



COILL DUBH AND
COOLERAGH



VILLAGE RENEWAL MASTER PLAN
HEALTH CHECK AND URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

COILL DUBH AND COOLERAGH, CO. KILDARE

FEBRUARY 2024

PROJECT LEAD:



Urban Design
Masterplanning
Planning
Architecture
Conservation Architecture
Project Services
Visualisation
Interiors
Research
PSDP

PROJECT TEAM:



FOREWORD

“A Town Renewal Masterplan is effectively a blueprint to guide the rejuvenation of a town or village. It is informed by robust analysis, including for example the historical context (urban morphology), urban ‘health checks,’ land use surveys, building use and condition surveys, analysis of movement patterns and facilities (pedestrian movement/ footfall and vehicular movement), car parking analysis, architectural heritage appraisals and urban design character and it is generally supported by extensive public consultation. As part of the Renewal Masterplan process a number of priority projects are identified for delivery.” Source: Kildare County Council Placemaking Strategies, Table 14.1, Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029).

Although not a statutory document, the Masterplan is both supported by and supportive of the objectives contained in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the relevant Local Area Plans. The Masterplan is unique to each town and will focus on maximising the potential of the built and natural heritage by using existing assets to enhance their role as visitor destinations and helping to create new local employment opportunities. A tailored approach to each settlement’s regeneration

will provide for the development and enhancement of their overall function and ‘unique selling point’ (USP) through the identification and implementation of priority projects.

The delivery of transformative projects, focussing on place-based change within the town centre, will facilitate the development of a high quality and people centred public realm that prioritises active modes of travel where possible.

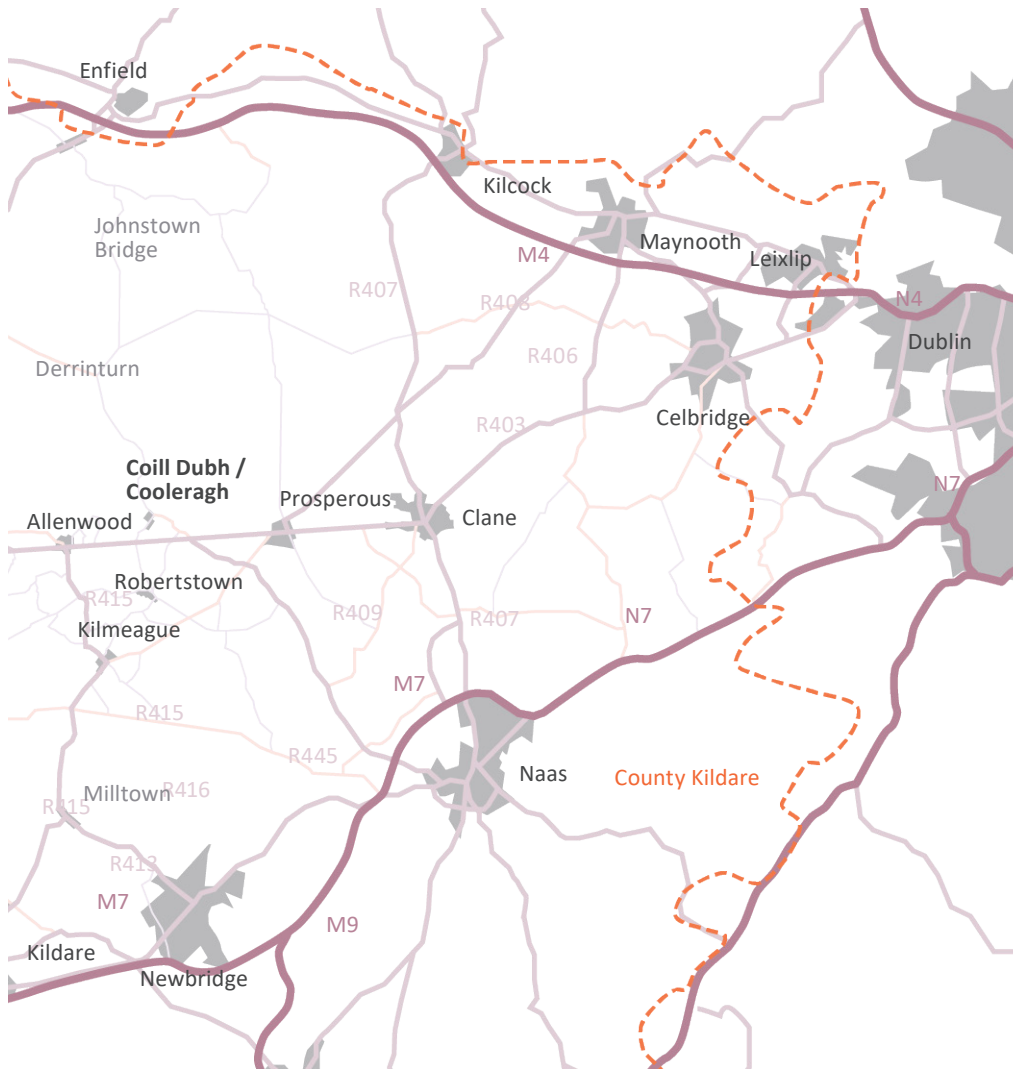
It should be viewed as a long-term plan of action (20+ years) which has been developed and agreed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from the town/village, the Elected Members and the relevant departments within Kildare County Council.

The Masterplan is vital to enabling Kildare County Council to access funding to deliver projects through the application process for URDF (Urban Regeneration Development Fund), RRDF (Rural Regeneration Development Fund) and Town and Village funding, where a greater priority is given to the funding of projects which are considered as part of an overall regeneration masterplan.

The projects identified for delivery are not prioritised within the document.

Projects will be delivered when funding becomes available through the various town renewal funding streams, LPT (Local Property Tax) or in partnership with other Local Authority departments to leverage available funding from other work programmes.

It should be noted that the projects identified in the Masterplan are conceptual only and are subject to appropriate planning consents and further consultation processes prior to detail design stage.



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1.

INTRODUCTION AND VISION



INTRODUCTION AND VISION

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Coill Dubh and Cooleragh Health Check and Town Renewal Plan is part of a suite of documents. Prepared by VHA Architects, similar documents have also been prepared for the town and villages of Kilmeague, Robertstown, and Allenwood.

The primary objective of these documents is to guide Kildare County Council in the integrated creation of healthy placemaking and viable public realm improvements.

The content presented within this and the other town/village documents have been prepared by a multi-disciplinary team, led by VHA (urban designers and architects), comprising Tobin Consulting Engineers (traffic and transport), Morley Consulting (economic and research data specialists), ID Consultants (Ecology/Environmental) and TORAQS (cost surveyors).



Key

— Study Area

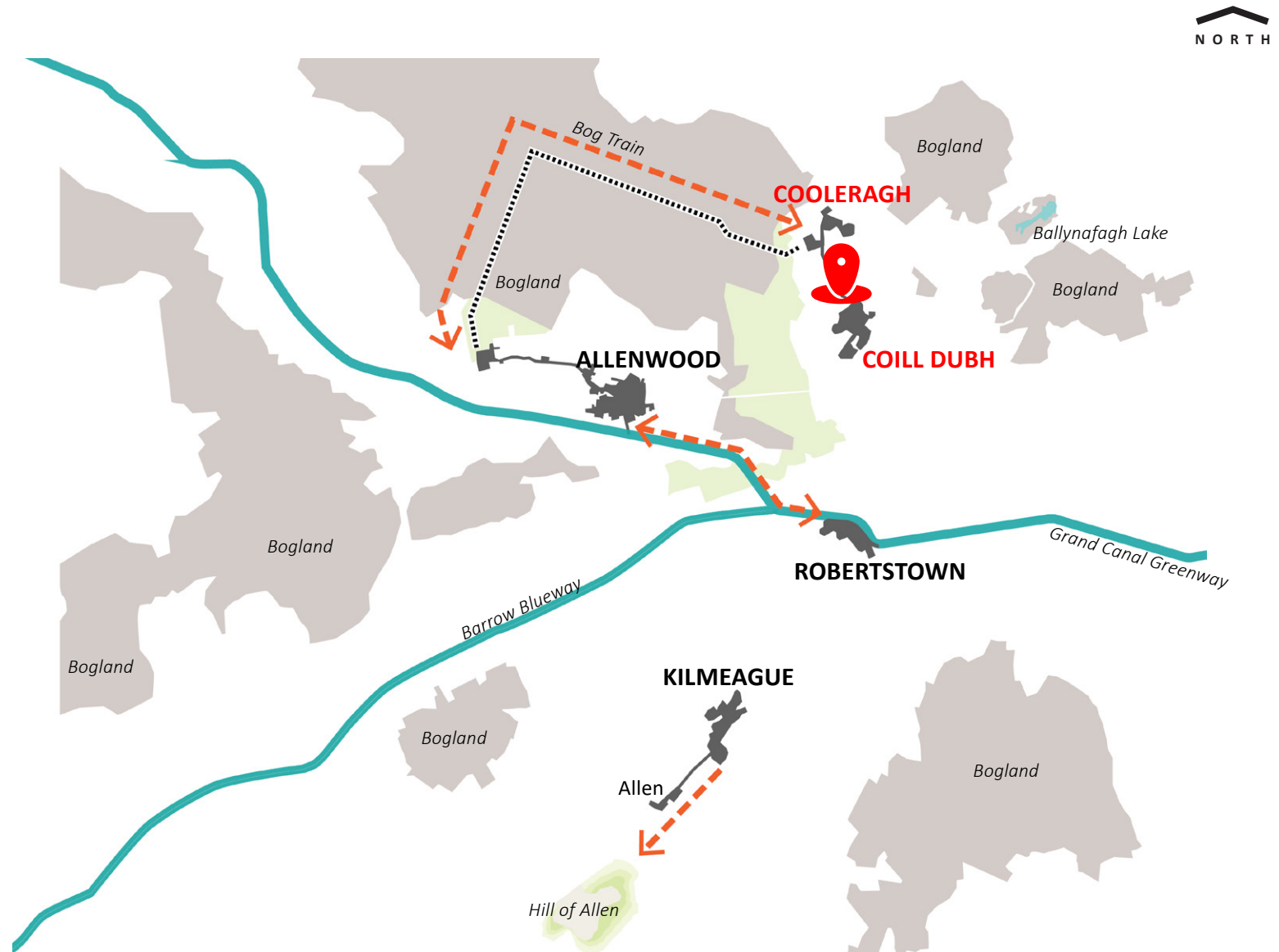
INTRODUCTION AND VISION

A VISION FOR COILL DUBH AND COOLERAGH

STRATEGIC VISION

The four villages of Robertstown, Allenwood, Coill Dubh/Cooleragh and Kilmeague emerged from the construction of the Grand Canal and the growth of the Bord na Móna boglands. Robertstown and Allenwood are also situated along the Grand Canal Greenway which is a key tourist trail.

The overall strategic vision for Cooleragh and Coill Dubh is to create well connected villages that would prioritise pedestrian movements and activate and enhance the existing public realm. Taking into account the proposed County Development Plan (2023-2029), the aim of this document is to respond to the objectives while also making sure that the two settlements are future-proofed for compact residential, community and social and economic development.



INTRODUCTION AND VISION

A VISION FOR COILL DUBH AND COOLERAGH

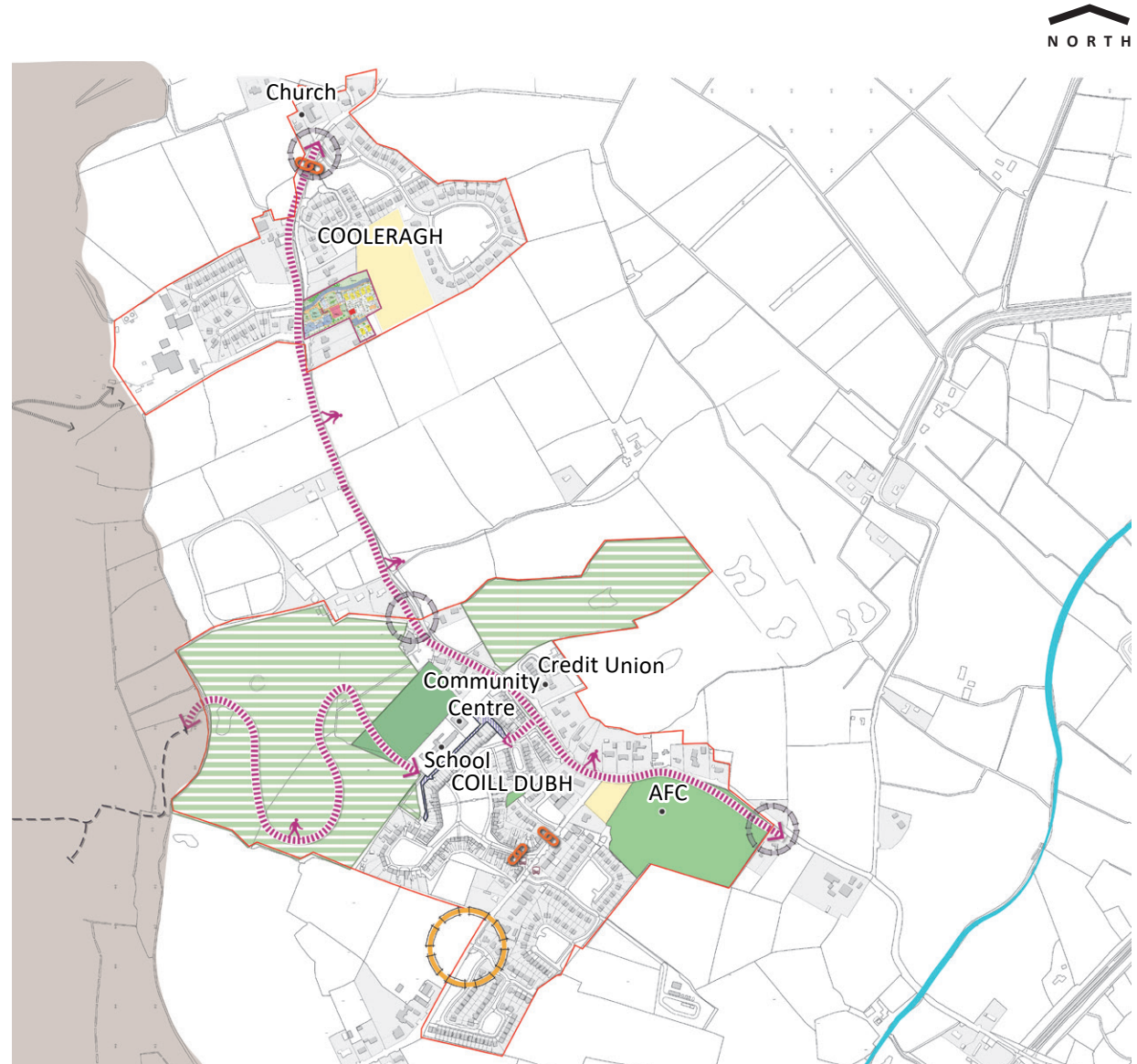
VILLAGE VISION

The vision aims to cohesively connect both village areas, creating destination spaces and safer pedestrian-oriented infrastructure within and between each area. It also intends to celebrate the unique and distinctive architectural heritage of the Frank Gibney estate, by way of providing a safe space within for all to share.

The creation of a safer and better integrated movement and access network to the existing destinations has also been a priority within this study. All proposals are indicative only.

Key

- Study Area
- Former bog lands
- Bus stop location
- Potential pedestrian crossings
- Indicative trails along former bog lands
- Key destinations
- Connected pedestrian realm
- Hard surface public realm improvements (streetscape, paving, etc.)
- Long term amenity zoned opportunity sites
- Active amenity zoned lands
- Zoned residential lands
- Primary gateways
- Secondary gateways



INTRODUCTION AND VISION

PUBLIC REALM: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IT MATTERS

Places are about people. People engage with the public face of the village on a daily basis; with its local destinations, roads, streets and open spaces. These features, along with the accessible spaces in between buildings, including car parks, courtyards, footpaths and spatial voids are what make the public realm.

How public spaces are designed and built, maintained and managed, and how safe they feel influence the spatial quality and the experience for users. Whether it's one space or a series of spaces within a village, it influences how we feel about it as the place which in turn bears influence of how people use, interact, enjoy and remember a place. How effectively and efficiently the public realm works is vital for the life of any place: how people move around the village and feel safe whilst doing so; how people access services, and how businesses operate. The public realm accommodates the essential services such as lighting, signage and drainage, all of which a village cannot function without. Public Realm is also the space within and around which transport of all forms can move and operate. It is for this reason, safety, orientation, integration and accessibility are important issues to consider when

looking at and designing for a robust and memorable public realm.

In the context of Cooleragh and Coill Dubh, it is important to have careful consideration, understanding and appreciation for role and function of the existing village. With this in mind, it is equally important to understand how Cooleragh and Coill Dubh can become a more pleasant and more competitive destination whilst building on its existing assets. The village's public realm and identity is inseparable from the user experience of the village. The influence of the public realm extends beyond its daily users and has an important role of being memorable and enjoyable to visitors of the village. Such experiences bear influence on the economic sustainability of Cooleragh and Coill Dubh and its overall well-being. Whether to visit, work and / or live in, people enjoy going to and staying in places that are pleasant, easy to use and well-functioning.

An attractive, high quality public realm can have a positive and memorable impact on the village's competitiveness with other destinations. It is an arena for business, for gathering, for recreation and for celebration.



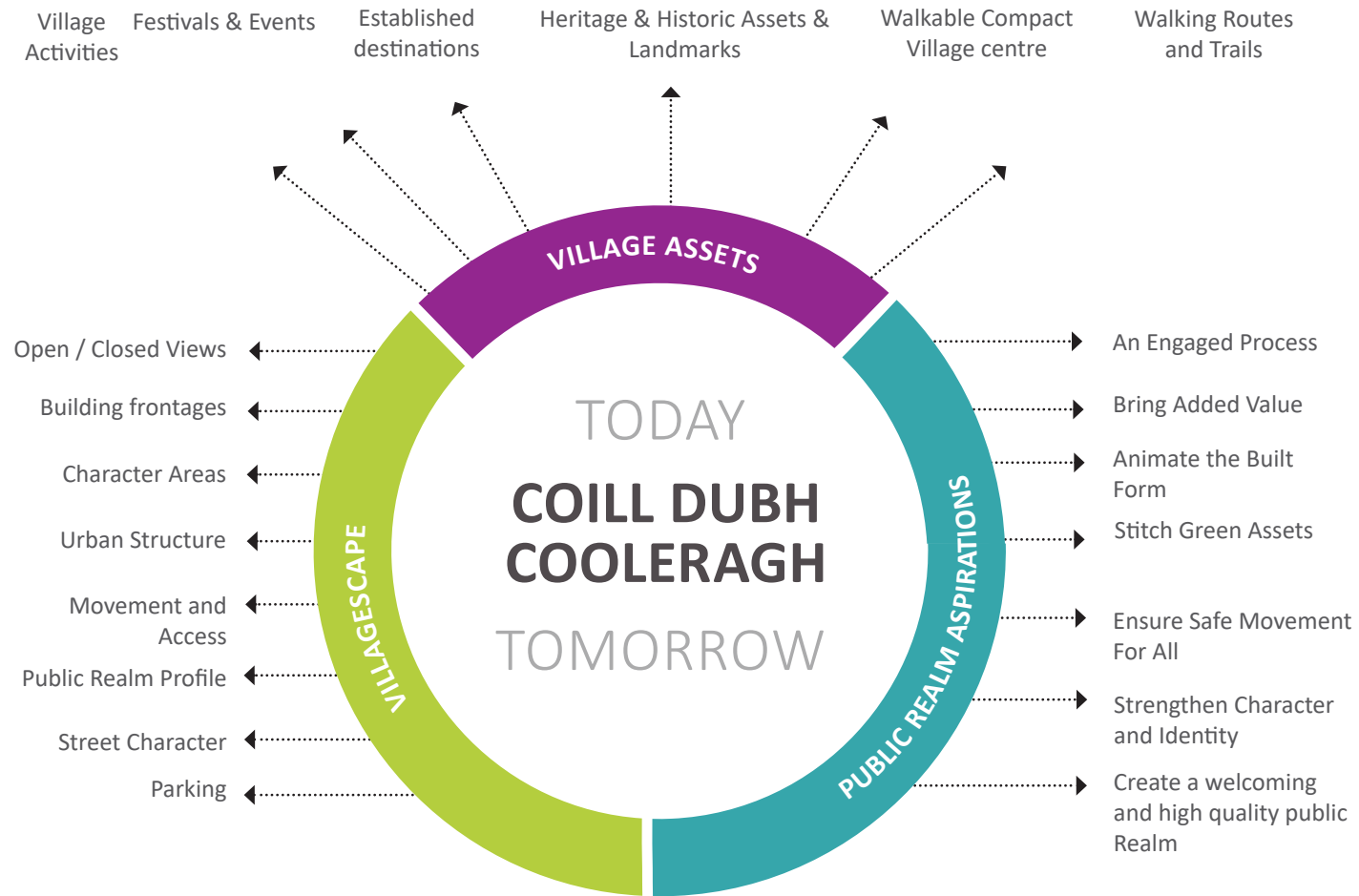
Seating and open space in Coill Dubh



Cooleragh Church

INTRODUCTION AND VISION

PUBLIC REALM: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IT MATTERS



INTRODUCTION AND VISION

HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

The Coill Dubh and Cooleragh Health Check identified specific quantitative and qualitative measures that could be recorded as a base against which future Health Checks could be compared. These measures were identified as a means of determining the vitality and viability of the villages.

The following indicators were included as part of this survey.

- Land Use Survey
- Dereliction/Vacancy
- Socio-Demographic Overview
- Employment Trends Overview
- Residential Market Overview
- Tourism and Leisure Overview
- Pedestrian Count Survey
- Walkability Survey
- Business / Shopper Audit
- Car Parking Surveys
- Public Realm Audit
- SWOT Analysis

Please also refer to the Appendix section of this document, for additional assessment findings carried out as part of the Coill Dubh and Cooleragh Health Check.



2.

