

Leixlip – 2019 Local Area Plan Submission

Leixlip together with Collinstown has been designated as a Large Growth Town in the context of the most recent Regional Planning Guidelines.

The six key locations earmarked for development in the Leixlip Local Area Plan (LAP) are.

- **KDA1** Two sites off Celbridge Road: The Wonderful Barn which has an existing residential zoning for approximately 400 houses.
- **KDA2.** On the opposite side of the Celbridge Road, land which is part of Leixlip Demesne to the rear of Leixlip Park/Wogansfield/Highfield Park is proposed for an additional 350 houses.
- **KDA3** An existing residential zoning also at Easton Road to the west of Glen Easton
- **KDA4** Easton Road a new residential zoning is proposed here at Leixlip Gate/Beech.
- Black Avenue Stanley lands new residential zoning.
- Confey Urban Design Framework KDA

While there is an existing residential zoning at Collinstown, the draft plan envisages this area will be developed as a new business and technology campus.

POPULATION / DEMOGRAPHICS

1971	1981	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016	
2,402	9,306	11,938	13,194	13,451	15,143	14,676	15,452	15,550	

The Core Strategy sets out the rationale for future developments this is set out in section 4 (page 9) of the LAP. The strategy identifies 3,315 housing units for Leixlip to the year 2023. This, the plan states, represents an overall target population for the town of 19,794. The existing population is 15,500, if the 3,315 housing units were fully developed within that timeframe, it would add to the existing population by 8,287 (assuming 2.5 per household) when added to the existing population it would give a population 23,837 by 2023, substantially above the 19,794 projected for in the plan.

While Leixlip and Collinstown are together designated as a Major Town the previously zoned residential lands in Collinstown are now included as a new business and technology campus. This area has been identified in the Celbridge LAP as satisfying the employment needs for

Celbridge. Transport and mobility issues therefore need to be considered in a wider context than the Leixlip LAP.

The basis for calculating the housing need obviously leads to the identification of land to be zoned new residential, it is essential therefore that the Core Strategy is clarified.

The Central Statistics Office projects a population increase in the Mid East Region, which includes Counties Kildare, Meath and Wicklow to 2031, of between 78,000 and 144,000. The Kildare Plan therefore seems to grossly overstate the housing need; we argue this requires reducing the target population for Kildare which would require an amendment to the County Development Plan.

KDA1 - The Wonderful Barn

New Residential – Already Zoned for approx. 400 houses.

New Residential/Open space & Amenity at the Wonderful Barn North of the M4.

Approximately 15.4 Hectares (38 acres) have been zoned residential for some years; the residential component has not as yet been developed. Albany Homes applied and were granted planning permission for 476 houses/apartments in 2005; however, that planning permission has now lapsed. The site appears to have been sold recently.

This site also includes a public park, part of which is successfully used for allotments. The Wonderful Barn has the potential to be developed as a visitor centre or similar community use which would require some public parking and other facilities, the location for these facilities needs to be identified in the plan.

House type including finish will be important as a backdrop to the Wonderful Barn and also how they relate to existing houses in Elton Court; Castletown and Rinawade. Heights and densities are particularly important as is the vista as the Barn relates to Castletown House. Set back distances from the Barn and between any new housing and the existing estates are particularly sensitive and should be considered in the plan in advance of any planning application.

THE NATURAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE WOUNDERFUL BARN AND CASTLETOWN HOUSE NEEDS TO BE REINSTATED FOR PEDESTERIAN AND NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS LAP.

Good quality access to and from this site will be difficult to achieve. The Celbridge Road is a single carriageway with limited lines of sight. The development of additional large scale residential development with access/egress in very close proximity (KDA2) will cause further conflict that will be difficult to resolve in such a tight space.

The Celbridge Road including all junctions needs to be considered in the context of the Transportation objectives in the LAP. The junction at Galvin's cross is at saturation point at peak times in particular, because of the location of the RC Church and the Gaelscoil there are

high levels of pedestrian movements that require to be catered for and should be addressed as an objective in the LAP.

Access & Traffic issues

The Celbridge Road is a single carriageway that currently provides access to the following housing estates; Elton Court, Forest Park, Castletown, Leixlip Park, Wogansfield, Highfield Park, Knockaulin, totalling well in excess of 1000 houses, Colaiste Chiaráin (Secondary) and Scoil Ui Dhalaigh (Primary) schools are also located on the Celbridge Road. A busy neighbourhood shopping centre is also situated at the entrance to Castletown Estate with a smaller commercial area beside Colaiste Chiaráin.

Hewlett Packard, Barnhall Rugby Club; Salmon Leap Canoe Club together with the community of Coneyboro are to the west of the proposed development. The proposed access to the Leixlip Demesne lands are also earmarked for new residential in excess of 350 units; in addition to the activity the public park and development of the Wonderful Barn will generate. All of the above need to be collectively considered in advance rather than at planning permission stage when the impact is measured.

