

# FLOWER HILL & ABBEYLANDS

URBAN DESIGN PLAN

Nov 2021



comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*



Rialtas na  
hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
**2040**

the **paul hogarth** company



## FOREWORD

I am very pleased to introduce this timely and welcomed Urban Design Plan for the future of Flower Hill and Abbeylands in Navan, County Meath.

As anyone who knows Navan will appreciate, Flower Hill is an important part of the town. It has long been home to generations of families, many of whom were traditionally employed in the nearby mills and other businesses. Yet people will also have noticed that in recent years Flower Hill has experienced a period of decline, evident by the number of vacant buildings in the area.

This document marks the determination of Meath County Council and local communities to arrest this decline, and to shape a brighter future for Flower Hill and the adjacent Abbeylands. Not only is this ambition vital for local residents and businesses, but it also plays a key part in our wider objectives for Navan town, which in line with national policy, encourage more people to live and work within walking distance of the town centre and its amenities.

I am delighted that this plan was produced in partnership with local people and would like to extend our gratitude to residents, business owners, local schools and everyone else who took time to participate. I would also like to acknowledge the funding for this project made possible through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Finally, I would urge everyone with an interest in Flower Hill and Abbeylands to join us on the journey set out in this plan. By working together to implement its proposals I am confident that we can realise the vision of a 'vibrant town centre community, proud of its past and confident of its future.

Jackie Maguire  
Chief Executive  
Meath County Council

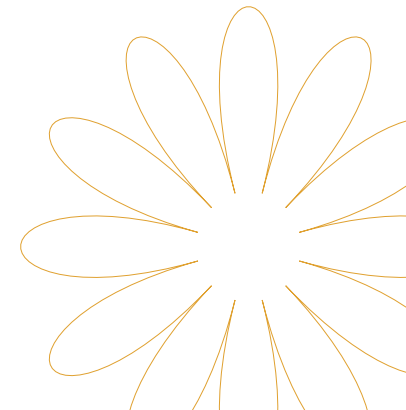




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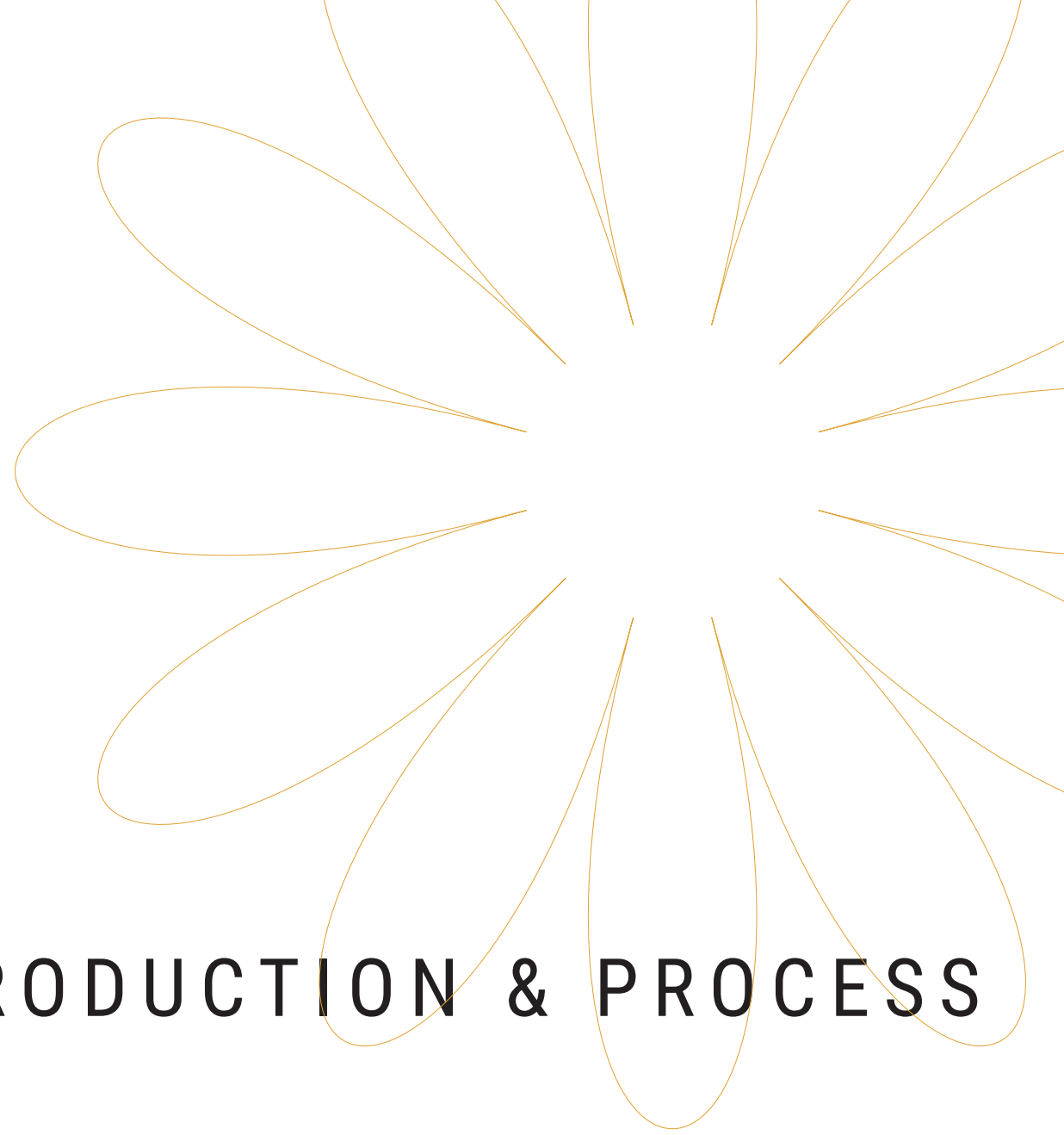
N5T

RATHOLDREN ROAD

KELLS ROAD

WATERGATE STREET

FLOWER HILL



**1.0**

**INTRODUCTION & PROCESS**

## INTRODUCTION

In January 2019 Meath County Council commissioned the preparation of an Urban Design Plan for Lands at Flower Hill and Abbeylands, Navan. This move reflects recognition that population decline, vacancy, dereliction and antisocial behaviour have led to the undesirability of Flower Hill as a place to live and invest in. The subsequent Plan was prepared by The Paul Hogarth Company, a multidisciplinary team of Landscape Architects, Urban Designers and Planners, in conjunction with the Planning Department of Meath County Council. It was jointly shaped by members of the public, local stakeholders and elected members.

This visionary report summarises the findings of the research process and sets out the Aims and Objectives of the project before proposing a series of Plans and Projects.

This Urban Design Plan seeks to set in place a positive road map for the regeneration of the local area, helping Flower Hill and Abbeylands to blossom into the best place that it can be. It will be used to inform policy for the area and to attract funding for regeneration.

## STUDY AREA

The area of Flower Hill and Abbeylands is located on the north-eastern edge of Navan Town Centre, County Meath. Spatially, the area is bound by the River Blackwater to its southern edge, residential development along Flower Hill road to the east, the N51 relief road encloses the northern and western aspects of the area and the site is diagonally transected by Ratholdren Road.







## PROCESS

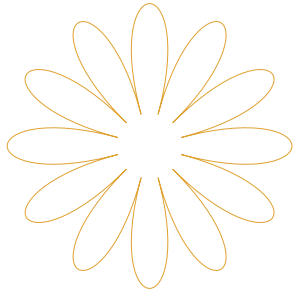
The streets and spaces of Flower Hill belong to us all, therefore it is extremely important that this plan reflects the views and aspirations of as many local people as possible.

Engagement was carried out with residents, community groups, school children, business owners, elected members of Navan Municipal District Council and other key stakeholders. This informed the development of the design in a manner that promoted widespread ownership of the Plan among local people.

As a vision for the area emerged, a series of strategic aims and objectives were formulated and in turn, projects devised to bring about their realisation. The resultant Urban Design Plan therefore responds to the uniqueness of the area and proposes an ambitious, sustainable and successful future for the area of Flower Hill and Abbeylands.







# 2.0

**ANALYSIS:**  
THE PLACE & IT'S PEOPLE

## THE PLACE

Before coming to an agreed vision for the future of Flower Hill and Abbeylands, it is important to first understand the place, its history and issues, we are then able to confidently recommend on how best to move forward and develop bespoke local solutions.

The area of Flower Hill and Abbeylands has long been a place of importance in Navan. Once known for its ecclesiastical links and cavalry barracks, the area became home to a series of successful mills in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Initially these mills handled corn and whiskey before becoming associated with flour production and furniture making. These mills were a source of steady employment for the local community and instilled a sense of community cohesion and pride. During the years of the 'Celtic Tiger' boom, the area became a hot spot for housing development with contemporary apartments being constructed along the river's edge.

Today however, a very different environmental and economic context exists. The area faces new challenges due to a shift in the economic landscape with the traditional mill and manufacturing jobs no longer in existence. The green area known as the 'Mollies', that lies alongside the River Blackwater, is no longer deemed a community asset but is now an overgrown inaccessible space that is an attraction for anti-social behaviour.