APPRECIATING THE
CONTEXT



APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF COILL DUBH AND COOLERAGH

Coill Dubh (meaning Black Wood) and Cooleragh (An Cuil Fhiarach) are two settlements located in close proximity to each other, connected via the L1019.

The northern settlement of Cooleragh is defined by the presence of a Church, the existing remnants of the ESB train tracks from the former power station and the current on-going residential development.

Coill Dubh has its unique identity and character defined by the Frank Gibney settlement. It also has community facilities such as the Community Centre, school, Credit Union, GAA club and the AFC grounds.

Coill Dubh emerged from the need to provide for housing for the workers in the turf camps in the bog lands for Bord Na Móna. The residential settlement was built along with a school and a community centre and a few retail units along the residential estates.



Train tracks and bog lands surrounding the village.
Source: Bord na Móna



Frank Gibney's Bord na Móna estates
Source: Bord na Móna

APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF COILL DUBH AND COOLERAGH



1810-1935

ORIGINALLY GREENFIELD SITES
 Hundreds of workers flocked to Turf camps in surrounding villages to work in the bog lands surrounding Coill Dubh.

1950-1970

BOARD NA MÓNA HOUSING BY FRANK GIBNEY

- 160 Houses designed by Gibney to accommodate Bord Na Móna workers
- It became a striking feature in West Kildare in the 1950s
- Unique settlement pattern of recognized vernacular and heritage value
- Cooleragh Church was built to service the workers living in the new Frank Gibney settlements.

1999-2008

DEVELOPMENT & EXPANSION

- 83% population increase
- Expansion of residential developments
- New golf club

Present

PRESENT SCENARIO

- Decrease in activity and amenities
- Golf course and Golf clubhouse currently not in use.
- Plan for residential growth - sites currently under development.

Key

- Study Area
- Grand Canal
- Bog lands
- Roads



APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER



Key map



1. & 2. - Bord Na Mona houses designed by Frank Gibney



3. School



4. Community Centre



5. Internalised streetscape



6. Existing local retail and post office



7. Existing road connecting Coill Dubh and Cooleragh (L1019)



8. Church

APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER



Remains of Blackwood Castle



Cooleragh Church



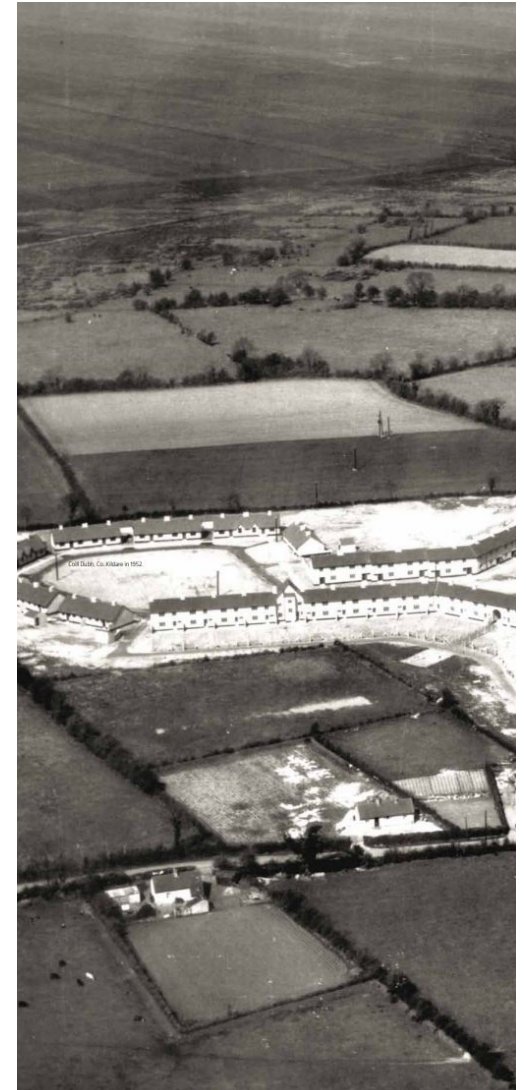
Existing train tracks through bog lands



Timahoe bog



Frank Gibney's Bord Na Mona Housing, 1956
Source: Bord Na Móna : living history

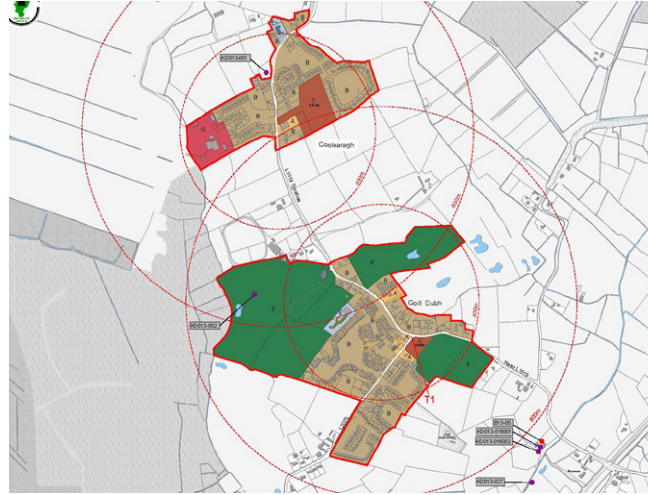


APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

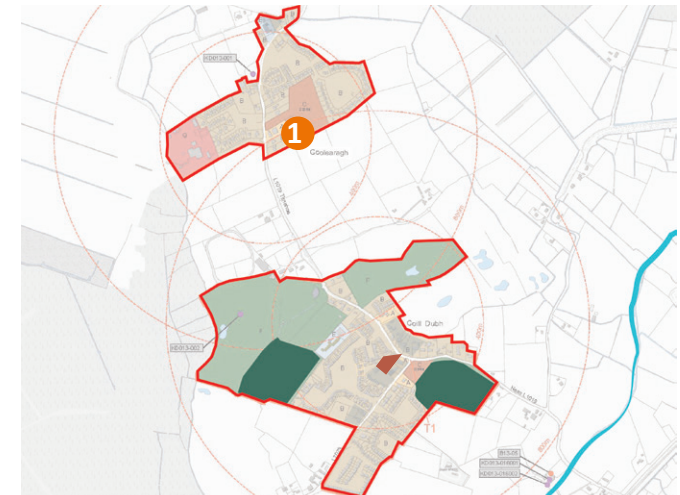
LAND USE, GROWTH AND CONSOLIDATION



Previous land use (2017-2023)



Current land use (2023-2029)



Planned growth and consolidation

- Study Area
- Village centre
- Existing/Infill residential
- New residential
- Community and Education
- Open space and amenity
- Agriculture
- Enterprise and Employment
- RPS (Record of protected structures)
- pNHA(Proposed natural heritage area)

Future land use

- Additional open space/amenity zoning added
- Land zoning revised from Village Centre to new residential
- 1 Planning application no. 22662- Mixed use development

3.

HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC
REALM ANALYSIS



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PLACEMAKING IN COILL DUBH AND COOLERAGH TODAY

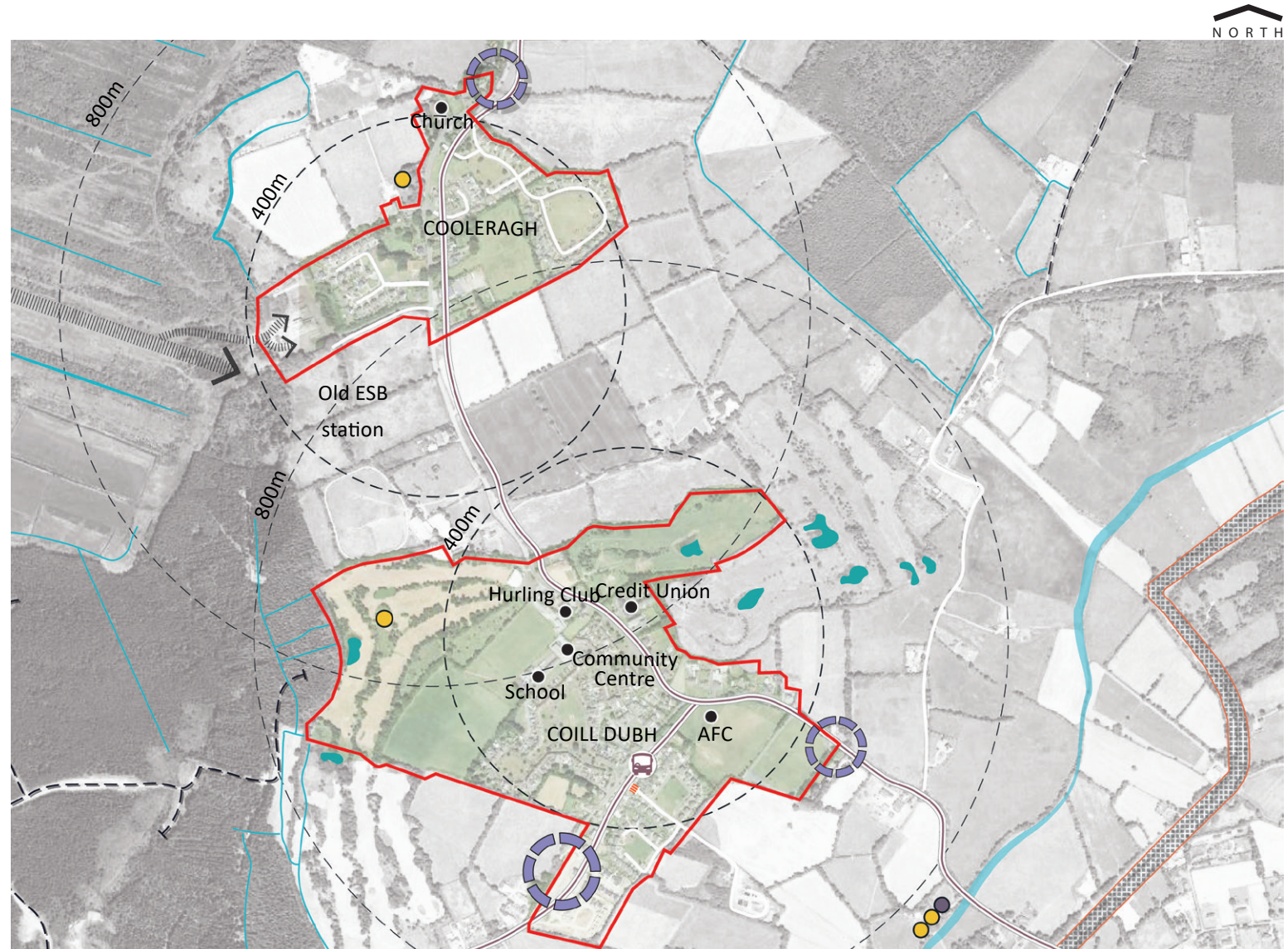
Key

- Study Area
- Grand Canal
- Key destinations
- Gateways

- Paths**
- Regional Bus Corridor
- Bus Stops
- Roads and Streets
- ▨ Pedestrian Crossing
- ▨ Train Tracks
- - Identified trails along former Bog lands

- Landmarks**
- Protected Structures and Monuments
- Record of Monuments and Places

- Other**
- ▨ Special Conservation Area

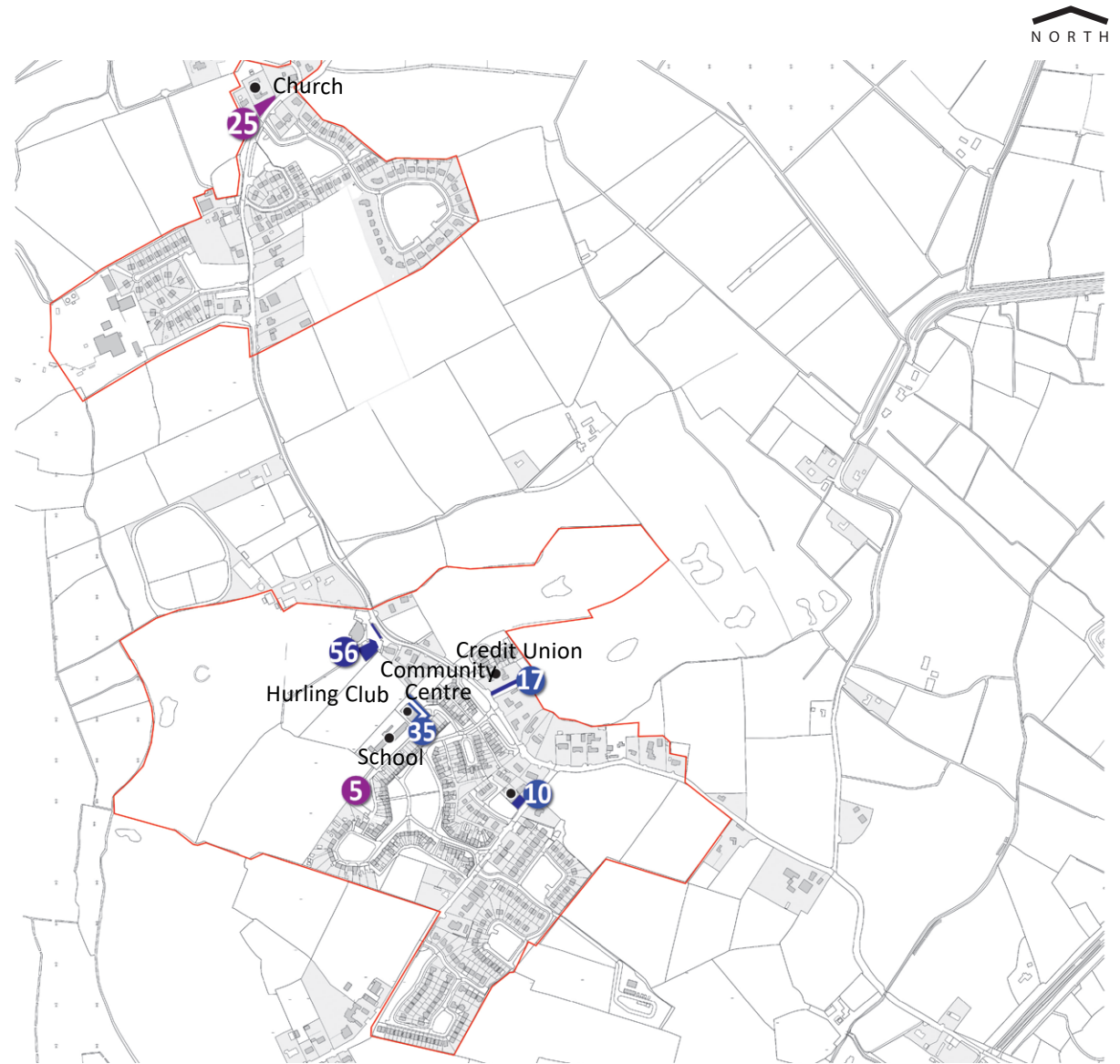


HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

CAR PARKING SURVEY

Key

- Study Area
- Grand Canal
- Indicative public/on street parking spaces
- Indicative private parking spaces



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

MASSING STUDY - COILL DUBH



Selected view point

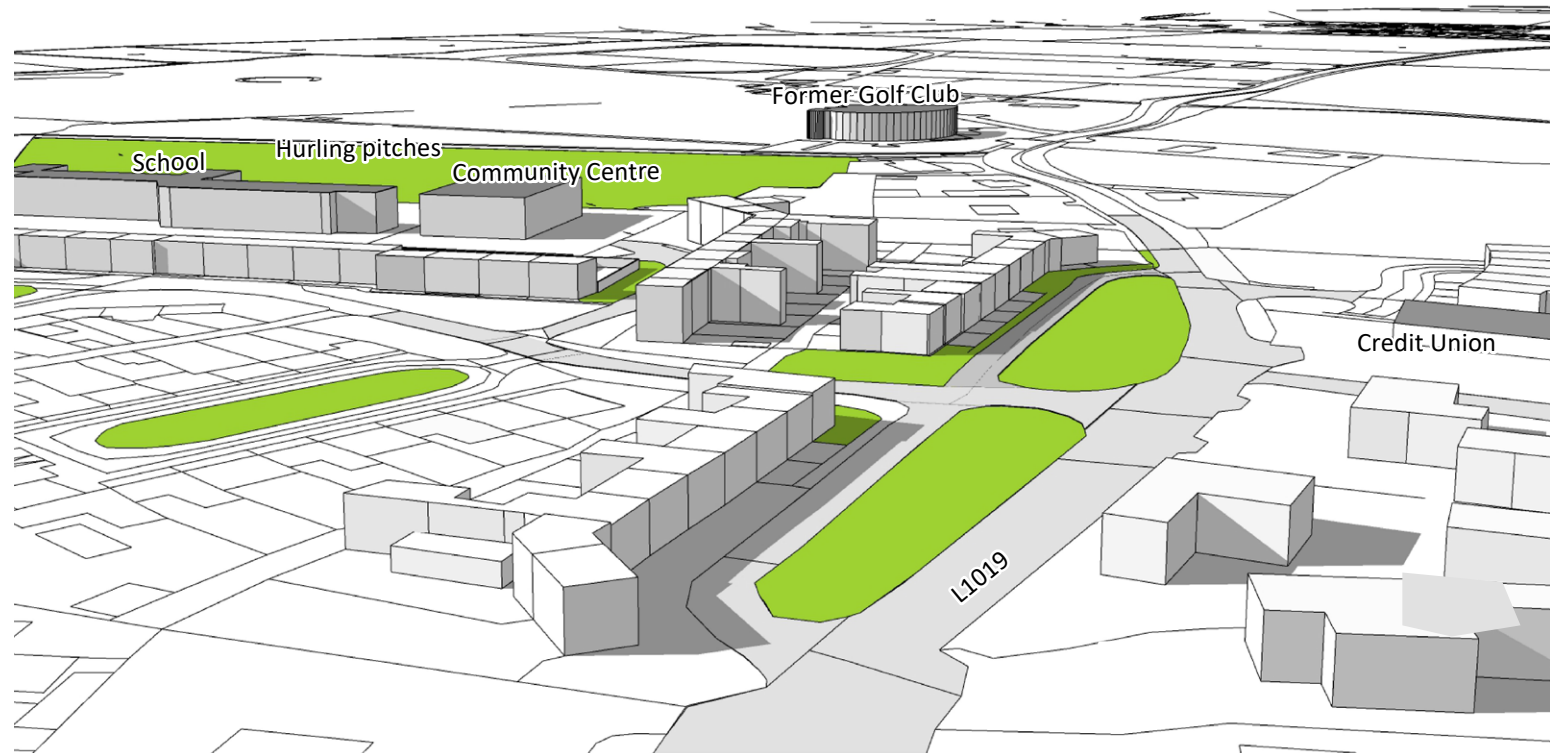


HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

MASSING STUDY - COILL DUBH



Selected view point



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND TOURISM OVERVIEW

SOCIO DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

Changing data collection methods over the past 20 years makes it difficult to identify accurate population growth trends for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh. Prior to Census 2011, no data was collected for Cooleragh. Between Census 2011 and Census 2016, Cooleragh was identified as a Small Area and Coill Dubh as a settlement. In Census 2022, the two areas have been amalgamated under the heading of Coill Dubh. Comparisons are most easily made between Census 2016 and Census 2022, with data showing significant population growth in the six-year period. Coill Dubh / Cooleragh has a relatively young population, with half aged under 35 years.

The broader area of Coill Dubh / Cooleragh is classified as 'marginally below average' in the HP Pobal Deprivation Index for Census 2016. This is particularly the case for the area of Cooleragh. A proportion of the village of Coill Dubh (431 of the 746 population) is classified as 'disadvantaged'.

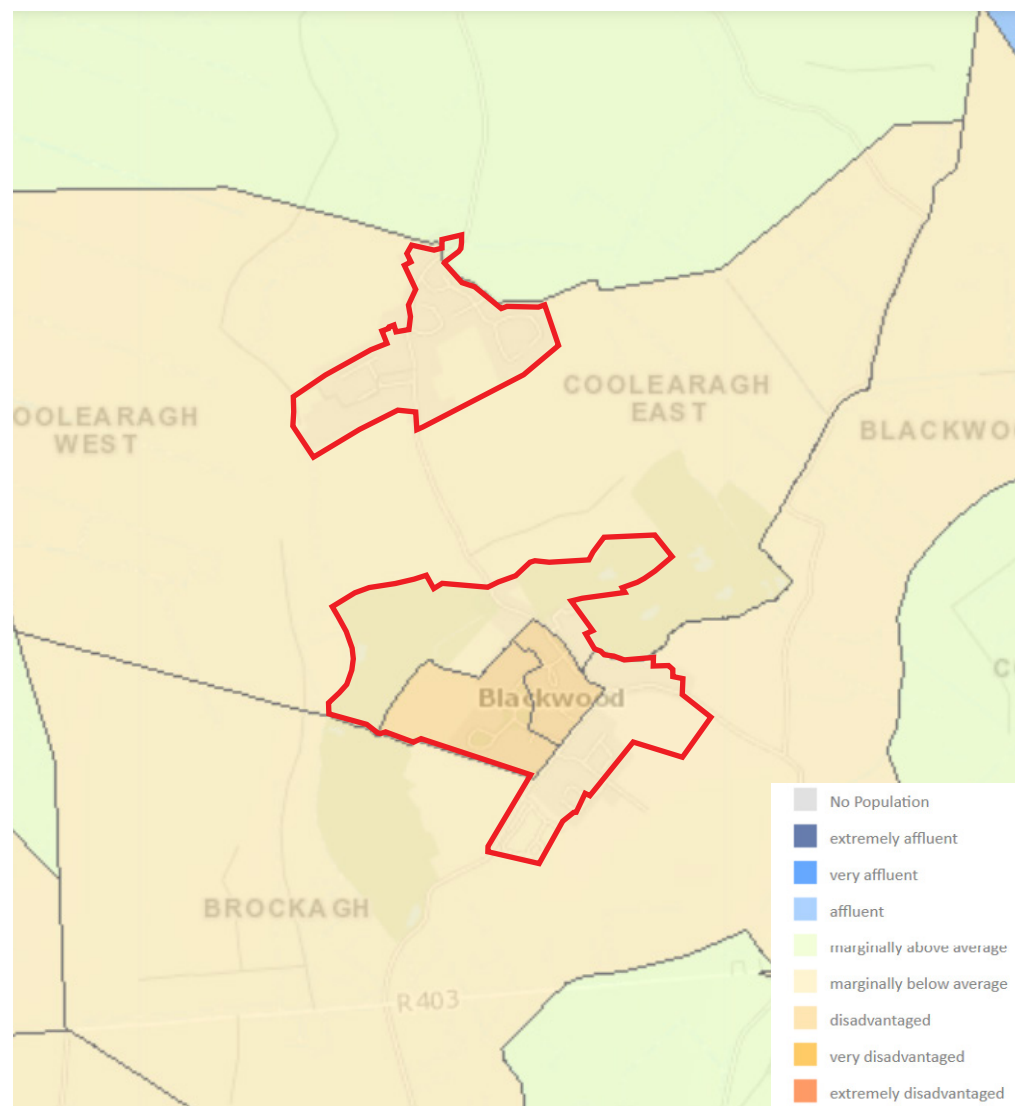
Compared to the surrounding Small Areas, this classification is driven by a higher proportion of lone parents; a higher proportion of the population with primary education only; a higher proportion of local authority housing;

and higher unemployment.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS OVERVIEW

In Census 2022, 52% of Coill Dubh / Cooleragh's population were 'at work', unchanged since Census 2016. The level of unemployment is broadly similar across the four villages, with a 4% rate recorded in Coill Dubh / Cooleragh in Census 2022. Similar to the other villages, and the national average, this marks a significant improvement on both Census 2016 and Census 2011 when unemployment stood at 10% and 19% respectively.