Dublin Bus provide a limited service to the Celbridge Road, the 66B terminates at the Salmon Leap Canoe Club. The junction with Maynooth Road, which is not controlled with lights, is under significant pressure with several peaks' during the day such as school opening and closing times and shift changeover at local industries, together with the normal morning and evening peak's... There are no traffic signals at this T junction, a roundabout solution may be possible but might prove to be less than ideal for pedestrians.

The exit/entrances for the proposed dual developments at Wonderful Barn and Leixlip Demesne would create yet another traffic conflict, It will also increase pressure at the various entrances to housing estates along the road. KDA2 should be excluded in this LAP see below.

KDA2 - Celbridge Road (Leixlip Demesne)

New Residential – Proposed new Zoning for approx. 350 houses

“This development area is located to the south of Leixlip town, north of the M4 motorway and is part of Leixlip Castle demesne. The lands are bound by Leixlip Park and Wogansfield to the north and by the rear of properties fronting onto Pound Street to the east. This key development area is physically and visually separated from Leixlip Castle by woodland belt. (LAP page 77)

The proposed development is approximately 12.8 Hectares (31 acres) Assuming a residential density of 10 to 12 to the acre that would accommodate approximately 350 houses.

Leixlip Castle

“Historically, the center of Leixlip has always been Leixlip Castle. Built on a rock at the confluence of the River Liffey and the Rye Water were granted to the de Hereford family and dates from the Norman Invasion of 1171 with the round tower added onto the square keep in the 14th Century. The castle was strategically placed at the confluence of the River Liffey and the River Rye. Over the following several hundred years Leixlip Castle was to be one of the strongholds of the Pale - an outpost.

*In 1732 the castle was acquired by William Conolly, nephew of Speaker William Conolly, who inherited Castletown House, the lands of which adjoin the Leixlip demesne to the west. “
(text from Leixlip Town Council Website)*

Leixlip Castle/Demesne

Both Leixlip Castle and Demesne are listed as protected in the LAP. While parts of these lands were severed in the context of the construction of the M4 what remains requires to be protected. Should this land be rezoned for housing it will undermine Leixlip Castle/Demesne as the Historic Centre of Leixlip. The Demesne Lands are listed as protected in the LAP which conflicts with the proposed rezoning.

The protection of all structures and the immediate surroundings including the curtilage and attendant grounds of structures contained in the *Record of Protected Structures* is covered by Policy BH1 and has associated objective’s BH01.1 and BH01.3 this need to be considered in the context of the proposal to re-zone this land. In terms of the Archaeological Heritage policy BH3 with the associated objective GH03.2 which seek to protect the historic core of Leixlip appear to be at odds with the proposal. Once lost the context of Leixlip Castle cannot be re-created.

Access issues:

Access to the Demesne is proposed from the Celbridge Road, specifically between the motorway bridge and the current entrance to the Wonderful Barn. Lands at the Wonderful Barn are likely to have a shared use with the public park and changes to the use of the Barn and associated buildings potentially generating a lot of event type activity; this in addition to the access and traffic issues stated above under KDA1 will expose the inadequate capacity of Celbridge Road, particularly at peak times.

Pedestrian Access

If the development proceeds it is likely to require pedestrian access; in this version of the plan pedestrian access points at Leixlip Park and Wogansfield, which were a source of concern for both estates, have been remove. The access point via Pound Street may look fine on a map but it is difficult to see how it can be easily achieved if at all. The Celbridge Road access beyond Leixlip Park does not have a footpath on the perimeter of the green at Leixlip Park which is bounded by a mature hedge; with additional traffic movements this is likely to pose quite a risk to pedestrians particularly children.

For the reasons stated above KDA2 should be removed from the Local Area Plan.

KDA3 - Easton road - Glen Easton

New Residential – Already Zoned – for approx. 200 houses.

This land was zoned residential in the Collinstown LAP 2010. All of the Collinstown LAP lands were to be subject to a Masterplan.

Approximately 9 Hectares (22 acres) which Kilross Properties Limited, 195 houses were recently granted planning permission and are now subject to an appeal to An Bord Pleanála. A small but prominent part of the site, bordering the R449 and Easton Road has not been included in the above planning application. This area has been identified in the LAP as “creating a built edge to the R449”. The traffic survey associated with the recent planning permission did not include this part of the site which was a glaring omission given the impact it would have on the exit/entrance at Easton Road, on the cumulative capacity of the road and on the internal impact it would have within the proposed new development. KDA3 is stated in the LAP as capable of accommodating between 360-420 houses, with just a small part of the site excluded from the recent planning application and with the impediment of the large pylons it is difficult to see how the suggested numbers could be achieved. The density of this element needs to be specified and how it would impact on the recently approved/appealed application assuming it is successful on appeal.

