

Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018

Laois & Offaly County Councils



October 2012



Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018

Comprising a Joint Local Area Plan for Portarlington including lands within both the Laois and Offaly County Council functional areas of the town.

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Adoption of Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018

Foreword

The Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018 was formally adopted at a special meeting of Laois County Council on 22nd October 2012 and at the monthly meeting of Offaly County Council on 15th October 2012.

The Plan is made in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012.

Section 1: Strategic Vision for Portarlington

The Strategic Vision in this Joint Local Area Plan is based on the role of Portarlington as defined in national, regional and local planning policy and the aspirations of the people and stakeholders within Portarlington as outlined in the Pre-Draft submissions and observations received in addition to the results of the SWOT analysis carried out by the plan working team.

The Vision Statement for Portarlington reads as follows:

“To continue to develop Portarlington as a balanced settlement centred on a vibrant town centre, to harness the location and accessibility strengths of Portarlington as a rail interchange in the promotion of employment and industry, to promote the town as a unique settlement for working, living and recreation, to facilitate and encourage the growth of Portarlington as an area of tourism and agri-food excellence and to balance the demands of a vibrant economy with the need for a healthy and sustainable environment and to ensure the protection of the unique built and cultural heritage of the area”.

Delivering the Strategic Vision

To deliver the Strategic Vision of this plan, the following strategic objectives will need to be delivered;

- The identification of opportunities to develop a strong and vibrant town centre which meets the retail and service needs of the town and its hinterland in addition to offering a pleasant and attractive environment for shopping, business, recreation and living.
- To capitalise on the exceptional locational advantages possessed by Portarlington by virtue of its unique location on the intersection of the national rail network. The ease of accessibility represents an invaluable asset in attracting industry and employment opportunities. In order to encourage industries to locate in the town it will also be necessary to work closely with a range of national, regional and local stakeholders.
- In accordance with the sequential approach, to consolidate and further develop the residential and service sectors within the town, ensuring that existing and potential future residents have a choice of high quality house types at a range of locations within a reasonable distance of the town centre.
- To expand the tourism product of Portarlington by building on the significant potential of the town. Highlighting the natural, manmade and other hidden assets of the town is vital in order to encourage and entice people to visit and stay in Portarlington. It is an objective of this plan to facilitate and guide the development of additional attractions and facilities to encourage tourists to extend their stay and increase expenditure in the town.
- To augment and upgrade the physical and social infrastructure of Portarlington and to facilitate the creation of sustainable employment opportunities.

It is critical that the strategic objectives set out above are delivered in a sustainable manner and that the economic and residential development of the town will occur in a balanced fashion, both recognising the need for the town to develop into the future and ensuring the protection of its unique built and natural heritage.