The key industries of employment in the two villages are commerce and trade (26%); professional services (20%); and manufacturing (16%). The vast majority of the local community travel by car or van to work, school or college (69%), marking the lowest dependence on private transport amongst the four villages. Between Census 2016 and Census 2022, both Coill Dubh / Cooleragh and Kilmeague recorded a five percentage point decline in the use of private transport for commuting. The use of public transport is in line with the national average (11%) and broadly similar to the other villages. According to the County Kildare Community Network listings, there



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND TOURISM OVERVIEW

are 16 businesses registered in the Coill Dubh / Cooleragh area. The main offerings under ‘accommodation and food services’ include two convenience shops, a butchers and take-away. The businesses that are categorised as ‘art, entertainment and recreation’ include a golf club, and leisure/equestrian facilities.

As noted in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 the main retail offerings in Coill Dubh / Cooleragh include a convenience shop and filling station, along with a Credit Union, Post Office and hairdressers. Two economic development objectives are set out in the County Development Plan 2023-2029 to

- Promote and facilitate the re-development of the former Bord na Móna site at Cooleragh; and
- Protect the established retail and commercial functions within the settlements of Coill Dubh and Cooleragh

HOUSING MARKET OVERVIEW

Both Coill Dubh / Cooleragh and Kilmearogue recorded the highest number of vacant homes in Census 2022 (6%), two percentage point lower than the

national average. In total, there are 521 homes in the village, with a 92% occupancy rate.

There was a 13% increase in the stock of housing in Coill Dubh / Cooleragh, reflecting the strong population growth in the past six years. After Allenwood at 24%, Coill Dubh / Cooleragh added the second most amount of new housing since 2016, with 58 new units added – 12% of the overall stock of housing in the village.

One-in-10 of the local population rent their home from Kildare County Council, with 22% overall living in some form of public or private rented accommodation. Social housing in Coill Dubh / Cooleragh has increased by six percentage points since Census 2016 representing one of the strongest growth rates of the four villages, after only Allenwood, up eight percentage points.

A significant new housing development to the south of Coill Dubh has added 60 new homes to the overall stock for the village. The Kildare County Development Plan 2023–2029 estimates that the population of this new development (Hawthorn Manor) could see the village population increase by 176 persons. The

Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 identifies 3Ha of developable land zoned for new residential.

TOURISM/ COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

According to Kildare County Development Plan 2023–2029, the Council intends to strengthen the social and community infrastructure within the village by way of, for example, investigating the feasibility of providing a playground and local park facility in Coill Dubh / Cooleragh; and to facilitate an appropriate expansion of amenity sites and recreation/sports facilities in the two village areas.

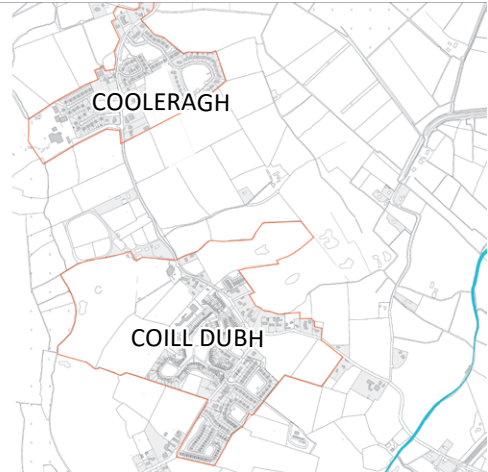
The viability and feasibility of these and other tourism, social, and community objectives will be further reviewed as the project progresses and through stakeholder consultations.

	Businesses by Sector (nr.)	Proportion of Sectors (%)
Accommodation and Food Services Activities	5	31%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5	31%
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	3	19%
Other Service Activities	2	13%
Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing	1	6%
Total	16	100%

Source: County Kildare Community Network. Accurate as at 10 November 2022 Note: Business location is based on address provided to the website.

HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PUBLIC REALM AUDIT - COOLERAGH (EXISTING STREETScape AND SPACES)



Key map

- Key**
- Study Area
 - Former bog lands
 - Poor quality pedestrian realm
 - Train tracks
 - Built form**
 - Key destination
 - Public Realm (soft surfaces, open green space, amenity)**
 - Active



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PUBLIC REALM AUDIT - COILL DUBH (EXISTING STREETScape AND SPACES)

Key

- Study Area
- Former Bog lands

Road Connectivity

- Dedicated pedestrian realm
- - - Poor quality pedestrian realm/missing footpaths
- - - Identified trails along former bog lands
- |||| Pedestrian crossing
- 🚌 Bus stop location
- ⦿ Primary Gateways/Signage
- ⦿ Secondary Gateways

Built form

- Vacant buildings
- First floor vacancy
- Key destinations

Public Realm (Streetscape, hard surfaces)

- Weak

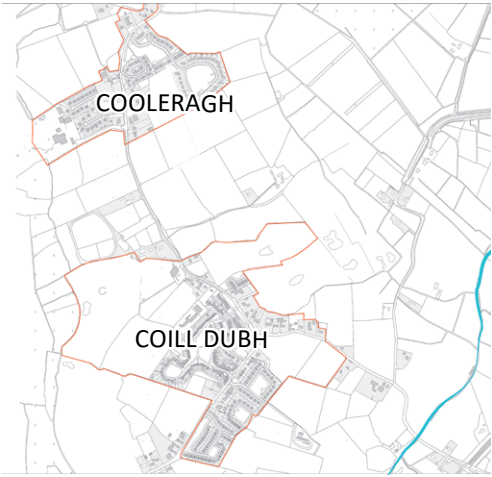
Public Realm (soft surfaces, open green space, amenity)

- Active
- Inactive



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES (STREETSCAPE AND SPACES)



Key map

- Study Area
- Former bog lands
- Built form
- Key destination
- Existing consented planning applications
- 🔗 Potential pedestrian links
- Existing train tracks
- Public Realm : Streetscape opportunities
- ➔ Connected pedestrian realm
- Zoned future residential lands
- Secondary Gateway



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES (STREETScape AND SPACES)

- Study Area
- Former bog lands

- Road Connectivity
- Bus stop location
- Potential pedestrian crossings
- - - Indicative trails along former bog lands

- Built form
- Key destinations

- Public Realm : Streetscape opportunities
- Connected pedestrian realm
- Hard surface public realm

- Public Realm : Green space, amenity opportunities
- Long term opportunity sites

- Other
- Primary gateway
- Secondary gateways
- Zoned future residential lands



4.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY



URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

CONSULTATION APPROACHES, FINDINGS AND FEEDBACK

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)

A meeting was held by Morley Economic Consulting with the co-ordinator of the LCDC on 2nd Feb, 2023 discussing the challenges and potential opportunities for socio-economic growth, tourism and transport links for Cooleragh and Coill Dubh. The following is a summary of the discussion categorised under a few key themes.

Key takeaways from the engagement can be summarised as follows:

- Coill Dubh and Cooleragh should link with the larger towns/villages
- There have been successes since LECP 2016-2021 but other issues have since arisen such as for example Covid 19 and the closure of Bord Na Móna.
- Kildare is a county of high population, youngest population, fifth largest county but no city to shape its identity.
- Lack of, or an under supply of services such as access to doctors, schools etc. present a significant challenge for the county – priorities under LECP.
- Any new services and infrastructure needs to meet local needs too i.e., employment opportunities.

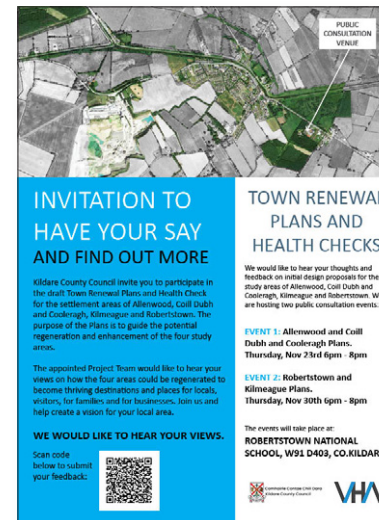
- Each village needs a hub for local activities.
- Need to focus on education and income levels, provision of childcare etc. to improve localised deprivation.
- Stronger transport links between villages and larger centres (Naas, Newbridge, Maynooth etc.) where employment training, education, and up-skilling occurs.
- “Just transition” is an important point for locals – need to ensure that changes asked of local communities are actually feasible i.e. using more public transport / walking but the infrastructure isn’t in place.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Kildare Village Renewal and Health Check and Urban Design Analysis plans were informed through conducting an analysis and an understanding of the village as it is today. To further inform the emerging design proposals, a process of consultation and engagement was facilitated.

Two public consultation events were held on 30th November and 7th December, 2023 in Robertstown National School between 6 pm and 8 pm. Prior to the event, flyers and

feedback forms were distributed and the design proposals were made available via multiple Kildare County Council web portal sites.

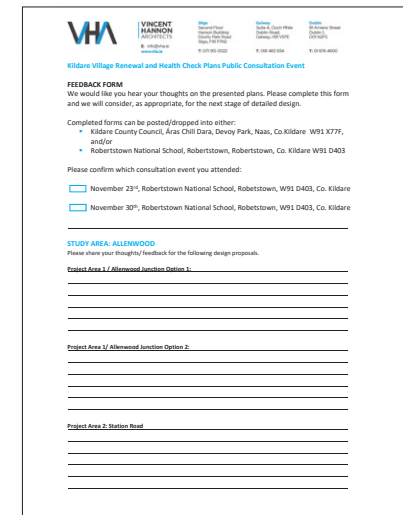


Public Consultation flyer

The purpose of these events was to showcase the draft emerging Village Renewal Plans and Health Checks for the study areas of Coill Dubh and Cooleragh and hear insights and gain knowledge from the local community, stakeholders and residents of Coill Dubh and Cooleragh. A series of exhibition boards were on display at the event along with feedback forms and flyers

that were available. The event was attended by approximately 30 members on each night which provided the team valuable insights on current issues and the potential opportunities for the public realm of Coill Dubh and Cooleragh.

The response period for comments and feedback was between 20th November - 11th December, 2023. Over 55 responses were received. A summary of these responses and key observations is provided below.



Public consultation feedback form

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

CONSULTATION APPROACHES, FINDINGS AND FEEDBACK

WHAT PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US:

Key issues raised:

- Improvement of street lighting in the village and the road linking Coill Dubh and Cooleragh.
- Need for appropriate traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossing in Cooleragh village.
- Concern for anti social behaviour.



Public Consultation event photos

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON PROJECT AREA 1: COILL DUBH NORTH

Movement and Accessibility for all

- Measures to be taken to provide appropriate traffic calming at the entry and exit points to the village to reduce speeding of vehicles.

Public Realm

- Need for street lighting near the bus stops and the pedestrian path connecting Coill Dubh and Cooleragh.
- Amenity for a dog park could be considered.
- Measures to be taken to reduce anti-social activity in the proposed playground and the proposed public realm area close to the school.
- Possible collaboration could be made with the village association to look at aspirations for the zoned amenity lands in the village.

Other

- Revitalisation of the Golf club building would be a great addition to the community

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this Kildare County Council (KCC) Public Consultation event, facilitated by its appointed design team. The purpose of this event is to present and showcase draft emerging Town Renewal Plans and Health Checks for the study areas of Allenwood, Robertstown, Cooleragh and Coill Dubh and Kilmagee.

The presented plans showcase identified opportunities to enhance and celebrate the unique identity of each village whilst also providing strategies to future proof each settlement as a living, working and destination area in its own right, for decades to come. The presented design strategies also provide interventions that will encourage climate change-oriented adaptability, encouraging low-carbon infrastructure, and movement between places via means other than the private car, thus encouraging a more climate resilient future.

The multi-disciplinary design team, led by Vincent Hanson Architects (VHA) welcome the opportunity to engage with residents, business operators and visitors of each area.

WHAT IS A TOWN RENEWAL PLAN?

The Town and Village Renewal Plan focuses on development of outdoor projects such as public realm spaces, parks, playgrounds and green spaces. It also aims to invest in qualifying regeneration projects that assist in revitalising rural towns and villages, in line with the Town Centre First Policy.

WHAT IS A HEALTH CHECK PLAN?

The Health Check process aims to identify a range of potential improvements that could be conducted to enhance the character, amenities and the identity of a village or town and provide for the needs of its population. It is conducted through performing the various urban design analyses as mentioned opposite and aims to implement them to inform and develop proposals for the four villages.

It aims to target funding to facilitate further development of the plans for each respective study area. If successful in acquiring funding, KCC aims to bring the presented proposals to the next stages of design development and delivery.

STUDY AREA LOCATIONS

WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?

The key objective of creating these plans is to deliver a new vision for the villages with pedestrian oriented public spaces, liveable streets and safer, better connected movement networks. Kildare County Council's primary goal is to also prioritise a sense of place and identity across each of the four study areas, to ensure safer pedestrian and cycle environments and to create more inclusive, sustainable and people friendly public realm.

Providing context and understanding, which in turn has informed the indicative design proposals, the project team have undertaken extensive analyses including information gathering, 2D and 3D analysis on a range of elements including:

- Land Use Survey
- Derelecton/Vacancy
- Socio-Demographic and Employment trends Overview
- Residential Market Overview
- Tourism and Leisure Overview
- Business / Shopper Audit
- Pedestrian Count Survey
- Walkability Survey
- Traffic Surveys and Audits
- Car Parking Survey
- Public Realm Audit
- SWOT Analyses

These analyses and findings have informed the Town Renewal Plans, and VHA welcome local community feedback to the draft plans.

Your inputs will help to better inform, from a local user perspective, the future proofing and enhancement of the character, identity and function of each study area, for all users, for generations to come.

PROJECT TEAM:

Extract of Public Consultation exhibition boards

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

CONSULTATION APPROACHES, FINDINGS AND FEEDBACK

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON PROJECT AREA 2: COILL DUBH EAST AND SOUTH

Movement and Accessibility for all

- Additional, appropriate traffic calming measures needed on the junction of the L1019 and L7073 for the safety of the pedestrians.
- Need for safe pedestrian access with lighting to the AFC highlighted.
- Continuous pedestrian lane to be provided to the existing bus stop on the R403 adjacent to Dagwelds pub, connecting it to Coill Dubh village.

Public Realm

- Important to promote a sense of rural village identity with the proposed ideas

Other

- Soccer club maintains a great amenity as they have created and maintain a public space for walking and exercise. Their development and support to be encouraged.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON PROJECT AREA 3: COOLERAGH

Movement and Accessibility for all

- Proposed and appropriate traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossing near Cooleragh Church are encouraged.
- Additional pedestrian crossing along with appropriate traffic calming measures near the Wards service station suggested.
- Need for an upgrade and widening of footpath linking Cooleragh and Coill Dubh highlighted.

Public Realm

- Improvement needed for lighting in the village and the road linking Coill Dubh and Cooleragh to enhance safety
- Need for a playground facility in the village highlighted.

COILL DUBH AND COOLERAGH DESIGN PROPOSALS

PROJECT AREA 1: COILL DUBH

BEFORE

Recommendations

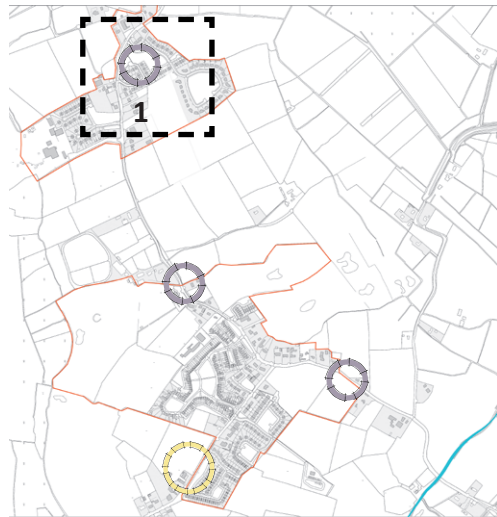
- Respond to Council policy objectives, providing a dedicated playground area adjacent to the GAA grounds.
- Create opportunities to re-vitalize derelict properties such as the former GAA club building for community use..
- Create a safer laneway and enhanced public realm experience adjacent to Coill Dubh National school by providing high quality paving, urban planting, seating and street furniture.
- Enhance the existing pedestrian realm by connecting the retail areas and the Credit Union to the existing residential area and Community Centre through providing a pedestrian crossing point along the L1019.
- Consider an alternative and safer vehicular access route to the school through the GAA grounds.

AFTER

Extract of Public Consultation exhibition boards

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECT 1

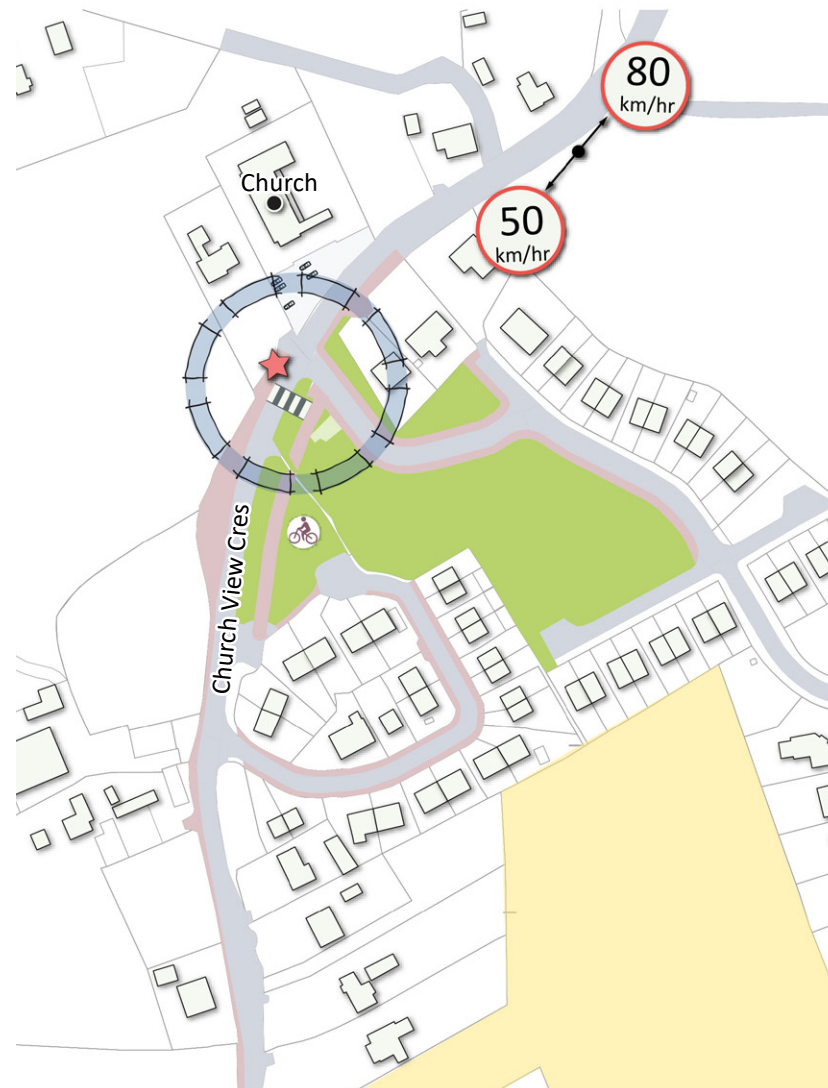


Key map

- Primary gateways
- Secondary gateways

Key

- Pedestrian realm
- Existing roads
- Existing open space
- Secondary gateway
- Proposed pedestrian crossing
- Key destination
- Proposed signage location
- Proposed signage for speed transition zones
- Zoned future residential lands
- Proposed dedicated cycle parking



All proposals are indicative only.