KDA4 - Easton Road – Leixlip Gate/Beech Park

New Residential – Proposed new Zoning approx. 200 houses

10 Hectares (25 acres) of residential zoning are proposed here which would equate to approximately 200 housing units, assuming a density of between 10-12 to the acre.

The existing entrance/exit to Leixlip Gate is tight and not well sighted. Easton Road is a busy road with several of the housing estate entrances/exits positioned on bends, some of which have limited lines of sight. Two further busy entrances/exits opposite each other in close proximity to a major roundabout will add to the road safety issues at the upper end of this his road. While there is road frontage along the R449 it is not regarded as desirable to open new entrances to regional roads.

This will be a difficult site to develop given that a mature low density housing development, Leixlip Gate, is positioned mainly in the middle of the site. It is difficult to see how a more intensive development will work in harmony with the existing housing. The perimeter of Beech Park also poses security and privacy issues that would need to be resolved.

Black Avenue/Stanley Lands.

Access to these lands through Mill Lane and up the Avenue is absolutely ridiculous this avenue should only be pedestrian and utility workers the transport of waste should also cease. This avenue could be considered for a greenway to city centre via Lucan ,Strawberry Beds and into Phoenix park a much more sustainable route after all it was the original road to city it can be recovered. Exit from these lands to Glendale meadows is also a huge issue this large estate already suffers traffic issues with only the one exit/entry I propose that KCC buy these lands and incorporate them into the park.

Confey Urban Design Framework.

The scale of this proposal is unprecedented and not sure if any town in Kildare have gone through a proposal like it. Time frames need to be included and infra structures in place new roads connecting M4 and M3, none of the existing settlements and infra structures can be considered as part of urban design as they are already over burdened. I propose that a hatching plan be sought here that zoning only be granted if rigorous assessments on flood risks, traffic management and solutions, environmental impact studys, and conservation assessments are done with detailed plans submitted identifying exact locations and size of all facilities, roads, and commercial that goes with a urban plan. If zoning granted only development under SHD threshold be given and master plan delivered and implemented thereafter.

Collinstown

Collinstown – Masterplan to be prepared

The previous Collinstown LAP included over 700 residential units and was identified as a new town centre. All the neighbouring towns were sequentially tested for their ability to absorb increased retailing, none proved capable of absorbing the additional projected traffic. The Collinstown Plan also included a much needed transport hub which has not been referenced in the LAP, the non-private car based transport relationship between Leixlip; Celbridge; Maynooth and Kilcock needs to be considered in its own right, there are considerable movements between these towns such as in the areas of education, leisure and employment.

According to the draft LAP the retail hierarchy is to be reviewed. Prior to the findings of that review it is proposed that this site is earmarked for a Business and Technology Campus. While the Business & Technology proposal has considerable merits, the previous plan was subject to public consultation and then formally adopted it has now been completely disregarded. Positive elements of such a new centre such as a Theatre, Cinema, Traffic Hub are not catered for anywhere in the LAP which is a huge disappointment.

In advance of a new retail strategy it is difficult to comment on the future retail strategy for North Kildare in general, it is unfortunate that the new Retail Strategy did not precede the publication of the draft Leixlip and Celbridge Local Area Plans.

Town Centre

The lack of adequate public car parking continues to undermine Leixlip Village and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The village core needs to be enhanced parking opportunities might have now been exposed due to the new Aldi site configuration.

Facilities

A Public Swimming Pool continues to be a demand; a site within Leixlip Amenities Centre was identified as the most suitable site, following a comprehensive consultation,. this should be included in the LAP. The site at Leixlip Amenity centre was selected following a consultation process; the ease of access from Leixlip, Celbridge, Maynooth and Kilcock was

a consideration as was the identification of Leixlip Amenity Centre as a regional campus. Any alternative site for a much needed public swimming pool needs to fully consider the issues that were central to the previous process.

In view of the extent of the population projected it is essential that the sporting clubs are evaluated for capacity. Indoor sport and leisure capacity should also be included in this evaluation.

An Arts Venue should be identified which has been a social infrastructure gap to date. There has been a vibrant performing arts community in Leixlip that has now spanned more than one generation; there has been national and international successes, despite the lack of provision of facilities. This performing arts community has also a commercial aspect.

There is no cinema in North Kildare the absence of a performing space and cinema means additional traffic is generated despite the population being sufficiently large viable. In view of the vibrant Arts & Theatre community in the Leixlip Area we are seeking the designation of a specific location for such a facility, a suggested location is Collinstown.