Map 1: Portarlington in context

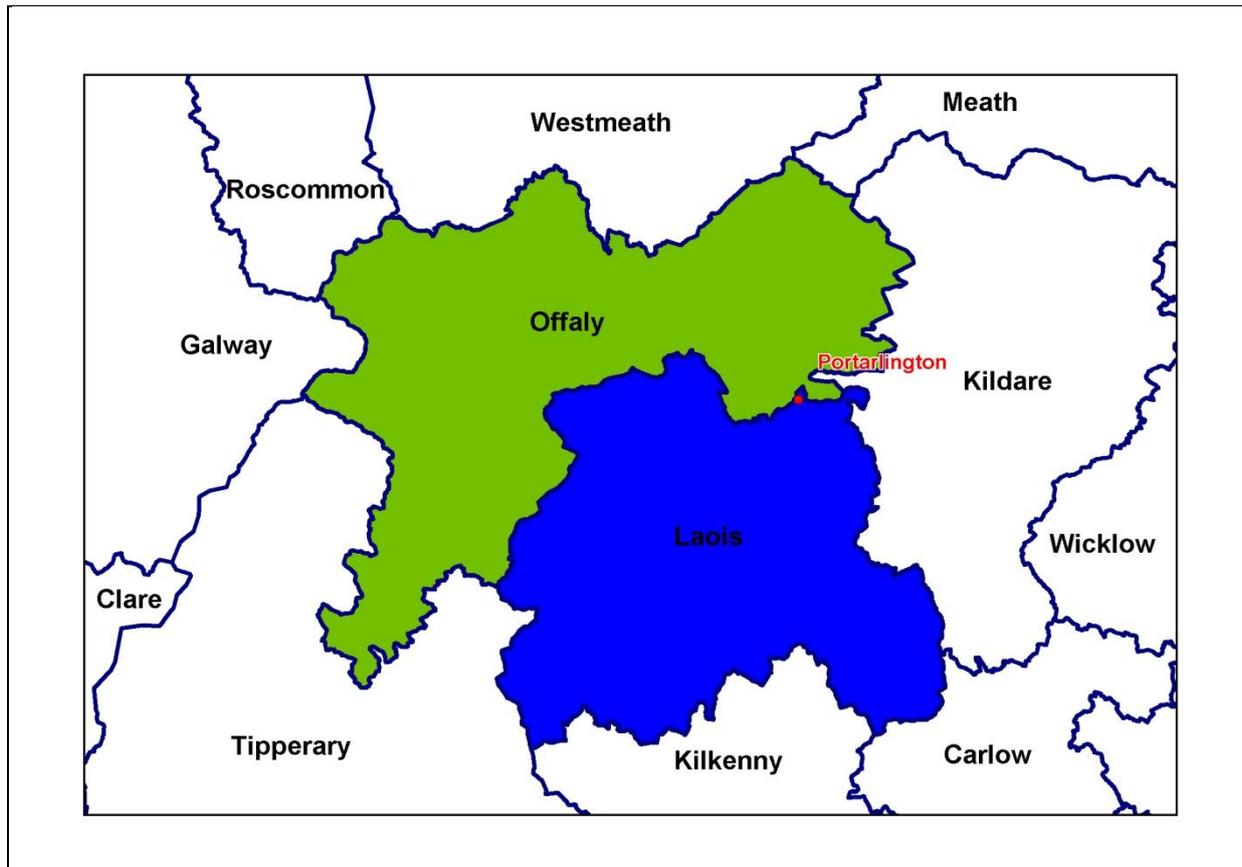


Plate 1: Portarlington from the south-east

Section 2: Introduction



Plate 2: Portarlington from the east

Portarlington is a large and expanding town situated on the Laois/Offaly county boundary equidistant from the county towns of Portlaoise and Tullamore. In terms of local government, the town has dual administration. The majority, approximately 75%, of the urban area is in County Laois [for CSO data purposes, this area is called Portarlington South] with the remaining portion [Portarlington North] in County Offaly. The River Barrow flows through the town in a west-east trajectory.

The Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018, which was prepared on an agreed **joint** basis between Laois and Offaly local authorities with the former acting as lead authority, establishes an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the greater Portarlington Urban Area consisting of **both** the Laois [Portarlington South] and Offaly [Portarlington North] areas of the town. The Plan considers the town as **one overall urban entity** rather than as two distinct sub-elements. Heretofore, both parts of the town had their own separate plans. This joint approach will result in a greater co-ordination and more focused delivery of services for the benefit of the whole community.

It is an objective of both the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017 to prepare a joint Local Area Plan with the adjoining local authority of Offaly County Council.

The Joint Local Area Plan will effectively replace the two existing local authority plans for the town namely:

Portarlington Local Area Plan 2007-13 as adopted by Laois County Council and

Portarlington Town Plan included in the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015 as adopted by

Offaly County Council.

The Councils have a statutory duty to prepare, monitor and review a Local Area Plan. The purpose of a Local Area Plan is to assess future land use needs (such as for housing, business, shopping and recreation) and make provision for them by the designation of land; and, secondly, to contain policies with which planning applications for development will have to accord, unless the importance of other material considerations prevails.

The Plan consists of: *Volume 1: Written Statement, and Zoning Map and Volume 2: Strategic Environmental Assessment.*

The Zoning Map identifies the proposals contained in the Written Statement, including those sites which are identified for development and designated areas to which specific policies will be applied.