DESIGN RATIONALE

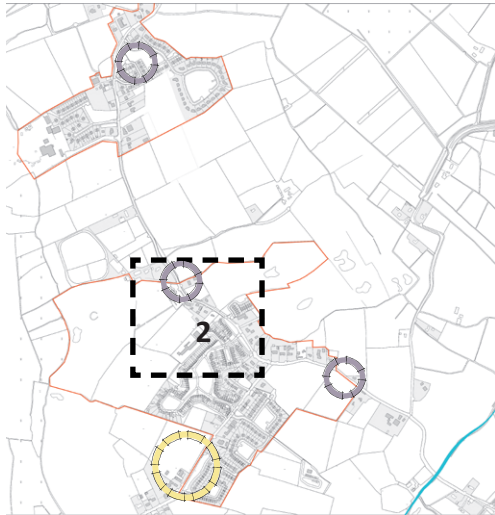
Create a sense of arrival by defining the entry and exit points of the village. Encourage sustainable modes of transport by prioritising infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide gateway and way-finding signage to celebrate the entry and exit points in the village.
- Introduce speed transition zones and appropriate traffic calming measures in order to slow down the vehicular traffic upon entering the village.
- Provide pedestrian crossing along Church View Cres to connect the Church to the surrounding residential areas.
- Enhance the existing public realm through improved paving, planting, signage, where appropriate.
- Provide dedicated cycle parking spaces to encourage a modal shift in travel.
- Encourage the activation of existing green spaces through providing functional green spaces in the form of poly-tunnels, community gardens, etc.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECT 2



Key map

- Primary gateways
- Secondary gateways

Key

- Pedestrian realm
- Existing roads
- Zoned amenity lands
- Proposed playground
- Indicative area for potential town park
- Existing green space
- Key destinations
- Existing commercial/retail
- Potential for community/amenity use
- Secondary gateways
- Proposed signage location
- Proposed speed transition zones
- Proposed pedestrian crossing
- Trail from pedestrian crossing
- Proposed dedicated cycle parking



All proposals are indicative only.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECT 2

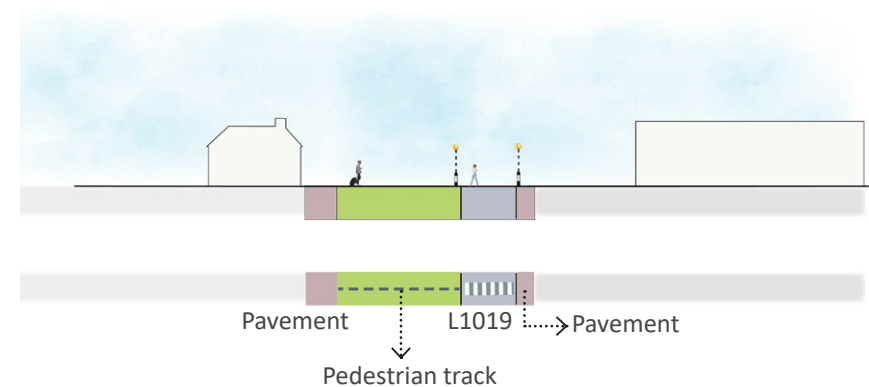
DESIGN RATIONALE

Improve the overall pedestrian and cyclist experience for the residents of the village through the prioritisation of sustainable modes of transport infrastructure. Activate the usage of existing derelict buildings for community use and activate and enhance laneways and public realm.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

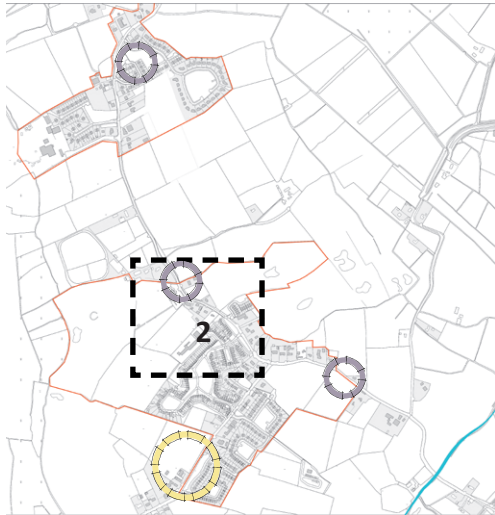
- Respond to Council policy objectives and provide a dedicated playground area adjacent to the Hurling grounds.
- Consider the possibility of providing a potential town park, adjacent to the proposed playground.
- Create a safer laneway and enhanced public realm adjacent to Coill Dubh National School by providing high quality paving, urban planting, seating and street furniture.
- Consider passive surveillance and security within the laneways through the proposed improvements.
- Provide enhanced entry and exit points in the village through appropriate signage and way-finding measures.
- Recognise and utilise under-used/ vacant buildings such as the former Golf clubhouse building for community uses.
- Provided dedicated cycle parking bays near the proposed playground location to encourage sustainable means of travel.
- Introduce speed transition zones to signal entry and exit points in the village to slow down traffic and prioritise pedestrian safety.
- Enhance the existing pedestrian realm by connecting the retail areas and the Credit Union to the existing residential settlements and Community centre through providing a pedestrian crossing point on the L1019.
- Consider an alternative and safer vehicular access route to Coill Dubh National school through the GAA grounds.

SECTION AA



URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECT 2



Key map

- Primary gateways
- Secondary gateways



Selected view point



BEFORE

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECT 2



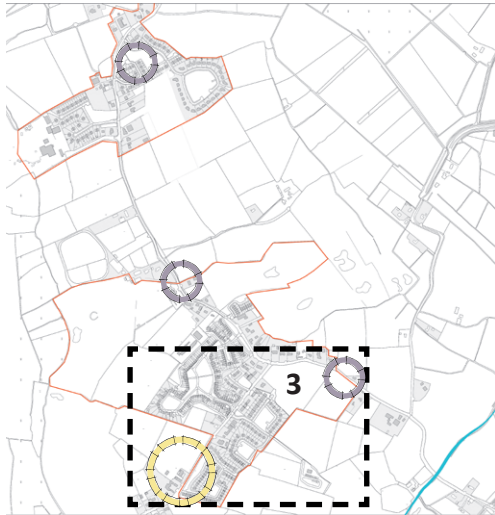
All proposals are indicative only.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Enhance existing access and entry points to Coill Dubh National School through providing an enhanced public realm.
- Utilise the under-used lands in the surroundings to create a new dedicated public realm area with seating and urban planting.
- Provide high quality paving, urban planting and street lighting to activate the existing laneway for all users.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECT 3



Key map



All proposals are indicative only.

Key

- Pedestrian realm
- Existing roads
- Existing open space
- Existing retail
- Primary gateway
- Secondary gateway
- Proposed pedestrian crossing
- Key destination
- Proposed signage location
- Proposed signage for speed transition zones
- Zoned future residential lands
- Proposed dedicated cycle parking
- Proposed traffic calming zone

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECT 3

DESIGN RATIONALE

Ensure pedestrian priority through the village by introducing appropriate traffic calming measures and through providing an enhanced pedestrian realm to connect the rest of the village to the existing destinations.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure pedestrian safety through introducing pedestrian crossing points on the L7073
- Connect the village core to the existing residential settlements along the L1019 through introducing a new dedicated pedestrian path passing through the AFC grounds.
- Encourage a modal shift in transport by creating safer and enhanced pedestrian access to the existing bus stop on the L7073.
- Create attractive entry and exit points into the village that also act as appropriate speed transition zones.
- Provide appropriate traffic calming and gateway signage in order to slow down vehicles upon entering the village.
- Identify and highlight residential zoned lands for future-proofing and compact development.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

INDICATIVE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Seating, paving and planting in proposed public realm spaces



Indicative street bollard types



Rain Garden - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)



Enhanced town branding and signage opportunities



Laneway enhancement opportunities



Flexible outdoor seating

5.

APPENDIX





Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Town Renewal Masterplan Coill Dubh Co. Kildare

DATE: 27/09/2023
FOR: Kildare County Council
BY: ID Environmental Consultants

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
AA	Appropriate Assessment
BOCCI	Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
EC	European Commission
IROPI	Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest
LSE	Likely Significant Effects
NHA	Natural Heritage Areas
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Areas
OPR	Office of the Planning Regulator
SCI	Special Conservation Interest
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Definitions

Definition	Term
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	An assessment of the potential adverse effects of a plan or project (in combination with other plans or projects) on Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas
Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government	The previous name for Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The Irish government department responsible for housing, local government (including planning) and heritage.
Effect	Outcome to an ecological feature from an impact, e.g., the effects on an animal population from the loss of a hedgerow.
European Commission (EC)	The executive body of the European Union responsible for proposing legislation, enforcing European law, setting objectives and priorities for action, negotiating trade agreements, and managing and implementing European Union policies and the budget.
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Directive relevant to on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

Definition	Term
Impact	Actions resulting in changes to an ecological feature, e.g., the construction activities of a development removing a hedgerow.
Natura 2000 / European Site	A network of sites selected to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. European site" replaced the term "Natura 2000 site" under the EU (Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 473 of 2011
Receptor	Environmental components that may be affected, adversely or beneficially, by the project.
Special Protection Areas (SPAs).	Sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex 1 of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory Species.
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	Areas of protected habitats and species as defined in the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).
Qualifying Interest (QI)	Relates to the habitats and/or (non-bird) species for which an SAC or SPA is selected
Zone of Influence (Zol)	Spatial extent of potential impacts resulting from the project.

1 Introduction

This Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by ID Environmental Consultants on behalf of Kildare County Council (KCC). It provides information on and assesses the potential for the Town Renewal Master Plan for Coill Dubh/Coolearagh, County Kildare, (hereafter referred to as 'the Master Plan') to impact on European sites within the Natura 2000 network.

The proposals for the two settlements of Coolearagh and Cooleragh aim to celebrate the unique and distinctive architectural heritage of the Frank Gibney estate, by way of providing a safe space within for all to share. The plans also aim to cohesively connect both village areas, creating destination spaces and safer pedestrian-oriented infrastructure within and between each area. By activating and prioritising the pedestrian connections within the village, the design interventions also aim to enhance the existing community assets of the village and aid the activation of derelict buildings.

The following report has been completed to provide information regarding the ecological status of the proposed sites of works. The report includes a general ecological assessment of the site including designated sites. This report has been completed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6[3] Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening of the Master Plan. An AA is required if likely significant effects on European sites arising from the Master Plan cannot be ruled out at the screening stage, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

1.1 Statement of Authority

This survey was completed by Ian Douglas (MSc, BSc, H Cert.Ag) of ID Environmental Consultants. Ian is an Ecologist and Environmental consultant with over 10 years of experience in appropriate assessment, ecological impact assessment, habitats assessment, soil science, GIS mapping and regenerative agriculture. Ian has worked on projects including large road developments, power infrastructure projects, planning applications, planning and design of nature trails, constructed wetland creation and on farm habitat development. Ian previously worked in Ecology and Agriculture in England and Australia before taking a position with Flynn, Furney Environmental Consultants in 2018. With whom he retains a position as Associate Director. Ian formed ID Environmental Consultants in 2021.

Ellen Irwin also aided with the completion of this survey. Ellen is a student of UCD, who has recently finished her degree in Agri-Environmental Science (BAgrSc, Level 8). Through this degree, Ellen has developed practical field and lab-based skills that are necessary for field/habitat surveying and soil sampling and has also gained knowledge of GIS software. Ellen has also completed modules in the areas of agri-environmental management, rural conservation and sustainable agriculture that have developed her knowledge of the policies, schemes and practices required to protect the rural environments.

1.1 Relevant Legislation and Overall Screening Methodology

The methodology for this screening statement is set out in a document prepared for the Environment DG of the European Commission entitled 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC'

(European Commission, 2019). This report and any contributory fieldwork were carried out in accordance with guidelines given by the Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (2009, amended 2010).

The process is given in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and is commonly referred to as 'Appropriate Assessments' (which in fact refers to Stage 2 in the sequence under the Habitats Directive Article 6 assessment). Article 6 of the Habitats Directive sets out provisions which govern the conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the (Natura2000) site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication 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 adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

Article 6(4) of the same directive states:

"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 social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

It is the responsibility of the proponent of the plan or project to provide the relevant information (ecological surveys, research, analysis etc.) for submission to the 'competent national authority'. Having satisfied itself that the information is complete and objective, the competent authority will use this information to screen the project, i.e., to determine if an AA is required and to carry out the AA, if one is deemed necessary. The competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. The appropriate assessment process has four stages. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further. The four stages are:

1. Screening to determine if an appropriate assessment is required.
2. Appropriate assessment
3. Consideration of alternative solutions
4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Stage 1: Screening

This is to determine if an appropriate assessment is required. Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular plan would be likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site and would thus warrant an Appropriate Assessment. The key indicator that will determine if an Appropriate Assessment is required is the determination of whether the development is likely to have significant environmental effects on a Natura 2000 site or not.

Stage 2. Appropriate Assessment

This step is required if the screening report indicates that the development is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Stage 2 assesses the impact of a plan or project on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to the site’s structure, function and conservation objectives. Where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of these impacts is also required.

Stage 3. Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of measures, a plan or project will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan or project can proceed.

Stage 4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project, an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura 2000 site will be necessary.

1.2 Case law

The European Court of Justice has made a number of relevant rulings in relation to when an Appropriate Assessment is required and its purpose: *“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site is to be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects”* and that the plan or project may only be authorised *“where no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects”*.

A list of relevant rulings to the proposed project is provided below:

Table 1: Case law relevant to this AA Screening for the Master Plan

Case	Ruling
People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)	The ruling of the CJEU in this case requires that any conclusion of ‘no Likely Significant Effect’ on a European site must be made prior to any consideration of measures to avoid or reduce harm to the European site. The determination of Likely Significant Effects should not, in the opinion of the CJEU, constitute an attempt at detailed technical analyses. This should be conducted as part of the AA.

<p>Waddenzee (C-127/02)</p>	<p>The ruling in this case clarified that AA must be conducted using best scientific knowledge, and that there must be no reasonable scientific doubt in the conclusions drawn.</p> <p>The Waddenzee ruling also provided clarity on the definition of ‘significant effect’, which would be any effect from a plan or project which is likely to undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.</p>
<p>Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála (C-461/17)</p>	<p>The conclusions of the Court in this case were that consideration must be given during AA to:</p> <p>effects on qualifying habitats and/or species of a SAC or SPA, even when occurring outside of the boundary of a European site, if these are relevant to the site meeting its conservation objectives; and,</p> <p>effects on non-qualifying habitats and/or species on which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend, and which could result in adverse effects on the integrity of the European site.</p>
<p>T.C Briels and Others v Minister van Infrastructuur en Milieu (C-521/12)</p>	<p>The ruling of the CJEU in this case determined that compensatory measures cannot be used to support a conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity.</p>

1.3 Guidance Documents

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents on Appropriate Assessment, where relevant:

Table 2: List of relevant guidance documents

<p>Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities</p>	<p>National guidance on Appropriate Assessment for planning authorities. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, (2010 revision)</p>
<p>Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities</p>	<p>Circulars issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government with guidance relating to Appropriate Assessment. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 (2010)</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>The guidance within this document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive European Commission Environment Directorate-General, (2001 and updates April 2015 and September 2021).</p>

Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC	Publication to the Member States with an interpretation of certain concepts in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. EC Environment Directorate-General (2018)
Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle.	Publication relating to the use of the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000)
Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Practice Note PN01.	Publication from the Office of the Planning Regulator relating to screening for Appropriate Assessment. OPR (March 2021)
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities	National guidance on Appropriate Assessment for planning authorities. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, (2010 revision)
Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities	Circulars issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government with guidance relating to Appropriate Assessment. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 (2010);
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	The guidance within this document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive European Commission Environment Directorate-General, (2001 and updates April 2015 and September 2021).
Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC	Publication to the Member States with an interpretation of certain concepts in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. EC Environment Directorate-General (2018)
Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle.	Publication relating to the use of the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000)

2 Methodologies

This screening report was informed by a desk study of all relevant environmental information and also included a review of the ecological field survey data collected in June 2023. The screening then incorporated the following steps (broadly based on EC [2000]):

- Determine if the proposed works are directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site;
- Describe the proposed works;

- Describe the baseline environment;
- List 'Relevant' European sites which are those sites potentially connected to the proposed works by source-pathway-receptor linkages; and
- Conclude if linkages to 'Relevant' sites have the potential to give rise to Likely Significant Effects (LSE).

2.1 The Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

The standard 'source-pathway-receptor' conceptual model is a standard tool in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. An example of this model is provided below:

- Source (s); – e.g. Piling;
- Pathway (s); e.g. Vibration; and
- Receptor (s); e.g. Underground otter resting site at risk of collapse

The model evaluates the receptors as the qualifying interests (QIs) for which individual European sites are designated, with reference to the latest conservation objectives from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website, or substitute detailed objectives from other European sites where only generic objectives are available.

European sites are at risk of significant effects as a result of the proposed works where a source-pathway-receptor link exists between any elements of the proposed works and the European site. In order for an impact to occur there must be a risk enabled by having a 'source' (e.g. proposed works), a 'receptor' (e.g. a SAC/SPA or their QI habitats/species), and a pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. a watercourse which connects the impact source at a site of proposed works to a SAC/SPA). The risk of the impact does not automatically mean it will occur, nor that it will be significant. However, identification of the risk does mean that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental impact occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk, and the characteristics of the receptor.

2.2 The Precautionary Principle

The Precautionary Principle has been defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2005) as: "When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm [to the environment] that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. The judgement of plausibility should be grounded in scientific analysis". Reasoned application of the 'Precautionary Principle' is fundamental to the Screening Stage (and AA). The precautionary principle is referenced in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). It relates to an approach to risk management whereby if there is the possibility that a given policy or action might cause harm to the public or the environment and if there is still no scientific consensus on the issue, the policy or action in question should not be pursued.

The precautionary principle prevails where 'reasonable scientific doubt' cannot be ruled out. Known threats

to QIs of relevant sites are analysed to avoid overlooking subtle or far-field effect pathways. The duration of potential effects is a key consideration, in particular, because the European Court of Justice has recently ruled—albeit in specific reference to priority habitats—those effects to site integrity must be “lasting”.

2.3 Likely Significant Effect

The threshold for a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) is treated in the screening exercise as being above a de minimis level¹. The opinion of the Advocate General in CJEU case C-258/11 outlines:

“the requirement that the effect in question be ‘significant’ exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill.”

In this assessment, therefore, ‘relevant’ European sites are those within the potential ZOI of activities associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development, where LSE pathways to European sites were identified through the source-pathway-receptor model.

2.4 Desktop Study

Prior to the main fieldwork contributing to this assessment, a desktop survey of available information sources was carried out. These included:

- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography available from www.osi.ie;
- Online data available on European sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie;
- Land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government <http://www.myplan.ie>;
- Water quality data available from www.epa.ie;
- Ireland River Basin District data from www.wfdireland.ie;
- Soils, geology and hydrogeology data available from www.gsi.ie;
- Article 17 Reporting on the status of EU protected habitats and species in Ireland available from National Parks and Wildlife Service website¹;
- Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020 – 2026 available at BirdWatch Ireland website²
- Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 available on Kildare County Council website³
- Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 available on Kildare County Council website⁴

¹ Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála (Court of Justice of the EU, case C-285/11). A de minimis effect is a level of risk that is too small to be concerned with when considering ecological requirements of an Annex I habitat or a population of Annex II species present on a European site necessary to ensure their favourable conservation condition. If low level effects on habitats or individuals of species are judged to be in this order of magnitude and that judgment has been made in the absence of reasonable scientific doubt, then those effects are not considered to be likely significant effects.

² <https://birdwatchireland.ie/birds-of-conservation-concern-in-ireland/>

³ <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Planning/DevelopmentPlans/KildareCountyDevelopmentPlan2017-2023/>

⁴ <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Planning/DevelopmentPlans/KildareCountyDevelopmentPlan2023-2029/Volume2SmallTownsEnvironsVillagesRuralSettlements/>

2.5 Field Surveys

A site multidisciplinary walkover survey was carried out in September 2023. Habitats were identified and classified and dominant plant species were noted in accordance with the guidelines given by the JNCC (2007) and The Heritage Council (2010). Habitats were classified as per Fossitt (2000). Plant nomenclature follows the BSBI's List of Accepted Plant Names (BSBI, 2007). Fauna surveys were carried out during this multidisciplinary walkover survey for the detection of field signs such as tracks, markings, feeding signs, and droppings, as well as by direct observation as per NRA (2009).

3 Master Plan Scope and Description

Kildare County Council, in association with community organisations, are undertaking a Health Check / Urban Design Analysis for Coill Dubh/Coolearagh Co. Kildare. To inform a Town Renewal Master Plan .

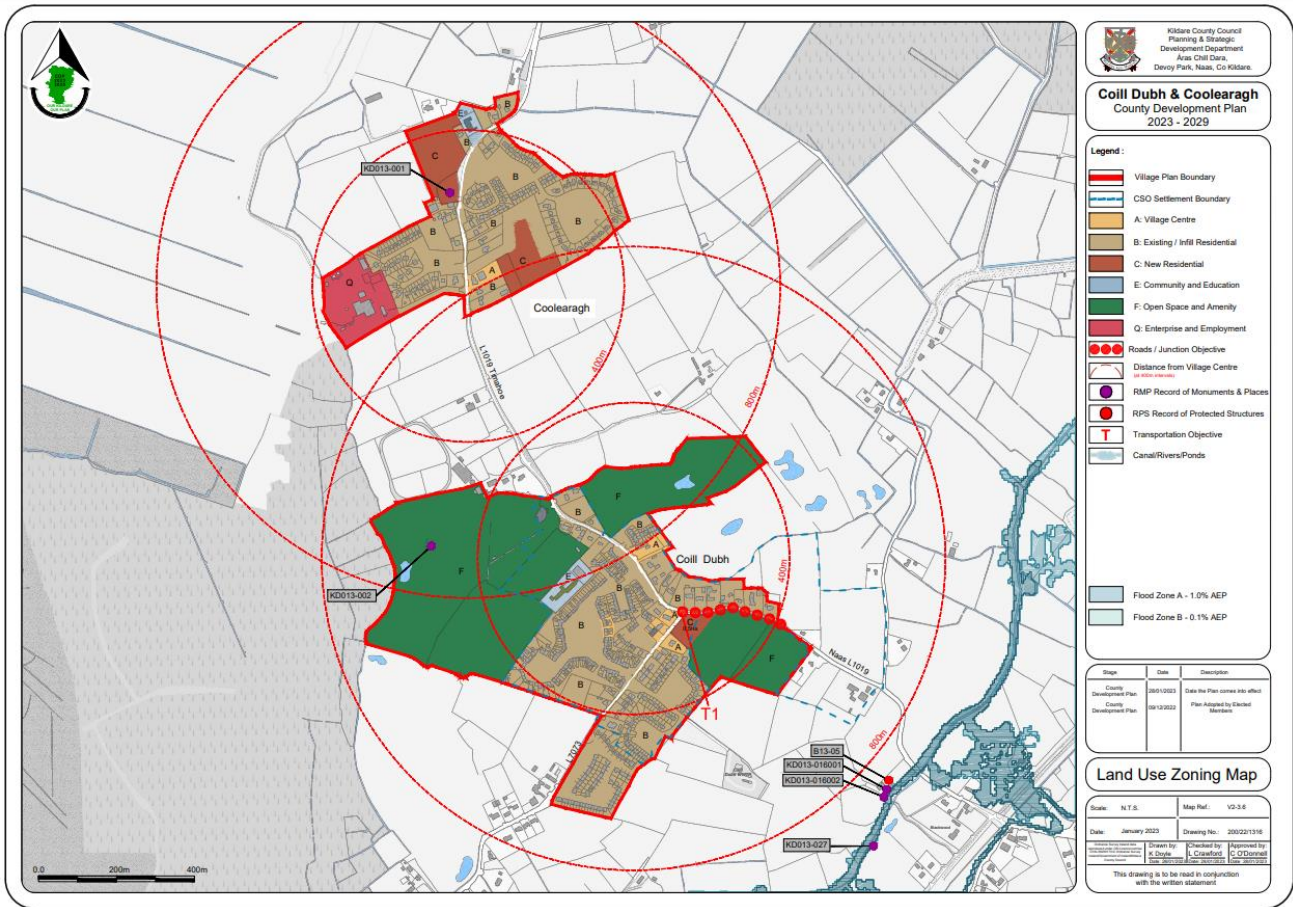
The key objectives of the Coill Dubh/Coolearagh Town Renewal Master Plan will be to deliver a new vision for the town with pedestrian focused public spaces and liveable streets. The aim is to put the pedestrian and cyclist at the heart of the design solution for these towns and to create fully accessible, inclusive and age-friendly public spaces. It is envisaged that the Town Renewal Master Plan will form part of the Development Plan policy for Coill Dubh/Coolearagh and will significantly shape the physical and social environment of the towns into the future.

