

# Nobber

## LOCAL AREA PLAN

### 2009-2015

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comhairle chontae na mí  
meath county council



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Table of Contents

<b>PREAMBLE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 The Challenge .....	2
1.2 Purpose of this Plan .....	3
1.3 Local Area Plan Content and Structure .....	4
1.4 The Local Area Plan Process to Date.....	4
1.4.1 Pre-Draft Public Consultation .....	5
1.4.2 Draft Public Consultation .....	7
1.4.3 Material Amendment Public Consultation .....	7
1.5 Local Area Plan's Development Boundary .....	7
1.6 Likely Significant Effects on the Environment.....	8
1.6.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment .....	8
1.6.2 Appropriate Assessment .....	9
<b>2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.....	11
2.1.1 Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Land .....	11
2.1.2 Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 - Variation No. 2 .....	12
2.1.2.1 Residential Implications of Variation No. 2 .....	13
2.2 Review of Previous Plans' Planning Policies And Development Objectives .....	14
<b>3.0 CORE STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 The Vision for the Village .....	17
3.2 Core Policies .....	19
3.2.1 Sustainable Development .....	19
3.2.2 Future Development Proposals .....	20
3.2.3 Land-Uses.....	20
3.2.4 Local Area Plan Implementation.....	21
3.3 Core Objectives.....	21

3.4	Development Boundary .....	23
<b>4.0</b>	<b>VILLAGE CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1	The Village's Strategic Context .....	24
4.2	Historical Development Context .....	24
4.3	The Village's Function and Role ithin The County .....	31
4.4	The Village's Topography.....	31
4.5	The Village's Context .....	32
4.6	Key Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends .....	33
4.6.1	Employment Profile .....	36
4.6.2	Occupational Profile .....	36
4.6.3	Educational Profile .....	36
4.6.4	Housing Structure .....	37
<b>5.0</b>	<b>COMMERCIAL, ECONOMIC AND RETAIL USES .....</b>	<b>39</b>
5.1	Existing Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses .....	39
5.2	Future Commercial, Economic And Retail Development .....	40
5.2.1	Shop-fronts.....	41
5.2.2	Street Furniture .....	41
5.3	Existing Business and Enterprise Use.....	41
5.3.1	Future Business and Enterprise Development .....	42
<b>6.0</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL USES .....</b>	<b>44</b>
6.1	Existing Residential Uses .....	44
6.2	Future Residential Uses .....	44
6.2.1	Social and Affordable Housing .....	45
6.2.2	Serviced residential Sites .....	45
<b>7.0</b>	<b>CIVIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES .....</b>	<b>48</b>
7.1	Existing Civic and Community Facilities .....	48
7.2	Future Civic and Community Development .....	48
<b>8.0</b>	<b>OPEN SPACES AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES .....</b>	<b>50</b>

8.1	Existing Open Spaces and Community Amenities.....	50
8.1.1	The River Dee .....	51
8.1.2	Nobber Motte .....	52
8.1.3	St John's Church of Ireland Site .....	52
8.2	Active and Passive Open Space .....	54
<b>9.0</b>	<b>HERITAGE .....</b>	<b>56</b>
9.1	Existing Heritage .....	56
9.1.1	Archaeological Heritage .....	56
9.2	Built Heritage.....	59
9.2.1	Current Protected Structures.....	59
9.3	Natural Heritage .....	59
9.3.1	The River Dee .....	60
9.3.2	Trees and Hedgerows .....	61
9.3.3	Significant Views & Prospects .....	64
9.3.4	Natural Environment.....	65
<b>10.0</b>	<b>FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>11.0</b>	<b>MOVEMENT AND ACCESS .....</b>	<b>68</b>
11.1	Transportation .....	68
11.2	Pedestrian and Cycling Facilities and Networks .....	69
11.3	Car Parking .....	71
11.4	Public Transportation .....	72
11.5	Rail Line .....	72
<b>12.0</b>	<b>SERVICES AND UTILITIES .....</b>	<b>73</b>
12.1	Waste Water collection and treatment.....	73
12.2	Storm Water .....	73
12.3	Water Supply.....	73
12.4	Other Utility Services: Telecommunications, Antennae, Satellite Dishes and all Ancillary Structures.....	74

<b>13.0 ENERGY EFFICIENCY .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>14.0 WASTE MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>15.0 RE-USE AND REGENERATION OF DERELICT SITES AND BUILDINGS.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>16.0 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY FOR NOBBER .....</b>	<b>78</b>
16.1 Introduction .....	78
16.1.1 Purpose of this Urban Design Strategy .....	78
16.1.2 Methodology.....	78
16.2 Character Areas .....	79
16.2.1 Nobber South .....	80
16.2.2 Nobber North.....	81
16.2.3 Village Centre.....	83
16.2.3.1 Main Street - Existing Urban Form .....	83
16.2.3.2 Main Street - Existing Environmental Condition .....	86
16.2.3.3 Urban Design Vision for the Village Centre .....	88
16.3 General Urban Design Guidance .....	91
16.3.1 Land-Uses.....	91
16.3.2 Topography .....	92
16.3.3 Urban Grain.....	92
16.3.4 Building Heights and Massing .....	92
16.3.5 Architectural Features .....	93
16.4 Implementation.....	94
<b>17.0 LAND USE ZONINGS .....</b>	<b>95</b>
17.1 Land-Use Zoning Objectives Explanatory Notes .....	96
17.2 Zoning Matrix .....	96
<b>18.0 PHASING AND IMPLEMENTATION.....</b>	<b>101</b>
18.1 Introduction .....	101
18.1.1 Various Implementation Frameworks .....	101
18.1.1.1 The Community Grant Scheme.....	101

18.1.1.2	Various Governmental Departments .....	101
18.1.1.3	EU Structural Funds .....	102
18.1.1.4	Conclusion .....	102
18.2	Phasing .....	102
18.3	Contributions .....	103
18.4	Monitoring And Review .....	103
<b>APPENDIX A .....</b>		<b>104</b>
Lists of Persons who made a Submission during the Pre-Draft Public Consultation Phase of the Local Area Plan's Preparation .....		104
Lists of Persons who made a Submission during the Draft Public Consultation Phase of the Local Area Plan's Preparation .....		104
Lists of Persons who made a Submission during the Material Amendments Public Consultation Phase of the Local Area Plan's Preparation .....		105
<b>APPENDIX B .....</b>		<b>106</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment: Screening Report .....		106
Strategic Environmental Assessment: Screening Report of the Proposed Amendments.....		116
Appropriate Assessment: Screening Exercise.....		120
<b>APPENDIX C .....</b>		<b>135</b>
Population Data.....		135
<b>APPENDIX D .....</b>		<b>137</b>
Protected Structures listed within the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013: .....		137
<b>APPENDIX E.....</b>		<b>139</b>
Energy Efficiency: Some Renewable Energy Methods.....		139

List of Figures

Figure One: Cover page of Strategic Issues Booklet compiled for the Pre-Draft Public Consultation held on Wednesday, 17th September 2008 at Nobber Parochial Hall. ....	5
Figure Two: Village Location Map. ....	24
Figure Three: Historical Village Map 1842. ....	27
Figure Four: Historical Village Map 1913. ....	28
Figure Five: Existing Land-Use Map. ....	32
Figure Six: Nobber Electoral Division encompassing Nobber Village. ....	35
Figure Seven: Environmental Parameters Map. ....	38
Figure Eight: The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. ....	75
Figure Nine: Identified 'Character Areas' within the Local Area Plan Development Boundary. ....	79
Figure Ten: Diagrammatic describing Urban Form of Main Street. ....	84
Figure Eleven: SK No.4 Village Improvement Scheme. ....	90

List of Plates

Plate One: Photographs of local community members who attended the Pre-Draft Public Consultation held on Wednesday, 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2008 between 6-8pm in Nobber Parochial Hall. ....	6
Plate Two: Aerial Photograph of the Village. ....	8
Plate Three: Village Centre Area. ....	17
Plate Four: Village Centre Area, photograph taken outside of the St John The Baptist Roman Catholic Church facing south-west. ....	18
Plate Five: Photograph taken along the Kingscourt Road to the north of the Village facing east. ....	18
Plate Six: Photograph taken from Nobber Bridge to the north of the Village facing west looking into Brittas Demesne. ....	25
Plate Seven: Monument erected to the memory of Gerald Cruise and Margaret Plunkett of Brittas with an inscription date of 1619 located within the Graveyard surrounding St John's Church of Ireland. ....	26
Plate Eight: Photograph of Nobber Motte and Bailey taken to the east of Nobber Bridge facing south. ....	29
Plate Nine: Memorial Garden to Turlough O'Carolan who was born in Nobber in the 1670s; reportedly the last of the great Irish Harpists. ....	29
Plate Ten: Nineteenth Century Dwelling constructed to the north of the Village Centre area. ....	30



Plate Eleven: Nineteenth Century Former Dwelling constructed to the south of the Village Centre area, now in use as a Garda Station. ....	30
Plate Twelve: Photograph taken of the drumlin topography to the north-east of the Village within the residential development of 'Muff Crescent' .....	31
Plate Thirteen: The recently constructed 'Cluain Beag' residential development.....	33
Plate Fourteen: The recently constructed 'Bridge Park' residential development. ....	34
Plate Fifteen: The loosely knit pattern of development fronting onto the approach road, photograph taken along the Navan Road facing south.....	34
Plate Sixteen: Photograph of Nobber Village Centre, taken outside of 'Keoghan's' Public House.....	39
Plate Seventeen: Recently constructed commercial developments to the South-East of the Village Centre area. ....	40
Plate Eighteen & Nineteen: Nobber Motors Ltd. and Sean McEntee's Agricultural Merchants and Suppliers. ....	42
Plate Twenty: The residential development of 'Muff Crescent'. ....	44
Plate Twenty-one & Twenty-two: Nobber Fire Station and Saint John the Baptist.....	48
Plate Twenty-three: 'O'Carolan College' Secondary School located along the Navan Road. ....	49
Plate Twenty-four: Old Cemetery adjacent to St John's Church of Ireland. ....	50
Plate Twenty-five: Picture of Nobber GAA Grounds. ....	50
Plate Twenty-six: The River Dee. ....	51
Plate Twenty-seven: Nobber Anglo-Norman Motte and Bailey. ....	52
Plate Twenty-eight: St John's Church of Ireland.....	53
Plate Twenty-nine: A former Milk Stand along the Navan Road. ....	56
Plate Thirty: Stone outbuildings associated with 'Bridge Farm' to the north of the Village. ....	57
Plate Thirty-one & Thirty-two: Entrance gate to St John's Church of Ireland and Graveyard, and a former lime kiln at 'Bridge Farm'. ....	59
Plate Thirty-three: Drumlin landscape to the West of the Village .....	60
Plate Thirty-four & Thirty-five: Hedgerows along the Kingscourt - Navan rail line and stone wall along Nobber Motte and Bridge. ....	61
Plate Thirty-six: The Kingscourt to Navan Rail Line, plate taken looking south from 'Casey's Forge' toward the Village.....	62
Plate Thirty-seven: View of those low lying lands to the West of the Village adjacent to the River Dee which flood during periods of high rainfall.....	66

Plate Thirty-eight: The approach road into the Village from the Navan Road. The New Cemetery is located to the centre right of the Plate. ....	68
Plate Thirty-nine: Hill to the south of the Village Centre area to the east of the Navan Road. ....	81
Plate Forty: Vacant Protected Structure along the Navan Road on approach to Nobber.....	82
Plate Forty-one: Nobber Motors Limited. ....	83
Plate Forty-two: Existing open space area to the front of the current and former Primary Schools.....	86
Plate Forty-three: Canopy of cables along Main Street. ....	88

List of Tables

Table One: Local Area Plan Core Objectives. ....	22
Table Two: Acceptable Building Materials and Finishes within the Village. ....	94
Table Three: Local Area Plan Land-Use Zoning Objectives. ....	95
Table Four: Land-Use Classes. ....	100

## **PREAMBLE**

The Meath County Development Plan, 2007-2013 was adopted on 02nd March 2007. It identified Ballivor, Longwood, Nobber, Slane and Summerhill as 'Key Villages' and specified that the future development of all five villages would be subject to the adoption of Local Area Plans. These plans should be adopted within two years of the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The existing County Development Plan, in conjunction with Variation No. 2 adopted in February, 2008, set the context for this Local Area Plan for Nobber Village.

This Local Area Plan builds upon the broad development objectives and planning policies outlined within the existing County Development Plan by providing a more detailed and comprehensive planning framework to guide future development proposals and the development of Nobber Village itself.

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

Within this document, references to 'the Plan' or 'this Plan' shall denote this Local Area Plan, save where the context requires otherwise. 'The Council' or 'the Planning Authority' shall signify Meath County Council.

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

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Local Area Plan relates to the Village of Nobber in north Co. Meath. It provides a statutory land-use framework for the physical, socio-economic, cultural and recreational development of Nobber. It promotes future development in a coordinated, planned and sustainable manner in order to conserve and enhance the established natural and historical amenities of the Village and its intrinsic character.

This Plan guides and regulates future development through land-use zoning objectives, planning policies and development objectives. Particular regard is also had to any natural landscape features such as the River Dee, archaeological and historical features of interest, open space needs and the existing undulating topography character.

### 1.1 The Challenge

The key challenge to producing this Local Area Plan was the need to create a consensus between the Planning Authority, the general public, landowners, private developers and all interested stakeholders, as to how the future development of Nobber should be undertaken. This also needed to be undertaken in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner. This Plan endeavours to create a built environment that is attractive and distinctive, and which creates a sense of place for those who both live and work within, as well as those who visit, the Village. A further challenge was to provide a document that is sufficiently prescriptive to achieve the pre-determined development objectives and planning policies, while allowing for flexibility to account for economic and social changes that may occur over the Plan's timeframe.

The major issues addressed in this Plan are as follows:

1. **Developing New Residential Communities:** Development and growth of Nobber will take account of the Village's ability to grow in a sustainable manner; without causing unacceptable impacts to the surrounding environment. Overall, the continued growth of well designed, sustainable new residential communities, which are in turn integrated with the existing Village's built environment, are key issues addressed in this Plan.
2. **Built and Natural Heritage:** Nobber has a unique collection of buildings and structures from numerous eras of Irish history. As the Village expands, the character that this built heritage provides will be retained.
3. **Built Form and Consolidation of the Village Centre:** The provision of a compact, vibrant and effective Village Centre is essential if Nobber is to cater for its current and future population needs in a sustainable manner. This Plan provides a comprehensive villagescape plan addressing these issues.
4. **Community, Leisure and Recreation Facilities:** Community, leisure and recreational infrastructure play a vital role in the life of any town or village. Sufficient lands have been reserved for such infrastructure to accommodate both existing and proposed future populations.
5. **Employment/Economic Development:** Planning Authorities are limited in their actions in support of economic development, which will be determined in the first instance by market forces, and secondly by agencies with a remit for specific intervention in this area. Notwithstanding this, Planning Authorities can assist the development of all economic sectors by the implementation of policies relating to:
  - The provision of an adequate and efficient transportation system,

- The zoning of sufficient and appropriately located lands for industrial and commercial development,
- The provision of sanitary services and other urban infrastructure,
- The zoning of adequate residentially zoned lands and the creation of an attractive urban domain to facilitate residency of the projected labour force, and
- Developing the public realm and amenities of Nobber so that the quality of life of employees and residents can be improved.

This Plan addresses each of these items.

6. **Communications and Infrastructure:** Communications and public utilities infrastructure play an indispensable role in everyday life through the provision of a better quality of life for the residents of an area. They also act as an important incentive in attracting economic development and investment to an area. This Plan endeavours to adequately serve the Village in terms of public utilities infrastructure, such as communications, electricity, water supply and wastewater treatment.
7. **Transportation:** This Plan aims seeks any new land-use zonings should be closely linked to and integrated with the existing Village, thereby encouraging more sustainable modes of transportation.

## 1.2 Purpose of this Plan

This Local Area Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Village going forward and will provide for an area specific focus, whereby a detailed assessment of local planning issues can be made and pursued with the benefit of local community involvement. This presents opportunities to set specific goals and development objectives that will seek to guide future development within the Local Area Plan's area. The primary focus of this Local Area Plan is to plan for, and secure, an appropriate level of facilities and services for the Village and the surrounding community.

This Local Area Plan includes policies and objectives, as set-out in the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006, in respect of the following:

- Location, supply and zoning of lands for an initial six-year period, but with an additional longer-term focus in mind,
- The provision and location of land for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, open space, education/ recreation uses or other as considered appropriate,
- Design, density and layout of future residential development,
- Protection of existing residential amenity,
- Infrastructural including environmental, sanitary, water, roads including cycling and pedestrian provision, and
- Amenity strategy including protected structures, architectural conservation areas, open space provision, and the protection of trees, stone walls, hedgerows, etc, if required.

In addition, this Local Area Plan will provide detailed urban development design guidance. The Plan will also identify potential opportunity sites and areas for future development. This Local Area Plan reassessed the development boundary, the land-use zoning map, and the planning policies and development objectives for Nobber outlined originally during the compilation of the Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007, which was later incorporated, unchanged, into the current Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. In short, all land-use zonings, planning policies and development objectives were reassessed on the basis of the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

### 1.3 Local Area Plan Content and Structure

The Local Area Plan is prepared under a number of chapter headings, which are sequentially laid-out as follows:

- Chapter 1:** Sets out the Local Area Plan Process to date, the development boundary and briefly outlines the Plan in the context of the screening process for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan.
- Chapter 2:** Sets out the national, regional and local planning policy context, a review of previous policies and objectives and possible future population levels.
- Chapter 3:** States the vision for the Village, including the core objectives and policies of this Local Area Plan.
- Chapter 4:** Sets out the Village's strategic context, historical development, function and role within the County, and the Village's context.
- Chapters 5-15:** Development Objectives and Planning Policies in relation to numerous planning-related issues within the Village.
- Chapter 16:** Provides a detailed urban design analysis of the Village, which identifies both weaknesses in the Villagescape and environmental improvements to combat such.
- Chapter 17:** Land Use and Zoning Objectives.
- Chapter 18:** Phasing and Implementation.

### 1.4 The Local Area Plan Process to Date

A Local Area Plan follows a specific statutory process, which may take nine or ten months before it is adopted by the Council. The Plan has been prepared following a four stage process, specifically;

1. A survey and analysis of the existing baseline economic, physical and social fabric of the Village and its hinterland,
2. A pre-draft public consultation process facilitated the identification of local community aspirations, concerns and issues, from both business and community groups, as well as from individuals through a public consultation event and written submissions to the Council during the identified pre-draft public consultation time period,
3. An extensive period of consultation with local area Councillors, the internal departments of the Council, as well as local, regional and national level bodies, and

4. Various service providers such as the Gardaí, educational facilitators, public utilities providers, auctioneers and enterprise services were consulted, either through informal phone discussions or meetings during the preparation of this Plan.

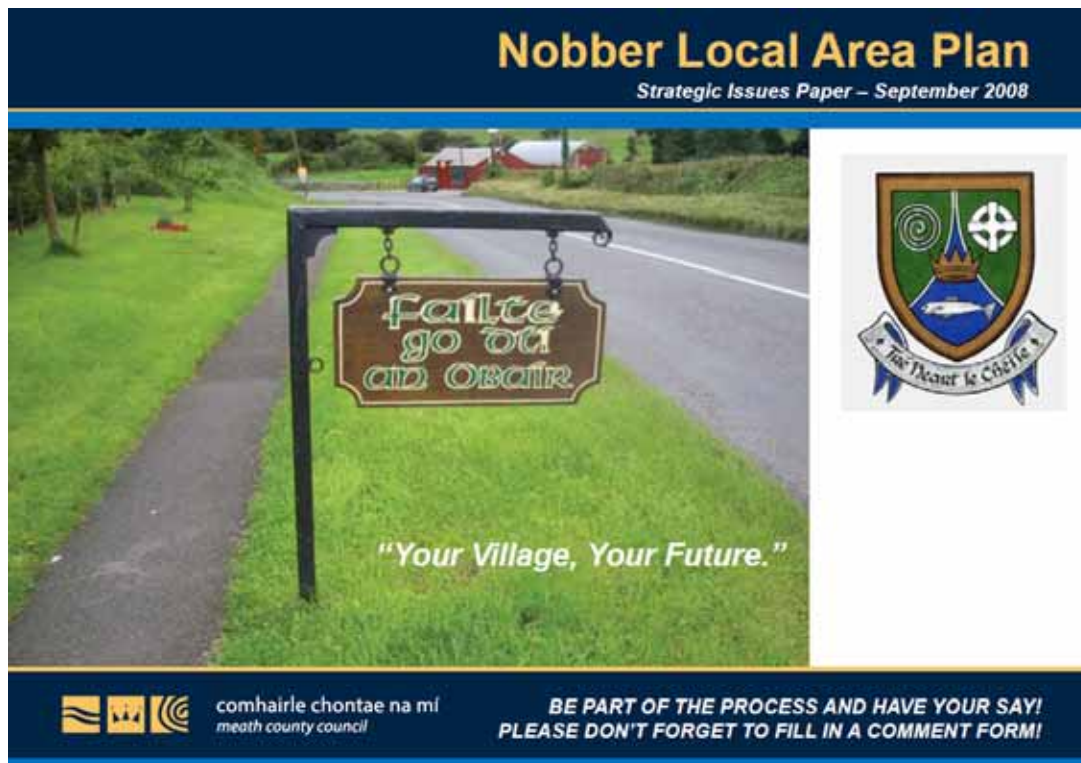


Figure One: Cover page of Strategic Issues Booklet compiled for the Pre-Draft Public Consultation held on Wednesday, 17th September 2008 at Nobber Parochial Hall.

#### 1.4.1 Pre-Draft Public Consultation

Consultation is a key element of any plan-making process. It was used to identify the key issues to be addressed during the preparation of the Local Area Plan, and in order to develop an overall vision for the Village. In accordance with Section 20(1) of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006, pre-draft public consultation took place and involved the publication of a 'Strategic Issues Paper', in conjunction with the hosting of a public consultation event in Nobber Village.

A notice was published in 'The Meath Chronicle'. It advertised the Council's intention to prepare a Draft Local Area Plan for Nobber and that a 'Strategic Issues Paper' would be available for public inspection through a series of media for a period of just over four weeks beginning on Monday, 15th September and ending on Tuesday, 14th October 2008. The notice invited written submissions from interested parties and members of the public on what matters should be addressed within the Local Area Plan. Eight submissions were received in response to the 'Strategic Issues Paper' and have been taken into account in the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan, see Appendix A.

- A process of identifying and notifying individual local businesses, as well as community and voluntary groups, of the Council's intentions was also undertaken. To facilitate local interest in the Plan's preparation, a public consultation meeting was held in the Village on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September in the local Parochial Hall to garner the views of local residents on how they would like to see their village develop in the future. The attendance at this consultation meeting was good with approximately 20-25 people present. The consultation was informal in nature and involved visual aids in the form of poster boards



and hand-outs including comments cards and a 'Strategic Issues Booklet', which outlined a non-exhaustive listing of pre-identified planning-related issues within the Village.



*Plate One: Photographs of local community members who attended the Pre-Draft Public Consultation held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008 between 6-8pm in Nobber Parochial Hall.*

From this a number of issues warranting further attention were identified, specifically:

- Roads, traffic levels and speed, and car parking,
- Natural environment - river amenity potential and walkways,
- Built heritage and protection of the special character of the Village,
- Village environmental improvements; footpaths, cycleways, public street lighting, approach roads into the Village, litter bins, recycling, etc,
- Current housing developments; design and type,
- Residential development and phasing,



- Additional commercial development, and
- Sporting, open space amenity and community facilities.

One comment form was received as a result of this public consultation and was considered in the preparation of the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan. The comments raised during this pre-draft public consultation event, as well as the nine submissions received from individuals and interested parties during the pre-draft submission period have been taken into account and addressed within this Local Area Plan.

#### 1.4.2 Draft Public Consultation

The Draft Local Area Plan for Nobber was placed on public display from Monday, 19th January 2009 to Monday, 02nd March 2009 in accordance with Section 20(c) of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006. The aim of this consultation process was to enable the public and interested parties to give their observations on the Draft Local Area Plan.

A total of nine written submissions were received during this period. All of these submissions were considered in full in the review of the Draft Local Area Plan. A list of all of the people who made a submission during the draft public consultation phase is outlined within Appendix A.

#### 1.4.3 Material Amendment Public Consultation

Material Amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan were proposed by the Council Amendments on 28th April 2009. These Amendments were placed on public display for four weeks extending from 11th May to 08th June 2009.

A total of four written submissions were received during this period. All of these submissions were considered in full in the review of the Amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan. A list of all of the people who made a submission during the material amendments public consultation phase is also outlined within Appendix A.

### 1.5 Local Area Plan's Development Boundary

The Council established a development boundary and a site zonings map for Nobber during the compilation of the Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007, which was incorporated, unchanged, into the current Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The development boundary for the Village has been amended following consideration of the following factors:

- The stated aims of this Plan,
- Strategic national, regional and county level policies,
- The existing urban structure of the Village,
- The likely future development needs and anticipated target population of the Village,
- The proper planning and sustainable development of the Village, and the surrounding area, and finally
- The proximity of the existing Kingscourt to Navan Railway Line, the River Dee, and its associated floodplain, the landscaped parkland of Brittas Demesne to the west of the Village, and the nature of the surrounding drumlin belt topography.

## 1.6 Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

A Local Area Plan must contain information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan.



*Plate Two: Aerial Photograph of the Village.*

### 1.6.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is the environmental assessment of plans, programmes or strategies. It is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. It seeks to provide high level protection to the environment; integrate the environment and sustainable development into planning processes generally; promote sustainable development; and promote a more open, transparent and evidenced-based planning

system. The process is regulated by the EU's SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and SEA Regulations (S.I. 435 & 436 of 2004).

The carrying-out of a SEA is not mandatory under the provisions of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 for the Nobber Local Area Plan as it has a population of less than 10,000. An SEA Screening Exercise was carried-out to assess the likely impacts that the implementation of the proposed Plan and amendments would have in accordance with Section 14A of Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004).<sup>1</sup> Given Policy SS POL 7 of the Meath County Development Plan prohibits the extension to the Village's development boundary and from rezoning additional lands, in conjunction with the fact that a full SEA was undertaken as part of the County Development Plan's preparation, this screening document concluded that an SEA was not required. The Screening Report is attached as Appendix B to this Plan.

Notwithstanding this, all future proposed development will have their environmental impacts individually assessed by the Council and may require an Environmental Impact Assessment of their environmental impacts to be undertaken and subsequently an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be submitted with such a planning application.

### 1.6.2 Appropriate Assessment

The purpose of Appropriate Assessment (AA) of local authority plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European 'Natura 2000' sites is included as an integral part of the planning process at a local level. An AA refers to an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, of the potential impacts of a plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and the development where necessary of measures to preclude negative effects.

The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of the plan, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impact on the site.

While there is no national legislation or guidelines with regard to 'appropriate assessment', it is the current recommendation of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government that any land use plan is screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. In any case where, following screening, it is found that the Draft Plan may have an impact, a full 'Appropriate Assessment' must be carried out, as well as a full SEA.

The requirement for AA of plans or projects originates from Article 6 (3) and (4) of *European Union (EU) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora*, commonly known as the 'Habitats Directive', which is implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations of 1997. The wording of Article 6 (3) of the directive is as follows:

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

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<sup>1</sup> Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant a full SEA to be undertaken. The key indicator that will determine if a SEA is required of particular non-mandatory Plans, is if they are likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment or not.

*adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

The wording of Article 6 (4) of the directive is as follows:

*If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.*

In February 2008, the statutory requirement for an Appropriate Assessment of all land use plans was further emphasised by a Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government Circular Letter (SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08). The Circular Letter entitled 'Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans' emphasises the fact that an Appropriate Assessment of the ecological implications of any plan or project is required, whether it is within or outside a designated site, if it may impact upon the conservation objectives of that site.

In May 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency circulated this letter as part of their guidance on the process to be employed in Strategic Environmental Assessment.

An AA Screening Exercise was carried-out to assess the likely impacts that the implementation of the proposed Plan and amendments on any Natura 2000 sites. The Screening Exercise found that there would be no indirect and cumulative impacts of the Plan on the integrity of any surrounding Natura 2000 sites. Therefore a full AA was not required. The Screening Report is attached as Appendix B to this Plan.

## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

A consistent theme in all planning related documents is that of 'sustainable development' defined by the Bruntland Commission in the 1980s as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The Council supports this concept as advocated within planning policy nationally and it is a major component in the implementation of the Nobber Local Area Plan.

Planning at this local level must be informed by prevailing planning policies and national best practice standards as established in national guidelines, reports and other documents. Therefore, the future economic, physical and social development of Nobber must be considered in the context of, and be consistent with, the hierarchy of National, Regional and Local level plans already in existence. The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 has had regard to all such national, regional and local planning policy documents.

### 2.1 Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013

The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 was adopted on 02<sup>nd</sup> March 2007 and aims to guide future development within the County over the period 2007 to 2013. Nobber has been identified as a 'Key Village' within the County Settlement Strategy in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. As a result, all future development within Nobber is guided by the County Development Plan's 'High Level Development Objectives' contained within Chapter 2.1.8, which envisages that:

*the future development strategy of Key Villages is to concentrate population, services and jobs in strategic village locations, which have relatively good access from nearby towns. The concentration of population will strengthen the viability of services, such as public transport, secondary and/or national schools, retail and the facilitation and expansion of small rural enterprise. The future development of Key Villages will be predicated more closely to local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade.*

It is intended that the Nobber Local Area Plan will replace the written objectives and land-use zoning map adopted as part of the previous Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007 in March 2001 and re-adopted within the existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

#### 2.1.1 Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Land

Having regard to the provisions of the County Settlement Strategy, the County Development Plan provides that the release and development of residential lands shall be linked to the following criteria:

- The provision of necessary physical infrastructure, primarily the availability, in advance of development occurring, of capacity in water and wastewater infrastructure. The environment must be capable of absorbing the scale and quantum of development that is envisaged;
- Spare capacity in existing (and planned) social infrastructure, primarily national and second level educational facilities. The future planning of the Department of Education and Science of national and second level educational facilities shall also be taken into account. The development of additional residential lands shall leverage the necessary recreational and amenity infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the resident population. The proposed scale and quantum of development must reinforce the integrity and vitality of the local community and services that can be provided;



- A more sustainable economic base whereby a greater percentage of local persons are employed locally. This will require closer liaison between the County Enterprise Board, County Development Board, Economic Development & Promotion Officer and the Planning Department;
- To facilitate the realisation of objectives contained in existing Local Area Plans or existing Written Statement and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages (Volume II of this Development Plan) in relation to the delivery of identified critical and necessary social and/or physical infrastructure in conjunction with residential development. Priority of phasing may be given to such residential lands accordingly;
- The extent of existing residentially zoned lands will be revised in the context of the individual Local Area Plan or Development Plan review for each centre and does not necessarily preclude identifying additional zoning in specific locations where the Planning Authority is satisfied that a clearly established need for such zoning is evident. Such additional zoning may only be considered where the development of such lands for residential purposes would deliver an identified piece of critical and necessary social and/or physical infrastructure in conjunction with such development and may require such lands to be prioritised for development over existing residentially zoned lands or that a corresponding amount of land has been dezoned;
- The Local Authority social and affordable house building programme, and;
- The efficient use of land by consolidating existing settlements, focusing in particular on development capacity within central urban areas through the re-use of underutilised lands and buildings as a priority, rather than extending green field development. This should also ensure that development is concentrated at locations where it is possible to integrate employment, community services, retailing and public transport. The order of priority for the release of residentially zoned land shall attempt to ensure that there is a sequential approach which downgrades the priority of outer suburban greenfield sites.