An early consideration in making, reviewing or varying a Local Area Plan is the need to comply with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended. **The Strategic Environmental Assessment** undertaken for this Plan is presented in Volume 2. SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic and social considerations.

The Written Statement is divided into 17 sections, which contain policies and proposals to guide and regulate development management decisions. It also sets out the reasoned justification and advice on how each of these policies and proposals will be implemented. Policies and objectives are distinguished by *black and blue italics* respectively.

All development proposals will be assessed against the policies in the Plan. It is important that individual policies are not considered in isolation, but will be seen as part of the whole Plan.

The policies and proposals set out in the Plan remain in effect for a six year period, but can be subject to amendment or review during this period where the Councils consider it prudent in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of Portarlington and its environs.

A central theme throughout the joint local area plan is [as is required] demonstration of **consistency** with the key objectives of higher order plans, in particular the **core strategies** [and the principle of the **Sequential Approach** as a guide to location of development] of the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans, the **Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010** and the **National Spatial Strategy**.

Sustainability is another fundamental principle that runs through the policies and proposals of the Plan. The aim is to work towards a sustainable future where the needs of today are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means careful consideration about daily socio-economic activities and their impact on key resources such as land and water quality.

The Plan has been prepared for all those who live, work and visit Portarlington and its environs. It recognises and builds into its policies the needs of the community for housing, employment, shopping, entertainment, recreation, green space, leisure and other social and community facilities.

It also recognises the high quality of the natural and built environment of Portarlington and the need to protect, and where necessary improve, these important assets.

The total area of land within the combined Portarlington urban area is 594 hectares.

Schedule of Zoned Lands

The following schedule is of lands in the Joint Local Area Plan area zoned for particular land uses and should be read in conjunction with the land use zoning map.

LAND USE	AREA IN HECTARES
Town Centre (Town Centre –Offaly County Council)	41.2
Residential 1Established (Residential –OCC)	140.31
Residential 2(Residential –OCC)	33
Strategic Reserve 2018-2024 (Phasing –OCC)	72.6
Amenity/ Open space	106.68
Community Educational – Institutional (Public- Community-Educational–OCC)	29.34
Industrial (Industry –OCC)	66.43
Enterprise and Employment(Business - Employment –OCC)	36.72
Utilities	2.573
Tourism and Leisure	2.07
Neighbourhood Centre	4.461

The Development Plan Process-Chronology

Sections 18-20 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 outline the statutory process for the preparation and adoption of Local Area Plans. According to Section 19[2], the Local Area Plan must be consistent with the objectives of the prevailing County Development Plan[s], in this case the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017 and Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015.

The Joint Local Area Plan shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the objectives in such detail as may be determined by the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies, including details on community facilities and amenities and on standards for the design of development and structures.

The publication of a notice on **30th August 2011**, stating the intention to prepare a new Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan marked the formal commencement of the review process.

There are a number of key stages in the process of making a local area plan. The initial stage involved a preliminary, non-statutory, consultation period during which submissions were invited on issues to be included in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan. This took place during September 2011.

A number of meetings were held with interested parties, the general public, Portarlington Community Development Association and the Emo/Edenderry joint electoral area members. Prescribed bodies were notified and service providers and semi-state organisations such as ESB Networks, Eirgrid, Telecom Éireann, Bord na Móna, Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann, Laois Trip, Laois VEC and the National Broadband Scheme were consulted on their future plans and operational programmes for the town. There were also meetings with key internal Council sections such as Road Design and Water Services on the subject of overall infrastructure provision in the town.

This stage was followed by preparation of the actual *draft* Joint Local Area Plan and a 6 week public display and consultation period extending from **26th April to 6th June 2012** during which a total of 14 no. valid submissions or observations relating to the draft Plan were made.

The 6 week public consultation period was followed by preparation of the [first] manager's report which listed the persons who made submissions or observations, summarised the issues raised and indicated the opinion and recommendation of the manager in relation to such issues.

At the Laois County Council meeting of **30th July 2012**, the draft Plan was amended by way of formal resolution pursuant to section 20[3] of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012. At the Offaly County Council meeting of 16th July 2012, the members resolved to accept the Managers report and recommendations.

