



VILLAGE RENEWAL MASTER PLAN
HEALTH CHECK AND URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

ROBERTSTOWN (BAILE RIOBAIRD), 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.

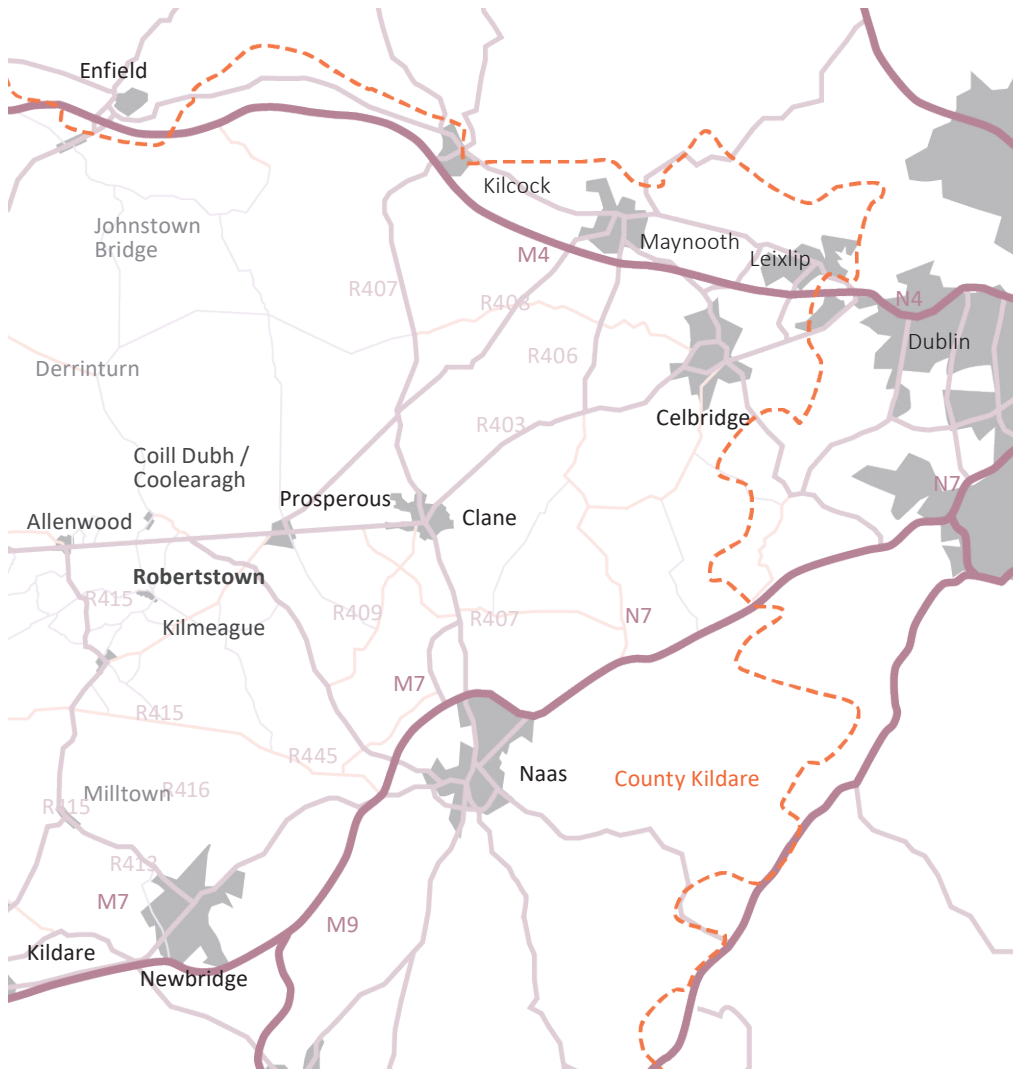
It should be viewed as a long-term plan of action (20+ years) which has been developed and agreed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from the town/village, the Elected Members and the relevant departments within Kildare County Council.

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.



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND VISION

A Vision for Robertstown
Public Realm: What is it and why it matters
Health check assessment approaches

2. APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

Origins and Evolution of Robertstown
Context and Character
Land Use, Growth and Consolidation

3. HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ASSESSMENT

Urban Design Analysis
Placemaking in Robertstown today
Public Realm Audit
Massing Study
Car Parking Survey
Socio-Demographic, Employment, Residential and Tourism trends
Overview
Public Realm opportunities(Streetscape and Spaces)

4. URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

Summary of Consultation Approaches, Findings and Feedback
Urban Design Opportunity projects
Indicative Public Realm improvement Opportunities

5. APPENDIX

AA Screening Report
SEA Screening Report
Traffic and Transport Assessment
DMURS Street Design Audit
Cost Analysis

1.

INTRODUCTION AND VISION



INTRODUCTION AND VISION

A VISION FOR ROBERTSTOWN

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Robertstown 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 villages of Kilmeague, Allenwood, and Coill Dubh / Coolearagh.

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

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 and Rowan Consulting (environmental) and TORAQS (cost surveyors).



Key

— Study Area

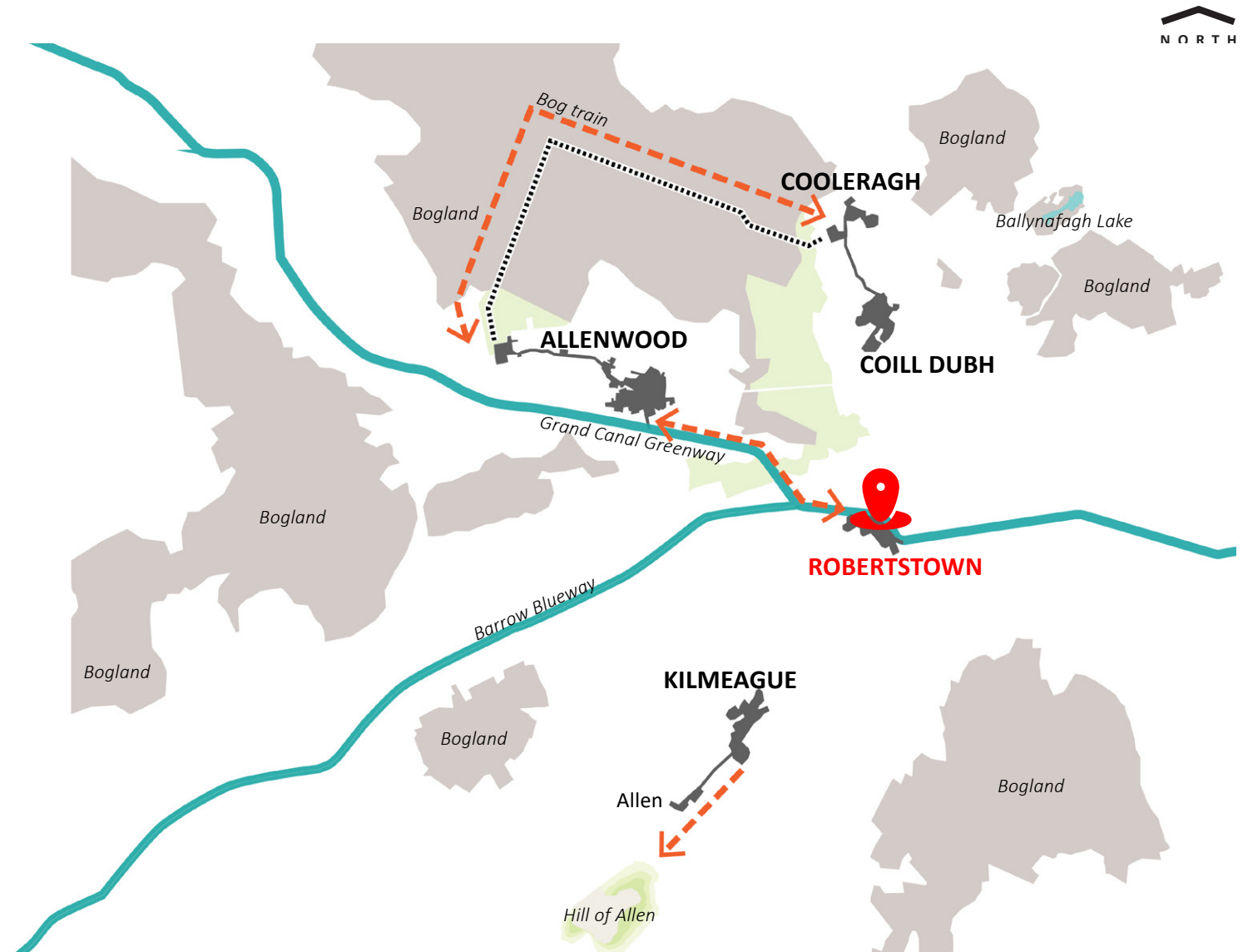
INTRODUCTION AND VISION

A VISION FOR ROBERTSTOWN

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 bog lands. Robertstown and Allenwood are also situated along the Grand Canal Greenway which is a key tourist trail.

The strategic positioning of the village along the Grand Canal acts as a natural asset to the village, contributing to its growth in terms of tourism and economic potential with the Grand Canal Greenway and the proposed Blue Barrow Way corridors along with the proposed Ecological park.



INTRODUCTION AND VISION

A VISION FOR ROBERTSTOWN

VILLAGE VISION

The vision for Robertstown aims to create a pedestrian friendly village that encourages compact residential growth, community and socio economic development and enhances its tourism potential through improved placemaking and public realm and opportunities.

The urban design opportunities explored in this document aim to illustrate how an enhanced public realm and placemaking strategy along with an improved village core can contribute towards the creation of a renewed sense of identity for Robertstown.

The creation of a safer and better integrated movement and access network, complimented by new and enhanced, existing destination spaces, and activation of vacant/derelict buildings, are just some of the urban design interventions proposed as part of the vision for Robertstown.



- Key**
- Study Area
 - Grand Canal
 - Regional bus routes
 - |||| Existing pedestrian crossings
 - ⊗ Potential pedestrian crossings
 - Potential pedestrian links
 - Connected pedestrian realm
 - Hard surface improvements (traffic calming, junction arrangements, etc)
 - Opportunity sites for amenity
 - Existing planning applications
 - Serviced site (as per County Development Plan 2023-2029)
 - ⊙ Primary gateways
 - ⊙ Secondary gateways
 - ⊙ Canal gateway

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 river, 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 Robertstown, 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 Robertstown can become a more pleasant and more inviting 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 Robertstown 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. It is where people can come together to participate in public activities of all shapes and sizes.



Way-finding signage on Binn's Bridge



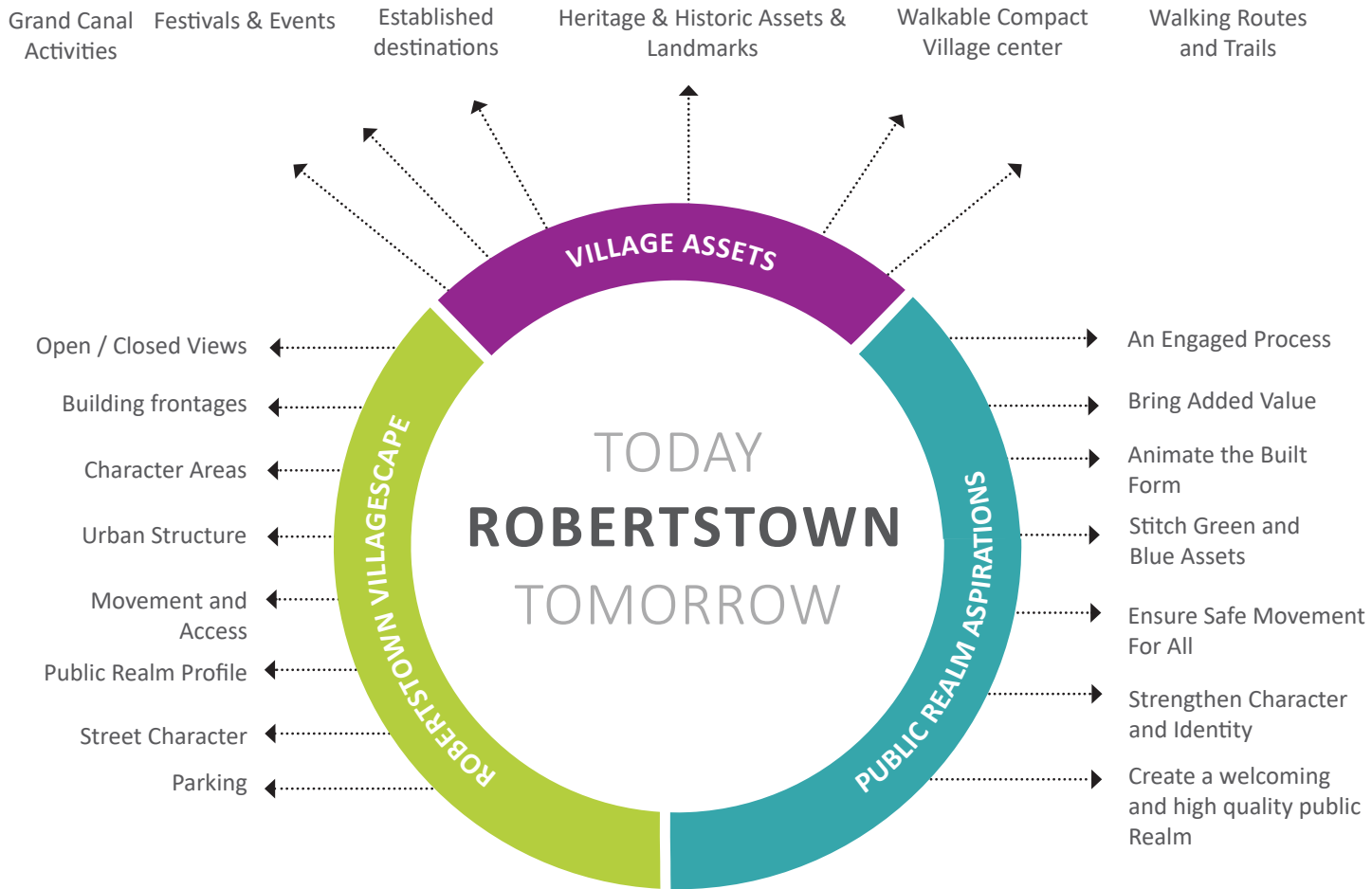
Canal front public realm



Grand Canal Greenway

INTRODUCTION AND VISION

PUBLIC REALM: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IT MATTERS



INTRODUCTION AND VISION

HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

The Robertstown 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 village.

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
- Car Parking Survey
- 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 Robertstown Health Check.



2.

**APPRECIATING THE
CONTEXT**



APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF ROBERTSTOWN

Robertstown has emerged from the construction of the Grand Canal in 1773. The Grand Canal was primarily used for transportation of cargo. This was discontinued in the 1960's with the popularity of road transport. The Grand Canal is now a key tourist attraction, with the Grand Canal Greenway passing through it and the proposed Barrow Blueway trail that is envisioned to start from Robertstown. The Grand Canal also acts as a water gateway into the village of Robertstown.

The former Grand Canal Hotel also makes up the historic fabric of the town, with its construction in the 1800s. The building witnessed many changes with time, including plans to renovate and extend the rooms but the economic downturn in 2008 impeded the growth. It now lies derelict, with proposals to re-purpose it as a tourist destination.

The other key heritage features of the village include "The Eustace" which is a heritage barge that has been recently restored, the historical Binn's bridge and a commemoration monument along the Grand Canal, all of which are well preserved and form an integral part of the architectural vernacular of the village.