In addition, the County Development Plan states that the extent of existing residentially zoned lands will be revised in the context of the individual Local Area Plan or Development Plan preparation for each centre and does not preclude additional zoning in specific locations where the Planning Authority is satisfied that a clearly established need for such zoning is evident. Such an established need can only be justified where the development of such lands for residential purposes would deliver an identified piece of critical and necessary social and/or physical infrastructure in conjunction with such development and may require such lands to be prioritised for development over existing residentially zoned lands or that a corresponding amount of land has been dezoned.

#### 2.1.2 Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 - Variation No. 2

Section 19 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006, as amended by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002 requires that a Local Area Plan must be consistent with the policies and objectives contained within the relevant County Development Plan; being the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. Ultimately, the Local Area Plan's stated policies and objectives must be explicitly linked to the quantum and scale of development envisaged for the settlement within the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The County Development Plan is thus the 'parent' document, which sets out the strategic framework within which all zoning and other objectives of the Local Area Plan must be formulated. For example, the zoning of lands for use solely or primarily as residential development should have regard to the Council's housing and settlement strategies.

Variation 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, adopted on 04<sup>th</sup> February 2008, varied the County's Settlement Strategy. It identified an 'Order of Priority' for residential zoned lands within a number of settlements, including Nobber. The residential zoned lands are identified as Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas. Phase 1 relates to lands to be developed during the existing County Development Plan period, up to 2013; while Phase 2 relates to lands to be developed post 2013. Variation 2 allocates a further 60 additional dwellings to Nobber over the period of the existing County Development Plan from 2007-2013 at a density of 20 dwellings per hectare.

This allocation does not include two specific site types within settlements, which are subject to the 'Order of Priority':

- The Council does not intend to stifle the delivery of the local authority housing programme. Therefore, units to be developed by the Council for social and affordable housing will not be taken from the numbers allocated for Nobber.
- The Planning Authority does not intend to stifle redevelopment of brown-field/infill/derelict sites and seeks to actively promote redevelopment of these lands. Therefore, units permitted on such sites will not be taken from the numbers allocated for Nobber.

As a result of Variation 2, the future development of Nobber must be undertaken within this framework and also by ensuring that 25-30% of new housing in multi-house developments is reserved for persons satisfying Policy HS POL 16 of the County Development Plan.

#### 2.1.2.1 Residential Implications of Variation No. 2

As noted above, the future population growth of the Village will be provided for in accordance with the provisions of Variation No. 2 of the County's Settlement Strategy, which allocates sixty additional dwellings to the Village over the period 2007-2013; this figure does not include local authority housing programmes or residential developments on brown-field/infill/derelict sites within the Village.

At a density of twenty dwellings per hectare, these sixty dwellings equate to approximately 3.0 hectares of zoned residential land. It is standard practice to provide 50% more land than is needed to be zoned in order to allow for additional headroom. This will ensure that an adequate supply of residential lands will be provided, which will allow for a choice of location and the potential non-release of lands over the Local Area Plan's timeframe. This would result in the need to zone enough residential lands within the Local Area Plan's development boundary to cater for ninety dwellings; at a density of twenty dwellings per hectare, this would equate to 4.5 hectares of residential land.

This Local Area Plan must comply with the policies and objectives of the adopted Meath County Development Plan. As a result, a reassessment of each of the areas zoned for additional residential development contained within the land-use zonings map outlined in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 has been undertaken. Variation No. 2 includes a 'Nobber Residential Phasing Sequence' map which identified 14.92 hectares of remaining largely undeveloped residential zoned land; 5.83 hectares of which was identified for development before 2013, while 9.09 hectares was identified for development after 2013. This Local Area Plan has reduced this pre-2013 figure to approximately 4.5 hectares, with the remainder of the residential zoned lands to be developed after 2013.

The realisation of these sixty dwellings would result in an additional population increase of approximately 150 or 162 persons over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, or a future population

of 383-395 persons in the Village by 2013.<sup>2</sup> This would equate to an increase in population of approximately 6-7% per annum over the period 2006-2015.

## 2.2 Review of Previous Plans' Planning Policies And Development Objectives

There has not been a previous Local Area or Development Plan prepared to specifically guide development proposals and population growth within the Village. All previous planning applications were assessed against the relevant Meath County Development Plan. The most recent Plan was the Meath County Development Plan, 2001-2007, which contained written planning policies, development objectives and a land-use zoning map with a defined development boundary for the Village. It was originally adopted as part of the Meath County Development Plan, 2001-2007 in March 2001 and was re-adopted unamended within the Meath County Development Plan, 2007-2013.

It is considered appropriate and beneficial to review the planning policies and development objectives as proposed within the previous County Development Plan. This will highlight areas that need attention, any possible weaknesses, the levels of implementation and the overall successfulness of the previous and current Meath County Development Plan's policies and objectives for Nobber.

A substantial amount of the planning policies and development objectives contained within Section 24 of the previous Meath County Development Plan have or are currently being implemented on an on-going basis including the following:

1. General Development Objective NB 1, which provided for the 'protection of the integrity and setting of Nobber Motte as denoted by the zone of archaeological interest surrounding the National Monument'.
2. General Development Objective NB 3, which provided for the 'upgrading of roads and footpaths in and around the village, in particular additional footpaths:
  - The construction of a pedestrian route to the right of the bridge on the Kingscourt side of the village, which is currently being undertaken'.
3. General Development Objective NB 4, which provided for 'additional street lighting on the Navan end of the village up as far as the cemetery'.
4. General Development Objective NB 5, which provided for co-operation 'with the local community in general to secure the improvement or screening of neglected sites and the repair and or maintenance of buildings'.
5. General Development Objective NB 6, which aimed to 'secure the protection of the trees indicated on Urban Detail Map 24 and to secure the provision or the planting of trees or shrubs in the village'.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 These figures are compiled using the predicted average household sizes for the period 2007-2013 outlined in Table 5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. On 31st December 2009 the average household size is predicted to be 2.694 persons per dwelling, by 31st December 2013 this is predicted to fall to 2.5 persons per dwelling.



6. General Development Objective NB 7, which provided for the protection of 'the following buildings and other structures listed below because of their artistic, architectural and historical interest:
  - Church Tomb.
  - Cross in graveyard.
  - Church of Ireland.
  - Stone house with pilasters at each end with a coach arch.
  - Three bay two storey house to right of Catholic Church'.

However, a number of the Policies and Objectives have not been fully or partially implemented, specifically:

1. The objective contained within Section 3.2.3, which aimed to promote 'the location of light industrial uses including transport, logistics and distribution centres or office campus uses' within Nobber.
2. General Development Objective NB 2, which aimed to facilitate for 'the provision of interpretative signage in order to inform visitors as to the historical importance of Nobber to the standards of other Heritage Villages in the County'.
3. General Development Objective NB 3, which aimed to 'upgrade roads and footpaths in and around the village, in particular additional footpaths:
  - On the east side of the road from the village centre as far as the library.
  - On the east side of the road from the second level school as far as the centre of the village. This footpath will serve both the school and the GAA pitch. [Although a footpath does not exist along the required eastern side of the road, a footpath has been recently constructed on the western side of the road.]
  - Footpath on the west side of the road from the junction of the Carrickmacross road and the Kingscourt Road as far as the health centre.' [Although a footpath to the east of Nobber Bridge is currently being constructed, no other footpaths exist along this side of the road north of the junction of the Cregg and Kingscourt Roads].
  - The future development of lands will be dependent upon road improvements such as road widening or the provision of footpaths in the interest of pedestrian safety'. [Aside from the R162, few, if any, roads have been widened within the past few years].
4. General Development Objective NB 4, which aims to provide for additional street lighting 'as far as the health centre'.

The identified objectives that have not been fully or partially implemented are addressed within this Local Area Plan. It is noted that the Planning Authority is not responsible for the direct provision of all the previously adopted objectives. The complete fulfilment of some objectives mentioned-above are based on a number of external factors such as market conditions, the release of zoned lands by landowners, private investment levels and external bodies. Ultimately, the Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015 is intended to replace and restate these written planning policies, development objectives and zoning map contained re-adopted within the current Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, as appropriate.

### 3.0 CORE STRATEGY

This Plan is the statutory Local Area Plan for Nobber made pursuant to the provisions of Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006. It is also in accordance with the *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)*, the objective of which is to 'provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans'.

The purpose of this Local Area Plan is to provide for a comprehensive yet flexible planning and development framework to promote and guide the planned and sustainable growth of Nobber Village. The Core Strategy sets out the vision and overall planning policies and development objectives for the future development of Nobber Village.



Plate Three: Village Centre Area.

#### 3.1 The Vision for the Village

The amenity, heritage qualities and character of Nobber are largely derived from the readily legible rectangular central area of the Village, located north of the Garda Station to the terrace of residential dwellings just north of the Parochial House. The Main Street, which traverses this central area, is wide and framed by the frontages of mainly two-storey buildings with diverse building styles along its eastern and western sides, some dating from the eighteenth century. This creates an attractive built environment. It is an objective of the Council that this environment be conserved and enhanced through the sensitive treatment of any infill development and the conservation of important or key buildings on each side of Main Street.

At the same time, a clear division between the Village's built-up area and the surrounding countryside, specifically the landscaped parkland within Brittas Demesne to the west of the Village, will be maintained through the strict control of urban generated ribbon development on the approaches to the Village. This Local Area Plan will also aim to improve local services and infrastructure by catering for future development.



*Plate Four: Village Centre Area, photograph taken outside of the St John The Baptist Roman Catholic Church facing south-west.*

This plan will also ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural and built heritage of the Village.

The overall focus and vision for Nobber is to consolidate and strengthen the Village, through the provision of a well-defined Village Centre, as well as a range of land-uses to support the residential element of the Village and the Village's role as a local service centre to the surrounding local area. This will also be complemented through the enhancement of the Village's street finishes, footpaths, green spaces and public domain generally, and the redevelopment of key Greenfield or neglected sites, and the re-use of derelict buildings.



*Plate Five: Photograph taken along the Kingscourt Road to the north of the Village facing east.*

The Nobber Local Area Plan, 2009-2015 has been prepared in a balanced and sustainable manner ensuring that the Plan is:

1. Locally focused: dealing with local issues within the Village Centre and immediate environs.
2. Appropriately compiled with a suitable consultation process: ensuring that all groups and individuals were given ample opportunity to make a submission and have their views aired.
3. Capable of being implemented within the lifetime of the Plan: The Nobber Local Area Plan must be practical and only address matters that are concerned with land-use planning. The Local Area Plan can not solve all local issues and problems. The Plan will have a very limited purpose if the development objectives and planning policies contained within it are too broad and aspirational and ultimately difficult to implement.

Fundamentally, this Local Area Plan will endeavour to:

1. Provide for a high-quality landscape, active and passive open spaces and include provisions to improve the public domain generally. It endeavours to create an area of high visual and environmental amenity by respecting river corridors and flood plain channels, varying contour levels, surrounding views, open spaces and natural features.
2. Provide for appropriate community, childcare, educational and recreational facilities.
3. Create unique, clearly identifiable and memorable areas consistent with, and protective of, the Village's existing character. This will be complemented by the creation of purposeful connecting routes, providing the maximum choice for people to decide how to undertake their journeys.
4. Create appropriate land-use planning conditions that will contribute to the creation of employment opportunities locally. This will be in co-operation with both the state's and the County's enterprise development agencies.
5. Allow for an environment that is clearly understood and useable by the existing and proposed community, including employees, residents and visitors alike.

### 3.2 Core Policies

#### 3.2.1 Sustainable Development

The core strategy for the Nobber Local Area Plan is based upon the need to allow for the sustainable planning and development of the Village. This will create high-quality standards in the provision of community facilities, employment and enterprise opportunities, additional residential areas, an ability to cater for numerous transportation modes and the provision of adequate recreational amenities. This will only be achieved sustainably through the protection of the natural environment and biodiversity level already in existence in the Village.

#### Core Policy 1: Sustainable Development

1. To adhere to the principles of sustainable development through the promotion of future development or redevelopment that makes a positive contribution to the development of Nobber Village by recognizing the importance of conserving and enhancing the quality of the Village's built and natural environment, while catering for the needs of all sections of the local community.
2. To contain new development within the development boundary of the Village thereby ensuring that the Village can develop within a coherent built form that encourages an

efficient and balanced use of land.

3. To sustain and enhance the role of Nobber as both a community and commercial service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland.

### 3.2.2 Future Development Proposals

This Local Area Plan includes guidelines on future development or redevelopment within the Village. They outline a broad approach to promoting development in a way that is consistent with the Plan's core development objectives and policies. In order to achieve these objectives, quality architectural design and site layouts are fundamental considerations to the overall development process.

#### **Core Policy 2: Future Development Proposals**

It is the policy of the Council that development proposals will be considered, which generally satisfies the following criteria positively:

1. To provide high-quality development in accordance with the provisions of this Plan and the Development Control Guidelines contained within the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013,
2. To protect and enhance, as appropriate, the Village's physical character and the built and natural environment, as appropriate
3. To respect and protect neighbouring properties' residential amenities,
4. To promote the future development of the Village as a compact settlement with a pedestrian friendly environment, a legible and coherent physical form, and a variety of land uses and amenities, and finally
5. To promote high quality design has a significant positive impact on the character and vitality of areas where it is achieved. This needs to be developed from understanding the local character of a place. This policy will ensure that the strategic objectives and key design principles are incorporated into the consideration of all planning applications.

It is the policy of the Council to favourably consider forms of development only where it accords with the Land Use Zoning Map, Objectives Map and associated urban design guidance. Any significant divergence from the guidance must adequately demonstrate how such divergences would be of greater benefit in achieving the strategic development objectives for Nobber, as set-out in this Plan.

### 3.2.3 Land-Uses

The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate to property owners, developers and the general public, the types of development that are considered most appropriate in each zone. These zoning objectives allow any would-be developers to plan proposals with a greater degree of certainty. In the control of development, zoning seeks to delimit competing and incompatible uses so as to promote greater environmental quality and thereby rationalise the land-use pattern of an urban area. This land use zoning policy is intended to be used as a general guide to assessing the acceptability or otherwise of development proposals. The various land-use designations used within this Plan have been taken from the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

This Plan's Land-use Zoning Map encourages a variety of land-uses in a manner that promotes the concept of a balanced residential community with an appropriate level of amenities, facilities

and services to cater for the Village's needs. At the same time it aims to ensure that the Village's character is protected and retained for future generations. The Plan also aims to allow the Village to continue to function as a compact physical place with good accessibility levels and high quality public open spaces. The development of residential land will be carefully monitored by the Council to ensure that the overall requirements are being delivered during the lifetime of the Plan and the Plan will be modified if considered necessary.

#### **Core Policy 3: Land-Uses**

To facilitate a variety of land uses within the Village's development boundary that can cater for the existing and future needs of the Village's population over the next six years and beyond. Proposed land-uses will have regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the Village and respect the amenities of the neighbouring properties, and the character and visual appearance of the Village.

#### **3.2.4 Local Area Plan Implementation**

One of the key issues arising from the pre-draft public consultation event and the Steering Committee Meetings with both the Executive and the Council's Members is the need for the Plan to be realistic, and ultimately to contain policies and objectives that are capable of being implemented within the lifetime of the Plan.

#### **Core Policy 4: Local Area Plan Implementation**

To encourage and support initiatives and private and public investment, which helps to facilitate and promote coordination between the various stakeholders, identified within this Plan, who are needed to implement the objectives and policies contained within it. Every practical effort will be made in partnership with other statutory and voluntary bodies, local businesses, developers and the local community to ensure the Plan is successfully implemented.

### **3.3 Core Objectives**

The objectives for this Local Area Plan are derived from the Meath County Development Plan, 2007-2013, which emphasises that the development of settlements must be promoted in a strategically planned and sustainable manner.

This Local Area Plan builds upon the settlement strategy of the existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 by supporting and promoting the sustainable development of Nobber as a self-supporting community, enjoying a good "quality of life" in terms of community, employment, housing, recreational and social amenities, as well as public utilities' and transportation infrastructure, while at the same time protecting the surrounding natural environment. The Council recognises that the Village must offer living and working conditions, as well as the community, educational and recreational opportunities of the highest quality in an attractive urban environment in order to achieve its stated objective of promoting a strategically planned and sustainable approach to future development.

In order to achieve these aims, the following Strategic Development Objectives have been established to underpin this Local Area Plan. They are based upon the requirements of the Village as identified by the local community during the pre-draft public consultation meeting held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008, and build-upon the strengths of Nobber, as recognised through the urban design assessment included in Section 18.0.



<b>SDO 1</b>	To promote a positive image of the Village through the support of the local community sector and through the encouragement of the development of community, cultural and social facilities, at an appropriate scale, at locations that are accessible to all members of the community.
<b>SDO 2</b>	To accommodate population and services growth in accordance with the levels provided for by Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 through the implementation of the policies contained in Variation No. 2 of that Plan and to cater primarily for the needs of the local population. Ultimately, this Plan will aim to provide a guide to future development catering for the expansion of the Village in an ordered and sustainable fashion.
<b>SDO 3</b>	To develop a strong local economy by continuing to encourage the role of Nobber as a local service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland, encourage small businesses to set-up within the Village by zoning land for the development of an employment/enterprise base for the Village and through facilitating the expansion of existing employment uses.
<b>SDO 4</b>	To Identify areas that are at risk of flooding with a view to ensuring that any development on such areas complies with the Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities 'The Planning System & Flood Risk Management published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, September, 2008, or their predecessor.
<b>SDO 5</b>	To upgrade existing public utilities' infrastructure in the Village and co-ordinate the delivery of new developments with the provision of new infrastructure. This will be mainly achieved by ensuring that additional local services and facilities in terms of community, educational, recreational and retail provision are provided in tandem with new residential development.
<b>SDO 6</b>	To develop a vibrant Village Centre through the upgrading of the physical environment of the Village core itself through the introduction of environmental improvements.
<b>SDO 7</b>	To protect the unique character of the Village, and protect and improve existing residential amenity through the provision of appropriate residential/infill development, which have regard to the scale, character, topography and amenities of the Village. This will also involve the consolidation of the existing retail land uses and existing commercial character of the Village.
<b>SDO 8</b>	To reserve land for the provision of active and passive open spaces to facilitate the development of playgrounds within existing and proposed residential developments in conjunction with Objective SOC OBJ 11 which aims to develop and implement a Play Strategy for Co. Meath in conjunction with the County Development Board and other agencies.
<b>SDO 9</b>	To create an appropriate transportation network for cyclists, pedestrians, public transportation users and motorists alike, at appropriate locations within the Village.

*Table One: Local Area Plan Core Objectives.*



### 3.4 Development Boundary

In determining the appropriate development boundary for the Village regard has been had for the existing pattern of development within the Village, the previous adopted zonings and the phasing of residential lands espoused by the existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, environmental protection, current and future infrastructural considerations, economic consideration, visual and urban design identity, community requirements and the future predicted population of the Village.

A number of additional issues have also been taken into consideration when shaping the desired future settlement structure of the Village, including:

- The Village's historic role and function,
- The level of proposed protected structures and protected structures within the Village, as well as the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's zone of archaeological interests within the Village,
- Protection of the unique urban character of the Village,
- Existing role, function and level of services available,
- Size and overall catchment population,
- Location within the County, as well as its proximity and interaction with other settlements and communities within the surrounding area,
- Potential for future possible population growth, as well as the economic and social benefits associated with this,
- Unique features, setting within the landscape and the sensitivity of the natural environment, and
- Possible constraints to future development.

The future development of Nobber should consolidate those lands within the Village Centre and then extend development in a sequential manner to the South, East and North.

## 4.0 VILLAGE CONTEXT

### 4.1 The Village's Strategic Context

The Village of Nobber is located to the north of County Meath within the 'Kells Development Area', along with other urban settlements such as Athboy, Kells and Oldcastle. Nobber is located along the R162 Regional Route from Navan to Kingscourt in Co. Cavan. It is also located at the convergence of a number of minor roads, specifically from Carlanstown, Drumconrath and Kells. From a strategic regional context, it is situated approximately 9.5km from Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, 18km from Navan, 13km from Kells and 14km from Ardee, Co. Louth. It is also situated north of the intersection of the R162 with the N52 National Secondary Route linking the Village with Kells and Ardee, Co. Louth; nationally this road provides a strategic cross-country link from Dundalk, Co. Louth to Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.



Figure Two: Village Location Map.

From a strategic context, the Village of Nobber is located approximately 58km to the north-west of Dublin City Centre within the Greater Dublin Area between two national transportation corridors, the N2 and the N3 National Primary Routes, and the soon to be finalised M3 Motorway accessed from link roads in Navan or Kells, radiating from Dublin City.

### 4.2 Historical Development Context

Historically the surrounding area has been subject to human habitation from prehistoric times. A good example of this are the lands surrounding Moynagh Lough, located to the west of the Village and well outside of the Local Area Plan area. The Lough contains a crannóg lying on its southern

edge.<sup>3</sup> The Lough historically was larger and the site appears to have been originally an expanse of the River Dee. The Lough was originally drained in the Nineteenth Century and was later subjected to additional land reclamation works in the late 1970s. As a result of this activity the crannóg was re-discovered in 1977. Following a series of excavations during the summers of 1981-1999, it was revealed to be a multi-period site dating from the prehistoric period; highlighting the significant historical importance of the area surrounding Nobber.



*Plate Six: Photograph taken from Nobber Bridge to the north of the Village facing west looking into Brittas Demesne.*

Brittas Demesne and House comprise of approximately 113 Hectares (280 acres) and were built in the early Eighteenth Century by General Thomas Bligh to the west of the Village. The main section of Brittas House was built in 1732 and incorporates an earlier residence which dates from 1672. It is a five-bay Georgian Country House, with a ballroom wing added in the early Nineteenth Century designed by the renowned Irish architect Francis Johnston. The surrounding area's Drumlin dominated setting provided an excellent natural backdrop for Brittas House and as a result Brittas Demesne is a notable Eighteenth Century designed landscape. A substantial number of the mature woodlands within the Demesne are named after various battles in which General Bligh fought in. The most important of these is the thirty-three acre field, known as 'The Battlefield', where trees were laid-out in battle formation commemorating one of the General's battles in France. The Demesne and these mature woodlands are all visible from the Village and provide an important natural landscape setting for Nobber.

Within the Local Area Plan boundary, several "high crosses" have been discovered in the churchyard cemetery surrounding the now ruinous Church of St. John the Baptist dating from possibly the Tenth Century. These are much smaller and less ornate than typical "high crosses" of the same period. This find suggests that a hitherto unrecorded monastic settlement once existed on the site of the Village and may have dated from the Sixth Century. The original monastic enclosure can be seen along the wall of the surrounding Churchyard. Overall, this site has been in continual use up to recent times; notably a monument belonging to the Cruise family with an inscription date of 1619 was erected to the memory of Gerald Cruise and Margaret Plunkett of Brittas, preceding the construction of a Church of Ireland Church after 1750.

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<sup>3</sup> A crannóg is a defensive settlement usually constructed on an artificial or enlarged island in a lake or other water body.



*Plate Seven: Monument erected to the memory of Gerald Cruise and Margaret Plunkett of Brittas with an inscription date of 1619 located within the Graveyard surrounding St John's Church of Ireland.*

When the Anglo-Normans arrived in the Village in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century they constructed a Motte and Bailey, which was strategically located at the northern entrance to the Village along the River Dee. The River Dee envelops the Village to the north, south and west, this would have been a strategic location for a military settlement.<sup>4</sup> The Motte and Bailey in Nobber exhibits many of the original design features of such structures and is an especially fine example.

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<sup>4</sup> A 'motte' is a raised earth mound in the form of a small, often artificial, hill and topped with a wooden or stone structure known as a keep. The earth used for the mound would be taken from a ditch, dug around the motte. The outer surface of the mound could be covered with clay or strengthened with wooden supports. The 'bailey' is an enclosed courtyard, typically surrounded by a wooden palisade fence overlooked by the motte and would typically contain a hall, stables for the horses and cattle, a chapel, and huts for the nobleman's people. Typically, the bailey was connected to the motte by a timber drawbridge, which could be separated from the bailey as a last defence mechanism.



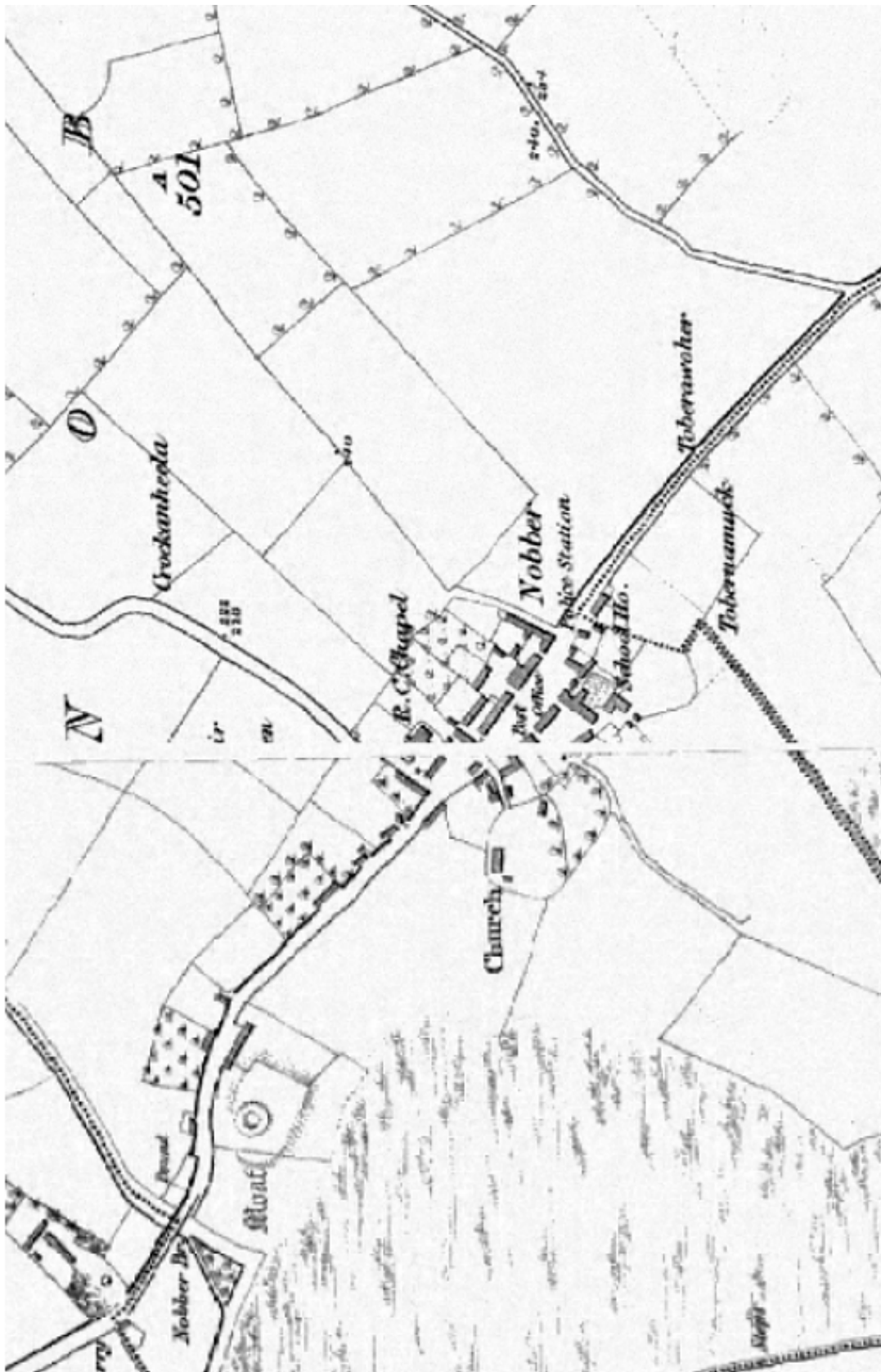
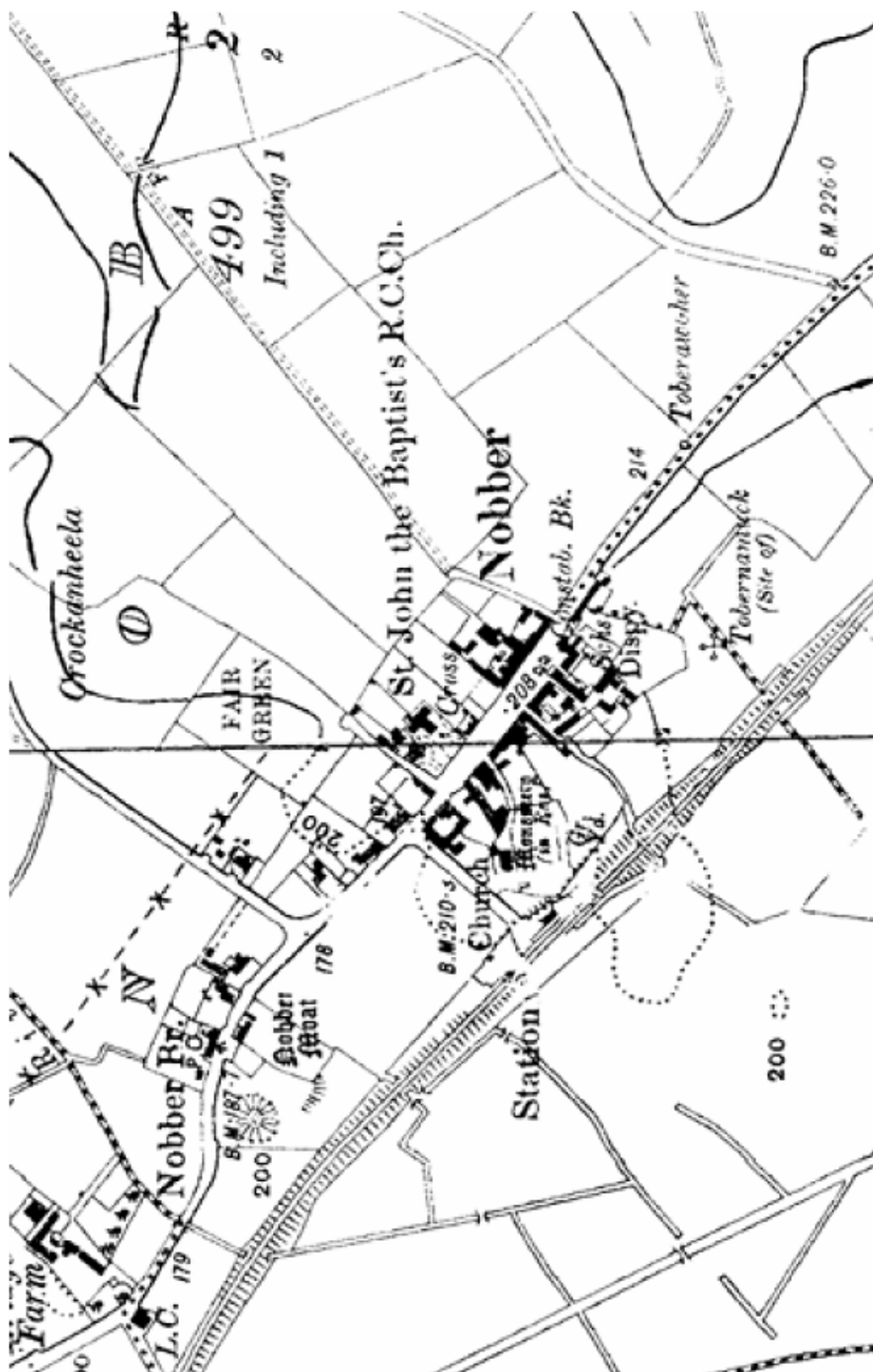


Figure Three: Historical Village Map 1842.