Along Flower Hill a transient population has brought with it issues with poor community cohesion which has been exacerbated by the more recent architectural additions to the streetscape. These apartments have failed to positively add to the area and have instead set the context for social issues, increased crime rates and a poorly perceived sense of safety.





## THE PEOPLE

Although the Plan is focused on Urban Design, a range of other issues have been considered in its formulation. These have included economic growth and development, housing provision, community facilities, sustainable movement and the protection and enhancement of natural and heritage assets.

Before the design process commenced, an initial consultation was held to garner local insight and to ascertain what are the important parts of the area that the Plan should analyse in greater detail.

From that initial consultation exercise, the most common words to describe the Flower Hill and Abbeylands area were **'dirty', 'derelict', 'dangerous'** and **'potential'**. When prompted for the top three things respondents 'liked' about the Flower Hill and Abbeylands, the most common answers were **'its proximity to the town centre', 'its traditional housing'** and **'nothing'**. When questioned what the top three things respondents 'disliked' about the Flower Hill and Abbeylands, the results were **'derelict buildings', 'unsafe and dirty',** and **'anti-social behaviour'**.

The final element of the initial consultation probed respondents for ideas to improve Flower Hill and Abbeylands. The responses shaped the emerging vision for the area.

It was clear from the initial exercise that multiple issues and concerns were high on the local agenda. It was also evident that although there was a sense of community in the area, unfortunately, community pride, capacity and energy had been diminished in recent years. As a result, frustration and disappointment in the current state of the area had resulted in strong demand for strategic and substantial change in the environmental, social and economic quality of the area.

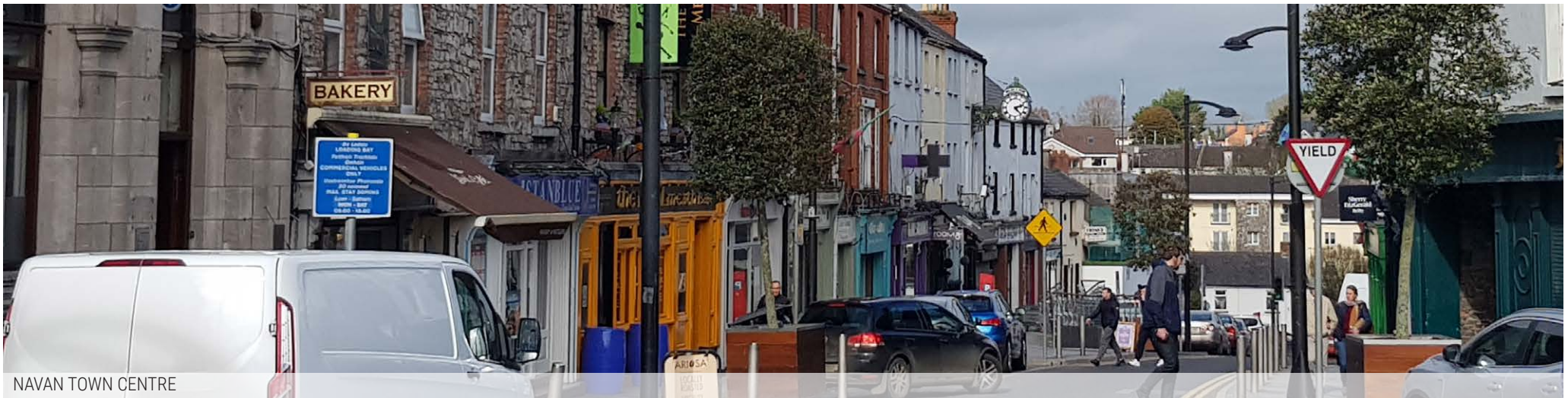
## TOWN CENTRE

The proximity of Flower Hill and Abbeylands to the Town Centre has long been a benefit to the area. The short distance linking Flower Hill to Market Square, via Pollboy bridge, should mean the area is a hive of commercial activity with residential properties in high demand.

Although visually connected to the town centre and only a few minutes' walk, psychologically Flower Hill and Abbeylands feels very much detached and forgotten from its surroundings. This is partly due to the barrier created by the Kells Road and the river.



FLOWER HILL FROM POLLBOY BRIDGE

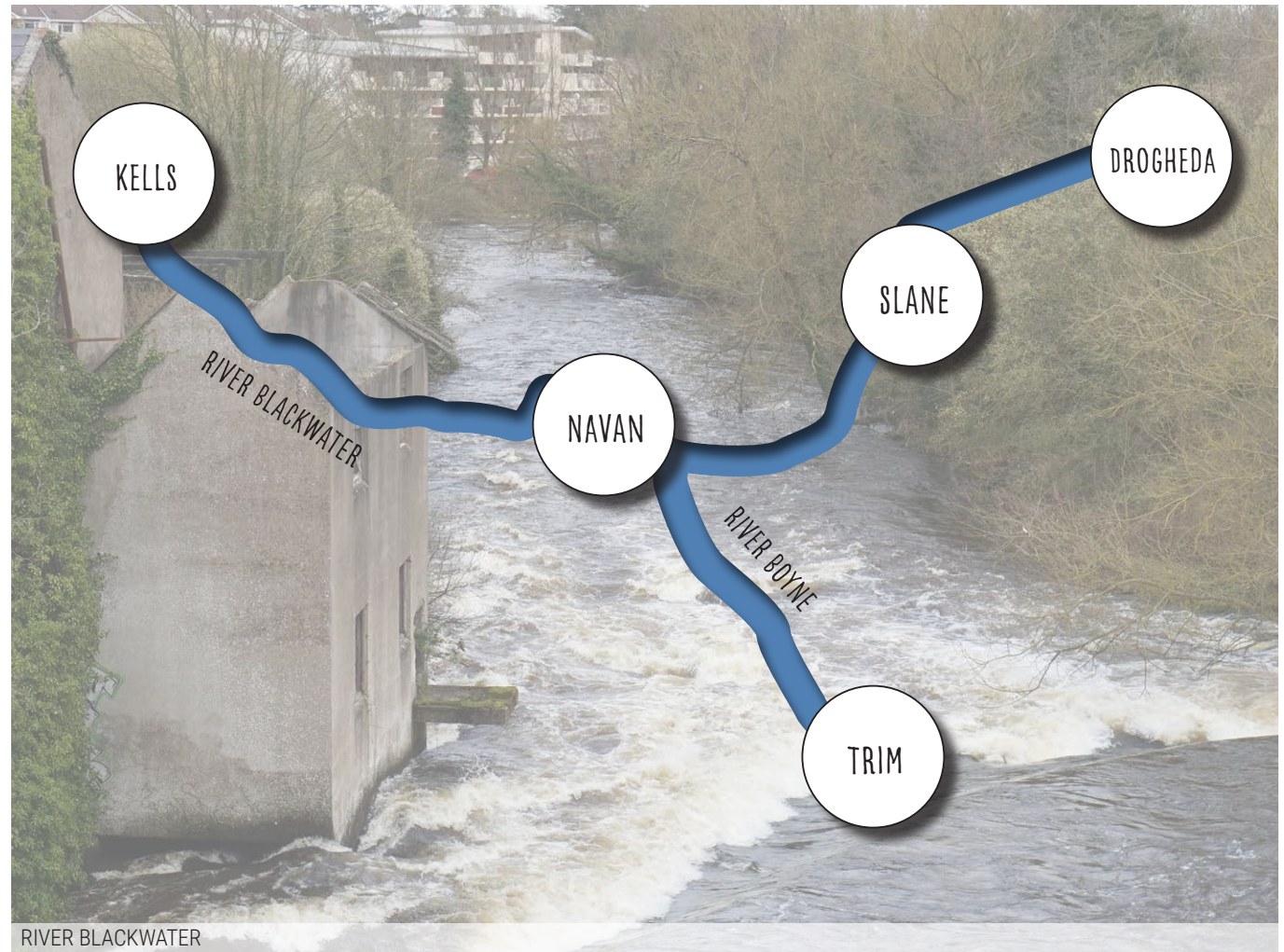


NAVAN TOWN CENTRE

## GREEN CONNECTIONS

The River Blackwater and its green connections are a major asset. The area is set within the context of a regional green corridor linking with Kells, Trim, Slane and Drogheda via the rivers Blackwater and Boyne.

In recent decades, Flower Hill has 'turned its back' upon the river. After years of neglect, the surrounding green space has become overgrown, littered and an attraction for anti-social behaviour, as such, the 'asset' is now both inaccessible and unappealing to explore. On first assessment, while it may appear that a large proportion of the site comprises public space, the study has shown that a significant proportion of the green area is currently inaccessible.



## ECOLOGY

The ecology of the area is an important consideration, especially along the River Blackwater. A Preliminary Ecological Scoping Report was prepared by WM Associates as well as an Arboricultural Report by Charles McCorkelly Arboricultural Consultancy. The findings of this identified the main tree and canopy cover in the area located on either side of the River Blackwater. The riverside area includes a diverse range of species including white willow, goat willow, ash, sycamore, alder, birch and elder. Though notably, a large percentage of trees within this area are young to early-mature age and have naturally regenerated due to the unmanaged nature of the site. The river corridor provides important foraging and nesting habitat for several species of bats and birds. A bat survey was carried out by Dr Tina Aughney. In addition Japanese Knotweed on both banks of the river was surveyed by Dr Patrick Moran. Both studies informed the preparation of the urban design plan.