3.1 Site of Works

Coill Dubh and Coolearagh are two separate settlements located close to each other in the northwest of County Kildare. Coolearagh has developed along the R403 and Coill Dubh has developed around the junction of this road with the R408. The villages are located approximately 40 km from Dublin and 15 km from Naas. Coill Dubh/Coolearagh act as local service centres for their inhabitants and the surrounding hinterland. Coill Dubh also known as Blackwood, was established in 1952 to accommodate workers on the Bord na Mona works in Allenwood. Coolearagh is located slightly to the north of Coill Dubh/Coolearagh and has a similar development form.

From 1999 - 2008 there was significant development and expansion of the town, with an 83% population increase came the expansion of residential developments and a new golf club. At present, there is a decrease in activity and amenities across the town, with the golf course currently not in use. According to the CSO, Coill Dubh/Coolearagh had a total population of 746 inhabitants as of the 2016 census. Coill Dubh/Coolearagh has several social and community facilities serving the village and surrounding hinterland, including a Community Centre, National School, Crèche, Soccer Pitch, GAA Pitch, Credit Union, Roman Catholic Church and Convenience Shops and petrol station.

Figure 1: Coill Dubh/Cooleragh Village (Source Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029)



3.2 Surface Water Bodies

No natural watercourses are found on or directly adjacent to the urban renewal sites. The West Cooleragh Stream is found to the east of the town. This small stream is a tributary of the Slate River, which provides connectivity to Ballynafagh Lake SAC and Ballynafagh Bog SAC. No water quality monitoring is conducted on the West Cooleragh Stream. Water Frameworks directive monitoring of the Slate from the period SW 2016-2021 indicated that this river has poor water quality. The Grand Canal is located 1.8 km South of Coill Dubh/Cooleragh and monitoring of the Grand Canal from the same period indicated that it has good water quality.

3.3 Groundwater

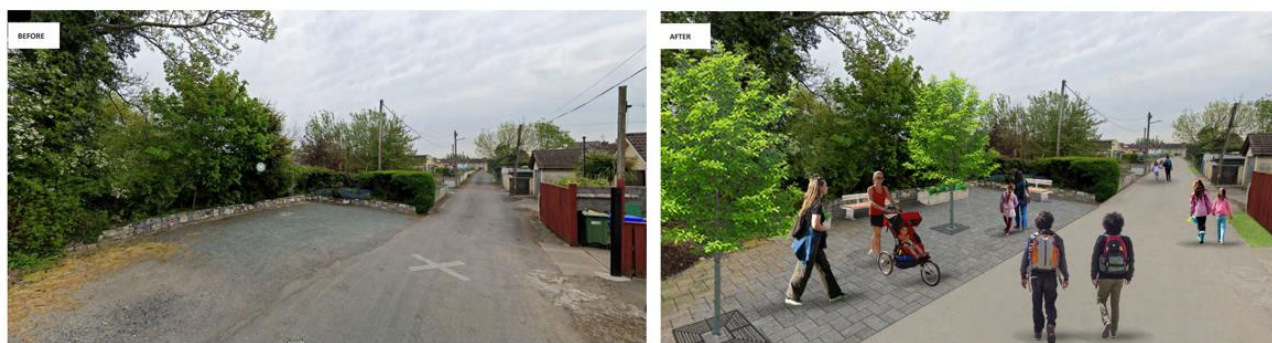
Groundwater vulnerability is a term used to represent the natural ground characteristics that determine the ease with which infiltrating water and potential contaminants may reach groundwater in a vertical or sub-vertical direction. Groundwater vulnerability was assessed using publicly available data sets from the Geological Survey of Ireland GIS web viewer⁵. Groundwater vulnerability was classed as Moderate/High under the village of Coill Dubh/Cooleragh. No groundwater dependent European designated habitats or species are found within or surrounding the subject site.

⁵ <https://dceur.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7e8a202301594687ab14629a10b748ef>

3.4 Habitat Description

Buildings and other artificial surfaces (BL3) make up the majority of the areas surveyed in Coill Dubh/Coolearagh. Adjoining areas include **Hedgerows (WL1)** containing Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with abundant Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg*) and Ivy (*Hedera helix*). Areas of **Ornamental/non-native shrub (WS3)** and **Amenity grassland (GA2)** are also found adjacent to the works areas.

Figure 1: Proposed Urban Renewal Area in Coill Dubh/Coolearagh



3.4.1 Habitat Significance

No Annex I habitats occur within the survey area or directly adjacent to it. No habitat types of any European designated sites are found within or adjacent to the Urban renewal areas. No rare, threatened, or protected species of plants as per the Red Data List (Wyse Jackson et al., 2016) were found. None of the habitat types found within any of the proposed renewal areas are of higher than low local ecological significance as defined by CIEEM (2016).

3.5 Species Surveys

3.5.1 Birds

Bird species recorded during the site walkover included wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), grey crow (*Corvus cornix*) and wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*). No SCI species were recorded within or surrounding the survey area.

3.5.2 Mammals

No Otter (*Lutra lutra*) holts or signs were identified. No suitable habitat for Otter is found within or surrounding the survey area.

3.5.3 Invasive Species

The Wildlife Acts, 1976 and 2000, contain a number of provisions relating to Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), covering several sections and subsections of the Acts. It is prohibited, without a licence, to plant or otherwise cause to grow in a wild state, in any place in the State, any species of flora, or the flowers, roots, seeds or spores of invasive flora listed on the Third Schedule.

Articles 49 and 50 of the aforementioned Acts set out the legal implications associated with alien invasive species and Schedule 3 (the Third Schedule) of the regulations lists non-native species subject to the restrictions of Articles 49 and 50, which make it an offence to plant, disperse, allow dispersal or cause the

spread of invasive species.

No Third Schedule invasive species were found within or surrounding the subject site.

4 Designated Sites and Ecological Assessment

A desktop study was carried out as part of the screening process. This included a review of available literature on the site and its immediate environs. Sources of information included the NPWS and National Biodiversity Data Centre databases on protected sites and species.

4.1 Designated Sites

Sites designated for the conservation of nature in Ireland include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Natural Heritage Areas (NHA); and
- proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA)

SACs and SPAs form the European/Natura 2000 network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for the Appropriate Assessment. SPAs and SACs are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. SPAs and SACs are designated under EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended. The following was considered when reviewing European sites:

1. Whether the proposed development site was located within or adjacent to any European sites.
2. Any European sites located within 15km of the proposed development site; and
3. Any European sites that are more than 15 km from the proposed development site but may potentially be impacted i.e., through a hydrological or bird foraging connection

Table 3: Source – Pathway – Receptor Assessment

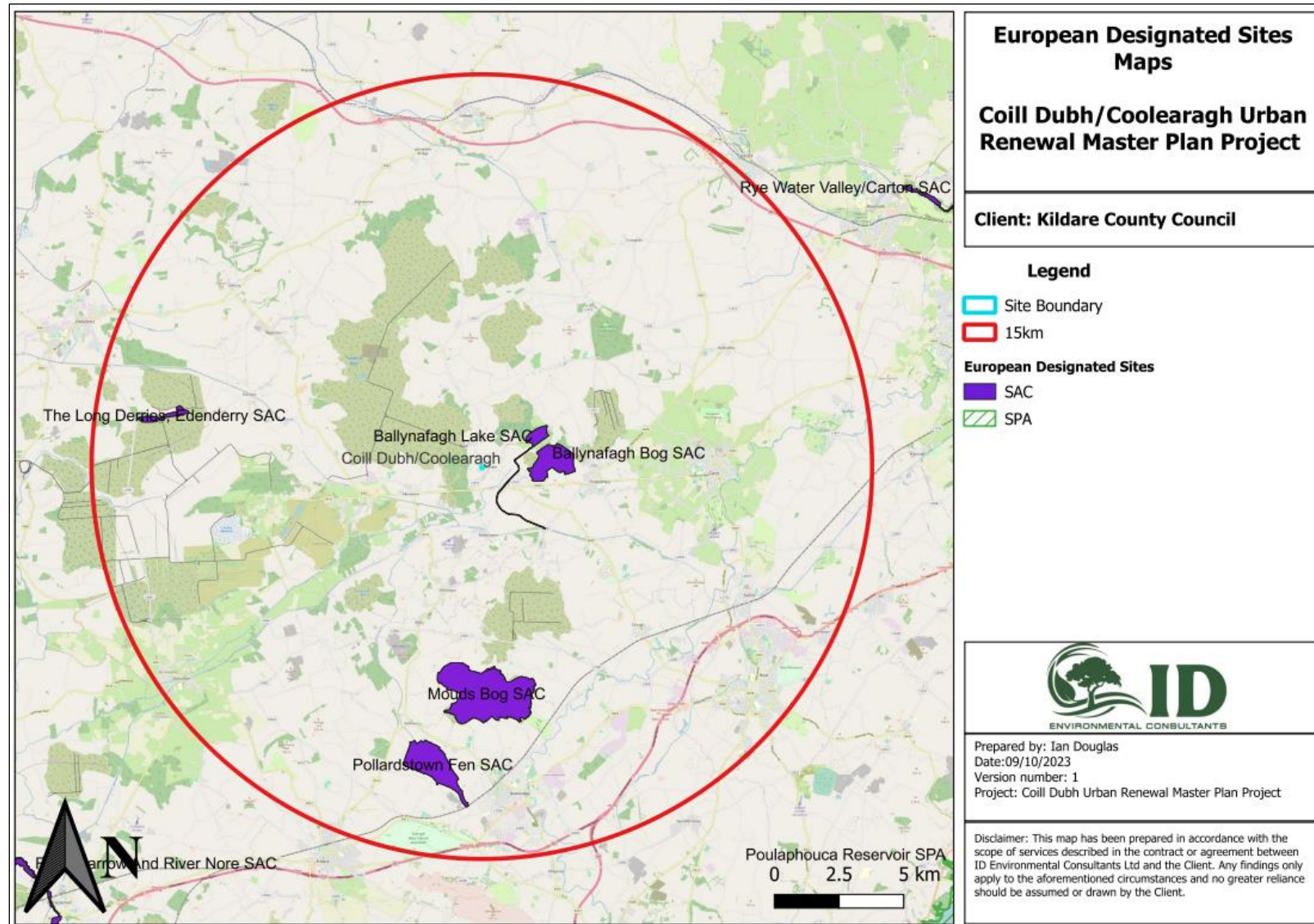
Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Ballynafagh Lake SAC 1387	640m	Alkaline fens [7230] Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016] Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The West Coolearagh Stream runs 160 meters east of the towns, which is a tributary of the River Slate which could provide a hydrological pathway to the SAC. However, as no works are occurring that will interact with the stream no impacts on water quality are predicted.</p> <p>Works occur within areas of existing built environments that are of low ecological value and could not support any of the QI species of the SAC.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No risk of likely significant effects were identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects</p>
Ballynafagh Bog SAC 0391	1.3km	Active Raised Bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitats, the intervening distance</p>

Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
		Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	<p>between the development site and the SAC and the absence of a source-pathway-receptor chain for likely significant effects.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide a pathway to the SAC or its QI habitats.</p> <p>No source-pathway-receptor links and no risk of likely significant effects were identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects</p>
Mouds bog SAC 2331	7.2km	<p>Active Raised Bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitats, the intervening distance between the development site and the SAC and the absence of a source-pathway-receptor chain for likely significant effects.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide a pathway to the SAC or its QI habitats.</p>

Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>No source-pathway-receptor links and no risk of likely significant effects were identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects</p>
Pollardstown Fen SAC 0396	10.2km	<p>Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitats, the intervening distance between the development site and the SAC and the absence of a source-pathway-receptor chain for likely significant effects.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide a pathway to the SAC or its QI habitats.</p> <p>No source-pathway-receptor links and no risk of likely significant effects were identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects</p>
The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC 0925	10.8km	<p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitats, the intervening distance</p>

Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>between the development site and the SAC and the absence of a source-pathway-receptor chain for likely significant effects.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide a pathway to the SAC or its QI habitats.</p> <p>No source-pathway-receptor links and no risk of likely significant effects were identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects</p>

Figure 3: Designated sites map



4.2 Cumulative and In combination Effects

Several other plans and projects have been considered as part of the screening process.

4.2.1 Plans

A wide range of international legislation, plans and programmes outlined below, cover aspects relevant to the draft Plan, such as nature, climate, water, air and waste.

- Floods Directive
- EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change
- EU Green Deal
- 2020 Climate and Energy Package
- 2030 Climate and Energy Framework
- UN Air Convention (also known as the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution)
- Convention on Biological Diversity and associated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020
- Bonn Convention
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

Relevant plans are listed in Table 4 according to a National, Regional/Local Projects and Plans. The Plan considered to be of the most relevance in assessing the potential for the impacts to designated sites local to Robertstown is the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report by ARUP (2022) stated:

‘This NIR has considered the potential of the Plan to give rise to likely significant effects which could adversely affect any European site, with regard to their qualifying interests, associated conservation status and the overall site integrity. In considering the potential for adverse effects, it has been noted that the Plan is largely a strategic and high-level plan, which will inform the preparation of project level design and assessment. In light of this, and where necessary, a precautionary approach has been adopted by the NIR to ensure that the policies and objectives proposed and supported by the Plan are underpinned by the principles of sustainability of which the protection of European Sites forms part of. Where necessary, the requirement for project level environmental assessment is emphasised in mitigation.

As such, the Plan itself, subject to it securing the mitigation detailed in this report, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects’.

Table 1: Plans reviewed for cumulative effects

Hierarchy	Plan/Project	Significance to the Plan
	Meath County Development Plans 2021-2027 Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027	Kildare is bordered by several counties with several protected European sites located across county borders. Similar

Hierarchy	Plan/Project	Significance to the Plan
Local	<p>Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028</p> <p>Wicklow County Development Plan 2021-2027</p> <p>Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028</p> <p>Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023</p> <p>Draft South County Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028</p> <p>Draft Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029</p> <p>Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028</p> <p>Athy Local Area Plan 2021- 2027</p> <p>Naas Local Area Plan 2021- 2027</p> <p>Local land use plans including Sallins Local Area Plan 2016-2022, Monasterevin Local Area Plan 2016-2022, Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021, Kilcullen LAP 2014-2020, Kildare LAP 2012, Newbridge LAP 2013-2019, Maynooth LAP 2013-2019, Collinstown LAP, Kilcock LAP 2015-2021, Clane Local Area Plan 2017- 2023, Celbridge LAP 2017-2023, Leixlip LAP 2020-2023, Sallins LAP 2009, Naas LAP 2019-2023</p> <p>Edenderry LAP 2011</p> <p>County Development Plan Settlement Strategy- Villages and Rural Settlements.</p> <p>Plans include for:</p>	<p>development plans are in existence, or draft format, throughout the region. All plans have been or will be subject to AA screening and if necessary Stage 2 AA with no likely significant effects or avoidance of impacts on the integrity meaning in combination effects are not likely (Kildare CDP 2023 – 2027).</p> <p>All plans have been or will be subject to AA screening and if necessary Stage 2 AA with no likely significant effects or avoidance of impacts on the integrity meaning in combination effects are not likely (Kildare CDP 2023 – 2027)</p> <p>All plans have been or will be subject to AA screening and if necessary Stage 2 AA within no</p>

Hierarchy	Plan/Project	Significance to the Plan
	<p>Villages (17) - Allenwood, Athgarvan, Ballitore, Ballymore Eustace, Caragh, Coill Dubh/Cooleragh, Crookstown, Johnstown, Johnstownbridge, Kildangan, Kilmeague, Moone, Narraghmore, Robertstown, Straffan, Suncroft, Timolin</p> <p>Settlements (20) - Allen, Ardclough, Ballyshannon, Brannockstown, Broadford, Brownstown, Calverstown, Clogharinka, Cutbush, Kilberry, Kilkea, Kilmead, Kilteel, Lackagh / Mountrice, Maganey / Levittown, Milltown, Nurney, Rathcoffey, Staplestown, Two Mile House</p>	likely significant effects or avoidance of impacts on the integrity meaning in combination effects are not likely (Kildare CDP 2023 – 2027)

4.3.2 Projects

Several other projects have been considered as part of the screening process. A search of the planning websites of Kildare County Council was carried out as part of the desktop study. Most developments in the wider area were associated with the construction of or alteration of residential buildings.

Table 2: Projects reviewed for cumulative effects

Planning Application Reference	Description	Potential for In Combination effects
181514	a ten year planning permission to develop a renewable energy development. The proposed renewable energy development will comprise of (a) the construction and operation of 2 areas of solar photovoltaic arrays mounted on metal frames over an area of approximately 200ha, and having a maximum overall height of 3 metres over ground level; (b) Internal solar farm underground cabling; (c) 2 no. temporary construction compounds; (d) recreation and amenity works, including looped walk (upgrade of existing tracks and provision of new tracks, car parking and vehicular access); (e) 1 no.	<p>The proposed development is 6.3km from the centre of Coill Dubh/Cooleragh.</p> <p>The NIS was carried out by the MKO in 2018 for the proposed development. This concluded the following: on the basis of best scientific knowledge in view of the conservation objectives of the</p>

	<p>Battery Storage compound; (f) upgrade of existing tracks and provision of new site access roads; (g) site drainage; (h) forestry felling and replanting; (i) permanent signage; and (j) all associated site development and ancillary works. The proposed renewable energy development will have an operational life of 35 years from the date of commissioning. The overall renewable energy project also includes the provision of a 110kV substation with associated electrical plant, welfare facilities, waste water holding tank, security fencing, upgrade of existing tracks and provision of new site access roads, 110kV overhead line grid connection cabling with associated angle lattice masts and supporting polesets and all ancillary works, which is subject to a separate planning application made directly to An Bord Pleanála in accordance with Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in relation to the project and accompanies this planning application. Revised by significant further information consisting of; Further Information Response Report; Updated Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Appendices; Updated Natura Impact Statement; Amended Planning Application Drawings, showing; amended access/amenity track (relocated to accommodate Marsh Fritillary habitat), updated amenity signage, clarification of road sectional drawings, additional substation cross section drawing. Updated photomontage booklet</p>	<p>European Sites identified above, that the components of the Proposed Project (Solar Farm, Substation and Grid Connection and associated infrastructure individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.</p> <p>Therefore no cumulative or in combination impacts can exist.</p>
<p>221203</p>	<p>for a 10-year permission, for the construction and operation of a renewable energy development within a site boundary of c. 114 ha. The proposed development will consist of a development area of circa 71.7 ha including solar on fixed on ground mounted frames with a maximum height of 3 metres, 1 No. battery storage compound, 1 No. customer switchgear container, 1 No. 110kv grid connected single storey substation, 1 No. single storey customer substation and all associated electrical plant, inverter units, electrical transformers, battery units, cooling equipment, underground cabling and ducting, boundary fencing, security entrance gates, CCTV, upgrading of existing access road and new internal access roads and all associated ancillary</p>	<p>The proposed development is 6.3km from the centre of Coill Dubh/Coolearagh</p> <p>The AA screening report was carried out by EirEco in 2022. This concluded that the proposed development presents no risk of giving rise to any significant or other impacts within any designated European site.</p> <p>Therefore no cumulative or in combination impacts exist</p>

	<p>activities. The proposed development will have a 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning. Revised by significant further information which consists of Provision of quantum of energy export (of up to 80MW) in the proposed development and storage capacity of proposed battery compound (of up to 80MWh). Clarification of energy export (of up to 15MW, no battery storage) of adjacent permitted development 15/1172 (extension of duration under 20/1052); Submission of details of adjacent permitted development 15/1172 (extension of duration under 20/1052); Provision of details of minor works to site entrance, construction traffic warning signage to public roadway, at proposed site entrance and also within internal haul routes; Clarification of extent of private roadway (haul roads) within the site; Provision of a fire risk assessment of hazards for on or near the solar array and battery storage compound; Provision of programme/schedule of works for proposed development and adjacent permitted development 15/1172 (extension of duration under 20/1052); Provision of amended Archaeological Impact Assessment. Provision of draft Construction Traffic Management Plan; Provision of Independent Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2; Provision of amended preliminary Construction and Environment Management Plan; Provision of Preliminary Public Liaison Engagement Plan</p>	
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5 Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement and Conclusion

The findings of this Screening Assessment are presented following the European Commission’s Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment’s Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

5.1 Summary of Assessment of Possible LSE to European Sites

The zone of Influence and all possible associated effects and impacts from the proposed works upon designated sites are discussed below. A rationale for no LSE is also provided.