*Figure Four: Historical Village Map 1913.*

It was during this period that the Village began to take on its current form being characterised by an elongated Main Street. This period also gave the Village its current name; Nobber or 'An Obair' in Irish (meaning the work) refers to the Village's Motte and Bailey.



*Plate Eight: Photograph of Nobber Motte and Bailey taken to the east of Nobber Bridge facing south.*

The “wedge-shaped” Anglo-Norman layout was subsequently filled-in with a range of Georgian buildings, including a number of well executed townhouses, a Coach Inn, a Schoolhouse, a Police Station, a Post Office and a Church or Ireland Chapel.



*Plate Nine: Memorial Garden to Turlough O'Carolan who was born in Nobber in the 1670s; reportedly the last of the great Irish Harpists.*

During the Victorian Period, these buildings were later complemented by a Roman Catholic Church, a Village Hall, and a Railway Platform, Station and Warehouse. The now freight-only railway line runs to the west of the Village and connects Kingscourt, Co. Cavan to Navan. It opened on 01st November 1872 before being purchased by the Midland Great Western Railway in 1888. Until recent years it operated to haul gypsum from the BPB Plc Gypsum Industries plant in Co. Cavan to the port of Drogheda. However, the preferred mode of transportation is now via

Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs). Nobber railway station closed to passenger traffic on 27th January 1947.

Nobber is reportedly the birthplace of the last of the great Irish Harpists, Turlough O'Carolan, who was born here in 1670. A memorial garden to the musician's contribution to music and the area can be found to the south of the Village along the Navan Road.

It is for these reasons that Nobber was designated as one of the County's 'Heritage Villages' in the previous Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007.



*Plate Ten: Nineteenth Century Dwelling constructed to the north of the Village Centre area.*



*Plate Eleven: Nineteenth Century Former Dwelling constructed to the south of the Village Centre area, now in use as a Garda Station.*



### 4.3 The Village's Function and Role within The County

The function and role of the Village has largely been determined by its proximity to surrounding urban areas. The Village provides a limited amount of employment opportunities compared to its population base. The relative proximity of the surrounding towns to Nobber both within and outside of the County has allowed for a commuting pattern to emerge with an obvious leakage of associated expenditure to areas outside of the Village. Nobber is located within a substantial agricultural hinterland catering for the daily and some weekly needs of this surrounding rural area and the residents of the Village itself. The principal function of the Village could therefore be described as that of a small local urban centre for the surrounding hinterland.

For this reason, the previous Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007 designated Nobber as a Local Service Centre within the 'Kells Development Area' providing a range of local community, economic and retailing functions catering for the surrounding local hinterland.

Given Nobber's important built heritage, there is potential for the Village to explore the lucrative tourist market, perhaps associated with other Villages within north County Meath. At present the lack of tourism accommodation or indeed tourist facilities and signage is acting as a major deterrent.

### 4.4 The Village's Topography

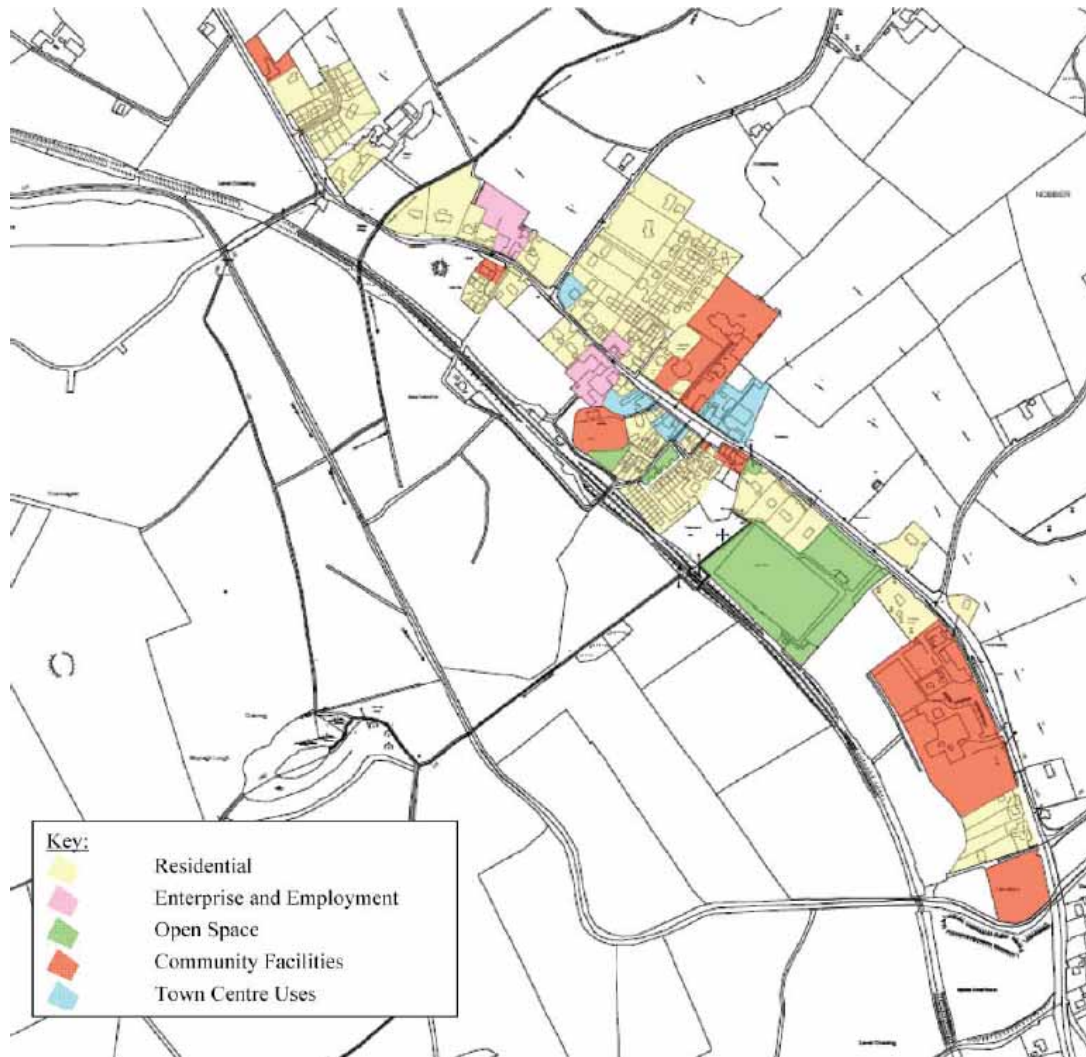
The topography of Nobber is strongly characterised by the undulating nature of the surrounding Drumlin landscape; this Drumlin-belt runs along the northern extremity of the County extending from Co. Louth into Co. Cavan. As a result, the surrounding landscape is both characterised by relatively low-lying areas and areas of an elevated nature. Typically this ranges from 50-80 metres above ordnance datum (AOD). The most significant low-lying areas are those within close proximity of the River Dee, which envelops the Village to the north, south and west. The most elevated areas within the Village are found to the east, approximately 70 metres AOD as well as those lands associated with Gallow's Hill to the north of the Village and the River Dee and to the west of the R162 National Secondary Route, rising to approximately 90 metres AOD.



*Plate Twelve: Photograph taken of the drumlin topography to the north-east of the Village within the residential development of 'Muff Crescent'.*

#### 4.5 The Village's Context

As previously outlined, the Village has historically developed in a linear fashion along the Village's Main Street and later running parallel to the now freight-only rail line, see Existing Land-Use Map and Environmental Parameters Map.



*Figure Five: Existing Land-Use Map*

Nobber Village has experienced a significant level of brownfield and backland re-development in recent years, this is particularly the case with the Council's recent residential development comprising of 22 no. dwellings in 'Bridge Park' and the residential development of 'Cluain Beag' comprising of 36 no. dwellings along the Cregg Road. Aside from this development, there has not been a substantial level of residential development aside from single dwellings within the Village's existing development boundary in the past decade. There have been additional commercial and retail developments, along with a number of refurbishments of existing premises within the Village's Centre; however there has not been any uptake on the current Enterprise and Employment zoned lands located along the Cregg Road, probably owing to their waterlogged nature, being within the River Dee's floodplain, for much of the year.

As a result, the Village possesses a relatively compact and legible rectangular Village Centre encompassing many of the Village's key buildings. These consist mainly of commercial,

institutional, office and public buildings along with numerous residential dwellings; see the existing Village Centre Land-Use Map. In contrast, a much more loosely knit pattern of development consisting mainly of individual houses and smaller housing developments front onto the approach roads to the Village, particularly along the R162. Future development within Nobber is largely constricted by the existing rail line to the west of the Village Centre, running parallel to Main Street, the elevated nature of the lands to the east of the Village and the low-lying areas associated with the River Dee, which envelops the Village to the north, south and west. Ultimately, this rail line acts as a man-made barrier to further development to the West and South-west.

#### 4.6 Key Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends

There are no Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) available for the Village of Nobber apart from its overall population level. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) will not provide SAPS for a settlement centre with a population of less than 1,000 for privacy reasons. However, there are comprehensive SAPS under many categories available for the Electoral Division (formerly called a District Electoral Division) of Nobber, see Appendix C.

Nobber Village is wholly located within the Nobber Electoral Division; however it is located adjacent to the Cruicetown Electoral Division to the west of the Village. Nobber's proximity to this Electoral Division has been discounted within the demographic and socio-economic analysis due to the fact that it almost wholly accommodates the landscaped parkland of Brittas House and Demesne and would therefore not have any material impact upon the results.



*Plate Thirteen: The recently constructed 'Cluain Beag' residential development.*





*Plate Fourteen: The recently constructed 'Bridge Park' residential development.*



*Plate Fifteen: The loosely knit pattern of development fronting onto the approach road, photograph taken along the Navan Road facing south.*



Figure Six: Nobber Electoral Division encompassing Nobber Village.

According to the 2006 Census of Population, the population of the Nobber Electoral Division was 652 persons. This was an increase of some 33 persons (5.33%) over the Electoral District's recorded population in both the 1996 and 2002 Census of Populations, when a population of 619 persons was recorded for both years.

The population of the Village in the 2006 Census of Population was 233 persons, a decrease of some 12 persons (-4.9%) over the Village's recorded population in the 2002 Census of Population, when a population of 245 persons was recorded. The population recorded in the 1996 Census of Population was 242 persons. This represents an increase in the Village's population of 1.24% from 1996-2002 and a decrease of 4.89% from 2002-2006. This decrease must be seen in light of the increase in the population of the Nobber Electoral Division of 5.33% from 2002-2006. This is wholly unsustainable in the medium to long term.

It is also considered reasonable to assume that the population of the Village will also increase as soon as the Council's currently under construction 'Bridge Park' development, comprising of 22 no. dwellings, is occupied. Aside from this residential development, a Housing Application Survey conducted with a particular focus on the 2006-2008 period, as part of the baseline information gathered for the Village, did not highlight any outstanding extant planning applications yet to be constructed within the Village which would have an impact upon the current population level of the Village.

By comparing the population of the Village against the population breakdown of the entire Electoral District, it is possible to calculate the percentage population split between those living within the urban area against the rural area. In 2002, there was a percentage split of 39.6% of the population within the Village as opposed to 60.4% within the rural area of the Nobber Electoral District. In 2006 this was slightly lower with only 35.74% of the population living within the Village as opposed to 64.26% in the rural area.

However, given that the Council's residential development comprises of twenty-two dwellings, which is nearing completion, it is reasonable to assume that the population of the Village will increase by approximately 59 persons based on a calculation of twenty-two dwellings multiplied

by an average household figure of 2.694 persons.<sup>5</sup> This will therefore compensate for the decrease in the population of the Village by 12 persons over the period of 2002-2006, helping to increase the sustainability, viability and vitality of the Village itself.

#### 4.6.1 Employment Profile

Almost 60% of the population of Nobber were in gainful employment at the time of the Census of Population in 2006 with an unemployment rate of less than the national average of 5.32% in 2006. The 'other' category was also substantially larger than the State's figure being 19.54% in comparison to 15.95%. This category is composed of those undertaking home duties, being unable to work and 'other'. The retiree profile (8.32%) was slightly lower than the State's figure of 11.20%.

#### 4.6.2 Occupational Profile

Nobber is within a significant agricultural region within County Meath and has a significantly higher percentage of agricultural workers than that of the State being 10.2% in comparison to 4.25% for the State as a whole. The Village also has a significant manufacturing working population substantially in excess of the State's figure, as well as a slightly larger construction service and transportation working population. Aside from the office and administrative positions offered by the HSE Health centre, the strong administrative, clerical, professionals and sales recorded positions could not possibly be catered for within the Village, and it must therefore be assumed that the majority of employed persons are commuting to neighbouring urban areas outside of Nobber to find employment. This emphasises the fact further that a future policy for the Village will need to focus on encouraging new businesses, commercial enterprises and light industry within the area.

#### 4.6.3 Educational Profile

A substantially higher percentage of the population have attained Primary and Lower Secondary education than the State, 23.57% and 29.06% respectively; however a substantial difference exists between both the State and Nobber in the Upper Secondary education level being 29.54% and 19.68% respectively. The level of the population with a third-level qualification being 27.69% is almost similar to the State's figure of 30.48%. Ultimately, these figures highlight that Nobber has a potentially substantial level of highly educated and skilled residents; however there may be scope for additional up-skilling of residents to provide additional skills, particularly targeted at that category of the population with limited upper secondary education.

Statistics available from the Central Statistics Office, illustrated overleaf, demonstrate that although there is a well educated workforce resident in Nobber, the vast majority of residents are travelling significant distances to their place of work or education as illustrated in Appendix C. This is not sustainable and the Planning Authority will endeavour through this Local Area Plan to facilitate the development of local enterprises to alleviate this situation. As significant numbers of people are travelling more than 15km to work, school and college, in conjunction with attracting employment-generating enterprises to the Village itself, it is important to improve access to other employment centres such as Ardee, Kells, Kingscourt and Navan.

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<sup>5</sup> An average household size of 2.694 persons per household is in accordance with the Meath County Development Plan, 2007 -2013 as outlined in Table 5 for the 31st December 2009.

#### 4.6.4 Housing Structure

According to the Small Area Statistics from the Census of Population 2006 there were a total of 220 households in the Nobber Electoral Division housing a total population of 652 persons. This equates to an average household population size of 2.96 virtually identical to the national average. This average size is also set to continue in line with the European average of approximately 2.60 persons per household.



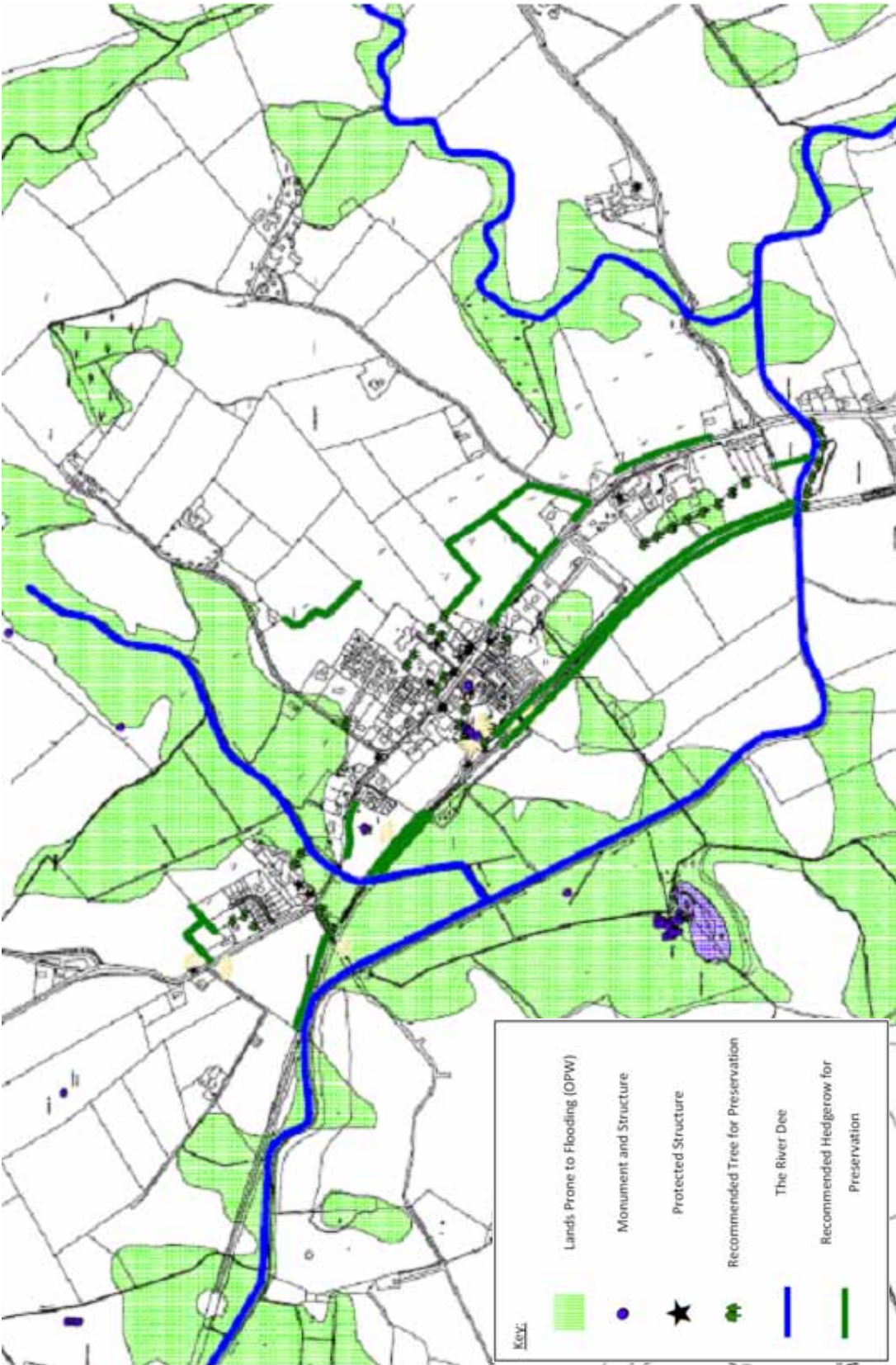


Figure Seven: Environmental Parameters Map.



## 5.0 COMMERCIAL, ECONOMIC AND RETAIL USES

The overall goals of the following twelve sections of the Plan are to encourage the creation of living and working environments of the highest quality through the setting out of objectives and standards for the control of future development. These are in addition to the planning policies and development objectives contained within the existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. It is the objective of the Council to implement all future development in accordance with these stated goals, objectives and policies in order to facilitate land-use in a manner that will promote the proper planning and sustainable development of Nobber Village as a whole.

### 5.1 Existing Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

Nobber is identified within the County Retail Hierarchy as a 'Tier 2 Level 4 Village Centre'. The existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 states that:

*Village centres play an important role in rural community life in the County. In general, they serve smaller catchment areas and have a more limited range and quality of retail floorspace than Small Town Centres. The retail offer within each of these centres is limited and as such the majority of retail needs are met in higher order centres in the County Retail Hierarchy. All of these centres would therefore benefit from an enhancement of their retail floorspace and specifically convenience floorspace in order that the daily needs of the villages and their catchments are better met (2007: 106).*

Nobber has a limited range of commercial and retail services, and would benefit from a greater range and variety of retail facilities. Commercial and retail development within the Village currently comprises of a convenience shop and numerous retail services shops, such as a butchers, a pharmacy, a hairdresser, a gift shop, an auction house, a bookmakers, a restaurant, a café, a beauty salon, a veterinary surgery, two public houses, a car dealership, an agricultural supply depot and a political regional office. There is currently one vacant retail shop within the Village's Centre. Additionally, a number of retail units have recently been constructed; however, one of these also remains vacant. There are no bank, credit union or other financial office in the Village. An existing commercial premises, 'Nobber House', is currently vacant within the Village Centre.



Plate Sixteen: Photograph of Nobber Village Centre, taken outside of 'Keoghan's' Public House facing South.

To provide for a possible growing population base, as well as the Village's role as a service provider for the surrounding rural area, the Village may need to expand upon its commercial and retail functions in the future.

As stated, the south-eastern section of Nobber Village Centre has been the subject of commercial and retail development in recent years, however they have largely not respected the existing vernacular design traits evident within the Village. The roof pitches, façade and fenestration details, specifically the use of stone cladding, and brick quoins and surrounds as material finishes may not be appropriate within this Village setting.



*Plate Seventeen: Recently constructed commercial developments to the South-East of the Village Centre area.*

## 5.2 Future Commercial, Economic And Retail Development

Nobber's retail and commercial zone is mainly based within the Village Centre core. Currently, the services provided are relatively limited and any future further retail development should be directed into the Village Centre thereby facilitating multi-purpose trips. This should include the change of use of existing residential properties within the Village in order to retain the Centre as the core retailing area of the Village. This would aid in the consolidation, and strengthen the existing retailing base.

The following policies are additional to the Council's policies regarding retail and commercial development within the existing Meath County Development Plan:

### **Objective CER 1: Commercial, Economic and Retail**

To address leakage of retail expenditure from the Village and its catchment by facilitating the strengthening of the range and quality of its retail offer to allow the Village to meet its local shopping needs.

### Policy CER1: Commercial, Economic And Retail

- a) To maintain and improve the vitality and viability of Nobber Village Centre as the centre of all commercial and retail activity within Nobber, in order to ensure both a mixture and variety of local shopping, to serve the day to day needs of the local community.
- b) To encourage the retention of traditional shop fronts, which enhance the local character of the Village's streetscape and provide the Village with an attractive appearance to attract further investment.
- c) To encourage the use of materials and finishes for future commercial and retail developments that respect the established vernacular design traits of the surrounding properties; this includes roof pitches, facade and fenestration details and materials used.

#### 5.2.1 Shop-fronts

Shop-fronts are one of the most important elements in determining the character, quality and image of retail streets in any town and village. In order to increase the attractiveness of the Village, the Council will promote the protection of traditional and original shop-fronts, while also encouraging good contemporary shop-front design which is complementary to the Village's existing character in new developments. The Council will actively discourage poor shop-front design which detracts from the villagescape such as the use of roller shutters and their associated boxes being placed on the exterior of shop-fronts.

### Policy SF 1: Shop-fronts

To encourage good shop front design that reflects the scale and proportions of the existing streetscape. The Council will seek to retain the remaining traditional shop-fronts of townscape importance.

#### 5.2.2 Street Furniture

Street furniture plays a vital role in helping to create an attractive, coherent and legible urban area. A street furniture palette, reflecting the nature of the Village's various character areas and spaces, should be developed and designed to accommodate a wide range of functions. It should not be dominated by any one function and would aim to provide an improved public realm setting.

### Policy SF 2: Street Furniture

To encourage the creation of a Street Furniture Palette to create an improved public realm setting within the Village.

### 5.3 Existing Business and Enterprise Use

There is a very limited business and industrial base within Nobber. The currently zoned enterprise and employment lands located at the junction of the Cregg and Kingscourt roads have not been developed. It is an objective of this Local Area Plan that the Village expands its own employment base; however this can be difficult for any Council to implement, as employment generating uses tend to be very much private sector driven. Business uses will be accommodated within both the Village Centre and Light Industrial zonings.

### 5.3.1 Future Business and Enterprise Development

Having regard to the nature, role and scale of the Village, the strategy for economic development in Nobber must focus on the achievable delivery of local services, and potential employment and enterprise generation. The zoning of an appropriate site within the Village boundary can facilitate the creation and development of small-scale services and rural enterprise, as well as allow for the relocation of existing non-conforming and incompatible businesses within the Village. A new site has been identified for enterprise and employment use to the south-east of the Village along the R162 Navan Road.

Lands have been identified to accommodate enterprise and employment uses to the east of the village centre, these lands are the subject of a Framework Plan Objective and there is a requirement that a Flood Impact Assessment be prepared as part of the Framework Plan.



*Plate Eighteen & Nineteen: Nobber Motors Ltd. and Sean McEntee's Agricultural Merchants and Suppliers.*

There are two business sites within the Village's boundary, which are considered to be non-conforming uses; namely the Nobber Motors Ltd, motor sales garage and the Sean McEntee's Agricultural Merchants & Suppliers facility. The Council will favourably consider the appropriate redevelopment of these sites for uses which are consistent with the planning policies and development objectives of this Plan. The Council will also proactively and favourably consider the relocation and retention of these uses in appropriately zoned land in the Village. Two separate business and enterprise zoned lands are proposed within this Local Area Plan.

<b>Objective BE 1: Business and Enterprise</b>
To cater for and allow the Village to expand on its current employment base.
<b>Objective BE 2: Business and Enterprise</b>
<p>The development of the new industrial zoned 'E1' lands to the north west of the village centre shall be subject to an agreed Framework Plan to be submitted with any future planning application for these lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The framework plan shall include a written statement and a plan or series of plans indicating proposals in relation to the overall design for the lands, types of development, road layout and access arrangements, provision of services, landscaping, phasing of development etc.</li> <li>b) The framework plan shall include provision of a maintained landscaped buffer/linear park</li> </ul>

in order to protect the residential amenity of adjoining residential development.

- c) The framework plan shall be accompanied by a Flood Impact Assessment.

**Policy BE 1: Business and Enterprise**

To work with the County Development Board and other relevant agencies to promote Nobber as an attractive place for inward investment, thereby encouraging business, enterprise and industry to invest in the Village.

**Policy BE 2: Business and Enterprise**

To appropriately landscape all employment, enterprise or light industrial developments, so that they integrate sensitively within the natural environment of Nobber, especially adjacent to residential development and open space areas. A landscaped buffer zone, of a minimum of 5 metres, will be a requirement of any planning application for any light Industrial/warehousing development where it adjoins another zoning or where it could potentially seriously injure the amenities of adjoining land uses.

## 6.0 RESIDENTIAL USES

### 6.1 Existing Residential Uses

Residential development is evident throughout the Village with older terraced and semi-detached developments having been integrated somewhat with the Village Centre. A number of newer residential developments have been built or are being completed within the Village. 'Cluain Beag' located to the South of Cregg Road is a medium-density residential development consisting of approximately thirty-six detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings of both single and two-storeys in height, equating to a density of 26-27 dwellings per hectare.

The Council have also undertaken the construction of a medium-sized residential development called 'Bridge Park' to the south of 'Railway View' consisting of twenty-two mainly semi-detached dwellings.



*Plate Twenty: The residential development of 'Muff Crescent'.*

The site layouts of some residential developments are not conducive to passive surveillance of internal pedestrian and cyclist movements. There are also dark and narrow alleyways evident within some developments that could allow for anti-social behaviour. Additionally, poorly paved pedestrian routes linked to the Village Centre, where pedestrians and cyclists share road space with motorised vehicles, and poorly laid-out and maintained public open spaces have resulted in some poor quality residential environments.

### 6.2 Future Residential Uses

The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the projected housing requirements of the Village over the Local Area Plan's timeline. This will ensure that an undue shortage of such land will not arise.

The aim of this Local Area Plan is to ensure that there is adequate land available in appropriate locations for housing, complemented by clear policies regarding any future development proposals to construct additional houses. The availability of housing, catering for a diverse range of housing needs, is important for sustaining communities within smaller urban settlements and enhances the quality of life for their occupants. Ultimately, financial constraints will determine the



rate of public sector house building, whilst, the demand and supply of new housing in the private sector is dictated largely by market forces.

It is the intention of this Local Area Plan that residential development will be accommodated within the areas zoned for residential use and within the areas zoned as 'Mixed Residential and Business' uses where residential would be 'open for consideration'. It is not envisaged that any residential development within the latter zone would be in excess of 50% of the overall development within this zone. It is also noted that Variation No. 2 of the existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 explicitly states that any proposed redevelopment on such brownfield sites would not be taken from the numbers allocated for Nobber. It is proposed that an average of 20 dwellings per hectare will be required within residential areas.