Beyond the river analysis shows that overall in the area, the tree population is considered extremely poor. The majority of any tree coverage exists within privately owned properties and that no public trees are located along Flower Hill, Ratholdren and Abbeylands.

A Natura Impact Statement in support of Appropriate Assessment of the Urban Design Plan was completed by Forest, Environmental Research and Services concluding that there that there would be no adverse impact of the proposed Urban Design Plan (assuming the implementation of mitigation measures).



OPEN SPACE ALONG RIVER



## URBAN GRAIN

The 'Triangle' on Flower Hill, which sits between Ratholdren Road and New Lane, has been a long-established feature of the urban grain. The area comprises a much smaller, finer and traditional urban grain than the adjacent Town Centre which has been completely altered in the 21st century to form a much larger, coarser urban grain, epitomised by the Navan Town Centre shopping centre.

This traditional built fabric and fine grain along Flower Hill contributes to local identity, adding important heritage quality and character to the area.



## HERITAGE

There is a rich and plentiful supply of social and built heritage in Flower Hill and Abbeylands. The area is composed of layers of historic buildings, monuments and unique heritage features, each with their own interesting tales to tell. These precious assets are currently overlooked and require further interpretation and conservation to contribute more fully to the area.

From the skeletal frames of the derelict mill structures that hint at much more successful and industrial past, to the remnants of the well-trodden historic 'Old Road' (Navan Kells walkway) that historically would have linked Abbeylands to Blackwater Park via 'The Mollies', Elliot's Mill and Blackwater Mill. All these physical markers act as reminders of the past, give reason for celebration and should be promoted and protected going forward.

The Flower Hill and Abbeylands area is also bestowed with a collection of protected structures, historical sites and monuments that reflect the area's history and personality. There are many examples of traditional vernacular architecture, particularly along Flower Hill, that although have not been afforded protection by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), they undoubtedly add to the overall quality and character of the area.

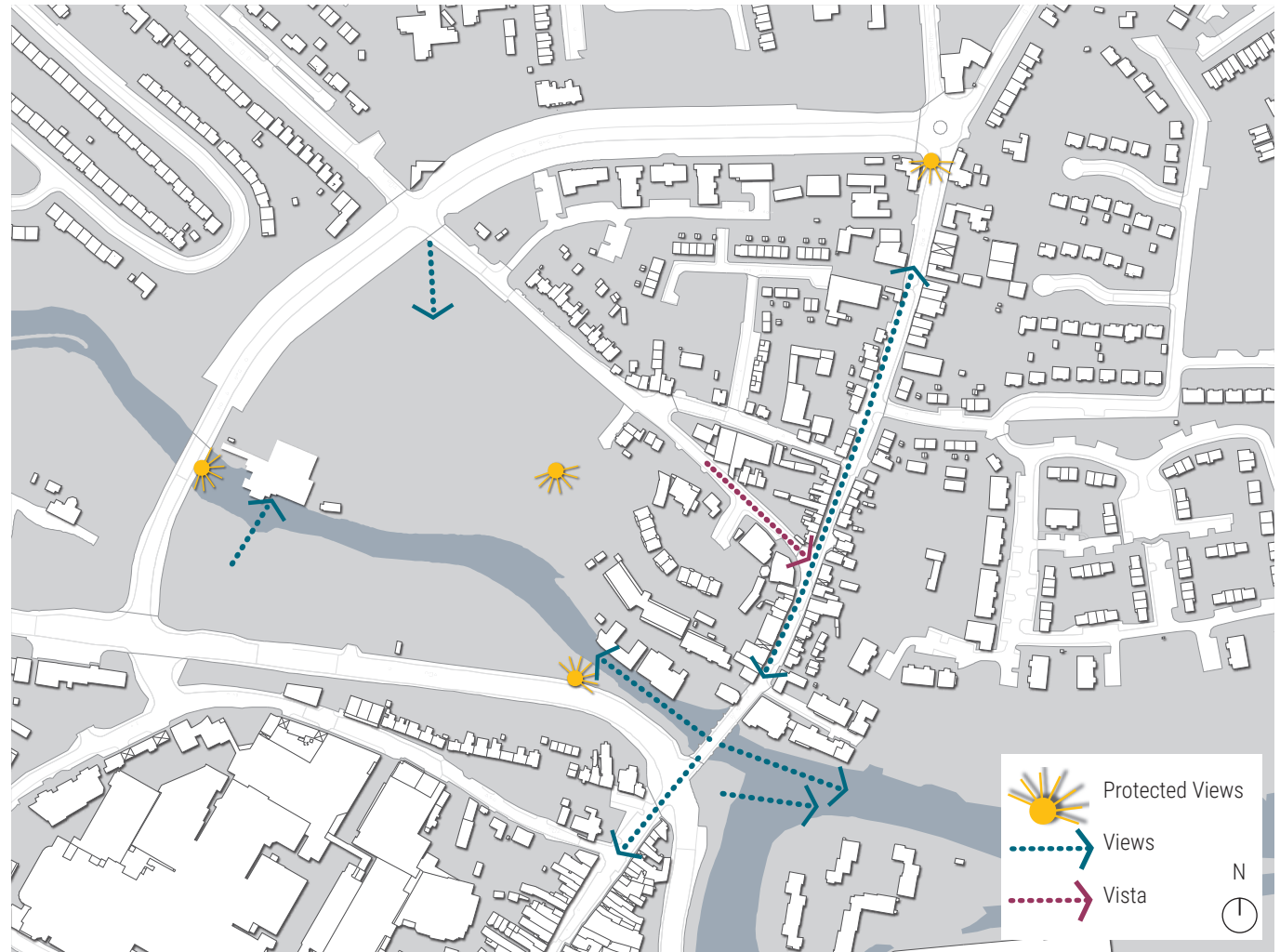


## VIEWS

Views and vistas have an important role to play in Flower Hill and Abbeylands. Yet in the current arrangement, these views are not able to be fully appreciated due to environmental constraints that have been left unmanaged.

There are four Protected Views in the area, identified in the Navan Development Plan, as can be seen from the Plan opposite, each view with a unique underlining focus, highlighting a distinctive landscape or streetscape that the area has to offer. These views include the attractive stepped rooftops of Flower Hill, the dramatic white water of the River Blackwater and also the luscious vegetation of the river embankment and surroundings.

A positive component of these views and vistas is based upon the rolling topography of the area that helps frame and highlight certain features. The local topography slopes in a downward direction towards the river's edge. Traditionally this natural topography has been complimented by the sympathetic stepped rooftops of Flower Hill. The apartment blocks constructed during the 'Celtic Tiger' years broke this traditional form, however, if these buildings were maintained on regular basis they would make a positive contribution to the streetscape.



## VACANCY & DERELICTION

A major challenge for Flower Hill is the extent of vacancy. The level of retail activity in the area has declined significantly, with the range and offer at present relatively limited.

This is equally matched by the impact of dereliction in the area, which although is not widespread, is perceived as significant. Meath County Council have now acquired and cleared the derelict lands contained at 'The Triangle'. This site is now ready for future development.

However, it is the overall visibly poor condition of properties, with the greatest concentration at the apartment buildings, that cumulatively creates an environment that looks unmaintained and under invested. It is undoubtedly the case that the impact of this visual blight has exacerbated socio-economic problems. As local community pride is reduced, derelict properties become attractive to those carrying out anti-social behaviour, attitudes to investing in the area change and as a result, the area has become a place to move through, rather than go to.



DERELICT PROPERTIES NEXT TO NEW DEVELOPMENT



DERELICT PROPERTY, FLOWER HILL



APARTMENTS, MILL LANE



APARTMENTS, FLOWER HILL

## SAFETY & SECURITY

While many residents care deeply for the area, with the aforementioned issues of vacancy and dereliction, a small minority of people perceive the area as unsafe. For locals and those in the surrounding town, the area of Flower Hill and Abbeylands has sadly become known for its problems of anti-social behaviour.

The lands at 'The Triangle' have been acquired by Meath County Council, extinguishing the right of way formerly known as 'Linky Lane', creating a safer environment and readying the site for development.

It is clear the area faces a major challenge that spans more than just aesthetic environmental conditions. The public consultation process highlighted high rates of substance abuse in the local area as well as instances of both serious and petty crime.

Physical manifestations of these problems can be seen with the frequent inclusion of signage highlighting CCTV surveillance operating in the area in an attempt to detect further crime.

Further in response to these safety concerns, gated housing schemes have been constructed. This style of development highlights local people's concerns and their desire for security. Whilst constructing gated communities may provide a short-term solution, this response risks damaging overall community cohesion and does not deal with the source of the problem.



PROPERTIES ON THE TRIANGLE



CCTV ALONG FLOWER HILL CRESC.



AREA FORMERLY KNOWN AS 'LINKY LANE'

## MOVEMENT

Flower Hill is currently dominated by one-way vehicular traffic but is within close proximity to the town centre with excellent walkability. A few minutes' walk connects the area to the town centre. Although there has been a history of traffic congestion, the amount of space dedicated to private vehicles has increased in recent decades affecting the quality of the local environment.