5.1.1 Land-take resulting in habitat loss or degradation.

The draft Master Plan area does not overlap with the boundary of any European site. Therefore, there are no European sites at risk of direct habitat loss impacts. All works areas proposed for this Master Plan are found within existing urban areas and are not likely to provide any supporting habitat for any QI of any designated site local to Coill Dubh/Coolearagh.

5.1.2 Changes in water quality and quantity/distribution resulting in habitat loss or degradation.

Changes to surface water quality within the West Coolearagh Stream or the Slate River as a result of the implementation of this Master Plan are unlikely to occur. These watercourses connect to the Ballynafagh Lake SAC. However, no planned works are occurring that will interact with or occur within close proximity to either of these watercourses.

5.1.3 Noise vibration resulting in disturbance

No construction-related disturbance and displacement impact on fauna species could potentially occur within the vicinity of the draft Master Plan. For mammal species such as otter, disturbance effects would not be expected to extend beyond 150m. No evidence of or suitable habitat for Otter is found within this area.

For birds, disturbance effects would not be expected to extend beyond a distance of c.300m, as noise levels associated with general construction activities would attenuate to close to background levels at that distance. No SPA's are found within 15km of Dubh/Coolearagh. Ballynafagh Lake SAC is likely to support SCI bird species throughout the year. Given a distance of over 640m and the small scale nature of the proposed works, no disturbance impacts are predicted.

5.1.4 In Combination and Cumulative Effects

The Master Plan area is not considered to form part of any important ex-situ sites for any SCI species of any European site, there is no potential for in-combination effects arising from this Master Plan. In addition, no likely significant effects were identified as a result of this project. Therefore no cumulative effects can exist.

5.2 Findings of Article 6(3) Screening Assessment

Name of project or plan: Town Renewal Master Plan: Coill Dubh/Coolearagh, Co. Kildare

Name and location of Natura 2000 Site: The closest SAC is Ballynafagh Lake SAC, which is 640m from the Coill Dubh/Coolearagh urban area boundary

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site? The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site.

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site

(provide details)? On the basis that the proposed project will have no impacts on any European site, no cumulative or in combination impacts are predicted.

Overall Conclusions

In our professional opinion and in view of the best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) are not likely to have any significant effects on nearby designated sites. **Therefore, progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.**

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Rowan



Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report, Cooleragh Town Renewal Master Plan September 2023

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Report Sign Off Page

CLIENT REF:	KIL003-1		
DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS	COOLERAGH / COILL DUBH, CO. KILDARE		
REVISION	DATE	ORIGNATOR	REVIEWER
FOR REVIEW	11/10/2023	SC	JM
FOR ISSUE			

NOTES

Reference Documents SEA Statement, Kildare County Council Development Plan 2023-2029

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1.0 Introduction and Background

This Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Rowan on behalf of Kildare County Council. It provides information on and assesses the Town Renewal Master Plan Urban Design Analyses / Health checks for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh and is prepared with due regard for the updated EPA (2023) guidelines 'SEA of Local Authority Land-Use Plans -EPA Recommendations and Resources' and in accordance with the SEA requirements as presented in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (KCDP).

This requirement falls under the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland, Project Ireland 2040. Both the 20 year National Planning Framework (NPF) and a the National Development Plan (NDP) are included in Project Ireland 2040.

Kildare County Council, in association with community organisations, appointed an urban designer led consultant team to prepare a Health Check / Urban Design Analysis and a Town Renewal Master Plan for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh, (hereafter referred to as 'the Master Plan').

The purpose of the plan is to guide the development of Coill Dubh / Cooleragh into the future as part of an initiative to deliver a new vision for the town. This includes pedestrian focused public spaces and liveable, accessible, inclusive and age friendly public spaces. It is envisaged that the Master Plan will form part of the Development Plan policy for this settlement and will significantly shape the physical and social environment of the village in accordance with the Village Plan policies and objectives.

SEA screening is defined in the relevant guidance documents¹ as *“the process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA.”*

The project opportunities will be assessed in accordance with the Kildare County Council Development Plan Policy and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Screening Guidelines. The proposed project sits within several of the National Strategic Outcomes contained in the National Planning Framework as follows;

NSO1 Compact Growth – A number of designated villages and settlements in Kildare County, of which Coill Dubh / Cooleragh is included, have been allocated a 4% and 1.5% of the overall population growth of the country up to 2029. These designated villages will continue to develop as local centres for services with growth levels to cater for sustainable growth minimising pressure on services and the environment. Future growth must be sustainable growth that will benefit the village while also creating an attractive place in which people can live and work. The land use zoning objectives within the KCDP include the protection and provision of open spaces and amenity and recreation areas.

Kildare County Council conducted a Strategic Environmental Assessment of County Development Plan 2023-2029. This assessment included the proposed update to the Coill Dubh / Cooleragh Town Plan and their objectives for the period. Neither the SEA or the NIS identified potential significant impacts requiring additional measures.

The Town Master Plan must also be assessed to determine if there is a risk of significant environmental effects. It must first be screened for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular Plan or Programme, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have

significant environmental effects, and thus would warrant SEA. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the requirement for SEA of the proposed Project.

In doing so, the Council must decide whether the Master Plan would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and in doing so must take account of the relevant criteria set out in the SEA Directive as transposed into Irish Legislation in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 201 of 2011.

It should be noted that the Kildare CDP 2023-2029, the NPF and RSES were all subject to full Strategic Environmental Assessment. The appropriate environmental authorities were consulted throughout the SEA process and therefore the objectives and changes arising from these plans and strategies sitting above the Master Plan in the planning hierarchy have all been subjected to a thorough and robust level of assessment.

The Council, in consultation with the statutory authorities, must make a determination as to whether an SEA is required, taking account of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and any submissions or observations received from the prescribed environmental authorities.

1.1 Legislative Context

The European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) requires an environmental assessment be carried out for all plans or programmes that are prepared in one of 11 specified sectors as follows;

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Fisheries
- Energy
- Industry
- Transport
- Waste Management
- Water Management
- Telecommunications
- Tourism •
- Town and Country Planning
- Land Use

In Ireland this Directive has been transposed into legislation under two separate regulations **S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (European Communities) (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 to 2011**. These regulations set out the following:

Schedule 1: Criteria for determining whether a Plan or Programme (or Modification thereto) is likely to have significant effects on the Environment and therefore require an SEA.

Schedule 2: Information to be contained in an Environmental Report

Articles 9-17 of those Regulations set out the requirement to complete an Environmental Report, scoping, timing, consultation, transboundary effects and monitoring associated with completing same.

S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (European Communities) (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 to 2011.

These Regulations specifically relate to the requirement to carry out SEA for Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Regional Planning Guidelines.

This report is the screening statement for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Coill Dubh / Cooleragh Master Plan. Article 3(4) of Directive 2001/42/EC requires that *“Member States shall determine whether plans and programmes other than those referred to in paragraph 2, which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant environmental effects”*. This process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and therefore, would require SEA is known as ‘Screening’.

The criteria for determining (or Screening) whether a particular plan *is likely to have significant environmental effects* are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and again in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

2.0 Planning Hierarchy and Purpose of the Master Plan

The National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040. On the 16th of February 2018, the Government published the National Planning Framework (NPF), which, together with the National Development Plan (NDP), form 'Project Ireland 2040' – the Government's vision for how to develop the country over the coming decades. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for our people, and to protect and enhance our environment – from our villages to our cities, and everything around and in between. The purpose of the National Planning Framework is to enable all parts of Ireland, whether rural or urban, to successfully accommodate growth and change, by facilitating a shift towards Ireland's regions and cities other than Dublin, while also recognising Dublin's ongoing key role.

The NPF was supported by the publication of the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework ('Roadmap') which was published on the 3rd of July 2018. This document advised that the NPF is of direct relevance to the preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and County Development Plans.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

The RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development to sustainably grow the Region to 2031 and beyond.

The RSES sets out a vision for the Eastern and Midland Region to create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all. Its key principals are;

- Healthy placemaking
- Climate Action
- Economic Opportunity.

Kildare County Council Development Plan 2023-2029

The vision and goals for village environs and amenities are set out in Chapter 13 Landscape Recreation Amenity of the KDP which are of relevance include;

LR 077 Encourage the planting of pollinator friendly trees and plants, where appropriate, to improve pollinator populations within state and publicly owned land public parks and public open spaces in towns and villages, including as part of mixed use and residential developments in accordance with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020.

And,

LR 095 Implement the recommendations of the Kildare Open Space Strategy 2021 and make provision for a hierarchy of public parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas within towns and villages so that the population can participate in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits within easy reach of their homes and places of work.

The KCDP identified Designated Villages and Settlements, which are further assessed in Volume 2 of the Plan. The KCDP Objectives for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh Village are;

- Promote re-development of former Cooleragh Bord na Móna site
- Protect the established retail and commercial functions of Coill Dubh / Coolearagh
- Investigate feasibility of a playground and local park facility in Coill Dubh / Cooleragh;
- Facilitate an appropriate expansion of amenity sites and recreation/sports facilities in the two village area.

Kildare Open Space Strategy (2021)

The proposed Master Plan would also fall under the objectives set out in Section 13.7.1 Open Space where the zoning of land for “open space” is highlighted as an important element of land use planning. The vision for future open space requirements for villages, as outlined in the document Kildare Open Space Strategy (2021), is;

“To advance a network of accessible, inclusive and safe open spaces in order to sustain the recreational, environmental, health and wellbeing needs of the community for current and future generations.”

And this is captured in

The Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy is provided in Appendix 3 of the KCDP. The key strategic goals of relevance to this proposed Master Plan include;

- To create a vision for open space and outdoor recreation provision in County Kildare
- To assess the play and recreation needs of a growing population across all age groups
- To optimise natural resources and green infrastructure, with a focus on biodiversity and climate action
- To guide the future provision of open spaces throughout County Kildare, by informing policies and objectives in the Kildare County Development Plan and Local Area Plans.

Kildare County Development Plan: Written Statement and Villages and Rural Settlements

V2 3.12.1 Village Centre It is an objective of the Council to;

- V CC1 Investigate the feasibility of designating an Architectural Conservation Area within the planned village of Coill Dubh.
- V CC2 Support the objectives and priority projects of the forthcoming Coill Dubh Village Renewal Plan.

V2 3.12.2 Economic Development It is an objective of the Council to;

- V CC3 Promote and facilitate the re-development of the former Bord na Mona site at Cooleragh.
- V CC4 Protect the established retail and commercial functions within the settlements of Coill Dubh and Cooleragh.

V2 3.12.3 Natural Heritage

- V CC5 It is an objective of the Council to implement a planting scheme in the village in order to improve the general appearance of the village and also enhance biodiversity.

V2 3.12.4 Social and Community Infrastructure It is an objective of the Council to;

- V CC6 Investigate the feasibility of providing a playground and local park facility in Coill Dubh/Cooleragh.
- V CC7 Facilitate the appropriate expansion of amenity sites and recreational / sports facilities in Coill Dubh / Cooleragh.

V2 3.12.5 Movement and Transport It is an objective of the Council to;

- V CC8 Provide safe access and egress to the permanent walkway, which links village centre lands to Coill Dubh AFC to the east (See Map V2-3.6).
- V CC9 Realign and improve the junction of the L1019 and the L7073 (See T1 on Map V2-3.6). V CC10 Investigate the feasibility of providing a new access to Coill Dubh National school, in order to eliminate traffic through the existing housing estate.
- V CC11 Improve and realign the road from Coill Dubh towards Dagwelds Cross (See Map V2-3.6)

Kildare County Development Plan: Written Statement and Villages and Rural Settlements

Volume 2 Part 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 presents the development plan and objectives for designated villages within the county. Volume 2 Part 2 (Table 3.3) of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 identifies Coill Dubh / Cooleragh land use proposal for 3 new residential hectares and 0 hectares of service sites – defined as *specifically makes provision to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in villages. It is envisaged that the provision of serviced sites to create ‘build your own home’ opportunities within the existing footprint of villages will provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside. New serviced sites should be developed in accordance with a comprehensive plan detailing the layout of services, roads, pedestrian and cycle routes and the landscaping of open space.*

The relevant CC objectives are proposed as priority projects of the forthcoming Coill Dubh Village Renewal Plan.

- V CC 5 It is an objective of the Council to implement a planting scheme in the village in order to improve the general appearance of the village and also enhance biodiversity.
- V CC 9 Realign and improve the junction of the L1019 and the L7073.

3.0 Coill Dubh / Cooleragh Town Renewal Master Plan

In accordance

The Master Plan looks at a vision for a future Coill Dubh / Cooleragh focused on an enhanced pedestrian realm connecting the villages, improving the walking paths and delivering a new vision for the villages with enhanced laneways, planting strategy, street furniture and protected open spaces.

The aim is to put the pedestrian and cyclist at the heart of the design solution for the village and to create fully accessible, inclusive and age-friendly public spaces. It does not serve a statutory function in terms of zoning. The key focus of the Master Plan is to provide the Spatial Framework within which the Village can be reinvigorated. It will provide a schematic view and layout for the project opportunities in the village.

Opportunity Coill Dubh: Transform an existing car park into a pedestrian realm with seating, plants and improved paving.

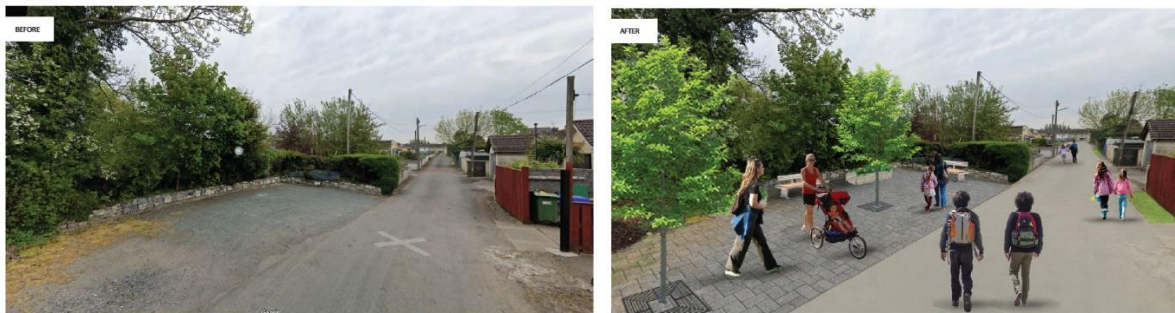


Figure 3-1: Proposed Coill Dubh Road Redevelopment

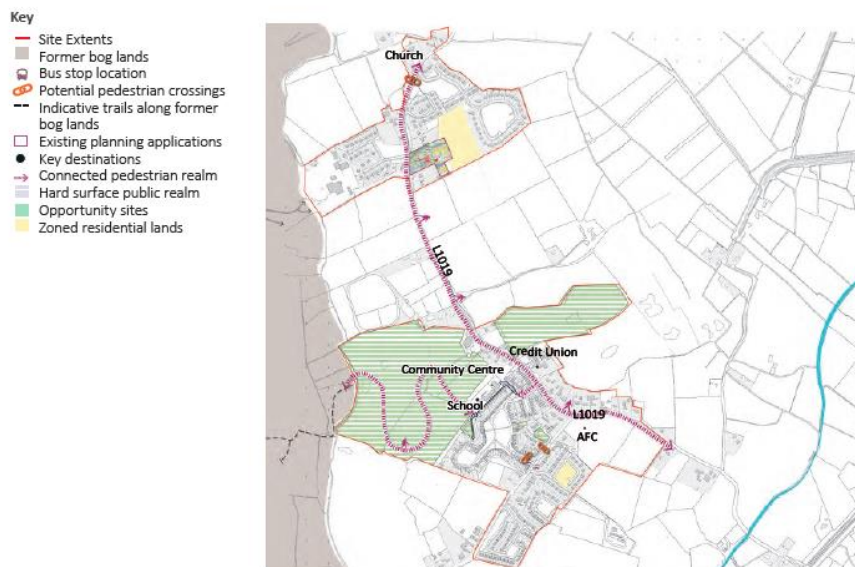


Figure 3-2 Framework of the Vision : A Future Coill Dubh / Cooleragh

4.0 Draft Master Plan and Screening Requirement for SEA

The Master Plan is a non-statutory land use plan and is being screened for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the requirements of:

- Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) & 3(5) relate to 'Screening' for the requirement for SEA.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which sets out the "Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment".

This Report constitutes a Screening of the proposed Master Plan for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the above legislation. The report has been prepared following consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Paragraph 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The specified Environmental Authorities are listed in Section 5.1 of this report.

4.1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and relationship to Screening for SEA

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on a European site. European sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

The first step in the process is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This first step is referred to as Screening for the requirement for AA and the purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

The AA Screening that has been undertaken for this site by ID Environmental Consultants and is provided for review in conjunction with this SEA Screening. The AA Screening Report presented the following findings and overall conclusion for Robertstown;

- The closest SAC is Ballynafagh Lake SAC, which is 640m from the Coill Dubh / Cooleragh urban area boundary, see Figure 3-1 below.
- The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site.
- On the basis that the proposed project will have no impacts on any European site, no cumulative or in combination impacts are predicted.
- In the professional opinion of the ecological consultants and Kildare CC (and in view of the best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) are not likely to have any significant effects on nearby designated sites. **Therefore, progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.**

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/084 (15th February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to screening for SEA in that *“where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

- *an AA of the plan must be carried out, and*
- *in any case where a SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out.”*

Hence, where the plan requires AA screening to be carried out it shall also require a SEA screening.

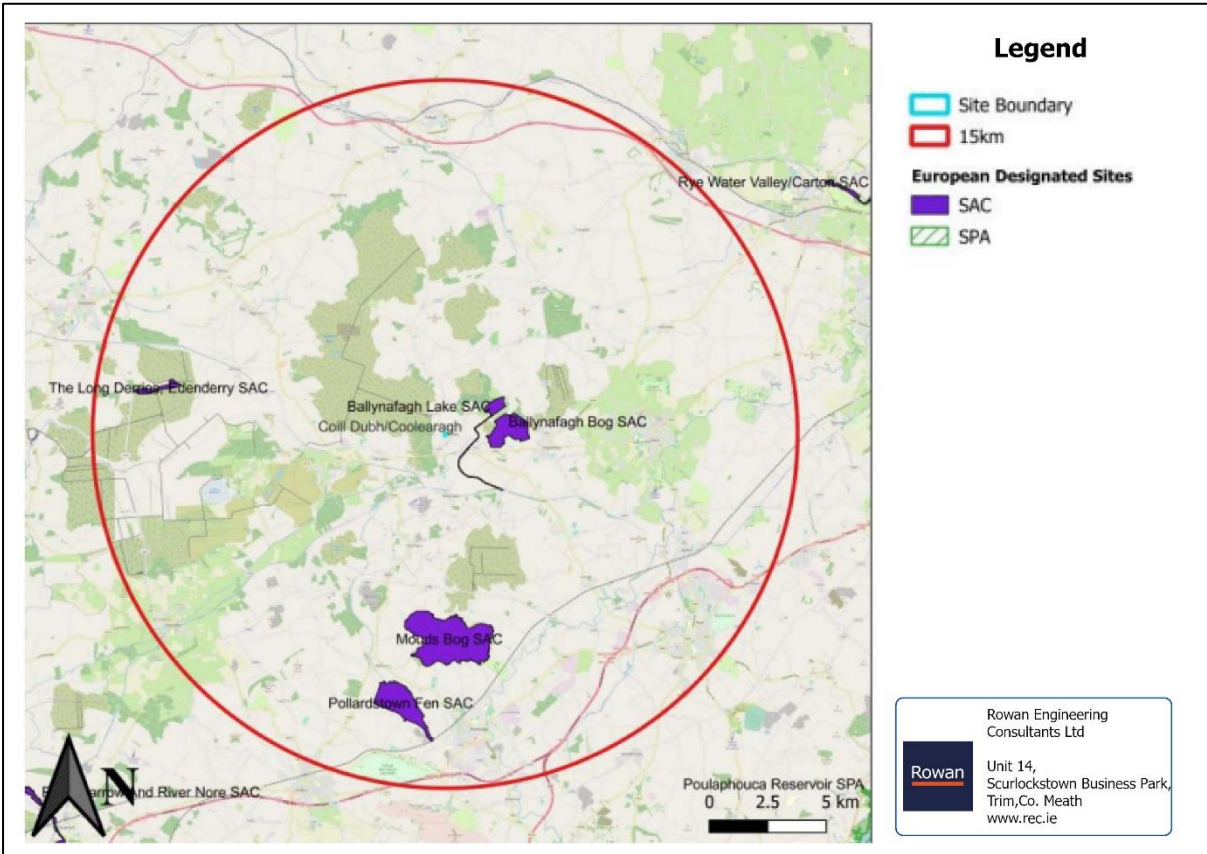


Figure 4-1 Proximity of European Designated Sites to Coill Dubh / Cooleragh.

