

2.0 STATUTORY PLANNING CONTEXT

A number of planning policies and relevant documents have informed the preparation of the Framework Plan – ‘The National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016’, ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, the Meath County Development Plan 2007 -2013 and the East Meath Local Area Plan - North and South 2005. All of these Plans advocate the development of more sustainable living and share many common objectives in particular the promotion of:

- Balanced regional development
- Higher densities of development in appropriate locations
- Emphasis on increased permeability
- Sustainable approach to neighbourhood design
- Integration of employment, community services, retailing and public transport
- Provision of high quality services, the management of public safety and the provision of high quality access and permeable networks
- Make a positive contribution to the locality and take best advantage of location by use of site topography.

2.1 Local Area Plan Status of Lands

The East Meath Local Area Plans 2005 – North and South outline the policies and objectives which are applied to the designated urban settlements of East Meath including Bettystown.

2.1.1 Zoning of the Lands

The lands are zoned A2 Residential and F1 Recreational uses in the Plan.

Land use zoning objective A2 states: *“To provide for new residential communities and community facilities subject to the provision of the necessary physical infrastructure and to protect the amenities of existing residential areas”*. Normal acceptable uses within this coming objective are as follows. -

A2 Zoning

To provide for new residential communities and community facilities subject to the provision of the necessary physical infrastructure and to protect the amenities of existing residential areas

Normally acceptable Uses:

- *A.T.M (in commercial premises)- B&B- Bring Bank- Community Facility/Centre*
- *Crèche/Childcare Facility- Guest House- Halting Site/Group Halting- Library- Open Space*
- *Public Services- Residential- Retirement Home- Local Shop- Water Services*

Land use zoning objective F1 states: *“To provide for and improve open spaces for active and recreational amenities”*. Normal acceptable uses within this coming objective are as follows. -