The prioritisation given to vehicles has resulted in a poor pedestrian experience. Footpaths have become narrow and the quality of the pavement, while generally adequate, is beginning to look dated, impacting those with mobility issues, children and vulnerable adults.

The study noted the daily experience of pupils at St Ultan's School, to the north of Flower Hill. The school is located on a constrained site, adjacent to a busy junction which creates safety risks for the pupils. Their experience of engagement with the surrounding environment exemplifies the nature of the current traffic arrangement, particularly at peak traffic flow times. The relocation of the school to an alternative site is currently under consideration.

At key access points, large traffic junctions prioritise the movement of vehicles over pedestrians. For those in Flower Hill wishing to access the Town Centre and vice

versa pedestrians must narrowly pass moving vehicles on Pollboy Bridge before navigating the R147 Road. This route can feel unsafe and adds to the issue of how the wider town views access to Flower Hill and Abbeylands, creating further connectivity issues.

There are currently plans to improve wider connectivity and movement in Navan through additional relief roads. If implemented, this may help alleviate localised traffic problems, particularly if it removed Heavy Goods Vehicles from the narrow streetscape of Flower Hill.



ROUNDBOUT AT THE TOP OF FLOWER HILL



HISTORIC TRAFFIC ISSUES (Image courtesy of the Navan Historical Society)



KELLS ROAD

## COMMUNITY

While Flower Hill and Abbeylands is visibly defined by its landscape and built heritage, it is the people that give the area its unique character and depth of personality.

Research for this study revealed that despite all its challenges, there is still a strong sense of community identity in the area. Families that have been long established in the area, spanning decades and generations, are not uncommon. Through the study, the local community exhibited a strong community spirit, a deep local knowledge and a desire to restore pride in the area.

As was mentioned in the issues of safety and security, from an initial assessment, the community appears somewhat fragmented, broken into spatial clusters that are defined by either housing style, development layout or duration of residency.

In recent years, attempts by the local community at streetscape improvements did have a positive impact upon the visual quality of the environment. These actions however have been short term and it is clear from the analysis the community now need to be further supported with longer-term interventions.

Harnessing, growing and sustaining the strong community spirit of Flower Hill and Abbeylands will be one of the driving forces behind the fulfilment of the area's potential. It will be crucial to the long-term sustainability of these efforts that all sections of the community are represented, engaged and bought into the project to ensure collective cohesiveness.



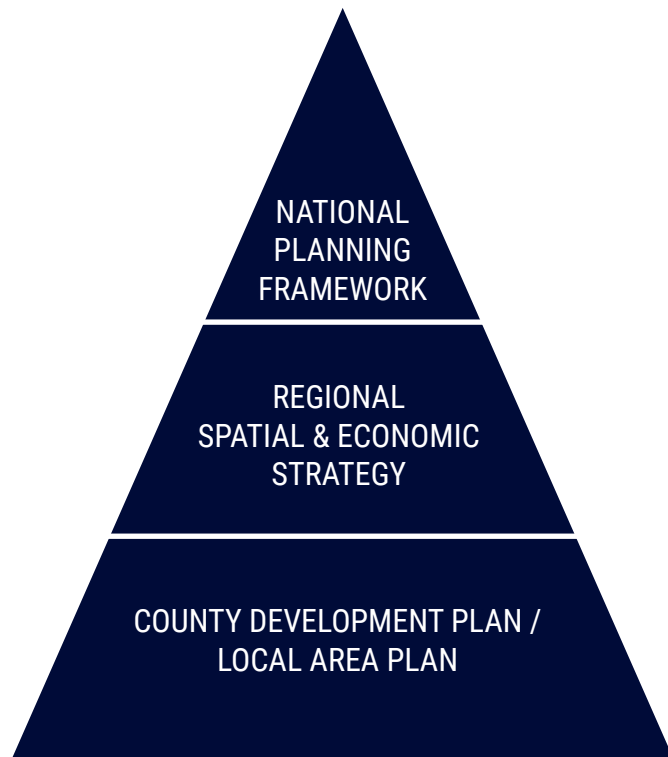
CONSULTATION - EVENT 1



CONSULTATION - EVENT 2



## PLANNING CONTEXT



### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A number of key strategic documents set out the policy context for Flower Hill and Abbeylands. These national, regional and local policy documents should be consulted alongside this plan in considering the future of the area by providing further direction and guidance.

### THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK (NPF) – PROJECT IRELAND 2040

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to the year 2040.

The NPF sets out National Policy Objectives that seek to create attractive, liveable, well designed and high-quality urban places. The National Policy Objectives seek to regenerate and rejuvenate urban environs, through enhanced levels of amenity space and design quality to reverse patterns of stagnation and decline. The NPF also details a series of objectives that promote the integration of residential development with safe and convenient alternatives to car use, such as prioritising walking and cycling travel modes, to assist in the creation of sustainable communities.



## URBAN REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) aims to deliver more compact and sustainable development as envisaged under Project Ireland 2040. It does this by part-funding regeneration and rejuvenation projects in Ireland's five cities and other large towns.

More compact and sustainable development involves a greater proportion of residential and mixed-use development within the existing built footprints of cities and towns. This will ensure more parts of our urban areas become attractive and vibrant places in which to live, work, visit and invest.

## REGIONAL SPATIAL & ECONOMIC STRATEGY (2019) EASTERN & MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the region to 2031 and beyond. The overall aim of the Strategy is to create a sustainable and competitive region that supports the health and wellbeing of people and places.

The three key principles of the RSES are focused on healthy placemaking, climate action and economic opportunity. Each of these principles are supported by the inclusion of compact growth and urban regeneration, integrated sustainable transport options, a promotion of enhanced green infrastructure and protection of local biodiversity and natural heritage.

Navan is identified within the RSES as a key town located in the Core Region, functioning as a dynamic urban centre and the focal point for the economic, cultural and social development for County Meath. It has capacity and future growth potential to accommodate above average growth coupled with the requisite investment in employment creating, services, amenities and sustainable transport.

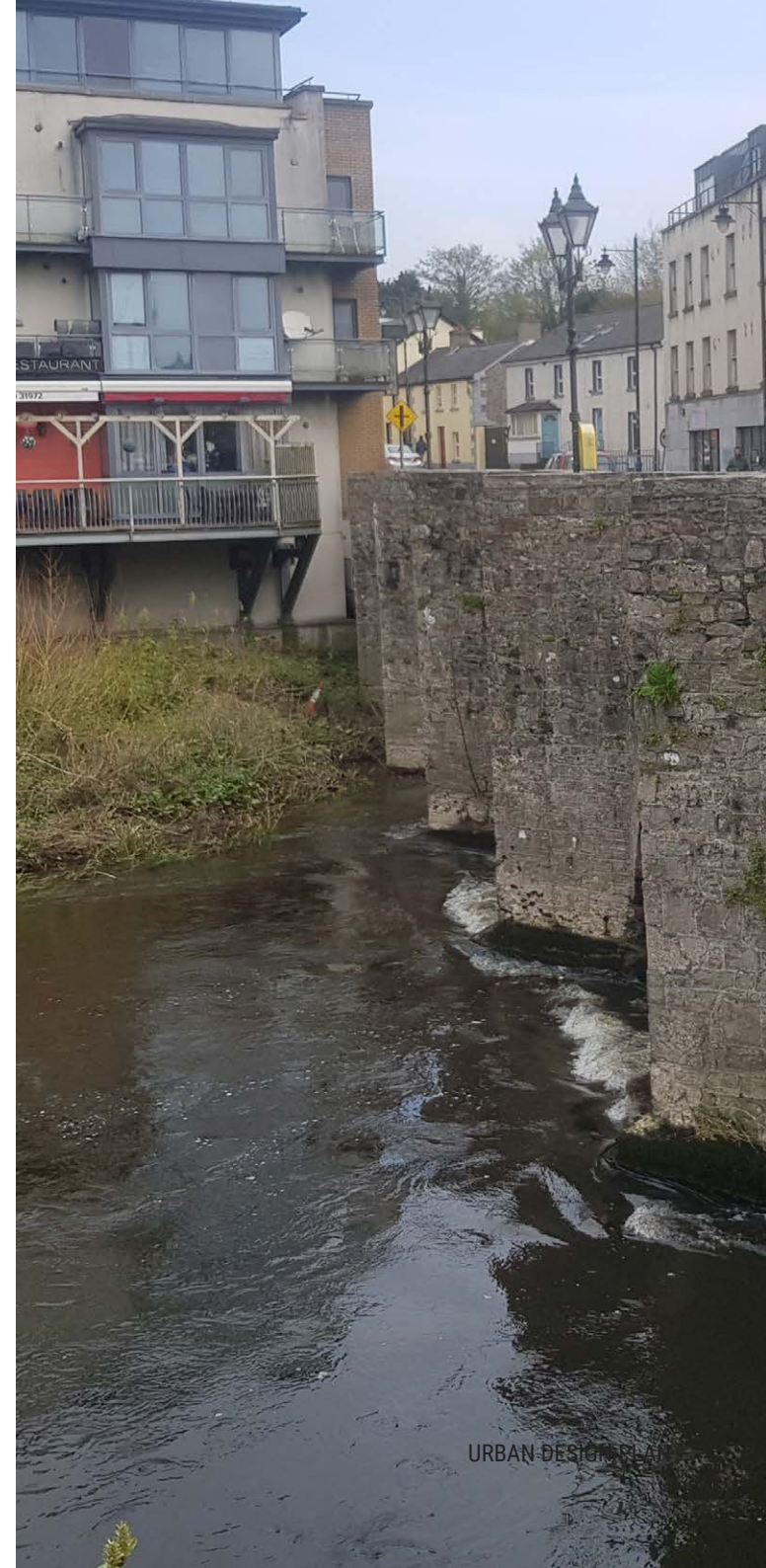
### MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan sets out the policies and objectives and the overall strategy for the development of the County over the plan period 2021-2027.