The amendments to the draft Plan were put on public display for a 4 week period, from 15th August to 12th September 2012; a total of 5 no. valid submissions or observations were received. This was followed by preparation of the second managers report which listed the person[s] who made submissions or observations, summarised the issues raised and indicated the opinion and recommendation of the manager in relation to such issues.

The Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018 was formally adopted at a special meeting of **Laois County Council on 22nd October 2012 and at the monthly meeting of Offaly County Council on 15th October 2012.**

Relationship with Other Plans and Strategies

The Plan does not exist in isolation; it is part of a wider planning framework, which includes both national and regional planning policy and guidance. These various levels of planning policy and guidance provide the strategic context that the Plan must take into account and respond to at the local level.

In terms of key national and regional strategy documents, such as the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, Smarter Travel-A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 and the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022, these are already referred to in detail in the respective current Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

As regards the local context, there are a range of plans and strategies in both County Councils which will inform the joint local area plan.

These include:

- *Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017*

- *Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015*
- *Portarlington Strategic Flood Risk Management Strategy 2007*
- *The Laois County Development Board Strategy 2009*
- *Laois County Council Corporate Plan 2009*
- *Laois County Heritage Plan 2007-2011*
- *Laois and Offaly Housing Strategies (adopted as part of the County Development Plans)*
- *Laois and Offaly Retail Strategies (adopted as part of the County Development Plans)*
- *Laois and Offaly Traveller Accommodation Programmes*
- *The Arts in Laois Development Plan 2006-2011*
- *Laois County Homeless Strategy 2010*
- *Laois County Climate Change Strategy 2009*
- *Laois County Local Agenda 21 Plan 2009*
- *Offaly County Heritage Plan 2012-2016*
- *Offaly County Arts Plan 2007-2011*
- *Offaly County Homeless Strategy 2008*
- *Offaly County Climate Change Strategy 2009*
- *Offaly Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2009*
- *Portarlington Community Development Association's "Port's Vision 2020"*



Plate 3: Portarlington from the south

National Guidelines

Section 28 National Planning Guidelines, as produced by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, have been considered during the preparation of the joint Local Area Plan.

It is considered that the Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018 is consistent with the relevant National Planning Guidelines issued by the DoECLG relating in particular to the following:

- Appropriate Assessment
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Flood Risk

- Retail
- Heritage Protection
- Sustainable Residential development and Urban Design
- Provision of schools
- Planning and Roads

Future individual development proposals as submitted to the Planning Authority by way of planning application will be further assessed at that time in respect of consistency with the provisions of the relevant National Guidelines as are applicable to that development.

Section 3: Context-National, Regional, Local

Background

A Local Area Plan is the most specific tier in the hierarchy of spatial planning policy in Ireland. Its purpose is to provide a land-use framework for the development of an area that contains detailed policies and objectives that are specific to the area in question, in this case Portarlington. It complements the broad-brush approach necessary for planning strategies at a national, regional and county level.

The hierarchy of spatial planning policy in which this Local Area Plan operates is indicated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Hierarchy of Spatial Plans

National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020 (NSS) is a twenty year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. In order to drive development in the regions, the NSS requires that areas of sufficient scale and critical mass be built up through a network of gateways and hubs.

The NSS identifies the town of Portarlington as being an ‘**urban strengthening opportunity**’. The NSS states that; “smaller towns in the Midlands such as **Portarlington in Laois**...can be enhanced through physical and townscape improvements, water services, facilities for smaller enterprises and enhancements to road and bus networks. This will offer an attractive environment for residential, employment, retailing and service functions.”

The NSS sets out a number of sustainable development principles, which include:

developing sustainable urban and rural settlement patterns and communities to reduce distance from employment, services and leisure facilities and to make better use of existing and future investments in public services;

- promoting cost-effective provision of public services like roads, drainage, waste management facilities, lighting, public amenities and schools and
- contributing to the evolution of socially integrated communities in both urban and rural areas.