View from Binn's Bridge : Former Grand Canal Hotel and Main Street
Source: National Library of Ireland



Heritage Barge
Source: National Library of Ireland



View from Binn's Bridge today



Return of the Heritage Barge
Source: Brendan Wyse

APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF ROBERTSTOWN



1785

ROBERTSTOWN GRAND CANAL

Economic Use

- Construction of the canal began in 1773,
- Canal reached Robertstown in 1785
- Canal used for Commercial Cargo traffic until 1960

1801-1865

GRAND CANAL HOTEL

Tourism

- Grand Canal Hotel built by the Grand Canal Company in 1801
- The hotel was leased by the Royal Irish Constabulary until 1905
- Settlement Expansion

1965- Present

DEVELOPMENT & EXPANSION

Potential for Tourism

- Grand Canal Hotel utilised for tourism from 1970s, currently derelict
- Grand Canal Greenway proposals
- Plans for Ecological park
- Piecemeal settlement growth

Key

- Study Area
- Grand Canal
- Bog lands
- Roads

APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER



Key map



1. Grand Canal towpath



2. View from Binn's Bridge (north)



3. View from Binn's Bridge (south)



4. Protected view corridor from Binn's Bridge



5. Main Street and Grove Lane junction



6. Former Grand Canal Hotel



7. Existing Public Realm



8. Robertstown school traffic calming

APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER



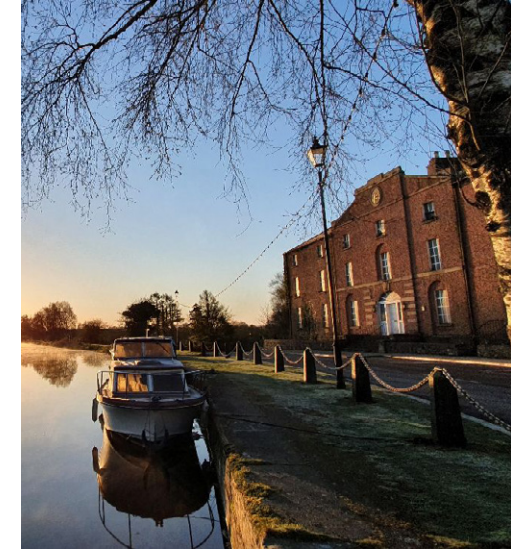
Public seating



Commemoration Monument



Robertstown Canal Festival



View of former Grand Canal Hotel



Biodiversity



View of former Grand Canal Hotel



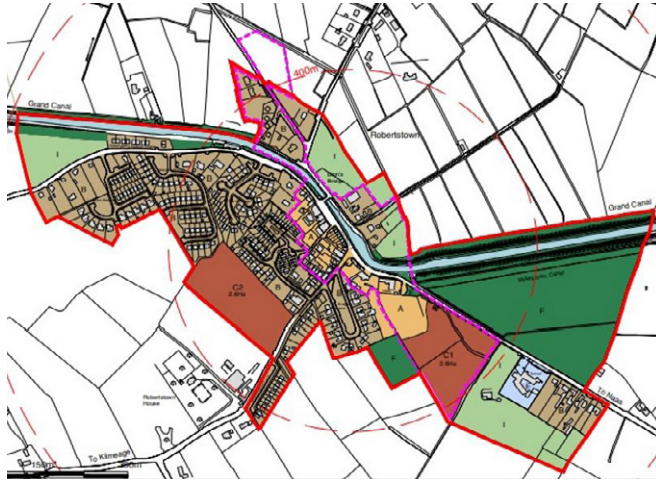
Tidy Towns Community



Welcome signage

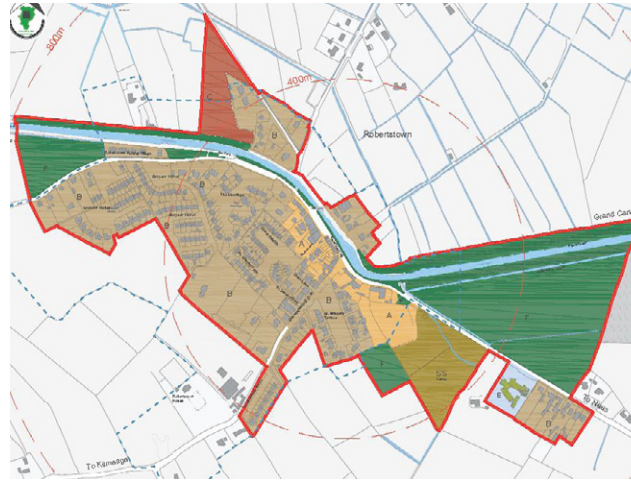
APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

LAND USE, GROWTH AND CONSOLIDATION

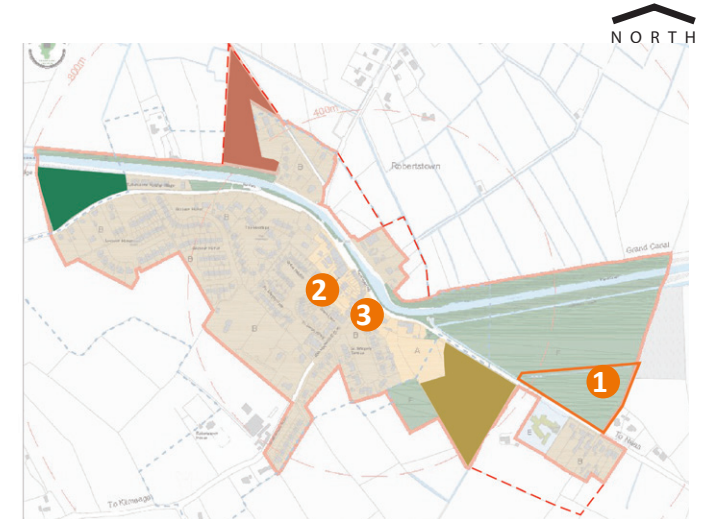


Previous land use (2017-2023)

- Study Area
- Village centre
- Existing/Infill residential
- New residential
- Community and Education
- Open space and amenity
- Agriculture
- Serviced site



Current land use (2023-2029)



Planned growth and consolidation

Future Use

- Revised red line boundary
- Revised zoning to open space/amenity
- Proposed new residential zoning
- Proposed new serviced site

Planning History

- 1 No. 22768, application finalised for Community Amenity area
- 2 No. 211490 application finalised for residential development
- 3 No. 19293 application finalised for residential development

3.

HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC
REALM ANALYSIS

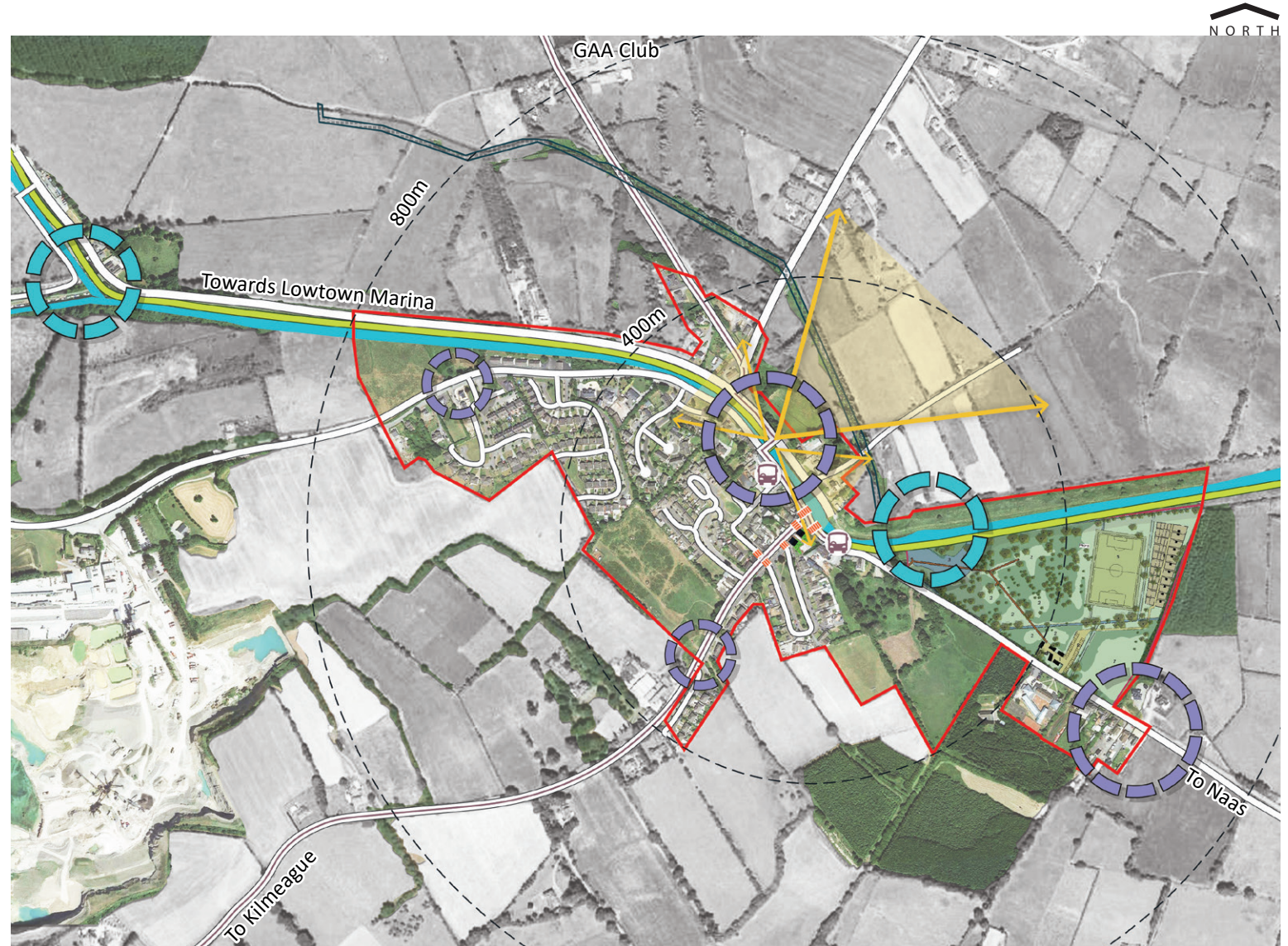


HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Key

- Study Area
 - Key views
 - Grand Canal
- Paths
- Regional Bus Corridor
 - Bus stops
 - Roads and streets
 - Pedestrian crossings
 - Grand Canal Greenway
- Gateways
- Land Gateway
 - Water Gateway



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PLACEMAKING IN ROBERTSTOWN TODAY

Key

- Study Area
- █ Grand Canal
- █ Built form
- Key destinations
- █ Nodes
- Canal nodes
- Village nodes
- Overhead 110Kv Power Lines
- █ Landmarks
- Protected Structures and Monuments
- █ Other
- █ pNHA(Proposed Heritage Area)
- █ Existing planning application for Robertstown Ecological Park



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PUBLIC REALM AUDIT



Existing public realm



Existing street furniture



Derelict Buildings



Potential for streetscape improvements



View from Binn's Bridge



Dominance of cars within village core



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PUBLIC REALM AUDIT

Key

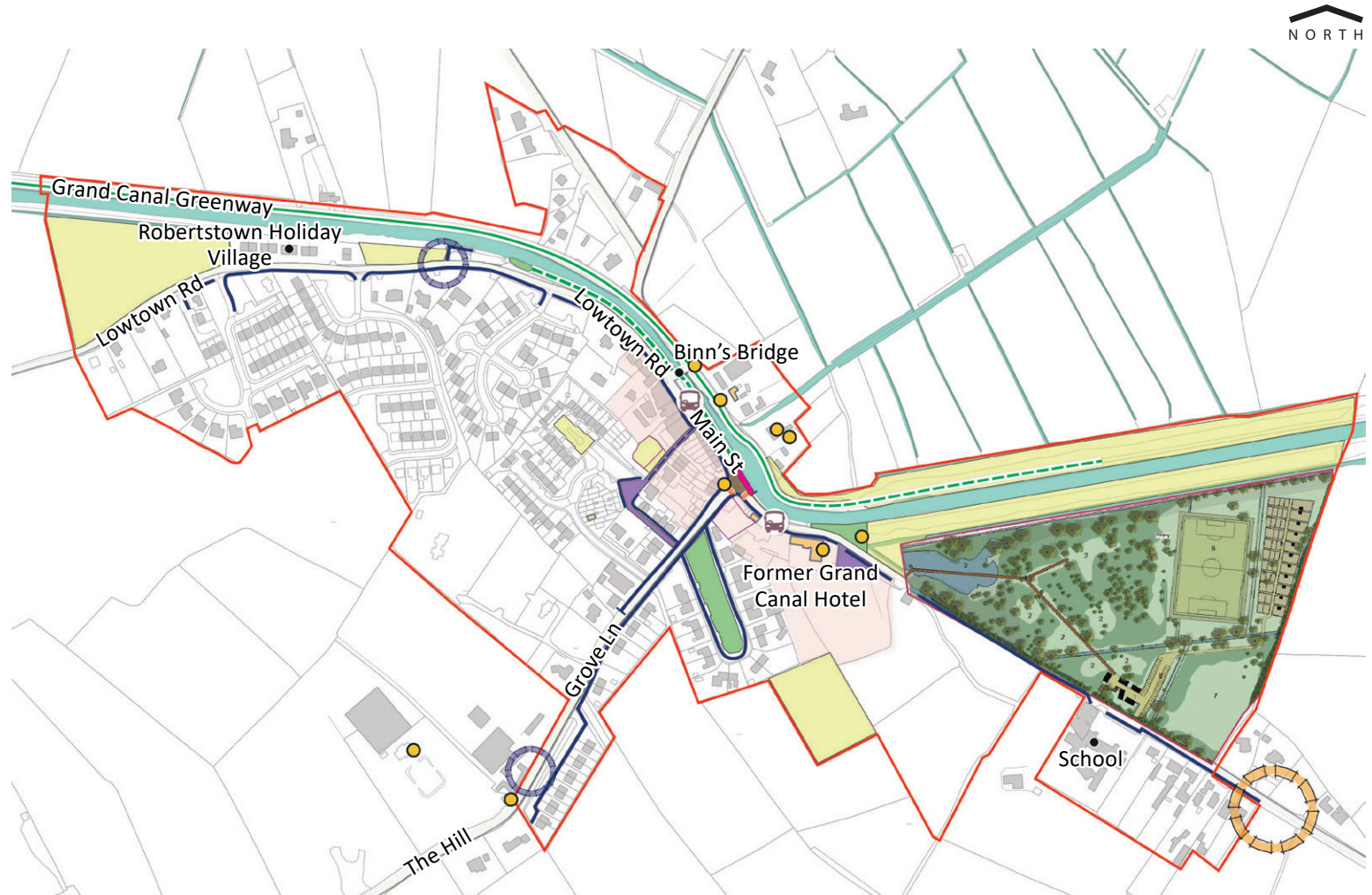
- Study Area
- Grand Canal

- Road and Canal Connectivity**
- Dedicated pedestrian realm
- Junction transition area
- Pedestrian crossing
- Bus stop locations
- Primary Gateways/Signage
- Secondary Gateways
- Strong canal front pedestrian links
- - - Weak canal front pedestrian links

- Built form**
- Vacant buildings
- Destinations
- Retail core
- Existing planning applications