### NAVAN LOCAL AREA PLAN

The Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 has been replaced with the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 pending the preparation of the Navan Local Area Plan. Work will commence on the preparation of a Local Transport Plan and Local Area Plan for Navan in 2022. As part of the LAP preparation process all master plans and the requirements for same will be re-examined.

It is intended that this Urban Design Plan will support the Navan Local Area Plan in providing a planning strategy for this area.





## NAVAN TOWN CENTRE – PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

The Public Realm Strategy sets out a vision for Navan Town Centre as the principal town of County Meath. The Strategy notes that Navan is an attractive and historic town, set within a rich landscape and that a continued high standard of living, public life, movement and amenity in the town centre will allow Navan to continue as a great destination for locals, visitors and tourists.

The Public Realm Strategy sets out the guiding principles of

- Creating an enhanced environment for people living, working and visiting the town through public realm enhancements – encouraging economic growth
- Optimising access to and within Navan for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, car and other vehicles
- Maximising connectivity and ease of movement throughout the town
- Creating multi-functional streets that balance movement and 'place', and safety for all within a traffic calmed environment.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Alongside the main strategic documents, the following plans and strategies have also been consulted as part of the policy context of this Plan and are seen as relevant:

- Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2018-2027
- Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness- 2016
- Climate Action Strategy
- Meath Age Friendly Strategy 2017 – 2020
- The Boyne Greenway and Navigation Restoration Scheme
- The Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway.





# 3.0

## VISION, AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

SETTING OUT A CONFIDENT FUTURE

”A VIBRANT TOWN CENTRE  
COMMUNITY, PROUD OF  
ITS PAST AND  
CONFIDENT  
OF ITS FUTURE”

## VISION

**Flower Hill –  
A vibrant Town Centre Community, proud of  
its past and confident of its future.**

The vision seeks to highlight and re-establish the spatial position of which the area sits within, positively highlighting its ease of accessibility and connectivity with Navan town.



It embraces the realities of the current situation in Flower Hill. Whilst the past gives a source of local celebration, distinctive built heritage and some unique visitor attractions, it then sets out a collective direction, confidently looking forward to what the future may hold with an assured sense of excitement and ambition.



## AIMS & OBJECTIVES



RESTORING AND CELEBRATING  
OUR HERITAGE


BRINGING TOGETHER A VIBRANT  
COMMUNITY

RECONNECTING WITH THE RIVER  
AND TOWN

CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES







## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

A key part of the Urban Design Plan involved developing a shared vision for the future identity of Flower Hill and Abbeylands. This vision is supported by a sequence of strategic aims and objectives that are developed with the intention of helping translate the vision into clear themes for project delivery.

Four key aims and objectives are crafted in response to the analysis and engagement, these are;

- **Restoring and celebrating our heritage**

There is a rich and plentiful supply of social and built heritage in Flower Hill and Abbeylands. These precious assets are currently overlooked and require further interpretation and conservation to get maximum enjoyment and value.

- **Bringing together a vibrant community**

It is the people that give the area its unique character and depth of personality. Harnessing, growing and sustaining the strong community spirit of Flower Hill and Abbeylands will be one of the driving forces behind the fulfilment of the area's potential.

- **Reconnecting with the river and town**

The River Blackwater, its green connections and the walkability of the area are major assets which provide enormous potential and opportunities to reconnect the area.

- **Creating new opportunities**

To return Flower Hill to its full potential, both short and long term, social and physical projects are needed to create community growth, civic pride and reverse current impressions of the area.

## OBJECTIVES, PROJECTS & ACTIONS

The subsequent outworking of these aims and objectives created five Projects for the overall study area. Each project is supported by a collection of well-considered and targeted intervention projects, both tangible and non-tangible in nature. The five Project areas are as follows;

- Flower Hill - The street (page 39)
- Abbeylands - A new urban quarter (page 43)
- Blackwater - The river park (page 47)
- Rebuilding Flower Hill
- Our Flower Hill - Our Community

**"A VIBRANT TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY,  
PROUD OF ITS PAST AND  
CONFIDENT OF ITS FUTURE"**

RESTORING AND CELEBRATING  
OUR HERITAGE

BRINGING TOGETHER A VIBRANT  
COMMUNITY

RECONNECTING WITH THE RIVER  
AND TOWN

CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

A.

**FLOWER HILL THE  
STREET**

ACTIONS

1. Streetscape enhancement
2. Shopfront improvement
3. Lighting / CCTV -
4. Aesthetic building enhancements

B.

**ABBAYLANDS -  
A NEW URBAN QUARTER**

ACTIONS

- Routes (including river bridge)
- Public spaces
- Mixed use development

C.

**BLACKWATER -  
THE RIVER PARK**

ACTIONS

1. Habitat restoration & creation
2. Archaeology & interpretation
3. River Park
4. River park developments

D.

**REBUILDING FLOWER HILL**

ACTIONS

1. Protection & conservation
2. New development
3. Community destination
4. Redevelopment of lands at the triangle.
5. Improving the aesthetics of existing dwellings, commercial units and apartment developments.

E.

**OUR FLOWER HILL,  
OUR COMMUNITY**

ACTIONS

1. Community partnership
2. Capacity building
3. Placemaking initiatives





**4.0**

**PROJECTS:**  
FLOWER HILL TOMORROW

## A. FLOWER HILL THE STREET

Creating a street that focuses and reconnects people to 'Flower Hill' the place, establishing a richer and more fulfilling environment which has the potential to encourage social and economic activity.

Flower Hill would greatly benefit from public realm improvements. Such a scheme would help transform the area and return it back to its role as a street, rather than a through-route for vehicles. A well-designed streetscape project which promotes active travel between the town centre and northern neighbourhoods will greatly improve connectivity and accessibility of the area. By rebalancing the needs of users and providing more sustainable movement options, including the provision of cycling infrastructure, this will help reduce localised noise and air pollution and provide an overall safer environment. Consideration should also be given to supporting bus services in the area.

Such public realm improvement works will help enhance the setting of the built heritage and provide an opportunity to highlight unique features that can further add to the character of the area.

By creating an environment that encourages the public to spend longer in the area, this will not only bring economic opportunities into Flower Hill and supporting indigenous businesses, but it will also enable greater community interaction and positive capacity building as it creates a focal point for community and commercial life.

## PROJECT AIMS

PROMOTE ACTIVE TRAVEL  
BETWEEN THE TOWN  
CENTRE AND NORTHERN  
NEIGHBOURHOODS

REDUCE LOCALISED  
NOISE AND AIR  
POLLUTION

ENHANCE THE SETTING  
OF BUILT HERITAGE

CREATE A FOCAL POINT  
FOR COMMUNITY AND  
COMMERCIAL LIFE



STUDY AREA FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL TO INCLUDE ON STREET PARKING, 2 WAY CYCLE LANE, IMPROVED CROSSING POINTS, STREET TREES, ATTRACTIVE HIGH QUALITY PAVING AND CROSSING POINTS. ALL MEASURES SUBJECT TO DETAILED DESIGN.

## CONCEPT STREETScape PLAN

## A. FLOWER HILL THE STREET

### ACTIONS

1. Streetscape enhancement - Improved street design including widened pedestrian pavements, cycling infrastructure, the introduction of quality paving, street trees, quality street furniture, car parking and lighting. Cycle infrastructure should also be included as part of a wider town network. This will create an improved environment which encourages pedestrian activity and will help return Flower Hill to the role of a street rather than a road.
2. Shopfront improvement - Improving the appearance of shop fronts will contribute to creating a more attractive environment. This will involve working with and supporting business owners to create an environment that fits the vision of Flower Hill and attracts visitors into the area as well as encouraging further investment.
3. Lighting / CCTV - The introduction of lighting and CCTV will help create a safer environment for both residents and visitors. This will create an immediate impact in the area, helping to detect and deter crime and easing concerns of safety. This will also encourage positive economic and community activity in the evenings.
4. Aesthetic building enhancements - Improving the external appearance of buildings, in particular the apartment developments, will have a positive impact on the overall visual quality of the area. This will create an improved built environment, contributing to an inviting and attractive sense of place.



HIGH QUALITY STREETSCAPES





## B. ABBEYLANDS - A NEW URBAN QUARTER

A new urban quarter will inject life and activity into Flower Hill through a mix of uses, spaces and connections.

A well-designed mixed-use development will create a new urban quarter for the area. Abbeylands offers a fantastic opportunity to embrace a style and scale of development that can compliment the offering of Flower Hill without competing or directly mirroring it.

This new urban quarter shall be a vibrant development that goes beyond merely providing housing units as it will provide a variety of quality housing supported by amenities and facilities that sustainably serve the community.