As noted above, to allow for the potential non-release of lands and choice of location, 50% more land has been zoned than considered necessary for residential development. Therefore, the total amount of land zoned for residential purposes to be developed before 2013 is approximately 4.5 hectares. Taking this into account, this land bank will deliver Variation No. 2 of the County Development Plan's sixty dwellings, which could realise a population increase of approximately 150 or 162 persons over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, as outlined in Section 2.9.2.1.<sup>6</sup> The realisation of these dwellings alone could result in a population within the Village of between 383-395 persons within the Local Area Plan's six year lifespan. This would equate to an increase in population of approximately 6-7% per annum over the period 2006-2015.

#### 6.2.1 Social and Affordable Housing

To achieve a fully integrated village, development needs to cater for people of different ages and income groups. The creation of separate enclaves of private, social and affordable housing should be resisted. Villages that provide a mixture of residential types, both in terms of tenure and economic characteristics, produce enriched social settings. The most successful urban settings tend to be characterised by patterns of mixed tenure and mixed economy. Therefore, every development which satisfies Section 96 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006 shall be required to provide up to 20% of such developments for social and affordable housing purposes. The final ratio will be determined by the Council.

Nobber has had a significant level of its housing constructed by the Council in the form of social housing consisting of numerous smaller residential developments fronting onto Main Street and the R162, specifically 'Muff Crescent', 'Muff Park', 'Moate View' and 'Railway View'. The Council are also finalising the construction of 22 no. dwellings, intended for social housing purposes in 'Bridge Park'. Currently, there are 17 dwellings within the Council's social housing stock within the Village's boundary; within the next few months this will have risen to 39 dwellings. This is considered to be a relatively substantial figure in relation to the overall number of households in the Village. Ultimately, private residential developments should be encouraged to provide for a broad mixture of household types.

#### 6.2.2 Serviced residential Sites

The provision of serviced residential sites in small towns and villages where services exist offer a viable alternative for individuals wishing to build and design their own houses in villages rather than the open countryside.

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<sup>6</sup> These figures are compiled using the predicted average household sizes for the period 2007-2013 outlined in Table 5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. On 31st December 2009 the average household size is predicted to be 2.694 persons per dwelling, by 31st December 2013 this is predicted to fall to 2.5 persons per dwelling.

One area has been identified within Nobber where this form of development could be considered to be appropriate and is located to the east of the Village to the south of the Cregg Road to the north of the 'Cluain Beag' residential development. This land is in the ownership of the Council. Densities of around eight to ten dwellings per hectare are considered to be appropriate for this type of development.

#### **Objective H1: Residential Development**

- a) To ensure the implementation of the Housing Strategy and to integrate housing provided under Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 into private residential developments in a layout that prevents segregation and promotes good design and layout.
- b) To carry out the Council's responsibilities under the Housing Acts and to provide Local Authority dwellings, affordable units, voluntary co-operative housing and private sites as the need arises and as finances allow.
- c) To promote a high standard of architecture in the design of new housing developments and to encourage a variety of house types, sizes and tenure in individual schemes and variety, interest and social mix in private and social housing developments.
- d) To ensure the necessary infrastructural investment to facilitate the overall level of housing output required to meet the current and anticipated levels of demand in a planned and coherent fashion.

#### **Policy H 1: New Residential Development**

- a) To prepare a Master Plan or Framework Plan for those greenfield lands to the east of Nobber Village zoned A5. Any redevelopment of these lands must include provision for a community facility and must take account of the extremely elevated nature of those lands fronting onto the R162 Navan Road to the west of the Village's Water Tower. The visual impact of any development of this site will be determined through visual impact assessment.
- b) To locate and zone lands to ensure that residential development in the area is suitably located, designed and serviced to enhance the local environment and prevent any inappropriate or avoidable impacts on the quality of that environment. In compliance with Policy HS POL 16 of the settlement strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 'between 25-30% of all new multi house developments, being developments in excess of four houses, shall be reserved for persons native to Co. Meath or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. The remainder of houses in such multiple house developments shall be provided for local growth only. The reservation of 25-30% of multiple housing units for local derived needs shall include the 20% reservation for social and affordable housing needs'.
- c) To ensure that Nobber avoids the monotony of urban sprawl, excessive and monotonous duplication of house styles within residential developments will be strongly resisted. The unique character, vernacular style and special setting of the Village mean that its capacity to absorb large-scale residential developments is limited. Future developments must have regard to the local setting and aim to create a sense of place and identity in any proposed development.
- d) To encourage a strong mixture of house types, tenures and sizes. This will cater for



changing household size and composition, and to provide for a social and demographic balance within the Village.

- e) To ensure that a high standard of design be incorporated into future residential developments in line with the recommendations of the 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages)' and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide' issued by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government in May 2009. Applications for four or more dwellings should be accompanied by a landscaping plan and a design statement. Furthermore, regard should be had to the use of local materials and house styles in designing all future residential developments.
- f) To encourage infill housing developments on appropriate sites where the proposals respect the existing scale and character of the area, and sufficiently protect the amenities of adjoining properties within the area. Proposed developments must have regard to the surrounding environment and the predominant design features, the existing residential density and the existence of particular elements within the Village, such as stands of trees, protected structures and open space areas.
- g) To only permit apartments at appropriate locations in the Village Centre. Apartments, or retail developments with apartments above, should only be located on lands zoned B1 within the Village Centre. In conjunction with Section 10.1.4.10 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 relating to the 'Height Control of Residential Development', three-storey duplex units will not be permitted in villages.
- h) To prohibit development on designated areas of open space that form part of a site layout for previously permitted developments.
- i) To require the naming of residential developments to reflect local place names, language or topographical features as appropriate and to incorporate old names from the locality as far as possible.
- j) To promote energy conservation and renewable energy technologies, as outlined under Section 14.0 of this Plan, in all future developments. Such measures should be consistent with other policies in this Plan.
- k) To support the provision of adequate engineering, as well as social infrastructure, as an integral part of any future residential development by ensuring that the necessary services and utilities infrastructure required for such developments are provided in tandem with the construction of any future residential developments.

#### **Policy H 2: Social and Affordable Housing**

- a) Encourage the integration of social and affordable units within private residential developments, which prevents segregation, and promotes good design and layout.
- b) To ensure that up to 20% of any land zoned solely for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Developments Acts, 2000-2006 and the County Housing Strategy.

#### **Policy H 3: Serviced Residential Initiative**

To investigate the possibility of developing a Serviced Residential Sites programme on the lands within the Council's ownership to the south of Cregg Road.

## 7.0 CIVIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### 7.1 Existing Civic and Community Facilities

Currently, the Village contains a Primary School, Nobber National School, a comprehensive Secondary School, O'Carolan College, a Montessori School, a Health Centre, a Parochial Hall, a Post Office, a Garda Station, a Graveyard, a Fire Station, GAA grounds and a Library. If Nobber is to experience additional growth, it is essential that sufficient community facilities are established, catering for all age groups.

### 7.2 Future Civic and Community Development

Facilities for community development allow for social interaction and engagement, and are an important part of any village in Ireland. Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives, a core policy of this Local Area Plan. Sustainable communities require not only economic development, but also the provision of and access to community support, education and health services, amenities and leisure services and a good quality built environment. Communities also require opportunities to meet, interact and form bonds, essential prerequisites to the development of a sense of place and belonging.



*Plate Twenty-one & Twenty-two: Nobber Fire Station and Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church.*

A number of community groups are active within Nobber, including the Cruicetown Cemetery Conservation Committee, the Meath Archaeological & Historical Society (M.A.H.S.), the Muff Crescent Residents Association, the Nobber Cemetery Restoration Committee, the Nobber Friendship Group, the Nobber Parish Community Alert, the Nobber Community Hall Committee, the Nobber GFC, the Railway View Residents Association and the River Dee Protection Society providing a strong public voice to the proper planning and sustainable development of the Village. There is one church within the Village with two graveyards, a crèche, a parochial hall, a library, a primary school, a secondary school and GAA Grounds. Youth facilities and useable public open spaces are lacking within the Village, as such it may be considered appropriate to provide a Community Centre or Gym for the residents of the Village and surrounding areas; an appropriate site may be the former Secondary School site located to the north of 'O'Carolan College' and south of the GAA Grounds. Any proposal must involve the re-use of the existing buildings on the site.

Regarding the primary and post-primary schools in Nobber, the Primary School, 'Scoil Nais an Obair', has a current enrolment figure of 100 pupils, whereas the post-primary school, 'O'Carolan

College', had an enrolment figure of 359 pupils in 2007. The capacity and potential future demands on these facilities have been considered during the preparation of this Local Area Plan.

A strategic goal of this Plan is to promote and enable the development of community facilities, public services and support mechanisms in the Village, which can adequately serve the needs of the local population over the six year timeframe of this Local Area Plan and beyond.



*Plate Twenty-three: 'O'Carolan College' Secondary School located along the Navan Road.*

<b>Objective CC 1: Community Facilities</b>
<p>a) To promote and enable the development of community facilities, public services and support mechanisms in the Village, which can adequately serve the needs of the local population over the six year timeframe of this Local Area Plan and beyond.</p> <p>b) To accommodate for the provision of a Community Centre or Gym for the residents of the Village and surrounding areas.</p> <p>c) To facilitate any necessary future expansion of Nobber Library, Nobber National School and O'Carolan College to accommodate their future needs.</p>

<b>Policy CC 1: Shared Use of Community and Educational Facilities</b>
To investigate, in cooperation with relevant agencies, the possibility of maximising the shared use of existing community and educational facilities for community and non-school purposes, where possible, to promote the sustainable use of such infrastructure and community cohesion.
<b>Policy CC 2: Policy CC 3: Phasing of Development</b>
To ensure the provision of amenity, community, cultural, educational, and recreational facilities in tandem with commercial, residential and other development.
<b>Policy CC 3: Improve Public Service Facilities and Infrastructure</b>
To support and facilitate the improvement of public service infrastructure and facilities in the area.
<b>Policy CC 4: Safer Routes to School</b>
To support the policies and recommendations outlined in the 'Safer Routes to School Initiative' (DTO 2005), to ensure adequate pedestrian access and safer routes to school throughout the Village.

## 8.0 OPEN SPACES AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES

The current Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 explicitly sets out the manner in which residential developments must comply with open space standards.

### 8.1 Existing Open Spaces and Community Amenities

Active and passive open spaces and facilities are an important component of any village. Nobber enjoys notable environmental qualities, specifically the undulating drumlin landscape, the enveloping nature of the River Dee, views into Brittas Demesne to the west of the Village and the Village's unique built heritage, such as the former St John's Church of Ireland ecclesiastical complex and the Motte and Bailey. However, the Village is distinctly lacking in active recreational and community amenities. A small open space area located to the south of the Fire Station in the memory of the Irish Harpist Turlough O'Carolan has been relatively recently constructed. However it is not entirely useable as an open space or recreational area due to its limited size, lack of seating areas and proximity to the R162 Route.



*Plate Twenty-four: Old Cemetery adjacent to St John's Church of Ireland.*



*Plate Twenty-five: Picture of Nobber GAA Grounds.*



A public open space area surrounds the graveyard and old monastic site outline located within the former Church of Ireland churchyard. The only other open space area is located to the front of the former Primary School, but is of a small size. None of these areas are interlinked in any cohesive manner, there are no riverside activities, distinctive open spaces, safe walking networks or active areas of open space to maximise upon and appropriately utilise such natural and man-made environmental assets, settings and views.

The possibility of safe walking routes has not been realised within the Village; neither has the Village's relationship with the River Dee been maximised for the benefit of the Village residents. One such proposal would be to utilise the rail line as a circuitous amenity walking route around the Village in conjunction with the River Dee and Main Street. Safe pedestrian walks have been identified within this Local Area Plan ensuring that Nobber is both pedestrian friendly and permeable. The Village is also in need of a larger more purposeful open space area or a series of areas with associated children's playground areas and civic spaces.

The Village is well served by playing pitches in the form of the GAA Sports Grounds located to the south of the Village.

#### 8.1.1 The River Dee

The River Dee provides the opportunity for many river-based and riverside amenities. The River has good stocks of Salmon, Sea Trout and Brown Trout, and angling and coarse fishing should be promoted.



*Plate Twenty-six: The River Dee.*

### 8.1.2 Nobber Motte

Nobber Motte is a fine example of an Anglo-Norman Motte and Bailey, is a designated National Monument and possesses a zone of archaeological interest surrounding it. This area is also directly north of the currently Greenfield area zoned residential to the south.

Due to the rich diversity of a River's channel and associated floodplains, the proximity of Brittas Demesne and the surrounding undulating agricultural lands, there are a significant variety of birds within and around Nobber, some of which are protected species. Opportunities for bird-watching could be promoted in this area.



*Plate Twenty-seven: Nobber Anglo-Norman Motte and Bailey.*

### 8.1.3 St John's Church of Ireland Site

The ecclesiastical complex surrounding the former St John's Church of Ireland site between the rail line and the Village Centre contains many significant built heritage items, as well as a small amount of recently restored open spaces surrounding it. The site of St John's Church of Ireland has been recently purchased by a local community group in conjunction with the Council with the aim of providing for a community facility. This is further complemented by the existence of open spaces to the north and south of the areas associated with the Railway Station complex and the open space to the north of 'Railway View'. The area is also included within an extensive zone of archaeological interest. For these reasons, this area and those surrounding it have been zoned as 'Open Space' to protect the ecclesiastical area's setting and to allow for the provision of community facilities within the area. In conclusion, a Conservation Plan should be enacted for the area, including those areas to the north and south.

This area is also located between the significant residential Greenfield zoned area to the north, and the recently constructed 'Bridge Park'. In this way a pedestrian walkway and green corridor should be facilitated for, which connects the newly constructed residential area to the south, the

ecclesiastical complex, the yet to be developed residential Greenfield site and, finally, Nobber Motte. In this way, a safe pedestrian walking route can be created within the Village for residents.



Plate Twenty-eight: St John's Church of Ireland.

#### Objective OS 1: Open Space & Amenities

- a) To encourage and promote the further development of river based amenities, which are open to the general public, such as bird watching and passive surveillance, by providing benches along the river way, and fishing, through the provision of designated fishing beats.
- b) To facilitate and encourage the preparation of a Conservation plan for St John's Church of Ireland site and adjoining lands.
- c) To retain those areas of land surrounding Nobber Bridge, Nobber Motte, and the ecclesiastical complex of the former St John's Church of Ireland site, free from development, by reason of their sensitive locations and views.
- d) To promote the development of walking routes through-out the Village. These walks include:
  - The creation of a pedestrian walkway and green corridor which connects the newly constructed residential development of 'Bridge Park', the ecclesiastical complex of the St John's Church of Ireland site, the yet to be developed residential Greenfield site and, finally, Nobber Motte a cater for a safe pedestrian walking route for residents.
  - To create a circuitous pedestrian walkway along the existing freight-only railway line

in conjunction with the creation of new or the improving of footpaths along the R162 from Nobber Cemetery through the Village's Main Street to the HSE Health Centre on both sides of the road. This walking route shall extend from 'Casey's Forge' in the north of the Village adjacent to Nobber Bridge along the rail line to the Spiddal Railway Crossing to the south of the Village along the Carlanstown Road. A footpath will need to be constructed from the Spiddal Railway Crossing along the Carlanstown Road and around to Nobber Cemetery to aid in pedestrian safety. There is a significant level of land available along the Carlanstown Road route to facilitate such a footpath.

- The creation of new, or the improving of existing, footpaths along the R162 from Nobber Cemetery through the Village's Main Street to the HSE Health Centre on both sides of the road will also allow for a safe walkway for the entire length of the Village.
- e) To encourage the provision of historical and interpretative signage in order to inform visitors of the historical importance of Nobber to a standard similar to other Heritage Villages in the County.

#### Policy OS 1: Open Space & Amenities

To protect and retain those lands surrounding Nobber Bridge, Nobber Motte and the ecclesiastical complex of the former St John's Church of Ireland site free from inappropriate development due to their sensitive locations and important associations with important Protected Structures and National Monuments and Structures.

#### Policy OS 2: Open Space & Amenities

- a) To examine the possibility of a riverside walk and aim to extend it where the opportunity arises in partnership with the community and private developers.
- b) To ensure that Nobber is pedestrian friendly through the provision of designated pedestrian linkages and safe walking routes preferably not associated with motorised traffic.

### 8.2 Active and Passive Open Space

Facilities for active open spaces are well catered for within Nobber, specifically with the presence of the GAA grounds to the south of the Village. Regarding passive open spaces, the Village has a small park located south of the Fire Station in memory of the Irish Harpist Turlough O'Carolan. However this park is largely unusable as it fronts onto the R162 National Secondary Route, does not contain any seating areas and is of a deficient size to be of any real value. The only other viable open space area is that surrounding the graveyard and churchyard surrounding the former Church of Ireland site within the Village Centre; however the entrance to this area is marred by the narrow width of the entrance route and the existence of a private dwelling fronting onto this route, as well as the fact that there is no public lighting within vicinity of it. There are also a few isolated passive open spaces located throughout the residential areas of Nobber providing a minimal amenity value for the Village.

However the Village does not possess Children's Play areas or recreational amenity grounds for the local population. A comprehensive open space network needs to be established within the Village, which also allows for unrestricted movement between such areas.



**Policy OS 3: Active and Passive Open Space**

To provide areas of high-quality active and passive amenity that are well designed, interlinked with one another, suitably proportioned and accessible to the surrounding community. The development of open spaces will aim to enhance and protect natural features and views, and be set in safe and secure environments enjoyed by all sectors of the community.

**Policy OS 4: Open Space in Residential Areas**

To ensure that a minimum rate of 15% of the total site area shall be designated as 'Open Space' in new residential developments.

## 9.0 HERITAGE

### 9.1 Existing Heritage

The rich archaeological, built and natural heritage of the Nobber area are important resources that must be protected and enhanced to add to the local sense of place and belonging, and also to increase the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. The protection of these resources and presentation of their heritage value are key considerations in this Plan; all development objectives and planning policies have been formulated with a view to improving the overall quality of their context and setting.



*Plate Twenty-nine: A former Milk Stand along the Navan Road.*

#### 9.1.1 Archaeological Heritage

Nobber contains two sites of archaeological interest namely, the ecclesiastical site, surrounding the former Church of Ireland of St. John the Baptist, including that area potentially outlining the initial early development of the Village to the west of the current Village Centre; and the second zone of archaeological interest surrounds Nobber Motte and Bailey to the north of the Village. The Village also contains eight items identified on the Sited and Monuments Record (SMR). These items highlight the extensive length of human occupation within the Village and are arranged around the two separate historical areas of Nobber Motte and the ecclesiastical settlement and early Village Centre.

Archaeology is a non-renewable resource and is of great cultural and scientific importance. Potential sites of archaeological interest may include archaeological remains beneath the ground surface. Such remains may only be uncovered during development work and must be investigated and recorded in detail. In relation to development proposals the planning authority will adopt a policy of archaeological monitoring which will be required on developments where the scale and nature of such developments may, in the opinion of the planning authority, have a

negative impact on previously unknown archaeological features/artefacts. The value of such archaeological sites and monuments in Nobber is fully recognised by the Council. When considering development proposals within Areas of Archaeological Potential and on, or in close proximity to, sites of known archaeological significance, the Council will have regard to the provisions of Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, or as may be amended from time to time. The Council will also have regard to the observations and recommendations of the Office of Public Works and the Heritage and Planning Division of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as well as the views and concerns of other interested statutory bodies will be taken into account when assessing such planning applications. Additionally, anyone intending to carry-out works which may interfere with a national monument is required to apply to the DoEHLG for a licence. The DoEHLG will specify what, if any, precautions or actions are required.



*Plate Thirty: Stone outbuildings associated with 'Bridge Farm' to the north of the Village.*

When considering development proposals within areas of archaeological potential, regard will be had to the nature of sub-surface works that could impact upon archaeological remains (e.g. foundation type and design, layout and location of services, road works, landscaping schemes, etc.). It is the Council's intention to fully protect these sites insitu or if necessary following a grant of permission to allow for archaeological assessment and examination to occur before any development may occur.

In relation to archaeological assessment of sites, applicants will also be required to define the buffer area or area contiguous with any monument which will preserve the setting and visual amenity of the site. The area of the monument and buffer should not be included as part of the open space requirement demanded of specific developments but should be additional to the required open spaces. The Council may also require the developer to submit a report prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist on the archaeological implications of the proposed development.

In appropriate circumstances, the Council when granting permission for development may impose conditions requiring the following:

1. Professional archaeological supervision of site excavations,
2. The funding by the applicant of any necessary archaeological assessment, monitoring, testing or excavation of the site and the submission of a report thereon, prior to the commencement of development, and
3. The preservation of all or part of any archaeological remains on the site.

Applicants are advised to consult archaeological maps, which are available for consultation from the planning authority, as well as the Environmental Parameters Map, in order to ascertain whether their site is located within a known area of archaeological potential. All Planning applications should have regard to the following to the Heritage Council's 'Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers, 2000'.

#### **Policy AH 1: record of monuments and Places and Zones of Archaeological Interest**

- a) To support access, if appropriate, to the various sites of archaeological importance within Nobber, with the prior co-operation of the individual landowners and to integrate, where possible and if appropriate, sites of archaeological interest into walking trails within Nobber.
- b) To have regard to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and both Zones of Archaeological Interest when dealing with planning applications for development or threats to recorded structures, including public sector development. Development shall be controlled in the vicinity of a recorded feature where it detracts from its setting. In all such cases the Council shall consult with the National Monuments Section of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG).
- c) To fully protect archaeological sites insitu, or, if necessary, following a grant of permission to allow for archaeological assessment and examination to occur before any development may occur. The Council may require an Archaeological Report outlining the archaeological implications of the proposed development. Where permission for such proposals is granted, the applicant will have due regard to the recommendations of the Heritage and Planning Division of the DoEHLG.
- d) To promote a presumption in favour of "preservation in situ" of archaeological remains and settings, in accordance with national policy, when dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features.
- e) To protect the area of any National Monument. A buffer zone should be additional to the required open space requirement.
- f) To seek the publication of the results of archaeological excavations carried out within Nobber Village, in co-operation with relevant bodies.
- g) To protect the burial grounds within Nobber Village identified in the RMP, in co-operation with the National Monuments Section of the DoEHLG, specifically the churchyard and accompanying burial ground surrounding the former Church of Ireland Chapel of St John the Baptist.

## 9.2 Built Heritage

There are numerous buildings and structures of historical significance within Nobber. Nobber has twenty structures listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) attached to the current Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 in accordance with the provisions of Section 51 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006. See Appendix D for a full listing and description of each. Furthermore, there are numerous structures within the Local Area Plan boundary that have been recommended for protection by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) compiled in 2004.



*Plate Thirty-one & Thirty-two: Entrance gate to St John's Church of Ireland and Graveyard, and a former lime kiln at 'Bridge Farm'.*

The continued protection of the built heritage of Nobber is intrinsic to the sustained success and viability of the Village.

### 9.2.1 Current Protected Structures

There are twenty structures designated as Protected Structures in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 within the Village's boundary. The County Development Plan details the Council's policies in assessing development proposals relating to such structures.

#### Policy BH 1: Existing Protected Structures

- a) To ensure the continued protection of the Protected Structures identified in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) appended to the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.
- b) To require planning permission for all works, both to the exterior and interior, which materially affect the character of a protected structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interest.

## 9.3 Natural Heritage

Although the Village and the surrounding environs hold environmental assets, none are designated at national or local level; the Village does not contain nor is it adjacent to any Natura 2000 sites (being SACs, NHAs or SPAs). However, there is a diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats within the Nobber environs area including hedgerow, grassland, river and woodland habitats.



This diversity is not under any significant threat, however a sustainable approach to future development is needed to protect and conserve it. This should be complemented by a drive to consolidate the Village further, with a clear demarcation between rural and urban areas, and the protection of natural heritage features, such as hedgerows, individual trees, important stands of trees, and river and floodplain environments. The protection of the natural environment of Nobber is fundamental to the success of this Local Area Plan, as it provides the Village with its own unique identity and amenity background. Therefore it is vital to achieve the correct balance between protection of the natural environment and the future development of the Village.



*Plate Thirty-three: Drumlin landscape to the West of the Village, plate taken to the South of the Nobber Motte.*

#### 9.3.1 The River Dee

The most significant environmental feature within Nobber is the River Dee. This feature is a huge asset to the Village, being one of the natural environmental features in Nobber's picturesque setting. Furthermore, river systems support a diverse range of animals, birds, fish, insects, reptiles and vegetation.

The Environmental Protection Agency has recently defined this stretch of the River Dee surrounding Nobber as having only 'moderate' water quality status and at being in risk of not achieving 'good' status by 2015. The River's water quality problems have been exacerbated by poor quality run-off from building sites entering the main channel. For this reason, particular attention should be given to its future protection and for mitigation measures to be borne in mind regarding any possible further degradation of its status. Protection measures both during and following construction of developments should be addressed in the Plan.

Riparian strips or zones along the banks of a river may form part of the terrestrial environment but are intrinsically linked to that of the aquatic. Riparian zones are significant in ecology, environmental management and civil engineering terms due to their role in soil conservation,

biodiversity and the influence on the quality of aquatic ecosystems generally as they provide a “buffer” from deleterious matter entering a watercourse.

#### Policy RD 1: The River Dee

- a) To protect the water quality of this stretch of the River Dee is not to be compromised by any existing or proposed developments within Nobber. All proposed future developments shall comply with the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) publication entitled, ‘Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, Guidance for Consultants and Contractors, CIRIA, 2001’ to mitigate against the risk of pollution from construction activities entering the River Dee’s watercourse. All construction works will be completed in line with the recommendations of this publication.
- b) To require future development proposals on lands adjoining the River Dee and its main tributaries in Nobber to include the identification of the River’s associated riparian zone and to maintain these areas free from development intrusion (including night lighting) as a natural environmental feature and amenity resource.

#### 9.3.2 Trees and Hedgerows

As previously identified, although significant hedgerows and tree groups are not entirely obvious upon first inspection, there are a number of examples within and around Nobber, as outlined in Section 5.1, which should be retained and incorporated where possible into any future development proposals within the Village, see the Environmental Parameters Map.



*Plate Thirty-four & Thirty-five: Hedgerows along the Kingscourt - Navan rail line and stone wall along Nobber Motte and Bridge.*

Hedgerows and mature trees can be multi-functional and have immense value to an area:

1. Flooding Control: root systems of hedgerows regulate water movement and help prevent flooding.
2. Disease Control: hedgerows help prevent the spread of airborne disease.
3. Water Quality: hedgerows trap silt and soil particles, which clog up fish spawning grounds if they enter watercourses.
4. Cultural/Historical: hedgerows are part of Ireland’s cultural, historical and archaeological Heritage: Village boundary hedgerows are particularly important as they can often date from medieval times.



5. Wildlife: as the area of native woodlands in Ireland is significantly smaller than fellow European Union Members, hedgerows have become very important wildlife habitats. They provide food, shelter, and corridors of movement, nest and hibernation sites for many of our native flora and fauna.
6. Screening: hedgerows when incorporated into urban developments provide screening and can greatly enhance the scenic quality of the area.

The current freight only railway line and the River Dee, both to the west of the Village, provides the area with optimal wildlife corridors. Intermittent open spaces alongside this allow the opportunity for wildlife to migrate. In this way it is important for the various natural and semi-natural features and open space elements to link where possible, thereby guaranteeing flora and fauna dispersal throughout the Village. This provides the Village with an attractive setting and allows for interaction between humans and their surrounding natural environment. All the above components can assist in the integration of future development into the existing landscape while sustaining the natural visual image of the Village.



*Plate Thirty-six: The Kingscourt to Navan Rail Line, plate taken looking south from 'Casey's Forge' toward the Village.*

There are a significant number of trees that are worthy of protection, notably two mature 'Irish Yew' (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata') to the front of the Parochial House, a stand of European Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) to the south of the former Primary School, a stand of Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) to the east of the current Primary School with an additional sycamore located in the site to the west of the Fire Station, the trees contained within the former Church of Ireland site being largely coniferous in nature, containing Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Leyland Cypress (*X Cupressocyparis leylandii*), a European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) specimen located within a dwelling's front garden along the south of Cregg Road, a Monkey-Puzzle (*Araucaria araucana* or

*Pehuén*) at the rear of 'Turlough's Restaurant', a stand of trees comprising of both coniferous and deciduous trees to the east of Bridge Farm running to the River Dee, a stand of coniferous trees to the south of the route linking 'Casey's Forge' with the rail line to the north of the Village, a stand of coniferous and European Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees to the south of Nobber Cemetery and finally an extensive stand of Poplars (*Populus*) to the rear of the current Secondary School.

There are also substantial stretches of hedgerows, which add to the Village's character within the Local Area Plan area, notably those along the approach roads into the Village, the hedgerow and stone walls surrounding Nobber Motte, the individual trees and hedgerow species lining both the rail line to the west of the Village and the River Dee and the various hedgerows surrounding agricultural fields to the east of the Village. Development will not generally be permitted where there is likely damage or destroy either trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or those which have a particular local amenity or nature conservation value or special interest, notwithstanding the fact that they are not listed for protection within this Local Area Plan.

### Objective TH 1: Tree Protection

To protect the following tree stands within the Village as indicated on the Environmental Parameters Map:

- a) Two mature 'Irish Yew' trees (*Taxus baccata 'Fastigiata'*) to the front of the Parochial House.
- b) A stand of European Ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) to the south of the former Primary School.
- c) A stand of Sycamore trees (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) to the east of the current Primary School.
- d) A Sycamore tree (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) located in the site to the west of the Fire Station.
- e) The stand of trees contained within the former Church of Ireland site being largely coniferous in nature, containing Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Leyland Cypress (*X Cupressocyparis leylandii*).
- f) A European Beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) specimen located within a dwelling's front garden along the south of Cregg Road.
- g) A Monkey-Puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana* or *Pehuén*) at the rear of 'Turlough's Restaurant'.
- h) The stand of trees to the east of Nobber Bridge along the River Dee's channel, extending to those trees surrounding and associated with Bridge Farm comprising of both coniferous and deciduous trees, excluding the mature Leyland Cypress (*X Cupressocyparis leylandii*).
- i) That stand of trees surrounding a residential dwelling to the north-west of 'Muff Crescent' and a stand of trees comprising of both coniferous and deciduous trees to the east of Bridge Farm running to the River Dee.
- j) A stand of coniferous trees to the south of the route linking 'Casey's Forge' with the rail line to the north of the Village.
- k) A stand of coniferous and European Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees to the south of Nobber Cemetery.