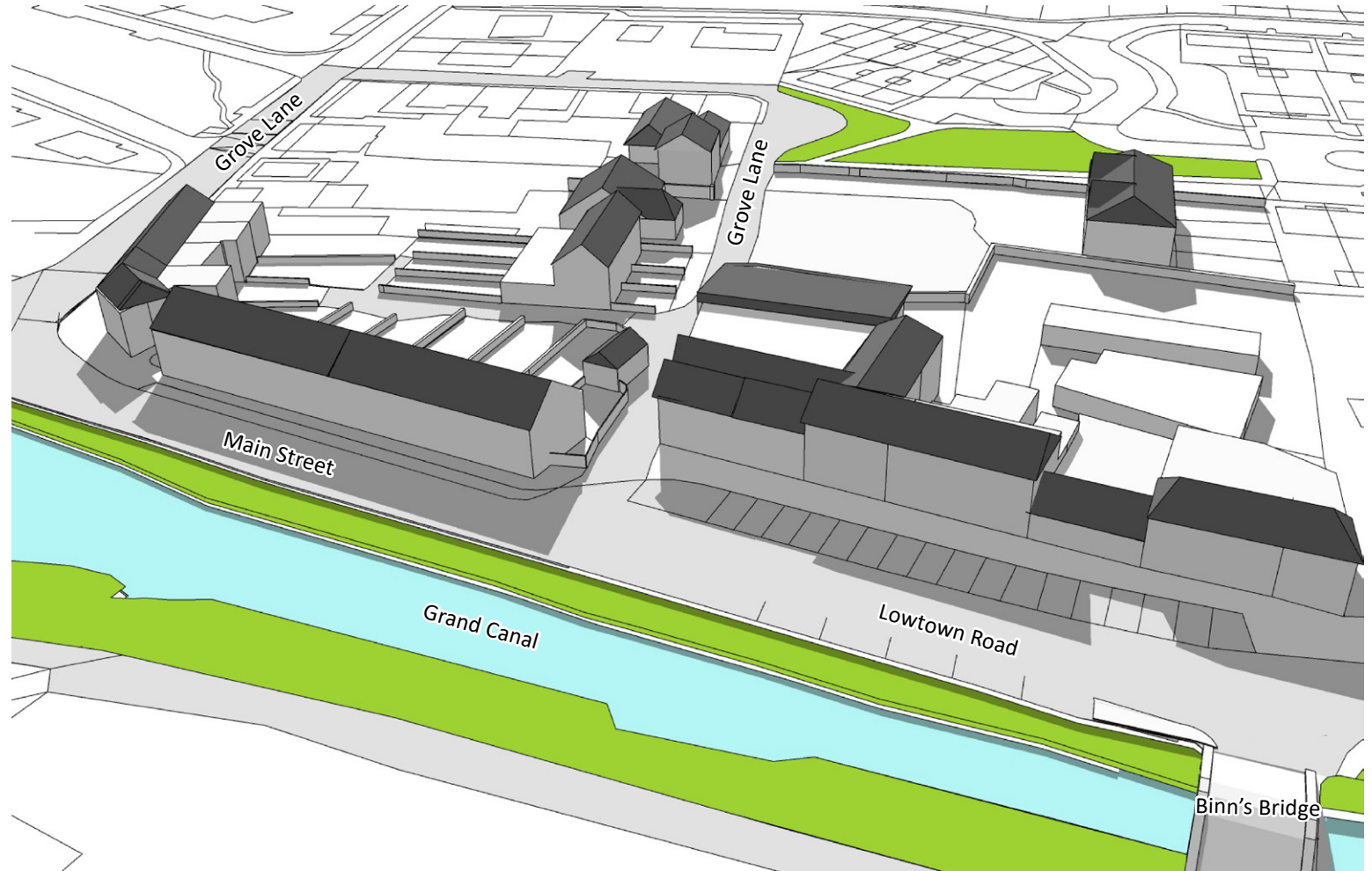
- Public Realm (Streetscape, hard surfaces)**
- Strong
- Weak

- Public Realm (soft surfaces, open green space, amenity)**
- Strong
- Weak



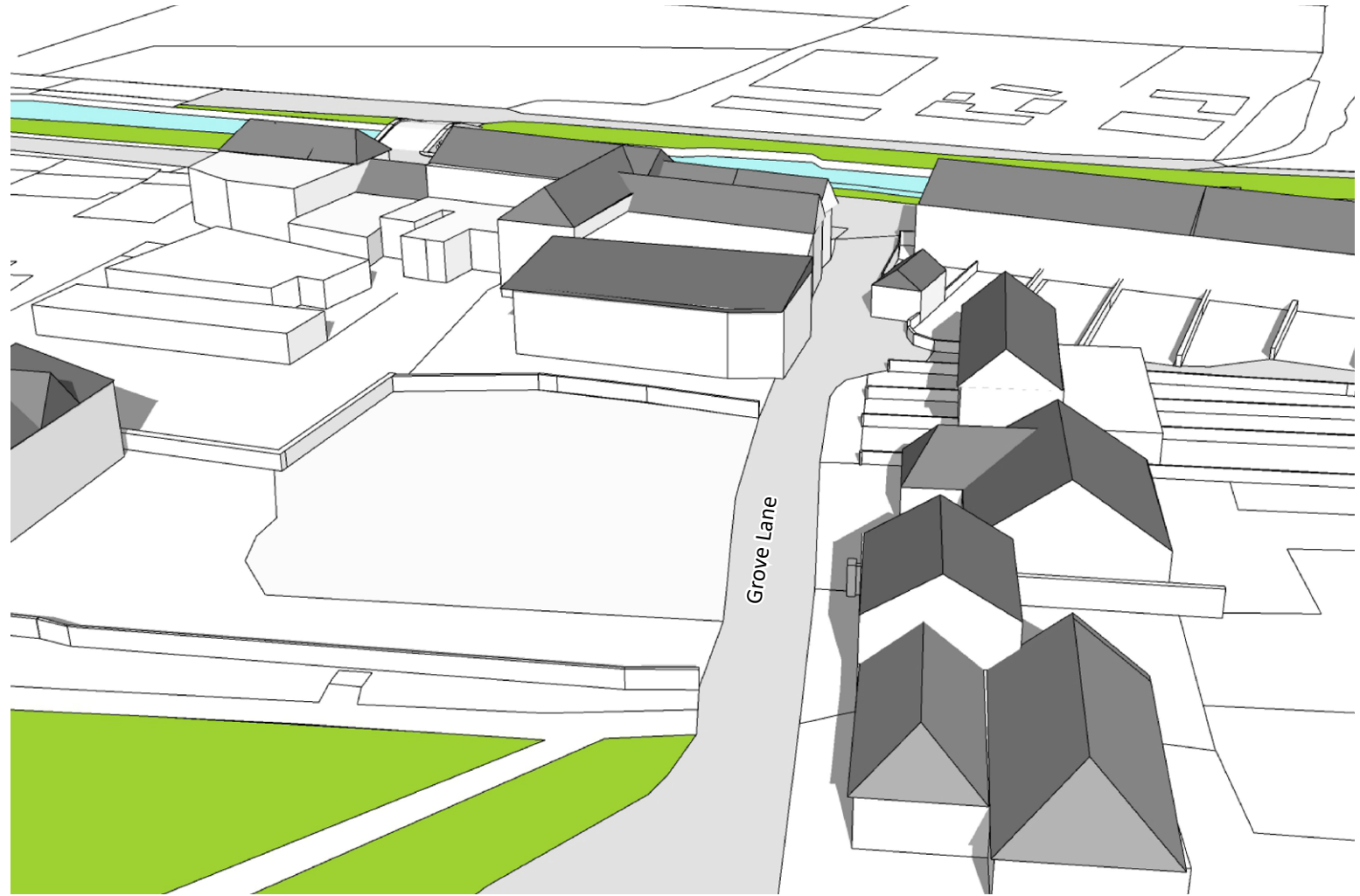
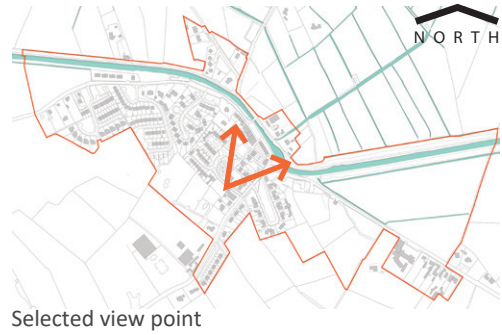
HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

MASSING STUDY



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

MASSING STUDY

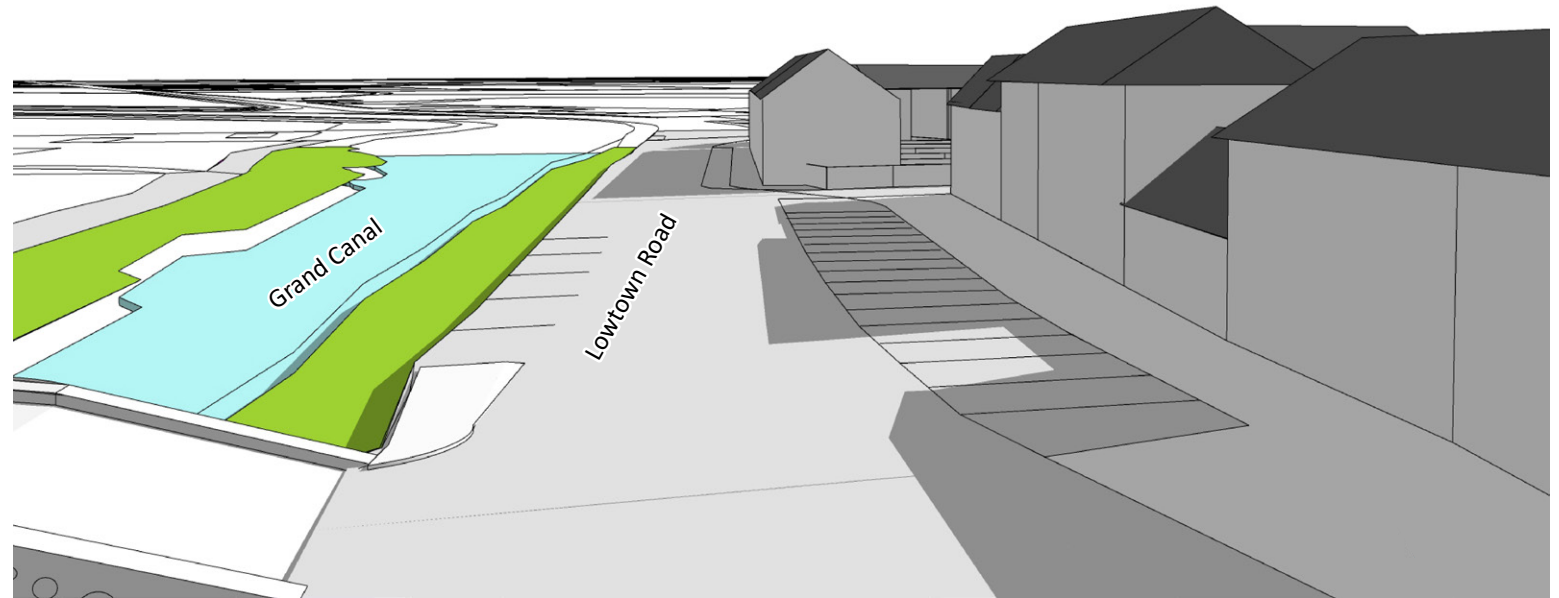


HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

MASSING STUDY



Selected view point



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

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS, EMPLOYMENT AND TOURISM OVERVIEW

RECENT POPULATION TRENDS

A relatively small village in Kildare, Robertstown is now the only one of the four village areas with a population below 1,000. After recording significant population growth in the late 90s and early 2000s, when the population of the village more than tripled in 20 years, the rate of population growth has since reduced significantly. Following growth of 66% in Census 2006, single digit growth has been recorded in each of the last three Census. Robertstown population has still more than doubled in the past 20 years.

Of the four villages, Robertstown can be classified as having the oldest population, as of Census 2022, with the lowest proportion of residents under the age of 35 (48%) and the highest proportion of those aged 65 years and over (10%). Since Census 2016, there has been a three percentage point increase in 65+ year aged population in Robertstown.

Broadly, Robertstown is classified under HP Pobal Deprivation Index as being ‘marginally below average’. The exception is one Small Area to the south-west of the village, with a population of 232 people, which is classified as ‘disadvantaged’.

Small Areas, this classification is driven by a higher proportion of lone parents; a higher proportion of the population with primary education only; a lower proportion of the population with a third level qualification; a higher proportion of local authority housing; and higher unemployment

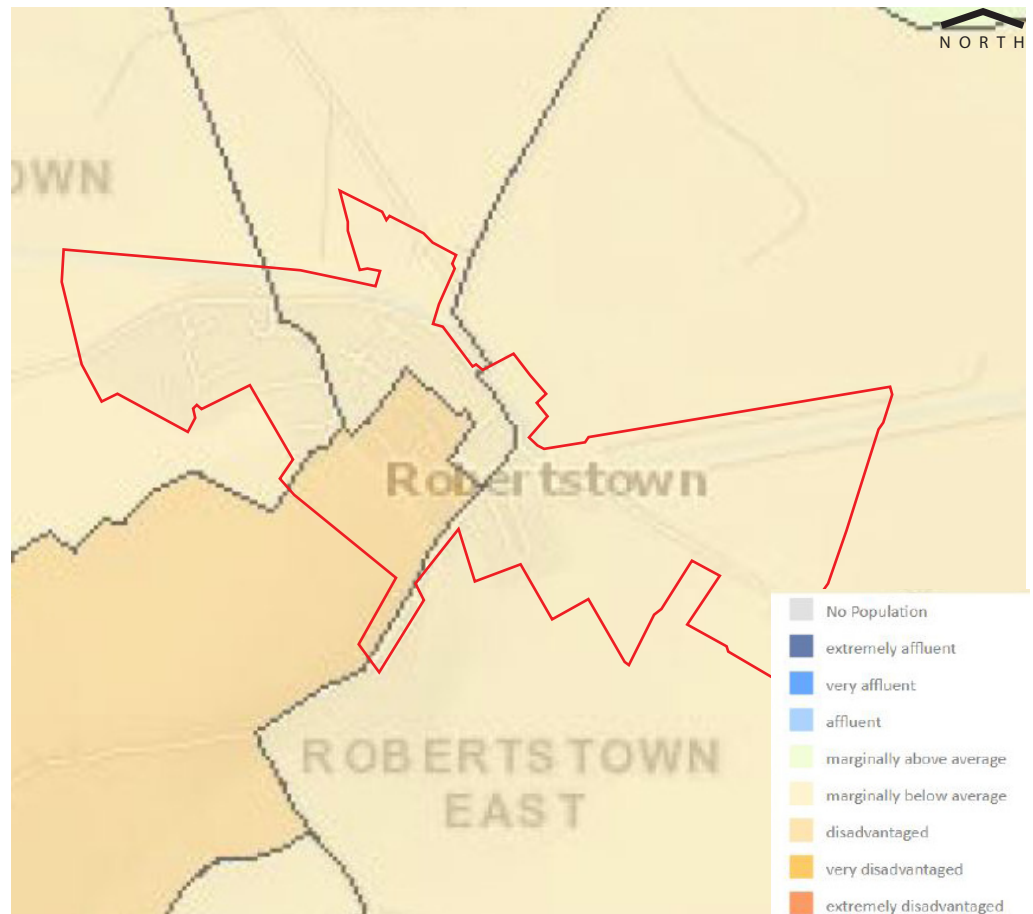
KEY EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The proportion of people in employment in Robertstown has increased steadily since the financial crash of 2008/2008. As of Census 2022, 56% of the local population were ‘at work’ compared to 46% in Census 2011. Reflecting the strong employment growth in the area, the level of unemployment has declined with just 4% of the population either unemployed or looking for their first job. This is broadly in line with the national average (3%) and marks a significant improvement on the levels recorded in Census 2011 (21%) and Census 2016 (11%).