5.0 Screening for the Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The following section and table below present's the SEA screening assessment of the Draft Master Plan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of SEA Regulations (S.I. 436 of 2004) as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the Master Plans together with the Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

Table 5-1 SEA screening against Schedule 2 a criteria

Criteria for determining whether the Draft Master Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment
1. The characteristics of the Town Renewals Master Plan having regard to;
i) <i>The degree to which the Master Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and opperting conditions or by allocation resources,</i>
<p>The land use zoning objectives and activities for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh are set out in the KCDP under Chapter 13 and Volume 2 Part 2 Villages and Rural Settlements, with further objectives in Appendix 3 Kildare Open Spaces Strategy as presented in the section above.</p> <p>The preparation of the Master Plan clearly aligns with these objectives and strategic goals. The opportunity for redevelopment of the existing Village towards a mixed-use approach with enhanced open spaces, more trees, improved pedestrian access and cycleways in the main village crossroads and approach roads.</p> <p>The proposal is clearly highlighted within the KCDP. While the proposed Master Plan includes for a schematic indication of potential future access routes around the Village and along the Grand Canal.</p> <p>The KCDP was subject to both SEA and AA, any changes to the use or zoning of these lands would need to form part of a Variation to the KCDP, however the Master Plan does not provide for any change of zoning at this juncture.</p> <p>Therefore, the Master Plan outlines potential future arrangements for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh which is consistent with the established land use zoning objectives for these lands. The KCDP as varied sets out the proposed Vision and objectives for the development of the County over a six-year period. The Development Plan aims to plan for and support the sustainable long-term development of Kildare; provide for the future wellbeing of the residents across the County. All planning proposals are assessed against the objectives of the Development Plan and all plans must be consistent with the KCDP.</p> <p>The Core Strategy which defines the settlement hierarchy; and identifies the delivery of sustainable, compact settlements supported by a commensurate level of physical, social and green infrastructure to mitigate against climate change and enhance the quality of life for residents. together with the associated zoning will not be altered as a result of the Master Plan.</p> <p>While the Master Plan does set out a guide to the spatial framework for future development in terms of the Village the future development of Allenwood does not provide for the re-zoning or de-zoning of lands and will not specify locational requirements. The KCDP sets out clearly the spatial framework for development locations and land use in the County with any future planning application assessed against its requirements and not the requirements of the Master Plan.</p>

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

The Master Plan will be a non-statutory plan that responds directly to a specific objectives of the KCDP;

- Land use zoning Objective F, Open Space and Amenity, To protect and provide for open space, amenity and recreation provision.
- V CC2 Support the objectives and priority projects of the forthcoming Coill Dubh Village Renewal Plan.
- V CC9 Realign and improve the junction of the L1019 and the L7073.

The primary purpose of the Master Plan is to provide further detail and clarity regarding the intentions of the Planning Authority to give effect to the objectives for the lands. The Master Plan will have no influence on other plans either above or below in a hierarchy.

(iii) the relevance of the Draft Master Plan in the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,

The Master Plan outlines potential future arrangements for Village in a manner which is entirely consistent with the land use zoning objectives for the lands as established in the KCDP. The KCDP was subject to a full SEA and AA.

As the Master Plan will not lead to the alteration of existing protective objectives within the KCDP it will be subject to the high-level protective objectives with which it must comply together with the SEA Strategic Environmental Objectives associated with the KCDP. Of relevance are the following objectives which promote sustainable development across the 2 of the 3 pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental and are relevant to the Master Plan

- Protect and enhance human health and wellbeing
- To promote sustainable development that matches existing and new infrastructure with the proposed population growth for the county.

(iv) Environmental Problems relevant to the Draft Master Plan

The Master Plan will be a non-statutory plan which outlines potential development arrangements for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh in a manner which is entirely consistent with the land use zoning objectives for the lands as established in the KCDP.

The SEA Environmental Report of the KCDP provides considerable detail on environmental issues relevant to the County.

The environmental report conducted as part of the SEA process on the entire content of the KCDP and discussed various issues of concern in the plan area. In summary, the SEA stated that the overarching aims and objectives for the rural settlements of County Kildare are likely to result in overall positive and neutral environmental effects as they largely support and mirror the objectives of volume one and the Core Strategy of the KCDP and the principles of sustainable development.

As discussed, the Master Plan will not give rise to any rezoning of lands and must ensure consistency with the KCDP which sets out the framework for development and land use. Therefore, any future development associated with the KCDP will be subject to the following council policies;

BI P1 1 Integrate in the development management process the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features by applying the mitigation hierarchy to potential adverse impacts on important ecological features (whether designated or not), i.e. avoiding impacts where possible, minimising adverse impacts, and if significant effects are unavoidable by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate. Opportunities for biodiversity net gain are encouraged.

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

The Master Plan will be a non-statutory plan which outlines potential development arrangements for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh Village in a manner which is entirely consistent with the land use zoning objectives for the lands as established in the KCDP. Therefore, the Master Plan includes for the implementation of European environmental legislation as already set out in the KCDP, or where otherwise required or updated since the adoption of the KCDP.

The EU has a wide range of environmental legislation, dealing with such issues as tackling climate change, sustainable development, waste management, air pollution, water protection, nature and biodiversity, soil protection and noise pollution. Directives relating to the environment are specifically mentioned in the KCDP with which the content of the Master Plan has been developed in compliance with which are;

- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC),
- EU Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC),
- EU Groundwater Directive 92006/118/EC),
- European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 S.I. 350 of 2014
- Wildlife Act 1976, as amended, and
- Flora Protection Order 1999
- EU Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

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

Typical effects in keeping with the development of village areas into a fully accessible, inclusive and age friendly public spaces will be in line with the zoning as outlined in the KCDP. The Master Plan provides a vision to create a future Coill Dubh / Cooleragh which will put the pedestrian and cyclist in the heart of the design solution.

It will demonstrate how Coill Dubh / Cooleragh can create a village with liveable streets and pedestrian focused public spaces, which aligns with the principles of sustainable development and compact growth.

It is considered that the characteristics of the effects of the Master Plan will be minimal and will largely be positive and would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

(ii) the cumulative nature of the effects,

No cumulative effects are identified for the Master Plan. There are no specific development proposals arising from the Master Plan and no changes to the Core Strategy which could potentially lead to cumulative effects with the current County Development Plan.

(iii) the transboundary nature of the effects

In terms of negative transboundary environmental effects/impacts it is considered that with proper regard and consistency with the environmental protection objectives contained in the Development Plan and the completion of appropriate environmental assessments and planning process for any proposed developments no negative transboundary environmental effects are predicted.

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

The KCDP contains protective objectives for human health and the environment. No risks to human health or to the environment occurred due to the preparation of the Master Plan.

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

The KCDP contains objectives to facilitate population and economic growth, Volume 2 Part 2 specifically mentions Coill Dubh / Cooleragh as a designated village for expected population growth. The purpose of the Master Plan is to set out the strategy within which the Village can become

more pedestrian and cycle orientated, creating a fully accessible and age friendly enhanced public realms from the Church in Coill Dubh southwards along the L1019. Therefore, the Master Plan is not envisaged to lead to any negative effects and will not go beyond or over and above the effects arising from the Vision and Objectives of the KCDP.

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

a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

The KCDP contains protective objectives with respect to the special natural characteristics or cultural heritage of the area.

The nearest European Site is the Ballynafagh Bog SAC, 640m east of Coill Dubh / Cooleragh for which the Master Plan does not identify any spatial elements or connectivity.

The Master Plan will not alter, remove or change these protective objectives which will ensure the continued protection of these sites and features.

b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values

As the Master Plan and any works arising from it must be consistent and compliant with the KCDP including specific provisions regarding environmental quality standards such as those contained in the Water Framework Directive and other environmental standards it is not anticipated that any environmental quality standards will be exceeded.

c) intensive land -use

The Master Plan does not represent a change in landuse or potentially permitted activities or any intensification of land-use within Coill Dubh / Cooleragh village.

d) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

The KCDP recognises the importance of sites with National and European designations and sets out clear objectives for their protection as already outlined within this assessment.

The Master Plan is designed to ensure that it is compatible and complementary with the relevant objectives of the existing KCDP the higher level NPF together with the RSES. It does not identify specific areas for development which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status. Therefore, effects on areas or landscapes are not envisaged.

6.0 Statutory Consultation

6.1 Consultation with Environmental Authorities

In accordance with Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, Kildare County Council have provided notice to the specified environmental authorities (below) that implementation of the proposed Master Plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and sought submissions or observations prior to finalising the Screening for the requirement for SEA.

The preliminary Screening for SEA was issued to the following specified environmental authorities:

- (a) the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- (b) the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine;
- (c) the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- (d) Development Applications unit of the Department of Housing, Local government and Heritage;
- (e) The Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications

7.0 Recommendations on requirement for SEA

Following detailed review and assessment it is considered that the Master Plan for Coill Dubh / Cooleragh will not result in significant adverse environmental effects and therefore, does not require further assessment of the likely effect on the environment of the preparation of the Master Plan through SEA.

This assessment is derived from consideration of the following factors:

- The Master Plan is a non-statutory plan, which sits below the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the Coill Dubh / Cooleragh Village Plan in the planning hierarchy;
- The lands are already zoned for the mixed use, residential and open space use in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 which was subject to full SEA;
- The existing protective objectives and policies of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 still apply;
- The Master Plan does not require AA;
- The minimal nature of any likely adverse environmental effects arising from the Master Plan; and ;
- Review of the proposed amendments for the potential for significant effects to arise.

The conclusion of the Screening is that Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

END

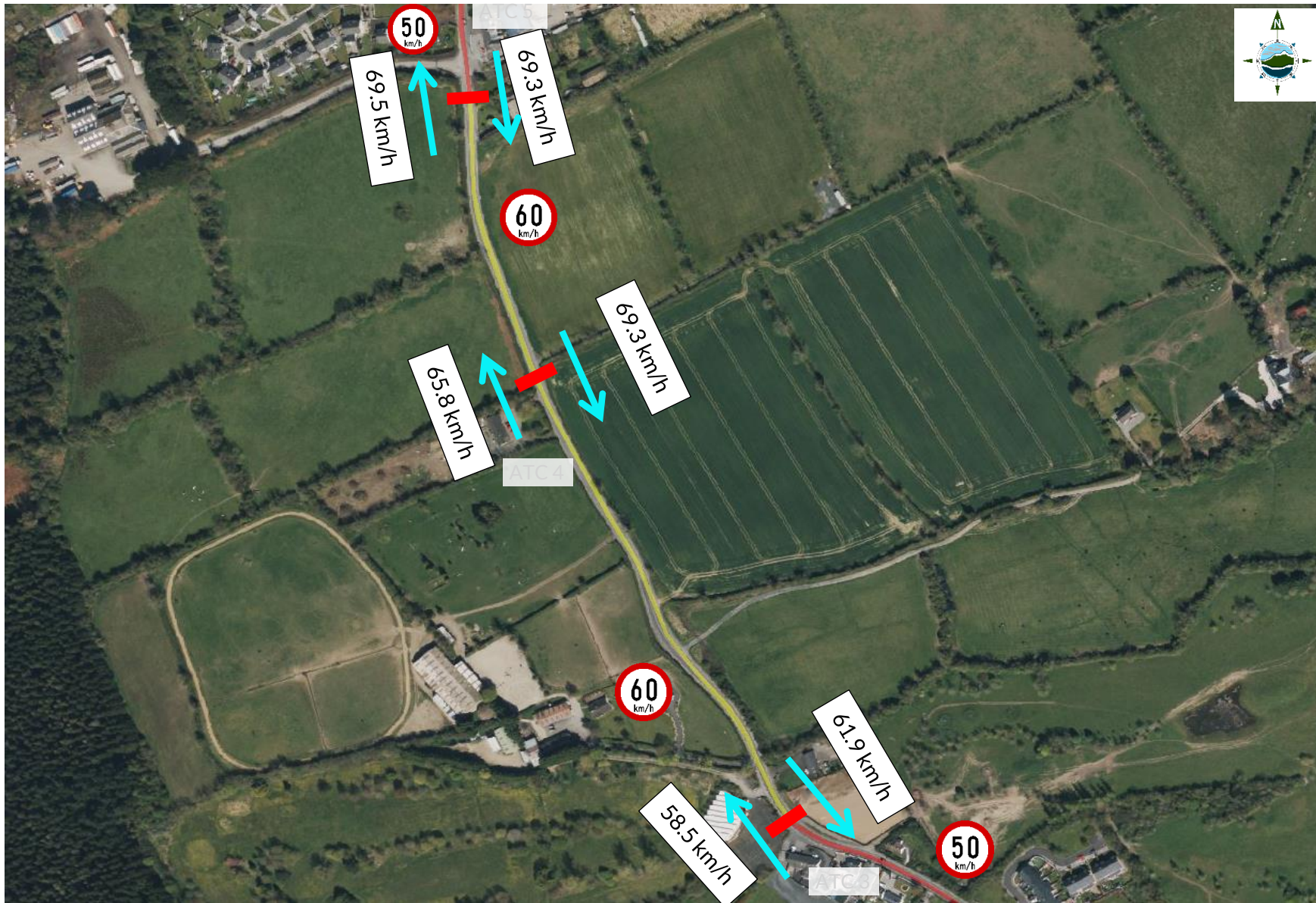
Appendix A: SEA Response to Submissions received from Statutory Environmental Authorities

1.1.1 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY ATC SPEED SURVEY RESULTS – 85%ILE SPEED (KM/H)¹



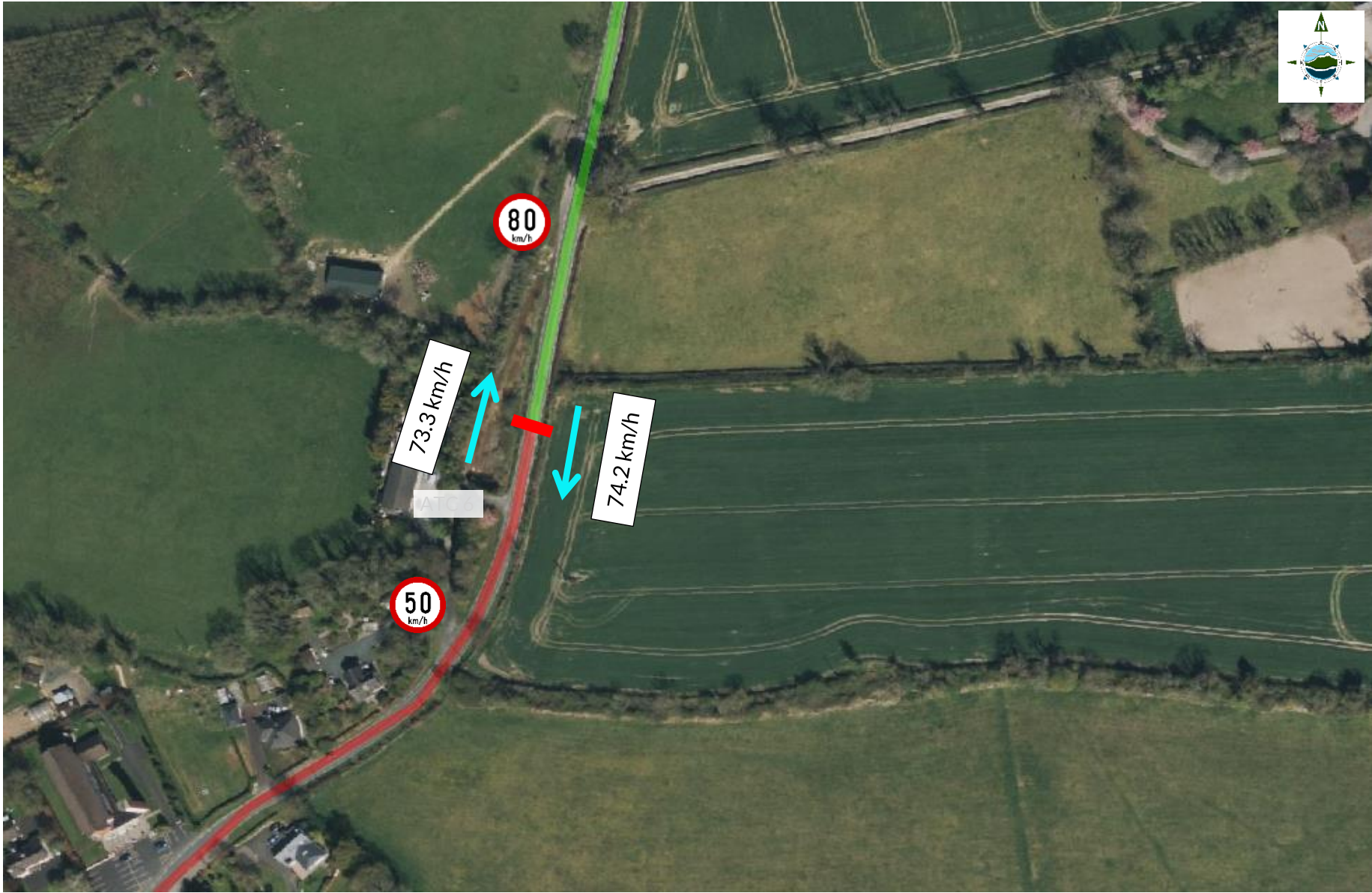
ATC Traffic and Speed surveys were captured from Thursday 24th November 2022 and Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full ATC survey results are presented in Appendix 1.

1.1.2 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY ATC SPEED SURVEY RESULTS – 85%ILE SPEED (KM/H)¹



ATC Traffic and Speed surveys were captured from Thursday 24th November 2022 and Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full ATC survey results are presented in Appendix 1.

1.1.3 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY ATC SPEED SURVEY RESULTS – 85%ILE SPEED (KM/H)¹



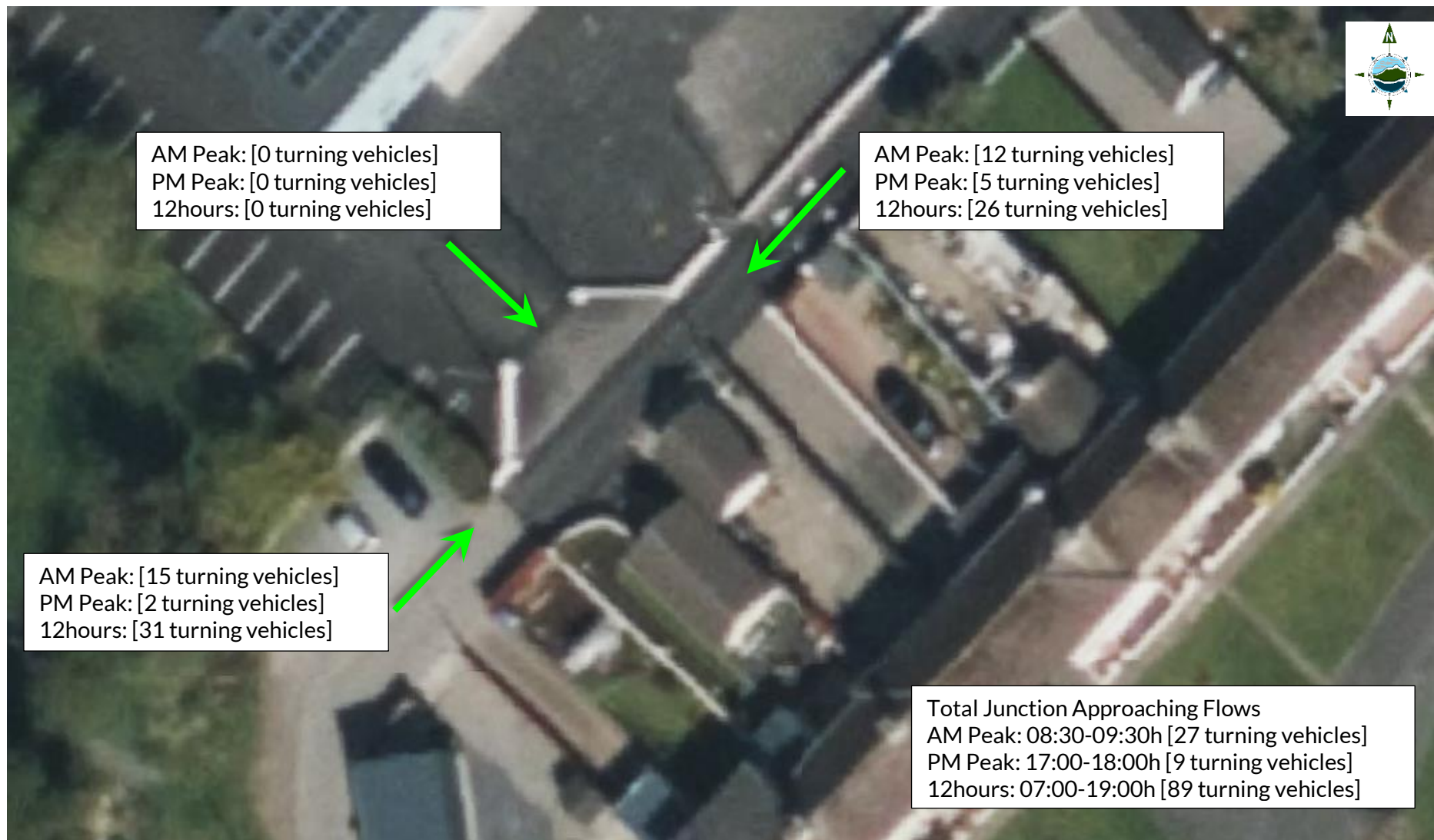
ATC Traffic and Speed surveys were captured from Thursday 24th November 2022 and Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full ATC survey results are presented in Appendix 1.