- l) An extensive stand of Poplars (*Populus*) to the rear of the current Secondary School.

#### Objective TH 2: Hedgerow and Stone Wall Protection

To retain, where possible, the following hedgerows and incorporate them into future development layouts within the Village as indicated on the Environmental Parameters Map specifically:

- a) Those hedgerows along the approach roads into the Village, specifically to the east of the R162's southern approach to the Village and those hedgerows fronting on to the R162's northern approach route.
- b) The hedgerow and stone walls surrounding Nobber Motte.
- c) The individual trees, shrubbery and hedgerow species lining both the rail line to the west of the Village and the River Dee.
- d) The various hedgerows surrounding agricultural fields to the east of the Village.

#### Objective TH 3: Removal of Hedgerows and Trees

To implement a presumption against the removal of both hedgerows and trees during the course of developments as the Council recognises the heritage and amenity importance of the county's hedgerow and tree resource.

#### Policy TH 1: Tree Protection

To protect the significant tree stands within the Village as indicated on the Environmental Parameters Map.

#### Policy TH 2: Hedgerow and Stone Wall Protection

To retain, where possible, significant hedgerows and stone walls, and incorporate them into future development layouts within the Village as indicated on the Environmental Parameters Map.

#### Policy TH 3: Removal of Hedgerows and Trees

- a) To promote the protection and preservation of existing hedgerows and to encourage planting of native hedgerow species of local provenance.
- b) To encourage the retention, where possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary will be required of similar length set back within the site. This shall also relate to Road Improvements and Realignments carried out by the Local Authorities or other agents on their behalf.

#### 9.3.3 Significant Views & Prospects

The topography of the drumlin-landscape surrounding Nobber, as well as the existence of the landscaped parkland of Brittas Demesne to the west of the Village has endowed the Village with a number of notable views and prospects. These views and prospects of special amenity value and/or special interest include:

- Views of the undulating drumlin landscape to the east of the Kingscourt Road to the north of the Village.
- Two separate views into Brittas Demesne, the River Dee floodplain area and the undulating drumlin landscape to the west of the Kingscourt Road to the north of the Village.
- A view into Brittas Demesne, the River Dee floodplain area and the undulating drumlin landscape to the west of Nobber Motte and Bailey to the north of the Village.
- Two separate views north and south of the Bridge to the west of the Village over the Kingscourt to Navan Rail Line, which is a Protected Structure.

#### **Policy VP 1: Significant Views & Prospects**

To preserve the visual amenity value of the designated viewpoints through restricting development that would represent a disproportionate visual effect on any available vistas.

#### **9.3.4 Natural Environment**

The continued protection of the Natural Environment in and around Nobber Village is vital to the success of developing Nobber sustainably.

#### **Objective NE 1: Natural Environment**

To ensure continued protection for the following natural environmental features and allow for these features to be integrated within the overall vision for the Village:

- The River Dee,
- Mature tree stands,
- Significant hedgerows,
- Significant views, particularly of Brittas Demesne and the undulating surrounding drumlin landscape,
- Open space networks, and
- Walking routes.

#### **Policy NE 1: Natural Environment**

To ensure continued protection for the identified natural environmental features and allow for these features to be integrated within the overall vision for the Village.

## 10.0 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Due to the close proximity of the River Dee to Nobber, as well as the manner in which it envelops the Village to the north, south and west, there are some areas within the Village's development boundary that are under threat of severe flooding. As a natural phenomenon of the hydrological cycle, flooding is largely attributed to extreme rainfall events. These areas are indicatively mapped upon the Environmental Parameters Map.

Like other natural processes, flooding can not be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and environmentally sustainable management. The extent of paved and other hard surface areas reduces the capacity of the soil to absorb run-off and may increase the risk of flash flooding. The accepted policy response to flood protection is how to manage the risk to life and property as sustainably as possible, and to consider flood risk and its related impacts on development on a catchment basis rather than on an individual location basis. This will facilitate sustainable development through the reduction of future flood damage, and hence reduce its associated potential economic and social costs.



*Plate Thirty-seven: View of those low lying lands to the West of the Village adjacent to the River Dee which flood during periods of high rainfall.*

For future development the Council will require that all large-scale developments incorporate 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems' (SUDS) as part of the development proposals. SUDS are effective technologies which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and enhance biodiversity and amenity. This approach to urban drainage encompasses a whole range of sustainable methods to effectively manage surface water drainage including:

1. Source control measures including recycling, e.g. use of "grey water" for irrigation of green spaces;
2. Infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground including individual soak-aways and communal facilities;
3. Permeable surface treatments that in suitable locations, allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed; and
4. Water attenuation ponds and storage tanks that can hold excess water after rain and that can be emptied gradually and in a controlled manner in drier periods.

Furthermore, the physical nature of built environments with their impervious surfaces, including roads, car parks, buildings and their rooftops, could increase surface water run-off into local

watercourse, such as the River Dee. It is important to mitigate any negative impacts arising from run-off that could alter the existing hydrology of the River Dee. It is considered that due to the size of the area associated with this floodplain within the Village's floodplain, development should be restricted along the floodplain area in order to provide suitable areas for flood relief, as the alteration of natural flow patterns can lead to problems elsewhere in the River's catchment area.

#### **Policy FRM 1: Flood Risk Management**

- a) To assess all development proposals against the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's recent publication 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management; Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities, September 2008' or any such guidelines in force at the time of the making of an application.
- b) To require all proposals for development shall demonstrate the suitability of proposed surface water outfalls to accommodate the proposed surface water discharge from developments. The Council shall seek to restrict development that would result in adverse effects on existing storm water drainage or result in flooding.
- c) To encourage the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) both as a supplement to and as an alternative to surface water discharge from developments to existing drainage systems and water courses.
- d) In addition to these measurements, the local authority will aim:
  - To promote public awareness on how to maintain water quality, reduce wastage of potable water supplies and encourage good domestic practices, which prevent pollutants from coming into contact with rainfall and runoff.
  - To prevent alteration to natural drainage systems and in the case of development works, require the provision of acceptable mitigation measures in order to minimise the risk of excessive run-off, flooding and negative impacts to water quality (including erosion, run-off and sedimentation).
  - To maintain and protect natural forms of drainage control through preserving areas of woodlands, wetlands and areas of natural vegetation, where these help to regulate stream flows, recharge groundwater and screen against pollutants.
  - To prevent the installation of non-porous hard standing in the front gardens of dwellings, thereby limiting the amount of run-off from such areas.



## 11.0 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Good connectivity provides a village with an efficient and effective transportation system both within the Village and to urban centres surrounding it.

### 11.1 Transportation

Nobber is within easy reach of Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, Navan, Kells and Ardee, Co. Louth. A village the size of Nobber needs to maintain good transportation links to these surrounding urban areas in order to attract future population and business opportunities.

There are three main approach roads into the Village. The principal approach road is from Navan. This route also interlinks with the main access routes from Carlanstown and Drumconrath to the south-west and southeast of the Village respectively. The other main approach routes are from Kingscourt, Co. Cavan and the Cregg Road, which enters the Village from the east.



*Plate Thirty-eight: The approach road into the Village from the Navan Road. The New Cemetery is located to the centre right of the Plate.*

The R162 Regional Road is in physically good condition upon approach to the Village Centre from both the north and south. However due to its excessive width to the south of the Village, poor pavement quality within the Village Centre area and the nature of the traffic utilising this route, specifically Heavy Goods Vehicles, environmental improvements and traffic calming measures are required. Such improvements would include an additional footpath to the east of the Navan Road, which would allow for the perceived reduction in the width of the road, and provide inherent traffic calming qualities. The environmental improvements promoted by this Local Area Plan for the R162 include the construction of pedestrian crossings, upgraded footpaths, cycleways, textured surfacing, tactile paving (which does not include tarmacadam), and improved road markings for cyclist, pedestrian and motorised traffic. These should be carried-out in tandem with the appropriate demarcation of areas for car parking and public bus stop shelters located along both sides of the Village Centre, as well as a tree planting and planter coordination initiatives within the Village Centre.

Furthermore, road widening and general environmental improvements could also be initiated along the Village's other approach roads, which are considered to be sub-standard in nature.

They require the construction of footpaths and insertion of public lighting to serve the needs of residents and visitors reliant upon these approach roads.

Overall, Nobber possesses sufficient land to accommodate the necessary expansion of the Village; however there is a need for future access points into zoned lands to be identified, thereby ensuring accessibility and permeability amongst both the existing and proposed future developments, as well as their preservation from future adverse development. Therefore, a number of access points have been identified on infill and backland areas throughout the Village.

#### Objective T 1: Transportation

- a) To maintain, and improve, as required, the local road network to ensure a high standard of road quality and safety.
- b) To implement appropriate traffic management measures throughout the Village.
- c) To support the redesign and environmental improvements of the R162 to include the reduction in the current excessive width of the route, particularly along the southern approach to the Village and within the Village Centre, specifically from the Garda Station to the area north of Nobber Bridge, in line with Strategic Development Objective SDO 6 and those policies and objectives contained within Chapter 16.
- d) To promote uniform roadside site treatments to include vegetative planting, preferably of indigenous hedgerow species, rather than excessive lengths of rendered walls and fences, which can, if unmaintained detract from the amenity of the area.

#### Policy T 1: Transportation

- a) To reserve access points throughout Nobber to allow development of vehicular routes in facilitating the sustainable development of backland areas and thereby allowing for appropriate circulation levels. Access roads should be overlooked and appropriately landscaped.
- b) To undertake an overview of the level of signage within the Village, and if deemed to be deficient regarding the sign-posting of community facilities, to complement the current signage provision within the Village. Suitable signage should be maintained at the Village's approach roads.

### 11.2 Pedestrian and Cycling Facilities and Networks

Pedestrian paths are provided mainly in the central area but are evident through-out the Village in a piecemeal fashion. They also vary in surface quality and do not all link within one cohesive network. This is particularly true of the northern approach road into the Village along the R162 and the Cregg Road, although work is currently being completed on a widening of Nobber Bridge, which will include pedestrian paths. Relatively new footpath surfaces are apparent along Main Street. However, in a substantial amount of areas surfaces tend to be uneven and difficult to traverse. This is particularly true for the elderly, wheelchair users and pram users. In some cases they are completely lacking. Footpaths on both sides of the approach roads are also lacking through-out the Village. Streets where these issues are apparent have been identified for improvement works. There are no dedicated pedestrian crossings within the Village.

Although footpaths have been included in the recently constructed residential schemes, they have not been laid-out in a way that facilitates the development of an internal network of cycleways and

footpaths. Such routes would encourage movements along secondary routes independent of the Main Street allowing for safe access to the Village Centre for all users.

Facilities for cyclists are completely lacking within Nobber. There are no cycling facilities such as bicycle parking stands/shelters, secure bicycle locking facilities, or cycle ways available within the Village. Cycling within the area should be facilitated for locals. Students should be encouraged to either walk or cycle to school particularly those living within the Village Boundary. Sufficient space should be provided for bicycle parking within dwellings, or outside of them. Communal bicycle stands should normally be provided and should be located so that they can be readily seen from front windows or entrances to provide for informal passive surveillance.

In a substantial number of areas pedestrians and cyclists share undemarcated road space with motor vehicles.

Regarding the R162, a significant level of heavy goods vehicles use this route through the Village, frequently parking in front of the Primary School and Parochial Hall. This issue in conjunction with a lack of appropriate delineation and demarcation of cyclist, pedestrian and motorised traffic areas within the Village Centre has resulted in a streetscape environment, which is not pedestrian/cyclist friendly.

A modal shift from the private car to public transportation, walking or cycling will be encouraged throughout Nobber. It is important that Nobber is permeable, especially in terms of pedestrian and cyclist connectivity. Thereby, new developments should allow for direct cyclist and pedestrian access to the Village Centre allowing movement to and from these areas. Public lighting is not ubiquitous through-out the Village. To the north, of the Village, public lighting from the Village Centre ends at the junction of the Cregg and Kingscourt Roads, yet re-appears within the residential development of 'Muff Crescent' and 'Cluain Beag'. A continual link of public lighting is required from the Village centre to the HSE Health Centre. Public lighting should also be fully extended to the Cemetery to the south of the Village.

<b>Objective PC 1: Footpath and Public Lighting Improvements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To initiate public footpath upgrades within the Village Centre area involving the use of textured surfacing and tactile paving in order to fully separate pedestrian and motorised traffic. This should involve the widening of the footpaths with a corresponding demarcation of the R162's route through the Village Centre in order to make the Village Centre safer for pedestrian traffic.</li> <li>b) To install a pedestrian crossing within the Village Core area, preferably to the front of the Primary School, where extended pieces of pedestrian paving are already in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective PC 2: Footpath and Public Lighting Provisions</b>
<p>To facilitate the provision of footpaths and public lighting in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A continuous length of public lighting should be extended from the junction of the Cregg and Kingscourt Roads to the HSE Health Centre. This should be accompanied by the construction of a footpath from Nobber Bridge to the HSE Health Centre to the Village Centre; following the widening of Nobber Bridge, currently being finalised. Furthermore, all developments along this route will be contingent upon the delivery of this objective in conjunction with the Council.</li> <li>b) Public lighting and footpaths should be extended to serve Nobber Cemetery to the south of the Village. All developments along this route will be contingent upon the delivery of this objective in conjunction with the Council.</li> </ul>

- c) Along the Cregg Road, public lighting should be extended from the junction of the Cregg and Kingscourt Roads, past the vehicular entrance to 'Cluain Beag' to the row of dwellings to the south of the Cregg Road located further east.
- d) A footpath should be constructed on the eastern side of the junction of the Navan and Drumconrath Roads into the Village Centre.
- e) A footpath should be constructed on the western side of the Kingscourt Road into the Village Centre linking with the footpath already evident to the front of 'Keoghan's Public House'.

#### Objective PC 3: Cyclist Facilities

- a) To promote the inclusion of bicycle stands for securing bicycles to within Nobber's Village Centre.
- b) To provide for an integrated network of cycle ways throughout the Village where considered appropriate in order to promote more sustainable modes of transportation.

#### Policy PC1: Footpath and Public Lighting Improvements and Provisions

To facilitate the upgrading and the provision of the identified footpaths and public lighting within the Village as outlined within this Plan.

#### Policy PC 2: Cyclist Facilities

To facilitate and encourage cycling as a more convenient, popular and safe method of transport, through the designation of an integrated cycle network throughout the Village linking population, commercial, community facilities and transportation nodes.

#### Policy PC 3: Heavy Goods Vehicles Parking

To investigate the provision of heavy goods vehicle parking within the Village.

### 11.3 Car Parking

There are both public and private car parking areas within Nobber. Overall, there does not appear to be an issue with regard to the availability of car parking facilities within the Village, however there is space for improvement.

The majority of public car parking spaces provided within the Village are located on either side of the R162 within the Village Centre or along the eastern side of the Navan Road.

Within the Village Centre this usually takes the form of on-street parallel parking; due to the width of the R162 within the Village Centre, there is a substantial distance between the route and the bays. This takes place in a haphazard manner as the car parking bays are not delineated. This practice extends from the Garda Station to just north of the Parochial House. There is no off-street public car parking areas, albeit there is a surface car parking area to the south of the set-down facility for the Primary School and crèche with a number of spaces (approximately 10) potentially for employees of both community facilities.

### Objective CP 1: Car Parking

To facilitate the provision of car parking improvements in the following areas:

- a) To delineate the existing car parking bays within the Village Centre in conjunction with the environmental upgrade of the Village Centre. This will involve the upgrading of the quality of the road surfacing within the Village Centre, amongst other things.
- b) To investigate the provision of additional off-street public car parking in the Village Centre and encourage the development of adequate parking to serve the Village Centre and community facilities, as the need arises.
- c) To provide adequately demarcated car parking bays adjacent to Nobber Cemetery.
- d) To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the Village.
- e) To provide loading bays to serve the commercial and retail areas of the Village at appropriate locations.

### Policy CP 1: Car Parking

To facilitate the upgrading and the provision of the identified car parking spaces within the Village as outlined within this Plan.

## 11.4 Public Transportation

Although there are no designated 'bus stops' in the Village, Bus Éireann provides Nobber with a limited bus service serving Dublin-Navan-Kingscourt Bus Éireann Bus Route 107. This offers a daily morning and early afternoon service to Dublin via Navan from Monday to Saturday with a late afternoon service on Sunday. Nobber is also served by two buses from Dublin via Navan terminating in Kingscourt, Co. Cavan in the early afternoon and the late afternoon respectively.

### Policy PT 1: Public Transportation

To work in conjunction with Córas Iompair Éireann (CIE) to provide bus stops and accompanying shelters within the Village Centre on each side of Main Street.

## 11.5 Rail Line

Although the current single-track rail line is strictly for transporting freight only, it has been the subject of significant investment by Iarnród Éireann in recent years. In the past two years the line has not been maintained and the line is currently overgrown. There is provision for the line re-opening in the medium to longer-term in conjunction with the restoration of commuter rail services from Dublin to Navan. As such, the line should be maintained and promoted as a possible tourist facility in conjunction with any tourist initiative linking Kingscourt and Navan, for example a seasonal steam engine facility.

### Policy RL 1: Rail Line

To retain and maintain the rail line corridor and infrastructure located to the west of Nobber Village and to work in conjunction with all stakeholders to promote the return of commuter rail or tourist facilities along the line.

## 12.0 SERVICES AND UTILITIES

### 12.1 Waste Water collection and treatment

The Village is currently served by an existing Waste Water Treatment Plant where all waste water within the Village is pumped to. It is located on the western side of the existing rail line. The system's original design capacity was set at 600p.e. (population equivalent), it is currently operating at 500pe.

### 12.2 Storm Water

Currently, the Village's storm water flows directly into the River Dee. Future development proposals will need to provide attenuation of this water prior to discharge in line with the recommendations of the 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems - Best Practice Manual' undertaken by the CIRIA and the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Consultation Draft Guidelines, 2008'.

### 12.3 Water Supply

The Village's receives its potable water supply from an existing borehole located adjacent to the GAA grounds. This scheme is operating at full capacity and is frequently supplemented from the Kilmainhamwood Water Supply System.

Nobber, together with Drumconrath, Kilmainhamwood and Moynalty, is listed as Item 21 of the Meath County Council Water Services Investment Programme Assessment of Needs, 2007-2013. A definite need has been identified for a new regional Water Supply Scheme to serve these north Meath villages. A new scheme is ultimately required to provide a consistent acceptable quality and security of supply, as well as to provide for the sustainable future growth of north Meath in general.

The ability of the current system to supply an increased level of potable water is therefore limited, as it is currently operating beyond full capacity. Therefore any future development within the Village will be severely constrained unless an independent water supply source can be attained.

#### Policy PU 1: Public Utilities

- a) To endeavour to maintain and provide adequate potable water and wastewater treatment infrastructure that is sufficient to meet the development needs of the Village within this Plan period. However, the Council acknowledges that there are significant constraints on the capacity of the existing infrastructure and may consider restricting development in circumstances where such infrastructure is inadequate.
- b) To require development proposals to provide for adequate potable water and wastewater infrastructure to facilitate the development proposal, which will contribute to an enhanced level of water/ wastewater infrastructure for Nobber.

#### Policy PU 2: Public Utilities

To accommodate serviced residential sites in the area identified to provide an alternative to urban generated rural dwellings. It is a policy of this Local Area Plan to work in conjunction with the local authority's internal departments to investigate fully the possibility of servicing these sites.



#### **12.4 Other Utility Services: Telecommunications, Antennae, Satellite Dishes and all Ancillary Structures**

Other utility services, such as telecommunications, specifically broadband, and electricity, are also provided for within the Village. These services are supplied via telegraph poles detract from the streetscape and amenity of the Village. It is an objective of the Council that these cables should be placed underground by the utilities operators.

The Council will consider applications for telecommunications masts and ancillary facilities only in appropriate locations.

<b>Policy TAS 1: Telecommunications</b>
To have regard to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication 'Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996' when assessing planning applications for telecommunications infrastructure.
<b>Policy TAS 2: Public Utilities Cables</b>
To promote the undergrounding of all public utilities' cabling infrastructure within Nobber Village Centre in order to improve the Village's streetscape setting.
<b>Policy TAS 3: Broadband</b>
To work in conjunction with public utilities' providers to increase broadband infrastructure and speed within the Village.

13.0 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

All designs for new buildings should be founded on a sustainable ethos, manifest and measurable in the use of energy sources.

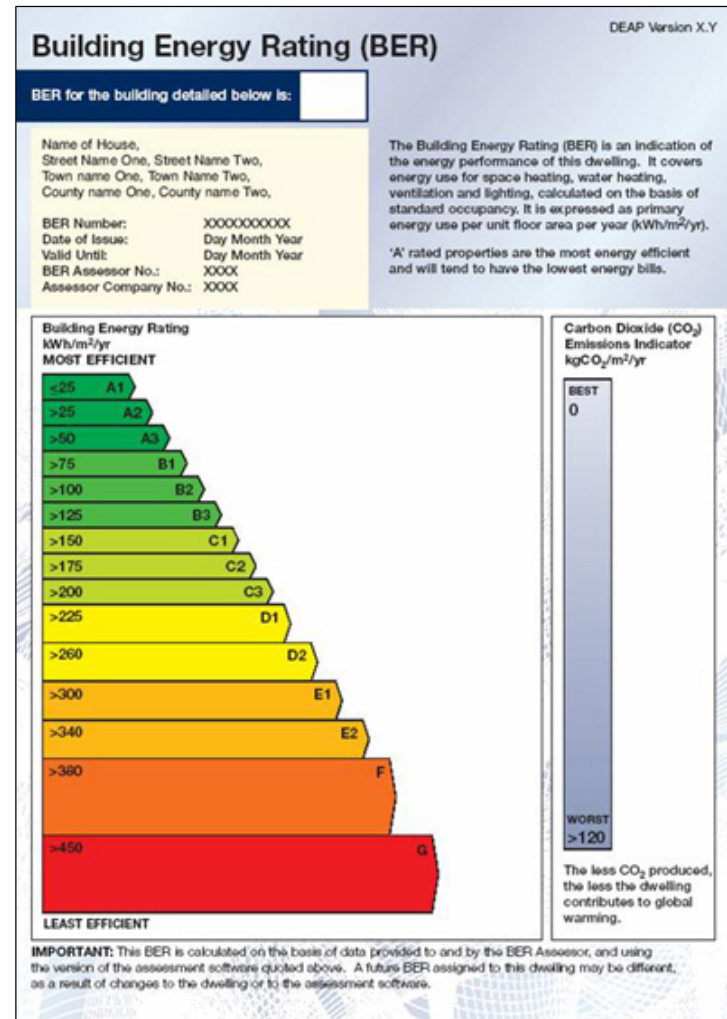


Figure Eight: The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

of superior energy performing housing units.

In this regard, the use of innovative materials and architectural designs to improve the environmental performance and energy efficiency of buildings will be encouraged, see Appendix E. In order to ensure a more sustainable approach to development, it is proposed that the Council adopt a range of sustainable building requirements so as to ensure energy efficiency, healthy and low environmental impact buildings.

The Greener Homes Scheme is now available and is administered by Sustainable Energy Ireland, providing assistance to homeowners intending to purchase a new renewable energy heating system.

Also funding is available through the House of Tomorrow Projects to developers for the design and construction of clusters (minimum of 10 dwellings)

Policy E 1: Energy Efficiency

To encourage all buildings to conform to Part L of the Building Regulations, 2008 with regard to the Energy Performance of Buildings and if possible provide renewable sources of energy. This requirement will ensure that the annual space and water heating energy requirements for all buildings will be reduced.

#### **14.0 WASTE MANAGEMENT**

It is noted that Nobber does not have any recycling facilities; however it is considered to be within range of the Kells and Navan Recycling Centres. Currently, the Village is served by private waste collection providers, which provide bins to cater for unrecyclable waste and dry recyclables. From 01st December 2008, this must be augmented by a third bin collection catering for bio-degradable waste.

<b>Policy WM 1: Waste Management</b>
To provide Nobber with a bottle-bank / recycling facility, as the need arises, in consultation with the Council's Environmental Awareness Officer.

## **15.0 RE-USE AND REGENERATION OF DERELICT SITES AND BUILDINGS**

By working with landowners, the Council has a core responsibility with regard to the re-use and regeneration of derelict sites and buildings, particularly given its powers under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.

### **Policy DSB 1: Derelict Sites and Buildings**

To promote the appropriate re-use, re-development, façade improvement and re-generation of derelict sites and buildings within Nobber. The Council will use its powers, where appropriate, in considering such sites for inclusion in the Register of Derelict Sites.

## **16.0 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY FOR NOBBER**

### **16.1 Introduction**

Nobber is a small and attractive Village enriched by its siting within an area of high amenity specifically the surrounding undulating drumlin-belt, the designed landscaped parkland of Brittas Demesne to the West of the Village and the enveloping nature of the River Dee.

This Local Area Plan includes an Urban Design Strategy for the Village in particular a Village Improvement Scheme for the Village Centre Area. The main rationale underlying this strategy is to address weaknesses found in the urban form of the built environment of the Village and to highlight where enhancements and improvements could be made to both the built and natural environment.

#### **16.1.1 Purpose of this Urban Design Strategy**

The purpose of this Urban Design Strategy is:

1. To provide a publicly accessible document for the general public which can provide a level of knowledge and certainty in respect of the future growth and direction that Nobber is likely to take.
2. To provide an accessible and legible guidance document for future planning applicants to review in advance of making an application.
3. To guide the planning process at pre-planning consultation stage and through the decision making process.

In short, the implementation of this Urban Design Strategy will help:

1. To facilitate the improvement of the physical appearance and general environment of the Village.
2. To encourage the continued success of the compact village planning much evidenced through the development of suitable backland areas both north and south of Main Street for the purposes of mixed use where a key criteria in the assessment of any proposal is for the applicant to demonstrate how the proposed intervention will provide pedestrian connections to surrounding lands.
3. To create new, enhance existing, and complete potential pedestrian linkages identified throughout the Village Centre area to improve permeability between residential and amenity related uses, specifically educational, recreational and community.
4. To promote well designed and highly considered architectural solutions to any interventions proposed to Main Street in order to enhance the image and appearance of the Village.

#### **16.1.2 Methodology**

The Urban Design Strategy for Nobber has been informed by the following working methodology:

1. A number of site visits to and walkabout studies of the plan area.
2. Preparation of a Land Use Survey and visual assessment of the plan lands with particular respect to Main Street.

3. Public consultation with review and assessment of associated submissions received during the pre-draft plan period.
4. Local Knowledge.
5. Planning search of planning applications, both public and private developments, made over previous periods from adoption of the current Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.
6. Evaluation of the trends found from the above planning search with respect to uptake of successful applications on zoned lands.
7. Due regard to the statutory documents and government guidance with respect to ensuring the proper planning and sustainable development of an area, all as set out in the foregoing chapters.

## 16.2 Character Areas

Nobber has been classified into three 'character' areas. The character of an area can be loosely defined as the most easily recognisable trait/s associated with a place or space.

For the purposes of this strategy, a physical and visual assessment of Nobber gives rise to three distinct Character Areas namely, Nobber South, Nobber North and the Village Centre which includes lands both north and south of Main Street, see Figure below.



*Figure Nine: Identified 'Character Areas' within the Local Area Plan Development Boundary.*

Each Character Area is individually described below, identifying potential opportunities arising from an evaluation of items identified in Section 16.1.2 above.



### 16.2.1 Nobber South

On approaching from the south along the Navan Road, there is a prevalence of mono-uses that includes largely community led development fronting along the Navan Road into the Village Centre. This is particularly notable along the western side of the roadway with limited urban-generated rural housing on the eastern side. This approach road is wide, expansive and generally straight. It also contains a continuous footpath linking the Village Centre to 'O'Carolan College' Secondary School located to the south west of the Village. Expansive uses, such as the Cemetery, 'O'Carolan College' and the GAA playing pitches, dominate this area of Nobber, although residential ribbon development is also evident. There are no backland developments in this area. The topography allows for deep views of the surrounding lands, often visually connecting with the backdrop of the landscaped parkland of Brittas Demesne. There is a physical and visually perceived imbalance as a result of the absence of an equal level of development to the eastern side of this roadway, likely due to the significant elevation of the Drumlin fronting onto the eastern side of the Navan Road to the north-west of the Village's Water Tower.

In short, this area provides a 'sense of expectation and arrival' to an urbanised area, along an easily negotiated roadway that owing to its topography provides pleasant views of the surrounding countryside, notably that of Brittas Demesne, to the West.

Given the largely Greenfield nature of the eastern side of the Navan Road in particular, there are a number of opportunities for Village expansion within this Character Area.

#### **Opportunity No. 1**

Given the limited level of residential development currently evident along the eastern side of the Navan Road, it is considered that the lands are capable of absorbing both significant residential and employment-generating developments and shall be strategically reserved for such uses. Given the width of the R162 Navan Road, the undeveloped nature of the road frontage associated with it and the existing road access points the lands possess the inherent potential to cater for such development.

As a result, those lands located to the south-east of the Plan boundary have been reserved for employment generating uses, while those lands to the east of the Village Core and directly opposite the GAA grounds fronting onto the Navan Road have been reserved for residential development.

These residential zoned lands are also subject to a Framework Plan designation and must be developed in conjunction with the various landowners for the area. These lands also contain a notable local natural feature, a drumlin. The height, shape and location of the drumlin rises steeply to the east, topped by the Village's Water Tower. This hill provides a natural visual development break and effectively acts as a strong feature to 'end' the Village Centre. The view is impressive and provides a natural back-drop to Nobber's Main Street. This natural feature adds an intrinsic value to the character of Nobber and should be protected from inappropriate development. Given the elevation of these lands along the Navan Road consideration shall also be had to their visual impact on the surrounding areas through the use of a Visual Impact Assessment.

#### **Opportunity No. 2**

Given the significant level of development along the western side of the Navan Road within this Character Area, particularly of community orientated facilities, an opportunity exists to link these areas with one another and with the Village Centre area.



*Plate Thirty-nine: Hill to the south of the Village Centre area to the east of the Navan Road.*

The presence of the Kingscourt to Navan rail line, a natural desire line forming the western boundary to the Local Area Plan area, presents an opportunity to link these various facilities with one another and the Village Centre, specifically that of O'Carolan College and the Nobber GAA grounds. An opportunity also exists to continue this pathway to the rail line's crossing with the Carlanstown Road to the south of the Plan area, to the Navan Road and along this route into the Village Centre.