The key industries of employment are commerce and trade (27%); professional services (23%); and manufacturing (13%). In a trend mirrored across all four villages, the vast majority of the local community travel by car or van to work, school or college (71%), far in excess of the national average (58%). Of the

Robertstown	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016	2022
Population (nr.)	206	375	621	669	707	771
Growth (%)		82%	66%	8%	6%	9%

Source: CSO. Note: Based on CSO defined ‘Settlement’ area.



HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS, EMPLOYMENT AND TOURISM OVERVIEW

four villages, Robertstown is one of two villages which has recorded an increase in private transport use in the six years since Census 2016. Commuting via car and van increased by seven percentage points in Robertstown in Census 2022, and by three percentage points in Allenwood. It was also the village to record the largest decline in the use of public transport, down four percentage points. Of the four villages, Robertstown is the only one for which the use of public transport (9%) is lower than the national average (11%).

According to the County Kildare Community Network listings, there are 38 businesses registered in the Robertstown area. One-third of the businesses are classified as ‘wholesale and retail trade; repair or motor vehicles and motorcycles’ – under this heading falls public houses, convenience shop and post office.

As noted in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 the main retail offerings in Robertstown include a convenience shop, along with a take-away, Credit Union, pre-school and public houses.

KEY HOUSING STATISTICS

According to Census 2022, Robertstown recorded the largest reduction in vacant homes, with a six percentage point decrease on Census 2016 levels. Vacancy levels are half of the national average (8%), with 94% of homes classified as occupied on the night of the Census. Overall, there are 264 homes in Robertstown, up 4% on 2016.

Corresponding to the strong double-digit growth at the time, the majority of homes were built in the 1990s and 2000s – 64% of homes. Since then, only 12 additional builds have been added to the stock of housing, all of which were built post-2016. This level of growth in housing stock (+5%) is in line with the national average.

Of the four villages, Robertstown has the second highest level, after Kilmeague, of households renting from Kildare County Council. Some 17% of households are living in social housing, just over twice the level recorded nationally, while a further 9% live in private rented accommodation. The proportion of the population renting their homes is broadly unchanged from Census 2016.

According to Kildare County Development Plan 2023–2029, there is

an objective to ‘facilitate the appropriate redevelopment of derelict buildings and suitable infill development’.

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 identifies 0Ha of developable land zoned for new residential.

TOURISM/COMMUNITY STATISTICS

According to Kildare County Development Plan 2023–2029, the Council intends to

- Promote Robertstown as a tourist destination having regards to its location on the future Grand Canal Greenway (the Grand Canal Greenway will traverse both Allenwood and Robertstown), and its close proximity to the Lowtown marina;

- Introduce consistent village branding at entry points to strengthen the Village’s identity as a tourist destination; and to
- Support and facilitate the development of a Discovery/Ecology Park in Robertstown.

There are also objectives within the Development Plan to improve the public realm; investigate the feasibility of developing a community centre; develop a playground and recreational facility within the village; and support the development of playing pitches.

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 (%)
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	13	34%
Construction	8	21%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	4	11%
Accommodation and Food Services Activities	4	11%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	3	8%
Other Service Activities	3	8%
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	2	5%
Transportation and Storage	1	3%
Total	38	100%

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

HEALTH CHECK AND PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES (EXISTING STREETScape AND SPACES)

Key

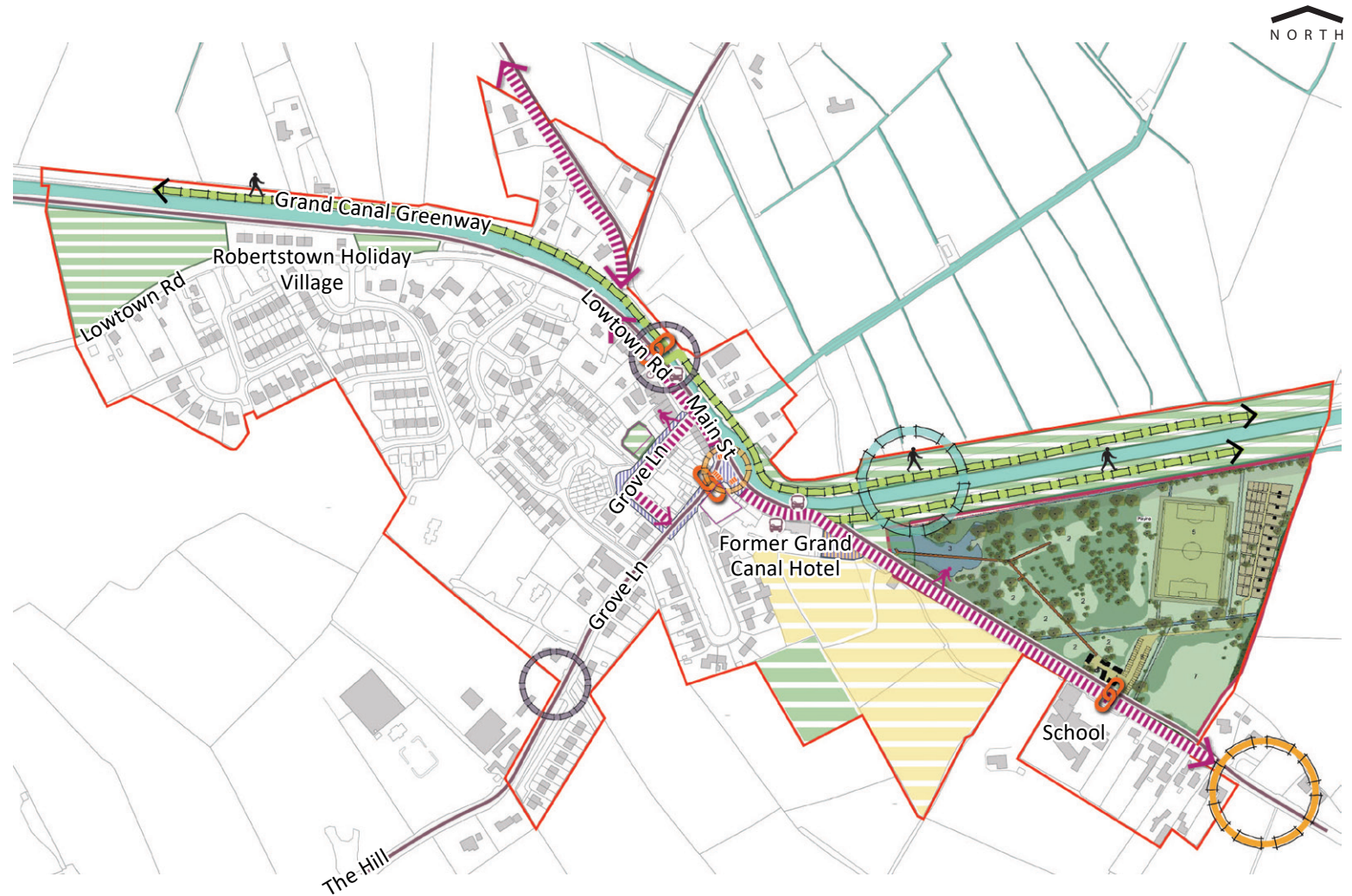
- Study Area
- Grand Canal

- Road and Canal Connectivity**
- Regional bus routes
- |||| Existing pedestrian crossings
- ⊗ Potential pedestrian crossings
- Potential pedestrian links

- Public Realm : Streetscape opportunities**
- Connected pedestrian realm
- |||| Hard surface improvements (traffic calming, junction arrangements, etc)

- Public Realm : Green space, amenity opportunities**
- |||| Opportunity sites

- Other**
- |||| Serviced site (as per County Development Plan 2023-2029)
- ⊗ Primary gateways
- ⊗ Secondary gateways
- ⊗ Canal gateway
- Existing planning applications



4.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY



URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

SUMMARY OF 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 Robertstown. The following is a summary of the discussion categorised under a few key themes.

Key takeaways from the engagement can be summarised as follows:

- 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.
- Robertstown needs to balance infrastructural projects to not only focus on tourism but also local need.
- 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 required 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 – and 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

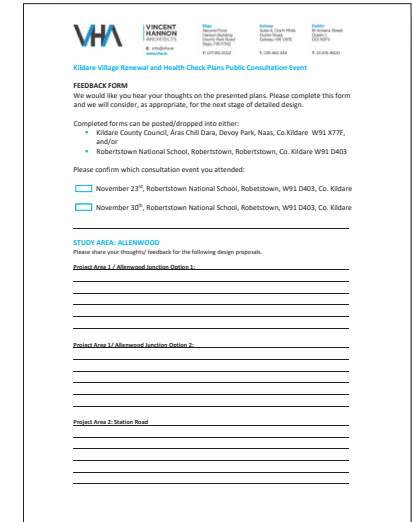
The Kildare Village Renewal and Health Check and Urban Design Analysis plans were informed through conducting an analysis and an understanding of the village as it is today. To further inform the emerging design proposals, a process of consultation and engagement was facilitated.

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 Kildare County Council websites.

The purpose of these events was to showcase the draft emerging Village Renewal Plans and Health Checks for the study area of Robertstown and hear insights and gain knowledge from the local community, stakeholders, members of the local tidy towns committee and residents in Robertstown. 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 Robertstown.



Public Consultation flyer



Feedback form



Public Consultation event photos

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

CONSULTATION APPROACHES, FINDINGS AND FEEDBACK

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.

What people have told us:

Key issues raised:

- Anti-social behaviour in the village centre.
- Need for paving, new road surface, street lighting.
- Car parking in the village centre.

Summary of feedback on Project Area 1: Lowlown Road

Movement and Accessibility for all

- Consideration to be given to the proposed reduction of car-parking spaces on Lowlown Road to not affect the local businesses.
- Possibility of moving pedestrian crossing closer to the shops to be considered.
- Traffic enforcement public measures to be considered for the car parking near Garda Station to be examined as there isn't sufficient space for two cars to pass when the parking space is being used.
- Lowlown canal road highlighted as a popular walking and cycling route for exercising, dog walking.

Public Realm

- Excellent ideas, promoting Robertstown as an attractive location.
- Public seating and furniture would be beneficial to local businesses.
- Proposals would better link the village to the canal.
- Additional things to be considered like street lighting, bins, vacancy in village centre.
- Introducing a play area in the main village might be more suitable to draw people away from anti-social

- behaviour in the neighbourhood.
- Consideration to be given to anti-social behaviour when suggesting public seating spaces.

Other

- Possibility of turning the underutilised former Grand Canal

- Hotel into another local amenity would be considered.
- Consideration to be given to push forward the upcoming plans for Blue Barrow Way, Grand Canal Greenway to bring economic development and transport links to Robertstown.



Public Consultation event photos

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 Design Checks for the study areas of Allenwood, Robertstown, Cooleraugh 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

Map showing the locations of the four study areas: Allenwood, Robertstown, Coill Dubh and Cooleraugh, and Kilmagee. The map also indicates the Grand Canal, bog lands, and former bog train tracks.

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, livelier 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
- Dereliction/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:

VHA
 Connaught Quay
 Kildare County Council

Extract of Public Consultation exhibition boards

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION APPROACHES, FINDINGS AND FEEDBACK

Summary of feedback on Project Area 2: Grove Lane

Movement and Accessibility for all

- This would be a great incentive to enhance Grove Lane.
- A playground or a secure soccer astro-pitch could be a better use of this land to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- New road surfaces and paving required.

Public Realm

- More street lighting is required to prevent anti-social activities.
- New street lights to be matched to the ones on the main street - black with lantern heads, vintage style.


Other

- Excessive tree growth in Grove Lane to be addressed.
- Vacant properties on Grove Lane need to be developed in order to discourage anti-social behaviour.
- Community centre would be beneficial.


ROBERTSTOWN (BAILE RIOBAIRD)

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

- **1785**
Construction of the Grand Canal at Robertstown, which functioned as a commercial cargo destination until 1960
- **1801-1865**
• Grand Canal Hotel was built in 1801. The former hotel was leased by the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1905.
• The village also witnessed settlement expansion.
- **TODAY**
Potential for future tourism and settlement growth through the proposals such as Ecological Park, Blue Barrow Way trails and the Grand Canal Greenway.



Robertstown 1895
Former Grand Canal Hotel in 1895
Source: Conroy Collection




Robertstown in the 1960s
Source: Conroy Collection


ROBERTSTOWN TODAY

Robertstown (Baile Rio Baird) is a village rich with tourism and canal-oriented assets, with a strong sense of community. Positioned approximately 14 km from Naas, the village acts as a local service centre, and has established facilities including Robertstown School, GAA Club, Lowtown Marina and a planned Ecological Park. It is rich in architectural heritage with several protected structures illustrating the rich heritage and history of the area. Acknowledging the tourism and canal oriented potentials of the village, VHA identify a strong opportunity, through public realm interventions, to further enhance the strong sense of identity and place, thus further encouraging Robertstown as a place to live, work and visit.