F1 zoning

To provide and improve open spaces for active and recreational amenities

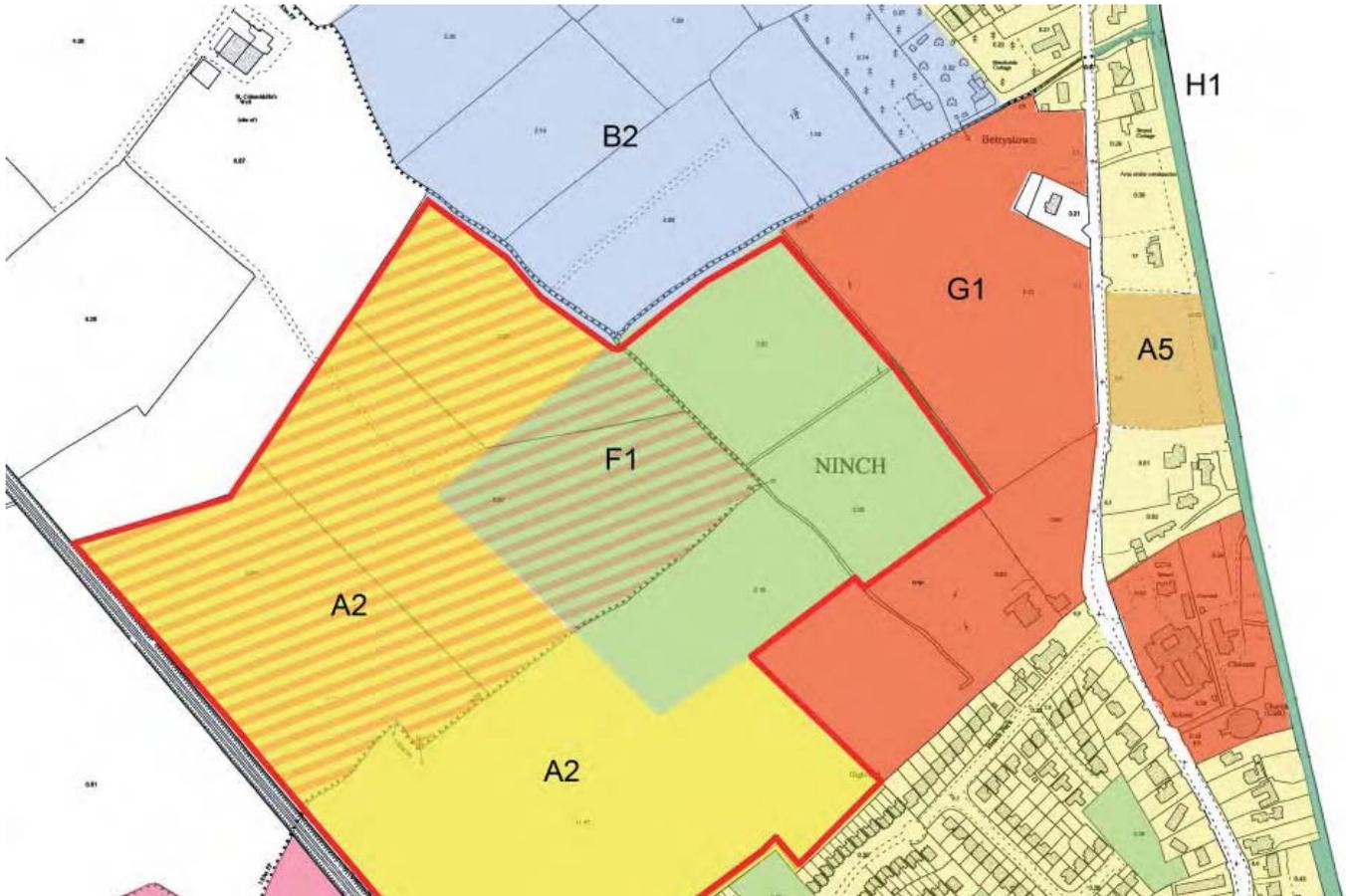


Fig. 2.0: Zoning and normally acceptable uses

The development of the Framework Plan lands is subject to the above considerations and to phasing – Phase I to the south and Phase II to the north as indicated on Figure 2.1. Phase I will see provision made for residential development over two phases and the development of the majority of the F1 zoned lands. A portion of these lands are included to be developed over Phase II of the Plan.