Regional Planning Guidelines

Portarlington lies within the Eastern Development Area of the overall **Midlands Region** which comprises counties Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Longford. The EDA sub-area is situated on the border with the GDA [Greater Dublin Area] and has been subject to significant development pressures over the last decade. Patterns of development and growth in Portarlington have been heavily influenced by issues relating to housing availability and affordability in the GDA.

Map 2: Portarlington’s location in the Midlands Region



(Source: Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines-MRPGs)

Portarlington is designated as one of five **Key Service Towns** for the Midlands Region under the Guidelines. These towns perform important retail, residential, service and amenity functions for local rural hinterlands and support the upper tiers of the urban hierarchy including the linked gateway and principal towns. The RPG's envisage that the development of these towns needs to be increasingly aimed at consolidating existing growth coupled with an emphasis on a **sequential** approach to new development, all within the context of the availability of current and future social and physical infrastructure.

Accordingly, it is recognised that Portarlington must **prioritise** its economic, social and community infrastructure base so as to support its own increased population and promote a balanced spatial structure to ensure its continued vitality and development. It is also acknowledged that the continued expansion of the town must be regulated to ensure that **industrial, commercial and community and social developments** keep pace with the recent phase of rapid population growth.

According to the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines, the key priorities for the EDA sub-area [and by extension for Portarlington] are:

Settlement and Population:

- *consolidate the development of previously fast growing towns and villages, ensuring a sequential approach to development,*
- *support the preparation of Joint Local Area Plans amongst Laois and Offaly Local Authorities to provide a planning framework for the future physical, economic and social development of Portarlington,*

Enterprise and Economy:

- *support employment generation, including up-skilling and training, to create more self sustaining development for the population currently residing in the area, providing an alternative to commuting to the GDA for employment,*

Transport and Infrastructure:

- *Support the improvement of transport links to the linked gateway, principal towns and national primary network,*
- *Support the upgrading of water and waste water infrastructure to serve the key service towns of Portarlington and Edenderry,*

Social and Community Development:

- *Support the relevant agencies and departments in addressing the social and economic needs in areas such as schools, healthcare, and recreation provision,*
- *Support the provision of outreach programmes from Higher Education Institutes and appropriate retraining schemes,*

Rural Development:

- *Support the creation of employment opportunities for those living and working in rural areas in order to revitalise and sustain rural communities.*

Under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 there is a requirement that Local Area Plans align, correlate and demonstrate **consistency** with the over-arching national and regional objectives as outlined in the [Midland] Regional Planning Guidelines and National Spatial Strategy. As discussed in Section 4, this has particular relevance in the whole area of demographics and housing land requirement.

Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017

Taking due cognisance of the recommendations of the NSS and Regional Planning Guidelines, Laois County Council identified Portarlington as the only **Key Service Town** in County Laois in the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The Key Service Town will prioritise economic growth and employment generation in an area that is comparatively remote from the main population centres in the region. There is a presumption against additional large scale residential development of the type that occurred in the town during the last two inter-censal periods in particular. However, where appropriate [for example on lands close to the railway station], higher density development will be considered. The location of new development will be guided by the sequential approach.

Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015

In recognition of the need for a detailed hierarchy of settlement plans for the county and having regard to the provisions of the NSS and Regional Planning Guidelines, Offaly County Council designated Portarlington as a **Key Service Town** in the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015.

The role of the **Key Service Town** is to strengthen the settlement pattern across the county and to provide support to their immediate surrounding hinterland as well as being self-sustaining. The plan anticipates that Large Towns will reinforce their role as key centres within the settlement hierarchy through the provision of employment opportunities, business, industry, education, tourism and infrastructure.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

CP 1: ensure that the development of Portarlington over the lifetime of this plan shall be focused on employment generation, the consolidation of the town centre, the completion of ongoing developments and the provision of community and social services in a sustainable manner (where feasible);

CP 2: implement the development strategies for Portarlington in order to be consistent with, and in accordance with, policies at a national level, regional level and at a county level];

CP 3: facilitate and promote the role of Portarlington as a 'Key Service Town' as designated in the MRPG's and in the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015.

Section 4: Demographics, Core Strategy, Housing Land Requirement and Development Strategy

This section examines demographics, core strategy, housing land requirement and development strategy.