CONSIDERATIONS




Road space and pedestrian realm with potential for improvement




Car-dominated streetscape


OPPORTUNITIES




Connect open spaces and destinations




Utilise and celebrate existing public realm




Laneway enhancement potential




Prioritise pedestrian safety



Poor sense of canal front connectivity



Potential to activate under-utilised sites within village core

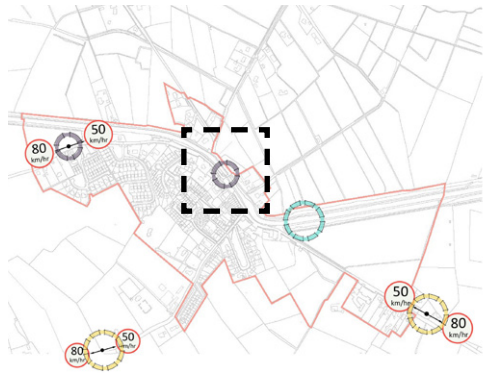


Greenway and Blue Barrow Way connectivity

Extract of Public Consultation exhibition boards

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECTS OPTION 1



- Key**
- Primary gateways
 - Secondary gateways
 - Water gateway
 - Speed transition zones

- Key**
- Pedestrian realm
 - Grove lane enhancement opportunity
 - Existing roads
 - Existing track
 - Existing dedicated green spaces
 - Proposed raised table
 - Proposed pedestrian crossing
 - Existing trees
 - Existing mature trees (to be protected)
 - Proposed enhanced canal front public realm
 - Existing retail areas
 - Proposed dedicated cycle parking
 - Proposed new dedicated surface car park
 - Existing planning application



All proposals are indicative only.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECTS OPTION 1

DESIGN RATIONALE

- To enhance the relationship between the Grand Canal, its adjoining street-scapes and built form fronting the Canal;
- To create a high quality public realm on both sides of Main Street and Lowtown Road;
- To enhance permeability through the village through streetscape and laneway improvements; and
- As an alternative, should a consented application site not come forward for development (see page 36 for detail), and to reduce the dominance of car parking along Main Street, there is an identified potential to create adaptable and multi-functional public realm along Main Street by partially relocating car parking to Grove Lane in the form of a dedicated car parking site.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

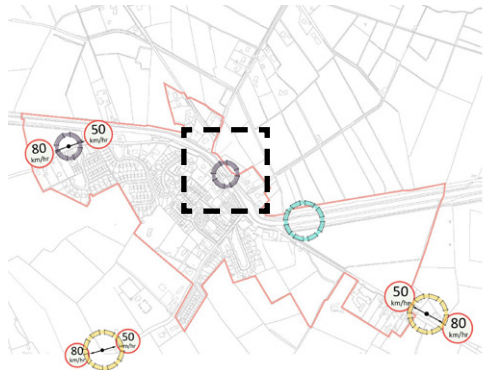
- Enhance the public realm along Lowtown Road through extending pockets of the existing pavement to create spaces for outdoor seating.
- Provide urban planting along the kerbs in order to aid visual calming measures and also discourage illegal parking manoeuvres on the existing public realm to the south of Main Street
- Enhance the permeability of the village core through a laneway enhancement opportunity in Grove Lane.
- Unlock and activate vacant/ derelict site on Grove Lane through introducing a playground area, thus responding to the objectives in the latest County Development Plan.
- Introduce a new pedestrian crossing along Lowtown Road to ensure safe passage from Binn's Bridge to the village core.
- Provide signalisation along Binn's Bridge and reduce it to a single lane of traffic.
- Reduce the visual dominance of car parking on Lowtown Road by reconfiguring the arrangement and quantum of parking spaces along the Grand Canal edge and in front of the shops and re-allocate them to Grove Lane.
- Modify the existing car parking in front of the shops to angled parking of 60 degrees in order to enhance the ease of movement and for optimal utilisation of the existing space.
- Taking into account the presence of local shops and residences, introduce appropriate traffic calming measures (like speed signage, pedestrian crossings, surface treatments) along Lowtown Road and Main Street to lower the operational speeds to 50km/h in an area where pedestrians and cyclists are present in larger numbers.
- Introduce a defined carriageway width and curbing, a raised table along the Robertstown village junction to the south of Main Street to ensure that the traffic is adequately calmed within the surrounding Study Area.
- Extensive road markings to be proposed to help narrow active carriageway widths and reduce vehicle speeds.
- Create a shared surface streetscape on Lowtown Road and Main Street to provide access and integration with the Grand Canal.
- Retain and protect the existing

mature trees and monuments along the Grand Canal and ensure that they are integrated into the overall streetscape and public realm.

- Consider the possibility of creating functional green space near Grove Lane for ecological uses by the community such as biodiversity, community garden, poly-tunnels.
- Consider an alternate location for the Bottle Bank, closer to the village core.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECTS OPTION 2



- Key**
- Primary gateways
 - Secondary gateways
 - Water gateway
 - Speed transition zones

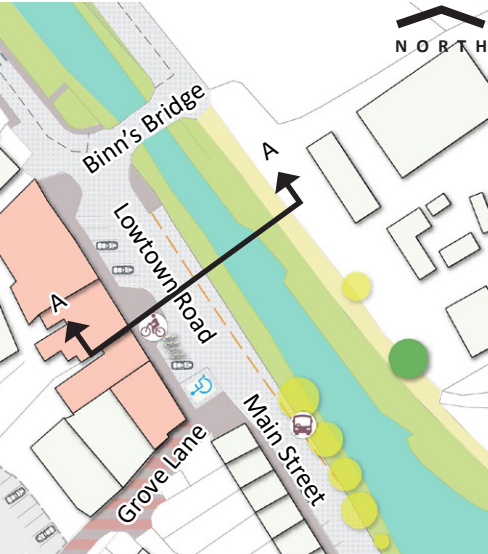
- Key**
- Pedestrian realm
 - Grove lane enhancement opportunity
 - Existing roads
 - Existing track
 - Existing dedicated green spaces
 - Proposed raised table
 - Proposed pedestrian crossing
 - Existing trees
 - Existing mature trees (to be protected)
 - Proposed enhanced canal front public realm
 - Existing retail areas
 - Proposed dedicated cycle parking
 - Consented planning application (File Ref: 211490 for the construction of 3 townhouses)



All proposals are indicative only.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

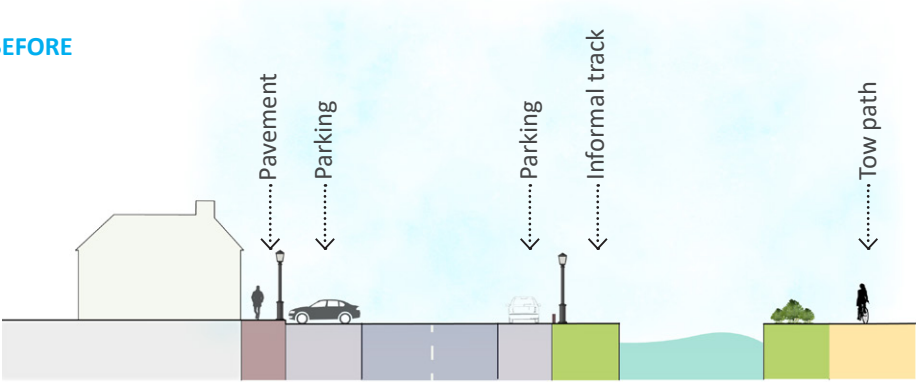
URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITY PROJECTS OPTION 1 AND 2



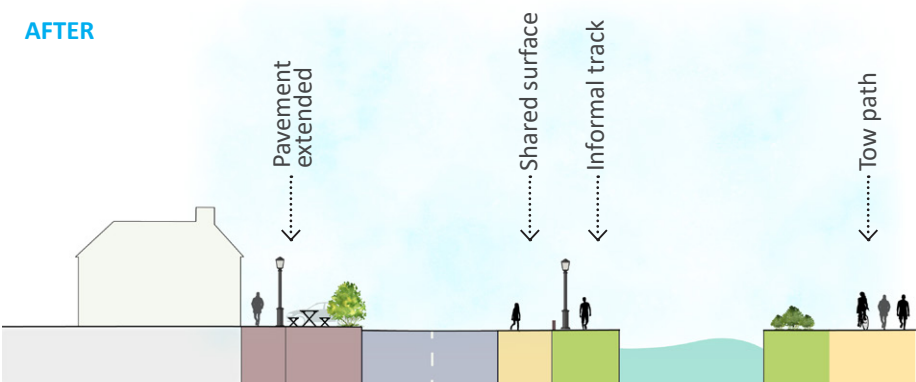
Selected view point

SECTION AA

BEFORE



AFTER



URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

LOWTOWN ROAD AND MAIN STREET ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY



Selected view point



Google

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

LOWTOWN ROAD AND MAIN STREET ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY



AFTER

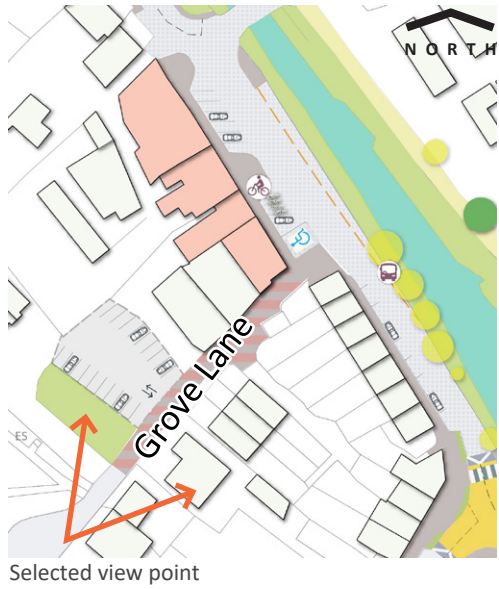
All proposals are indicative only.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Improve the interface between the streetscape, public spaces and Canal-front via introduction of streetscape improvements and public realm enhancement.
- Upgrade and activate the existing canal-front edge for all users through re-allocating existing parking spaces and creating a shared surface along the Grand Canal edge.
- Enhance the pedestrian public realm along the Lowtown Road by using high quality paving, lighting, trees and landscape
- Introduce dedicated cycle parking spaces within the village core.
- Reduce the dominance of car parking on Lowtown Road by re-allocating parking spaces to an appropriate site on Grove Lane.
- Strengthen the interface between the existing shop fronts and the public realm through activating the pedestrian realm through planters, outdoor seating.
- Modifying the existing parking spaces to angled or echelon parking in order to reduce the dominance of vehicles.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

GROVE LANE ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY OPTION 1



URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

GROVE LANE ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY OPTION 1



All proposals are indicative only.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create a pedestrian orientated street for a more pleasant and safer streetscape and enhance permeability to the village core.
- Re-allocate existing parking spaces on the main-street to a dedicated surface car parking area in Grove lane.
- Introduce seating, play areas in order to cater to the provision of a playground in the existing residential space, utilising the natural surveillance.
- Improve streetscape by using high quality paving, lighting and street furniture along Grove lane.
- Enhance the interface between the existing residences on Grove lane and the street in order to encourage the activation of derelict buildings and the existing residences.
- Create a functional green space along Grove lane and consider opportunities for providing community gardens, poly-tunnels and increase biodiversity.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

INDICATIVE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Activated shop frontages



Indicative street bollard types



Canal oriented activities



Activated streets



Laneway enhancement opportunity



Canal oriented activities

5.

APPENDIX

VHA



Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Town Renewal Masterplan Robertstown Co. Kildare



DATE: 30/09/2023
FOR: Kildare County Council
BY: ID Environmental Consultants

Contents

Abbreviations	2
Definitions	2
1 Introduction.....	4
1.1 Statement of Authority.....	4
1.1 Relevant Legislation and Overall Screening Methodology.....	4
1.2 Case law.....	6
1.3 Guidance Documents	7
2 Methodologies.....	8
2.1 The Source-Pathway-Receptor Model	9
2.2 The Precautionary Principle	9
2.3 Likely Significant Effect.....	9
2.4 Desktop Study.....	10
2.5 Field Surveys.....	10
3 Master Plan Scope and Description.....	10
3.1 Site of Works	11
3.2 Development Description.....	12
3.3 Urban Design Opportunity Project 1	12
3.4 Urban Design Opportunity Project 2	13
3.5 Surface Water Bodies	13
3.6 Groundwater	13
3.7 Habitat Description.....	13
3.7.1 Habitat significance	15
3.8 Ecology Surveys	15
3.8.1 Birds.....	15
3.8.2 Mammals.....	15
3.8.3 Invasive Species.....	15
4 Designated Sites and Ecological Assessment	15
4.1 Designated Sites	16
4.2 Cumulative and In combination Effects	22
4.2.1 Plans.....	22
4.2.2 Projects.....	24
5 Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement and Conclusion	24
5.1 Summary Assessment of Possible LSE to European Sites.....	24
5.1.1 Land take resulting in habitat loss or degradation.....	24
5.1.2 Changes in water quality, quantity or distribution resulting in habitat loss or degradation. ...	24
5.1.3 Noise vibration resulting in disturbance	24
5.1.4 In Combination	24
5.2 Findings of Article 6(3) Screening Assessment.....	25
References.....	26

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 (non-bird) species for which an SAC or SPA is selected
Zone of Influence (Zoi)	Spatial extent of potential impacts resulting from the project.

1 Introduction

This 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 Robertstown, County Kildare, (hereafter referred to as 'the Master Plan') to impact European sites within the Natura 2000 network.

The vision for Robertstown aims to create a pedestrian friendly village that encourages compact residential growth, community and socio economic development and enhances its tourism potential through improved placemaking and public realm and opportunities. The urban design opportunities explored aim to illustrate how an enhanced public realm and placemaking strategy along with an improved village core can contribute towards the creation of a renewed sense of identity for Robertstown.

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, the planning and design of nature trails, constructed wetland creation and 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 in 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 Master plan AA Screening report

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 the 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>

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>
<p>Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC</p>	<p>Publication to the Member States with an interpretation of certain concepts in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. EC Environment Directorate-General (2018)</p>
<p>Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle.</p>	<p>Publication relating to the use of the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000)</p>

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);
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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 September 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—that those effects on 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 level. 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;
- Soils, geology and hydrogeology data are 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 website¹
- Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 available on the Kildare County Council website²
- Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 available on the Kildare County Council website³

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 Masterplan Scope and Description

Kildare County Council, in association with community organisations, are undertaking a Health Check / Urban Design Analysis for Robertstown Co. Kildare. To inform the Town Renewal masterplan.

¹ <https://birdwatchireland.ie/birds-of-conservation-concern-in-ireland/>

² <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Planning/DevelopmentPlans/KildareCountyDevelopmentPlan2017-2023/>

³ <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Planning/DevelopmentPlans/KildareCountyDevelopmentPlan2023-2029/Volume2SmallTownsEnvironsVillagesRuralSettlements/>

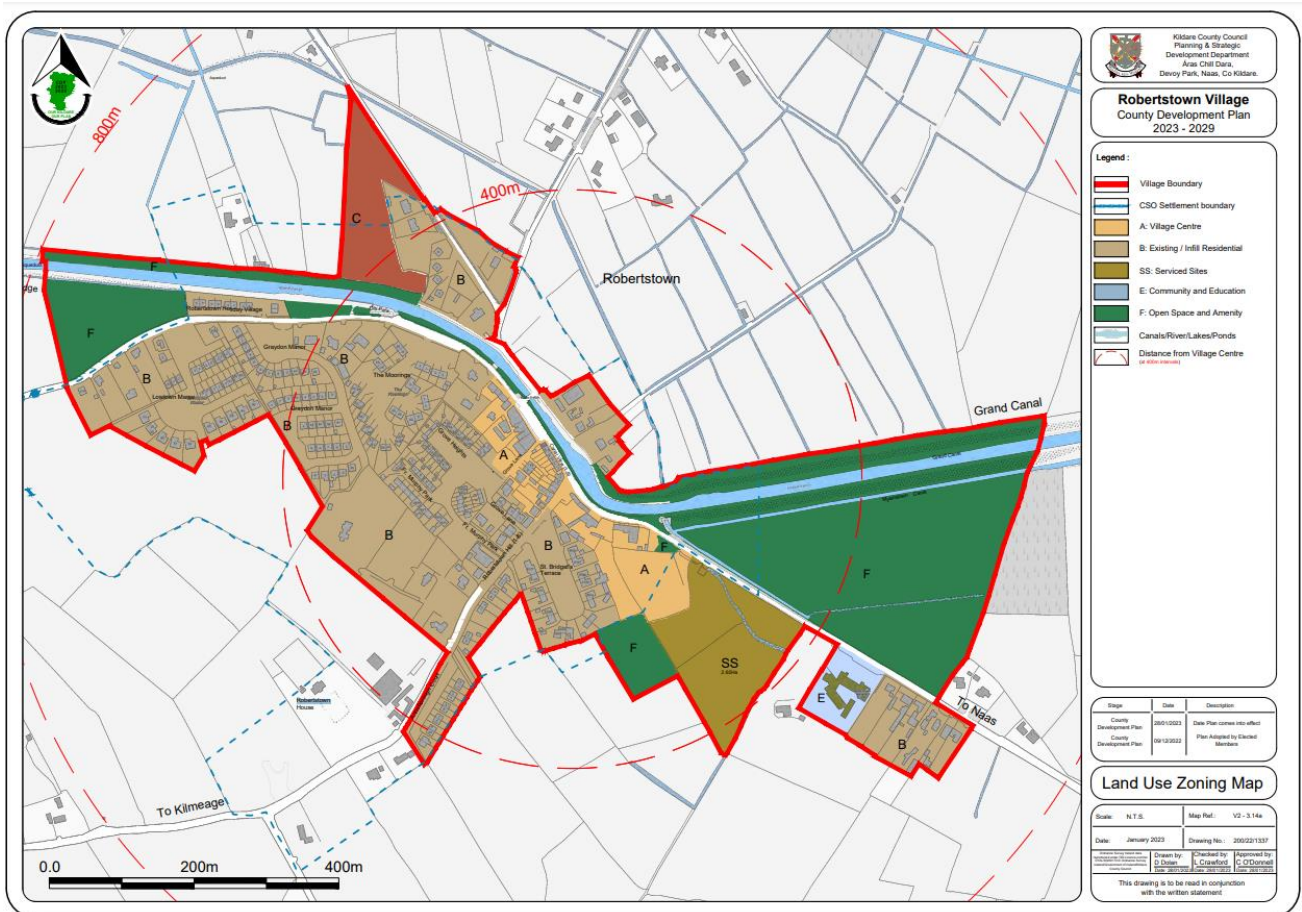
The key objectives of the Robertstown Town Renewal Masterplan will be to deliver a new vision for the town with pedestrian focused public spaces and liveable streets. The aim is to put the pedestrian and cyclist at the heart of the design solution for these towns and to create fully accessible, inclusive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

3.1 Site of Works

Robertstown (Baile Riobaird) is located on boglands in north central Kildare, predominantly on the southern banks of the Grand Canal and approximately 14 km from Naas. The Barrow Line of the Grand Canal connects to the main line of the Canal west of the village, at Lowtown.