Building on lessons learnt, this area needs a sustainable network of streets and pathways, rather than roads and highways. This will encourage residents to interact with the surrounding environment and provide dedicated public realm space for occasional civic and social events and activities.

Importantly, this area must be highly connected with the adjacent River Blackwater so that it can be enjoyed as a visual asset and an attractive riverside park. This new urban quarter can be a significant attraction, both in terms of the quality of the development and also quality of life for residents.

### PROJECT AIMS

ENCOURAGE MIXED-USE  
DEVELOPMENT

INCLUDE QUALITY  
RESIDENTIAL  
ACCOMMODATION

FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT  
AROUND A NETWORK OF  
SUSTAINABLE STREETS  
AND PATHWAYS

CREATE PUBLIC CIVIC  
SPACE



ABBEYLANDS - NEW QUARTER CONCEPT PLAN

## B. ABBEYLANDS - A NEW URBAN QUARTER

### ACTIONS

- **Routes (including river bridge)** - A network of connections will link Abbeylands with the river, Flower Hill and the surrounding areas. This network will promote sustainable movement to help alleviate traffic congestion and create a healthy and attractive environment that alters current perceptions.
- **Public spaces** - Public spaces are important in creating an attractive and vibrant place. These spaces provide a destination where people can gather, and events can take place. In this instance, public spaces will also provide locations where all residents from Flower Hill and Abbeylands can enjoy.
- **Mixed use development** - A mix of uses will complement both Flower Hill and the Town Centre while encouraging activity and ensuring spaces are overlooked. Development will be of an appropriate density that respectfully reflects its adjacent environs.



HIGH QUALITY MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT



## C. BLACKWATER - THE RIVER PARK

Creating a network of connections along the river linking Flower Hill with its surroundings.

Opening this stretch of the River Blackwater would enable Flower Hill and Abbeylands not only to connect with the Town Centre but also connect to the regional river network and Blackwater Park. A town wide network of river spaces and connections will provide leisure and sustainable tourism opportunities with potential economic benefits.

Increasing the accessibility and connectivity of the area via the river park, will encourage greater pedestrian movement and provide an alternative method of travel to alleviate traffic congestion.

In terms of ecology, managing the overgrown vegetation and sensitively working with native species means that the plan offers a chance for habitat restoration and creation along the riverbanks. It would be recommended that local residents, schools, businesses and community groups could take ownership of such enhancement projects. This would help with longer-term maintenance of the area, boosting community capacity and local pride.

The river has long been an important venue for fishing and improvements present the opportunity to support this activity.

Implications of the historic functions of the site adjacent to Meath County Council's car park, namely its role as a graveyard, Abbey and barracks, indicates that there will be zones of archaeological interest within the river park.

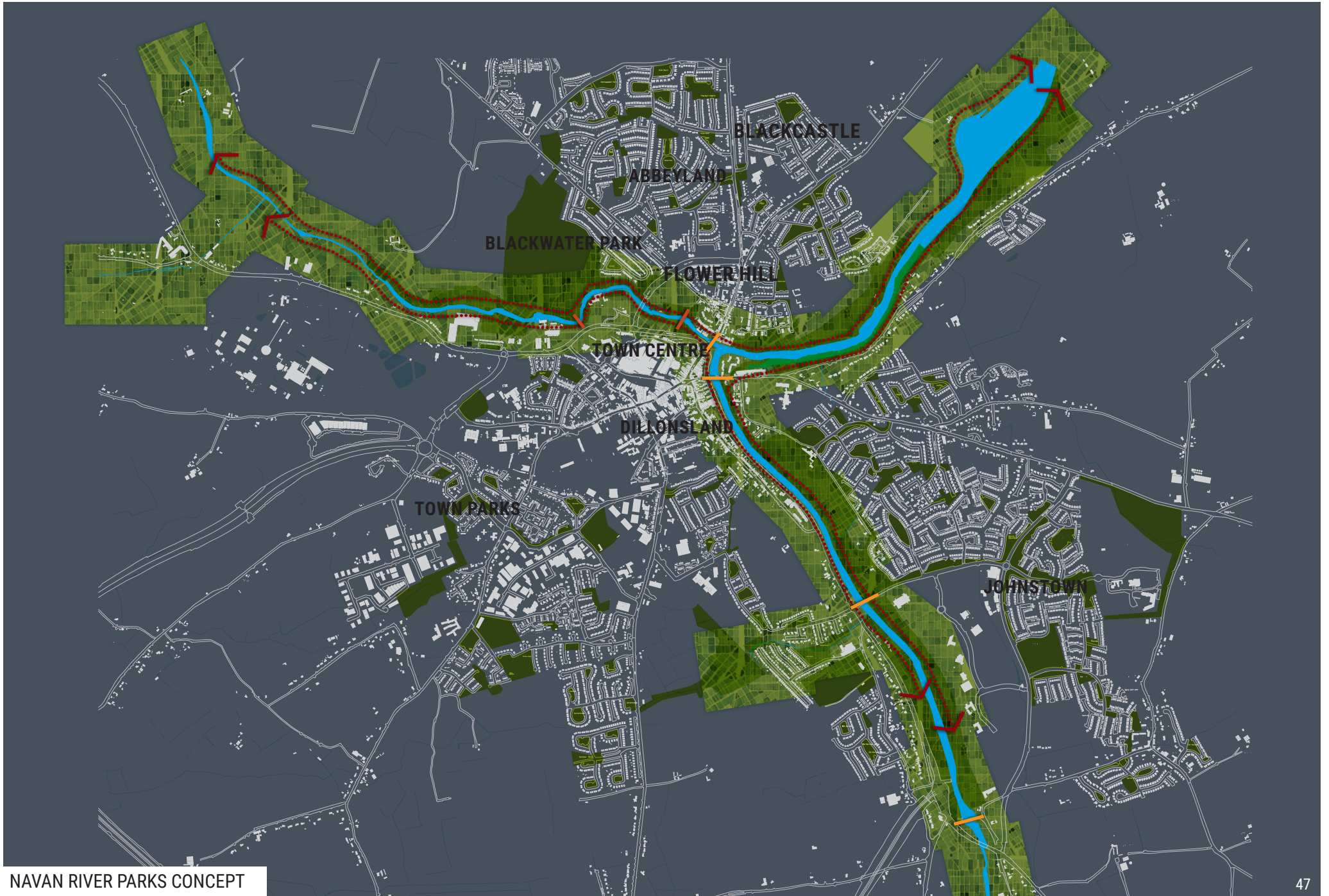
### PROJECT AIMS

HABITAT RESTORATION

CELEBRATE LOCAL  
HERITAGE

CONNECT TO WIDER RIVER  
PARK NETWORK

PROMOTE RIVER PARK  
DEVELOPMENT THAT  
IMPROVES PASSIVE  
SURVEILLANCE



NAVAN RIVER PARKS CONCEPT

## C. BLACKWATER - THE RIVER PARK

### ACTIONS

1. Habitat restoration & creation - Encourage Kingfishers to nest on riverbanks, introduce bat and bird boxes, include native flora species such as Hairy St. Johns Wort and Ash trees, as well as non-native but complimentary species such as flowering lawns.
2. Archaeology & interpretation - Opportunity to provide events and information celebrating the history and heritage of the area.
3. River Park - The creation of a river park will provide a network of paths and valuable amenity space, reconnecting Flower Hill to the river. Spurs off the main path that include steps up to clearings with a view of the river will create an attractive and interesting park. Provision should also be made for angling, including wheelchair accessible platforms.
4. River park developments - Opportunity for development to overlook the river park, creating activity, passive surveillance and ensuring a safe environment.





ATTRACTIVE RIVER PARKS

## D. REBUILDING FLOWER HILL

There is an opportunity to develop Flower Hill into a community destination as it once was.

A key element of what defines Flower Hill is undeniably its built heritage. Buildings of architectural character form a strong sense of place and it is this sense of place that once created pride amongst the local community.

The recent additions of apartment buildings, particularly around the southern end of Flower Hill, have failed to positively add to the area. Their condition alongside the derelict buildings, have had a negative impact on local community spirit and how the area is perceived to visitors.

In response to these challenges, rebuilding Flower Hill must involve both the physical structures of the area as well as rebuilding community pride and capacity.

Promotion of protection and conservation of the local built heritage, as well as permitting the introduction of well-designed new development which complements the area, will breathe new life into Flower Hill whilst still retaining its intrinsic character.

Improving the external appearance of buildings, in particular the apartment developments in Flower Hill, will have a positive impact on the overall visual quality of the area and contribute to rebuilding community pride.

The key site, bound by the Ratholdren Road, New Lane and Flower Hill, is a particularly important location on Flower Hill. Following extensive examination and re-evaluation the retention of the existing buildings along Flower Hill is not considered appropriate due to technical constraints, in particular having regard to site gradients and accessibility requirements. The redevelopment of this site will be subject to a plan led approach, to include the following key design principles:

- An overall integrated development for the site.
- High quality design and finish taking into consideration the scale and massing of the surrounding context.
- The requirement for defined frontage on all three sides of the site, to include retaining a strong streetscape along Flower Hill, which provides for high quality pedestrian permeability;
- Pedestrian permeability throughout the site;
- The incorporation of a three-storey gateway building on the southeastern side; and
- Mixed use development with an appropriate mix of housing unit types.