Mast

The Telecommunications Mast at the former ESB building on Main Street continues to dominate the skyline; its location also undermines the potential of the site to the rear which is owned by Kildare County Council. An alternative location needs to be found for this mast.

Tourism

The Wonderful Barn has been earmarked as a potential Tourism Venue possible Heritage/Community centre, to achieve full value of that potential the pedestrian link between the barn and Castletown House should be re-established as stated above KDA1.

Transport/Movement

The LAP lists the services currently provided by Dublin Bus; however, this plan proposes a very significant population increase with no corresponding comment on new transport services. As has been highlighted earlier there is an absence of a bus connection between Celbridge and Leixlip in particular which is surprising given the number need to access employment, education, leisure and indeed transport services. In addition, just one bus service, at peak time in each direction, is provided in the now densely populated Easton Road area, the service requires to be greatly expanded here. The latter proves the point that it cannot be taken for granted that additional population brings new services.

Many of the public transport improvements in Leixlip resulted from a major origin and destination survey conducted in the mid 1980's; improvements included the provision of the 66A to Captains Hill and the 66B to Barnhall; the opening of Confey Train Station and the doubling of the Maynooth line etc. The survey was collaboration between the then Combined Residents Association of Leixlip and CIE and was the first time such collaboration had taken place. The National Transportation Authority who are responsible for issuing bus licences need to repeat this type survey for the combined North Kildare settlements.

The electrification of the Maynooth line has been identified, together with the removal of level crossings and re-signalling (page 41 of the LAP). Currently peak time services are fully used and more frequent services are not possible because of non-availability of rolling stock. Much more importantly there are capacity constraints in the city centre. These capacity constraints will only be overcome by the construction of the Rail Interconnector (Dart Underground). This infrastructure would dramatically alter the frequency and reach of both the Maynooth and Kildare lines and would also provide new opportunities in North Kildare for employment. There is the potential to draw a variety of skill sets from a much wider catchment. The need for this vital piece of infrastructure should be referenced and fully endorsed as a key requirement by Kildare County Council both at County Development and Local Area Plan level as appropriate.

Two further stations should be explored in this lap Collinstown and Youngs Cross rear of government laboratories on Celbridge line.

New developments need to involve consideration in advance of bus based public transport. The identification of bus stops and turning circles has been piecemeal to date, the approach of considering such infrastructure on a development by development basis has proved inadequate in the past, if more sustainable travel patterns are to be achieved much more strategic planning is required in the LAP.

A comprehensive transport origin and destination survey is required in order to tailor public transport to the needs of the area. The National Transport Authority should be involved to a greater degree if a more sustainable pattern of movement is to be achieved. They conduct an origin and destination survey to assess current and future needs.

The cycle route identified on the Transport Map has a number of elements;

- The use of the Royal Canal tow path as a greenway is one welcome element, it is important that the greenway is sufficiently wide to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians.
- A bridge is identified at the large green in the centre of Riverforest Estate, a cycle path through the centre of the green is shown, the Residents Association put considerable work into making this area usable for recreational purposes, how such a bridge and cycle path could be achieved, given the levels of the land in this location in tandem with current uses, this requires further consultation with the residents of this area.
- River crossings are also shown between River Forest and Ryevale Lawns **and** Woodside and Louisa Valley Housing Estates, there has been considerable public disquiet in the past when similar proposals were made, it is essential that the sensitivities of such a proposal are understood and there is a commitment to further consultation.
- The same situation arises where a cycle path is identified through the Wonderful Barn Lands and neighbouring housing estates. While more sustainable patterns of transport are required opening up areas that are regarded as secure can be problematic.

While it is laudable that cycling and walking are being promoted, in addition to existing and new cycle paths, locations to park bicycles and other facilities such as safe storage compartments are required if scaling up the attractiveness of mixing modes of transport is to be achieved. A policy and objective in the LAP is needed.

Confey – St Catherine’s Park

Wording to support no road through St Catherine’s Park to be included in this LAP.

The park has been used to accommodate major pipe infrastructure in the recent past with further developments of that nature planned in the near future. There was poor re-instatement following previous works which were supervised by Kildare County Council, this showed a lack of good will towards the users of the park. The maintenance of the Kildare section of this park is primarily done by voluntary organisations, a sensory garden which has been approved by KCC and funding in place has yet to begin. Fingal have been much more active in providing play facilities and also maintain their section of the park.

Kildare County Council must demonstrate a real commitment to the ongoing development, enhancement and of facilities in the park. A means of public engagement to assess required facilities needs to be established.

Masterplans

Lands at Confey and Leixlip Castle should be subject to Master plans in advance of any construction or if granted zoning first application should be below threshold of 100 {SHD} units, in order to allow KCC and Councillors input in to process and guarantee masterplans thereafter.