Additionally, the large greenfield site zoned objective 'B1' separates the GAA playing fields with the new residential development of 'Bridge Park'. Where future development of this site occurs, a partnership approach between the key stakeholders should be encouraged to incorporate a passively supervised pedestrian linkage between those residential areas to the south and west of the Village Centre with the facility.

### **Opportunity No. 3**

A substantial Protected Structure exists along the western side of the Navan Road within this Character Area that is currently vacant. An opportunity exists to consider this site as an opportunity site where development proposals aimed at returning the building to an active use shall be a key planning objective. Such a use may include residential, community and or cultural uses. It's physical location at what is effectively a T-junction gives the building an added advantage signalling an entrance or arrival point into the Village.

#### **16.2.2 Nobber North**

In contrast with Nobber South, the approach toward the Village Centre from the north of the Village is constrained owing to the narrow width of the road coupled with a winding and undulating profile that limits visibility ahead, thus reducing the sense of openness or wide visual appreciation. Like Nobber South, this area also exhibits development to one side, eastern-side.

The nature of development along this route is a mixture of residential and non-residential by comparison to the more community-driven developments on the southern end of Nobber. There is evidence of backland developments along this route owing to the ease of visibility owing to the route's elevation in relation to surrounding lands preventing longer distance views and ultimately reducing wider visual appreciation of the countryside.



*Plate Forty: Vacant Protected Structure along the Navan Road on approach to Nobber from the South.*

There are significant areas of low-lying lands associated with the River Dee within this Character Area. These areas have been identified by the Office of Public Works (OPW) as liable for flooding and, in conjunction with the recent Draft Planning Guidelines on Flooding from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, have necessitated the review of the suitability of these lands for employment uses.

In short, Nobber North can be perceived as giving a 'delayed sense of expectation and arrival' to an urbanised area, along a somewhat difficult negotiated roadway that owing to its topography and recent development provides obstructed views of the surrounding countryside. The overriding characteristics of Nobber North are the social and economic characters of the Area providing two opportunities.

#### **Opportunity No.4**

The established community of 'Muff Crescent' is removed from the educational and recreational amenities of Nobber Village Centre with limited safe access to any form of (active i.e. playground) open space. Notwithstanding the fact that Nobber does not have any purpose built playground, other existing small housing clusters have dedicated open space areas that are in close proximity to residential developments to allow and promote passive play.

Due consideration should be given to any future residential application on those lands opposite the residential development of 'Muff Crescent', particularly with respect to any proposed open space provisions that would provide a safe accessible recreational amenity for the existing

community, to integrate this established residential community with any proposed development on this site.

### **Opportunity No.5**

Nobber contains older commercial activities along the R162 Kingscourt Road's route, which present a 'jaded' appearance. The Agricultural Distributors' and the Motor Sales Garage both impact upon the quality of the streetscape and these sites would benefit from a more consolidated and purpose-built urban form.



*Plate Forty-one: Nobber Motors Limited.*

The siting of employment generating lands to Nobber South provides an opportunity for such uses to relocate to new premises, thus freeing up these brownfield Nobber North lands for alternative 'mixed use' proposals that would afford the opportunity to provide a consolidated and managed approach, through purpose-led developments.

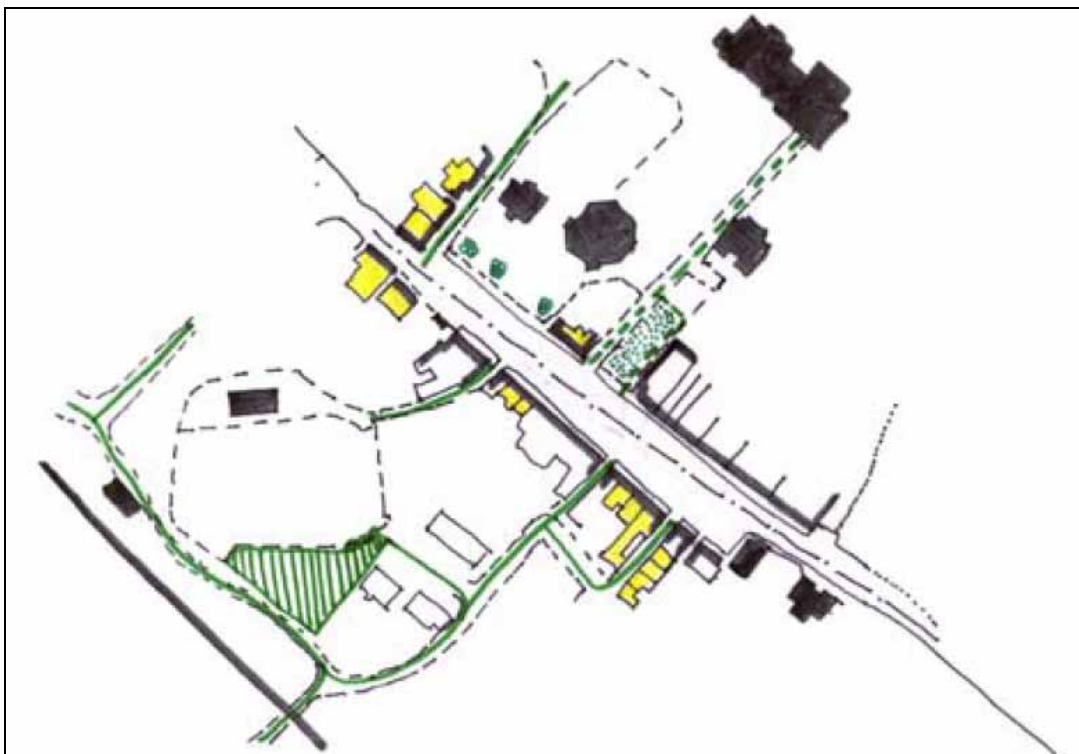
### **16.2.3 Village Centre**

This area is comprised of three sub units; lands north of Main Street, lands South of Main Street and the length of Main Street itself. Although the backlands physically comprise of a greater area, Main Street constitutes the more significant area owing to its greater public profile and appearance that establishes the main character of Nobber Village.

#### **16.2.3.1 Main Street - Existing Urban Form**

##### *Village Typology*

The ground configuration of Main Street is formed by a long mall type 'linear square' where the Garda station at the southern side and a similarly configured (kick-out) house at the northern end provide the outer extents to this central space, see Figure Ten below. All public buildings are denoted in black.



*Figure Ten: Diagrammatic describing Urban Form of Main Street.*

#### *Building Line*

There is a distinct building line associated with Main Street, broken only by the Parochial House, Catholic Church and educational buildings (including the former national school) on the eastern side of the road at the northern end of Main Street.

#### *Distinctive Buildings*

Two church buildings exist within the confines of the Village Centre. Both church buildings provide a subtle balance within the Village Centre, as they are located on either side of Main Street. Both have a distinct presence but such presence is articulated differently.

Both are set back from the road, with the Roman Catholic Church openly on display whereas the former Church of Ireland is discreetly hidden 'off road' but where glimpses of its profile are visible on approach to the Village and where its roofscape acts as an orientating device throughout the Village itself, giving it a landmark status. Retaining the vista both from and to the former Church of Ireland is important to the preservation of the inherent character of Nobber. To this end the Plan has sought a 'H1' zoning objective combined with a view to safeguard the visual setting of this distinctive building.

#### *Use*

For a village, the level of residential uses, identified in yellow above, along Main Street is noteworthy in Nobber.

#### *Permeability*

There are three points, off the western side of Main Street, that access successful and well integrated backland development. There is one point on the eastern side and the entrance to the



former school that is in close proximity to the new national school is accessed along a semi private road. Refer to Figure Ten above where access points are delineated in green.

The level of compact back-land development that has taken place to date in Nobber, on either side of Main Street has been successful. The most notable location for such further and potential development is to the east of the School building on the north side of Main Street, on lands zoned 'B1'.

This Plan has proposed a series of access points to residential zoned land that will connect the Village Centre to Nobber South and Nobber North thus promoting a well connected series of developments thus ensuring permeability to the backlands and from the backlands to the Village Centre.

#### *Building Height*

The buildings located on Main Street generally follow a vernacular-style and are one or two storeys in height, contain a pitched roof with noticeable chimney design, and a simplified façade with a strong 'solid to void' ratio.

The southern section of Main Street is lower than the central and northern section of this linear square. Owing to this local topography there is variation in the relative height of building ridgelines with individual building terraces tending to step-up given the increase in the topography of the Village Centre from south to north.

The plot depth ranges from 40-60 metres, while the plot widths vary from 5-12 metres in length, although there are some plots with widths of circa 25 metres.

#### *Open Space*

An area of open space is associated with the older established community south of Main Street. A new area of open space is associated with the new residential community south of Main Street providing an area of amenity in close proximity to other smaller scale backland development in this area where both old and new open spaces are accessible and indirectly connected.

Similarly on the north side of the Main Street, open space is associated with residential communities (none of the above areas of open space however, provide an equipped area of play).

Importantly, there is no clear or obvious area of public/civic space attaching to this central linear space along Main Street that is considered of higher profile than the backlands areas.

Public or civic spaces are central to the liveliness and character of urban centre. This provides places for civic gatherings and can become hubs of activity. Currently there are no designated civic spaces.

An area of open space, dotted in green, see Figure Ten above, associated with the former national school, located beside the Roman Catholic Church, addressing Main Street, provides an opportunity to consider its size, (spatially proportionate to the central linear square comprising Main street) location (effectively part of the 'public' building streetscape being in close proximity to schools and church and addressing the Main Street) as such a space, as identified in the Plate above.





*Plate Forty-two: Existing open space area to the front of the current and former Primary Schools along Main Street.*

#### 16.2.3.2 Main Street - Existing Environmental Condition

The most significant weakness of Main Street is its environmental condition. Three key aspects of the public realm have been identified and are set out below.

##### *Lack of Traffic Management - Dominance of the car*

Main Street suffers from the dominance of the car. This is primarily owing to the surface area of the central space, depicted above, given over to the car, see plate fifty-four above. The surface area of road versus the surface area of pavement is significant and proportionately reflects the ratio of pedestrian activity permitted in Nobber in this central area.

As car parking is not delineated, segregated or dedicated, i.e. random parking takes place, the possibility to colonise the street for pedestrian activity over time has not happened, even though the surface area required to both park a car and maintain road capacity is considered more than what is deemed to be sufficient.

#### **Objective TM 1: Traffic Management**

To consider the promotion of controlled or directional measures such as traffic lights, pedestrian prioritised paving, road islands, pavement widening or other traffic calming measures on Main Street, where particular attention is given to the detail of road surfaces, finishes and materials that allows for a distinction between car and pedestrian activities.

##### *Street Furniture - Enhancing Opportunities or Social Interaction*

It is an objective of this Local Area Plan to provide an appropriate level of Street Furniture including:

- adequate street lighting,
- public seating,

- litter bins,
- safety bollards,
- secure parking for bicycles, and
- local informational signage (with respect to identifying the location of schools, church or residential areas).

#### *Illumination*

With regard to the issue of street and building lighting, it is becoming general practice to provide A Dark Sky Policy to be established to all night-time illumination, existing and proposed. Regarding the existing, it is proposed to phase the replacement of no-compliant units as these become available for repair or maintenance.

The principles of Dark Sky lighting area:

- All units must be illuminated downwards.
- The general illumination of building is to be reserve of important public edifices. General illumination of residential facades is deemed in appropriate.
- Backlight signage shall be discontinued.
- Neon shall not be used externally except where part of the heritage of the buildings
- All units shall have a 100% cut off (having a deep shade for the lamps and having no spill over 180 degrees (Horizon)
- Lighting should be focused on the areas of need, paths, roads, etc, the areas of need, paths, roads, etc for safety. Low-level lighting bollards are particularly useful in this regard as they also avoid excessive glare in relation to pedestrian uses.

#### *Street Landscaping (hard and soft) - Quality of the Streetscape*

With the exception of some pot planters, landscaping features are weak on Main Street. Main Street is characterised by uneven surfaces, excessive prevalence of carparking and a level of public utilities' cable infrastructure haphazardly arranged on poles and buildings, impacting on the appearance of the street, see Plate below.

Aside from the exposed O'Carolan Memorial space to the south of the Garda Station and the area surrounding the former Church of Ireland Churchyard, there is not a fit for purpose public open space area within Nobber Village. Places where people meet and interact are essential for the creation of strong and healthy communities. Therefore the provision of a civic/public open space is a priority for this Local Area Plan.

Whilst other private led developments may include for such a space, it is considered appropriate that for the image of Nobber to be enhanced, a dedicated civic space should form part of the public realm and be placed so that it is on visual display.

There is, therefore, an opportunity to review the use of the space to the fore of the original national school as an appropriate location for a new civic space and to be incorporated into an overall landscape managed streetscape.

Landscaping measures provide a value added aesthetic to a street scene. It can 'hold' a place together and provide the initial impression of a place and thus sets the character of an area. It is

particularly effective where buildings that may detract from a street scene can be obscured by the specific location of trees, etc. In essence, the use of a coherent landscape plan (both hard and soft) combined with a programme of select street furniture can both compensate for weaknesses in the quality of any given streetscape and enhance significantly the quality of that environment.

Nobber's Main Street would benefit dramatically from a combined and coherent landscape and street furniture 'masterplan'. However, such a proposal would be primarily informed by a traffic management regime and thus the integration of these public works is considered the single most important intervention that the Village of Nobber needs, as a matter of priority.



*Plate Forty-three: Canopy of cables along Main Street.*

#### 16.2.3.3 Urban Design Vision for the Village Centre

The overall Urban Design Vision for the Village Centre of Nobber can be summarised as follows:

**Firstly**, to upgrade the existing environment at street level and create a legible public realm on Main Street that will generate a lively, vibrant Village Centre with a proposed new civic space (Village Green) incorporating an equipped playground. This will necessitate the transformation of Main Street into an easily negotiated pedestrian friendly 'street bridge' that links communities and amenities located north and south of Main Street together, thus reducing the perceived dominance of Main Street to act as a divide or 'obstacle to get across', currently exacerbated by the area of surface given over to the car.

**Secondly**, to build on Nobber's inherent physical potential (evident both north and south of Main Street) to improve connections between existing communities and amenities, create new connections as part of consolidating existing successful backland development and propose new backland sites that can provide similar successful linkages.

Below are a series of indicative conceptual schematic figures of how the Village Centre of Main Street Nobber could be considered under a programme for Village Improvements Works and which should inform future planning applications in the vicinity.

The Figures below highlight the current relationship of the pedestrian realm to road carriageway.

- SK No.1: This sketch extracts the area of amenity given over to pedestrian zones versus that of road carriageway.



- SK No.2: This space provides an opportunity to identify appropriate and spatially intelligent locations to provide pedestrian crossings, namely one on either end of the space and one at a central location that links with the school and potential new civic space.



- SK No.3: highlights the potential relationship of the pedestrian realm to road carriageway, on foot of addressing the issues arising from the above SWOT analysis, essentially reversing the ratio of pedestrian realm to road carriageway. The area in green delineates pedestrian activity that can accommodate pedestrian gathering, space for outdoor cafés, and street furniture etc.

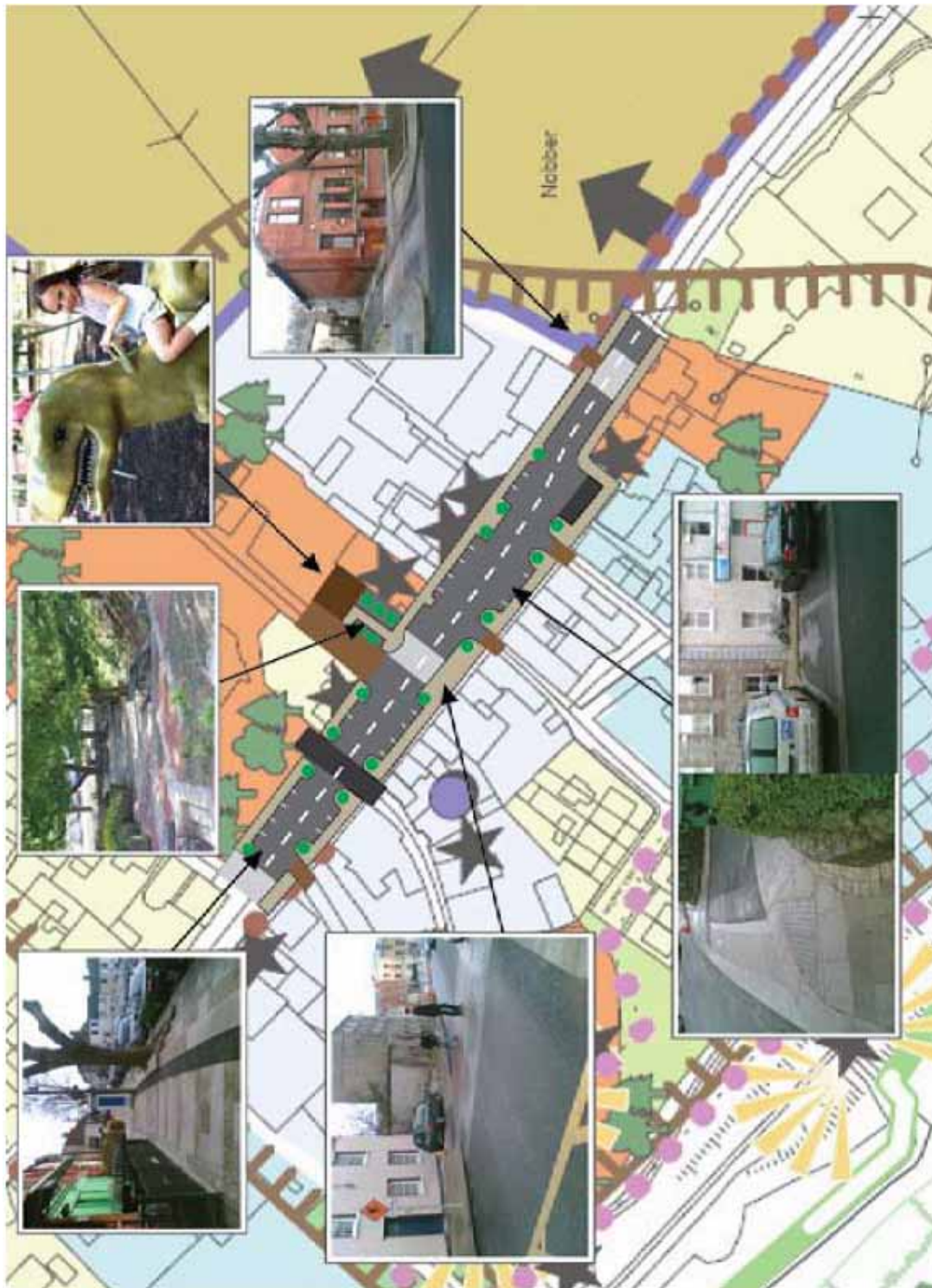


The area in black identifies the possible location for dedicated car parking (parallel and other).

Two other targeted areas of surface treatment are also indicated to demarcate a particular relationship, specific to Nobber. These include a segregated area to the fore of the Garda Station and a cultural connection between two Church buildings of architectural note on either side of the street.

- SK No.4 highlights the potential location for trees, located at all existing access points onto Main Street. The type of tree specified would need to include for adequate sightlines being maintained for motoring traffic.





*Figure Eleven: SK No.4 Village Improvement Scheme.*

All of the above provides a conceptual basis for a purposefully designed integrated traffic, landscape and street furniture programme to be formulated into an appropriate Village Improvement Scheme for Main Street, Nobber.

### 16.3 General Urban Design Guidance

Successful developments can be achieved through their careful integration with the surrounding built environment of the Village through the utilisation of the right building materials, finishes, forms and landscaping elements that relates to the existing built fabric and settlement structure of Nobber.

#### Objective UDG 1: Urban Design Guidance

To require all new developments within the Plan area to contribute to the creation of high quality, functional and well designed environments. To achieve this, new development proposals within the Village shall be required to:

- a) Consider and reflect the physical, social and environmental context of the Village. Proposed uses shall be compatible with the surrounding areas and the established character of Village.
- b) Protect the Village's important historic fabric and positively contribute towards its unique identity and character.
- c) Address amenity issues in respect to adjoining properties such as overlooking, scale and bulk, overshadowing of habitable rooms and height.
- d) Architectural design, the palette of building materials and landscaping shall be of a high quality, shall complement one another to create a sense of uniformity within the Village and contain building designs that reflect their intended function and be easily interpreted.
- e) Contribute to improvements in public safety by enhancing natural surveillance, providing active street frontages, and by ensuring appropriate enclosure and overlooking of public open spaces generally: lengths of blank facades facing public spaces shall be avoided.
- f) Support increased permeability levels, strengthen the linkages between places and contributing to a well defined movement network particularly in relation to walking, cycling and access to public transportation.
- g) Developments shall use sustainable construction methods to minimise the use of energy and materials, and reduce pollution and waste levels generated from their construction and upkeep.
- h) In residential developments, buildings shall present a high-quality living environment for their future occupants, both in terms of the standard of individual dwelling units, and the overall layout and appearance of the development.

This section presents general urban design guidance for proposed developments within each of the three Character Areas.

#### 16.3.1 Land-Uses

The existing land use survey identified a number of residential units on the southern/western side of Main Street. Many of these residential units appear to have plots to the rear. Whilst it is accepted that most Irish towns and villages are characterised by residential uses fronting onto a main street, a level of commercial activity is also required to make villages viable.

In order to ensure that such possibilities can be realised, the level of residential versus commercial use should be monitored where "*living over the shop*" schemes should be promoted to ensure a non-residential ground floor use. Relaxation on development standards may be



considered where appropriate backland development can provide alternative residential accommodation to secure on-street commercial activity.

**Policy LD 1: Land-Uses**

- a) To promote the intensification of the Village Centre area through the development of various infill backland sites.
- b) To encourage new developments along Main Street to contain ground floor retail/commercial uses.

**16.3.2 Topography**

As has been identified, Nobber contains a significant number of elevated sites and these need to be taken into consideration within this Plan. At the planning application stage proposals on such sites shall be subject to a Visual Impact Assessment in order to ensure that any proposed developments do not negatively impact upon the Village's current character.

**Policy TY 1: Topography**

To protect the Village's existing character, proposed developments on elevated sites shall propose taller buildings on lower contours and reduced heights on higher contours. Building ridgelines must not exceed a line of five metres under the ridgeline of any hill or drumlin on which it is proposed to be constructed on.

**16.3.3 Urban Grain**

The existing urban grain of the Village needs to be respected as it contributes to its character. This can be achieved through the use of existing urban grain dimensions as a basis to guide new developments. New development can also address this existing urban grain through the use of facade design with variations in the facade composition to echo the traditional grain pattern.

**Policy UG 1: Urban Grain**

To protect the established building line within the Village, particularly along Main Street.

**16.3.4 Building Heights and Massing**

The Village Centre has developed as a low-rise settlement with little variation in building heights and is generally a standard height of two-storeys. There is also little variation in the steep pitches of the roofs addressing Main Street. A significant number of protected structures along Main Street also limit the possibility for increased heights.

Any planning application for a building with a height in excess of two-storeys must be accompanied by a written Design Statement and Street Impact Assessment setting-out a justification for the height increase, accompanied by visual 3D material.

The location of an existing one-storey building fronting on to Main Street is considered to be one such potential exceptional case. A three-storey building at this location may be considered acceptable for two reasons. This location, adjacent to an existing route currently signals the way to the former St John's Church of Ireland building and secondly to ensure the feasibility of any redevelopment development at this location.

Where a three storey redevelopment is not feasible (e.g. circulation space becomes problematic, etc) a two storey will be accepted but only where the façade treatment and roof profile provide a

“bookend” type feature to this terrace of buildings in order to signal the location of the former St John’s Chapel.

#### Policy BM 1: Building Heights and Massing

- a) To protect the existing roofscape character of the Village.
- b) To discourage flat roofed infill developments.

#### 16.3.5 Architectural Features

In order to ensure the continued protection of the Village’s character, architectural treatment is of vital importance. Issues such as the relationship between the “solid to void” ratio (the exterior wall versus any openings including windows and doors), respecting the verticality of the existing urban grain of the Village and building features, such as chimneys, roofs, windows and doors are all extremely important. The existing buildings within the Village Centre also have a consistent palette of materials and comprise mainly of cut stone, rubble stone, brick, render (plaster) and slate.

#### Policy AF 1: Architectural Features

To ensure that any proposed developments respect the existing character of the Village Centre the following requirements shall be sought in all future developments

##### *a) Facade Treatments:*

- 1. To require a high “solid-to-void” ratio in all proposed buildings. The minimum recommended “solid to void ratio” is to comprise a ratio of 2:5 of the façade. The maximum recommended void or glazed area is expressed as a ratio of 3:5 of the façade.
- 2. To require vertical window forms and treatments that shall be promoted to enhance a vertical building emphasis.

##### *b) Roof Treatments*

- 1. To promote roof pitches between 30°-45° that shall span the shortest plan dimension to avoid excessively large roof spans.
- 2. To promote lean-to roofs to be of equal or lower pitch than the main roof.
- 3. To encourage the use of gable and hipped roof styles to reflect the prevailing roof profile.
- 4. To retain existing chimneys, even if disused, and any new chimneys and repairs should match the original traditional details.
- 5. To avoid inappropriate and modern box eaves with deep projecting fascia, flat soffits and projecting barge boards.

##### *c) Facade Finishes and Building Materials*

- 1. To encourage only façade finishes and building materials within the Village Centre that both age and weather well.
- 2. To discourage buildings where the entire façade is glazed.
- 3. To encourage the re-use of appropriate building materials from buildings which have

been unavoidably demolished.

4. The building materials specified in the *table* below are the 'base materials' to be used in any proposed new building.

Exterior Walls	Roofs	Windows / Door
Cut Stone	Slate	Non-Tropical Hardwood Timber
Rubble Stone	Metal Sheetting with raised seams (Zinc, Copper, etc.)	
Render or Plaster		
Metal (Copper and Aluminium)		

*Table Two: Acceptable Building Materials and Finishes within the Village.*

#### 16.4 Implementation

The implementation of this Urban Design Strategy section of the Local Area Plan, set out below, is predicated on a long term vision for Nobber. Financing public works proposals, as described above, may be funded from a collection of sources that includes financial contributions from developers as conditions of planning permission. It is intended that such contributions will be 'ring fenced' for environmental and traffic improvements within the Plan lands. This will serve to ensure that the Village Improvement Scheme for Nobber is in accordance with the strategy. The Urban Strategy may be used as a lobby or marketing document to support application for funding for specific projects in the community or recreational spheres.

## 17.0 LAND USE ZONINGS

The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 sets out the general context and the nature of land-use for those villages and towns outlined for the preparation of a Local Area Plan. A Land-Use Zoning Map and Environmental Parameters Map have been prepared, which are to be read in conjunction with the following sections. Although some changes have been made to the zonings within the previous Land-Use Zoning Map for the Village, the quantum of zonings remains approximately the same.

As previously stated, the purpose of land-use zoning is to indicate to property owners, developers and the general public alike, the types of development that are considered most appropriate in each zone. In this context, the zoning objectives allow a developer to plan proposals with some degree of certainty, subject to other conditions and requirements as set-out in the Plan. In the control of development, zoning seeks to delimit competing and incompatible uses so as to promote greater environmental quality and thereby rationalise the land-use pattern of an urban area.

The Zoning designations A1, A2, etc, of this LAP are in accordance with the designations assigned within the Settlement Strategy of the existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, outlined in Table 7a. The designations are as follows:

Land-Use Zoning Objective	Description of Land-Use Zoning Objective
A1	To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.
A2	To provide for new residential communities and community facilities and protect the amenities of existing residential areas in accordance with an approved framework plan.
A5	To provide for low density residential development in accordance with action area based planning and individual dwelling design.
B1	To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of existing town and village centres and to provide for new and improved town centre facilities and uses.
C1	To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses in existing mixed uses central business districts.
E1	To provide for industrial and related uses subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
E2	To provide for light industrial and industrial office type employment in a high quality campus environment subject to the requirements of approved action plans and the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
F1	To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.
G1	To provide for necessary community, recreational and educational facilities.
H1	To protect the setting, character and environmental quality of areas of high natural beauty.

Table Three: Local Area Plan Land-Use Zoning Objectives.

### 17.1 Land-Use Zoning Objectives Explanatory Notes

The following explanatory notes on the Plan's Land-Use Zoning Objectives have been taken from the existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

In A1 zones, the Planning Authority 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, aspect and so on in new proposals.

The A2 and A4 zones are intended to be the main areas for new residential development.

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.

In B1 zones, it is intended to accommodate the majority of new commercial and retail uses in towns and villages.

E1 zones provide 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. Non industrial uses are limited to prevent land use conflicts.

E2 zones provide for light industrial and industrial office type development in a high quality campus environment subject to the requirements of approved framework plans addressing issues such as built form and general overall layout, transportation, integration with surrounding uses and the range of uses to be accommodated and the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.

F1 and G1 zones are self-explanatory and relate to community and amenity uses or designations. 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.

### 17.2 Zoning Matrix

Each zoning category is highlighted within the Zoning Matrix with particular land uses identified as 'normally permitted', 'not normally permitted' or 'open for consideration'.

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. The Zoning Matrix illustrates the acceptability or unacceptability in principle of various uses for each of the zoning objectives. The land use zoning matrix is intended to provide guidance to potential developers. It is not intended to supplant the normal planning process. An indication that a proposal would be 'permitted in principle' from the matrix should in no way be taken to imply a granting of permission, or indeed that a planning application may be necessarily successful. Individual applications are a matter for the Planning Authority to decide and the final decision rests with them, taking into consideration the merits of individual cases and circumstances that may be relevant at a specific time or at a specific location. The matrix relates to land use only and important factors such as density, building height, design standards, traffic generation, etc., are also relevant in establishing whether or not a development proposal would be acceptable in a particular location.