The redevelopment of this site and the provision of a high-quality development is considered to be of paramount importance to the successful regeneration of the wider Flower Hill area.

## PROJECT AIMS

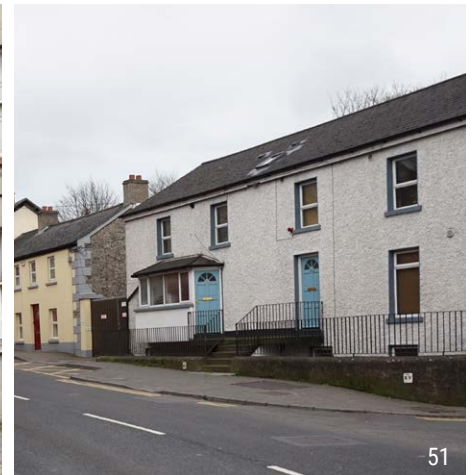
REFURBISH / RESTORE / REDEVELOP

CREATE A COMMUNITY DESTINATION



BUILT HERITAGE

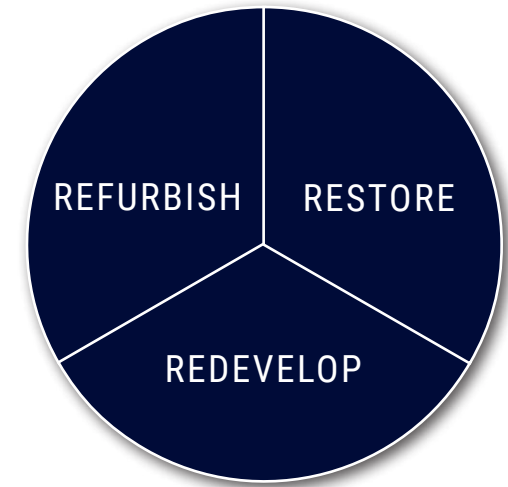
- Protected Structure
- Buildings of Architectural Character



## D. REBUILDING FLOWER HILL

### ACTIONS

1. Protection & conservation - Retain and protect the character and heritage of Flower Hill through the redevelopment of vacant buildings.
2. New development - Encourage new development that is of a high-quality design and an appropriate scale and massing to complement the built heritage of the area.
3. Community destination - Create an environment that is vibrant, where people can meet, hold activities and be proud of Flower Hill.
4. Redevelopment of the lands at the triangle.
5. Improving the aesthetics of existing dwellings, commercial units and apartment developments.





EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY USE & RESTORATION

“IT’S CALLED FLOWER HILL, BUT  
WHERE ARE THE FLOWERS?”

Pupil, St Paul’s Primary School

## E. OUR FLOWER HILL, OUR COMMUNITY

A series of projects driven by the local people will strengthen community spirit and become the driving force in improving Flower Hill for everyone.

Building on existing community strengths will play a key role in addressing the identified social and economic issues and create a more appealing place to live, work and invest in.

There is an opportunity to build a group of collaborative partners who will work together towards a vibrant Flower Hill. This should include members from the Council, landowners and landlords, agencies and the community. A community partnership would then have capacity to tackle short term solutions through placemaking initiatives as well as working towards long-term social solutions.

Placemaking projects which are low cost but high social value will give the community a hands-on opportunity to make a difference and play an important role in improving the area.

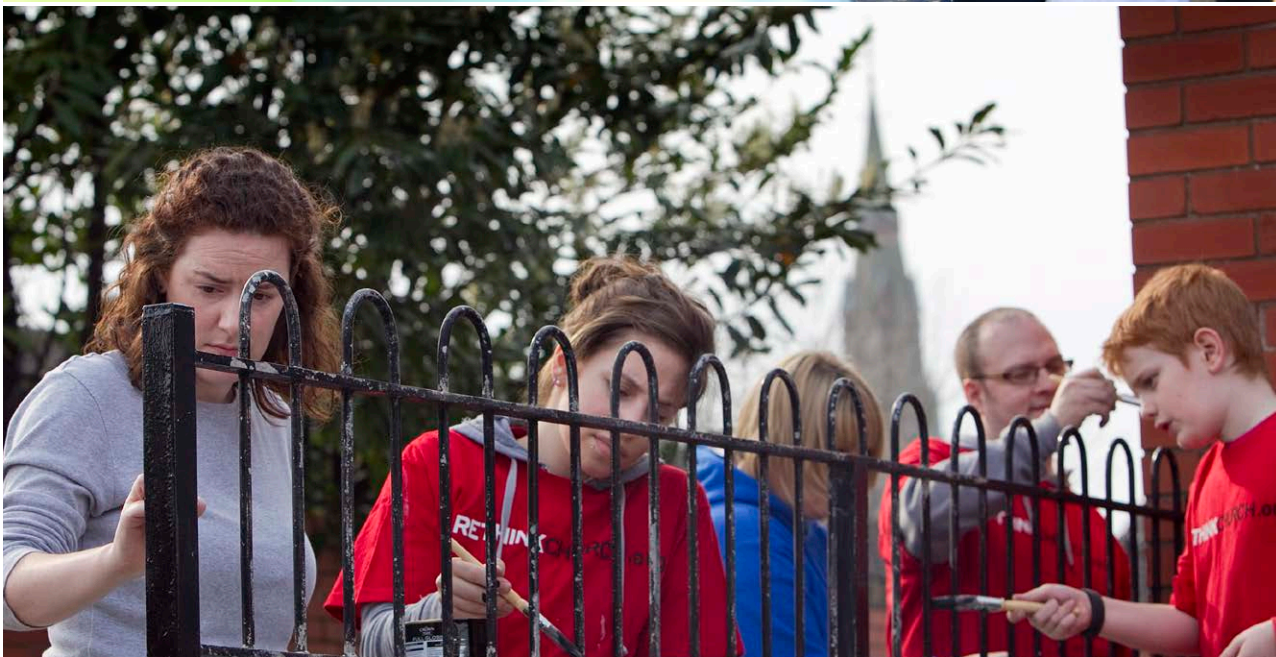
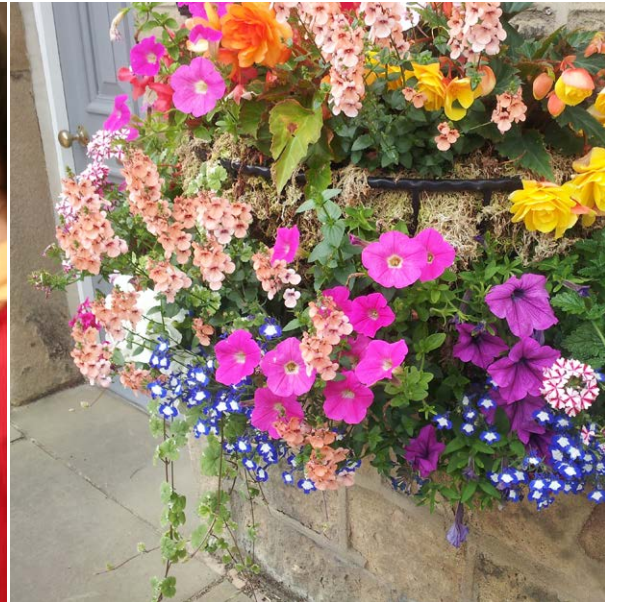
A simple yet very valuable addition to the area would be the provision of community space . This would help build capacity and encourage growth of cohesion amongst the greater community through the provision of space for events, meetings and activities to take place. This space, although civic in its purpose, would be very different in its feel from the public space at Abbeylands. Each would provide useful space that could be tailored to purpose but would feel very different in their nature.

