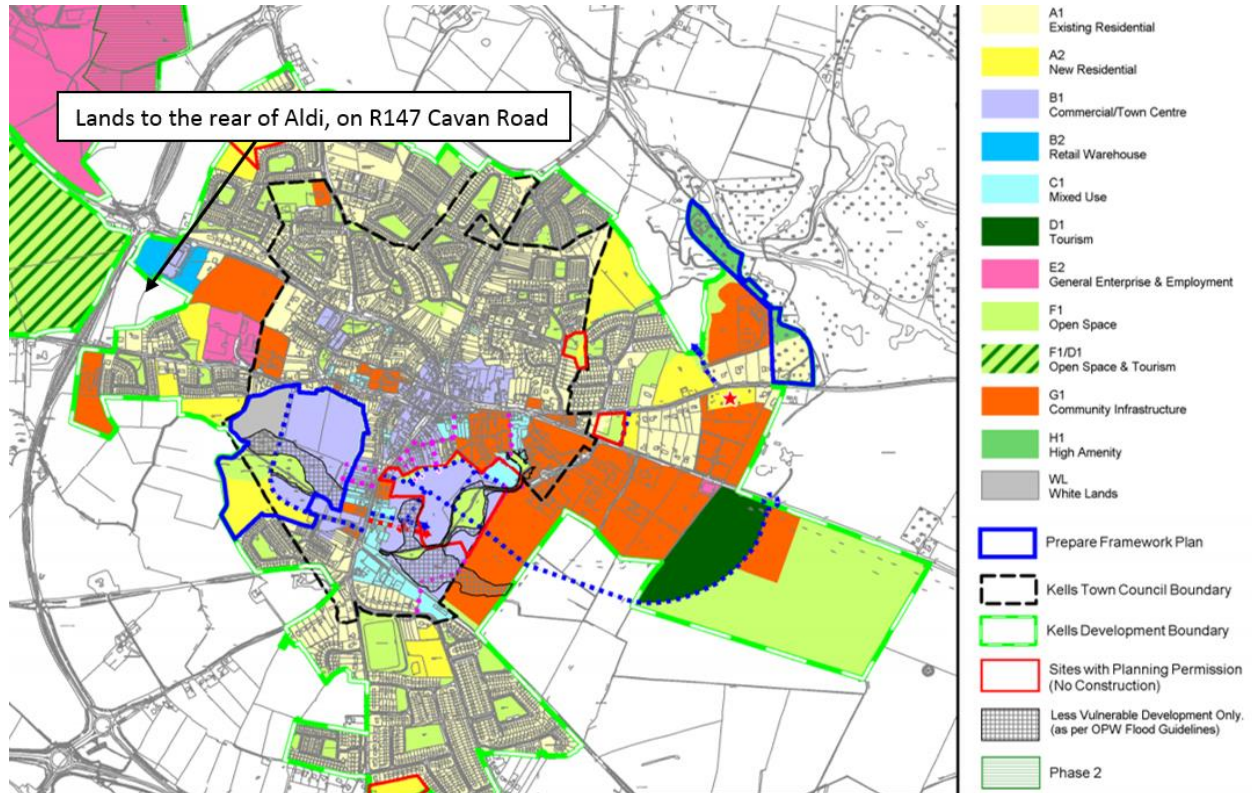


Figure 8: Extract of the Kells Development Plan 2013 – 2019 with the lands to the rear of Aldi, on R147 Road identified

Residential development

The delivery of further economic development could be assisted by the facilitation of more executive-type housing in Kells, which is attractive to the business community. Appropriate housing opportunities comprises an important element of the attractiveness of an area to the business community. The Council should give consideration to, in appropriate circumstances, facilitating the provision of lower density, executive style housing in Kells, while remaining within the Core Strategy parameters..