### A = Will Normally be Acceptable

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

### O = Are Open for Consideration

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

### X = Will Not Normally be Acceptable

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

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

Use Classes	A1	A2	A5	B1	C1	E1	E2	F1	G1	H1
A.T.M. (In Commercial Premises)	A	A	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X
Abattoir	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Adverts	O	O	X	A	O	A	O	X	X	X
Outdoor Advertising Structures	X	X	X	O	O	A	O	O	X	X
Agri - Business	X	X	X	O	O	A	X	X	X	X
Amusement Arcade	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
B & B	A	A	A	A	A	X	X	X	X	X
Bank / Financial Institution	X	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	X
Betting Office	X	O	X	A	O	X	X	X	X	X
Bring Banks	A	A	A	A	A	A	O	O	O	X
Car Park (Commercial)	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X
Caravan Park	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X



Use Classes	A1	A2	A5	B1	C1	E1	E2	F1	G1	H1
Cash & Carry	X	X	X	O	O	A	X	X	X	X
Casual Trading	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X
Church	X	O	O	A	A	X	X	O	A	X
Cinema	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X	A	X
Community Facility / Centre	O	A	O	A	A	X	X	O	A	O
Conference Centre	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
C & D Waste Recycling Centre	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Crèche / Childcare Facility	O	A	A	A	A	O	O	X	A	X
Cultural Facility / Use	O	O	O	A	A	X	X	O	A	X
Dance Hall / Night Club	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X	X	X
Doctors / Dentists	O	O	O	A	A	X	X	X	O	X
Drive Through Restaurants	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Education	O	O	O	A	A	X	X	X	A	X
Energy Installation	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X
Enterprise Centre	X	O	X	O	O	A	A	X	X	X
Fuel Depot - Domestic	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X
Fuel Depot - Petroleum Products	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X
Funeral Home	X	O	X	A	O	X	X	X	A	X
Garden Centre	X	X	X	X	O	A	X	X	X	X
Guest House	O	A	O	A	A	X	X	X	X	X
Halting Site/Group Housing	O	A	O	X	O	X	X	X	O	X
Health Centre	O	O	O	A	A	X	X	X	A	X
Heavy Goods Vehicle Car Park	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X

Use Classes	A1	A2	A5	B1	C1	E1	E2	F1	G1	H1
Home Based Economic Activities	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Hospital	X	O	O	X	A	X	X	X	A	X
Hostel	X	O	O	A	A	X	X	X	X	X
Hotel / Motel	X	O	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X
Industry – General	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X
Industry – Light	X	O	X	X	O	A	A	X	X	X
Leisure / Recreation	X	O	O	A	O	X	X	O	A	O
Library	X	A	O	A	A	X	X	X	A	X
Motor Sales / Repair	X	X	X	O	O	A	X	X	X	X
Offices <100m <sup>2</sup>	X	O	X	A	A	X	X	X	O	X
Offices 100 to 1000 m <sup>2</sup>	X	X	X	A	A	X	A	X	X	X
Offices >1000m <sup>2</sup>	X	X	X	A	A	O	A	X	X	X
Open Space	A	A	A	A	A	O	X	A	A	A
Park and Ride	X	X	X	X	O	A	A	X	X	X
Petrol Station	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Plant & Tool Hire	X	X	X	X	O	A	X	X	X	X
Public House	X	O	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X
Public Services	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	X
Civic & Amenity Recycling Facility	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	X	A	X
Refuse Transfer Station	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X
Residential	A	A	A	O	A	X	X	X	X	X
Residential Institution	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	X
Restaurant / Café	X	X	X	A	A	O	O	X	O	X
Retail Warehouse	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X
Retirement Home	O	A	O	X	O	X	X	X	A	X
Science & Technology	X	X	X	O	O	O	A	X	X	X

Use Classes	A1	A2	A5	B1	C1	E1	E2	F1	G1	H1
Based Enterprise										
Shop - Local **	O	A	X	A	A	O	O	X	X	X
Shop - Major	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X	X	X
Shopping Centre	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sports Facilities	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	A	A	X
Take-Away	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X	X	X
Telecommunication Structures	X	X	X	A	O	A	A	O	O	X
Third Level Educational Institution	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	A	X
Tourism Complex	X	X	X	A	A	X	X	A	A	X
Transport Depot	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X
Veterinary Surgery	O*	O*	O*	A	O	X	X	X	X	X
Warehouse	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X
Water Services ***	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	O
Wholesale Warehousing	X	X	X	O	O	A	X	X	X	X
* Where this use would be ancillary to the use of the overall dwelling as a normal place of residence by the user of the office.										
** A local shop is defined as a convenience retail unit of not more than 200 square metres in gross floor area.										
*** Refers to public utility installations.										

Table Four: Land-Use Classes.

## **18.0 PHASING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **18.1 Introduction**

The success of this Plan rests with the degree of implementation that is achieved over the next six years. It is important for a plan to strive towards a higher standard in terms of economic gain, commercial success, environmental awareness and residential living. However the objectives in relation to these topics need to be realistic in terms of funding capabilities and implementation structures. The funding of the Plan falls within the scope of three sectors: the national government, either directly or through the guise of Public Utilities' providers, the County Council and the private sector. The actions required to facilitate the implementation of the Local Area Plan, as well as the agents responsible for the respective actions have been identified.

The Local Authority will require developers to incorporate the objectives of this Plan, including those relating to the provision of physical and social infrastructure, into their individual development proposals. Existing objectives may also be implemented by means of conditions attached to grant of permission on developers and their associated development proposals.

The implementation of this Local Area Plan may be constrained by a number of elements, namely the current economic climate, political support, allocated Local Authority funding, and the availability of funding from other sources. The nature of statutory Development Plans is such that no budget is agreed in advance and therefore no funding of projects or implementation of all objectives contained within the Plan is guaranteed. However, where appropriate, the County Council will seek financing from specified sources, both public and private sector, as well as from European Union (E.U.) programmes and grants.

#### **18.1.1 Various Implementation Frameworks**

Additional National and E.U. level programmes include the National Lottery Facility Funding, E.U. Structural Fund, the E.U. Community Support Framework, as well as other funding mechanisms available from various government departments. Such bodies have varying criteria regarding the type of developments they fund and may be useful to consider in the achievement of development objectives.

##### **18.1.1.1 The Community Grant Scheme**

This grant scheme is undertaken by Meath County Council and is intended to assist community-based projects under the following categories:

1. General public interest
2. Events
3. Activities
4. Cultural and heritage development projects
5. Tidy Towns/Villages enhancement projects
6. Maintenance of burial grounds

##### **18.1.1.2 Various Governmental Departments**

Funding is available through various governmental departments such as:

- The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism offers grants and funding through varying programs such as the Sports Capital Programme, which is a National Lottery Funded programme that advertises on an annual basis and allocates funding to projects that are directly related to the provision of sport and recreational sport facilities.
- The Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs offers two schemes. One of which is an Equipment and Refurbishment Grant providing essential physical supports for the local community and voluntary sector, and the second scheme is an Education, Training and Research Grant aimed at enhancing the capacity of local communities.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform operates the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006, which is in part funded by the European Union Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF). Grant schemes operated under this programme include:
  - Capital grants to community groups and organisations which operate on a “not for profit” basis for the establishment, upgrading and enhancement of childcare facilities;
  - Staffing grants to community groups and organisations which operate on a “not for profit” basis for childcare personnel in childcare services;
  - Capital grants for self-employed/private childcare service providers of up to €50,790 subject to a maximum of 65% of the total capital cost of the childcare project.

#### 18.1.1.3 EU Structural Funds

This programme identifies a number of areas for funding, two of which are the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. There also exists a separate programme, which is co-financed by the structural funds called Community Initiatives. Such EU programmes can be a valuable source of investment, through which specific policies and objectives, as identified in this plan, can be implemented.

#### 18.1.1.4 Conclusion

Above outlines just some of the programmes available to aid the implementation of the objectives of the Nobber Local Area Plan. Various agencies, including voluntary groups, professional institutions, public and private bodies, and other organisations should be encouraged to participate whenever possible.

### 18.2 Phasing

With regard to phasing, it is an objective of the Planning Authority to promote the implementation of the Local Area Plan in a rational and sequential approach that is in keeping with the ‘Order of Priority’ map for the Village from Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, the proposed development strategy, and to ensure that essential facilities, such as road infrastructure, water and sewerage networks, etc, are secured and in place in tandem with the proposed development projects. The sequence with which these schemes are or will be advanced, determines the sequence and phasing of development. Within large scale developments, or where key infrastructure is proposed, developments may be phased to tie-in with these schemes or projects. The Local Authority reserves the right to refuse development on the grounds of it being premature pending the provision of necessary physical infrastructure or the provision of infrastructural capacities.

### **18.3 Contributions**

It is considered reasonable that contributions be paid, towards Local Authority investment in the provision of infrastructure and services, by developers who benefit from such provisions. The Development Contribution Scheme in accordance with the provisions of Part III, Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006, has been adopted by the Council requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority.

### **18.4 Monitoring And Review**

In order to ensure that the development strategy outlined in this Local Area Plan is being pursued, the Council, through the “day-to-day” activity of its development management function, will monitor the implementation and phasing of this Local Area Plan. A review will assist in assessing whether the objectives detailed in the Plan are being met.



## APPENDIX A

### Lists of Persons who made a Submission during the Pre-Draft Public Consultation Phase of the Local Area Plan's Preparation

Pre-Draft Submissions	
1	Oliver Ward, Spiddal, Nobber, Co. Meath.
2	Kevin Weldon, 7 Railway View, Nobber, Co. Meath. Submissions both on a Comment Form and a later additional submission sent by e-mail.
3	Shirley Kearney, Department of Education and Science.
4	Michael McCormack, National Roads Authority.
5	Catriona O'Donnell/Patrick Sullivan, Spatial Policy Section, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
6	Robert Kenny Architects and Engineers on behalf of Joe Carty.
7	Frances Heaslip, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
8	Diarmuid Ryan, Easter Regional Fisheries Board.
9	Teresa Kelly, 2 O'Carolan Park, Nobber, Co. Meath.
10	Margaret Flood, Development Applications Unit, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

### Lists of Persons who made a Submission during the Draft Public Consultation Phase of the Local Area Plan's Preparation

Draft Submissions	
1	Bernadine Carry, Administrative Officer, Pride of Place, Meath County Council, Killegland Square, Ashbourne, Co Meath.
2	Diarmuid Ryan, The Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, 15A Main Street, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
3	Joe Carty, c/o Robert Kenny, Architectural and Engineering Services Ltd, Townley Hall, Drogheda, Co. Louth.
4	Trustees of St John's Old Cemetery Restoration Group, c/o Richard Clarke, Trustee, Parochial House, Nobber, Co. Meath.
5	Frances Heaslip, Co-ordination Unit, Department Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
6	Foras Voluntary Housing Association, c/o Aly Alvy, Paperspace Ltd, 11 Mayfield Terrace, Ballinteer, Dublin 16.
7	George Carolan, Forward Planning Section, Department of Education and Science

8	Patrick O'Sullivan, Spatial Policy Section, Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
9	Seamus McDermott, Nobber, Co. Meath.

**Lists of Persons who made a Submission during the Material Amendments Public Consultation Phase of the Local Area Plan's Preparation**

Material Amendments Submissions	
1	Seana McGearty, Co-ordination Unit, Department Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
2	Erica O'Driscoll, National Roads Authority.
3	Cian O'Mahony, Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Protection Agency.
4	Seana McGearty, Co-ordination Unit, Department Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

## APPENDIX B

### Strategic Environmental Assessment: Screening Report



Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2014

*SEA Screening Report*

for submission to:

*Environmental Protection Agency,  
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and  
Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Meath County Council intends to prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) for the Village of Nobber in accordance with Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006. The purpose of this report is to consider whether the LAP requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

In accordance with the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) an environmental assessment must be carried out for all plans and programmes which have the following purpose:

1. prepared for certain specified sectors (including land-use planning), and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive; or
2. in view of the likely effect on protected sites, have been determined to require an assessment under the Habitats Directive.

According to the DoEHLG's (Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government) SEA Guidelines,

*'in deciding whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive - which is reproduced in new Schedule 2A to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as inserted by Article 12 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004'.*

Regarding the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, EU Directive 2001/42/EC provides that SEA is mandatory for Local Area Plans for areas with a population of 10,000 or more. Where the population involved is less than 10,000, the EU Directive requires 'Screening' of the Plan. The following Screening Report has been prepared in order to establish whether or not an SEA is required for the Nobber LAP. The LAP does not fall within the mandatory national requirements for the preparation of an SEA for an LAP as the population of the Village is not above the 10,000 person threshold as indicated by the Census of Population undertaken in 2006. The Census calculates the population of Nobber as 233 persons in 2006.

The following Screening Report seeks to establish whether or not the preparation of an LAP for Nobber will have any likely significant environmental effects on the Village, and as such, would therefore require the preparation of an SEA. The current Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 Zoning Map, as well as an 'Order of Priority' map for the Village from Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 are attached as appendices.

### 1.1 Village Location

The Village of Nobber is located to the north of County Meath along the R162 Regional Route from Navan to Kingscourt, Co. Cavan. It is also situated north of the R162's intersection with the N52 National Secondary Route linking the Village with Kells and Ardee, Co. Louth; nationally it provides a strategic cross-country link from Dundalk, Co. Louth to Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. It is also located at the convergence of a number of minor roads, specifically from Carlanstown, Drumconrath and Kells.

From a strategic regional context, Nobber is situated approximately 9.5km from Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, 18km from Navan, 13km from Kells and 14km from Ardee, Co. Louth. From a strategic national context, the Village of Nobber is located approximately 58km to the north-west of Dublin City Centre within the Greater Dublin Area between two national transportation corridors, the N2 and the N3 radiating from Dublin City.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE LAP

The Plan will set-out the policies and objectives of Meath County Council for the sustainable development of Nobber over a six year period. The key policies used to determine the future development pattern and objectives for Nobber are informed by national, regional and local planning policy, and ultimately seek to:

- accommodate and encourage the sustainable growth of the Village to meet resident needs;
- contribute to the evolution of a socially integrated community;
- ensure physical and social integration of new development in the Village;
- increase a mixture of uses to facilitate a more sustainable Village capable of meeting its own needs;
- ensure sufficient land is zoned to cater for the future growth and development needs of the Village.

### 2.1 Meath County Development Plan Policy

The need for an LAP is prompted, in particular, by the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. Policy SS POL 3 of the Plan states “to review and prepare Local Area Plans for groups of related settlements which have economic, geographical or settlement hierarchical relationships in conjunction with local communities”. As a result, Objective SS OBJ 1 of the County Development Plan aims “to prepare Local Area Plans for the urban centres contained in Table 7 within 2 years of the adoption of this County Development Plan in accordance with the provisions of Sections 18 - 20 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2006. These Local Area Plans will replace the individual Written Statements and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages contained in the 2001 County Development Plan.”

The Meath County Development Plan sets out the contents required to be included in Laps in the County Area.

Nobber has been identified as a ‘Key Village’ settlement within the Meath County Development Plan’s Settlement Strategy and the LAP will be guided by this Strategy. The primary principle of the Strategy is to channel residential development into the three main settlements of Navan, the Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace Rail corridor and the Drogheda Environs. In relation to ‘Key Villages’ it states that:

*“it is envisaged that the future development strategy of Key Villages is to concentrate population, services and jobs in strategic village locations, which have relatively good access from nearby towns. The concentration of population will strengthen the viability of services, such as public transport, secondary and/or national schools, retail and the facilitation and expansion of small rural enterprise. The future development of Key Villages will be predicated more closely to local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade.”*

The current County Development Plan also states that the release and development of residential lands shall be linked to the following criteria:

- The provision of necessary physical infrastructure, primarily the availability, in advance of development occurring, of capacity in water and wastewater infrastructure. The environment must be capable of absorbing the scale and quantum of development that is envisaged;

- Spare capacity in existing (and planned) social infrastructure, primarily national and second level educational facilities. The future planning of the Department of Education and Science of national and second level educational facilities shall also be taken into account. The development of additional residential lands shall leverage the necessary recreational and amenity infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the resident population. The proposed scale and quantum of development must reinforce the integrity and vitality of the local community and services that can be provided;
- A more sustainable economic base whereby a greater percentage of local persons are employed locally. This will require closer liaison between the County Enterprise Board, County Development Board, Meath Partnership, Economic Development & Promotion Officer and the Planning Department;
- To facilitate the realisation of objectives contained in existing Local Area Plans or existing Written
- Statement and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages (Volume II of this Development Plan) in relation to the delivery of identified critical and necessary social and/or physical infrastructure in conjunction with residential development. Priority of phasing may be given to such residential lands accordingly;
- The extent of existing residentially zoned lands will be revised in the context of the individual Local Area Plan or Development Plan review for each centre and does not necessarily preclude identifying additional zoning in specific locations where the Planning Authority is satisfied that a clearly established need for such zoning is evident. Such additional zoning may only be considered where the development of such lands for residential purposes would deliver an identified piece of critical and necessary social and/or physical infrastructure in conjunction with such development and may require such lands to be prioritised for development over existing residentially zoned lands or that a corresponding amount of land has been dezoned;
- The Local Authority social and affordable house building programme, and;
- The efficient use of land by consolidating existing settlements, focusing in particular on development capacity within central urban areas through the re-use of under utilised lands and buildings as a priority, rather than extending green field development. This should also ensure that development is concentrated at locations where it is possible to integrate employment, community services, retailing and public transport. The order of priority for the release of residentially zoned land shall attempt to ensure that there is a sequential approach which downgrades the priority of outer suburban greenfield sites.

In addition the Development plan states that the extent of existing residentially zoned lands will be revised in the context of the individual Local Area Plan or Development Plan preparation for each centre and does not preclude additional zoning in specific locations where the Planning Authority is satisfied that a clearly established need for such zoning is evident. Such an established need can only be justified where the development of such lands for residential purposes would deliver an identified piece of critical and necessary social and/or physical infrastructure in conjunction with such development and may require such lands to be prioritised for development over existing residentially zoned lands or that a corresponding amount of land has been dezoned.

## **2.2 Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 - Variation No. 2**

In line with the Development Plan's provisions outlined above, the Development Plan's Settlement Strategy has been subject to a recent review. Variation 2 of the Meath County



Development Plan 2007-2013 was adopted on 04<sup>th</sup> February 2008 having identified an 'Order of Priority' for residential zoned lands within a number of settlements, Nobber amongst them. The residential zoned lands are segregated into Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas. Phase 1 relates to lands to be developed during the current Development plan period (up to 2013); while Phase 2 relates to lands to be developed post 2013. Variation 2 allocates a further 60 additional dwellings to Nobber over the period of the current County Development Plan from 2007-2013.

This allocation does not include two specific site types within settlements subject to such an 'Order of Priority':

- The Planning Authority does not intend to stifle the delivery of the local authority housing programme. Therefore, units to be developed by Meath County Council for social and affordable housing will not be taken from the numbers allocated for Nobber.
- The Planning Authority does not intend to stifle redevelopment of brown field/infill/derelict sites and seeks to actively promote redevelopment of these lands. Therefore, units permitted on such sites will not be taken from the numbers allocated for Nobber.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002 requires that a Local Area Plan must be consistent with the policies and objectives contained within the relevant County Development Plan, being the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013; ultimately, the Local Area Plan's stated policies and objectives must be explicitly linked to the quantum and scale of development envisaged for the settlement within the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

### **2.3 The Planning System And Flood Risk Management Consultation Draft Guidelines For Planning Authorities September, 2008**

The Department of the Environment recently published 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities September, 2008'. These guidelines aim to integrate flood risk management into the planning process, to assist in the delivery of sustainable development. These guidelines aim to:

1. Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding by not permitting development in flood risk areas, particularly floodplains;
2. Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and then mitigation of flood risk as the overall framework for assessing the location of new development in the development planning processes; and
3. Incorporate flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

In relation to Nobber, the Office of Public Works have prepared a 'Benefiting Land Map' aimed at identifying 'land that might benefit from the implementation of Arterial (Major) Drainage Schemes (under the Arterial Drainage Act 1945) and indicating areas of land subject to flooding or poor drainage'. The map, attached as an Appendix to this report, highlights those lands liable to flooding within proximity of the Village. The most significant area is that associated with the River Dee to the west and north of the Village. Low-lying lands to the west of the existing freight-only rail-line linking Kingscourt, Co. Cavan with Navan are bisected by the River Dee and are liable to flood on both sides of the River's banks. This extends to low-lying agricultural areas to the north of the Village along the River Dee's channel. Effectively both areas act as attenuation areas for the River during periods of heavy rainfall. A small portion of this area lies within the existing development boundary of the Village. The only area within the Village liable to flooding is the low-

lying GAA grounds to the south of the Village core to the east of the rail-line. Aside from this area, there are no other identifiable areas on the 'Benefiting Map' within the Village, which are liable to flooding.

As a result, there would not appear to be any local flooding issues within the Village of Nobber; however the objectives and policies contained within the Department's Guidelines will be taken into consideration in full during the preparation of this Local Area Plan.

### **3.0 CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

#### **3.1 Characteristics of the Plan**

(i) The degree, to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources

As stated, the Lap's strategic objective is to provide a framework for the general development of the Plan area. The Plan will seek to provide guidance in the form of policies and objectives for the development of social, physical and environmental infrastructure in a sustainable manner for Nobber, provided they are appropriate in scale, do not unduly interfere with the character and setting of the existing Village Centre. Overall, the LAP will give a general indication of the preferred urban structure and layout for the Village.

The existing development boundary of the Village will also be the subject of a review by the Council as part of the LAP preparation. Any process for establishing a new development boundary will take into consideration the following physical and policy issues. Physical considerations include the existing urban structure of the village; elevated nature of surround lands, specifically to the east of the Village, the existing rail-line and the River Dee. Physical considerations are centred upon consistency with planning policies at national, regional and local level; anticipated population target; likely future development needs; and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in general.

Any review of the development boundary will also take into consideration the policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan, as varied. As stated, Variation 2 of the County Development Plan provides for a maximum of 60 no. additional dwellings for the Village in the period from 2007 to 2013. Using the County Development Plan's average household size figure contained within Table 5, this would result in a population increase of 153-165 persons by 2013 based upon Table 5's prediction for the 2009 and 2013 average household size figures. The LAP will therefore be required to ensure sufficient residentially zoned land to meet this target. Additionally, the draft LAP will seek to provide adequate levels of zoned land to ensure community and commercial facilities, and services are accommodated to sustain this target during the lifetime of the Plan.

Whilst considering and meeting the needs of the community the Draft LAP will have regard to the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment and assist in achieving the principles of sustainability. Ultimately, it is foreseen that all of these requirements can be easily accommodated for within the existing development boundary.

The LAP will also make provisions with regard to design standards, services and the phasing of such development.

(ii) The degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy

The LAP will be informed by the hierarchy of national policy (National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020), regional policy (Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016) and local plans (Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013). The Nobber LAP will be consistent with the policies and objectives of the aforementioned plans. As the LAP will sit below these plans within the spatial plan hierarchy it will only influence any future plans that may be prepared for designated lands within the proposed Village boundary.

(iii) The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development

As stated, the LAP will be made pursuant to the provisions of Sections 18 to 20 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 and, therefore, policies and objectives of the LAP must be informed by the principles of sustainable development. As such, the Plan will seek to achieve development in a sustainable manner through the protection and enhancement of its natural, archaeological, social, economic and built heritage.

Through the policies and objectives of the LAP there are opportunities to conserve and protect the key environmental features of Nobber. These opportunities will:

- Consolidate the expansion of the Village;
- Enhance linkages within the village;
- Provide traffic calming measures and enhance pedestrian safety;
- Promote environmental enhancement;
- Conserve and enhance the built heritage;
- Provide physical, social and economic infrastructure appropriate to the Village.

As previously stated, the preparation of the LAP is also guided by the overall objectives of the County Development Plan which seek inter alia;

- Land use zoning of areas for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, open space, community facilities or otherwise, or a mixture of those uses;
- Provision of infrastructure - transport including the promotion of public transport and road / rail development, energy, communications facilities, water supplies, waste recovery, disposal facilities, waste water services, etc.;
- Conservation and protection of the environment;
- Protection of structures and preservation of the character of Conservation Protection Areas;
- The integration of social, community and cultural requirements with the planning and sustainable development of the area;
- The preservation of the character of the landscape including preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest;
- The renewal and development of areas in need of regeneration;

- Provision of traveller accommodation;
- Preserving, improving and extending amenities and recreational amenities;
- Major Accidents Directive (siting of new establishments, modifications of existing establishments, development in the vicinity of establishments);
- Provision of community services, including schools, crèches, childcare facilities and other educational facilities, and;
- Protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Gaeltacht areas.

**(iv) Environmental problems relevant to the Plan**

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's (DoEHLG) Circular letter SEA 1/08 and the National Parks & Wildlife Service's (NPWS) Circular 1/08, both dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008, state that any draft land use plan (development plans, local area plans, regional planning guidelines, schemes for strategic development zones) or amendment/variation to it proposed under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites (being SACs, NHAs or SPAs). Whilst the Village holds environmental assets, none are designated at national or local level. Ultimately, the Village does not contain nor is it adjacent to any Natura 2000 sites. It is for these reasons that the draft Local Area Plan is deemed not to have any potential impact on any areas designated as SAC, NHA or SPA sites.

Furthermore, all lands within the existing Plan Area are capable of being serviced by existing public water supply and foul and surface water drainage services. The lands are also served by a modern road network. Ultimately, there are no manifest strategically significant environmental problems identified.

**(v) The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection)**

These plans and programmes are considered under the County Development Plan and will not be specifically addressed in this LAP. There exists facility for the adoption of policies and objectives arising from E.U. legislation via the statutory processes of; making of Planning Regulations, Material Variations of Development Plans, where necessary. The LAP will therefore take into account all existing relevant environmental legislation and will accommodate any new legislation via the above processes. Any site specific issues will be addressed through the planning application process.

### **3.2 Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area Likely to be Affected**

**(i) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects**

Generally, it is considered that the effects on the existing environment will be irreversible but acceptable as the context of the proper planning and sustainable development of the Village, hinterland and County as a whole. In addition, development control provisions in the County Development Plan and the LAP, as well as the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations, will allow for the appropriate assessment of proposed developments on a case by case basis via the Planning Application process.

The policies and objectives of the Nobber LAP will seek to mitigate and reduce any adverse environmental impact resulting from development.

(ii) The cumulative nature of the effects

It is not anticipated that Nobber Village will experience any unacceptable cumulative environmental effects as a result of the policies and objectives contained within the LAP.

(iii) The trans-boundary nature of the effects

At this time, it is not foreseen that any extension to the existing Village development boundary will be required. Furthermore, through policies and objectives for appropriate design and siting of development within the Village, it is the aim of the Council to minimise any potential environmental effects, which may arise from development within the current Village Boundary on the surrounding landscape. The policies and objectives of the Nobber LAP will have no other national, regional or inter-county transboundary effects.

(iv) The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

The policies and objectives of the County Development Plan seek to reduce any potential impact on the community health and safety. The Nobber LAP will further enforce these policies and objectives. There are no designated SEVESO sites located in Nobber.

(v) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effect (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

At present, the Village has a population of 233 persons as recorded by the 2006 Census. It is an objective of the LAP to accommodate a further increase of 60 no. additional residential units up to 2013. This would result in a population increase of 153-165 persons by 2013 based upon the County Development Plan's Table 5 predictions for the 2009 and 2013 average household size figures. The implementation of the LAP will therefore increase the potential population of Nobber over the plan period. It is expected that this increase can be accommodated for within the existing development boundary. Therefore no significant alteration to the existing spatial extent is expected.

(vi) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

- Special Natural Characteristics or Cultural Heritage

There are no areas within or in close proximity to Nobber that have been environmentally designated under EU legislation and, as such, must be preserved and protected.

Nobber has a varied and interesting built heritage; architecturally there are a significant number of attractive structures, while the Village has a rich archaeological heritage. Ultimately, there are many buildings, structures and features of historical interest, symbols of the cultural, economic and social development of the Village, which contribute to its intrinsic character.

The Motte and Bailey and the ecclesiastical structures surrounding St. John the Baptist Church of Ireland Church to the north and west of the Village respectively represent historic settlement nodes within Nobber. The later Main Street bisecting the Village is also lined with historic buildings.

In order to reduce the impact of new development on the existing architectural character of the Village, the Draft LAP will propose policies and objectives promoting such protection. This will allow for mechanisms for the preservation of a place, area, group or village of special interest or which contributes to the appreciation of protected structures collectively.

It is considered appropriate that the Council provide a policy within the LAP that will ensure all planning applications that may, due to their location, size or nature, have implications for the archaeological heritage should be subject to an archaeological assessment.

- Exceeded Environmental Quality Standards or Limit Values

The environmental policies and objectives to be contained within the LAP will seek to reduce the overall impact of future developments on the environmental quality of the Plan Area. The value of environmentally sensitive locations will not likely be adversely impacted upon.

- Intensive land-use

It is not expected that the intensification of existing land uses in the Plan area will be such that vulnerable areas will be significantly affected. It is considered appropriate that the Council provide policies which seek to reduce the potentially negative impact of increased land uses within the Village which is achievable through appropriate quality design standards and guidelines which shall be provided in the Plan through development briefs.

(vii) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, European Union or international protection status

There are no such areas within the Plan area, although the River Dee eventually flows into Dundalk Bay at Annagassan, Co. Louth, which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Natural Heritage Area (NHA).

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

SEA is not mandatory for this Plan as its current and proposed population is less than 10,000, the threshold at which an SEA is deemed necessary. The value of the existing environment in the Plan area and the nature of surrounding areas is such that the development resulting from policies and objectives within the LAP is unlikely to lead to any significant negative environmental effects. The development control provisions in the County

Development Plan and the LAP, as well as those inherent within the planning application process arising from the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations, will ensure the appropriate assessment of proposed developments on lands within the Lap's area on an individual basis.

#### **5.0 RECOMMENDATION**

Based on this screening process it is considered that an SEA will not be required for the proposed Local Area Plan in Nobber.



**Strategic Environmental Assessment: Screening Report of the Proposed Amendments**



Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015

*SEA Screening Report of the Proposed Amendments (Material Amendments)*

for submission to:

*Environmental Protection Agency,  
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and  
Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 20(d) of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006, notice is hereby given that Meath County Council are proposing amendments to the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015. These amendments have arisen following the review of the Manager's Report on submissions received during the public display period of the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015 by the Elected Members of the Council.

The purpose of this report is to consider whether the material amendments to the Local Area Plan will have any likely significant environmental effects, and as such, would therefore require the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The SEA process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The key indicator that will determine if an SEA is required, of particular non-mandatory Plans, is if they are likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment or not. Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant an SEA.

In accordance with Section 14A of the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan was 'screened' for environmental impacts in October 2008. This screening report is included as an addendum to this report (Appendix A).

In accordance with Section 14A and 14G of the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004, the proposed amendments to the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015 also require to be screened for SEA in order to ensure that the analysis previously carried out remains valid.