Robertstown is a historic settlement which developed with the arrival of the Grand Canal in 1784. Located within the western boglands, physically the village core has a T-shape form, along the canal between Binn’s Bridge and the former Canal Hotel, and the intersection with Robinstown Hill. The village has expanded primarily on the southern side of the canal, with a mixture of local authority housing and more recent suburban-style housing to the northwestern edge of the town.

Figure 1: Robertstown Village (Source Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029)



According to the CSO, Robertstown had a total population of 707 inhabitants as of the 2016 census, an increase from 669 in the 2011 census.

Robertstown performs a role as a local service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland in conjunction with the other settlements in the area such as Allenwood and Prosperous. Robertstown has several social and community facilities serving the village and its hinterland including Pre-School, Soccer Pitch, GAA Pitch (outside village plan area), Post Office, Garda Station, Credit Union, Pubs and Convenience Shops.

The village has significant potential in terms of tourism/amenity functions. Robertstown is rich in architectural heritage and many protected structures are located in the village. The town currently caters for tourism with canal walks, fishing and an annual vintage fair which takes place in June every year.

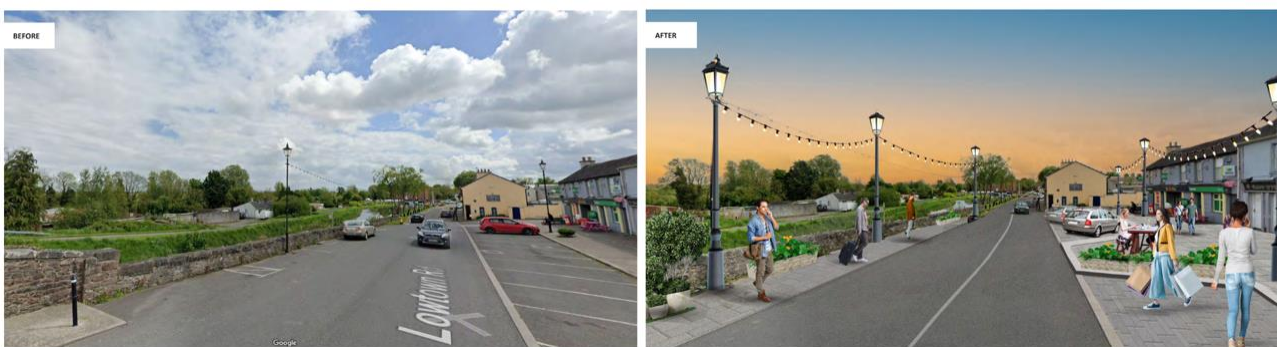
3.2 Development Description

This Master Plan proposes to set out a vision for the future planning and sustainable development of Robertstown. It will guide the sustainable growth of Robertstown and enable it to be a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, and prosper while leveraging the town's unique assets as an exciting place to visit and explore. It plans to redevelop several areas within the two to improve their functionality for residents and visitors. General works associated with the implementation of the proposed Master Plan are likely to include the following:

- The removal of soil and overburden material from the site
- The removal of existing site assets including footpaths, seating, street lights and portions of existing roadway
- Removal, diversion and reconnection of existing services including water, electricity and broadband, where applicable
- Creation of pedestrian realms
- Paving, planting and attenuation/rain gardens features and other landscaping elements and;
- All associated works and assets

3.3 Urban Design Opportunity Project 1

Figure 1: Proposed Lowtown Road Redevelopment



3.4 Urban Design Opportunity Project 2

Figure 2: Proposed Grove Lane Enhancement Redevelopment



3.5 Surface Water Bodies

No natural watercourses are found on or directly adjacent to the urban renewal sites. The Grand Canal runs along the northern boundary of the town and provides connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between several towns and villages in Kildare and south Dublin. The Brockagh River is found at the western edge of the town. This small stream is a tributary of the Slate River. No water quality monitoring is conducted on the Brockagh River. Water Frameworks directive monitoring of the Slate from the period SW 2016-2021 indicated that this river has poor water quality. Monitoring of the Grand Canal from the same period indicated that it has good water quality.

3.6 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 viewer⁴. Groundwater vulnerability was classed as moderate under Robertstown. No groundwater-dependent European designated habitats or species are found within or surrounding the subject site.

3.7 Habitat Description

Buildings and other artificial surfaces (BL3) make up the majority of the areas surveyed including Main Street, Lowtown Road and Grove Lane. This includes the roadways and their adjoining footpaths. It also includes street buildings, walls and private driveways. The Lowtown Road renewal area is bounded by **Stone walls (BL1)** that separate Lowtown Road from the **Canal (FW3)**.

Figure 3: Lowtown Road Proposed Urban Renewal Area

⁴ <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7e8a202301594687ab14629a10b748ef>



The Grove Lane Renewal area is bounded by buildings on all sides. An area of disused ground is found in the southwest. Currently, this is composed of **grassy verge (GS2)** habitat composed of Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Bents (*Agrostis spp.*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) dominated. The herb layer contained mainly tall growing or climbing herbs including common Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), Common Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Thistles (*Cirsium arvense*, *C. vulgare*), Docks (*Rumex spp.*) and Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*). Small patches of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg*) dominated scrub are also common in this area.

Figure 4: Grove Lane proposed urban renewal area



3.7.1 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 any of 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). The Grand Canal is the key habitat area within proximity to the proposed urban renewal areas of Robertstown.

3.8 Ecology Surveys

3.8.1 Birds

Bird species recorded during the site walkover included mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*). No Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species were recorded within or surrounding Robertstown.

3.8.2 Mammals

No Otter (*Lutra lutra*) holting sites or signs of usage were identified during a survey 150m up and downstream of Lowtown Road along the Grand Canal. Otters may occasionally use this stretch of Canal of the canal for foraging and navigation. Quay walls within the town make much of this stretch of the canal unusable for Otter holting

3.8.3 Invasive Species

The Wildlife Acts, 1976 and 2000, contain several 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

European sites designated for the conservation of nature in Ireland include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)

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 the 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

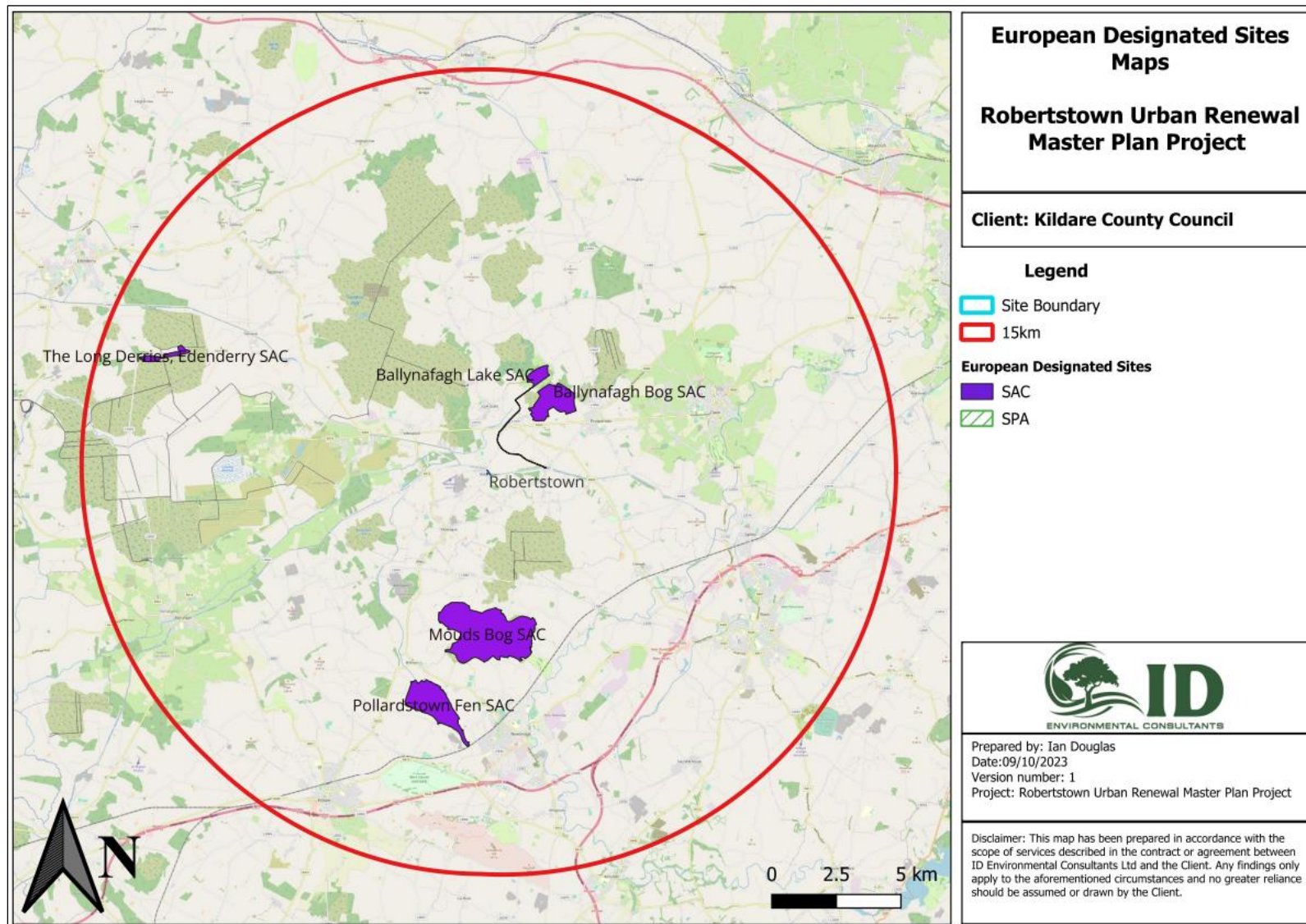
Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Ballynafagh Lake SAC 1387	730m	Alkaline fens [7230] Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016] Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The Blackwood Feeder, which connects Ballynafagh Lake to the Grand Canal, is also included in the site. The Grand Canal runs through Robertstown and could provide connectivity to this designated site. No works are occurring that will interact with the Canal, no water quality impacts are predicted. If any pollutants were to reach the Grand Canal the lack of flow would mean they would not be transported into the SAC.</p> <p>Works occur within areas of the existing built environment this is 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	2.2km	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, and the intervening distance between the development site and the SAC.</p>

Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
		Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	<p>Brockagh River could provide a hydrological pathway to the SAC. However, any potential water quality impacts could not lead to LSE to the conservation objectives of this SAC given the nature of the site Qualifying Interests.</p> <p>No risk of likely significant effects were identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects</p>
Mouds bog SAC 2331	5.2km	<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 a likely significant effect.</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>

Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Pollardstown Fen SAC 0396	8.6km	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [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]	The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects. 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. 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 style="text-align: center;">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	11.2km	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]	The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects. 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.

Site Name Designation Site Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<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 this Mast Plan that relate to areas including nature, climate, water, air and waste. These include:

- 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 National, Regional/Local Projects and Plans. The Plan considered to be of the most relevance in assessing the potential for the impacts on 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 4: Plans and Projects

Hierarchy	Plan/Project	Significance of the Plan
Local	<p>Meath County Development Plans 2021-2027 Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 Wicklow County Development Plan 2021-2027 Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 Draft South County Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028 Draft Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029 Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 Athy Local Area Plan 2021- 2027 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 Edenderry LAP 2011</p> <p>County Development Plan Settlement Strategy- Villages and Rural Settlements. Plans include for: Villages (17) - Allenwood, Athgarvan, Ballitore, Ballymore Eustace, Caragh, Coil 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>	<p>Kildare is bordered by several counties with several protected European sites located across county borders. Similar 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 with no likely significant effects or avoidance of impacts on the integrity meaning in combination effects are not likely (Kildare CDP 2023 – 2027)</p>

4.2.2 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. No potential cumulative or in combination effects were identified.

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 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 is discussed below. A rationale for no LSE is also provided.

5.1.1 Land take resulting in habitat loss or degradation.

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

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

Changes to surface water quality within the Grand Canal or the Brockagh River as a result of the implementation of this Master Plan are unlikely to occur. If any water quality impacts were to occur these are likely to be highly localised. The Grand Canal has connectivity to the Blackwood Feeder, which connects to the Ballynafagh Lake SAC which is inside the SAC site boundary. The Grand Canal runs through Robertstown and could provide connectivity to this designated site via the Blackwood Feeder. However, no works are occurring that are planned to interact with the Canal. If any pollutants were to reach the Canal the lack of flow would mean they would settle out or dissolve immediately and wouldn't not be transported into the SAC.

5.1.3 Noise vibration resulting in disturbance

Construction-related disturbance and displacement of 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 150m⁵. No evidence of Otter usage of the canal opposite the Lowtown Road site was found. Stone quay walls make the area unsuitable for Otter holting.

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 SPAs are found within 15km of Robertstown. No SCI bird species were recorded during surveys in September along the Canal or the Brockagh River. There are no European sites within the disturbance ZOI.

5.1.4 In Combination and Cumulative Effects

The masterplan 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 Masterplan: Robertstown Co. Kildare

Name and location of Natura 2000 Site: The closest SAC is Ballynafagh Lake SAC, which is 730m from the Robertstown 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.**

⁵ This is consistent with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) guidance (Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes and Guidelines for the Treatment of Badgers prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes) documents. This is a precautionary distance, and likely to be moderated by the screening effect provided by surrounding vegetation and buildings, with the actual ZOI of construction related disturbance likely to be much less in reality

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

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Report Sign Off Page

CLIENT REF:	KIL003-1		
DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS	ROBERTSTOWN, CO. KILDARE		
REVISION	DATE	ORIGNATOR	REVIEWER
FOR REVIEW	27/09/2023	SC	JM
FOR ISSUE			

NOTES

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction and Background	4
1.1 Legislative Context	6
2.0 Planning Hierarchy and Purpose of the Master Plan	7
3.0 Draft Master Plan and Screening Requirement for SEA	13
3.1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and relationship to Screening for SEA	13
4.0 Screening for the Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	15
5.0 Statutory Consultation.....	19
5.1 Consultation with Environmental Authorities	19
6.0 Recommendations on requirement for SEA	20
Appendix A: SEA Response to Submissions received from Statutory Environmental Authorities.....	21

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 Robertstown 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 Robertstown, (hereafter referred to as 'the Master Plan').