### PROJECT AIMS

INCREASE COMMUNITY  
COHESION AND  
COMMUNITY PRIDE

ENCOURAGE  
COLLABORATIVE  
PARTNERSHIP WORKING

PROMOTE COMMUNITY  
CAPACITY BUILDING



COMMUNITY AND PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES

## E. OUR FLOWER HILL, OUR COMMUNITY

### ACTIONS

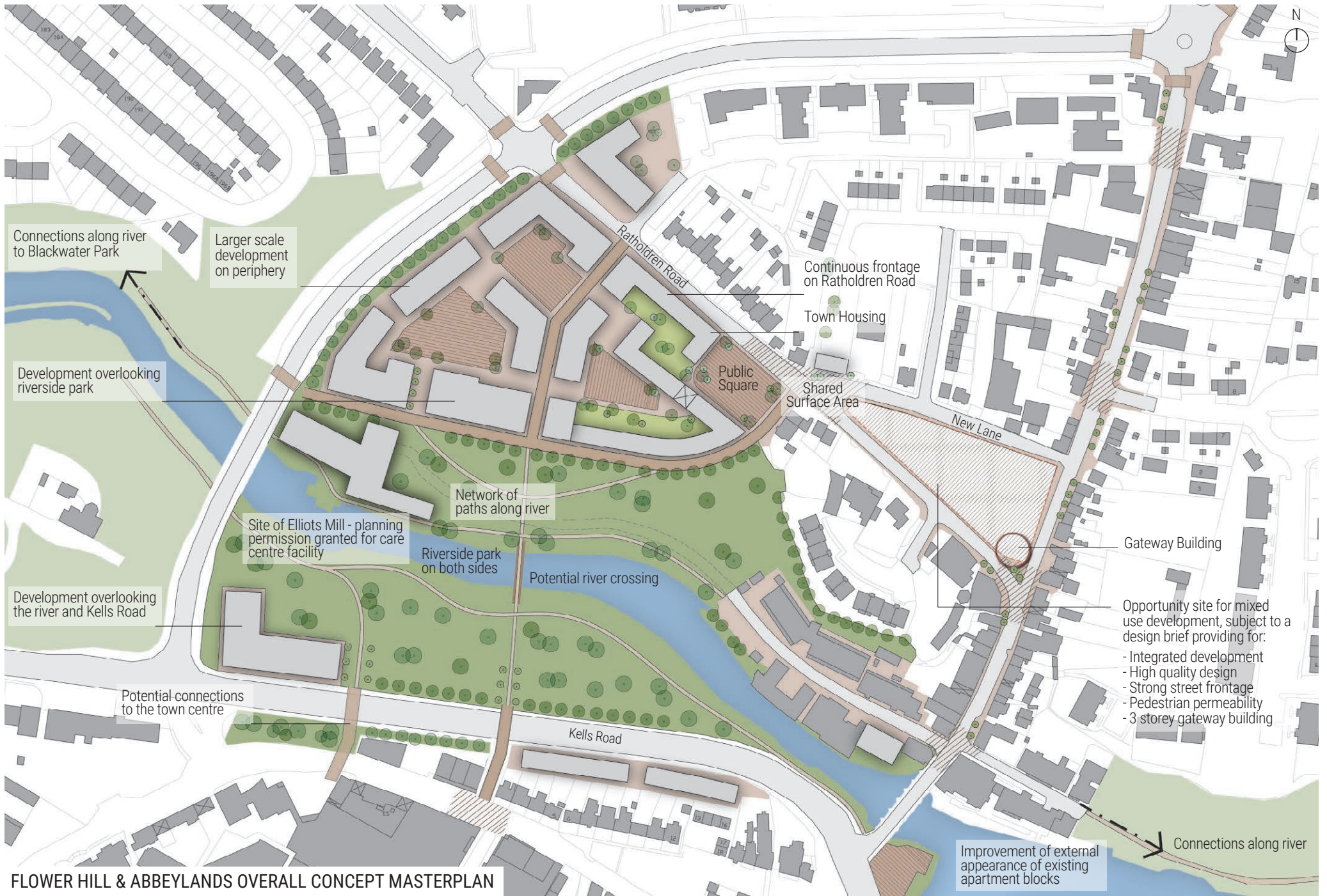
1. Community partnership - Collaborative partnership between the community and other groups to drive forward short-term solutions such as a clean-up project and planting of flowers.
2. Capacity building - Opportunity to build civic pride and bring the community together by providing more opportunities for local involvement through short term interventions.
3. Placemaking initiatives - Opportunity for creative arts and cultural projects to implement community led change, such as the use of a local artist to create a mural within Flower Hill. The opportunity also exists to recognise Sir Francis Beaufort and his associations to the area through appropriate artworks. Famous as the creator of the Beaufort Wind Scale, Sir Francis Beaufort, was born on Flower Hill in 1774, with his family home formerly located at the top of Flower Hill.







COMMUNITY AND PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES



**FLOWER HILL & ABBEYLANDS OVERALL CONCEPT MASTERPLAN**



**5.0**

**DELIVERY & ACTION PLAN**

## URDF FUNDING

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) aims to deliver more compact and sustainable development, as envisaged under Project Ireland 2040.

Meath County Council has secured funding under 'Call 2' of the URDF for the Flower Hill and Abbeylands redevelopment and regeneration project. The URDF part-funds projects aimed at enhancing urban areas to make them more attractive places in which to live, work, visit and invest. The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, has announced an allocation of for €7,661,250, in addition to the €2,538,750 committed by Meath County Council, for the project.

The project will address significant issues which are viewed as blockages to the redevelopment and regeneration of the area and the following sub-projects form the core elements of this application:

### **Sub-project A: The streetscape enhancement**

A comprehensive redesign of the streetscape of Flower Hill. This will see the role of the thoroughfare altered from a car-dominated road to a people-focused street. The project will promote footfall and sustainable travel options to encourage a transport modal shift and support local businesses. Works will comprise upgraded surface paving, new pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, street trees, lighting and furniture. These works relate to Project A: Flower Hill -The Street.

### **Sub-project B: The river park**

Connecting to a wider greenway network, the river park will transform the accessibility of Flower Hill. Environmental improvements will include woodland management, land clearing and planting as well as an introduction of pedestrian and cycle paths with associated lighting, furniture and wayfinding measures on the northern side of the River Blackwater. These works relate to Project C: Blackwater - The River Park.

### **Sub-project C: The community destination**

This element will consist of a provision of a community focused space which will become a valuable civic asset and important piece of social infrastructure for the local community. These works relate to Project D: Rebuilding Flower Hill.

### **Sub-project D: The frontage improvement scheme**

An improvement scheme for building frontages and their settings along Flower Hill. This will include shops, other commercial businesses and residential properties. These works relate to Project A: Flower Hill -The Street.

## DELIVERY & ACTION PLAN

The plan sets out an ambitious but practical set of projects for delivery by a range of stakeholders. As per the Action Plan, projects should be delivered by a range of parties to spread efforts and share a sense of ownership.

Each project will be dependent on funding and approvals, which will involve detailed design and public engagement. The range of available funding opportunities will require monitoring and review. Community initiatives and funding opportunities should be actively pursued for the delivery of community-led projects.

This Action Plan should be viewed as a 'live document' to assist in managing project delivery.

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed major challenges on Navan, its residents and businesses with a shift into what many call the new normal. The Plan demonstrates its compatibility with new ways of living through projects, such as the provision of community space and the River Park creating important breathing space for the town. Through the Abbeylands and Flower Hill Urban Design Plan it can be strengthened, creating accessible and good quality open space and providing an important resource for improving both physical and mental health.

For the Flower Hill and Abbeylands area it is the people that provide its unique character and depth of personality. There is great scope to harness the knowledge, passions and enthusiasm of local people in the delivery of projects. Therefore, it is incredibly important to bring everyone along on the journey of transformation by providing regular updates, opportunities for participation, regular consultation and ensuring that everyone has the chance to be part of the change.

### DELIVER & ACTION PLAN KEY

#### PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

- MCC - MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
- NTA - NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
- TT - TIDY TOWNS
- LB - LOCAL BUSINESSES
- L/ B - LAND / BUILDING OWNERS
- R - RESIDENTS
- G - AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA
- F & AP/COMMUNITY GROUPS - FLOWER HILL & ABBEYLANDS PARTNERSHIP / AND OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS

#### PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

- € - Less than 1 million Euros
- € € - 1-3 million Euros
- € € € - over 3 million Euros

| PROJECT AND ACTIONS                        | PRIORITY  | COST  | PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDER                          |
|--|-----------|-------|---|
| <b>A. FLOWER HILL THE STREET</b>           |           |       |   |
| 1. STREETScape ENHANCEMENT                 | HIGH      | € €   | MCC, NTA  |
| 2. SHOPFRONT IMPROVEMENT                   | HIGH      | € €   | MCC, LB, L/B                                    |
| 3. LIGHTING / CCTV                         | IMMEDIATE | €     | MCC, G  |
| <b>B. ABBEYLANDS - A NEW URBAN QUARTER</b> |           |       |   |
| ABBEYLANDS - A NEW URBAN QUARTER           | MEDIUM    | € €   | MCC   |
| <b>C. BLACKWATER - THE RIVER PARK</b>      |           |       |   |
| 1. HABITAT RESTORATION                     | HIGH      | €     | MCC, R, F & AP/COMMUNITY GROUPS                 |
| 2. ARCHAEOLOGY & INTERPRETATION            | MEDIUM    | €     | MCC, R, F & AP/COMMUNITY GROUPS                 |
| 3. RIVER PARK                              | HIGH      | € €   | MCC, L/B  |
| 4. RIVER PARK DEVELOPMENTS                 | MEDIUM    | € € € | MCC, L/B  |
| <b>D. REBUILDING FLOWER HILL</b>           |           |       |   |
| 1. PROTECTION & CONSERVATION               | HIGH      | € €   | MCC, L/B, LB, R                                 |
| 2. NEW DEVELOPMENT                         | MEDIUM    | € € € | MCC, L/B  |
| 3. COMMUNITY DESTINATION                   | HIGH      | € €   | MCC, L/B, R, LB, F & AP/COMMUNITY GROUPS        |
| <b>E. OUR FLOWER HILL, OUR COMMUNITY</b>   |           |       |   |
| 1. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP                   | IMMEDIATE | €     | MCC, L/B, R, LB, F & AP/COMMUNITY GROUPS, TT, G |
| 2. CAPACITY BUILDING                       | HIGH      | €     | MCC, L/B, R, LB, F & AP/COMMUNITY GROUPS, TT, G |
| 3. PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES                 | IMMEDIATE | €     | MCC, L/B, R, LB, F & AP/COMMUNITY GROUPS TT, G  |





FLOWER HILL  
&  
ABBEYLANDS



comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*

the **paulhogarth** company