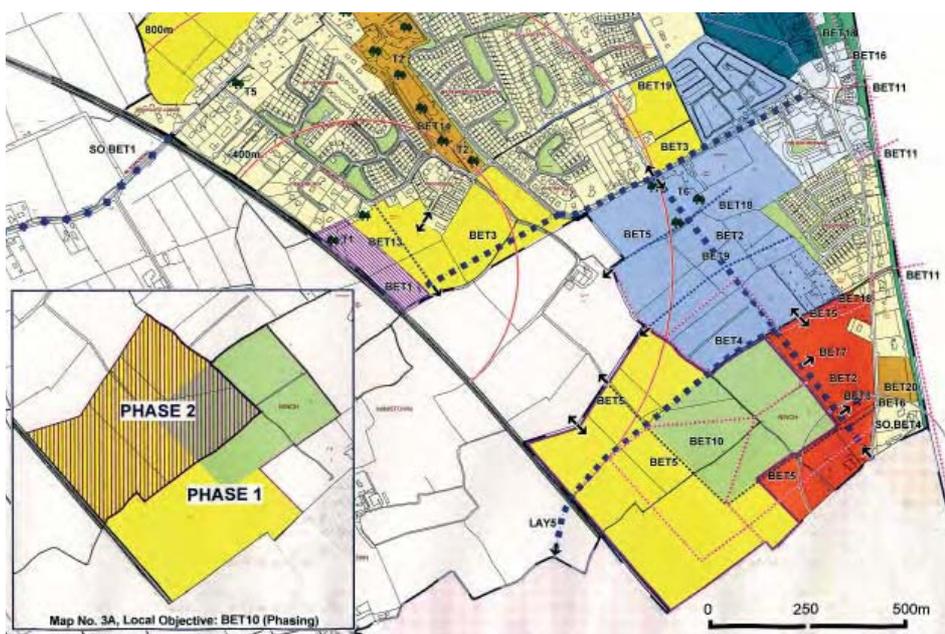


Figure 2.1: Extract from Map No. 3 Bettystown – East Meath Local Area Plan 2005

The development of the Framework Plan lands provides for the delivery of a new primary school and recreational amenities over a total area of 4.8 ha (1.6 ha Primary School Site and 3.2 ha School Playing Pitches). The educational requirement is being fulfilled with a planning application recently granted under SA70140 to Scoil Oilibheir Naofa for a temporary 2 storey school building of 1890 m² with provision for 16 classrooms on April 27th 2007. This development is located on lands to the north east zoned G1 for community, recreational and educational facilities. A permanent 24 classroom primary school with special needs unit was granted permission in February 2009. Works have commenced on site.

Further the development of the Framework Plan lands also provides for a major element of strategic services infrastructure, namely the provision of the major distributor road from the town centre lands to the Laytown Road, as identified on Figure 2.1 immediately east of the Framework Plan lands.

This Framework Plan will provide details on the overall design of the proposed lands including how the residential and recreational uses will integrate with surrounding development and land uses.

2.1.2 Local Area Plan Objectives

The subject lands are also subject to Local Objective BET 5 which states *“to facilitate the provision of a new minor road network”*.

Section 4.7 of this Plan details the provision of the proposed road network which will accommodate all planned development within the Framework Plan area.

It is considered appropriate that this Framework Plan should be considered in conjunction with adjoining lands and their proposed land use context to ensure a fully integrated approach to the future development of the subject lands. Lands immediately to the east of the subject lands are zoned G1 the objective of which is *‘to provide for necessary community, recreational and educational facilities’*. Section 5 of the Framework Plan provides an open space and leisure strategy for lands zoned F1. Lands zoned F1 adjoin the educational lands to the east and the strategy shows effective linkages and integration with these lands. Approximately 3.2 ha of these lands are intended to be made available to the Department of Education for sports and leisure activities in association with the proposed primary school. It is envisaged this portion of the lands will be used for playing pitches. The remainder of the F1 lands will provide for other sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development as detailed under the Landscape and Recreation Strategy in Section 5.3 of this Plan.

Lands immediately to the north east of the subject lands are zoned B3 the objective of which is *‘to provide for major new town centre activities subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure’*. Appropriate pedestrian and vehicular access and linkages to the town centre and adjoining land uses are detailed in Section 4 of this Plan.

2.1.3 Variation No. 2 Order of Priority Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013

Context

The settlement strategy for County Meath as contained in the Meath County Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the CDP) 2007 – 2013 seeks to locate residential growth in the county in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines. The primary tenet of the adopted County settlement strategy is to channel residential development into the three settlements of Navan, Dunboyne/ Clonee/ Pace Rail corridor and Drogheda Environs. As a result, the development of the small growth towns and key villages in the County will need to be slowed dramatically and will be more closely linked to local growth rather than to regional growth. This will be achieved by reducing the projected growth rates of these centres from that experienced over the past few years and by ensuring that a proportion of new housing in multi house developments are being reserved for locals only. In the case of Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin and the Small Growth Towns, Key Villages and Villages, the residentially zoned landbank in these areas is being revisited to ensure that only the quantum and scale of projected residential development contained in Table 5 (Population & Household Projection for the Plan Period) and Table 6 (Location of Household Growth 2006 – 2013) will take place. This is to ensure that the Development Plan accords with the policy framework contained in both the NSS and RPG's.

Bettystown / Laytown / Mornington East

As set out in the CDP, the number of units identified as being permissible for the life of the County Development Plan in this area for 2007 - 2013 is 1163. There are two planning applications SA 60368 Darlington Properties and SA 60514 Empire Homes which have been granted and need to be provided for within Table 6. However 100 units were re-directed from Gormanstown and 60 units from Mornington /Donacarney to Bettystown /Laytown /Mornington east, thereby ensuring adequate capacity to release the areas of lands identified in Phase 1 which provides for 648 units in total. 200 units out of this total will be provided within the framework plan area. When considering lands suitable for release in each of the phases the Planning Authority had regard to the criteria in Section 2.1.7.1 of the County Development Plan. The delivery of social and improved physical infrastructure along with the promotion of a more sustainable economic base located on town centre lands is a priority in Bettystown /Laytown and Mornington East area.