The purpose of the plan is to guide the development of Robertstown into the future as part of an initiative to deliver a new vision for the village. 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.

The requirement for an SEA is evaluated in accordance with legislative requirements including EU's Council Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), national legislation and associated regulations. The requirement for the Town Master Plan and the wider Kildare policies are outlined in the Kildare County Council Development Plan 2023-2029, and the Kildare County Council Development Plan 2023-2029 SEA Statement and Environmental Report.

The methodology for the SEA is based on legislative requirements and guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) thus ensuring compliance with the SEA Directive and associated national legislation.

SEA screening is defined in the relevant legislation and EPA guidance documents 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 Robertstown 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.

NSO7 Enhanced Amenity and Heritage – it is intended the future development of Robertstown will include enhanced public area development in the village centre building on the network of paths and walks for pedestrian and cyclist priority and providing better pedestrian links along the Grand Canal (pNHA Site No 002104).

Kildare County Council conducted a Strategic Environmental Assessment of County Development Plan 2023-2029. This assessment included the proposed update to the Roberstown 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 KCDP, 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 Robertstown Town Renewal 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 where the Grand and Royal Canal Corridors are noted as areas of High Amenity. Section 13.6 states the objective for Recreation and Amenities as

“Recreation and amenity areas within the county include natural, recreational and sporting amenities as well as social and community infrastructure. These facilities provide many cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits and provide a positive contribution towards quality of life. The provision of a range of amenities which can cater for the demands of an increasing population, and which will be accessible for all sectors and age groups of the population is a central element in the delivery of sustainable communities.”

Whilst Section 13.6.4 Greenways, Blueways, Peatways, trails and Peatland Railways also states

“Cycling and walking as a means of recreational activity have increased in popularity over the past number of years. The Council acknowledges that provision for cyclists and walkers should be prioritised as resources permit and where appropriate.”

Of relevance are the following objectives from Chapter 13 of the KDCP

LR 054 Ensure any proposed walking or cycling route does not significantly impact the following;

- *Natural Heritage Areas(NHAs).*
- *Scenic Views and prospects.*

LR 075 All developments that would be visible from the canal network shall be required to submit a visual assessment of the proposal relative to the canal in order to determine any negative impacts on the visual amenity and environmental quality of the canal.

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 ad 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.

The KCDP identified Designated Villages and Settlements, which are further assessed in Volume 2 of the Plan. TheKCDP Objectives for Robertstown Village are;

- Promote as tourist destination, having regard to its location and the proposed future Grand Canal Greenway and proximity to Lowtown Marina;
- Consistent village branding to strengthen identity as a tourist destination
- Facilitate development of a Discovery/Ecology Park
- Improve public realm
- Investigate feasibility of a community centre
- Develop a playground, recreational facility, and support development of playing pitches.

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.”

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 3.20.1 Village Centre It is an objective of the Council to;
- V R1 Facilitate the appropriate redevelopment of derelict buildings and suitable infill development proposals, having regard to any protected structures within the vicinity of the site.
- V R2 Support the objectives and priority projects of the Robertstown Master Plan.
- V2 3.20.2 Tourist Development It is an objective of the Council to;
- V R3 Promote Robertstown as a tourist destination having regard to its location on the Future Grand Canal Greenway and its close proximity to the Lowtown marina.
- V R4 Introduce consistent village branding at the village entry points in the form of high-quality signage, in order to strengthen Robertstown's identity as a tourist destination.
- V R5 Support and facilitate the development of a Discovery / Ecology Park in Robertstown. V2 3.20.3 Social and Community Infrastructure It is an objective of the Council to;
- V R6 Improve the public realm at open space areas in Father Murphy Park, Grove Lane and Grove Heights (e.g. cleaning, planting adjacent walls at public open spaces, lighting improvements and footpath delineation).(See VR6 on Map V2-3.14b).
- V R7 Investigate the feasibility of securing the development of a community centre in the village. V R8 Secure the development of playground and recreational facilities within the village. V R9 Support the development of playing pitches within the village.
- V2 3.20.4 Natural Heritage It is an objective of the Council to;
- V R10 Survey the trees illustrated on Map V2-3.14b and to protect trees deemed to be of significant amenity value.
- VR 11 Protect the vistas available from Binn's Bridge from inappropriate development (See Map Ref V2 – 3.14b).
- V2 3.20.5 Movement and Transport It is an objective of the Council to;
- V R12 Implement footpath, junction and parking improvements in the village, including the provision of additional car parking for Robertstown National School (See Map V2-3.14b).
- V R13 Improve the Grand Canal crossing point for pedestrians at Binn's Bridge (See T2 on Map V2-3.14b).
- V R14 Look at the feasibility of a cycleway / walkway from the village centre towards Robertstown GAA club (See Map V2-3.14b).
- V R15 Develop a high-quality walking and cycling route from Binn's Bridge towards Fenton's Bridge to link with routes on the Grand Canal and Barrow Navigation (See Map V2-3.14b).
- V R16 Control new development accessed from the Grand Canal towpath in order to protect it as a walking/cycling route.
-
-

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 Roberstown land use proposal for 0 new residential hectares and 3 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 objectives to the proposed Master Plan include;

- Land use zoning Objective F, Open Space and Amenity, To protect and provide for open space, amenity and recreation provision.
- V R 6 Improve the public realm at open space areas in Father Murphy Park, Grove Lane and Grove Heights (e.g. cleaning, planting adjacent walls at public open spaces, lighting improvements and footpath delineation).
- V R 8 Secure the development of playground and recreational facilities within the village.
- V R 12 Implement footpath, junction and parking improvements in the village, including the provision of additional car parking for Robertstown National School.

3.0 Robertstown Town Renewal Master Plan

In accrdnace

This Master Plan proposes to set out a vision for the future planning and sustainable development of Robertstown. It will guide the sustainable growth of Robertstown and enable it to be a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, and prosper while leveraging the town’s unique assets as an exciting place to visit and explore. It plans to redevelop several areas within the two to improve their functionality for residents and visitors. General works associated with the implementation of the proposed Master Plan are likely to include the following:

- The removal of soil and overburden material from the site
- The removal of existing site assets including footpaths, seating, street lights and portions of existing roadway
- Removal, diversion and reconnection of existing services including water, electricity and broadband, where applicable
- Creation of pedestrian realms
- Paving, planting and attenuation/rain gardens features and other landscaping elements and;
- All associated works and assets.

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 1: Lowtown Road Extend pavement behind the existing housing, addition of a shared surface and informal track along the Grand Canal leading to Binns Bridge area which connects over to the Grand Canal way, and addition of a proposed raised table at the junction leading into the Main St.

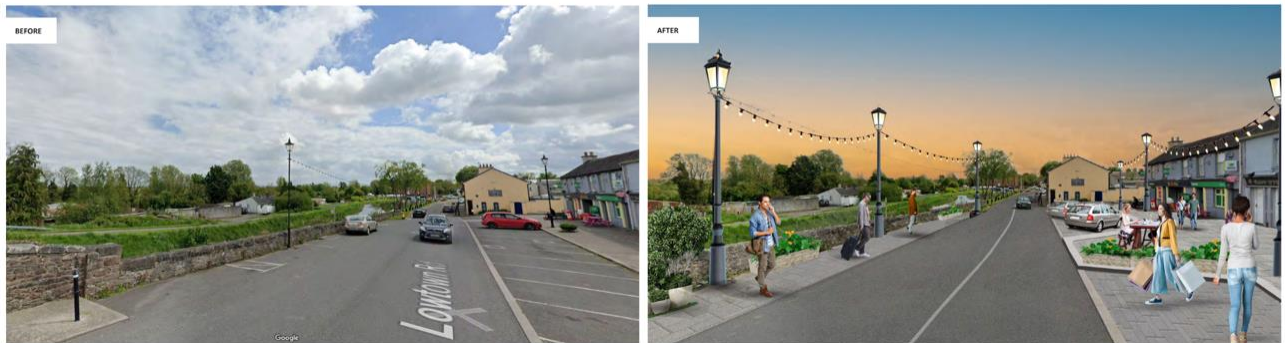


Figure 3-1: Proposed Lowtown Road Redevelopment

Opportunity 2: Grove Lane Enhancement, this lane adjoins the Main St mentioned in the opportunity above and the project proposes adding parking and recreational public space to currently disused green area. The enhancement will link Grove Lane to the Main st and create a new public space.



Figure 3-2: Proposed Grove Lane Enhancement Redevelopment

ROBERTSTOWN

VISION: A FUTURE ROBERTSTOWN

- Key**
- Study Area
- Grand Canal
- Road and Canal Connectivity**
- Regional bus routes
- Existing pedestrian crossings
- Potential pedestrian links
- Public Realm : Streetscape opportunities**
- Connected pedestrian realm
- Hard surface improvements (traffic calming, junction arrangements, etc)
- Public Realm : Green space, amenity opportunities**
- Opportunity sites
- Other**
- Serviced site (as per County Development Plan 2023-2029)
- Primary gateways
- Secondary gateways
- Canal gateway
- Existing planning applications



Figure 3-3 Framework of the Vision: A Future Robertstown from VHA presentation

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.

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

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) is required 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 730m from the Robertstown 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.

The conclusion of the AA Screening determined that a Stage 2 Assessment or Natura Impact Statement is not required for this plan as it is unlikely to have any significant effects on designated sites. As a result, an Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required under this criteria and the need for an SEA will be screened under the relevant Schedule 2a of the SEA Regulations.

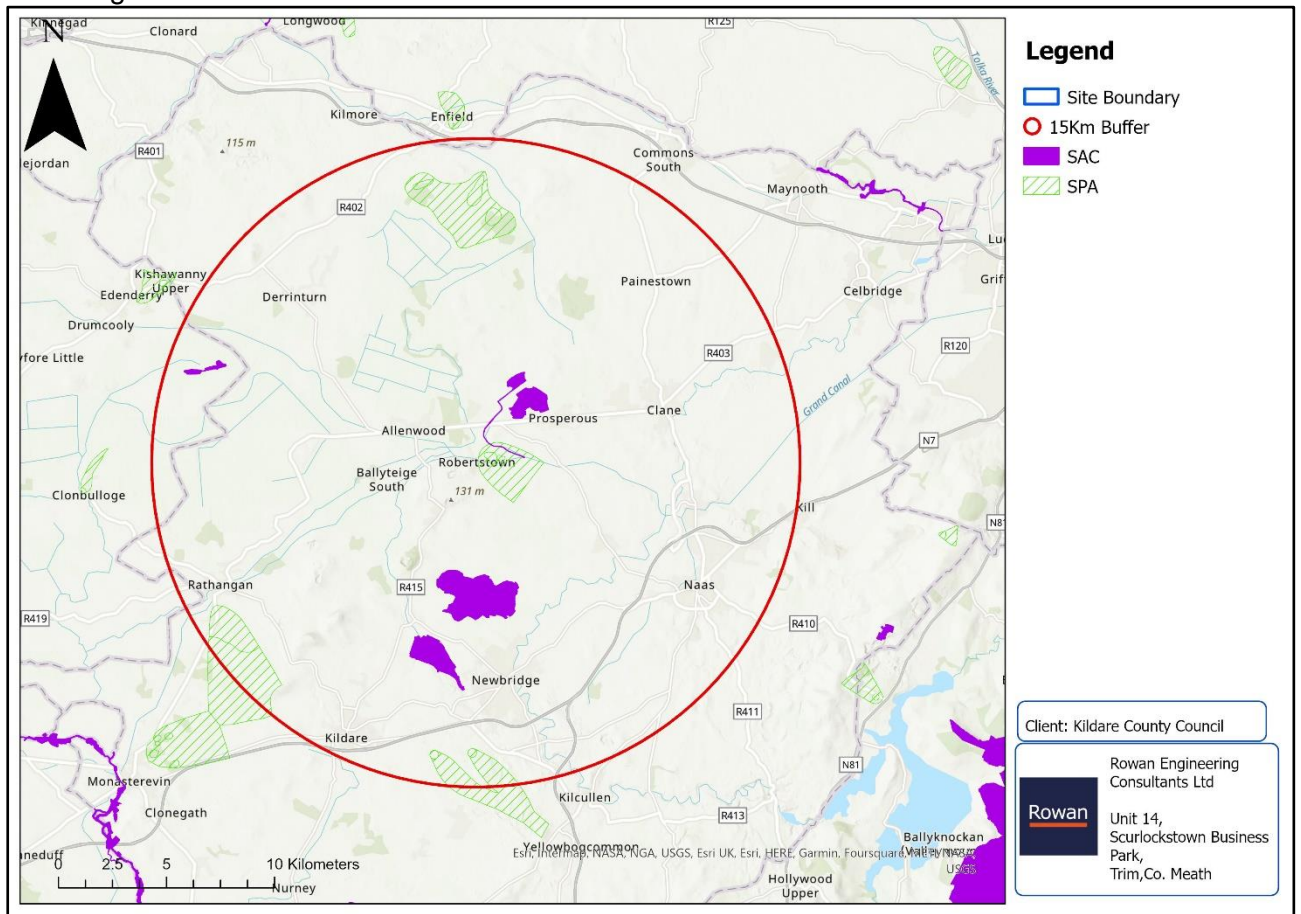


Figure 4-1 Proximity of European Designated Sites to Robertstown.

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 Town Renewal Master Plan together with the Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

Table 4-1 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 Town Renewal Master Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocation resources,</i>
<p>The land use zoning objectives and activities for Robertstown 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>Therefore, the proposed Master Plan outlines potential future arrangements for Robertstown 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 Town Renewal 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) <i>the degree to which the Draft Master Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,</i>
<p>The Master Plan will be a non-statutory plan that responds directly to a specific objectives of the KCDP;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use zoning Objective F, Open Space and Amenity, To protect and provide for open

space, amenity and recreation provision.

- V AL 2 Enhance the appearance of the village centre by including tree planting to enhance biodiversity.
- V AL 7 Support the creation of an attractive hub of waterside activity and an attractive amenity area for use by the general public along the Grand Canal waterways within the village boundaries.

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 Draft 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 Robertstown 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.

BI P2 Seek to contribute to maintaining or restoring the conservation status of all sites designated for nature conservation or proposed for designation in accordance with European and national legislation and agreements. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Ramsar Sites and Statutory Nature Reserves.

(v) the relevance of the Town Renewal 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 Robertstown 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 Robertstown which will put the pedestrian and cyclist in the heart of the design solution.

It will demonstrate how Robertstown can create a village with liveable streets and pedestrian focused public spaces enhancing its location traversing the Grand Canal, 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 Robertstown 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 Binns Bridge, along Main St and including an enhancement of the adjoining Grove lane. 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 Grand Canal is a proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA), this forms part of the proposed greenway that will extend from the Dublin Border to the Offaly border. The area of key views is from Binns Bridge have been mitigated for within the proposed design by adding the pedestrian path behind the existing wall, no development will take place near the protected structures on the far side of the Grand Canal.

The nearest European Site is the Ballynafagh Bog SAC, 2.2km north east of Robertstown 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 Robertstown 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

The Kildare County Development Plan, which included the objectives for Robertstown and its SEA were subject to full statutory and public consultation process. This process and submission and responses are included in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 SEA Statement and associated appendices.

6.1 Screening 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

This screening report will be submitted to the EPA SEA unit for dissemination to the consultees.