The proposed material amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan are outlined in Section 2.1.1 presented in the order they appear in the Local Area Plan and should be read in conjunction with the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015. The likely significant environmental effects or potential impacts of all amendments are screened and assessed in Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

This screening report concludes that the material amendments to the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015 would not warrant a full SEA.

## 2.0 SEA SCREENING OF PROPOSED MATERIAL AMENDMENTS

### 2.1 Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Environmental Effects

#### 2.1.1 Characteristics of the Plan

Amendment	Consideration
1	Replace the following paragraph 'the location of the zoned objective E1 lands in the Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007 and the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 was within the floodplain of the River Dee, which rendered the lands unsuitable for development purposes' with a paragraph stating that 'lands have been identified to accommodate enterprise and employment uses to the east of the Village Centre. These lands are the subject of a Framework Plan objective and a requirement for a flood impact assessment to be prepared as part of the Framework Plan'.

2	Zone 2.948ha of land outside the Draft Local Area Plan's north-western boundary for 'E1' enterprise and employment uses.
3	Additional Business and Enterprise Objective to ensure that the additional enterprise and employment zoned lands to the north-west of the Village be the subject of an agreed Framework Plan to include a written statement and a plan or series of plans indicating proposals in relation to the overall design for the lands, types of development, road layout and access arrangements, provision of services, landscaping, phasing of development, etc. The Framework Plan shall include provision for a landscaped buffer/linear park in order to protect the residential amenity of adjoining existing and future residential areas and be accompanied by a Flood Impact Assessment.
4	Rezone 0.26ha of land within the Village Centre currently zoned 'A5' to 'C1'.

### 2.1.2 Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area Likely to be Affected

The effects have been determined having regard to:

1. The area likely to be affected,
2. The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects,
3. The cumulative nature of the effects,
4. The transboundary nature of the effects,
5. The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
6. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effect (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
7. The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
  - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
  - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and
  - intensive land use.
8. The effects on areas or landscapes, which have recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

Amendment	Consideration
1	No Effect
2	No Effect – Although the site is located within the floodplain of the Moynalty River to the east and north-east of the Village, Policy FRM 1 of the Draft Local Area Plan relating to Flood Risk Management will ensure that any potential flooding implications that future development proposals on the lands may have will be given adequate consideration during the planning application process.
3	No Effect
4	No effect

### 2.1.3 Significance of effects

Assessment is the process of evaluating the importance or significance of a plan's impacts, be they adverse or beneficial in nature. In most cases, this is essentially a judgment grounded within a number of factors but it may also be made more objective with the use of a range of criteria and standards. The assessment of significance will be based upon the following main factors:

- The character and perceived value of the affected environment;
- The magnitude, spatial extent and duration of anticipated change;
- The resilience of the environment to cope with change;
- Confidence in the accuracy of predictions of change;
- The existence of policies, programmes, plans, etc. which can be used as criteria;
- The existence of environmental standards against which a proposal can be assessed (e.g. air quality standards, water quality standards);
- The degree of public interest and concern in the environmental resources concerned and the issues associated with a proposed project;
- Scope for mitigation, sustainability and reversibility.

Having regard to these factors and the identified likely impacts set out above, it is considered that given the value of the existing environment in the Plan area and the nature of surrounding areas is such that any development resulting from the material amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan is unlikely to lead to any significant negative environmental effects.

Development control provisions in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Local Area Plan, as well as those inherent within the planning application process arising from the Planning & Development Acts, 2000-2006 and Regulations, 2001-2008, will ensure the appropriate consideration of any development proposals on lands within the Local Area Plan's area on an individual basis.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATION

Based on this screening process it is considered that an SEA will not be required for the proposed material amendments to the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015.

As outlined in section 14A of the Planning & Development (Strategic environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004, subject to any submissions received during the consultation period, full SEA scoping and environmental reports shall not be necessary.

Appropriate Assessment: Screening Exercise



Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2014

*Appropriate Assessment Screening Report*

*Inclusive of the Proposed Amendments (Material Amendments)*

*Carried out under the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Meath County Council is preparing a Local Area Plan for the Village of Nobber, Co. Meath as required by the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21<sup>st</sup> May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, hereafter referred to as the Habitats Directive, compels competent authorities to undertake an appropriate assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.<sup>7</sup> The assessment examines the implications of proceeding with the plan or project in view of any Natura 2000 site's conservation objectives.

The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) Circular letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 (dated 15 February, 2008) states:

*Any draft land use plan (development plans, local area plans, regional planning guidelines, schemes for strategic development zones) or amendment/variation to it proposed under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites (normally called Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs)).*

Screening is further directed to be based on any ecological information available to the authority and an adequate description of the plan and its likely environmental impacts, having regard to policies for future development. Where screening finds that the draft plan or amendment will have an impact on a Natura 2000 site an appropriate assessment of the plan must be undertaken.

As part of the process of preparing the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015, hereinafter referred to as the Draft LAP, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Exercise must be carried out for the Plan. This document is provided as an appendix to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015, but should also be read as independent of the SEA process.

While Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening addresses the potential effects that the Draft LAP might have on the wider environment, AA Screening is specifically focused on the impact of the Draft LAP (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites in the area of the Draft LAP or those that have the potential to be affected by it. The integrity of a Natura 2000 site relates to its ecological functions and the assessment of whether or not it might be adversely affected by the Draft LAP focuses on, and is limited to, the conservation objectives of the site.

The following are the stages in the Appropriate Assessment procedure:

1. Determining whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects – the screening stage,
2. Appropriate Assessment ascertaining the effect on site integrity,
3. Mitigation & alternative solutions - where there is a risk of the plan having adverse effects on the integrity of a site, there should be an examination of mitigation measures and alternative solutions.

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<sup>7</sup> Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) are collectively known as Natura 2000 sites.



The Draft LAP has been screened to ascertain if the Plan should be subject to an Appropriate Assessment as outlined in the Habitats Directive. The screening exercise has had regard to the European Commission's guidance document entitled '*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*'. In line with the suggested assessment methodology put forward by the Commission, a screening matrix and a finding of no significant effects matrix have been completed.

The screening exercise process has found that the Draft LAP does not require an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken as the implementation of the Plan would not be likely to have significant effects on any Natura 2000 site.

## 1.1 Methodology

The appropriate methodology for this study has been informed by '*Managing Natura 2000 Sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*' and has accordingly drawn on the methodology envisaged by EIA Directive 85/337/EEC with further guidance provided by '*Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*'.

Through this AA Screening the likely effects of the Draft LAP on Natura 2000 sites will be examined and it will be considered whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. This will involve:

1. determining whether the project or plan is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site.
2. describing the Draft LAP, and other plans or projects, that have the potential for having significant effects on Natura 2000 sites;
3. identifying the potential effects on Natura 2000 sites;
4. assessing the significance of any effects.

In the following section the Draft LAP will be assessed in terms of these four issues.

## 2.0 SCREENING MATRIX

### 2.1 Brief Description of the Project or Plan

The LAP is intended to provide for the proper planning and sustainable development of Nobber Village over the Plan's six year timeframe, specifically 2009-2015, unless amended. It consists of a written statement and maps which give a graphic representation of the planning policies and development objectives contained within the Plan.

The primary purpose of this LAP is to establish a land-use planning framework for the sustainable development of Nobber Village in a co-ordinated and coherent manner that is respectful of the Village's existing character and size.

The overall goal of this LAP is to facilitate the development of Nobber commensurate to its designation as a 'Village' within the Settlement Strategy in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. In accordance with Variation No. 2 (Order of Priority) of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, the Draft LAP will seek to promote the development of up to sixty additional residential units up to 2013 with priority for development going to Village Centre consolidation sites.

Such an increase in the local population needs to be achieved in conjunction with the provision of an increase in local employment. The growth of Nobber in line with these targets would achieve, inter alia, the following key policy objectives in line with the Development Plan:

- a strengthening of the service centre role of the Village both in terms of servicing its existing population but also that of its immediate hinterland.
- maintaining the vitality and viability of the existing Village and in particular ensuring the sustained provision of existing services, such as schools, shops, sports clubs, employment uses, etc.
- the avoidance of unsustainable ribbon development along the entrance roads and the surrounding countryside through the designation of appropriately zoned lands adjacent to the existing Village and the efficient use of existing and planned for transportation and services infrastructure, and
- the bypassing of the Village to the south-east to provide for the improvement of transportation infrastructure in the Village.

## 2.2 Brief Description of the Natura 2000 sites

There are no Natura 2000 sites within the boundary of the Local Area Plan. There are two Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of Nobber that could potentially be affected by the Plan; namely the Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area.

### 2.2.1 Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation

A site of indirect relevance to Nobber is Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as a result of the fact that the River Dee flows through the Village and eventually enters Dundalk Bay at Annagassan, County Louth.

Site Code:	Site Name:
000455	Dundalk Bay

Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is situated 32km to the north-east of Nobber Village. Dundalk Bay is a very large open shallow sea bay with extensive saltmarshes and intertidal sand/mudflats, extending some 16km from Castletown River on the Cooley Peninsula in the north to Annagassan/Salterstown in the south. The bay encompasses the mouths and estuaries of the Rivers Dee, Glyde, Fane, Castletown and Flurry. The site contains five habitats listed under the EU Habitats Directive, i.e. perennial vegetation of stony banks, tidal mudflats, salt marshes, Salicornia mudflats and estuaries. The site is internationally important for waterfowl and regularly accommodates over 20,000 birds.

### 2.2.2 Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area

Site Code:	Site Name:
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA

124



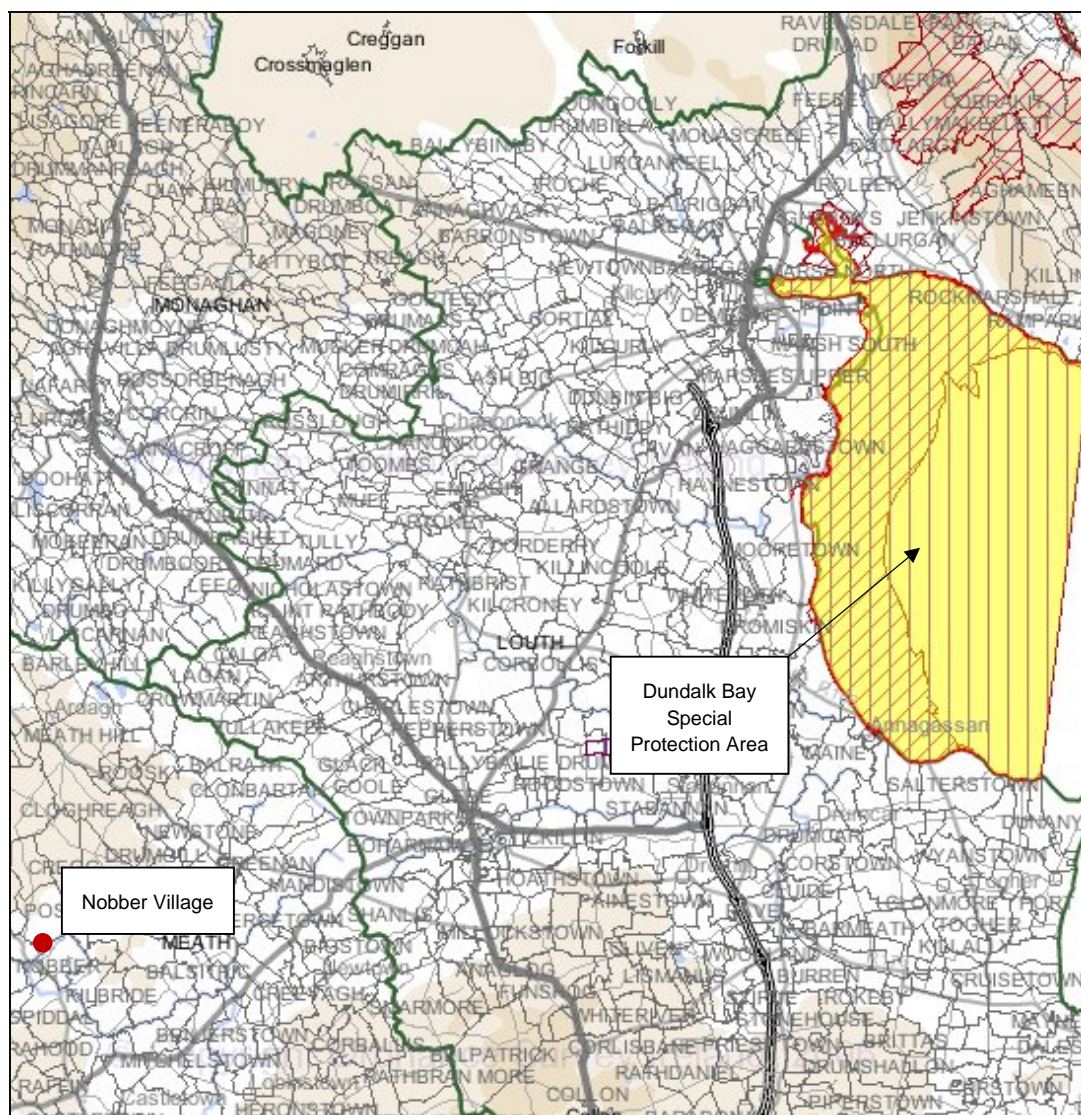


Figure Two: Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) in relation to Nobber Village.

This site is one of the most important wintering waterfowl sites in the country and one of the few which regularly supports more than 20,000 waterfowl. It supports three species in numbers of International Importance and a further 15 species in numbers of National Importance. The populations of Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redthroated and Great Northern Divers are of particular note as these species are listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

## 2.3 Assessment Criteria

### 2.3.1 Assessment Criteria Dundalk Bay SAC

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

The LAP has been prepared to provide a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of this area over the lifetime of the Plan. The Plan provides for the orderly expansion of the Village. While the Plan envisages significant additional development in the context of the current size of the Village, the level of development is limited when viewed in the wider context (in

accordance with Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, sixty additional dwellings are projected to be catered for up to 2013) and therefore is unlikely to generate significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:*

- size and scale;

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

- land take;

The Draft LAP provides for sufficient residential lands to meet the household projections for the Village as set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The LAP has zoned limited additional lands for village centre, community, employment and open space uses. No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites arising from land take, shall be permitted on the basis of this LAP (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;

The closest Natura 2000 site is approximately 32km from the Village. Given the distance involved and the limited extent of development proposed within the LAP, no projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites arising from their proximity to the sites shall be permitted on the basis of this LAP (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- resource requirements (water abstraction, etc.)

Raw water is abstracted from a borehole within the Village's development boundary. Any increase in the rate of this abstraction by the Council would be the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

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

- emissions (disposal to land, water or air);

Wastewater is pumped to the Village's Wastewater Treatment Plant located to the west of the LAP area. The system's original design capacity is 600p.e. (population equivalent), it is currently operating below capacity at 500pe. Therefore the system has capacity to cater for additional development within the Village.

Hypothetically any such projects would be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the pollution licensing regime of the Environmental Protection Agency. The relevant Planning Authority or An Bord Pleanála also has the power to refuse planning permission for development despite the issuing of an EPA license, under Section 99F of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 (as inserted by Section 15 of the Protection of the Environment Act 2003).

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

- excavation requirements;

Soils and rock are a natural resource and an important component of the local ecosystem. The policy provisions included within the LAP and the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 will ensure that no projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites arising from excavation requirements shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

Such projects would also be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

- transportation requirements;

The transportation policies of the Draft LAP (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) would not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from transportation requirements shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan.

Such projects would also be the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the Council.

- duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;

The Draft LAP shall be adopted in mid 2009 and will remain in effect until 2015. The duration of the Plan is irrelevant and not applicable to the ongoing protection of any Natura 2000 site. No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from the duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- other;

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

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

- reduction of habitat area;

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

- disturbance to key species;

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

- habitat or species fragmentation;



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

- reduction in species density;

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

- changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);

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

- climate change;

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

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

- interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;

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

- interference with key relationships that define the function of the site;

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

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

- loss;

Not applicable.

- fragmentation;

Not applicable.

- disruption;

Not applicable.

- disturbance;

Not applicable.

- change to key elements of the sites (e.g. water quality etc.);

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

### 2.3.2 Assessment Criteria Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area (SPA)

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

The LAP has been prepared to provide a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of this area over the lifetime of the Plan. The Plan provides for the orderly expansion of the Village. While the Plan envisages significant additional development in the context of the current size of the Village, the level of development nonetheless is limited when viewed in the wider context (in accordance with Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, sixty additional dwellings are projected to be catered for up to 2013) and therefore is unlikely to generate significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:*

- size and scale;

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

- land take;

The Draft LAP provides for sufficient residential lands to meet the household projections for the Village as set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The LAP has zoned limited additional lands for village centre, community, employment and open space uses. No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from land take, shall be permitted on the basis of this LAP (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;

The closest Natura 2000 site is approximately 32km from the Village. Given the distance involved and the limited extent of development proposed within the LAP, no projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from proximity to the sites shall be permitted on the basis of this LAP (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects)

- resource requirements (water abstraction, etc.)

Raw water is abstracted from a borehole within the Village's development boundary. Any increase in the rate of this abstraction by the Council would be the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

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

- emissions (disposal to land, water or air);

Wastewater is pumped to the Village's Wastewater Treatment Plant located to the west of the LAP area. The system's original design capacity is 600p.e. (population equivalent), it is currently operating below capacity at 500pe. Therefore the system has capacity to cater for additional development within the Village.

Hypothetically any such projects would be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the pollution licensing regime of the Environmental Protection Agency. The relevant Planning Authority or An Bord Pleanála also has the power to refuse planning permission for development despite the issuing of an EPA license, under Section 99F of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 (as inserted by Section 15 of the Protection of the Environment Act 2003).

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

- excavation requirements;

Soils and rock are a natural resource and an important component of the local ecosystem. The policy provisions included within the LAP and the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 will ensure that no projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from excavation requirements shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- transportation requirements;

The transportation policies of the Draft LAP (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) would not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from transportation requirements shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan.

The Plan does include indicative route alignments for the development of a local distributor road network to the south-east of the Village. These alignments are indicative and of a very general nature. Such projects would be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the Council.

- duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;

The Draft LAP shall be adopted in mid 2009 and will remain in effect until 2015. The duration of the Plan is irrelevant and not applicable to the ongoing protection of the Natura 2000 sites. No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- other;

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from other

considerations, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

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

- reduction of habitat area;

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

- disturbance to key species;

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

- habitat or species fragmentation;

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

- reduction in species density;

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

- changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);

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

- climate change;

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

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

- interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;

No projects giving rise to significant interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- interference with key relationships that define the function of the site;

No projects giving rise to significant interference with the key relationships that define the function of the Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

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

- loss;

Not applicable.

- fragmentation;

Not applicable.

- disruption;

Not applicable.

- disturbance;

Not applicable.

- change to key elements of the sites (e.g. water quality etc.);

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

### **3.0 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT MATRIX**

Name of project or plan:

Draft Nobber Local Area Plan 2009-2015.

Name and Location of Natura 2000 sites:

There are no Natura 2000 sites within or adjoining the Local Area Plan boundary. The closest Natura 2000 sites that could be affected by the Plan are the Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) situated approximately 32km to the north-east of Nobber Village.

Description of the project or plan

As given in Screening Matrix Section 2.0 above, page 3.

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

The Draft Plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 site but rather the future planning and development of Nobber Village. The Plan includes robust and thorough planning policies and development objectives aimed specifically at protecting, conserving and managing in a prudent and sustainable manner Nobber's natural and built heritage.

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

The Draft LAP is the only land use plan directly applicable to Nobber Village. It is placed within a hierarchy of plans such as the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016. The Plan is a subsidiary document to the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, for which a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared.

The Plan has been formulated to ensure that development arising from planning permissions granted in accordance with the provisions of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site having regard to its conservation objectives.

*The assessment of significance of effects:*

*Describe how the project of plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site*

The Plan has been formulated to ensure that development arising from planning permissions granted in accordance with the provisions of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site having regard to its conservation objectives.

*Explain why these effects are not considered significant.*

The policies and provisions of the Plan have been devised to anticipate and avoid the need for developments that would be likely to significantly and adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. Furthermore, such developments as will be permitted on foot of the provisions of this Plan shall be required to conform to the relevant regulatory provisions for the prevention of pollution, nuisance or other environmental effects likely to significantly and adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

Additionally, it should be noted that any developments permitted in accordance with this plan also have a legal duty to conform with the relevant statutory and regulatory provisions enacted for the prevention of environmental pollution and degradation or other effects likely to significantly and adversely affect the integrity of Natura 2000 sites having regard to their conservation objectives.

*List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address.*

At the time of writing Irish legislation does not prescribe statutory consultees for the purpose of consultation on the appropriate assessment of land use development plans. However Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government states the Department should be consulted.

As part of the SEA of the Draft LAP, consultation occurred with the following prescribed bodies stating that a submission or observation in relation to the SEA process could be made to the Planning Authorities;

1. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2. (+353 (0) 1 833 3190).
2. Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DoCMNR), Leeson Lane, Dublin 2. (+353 (0) 1 678 3084).
3. Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra, County Cork. (+353 (0) 21 487 5540).

*Response to consultation.*



The response from the Environmental Protection Agency in their correspondence reminded the Planning Authority of the potential need for appropriate assessment.

The response from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources did not refer to Appropriate Assessment in their correspondence.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government reminded the Planning Authority that appropriate assessment constituted a separate process to SEA screening. The submission noted that the issue of cumulative and downstream impacts to Natura 2000 sites needed to be considered.

Data collected to carry out the assessment

Who carried out this assessment?

Meath County Council

Sources of data

Existing records and information published by the NPWS and EPA.

Level of assessment completed

A desktop study was completed utilising existing information from the relevant state authorities.

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

The full results of the assessment can be accessed and viewed in this document which is available for public inspection at the offices of *Meath County Council's* Planning Department, Abbey Road, Navan, Co. Meath.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Following the review of the Draft LAP in accordance with the '*Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43*', a Screening Matrix and Findings of No Significant Effects Matrix have been completed.

This Screening Exercise was carried out to ascertain if the planning policies and development objectives contained within the Draft LAP were likely to have significant effects on any Natura 2000 site. If this were the case then it would be necessary to carry out Appropriate Assessment.

The Draft LAP has been formulated to ensure that developments and effects arising from permissions based upon this Draft Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.

This Screening Report finds that the Draft LAP does not require further Appropriate Assessment.

**APPENDIX C****Population Data**

Age Cohort	Nobber ED	%	State	%
0-14 Years	135	20.70	864,449	20.39
15-24 Years	94	14.42	632,732	14.92
25-44 Years	184	28.22	1,345,873	31.74
45-64 Years	154	23.62	928,868	21.91
65+ Years	85	13.04	467,926	11.04
Total	652		4,239,848	

*Table 1: Age Profile, 2006*

Area	At Work	Unemployed (including First-Time Job Seekers)	Student	Retired	Other*	Total
Nobber ED	310	21	42	43	101	517
%	59.96	4.06	8.12	8.32	19.54	
State	1,930,042	179,456	349,596	377,927	538,378	3,375,399
%	57.18	5.32	10.36	11.20	15.95	
*Other includes those with Home Duties, unable to work and other						

*Table 2: Persons over 15+ Classified by Present Status, 2006*

Area	Agri	Man	Build	Cleric/Admin	Trans	Sales	Prof	Serv	Other	Total
Nobber ED	31	56	28	43	21	30	42	42	11	304
%	10.20	18.42	9.21	14.14	6.91	9.87	13.82	13.82	3.62	
State	88,414	245,234	183,429	365,670	114,919	284,164	342,414	224,964	230,918	2,080,126
%	4.25	11.79	8.82	17.58	5.52	13.66	16.46	10.81	11.10	

*Table 3: Occupational Profile, 2006*

Level of Education	Nobber ED	%	State	%
Primary	103	23.57	514,085	18.90
Lower Secondary	127	29.06	573,411	21.08
Upper Secondary	86	19.68	803,498	29.54
Third Level	121	27.69	829,102	30.48
Total	437		2,720,096	

*Table 4: Highest Level of Education Attained, 2006*

Although the above figures cover the entire Nobber Electoral Division including urban and rural areas, they do incorporate the Village itself and are ultimately representative of the population within the Local Area Plan's area.

## APPENDIX D

### Protected Structures listed within the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013:

1	Limekiln	Square-plan limekiln, built c.1800, now disused. Roughly dressed limestone walls with ashlar voussoirs to segmental-arch opening. Built into limestone outcrop.
2	Bridge Farm	Detached three-bay single-storey outbuilding, built c.1820. Pitched corrugated steel roof. Dressed sandstone and limestone walls with limestone quoins. Segmental-arch carriage openings with ashlar voussoirs. Square-headed window openings with stone sills
3	Nobber Bridge	Four-arch road bridge, built c.1830, with roughly dressed rubble limestone walls and ashlar limestone voussoirs. Buttresses added to carry pipe across river.
4	Railway station	Remains of railway station platform, built c.1872, comprising of limestone kerbing set on rubble limestone wall.
5	Water Pump	Cast-iron water pump, erected c.1870, with lion's head surrounding spout. Fluted base and cap, with finial and side handle.
6	Railway Warehouse	Detached two-bay single-storey former railway warehouse, built 1872, now in use as outbuilding. Pitched corrugated-iron roof. Dressed limestone walls. Segmental arched carriage openings with ashlar limestone voussoirs.
7	Saint John the Baptist Church of Ireland Church	Detached gable-fronted former church, built c.1750, with three-bay side elevations to nave.
8	Railway Bridge	Single-arch railway bridge, built c.1875, to carry the road over the track. Rock faced limestone walls with segmental-arched opening having brick dressings
9	House	Detached three-bay two-storey house, built c.1830. Hipped slate roof with ashlar chimneystacks. Roughly-dressed stone walls with limestone quoins.
10	Church Tomb	Stone tomb to the south-east of the old Church(now in use as a house). Some of the stone is badly damaged and broken.
11	Parochial House	Detached three-bay two-storey roughcast rendered parochial house, built c.1869, with central entrance porch. Timber sash windows with stone sills. Hipped slate roof with rendered chimneystacks and clay pots, incl. Detached four-bay two-storey outbuilding.

12	Cross in Graveyard	Stone cross with wheel, in centre of grave yard.
13	Ceard Scoil	Detached seven-bay single-storey red brick school, built c.1935, now disused. Comprising of three-bay central entrance block, flanked by projecting end bays. Hipped tile roofs and red brick walls.
14	Lady Bridge	Double-arch road bridge, built c.1820. Rubble limestone walls with ashlar voussoirs to arches. Modern repairs to west.
15	House	Detached three-bay two-storey roughcast rendered house, built c.1820. Timber sash windows with timber sash boxes and stone sills. Round-arched ashlar stone door surround with cornice and spoked fanlight. Hipped slate roof with red brick chimneystacks.
16	Parochial Hall	Detached gable-fronted three-bay two-storey hall, built 1915. Rendered walls to ground floor, roughcast rendered to first floor, with render quoins. Platband between floors, and continuous hood mouldings over ground floor openings.
17	Dee Local Lounge	End-of-terrace six-bay two-storey building, built c.1830, comprising of four-bay house with two-bay outbuilding. Exposed rubble stone walls. Timber sash windows with stone sills.
18	Nobber House	Terraced five-bay two-storey house, built c.1790. Dressed stone walls with ashlar limestone quoins. Pitched slate roof with ashlar chimneystacks.
19	National School	Detached H-plan six-bay single-storey former national school, built 1927. Ruled and lined rendered walls with render quoins and limestone plaque. Pitched slate roof with red brick chimneystacks.
20	Garda Station	Detached three-bay two-storey roughcast rendered house, built c.1820, now in use as Garda station. Timber sash windows with stone sills to first floor. Pitched slate roof and brick chimneystacks.

## APPENDIX E

### Energy Efficiency: Some Renewable Energy Methods

Passive solar architecture is a design approach rather than the active use of a specific technology or device. The fabric, orientation and layout of the building are manipulated to achieve maximum solar gains and minimise the need for artificial lighting, heating and ventilation.

Active solar technology involves the installation of a solar collector device, which is typically a metal box structure containing an absorber. The solar collector absorbs the sun's heat, which can in turn heat water for the building.

Solar energy can also be harnessed through the use of photovoltaic technology using semiconductor materials to convert sunlight to electricity. These can be integrated in building structures.

A green roof system is an extension of the existing roof which involves a high quality water proofing and root repellent system, a drainage system, filter cloth, a lightweight growing medium and plants. The benefits of this system are numerous including savings on energy heating and cooling costs, sound insulation benefits, potential to reduce or eliminate roof drains, potential to assist with storm water management, provision of amenity space, aesthetic appeal and improved air quality.

#### *Energy Efficiency Standards*

The following points should be incorporated into making the transition to "greener" domestic building design:

- The building regulations revised Part L came into effect in July 2006. The following are some points that will affect building of housing in the future :
- The building elements make-up and insulation should be observed to the current U-values as detailed in the building regulations.
- Any house over 100m<sup>2</sup> should have two independent heating zones. The zones can be (a) the living area and (b) the dwelling area. This will reduce heating the whole house while only a section is populated during certain times during the day.
- Hot water storage should be fitted with thermostatic controls that shut-off the supply of heat when the desired storage temperature is reached.
- Separate and independent time control for space heating and for heating of stored water should be provided.
- All hot water storage vessels, pipes and ducts should be insulated to prevent heat loss. It is preferable if the hot water storage vessel is the pre-insulated type.
- External floor, window and roof light openings should not exceed 25% of the floor area. Particular attention should be given to the orientation and type of the glazing as this affects solar overheating.
- Energy efficient light bulbs should be use in all fittings including fluorescent tube lighting in the kitchen.



- To avoid heat loss and local condensation problems, limit local thermal bridging. Details of how to limit this are described in the draft building regulations.
- The selection of heating sources should be given proper attention. Sources such as wood pellet boilers and heat pumps appear to be most appropriate sustainable heat sources in contrast to electric heating, oil and LPG fired boilers.
- Houses with central heating should avoid the placing of open fireplaces in individual rooms to prevent heat loss and inefficient heat sources. 80% of the heat produced by a fire goes straight up the chimney.
- Six litre flush toilets should be specified.
- Cooker hood and extract fans should be used in both kitchens and bathroom to reduce the amount of moisture in a dwelling; this prevents the air being drawn into living and bedrooms.
- Domestic solar water heating systems can contribute to the water heating system.