Aim: To respond in a coherent sustainable spatial fashion to the challenges facing Portarlington while building on its strengths and providing a more focused approach to planning for future development. The development strategy seeks to promote a more consolidated and compact urban form; to maintain and improve a sustainable economic base; to create new employment opportunities; to create sustainable and integrated communities together with the balancing of the natural environment with sustainable and appropriate development.

Context

Portarlington has witnessed major population growth since the beginning of the millennium. From census 2002 to census 2006, the population of the combined urban area [Portarlington North and South] grew from 4,001 to 6,004, representing a growth rate of **50%** over the five year timeframe or 10% per annum.

Portarlington is ranked third in overall population size in counties Laois and Offaly behind only Tullamore and Portlaoise both of which have higher ranking status under the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines [*Gateway* and *Principal Town* designation respectively].

Table 1: Population growth of main urban centres in counties Laois and Offaly 2002-2006-2011

Town	2002	2006	% Change 02-06	2011	% Change 06-11
Portlaoise	12,127	14,613	20.5%		
Tullamore	11,098	12,927	16%		
Portarlington	4,001	6,004	50%	8,930*	46%

CSO: 2002,2006,2011

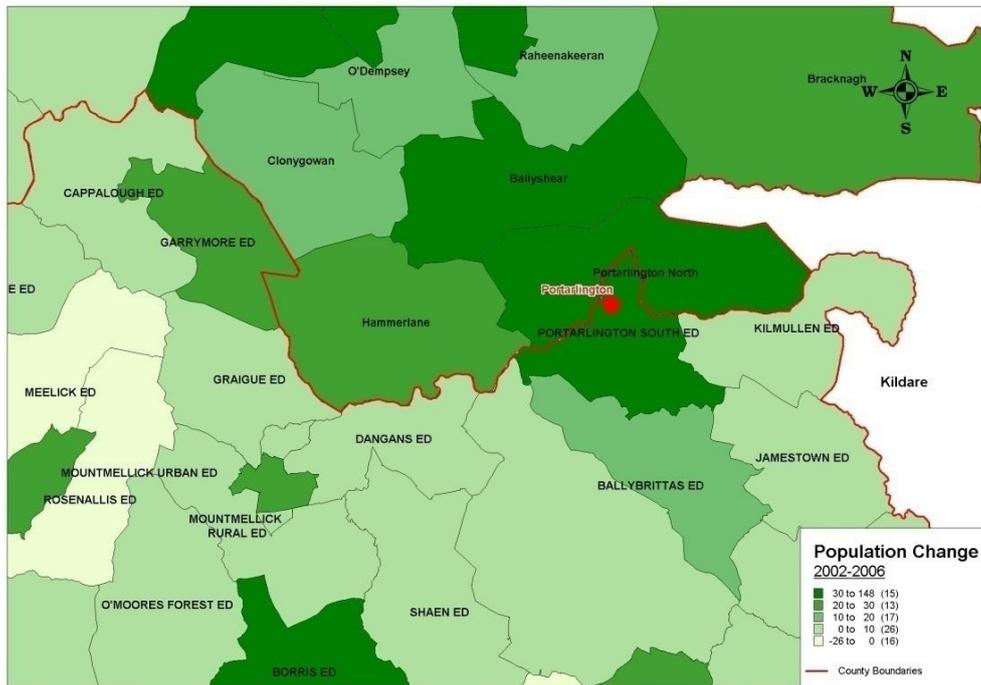
** Preliminary data*

Much of the population increase is attributable to in-migration from Dublin commuters, attracted to the town by affordable house prices and the availability of excellent rail links to the capital. The bulk of the new residential development has occurred in the eastern suburbs of the town in close proximity to the railway station as well as on the Edenderry Road [R419] north of the town centre and on the R420 Tullamore Road.

2011 Census Results

The exceptional population growth that occurred in Portarlington in inter-censal period 2002-2006 has continued through to 2011. According to census data for 2011, Portarlington now has a population of 8,930 which is 46% higher than in 2006, which itself was 50% higher than in 2002. However growth rates are anticipated to be in line with the MRPG's and each counties adopted core strategies.