Development of the Framework Plan lands shall conform strictly with the provisions of the Order of Priority as set out in Variation 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 - 2013.

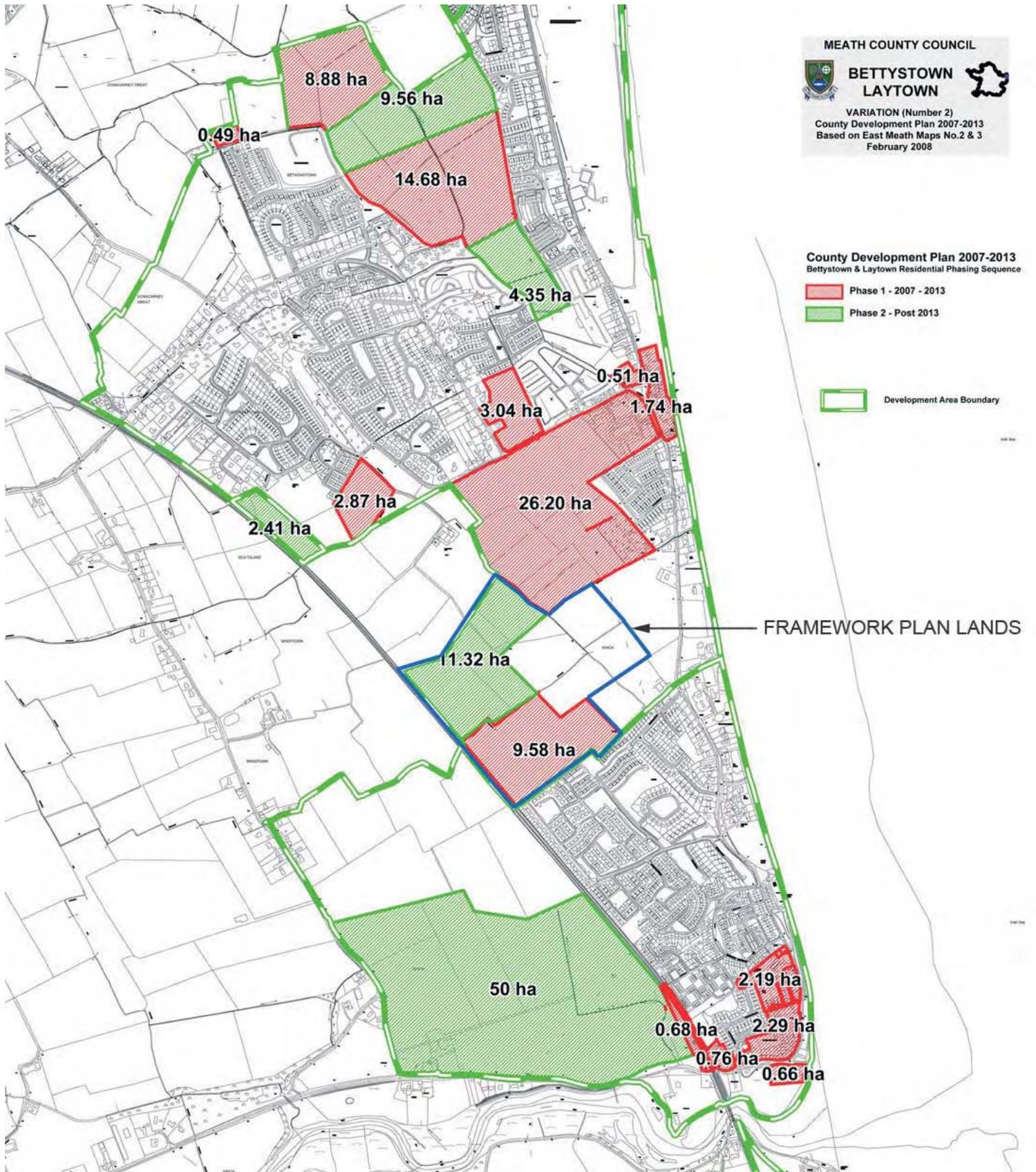


Fig. 2.2 County Development Plan 2007 -2013

2.1.4 Residential Policy

Approximately 21 ha of the Framework Plan lands are zoned A2 residential in the East Meath LAP - North 2005 to be developed over two phases. The land use zoning objective of these lands is *“to provide for new residential communities and community facilities subject to the provision of the necessary physical infrastructure, and to protect the amenities of existing residential areas”*.