1.2.1 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY JUNCTION TURNING COUNT SURVEY RESULTS – AM/P/12H²



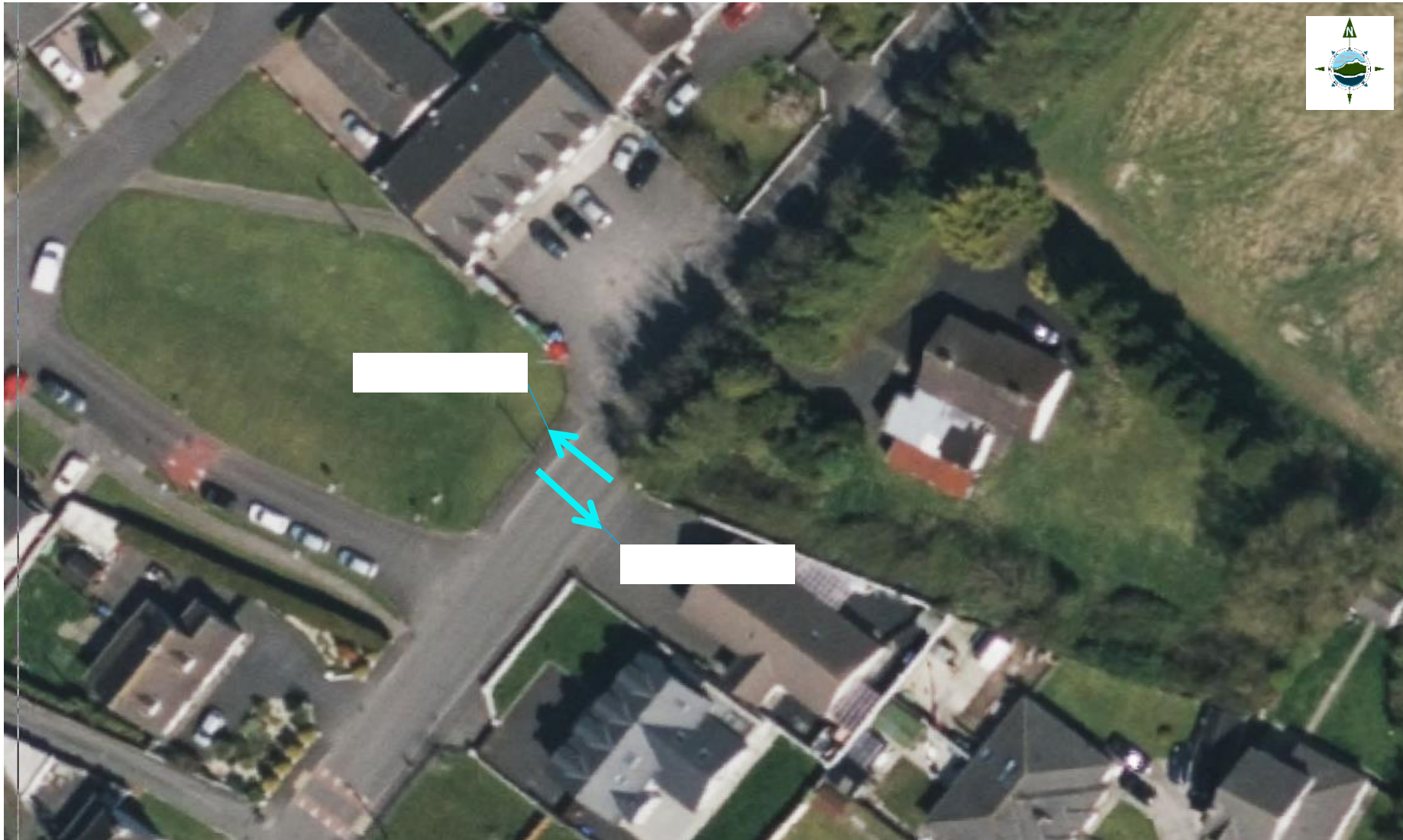
JTC surveys were recorded on Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full ATC survey results are presented in Appendix 2.

1.2.2 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY JUNCTION TURNING COUNT SURVEY RESULTS – AM/P/12H²



JTC surveys were recorded on Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full ATC survey results are presented in Appendix 2.

1.3.1 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY PEDESTRIAN COUNT SURVEY RESULTS – VOLUMES PER 12 HOURS



Pedestrian Count surveys were recorded on Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full survey results are presented in Appendix 3.

1.3.2 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY PEDESTRIAN COUNT SURVEY RESULTS – VOLUMES PER 12 HOURS



Pedestrian Count surveys were recorded on Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full survey results are presented in Appendix 3.

1.3.3 COILL DUBH: SUMMARY PEDESTRIAN COUNT SURVEY RESULTS – VOLUMES PER 12 HOURS



Pedestrian Count surveys were recorded on Wednesday 30th November 2022. The full survey results are presented in Appendix 3.



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

Kildare County Council

Health Check & Urban Design Analysis And Town Renewal Masterplans For Four Villages In County Kildare

Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh – DMURS Street Design Audit

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2040



HEALTH CHECK & URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS AND TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLANS FOR FOUR VILLAGES IN COUNTY KILDARE

Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh – DMURS Street Design Audit

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Revision	Description	Author:	Date	Reviewed By:	Date	Authorised by:	Date
D01	Issue	GI	29/03/23	MR	29/03/23	PC	25/04/23
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME

1.1.1 Background

TOBIN Consulting Engineers have been commissioned by Kildare County Council to provide design consultancy services for the Health Check / Urban Design Analysis and Town Renewal Masterplans for Allenwood, Kilmeague, Robertstown and Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh villages. The key objectives of the Allenwood, Kilmeague, Robertstown and Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh Town Renewal Masterplans will be to deliver a new vision for the towns with pedestrian focused public spaces and liveable streets. The aim is to put the pedestrian and cyclist at the heart of the design solution for these towns and to create fully accessible, inclusive and age-friendly public spaces.

This DMURS Quality Audit report aims to assess the scheme from the perspective of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets on aspects of safety, accessibility and streetscape. This project includes the review and recommendation of provision of walking and cycling facilities within Robertstown village.

1.1.2 Site Location

Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh settlements are located approximately 20 kilometres to the north of Kildare town, in County Kildare. Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh are two disconnected villages, the main street is the centre of the village in Coill Dubh, provides priority controlled. The remainder of the village has limited pedestrian connectivity. Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh villages comprise a church, national school, local shop and busstop. In addition to housing estates around the villages, a can be seen in Figure 1-1.

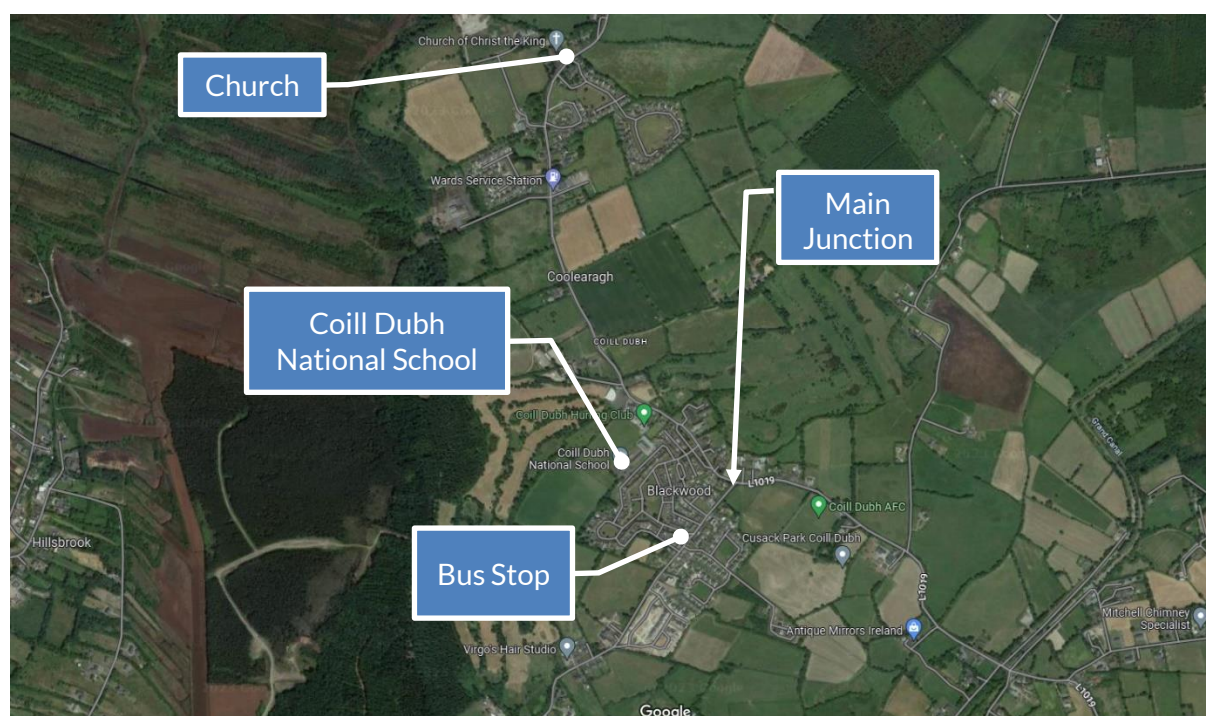


Figure 1-1 Site Location (from © Google)

This project envisages to link all areas of the village by introducing better walking facilities, pedestrian focused street space by introducing traffic calming, pedestrian crossings and continuous footpaths at main locations and therefore create a better and safer walkable village.

2.0 QUALITY AUDIT

Quality Audit is a defined process, independent of, but involving, the design team that, through planning, design, construction and management stages of a project provides a check that high quality places are delivered and maintained by all relevant parties, for the benefit of all end users. Quality Audit is a process, applied to urban roads, traffic management or development schemes, which systematically reviews projects using a series of discrete but linked evaluations and ensures that the broad objectives of place, functionality, maintenance and safety are achieved.

Quality Audit was introduced in the publication Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets following concerns that in the design of new streets provisions made for motor vehicles frequently led to a poorly-designed public realm. In an urban area there is a high level of competing demand from different classes of road users. A well-balanced street will have minimal visual clutter and obstacles; it will use durable materials and most importantly, will encourage a degree of negotiation between road users as they make their way through it.

Quality Audit involves various assessments of the impacts of a street scheme in terms of road safety, visual quality and the use of streets by the community. Access for disabled people, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers of motor vehicles is considered.

In the context of a Quality Audit, road safety assessment is considered to be an appropriate method of examining road safety issues as it incorporates both the hazard identification techniques used in road safety audit and formal risk assessment techniques. This allows the opportunity at an early stage for road safety issues to be considered in a more dynamic way within the design process, and to ensure that safety issues are considered as part of the design rather than after design work is completed.

The Quality Audit Team reports findings with suggestions for future action. It should be noted that, in a Quality Audit, it is not the intention that suggestions would be binding on the design team; they are offered for detailed consideration in the design process.

DMURS states that Quality Audits should consist of the following parts:

- DMURS Street Design Audit
- Individual Design Audits
- Quality Audit Report

This report comprises the design response of DMURS Street Design Audit form.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The Design Audit Team for the Quality Audit was as follows:

- Maria Rooney Chartered Engineer MIEI
- Gabriela Iha Design Engineer MIEI

Road safety, non-motorised users, visual quality, access for disabled and functionality were considered in the Quality Audit. This exercise focused on issues such as:

- the design rationale as it related to vehicle, cycle and pedestrian movements;
- pedestrian desire lines both to and through the site;
- access requirements for all modes of transport;
- access requirements for disabled people and other vulnerable users;
- any road safety concerns associated with the scheme;
- the visual appearance of the scheme as it is experienced by those entering it and moving around within the street, including how this affects road user behavior; and
- any other issues considered relevant to each constituent element of the Quality Audit process.

A desktop review in combination with a site visit, which has been carried out by the design team to enable to prepare the Street Design Audit (Section 4). The Street Design Audit is in the format provided as a template on the DMURS website (<https://www.dmurs.ie/supplementary-material>).

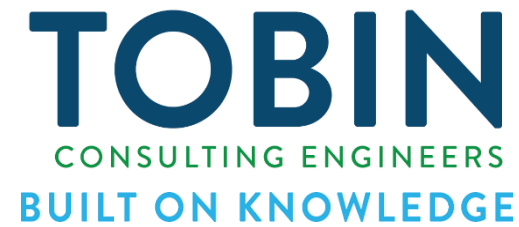
This project is still in the concept stage, as such no design was prepared for the Masterplan and no designer was yet assigned for this project. This Audit report reviews the concept ideas raised to improve the walkability within the Four Villages.

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

Street Design Audit

Prepared in respect of: *[Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh Village Masterplan]*

Prepared by: *[TOBIN Consulting Engineers]*



Date: *[14/06/2023]*

Connectivity		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
Strategic routes/major desire lines been identified and are clearly incorporated into the design.	<p>3.1 – Integrated Street Network</p> <p>3.2.1 – Movement Function</p> <p>3.3.1 – Street layouts</p> <p>3.3.4 - Wayfinding</p>	<p>The Masterplan Design is creating a pedestrian orientated village, providing a continuous walkway between the two villages, to main attractive areas, mainly the local shops, school, bus stop, and village centre.</p> <p>The proposed design includes proposed designated pedestrian crossing points along Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh to provide safer pedestrian movements around the housing estates, to the school and bus stops. Designed crossing point to be installed at the main junction and along Coill Dubh housing estate main road, in addition to a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the church and credit union building in Coolearagh to provide wayfinding easier and safer for vulnerable road users around the villages.</p>
Multiple points of access are provided to the site/place, in particular for sustainable modes.	<p>3.3.1 – Street Layouts</p> <p>3.3.3 – Retrofitting¹</p>	<p>The proposed masterplan design focus on the provision of crossing points around the main street within housing estates, including traffic calming measures. Existing access points shall be considered in the preliminary design stage to accommodate the proposed new sections of footpath, crossing points and traffic calming measures.</p> <p>This project retrofits an existing urban street with new pedestrian facilities which will improve connectivity to the villages grounds. Provision of a crossing point at the village centre and main road within housing estates to increase permeability.</p>

¹ When connecting with existing communities a detailed analysis and extensive community consultation should be carried out to identify the optimal location for connections (refer also to the NTA Permeability in Existing Urban Areas: Best Practice Guide).

Connectivity		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
Accessibility throughout the site is maximised for pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring route choice.	<p>3.3.1 – Street Layouts</p> <p>3.3.2 – Block Sizes</p> <p>3.4.1 – Vehicle Permeability</p>	<p>The design increases permeability and legibility by providing new crossing points, traffic calming measures and continuous pedestrian footpaths to make wayfinding easier and safer for vulnerable road users.</p> <p>The masterplan design is also taking into account that for the current speed limit of 50km/h within Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh village, the ATC Speed survey recorded the 85th %ile speeds higher than the speed limit towards the village. The design includes traffic calming measure at both Coill Dubh and Coolearagh to ensure low operational speeds, therefore a safer environment for vulnerable road users.</p> <p>Given the layout constraints and lack of pedestrian crossing points, the objective of providing pedestrian crossings and traffic calming, offline cyclist provision has not been provided on the scheme. Cyclists will continue to use the road carriageway.</p>
Through movements by private vehicles on local streets are discouraged by an appropriate level of traffic calming measures.	<p>3.2.1 – Movement Function</p> <p>3.2.3 – Place Context</p> <p>3.4.1 – Vehicle Permeability</p>	<p>Currently, the 85th %ile speeds recorded at the village are higher than the speed limit of 50km/h. For this reason, the masterplan design includes provision of traffic calming measures in the vicinity of village centre.</p> <p>The masterplan design comprises Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh villages and focus on providing connectivity and accessibility for the vulnerable road users, while the design and landscaping promotes the importance of the place.</p>

Self Regulating Street Environment		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
A suitable range of design speeds have been applied with regard to context and function.	3.2.1 – Movement Function. 3.2.2 – Place Context. 4.1.1 – A Balanced Approach to Speed ²	85 th %ile Operational Speeds at Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh villages have been monitored at higher than speed limit of 50km/h towards the village. Traffic calming measures intends to reduce the 85 th %ile speeds below the speed limit. Given the presence of the bus stops and local shops, the geometric design parameters and traffic calming measures included in the design aim to lower operational speeds to 50km/h in an area where pedestrians and cyclists are present in larger numbers.
The street environment will facilitate the creation of a traffic calmed environment via the use of	4.2.1 – Building Height and Street Width 4.2.2 – Street Trees 4.2.3 – Active Street Edges 4.2.4 – Signage and Line Marking	Introduction of a defined carriageway width and kerbing, designated crossing points and related signage will ensure that traffic is adequately calmed within and surrounding the study area. And shall be considered during preliminary stage. Controlled access points with low radii will ensure vehicles entering or leaving the carriageway can only do so at low speed to again generate a softer traffic calmed environment. Urban planting will provide a height element and moderate sense of enclosure to aid visual calming measures

² Refer also to the National Speed Limit Guidelines

Self Regulating Street Environment		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
'softer' or passive measures. ³	<p>4.2.7 – Planting</p> <p>4.4.2 – Carriageway Surfaces</p> <p>4.4.9 - On-Street Parking</p> <p>Advice Note 1 – Transitions and Gateways</p>	<p>while the shared surface will be paved and not a flexible or rigid pavement design to raise awareness of the priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the area while also providing an active street edge along with the designated bus facility.</p> <p>Extensive road markings are proposed throughout the scheme to help narrow active carriageway widths, discourage illegal parking manoeuvres and vehicle speeds.</p>
A suitable range of design standards/measures have been applied that are consistent with the applied design speeds.	<p>4.4.1 - Carriageway Widths</p> <p>4.4.4 – Forward Visibility</p> <p>4.4.5 – Visibility Splays</p> <p>4.4.6 – Alignment and curvature</p> <p>4.4.7 – Horizontal and Vertical Deflections</p> <p>Advice Note 1 – Transitions and Gateways</p>	<p>Design standards as outlined in DMURS shall be adopted to improve the existing carriageway widths, road geometry, forward and junction visibilities and horizontal and vertical deflections throughout the scheme.</p>

³ In retrofit situations a detailed analysis should be carried out to establish what measures exist, what their likely effectiveness is and level of intervention required to achieve the designed design speed.

Pedestrian and Cycling Environment		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
<p>The built environment contributes to the creation of a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.</p>	<p>4.2.1 – Building Height and Street Width</p> <p>4.2.3 – Active Street Edges</p> <p>4.2.5 – Street Furniture</p> <p>4.4.9 - On-Street parking</p>	<p>Key focus has been given to provide a fully accessible village within the design, with comfortable pedestrian facilities throughout the village for the Bus stop and local shops.</p> <p>Given constraints on cross sectional width and focus on providing pedestrian facilities on both sides of the road, no offline cycle facility is being provided. Lower operational speeds and traffic calming will encourage and provide safety to cyclists using the carriageway.</p> <p>Buildings are typically set back from the carriageway in private plots with accesses off the street while planting, street furniture and active street edges will take cognisance of pedestrians, cyclists and motorised users within the shared areas and adjacent pedestrian area.</p>
<p>Junctions been designed to ensure the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised⁴.</p>	<p>4.3.2 - Pedestrian Crossings</p> <p>4.3.3 – Corner Radii</p> <p>4.4.3 - Junction Design</p> <p>4.4.7 - Horizontal and Vertical Deflections</p>	<p>During preliminary design stage, the provision of continuous footpath, traffic calming measures, road markings and type of material at lighting shall be reviewed to be in compliance with DMURS.</p>

⁴ Refer also to the National Cycle Manual (2011)

Pedestrian and Cycling Environment		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
Footpaths are continuous and wide enough to cater for the anticipated number of pedestrian movements.	3.2.1 – Movement Function. 3.2.3 – Place Context. 4.2.5 – Street Furniture 4.3.1 - Footways, Verges and Strips 4.3.2 - Pedestrian Crossings	Continuous footpaths and pedestrian crossing points are part of the masterplan design to like Coill Dubh and Coolearagh. Further design details shall be proposed during preliminary design stage.
The particular needs of visually and mobility impaired users been identified and incorporated in the design.	4.2.5 - Street Furniture 4.3.1 - Footways, Verges and Strips 4.3.2 - Pedestrian Crossings 4.3.4 - Pedestrianised and Shared Surfaces	The use of tactile paving, kerbing, pedestrian crossings and height changes between areas in the proposed design to consider needs of visually and mobility impaired users shall all be considered during preliminary design stage.

Pedestrian and Cycling Environment		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
Cycling facilities will cater for cyclists of all ages and abilities. ⁵	<p>3.2.1 – Movement Function.</p> <p>3.2.3 – Place Context.</p> <p>4.3.5 - Cycle facilities.</p>	<p>Given width constraints and the focus on prioritising pedestrian facilities, space is not available within the study area to provide an offline cycle facility. Cyclists will share the carriageway with motorised road users. The masterplan design includes traffic calming measures raised table and speed ramp within the scheme extents to reduce operational speeds and improve safety for cyclists.</p> <p>The designer notes that no cycle facilities exist on the Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh village and that provision of offline or cycle lane facilities would be intermittent and should be considered as part of a larger cycle network upgrade.</p>

⁵ Refer also to the National Cycle Manual (2011)

Visual Quality		
Key Issues	Key Considerations and DMURS Ref:	Design Response
The landscape plan responds to the street hierarchy and the value of the place.	<p>3.2.1 – Movement Function.</p> <p>3.2.3 – Place Context.</p> <p>4.2.2 – Street Trees</p> <p>4.2.7 – Planting</p> <p>Advice Note 1 – Transitions and Gateways</p>	<p>The design team shall liaise with the Conservation Department of Kildare County Council and Archaeology sections to ensure that the landscape plan is in keeping with the Planning specifications of the area.</p> <p>This includes consultation with adjacent impacted landowners to ensure thorough design and thought is given to landscaping plans.</p> <p>The Design will include Street Trees and Planting to enhance the Urban Realm aesthetics</p>
Street furniture is orderly placed.	<p>3.2.1 – Movement Function.</p> <p>3.2.3 – Place Context.</p> <p>4.2.5 - Street Furniture.</p> <p>4.3.1 Footways, Verges and Strips</p>	Street Furniture will be placed cognisant of pedestrian desire lines, footpath widths and likely use of the various zones within the scheme extents
The use of signage and line marking has been minimised.	<p>3.2.1 – Movement Function.</p> <p>3.2.3 – Place Context.</p> <p>4.2.4 - Signage and Line Marking.</p>	Signage and line markings shall be considered for masterplan design next phase. The presence of the national school, local shops and Bus Stop shall be considered to provide appropriate levels of signage and delineation as part of the design process.

Visual Quality		
Key Issues	Key Considerations and DMURS Ref:	Design Response
Materials and finishes used throughout the scheme have been selected from a limited palette and respond to the value of the place?	3.2.1 – Movement Function. 3.2.3 – Place Context. 4.2.6 – Materials and Finishes 4.2.8 – Historic Contexts. 4.3.2 – Pedestrian Crossings 4.4.2 – Carriageway Surfaces Advice Note 2 – Materials and Specifications	<p>Materials and finishes will be chosen at detailed design stage in consultation with Kildare County Council and following close consideration of the historic context of the area.</p> <p>Full consideration will be given to construction guidance as outlined in DMURS Advice Note 2 – Materials and Specifications to ensure that appropriate surface and sub surface materials and construction are implemented</p> <p>The design team shall engage with Kildare County Council Architectural and Conservation departments along with planners to ensure a design in keeping with the area and in keeping with the long-term development and planning strategy for Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh villages.</p>

Additional Comments

Personnel Information

	Name	Date	Signature
Report Prepared By:	Maria Rooney (C. Eng) Gabriela Iha	29/03/2023 29/03/2023	
Principle Designers	Not Applicable	-	

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