7.0 Recommendations on requirement for SEA

Following detailed review and assessment it is considered that the Master Plan for Robertstown 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:

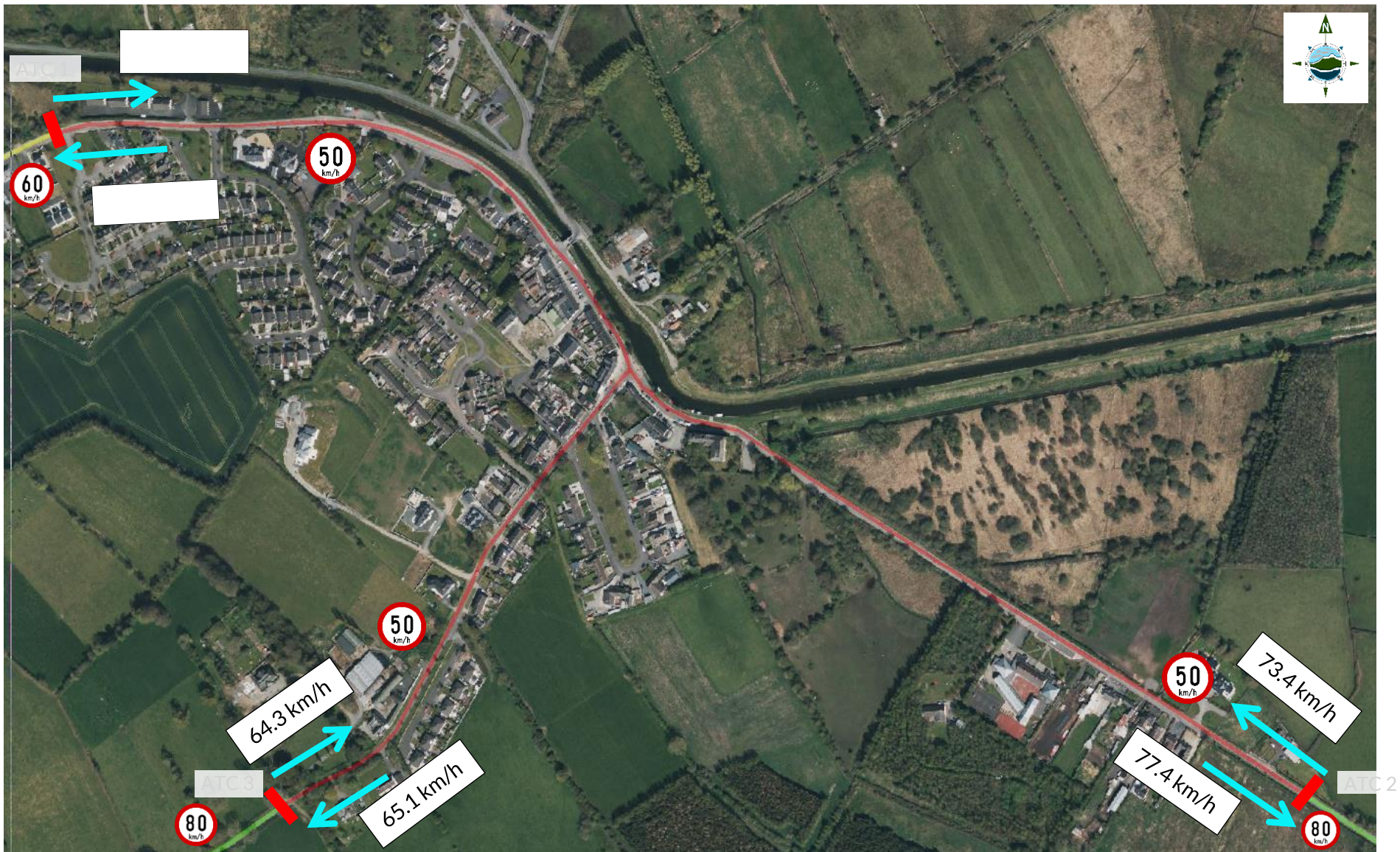
- The Master Plan is a non-statutory plan, which sits below the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the Robertstown Village Plan in the planning hierarchy;
- The lands are already zoned for the mixed use, residential and open space use in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 which 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

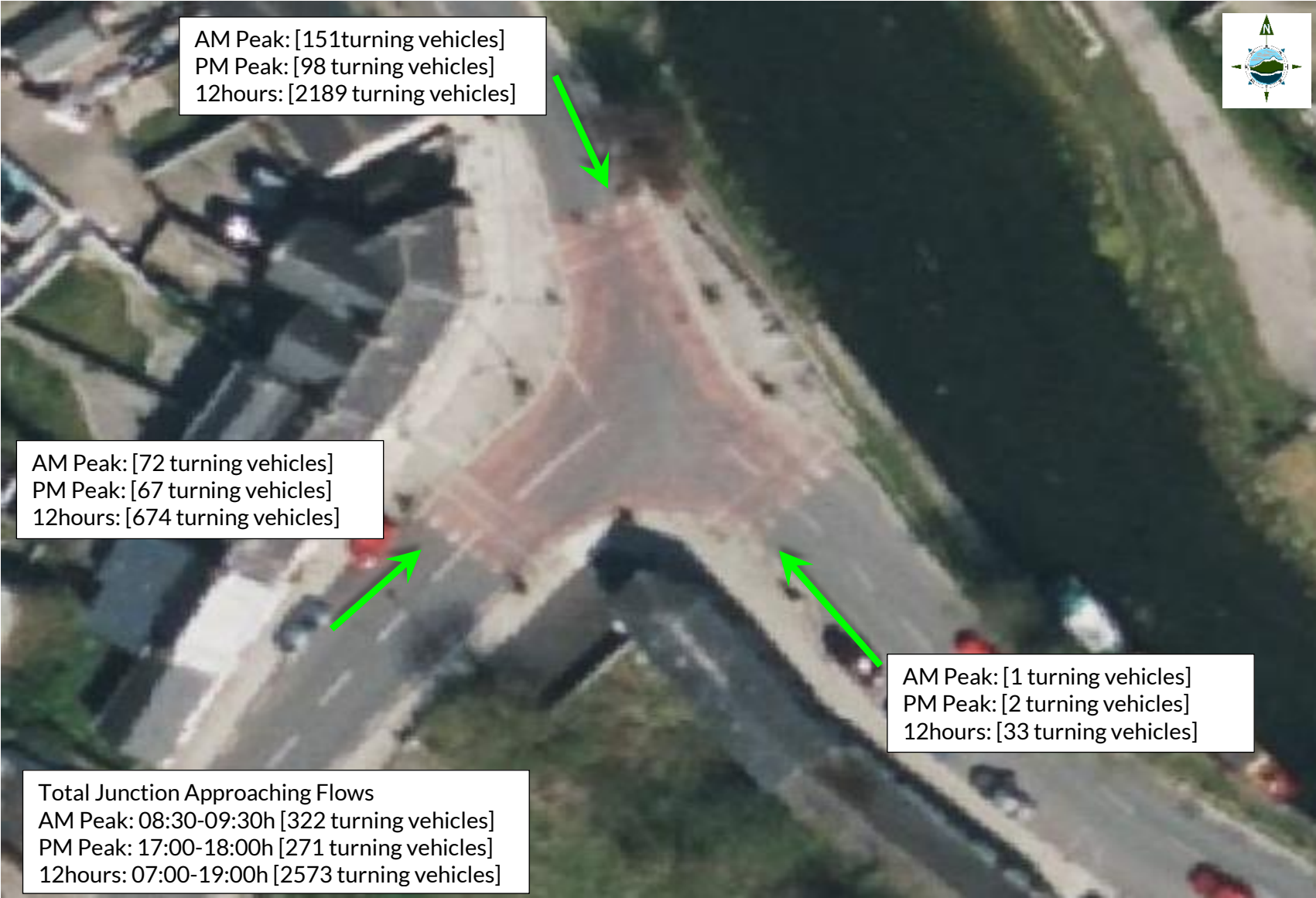
Appendix A: SEA Response to Submissions received from Statutory Environmental Authorities

1.1 ROBERTSTOWN: 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 ROBERTSTOWN: 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 ROBERSTOWN: 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

Robertstown – DMURS Street Design Audit

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Project Ireland
2040



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

Robertstown – 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	29/03/22	PC	25/04/22
D01	Issue	MR	05/07/23	MR	05/07/2	PC	05/07/2

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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME.....	1
1.1.1	<i>Background</i>	1
1.1.2	<i>Site Location</i>	1
2.0	Quality Audit.....	2
3.0	Methodology.....	3



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

Robertstown village is located approximately 12 kilometres to the north of Kildare town, in County Kildare. Robertstown is a compact village, the main street is the centre of the village, providing priority controlled tee junction. The remainder of the village has poor pedestrian connectivity. Robertstown village comprises a local shop and bus stop in the vicinity of the main junction. In addition to housing estates around the village, as can be seen in Figure 1-1.

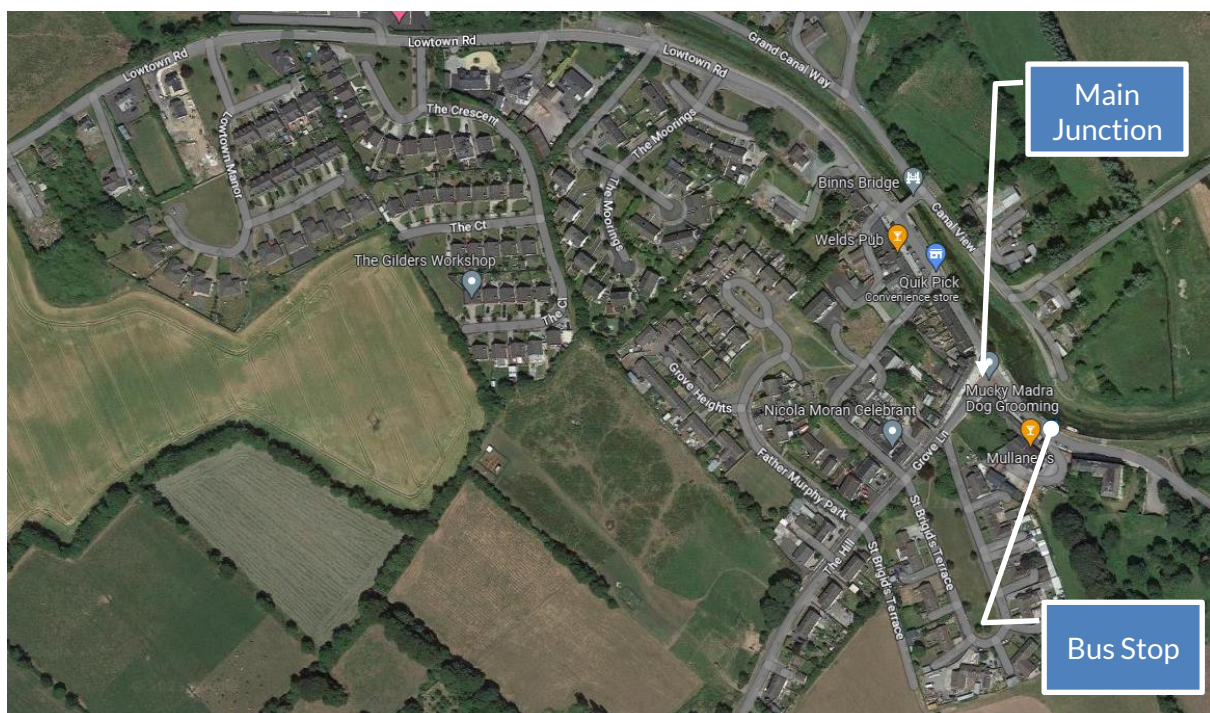


Figure 1-1 Site Location (from © Google)

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 continues 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: *[Robertstown Village Masterplan]*

Prepared by: *[TOBIN Consulting Engineers]*



Date: *[29/03/2023]*

Connectivity		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
Strategic routes/major desire lines been identified and are clearly incorporated into the design.	3.1 – Integrated Street Network 3.2.1 – Movement Function 3.3.1 – Street layouts 3.3.4 - Wayfinding	<p>The Masterplan Design is creating a pedestrian orientated village, providing a continuous walkway to main attractive areas, mainly the local shop, bus stop, and village centre.</p> <p>The proposed design includes proposed designated pedestrian crossing points along Robertstown to provide safer pedestrian movements around the housing estates, to the local shop and bus stop. Traffic calming to be installed in the main approach, to slow down traffic speed and provide wayfinding easier and safer for vulnerable road users around village centre.</p>
Multiple points of access are provided to the site/place, in particular for sustainable modes.	3.3.1 – Street Layouts 3.3.3 – Retrofitting ¹	<p>The proposed masterplan design focus on the provision of crossing points around the main street within housing estates, including traffic calming measures at the main junction. 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 bus stop and village 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
<p>Accessibility throughout the site is maximised for pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring route choice.</p>	<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 along main road 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 Robertstown village, the ATC Speed survey recorded the 85th %ile speeds higher than the speed limit towards the village. The design includes traffic calming measure 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>
<p>Through movements by private vehicles on local streets are discouraged by an appropriate level of traffic calming measures.</p>	<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 Robertstown village 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.	<p>3.2.1 – Movement Function.</p> <p>3.2.2 – Place Context.</p> <p>4.1.1 – A Balanced Approach to Speed²</p>	<p>85th %ile Operational Speeds at Robertstown village have been monitored at higher than speed limit of 50km/h towards the village. Traffic calming measures intends to reduce the 85th %ile speeds below the speed limit.</p> <p>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.</p>
The street environment will facilitate the creation of a traffic calmed environment via the use of ‘softer’ or passive measures. ³	<p>4.2.1 – Building Height and Street Width</p> <p>4.2.2 – Street Trees</p> <p>4.2.3 – Active Street Edges</p> <p>4.2.4 – Signage and Line Marking</p> <p>4.2.7 – Planting</p>	<p>Introduction of a defined carriageway width and kerbing, a raised table along Robertstown village centre, speed ramp before and after the signalised crossing will ensure that traffic is adequately calmed within and surrounding the study area. And shall be considered during preliminary stage.</p> <p>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</p>

² Refer also to the National Speed Limit Guidelines

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.

Self Regulating Street Environment		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
	4.4.2 - Carriageway Surfaces 4.4.9 - On-Street Parking Advice Note 1 - Transitions and Gateways	<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>
<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 4.4.4 - Forward Visibility 4.4.5 - Visibility Splays 4.4.6 - Alignment and curvature 4.4.7 - Horizontal and Vertical Deflections Advice Note 1 - Transitions and Gateways	<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>

Pedestrian and Cycling Environment		
Key Issues	Key DMURS Reference.	Design Response
The built environment contributes to the creation of a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.	<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 shop.</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>
Junctions been designed to ensure the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised ⁴ .	<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. 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 Robertstown 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.	3.2.1 – Movement Function. 3.2.3 – Place Context. 4.2.2 – Street Trees 4.2.7 – Planting Advice Note 1 – Transitions and Gateways	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. This includes consultation with adjacent impacted landowners to ensure thorough design and thought is given to landscaping plans. The Design will include Street Trees and Planting to enhance the Urban Realm aesthetics
Street furniture is orderly placed.	3.2.1 – Movement Function. 3.2.3 – Place Context. 4.2.5 - Street Furniture. 4.3.1 Footways, Verges and Strips	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.	3.2.1 – Movement Function. 3.2.3 – Place Context. 4.2.4 - Signage and Line Marking.	Signage and line markings shall be considered for masterplan design next phase. The presence of local shops and Bus Stop shall be considerer 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 Robertstown village.</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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