Section 3.2.2 of the East Meath LAPs 2005 provides a number of policies and primary objectives for new residential developments. These policies include the following:

- *To promote a high standard of design and layout in new residential developments with regard to the local character of townscape and landscape.*
- *To ensure, through the development management process, that existing access points to backland areas are reserved or that adequate road frontage is reserved to provide future road access.*
- *To promote layouts, which reflect the principles of permeability and legibility, in order to facilitate public transport routes, cycling routes and pedestrian connections.*
- *To promote a balanced population structure by ensuring that a range of residential units, particularly smaller house types, apartments and town houses, are constructed to cater for the current and expected demographic structure and market needs, so as to avoid the uniformity of bland and repetitive suburban type developments.*
- *To ensure that services and utilities in residential development are provided concurrent with the provision of new dwellings.*
- *To ensure that all new residential developments incorporate a detailed landscape plan, which shall be an integral part of the implementation of the development. Maximum use should be made of the opportunities presented by existing landscape features (including tree groups, hedgerows and streams).*
- *To encourage and in some cases, require the use or incorporation of local place-names for new housing developments.*

This Framework Plan has been prepared within the context of the policies and objectives provided within the East Meath Local Area Plans - North and South 2005 for new residential development.

2.1.5 Residential Development Guidelines and Standards

The design of the residential element of the Framework Plan has been guided by the development management quantitative and qualitative criteria and standards as provided in Part 4 of the East Meath Local Area Plans - North and South 2005 and the objectives of ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The creation of residential areas with a sense of place and a high quality public realm is the priority for the Framework Plan lands.

Residential Density

The East Meath Local Area Plans - North and South 2005 recognise the benefits of increasing the density of residential development at appropriate locations having regard to the established character and amenities of existing adjoining residential areas and with the need to realise the following:

- High quality design
- Compliance with qualitative and quantitative criteria
- Proximity to points of access and public transport
- Existing topographical, landscape or other features on site
- Capacity of the service, social and community infrastructure to absorb demand.

The Residential Density Guidelines advocate a net residential density of 35 - 50 per hectare for outer-suburban/greenfield sites. According to the Meath County Development Plan 2007, it provides that in smaller towns and villages, maximum densities of 30 units per hectare shall be applicable and in general densities and house types shall be compatible with established densities and housing character in the area. Having regard to requirements of the Plan and Section 4.16 of the LAP it is proposed to provide for a density of 29 - 35 units/ha on the subject lands. Public open space shall be provided at a minimum rate of 15% of the total site area.

Qualitative Criteria

The development of the residential lands within the Framework Plan will be in accordance with the following qualitative criteria:

- Convenient, safe and pleasant pedestrian and vehicular movement through a clear hierarchy of spaces and roads
- Layout of roads, footpaths and open spaces to facilitate children and needs of the elderly
- Effective Traffic Management proposals
- Mix of house types and sizes with variety in design
- Public open space be provided at a rate of 15% to complement the residential layout and informally supervised
- Landscape design to retain existing features where possible
- Adequate private open space and screening.

Qualitative Standards

1. Houses

In accordance with Section 4.1.4.2 of the East Meath Local Area Plans - North and South 2005 the development of the Framework Plan lands is in accordance with the following standards.

- All houses will have an area of private open space exclusive of car parking. Minimum rear garden size shall conform to the recommendations of the 'Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities'.
- A minimum of 22 metres between directly opposing windows will be provided.
- Screen walls, 2.0 metres in height and a minimum distance of 2.3 metres shall be provided between dwellings for the full length of the flanks in all developments of detached, semi-detached and end terrace houses.
- Public Open Space will be provided at a minimum rate of 15% of total site area.
- Use of hard landscaping elements in design and presentation of open space areas.
- The phased development of the Framework Plan lands will accord with all minimum requirements for apartments as put forward in Section 4.1.4.2 of the East Meath LAPs.

2. Apartments

- High quality of building design and site layout with due regard to the landscape and character of the adjoining lands.
- The maximum height of apartment development will be 2-3 storeys with few 4 storey elements in areas of civic importance.
- Car parking to be broken up by planting and located where they do not obtrude on the layout while providing for reasonable convenience of users.
- The phased development of the Framework Plan lands will accord with all minimum requirements for apartments as put forward in Section 4.1.4.3 of the East Meath Plan Local Plan

3. Childcare

In accordance with Section 4.1.4.8 of the LAP the provision of a purpose built unit for childcare facilities will be provided for large housing developments in excess of 75 units.

4. Services

It is proposed to connect to existing services infrastructure within Bettystown. Section 7 of the Framework Plan details the adequacy of services within the area.

5. Parking

The standards will comply with the East Meath Local Area Plan. Car parking spaces will be provided on the basis of one/two spaces per dwelling unit depending on dwelling size. Generally car parking will consist of 2 spaces per conventional dwelling and 1.25 spaces per apartment unit. No more than 10-15 spaces will be provided in a shared parking cluster, in the interest of visual amenity.

6. Maintenance and Management

In accordance with Section 4.2.6 of the East Meath Local Area Plans - North and South 2005, a management company will be established to carry out management or maintenance of the residential areas.

2.1.6 Amenities and Recreational Facilities

Approximately 11 ha of the Framework Plan lands are zoned as F1 *“to provide for and improve open spaces for active and recreational amenities”*.

Under Local Objective BET 10 (ii) attached to the lands *“no residential unit shall be occupied in phase 1 prior to the delivery of recreational amenities on lands zoned F1. No residential units shall be occupied in phase 2 prior to the delivery of recreational amenities on lands zoned F1”*.

As such a landscaping and recreational strategy is provided under Section 5.3 of the Framework Plan. This strategy has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the LAP under Section 3.8.1 and 4.16 for the coherent development of the F1 lands. The development of the lands recognises the following policy objectives:

- To encourage a balance in the location and types of open space provided within the East Meath area and to ensure the development of high quality open space areas, for both active and passive use, and formal and informal activities.
- To resist the loss of existing public open space, unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.
- To encourage local community involvement in the upgrading and improvement of open space.
- To facilitate the development of children’s playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed neighbourhood centres, where feasible.

A significant open space area of 11 ha is provided within the Framework Plan lands to facilitate recreational grounds, local parks and greens. It is an aspiration of the Framework Plan that most residents should have access to an open space area at most five minutes walking distance from their home which can be safely reached by only crossing minor streets.

2.1.7 Education

Section 3.4 of the East Meath Local Area Plans - North and South 2005 provides the following policies:

- *To facilitate the development of primary and post primary educational facilities to meet the needs of the Local Area Plan areas through the implementation of Local Objectives.*
- *To ensure that adequate land and services are reserved to cater for the establishment, improvement or expansion (where possible) of primary and post primary educational facilities.*
- *To ensure that high standards of design and layout are achieved in new educational facilities.*

In accordance with part (i) of the BET 10 objective, which states that “no development shall take place on these lands prior to the delivery of a new primary school within the lands identified for an educational campus subject of Local Objective BET 7”, the development of the lands provides for the delivery of a new primary school to the east of the F1 zoned lands. The Department of Education and Science now have full legal interest in the education lands. A permanent 24 classroom primary school with special needs unit was granted permission in February 2009. Works have commenced on site.

2.1.8 Social and Affordable Housing

Social and affordable housing is to be provided as part of any residential development within the framework plan lands and in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) as incorporated into the Meath Housing Strategy 2007 or as subsequently reviewed.

2.1.9 Settlement Strategy

Policy SP3 of the CDP requires that 25% of all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are native to the County (being persons who have lived in the County for at least 1 year) or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that the development of Small Growth Towns is more closely linked to local rather than to regional residential growth.