Map 3: Population change by DED in Portarlington and hinterland, 2002-2006



Core Strategy

Under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 there is a requirement that:

- County Development Plans include a **core strategy** which is **consistent** with overarching national and regional objectives as outlined in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines,
- Local Area Plans demonstrate **consistency** with the **core strategy** of the County Development Plan and with overarching national and regional objectives as outlined in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines.

The purpose of a **core strategy** “is to articulate a medium to longer term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the area of the planning authority, and in doing so, to demonstrate that the development plan and its objectives are consistent with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines.

The respective Councils core strategies include the following:

- A Written Statement outlining the broad aims of the strategy including: the population targets and housing demand allocation for the remainder of the plan period;
- A Core Strategy Table which demonstrates the allocation of population distribution and required amount of residential zoned lands throughout Laois and Offaly;

- A Core Strategy Map which is a schematic map depicting how the planning authority anticipates that its area will develop out over the plan period in line with the availability of infrastructure, services and amenities.

The **sequential approach** in effect favours town centre, edge of centre and inner suburban locations over suburban locations for reasons of promoting sustainability, urban compactness and ease of serviceability. There is a strong presumption against the leapfrogging effect which leads to ad-hoc and disjointed development at relatively long distances from the town centre.

By extension, **one of the key tasks** of the Joint Plan was to critically examine all current residentially zoned lands in the context of these key criteria:

- Location relative to town centre
- Sensitivities including flooding, various environmental designations, serviceability e.g. Water Services Investments Programme and
- Compatibility with County and Midland Regional population targets.

The projected housing land requirement to 2018 is for an overall total of **33** hectares comprising 23 hectares in County Laois [Portarlington South] and 10 hectares in County Offaly [Portarlington North]. The majority of this figure is derived from extant planning permissions [including those that have commenced and are ongoing, those that commenced and are now stalled because of the recession and those that have yet to commence] with the balance made up of lands identified following on from application of the **sequential approach**. See Map 1.

Surplus residentially zoned lands are disposed of by way of rezoning to other land-uses, inclusion in a strategic land bank for consideration at a subsequent plan stage or de-zoned altogether.

Table 2: Housing Land Requirement 2006-2018 for Portarlington [County Laois Core Strategy]

	Population 2006 (CSO)	Projected Population 2018	Projected Population Growth to 2018	Projected increase in Households to 2018	Density (per ha)	Housing Land Requirement to 2018 (Inc. 50% headroom)	AREA(ha) proposed to be Zoned for Residential Development 2012 - 2018
County Laois	67,059	77,059	10,000	4,167			
Eastern Development Area(MRPGs)							
Portarlington	4,395	4,829	434	181	12	23	23

Table 3: Housing Land Requirement 2006-2018 for Portarlington [County Offaly Core Strategy]

	Pop. 2006 (CSO)	Projected Population 2018	Projected Population Growth to 2018	Projected increase in Households to 2018	Density (per ha)	Housing Land Requirement to 2018 [Inc. 50% headroom]	Area(ha) proposed to be Zoned for Residential Development 2012 - 2018
County Offaly	70,868	82,114	11,246	4,686	12		
Eastern Development Area (MRPGs)							
Portarlington	2,039	2,285	246	102	12	10	10

Overall Development Strategy for Portarlington

The strategy for the future growth of Portarlington is based on formulating a framework for the sustainable development of the town while simultaneously conserving its unique character, form, heritage and amenity. The strategy will seek to maximise the potential of Portarlington as a **Key Service Town** in terms of services, employment, settlement and economic activity.

The strategy for the future economic development of Portarlington promotes enterprise and employment land uses which will facilitate the creation of job-opportunities in the town. A key aim is to reduce levels of unemployment and commuting to the GDA and to attract higher order knowledge based enterprise and economic development in addition to promotion of the small-medium sized enterprises.

To realise the full potential of Portarlington, sectoral opportunities focusing on high-tech manufacturing, logistics, agri—business, food production and tourism will be pursued.

The overall economic strategy for Portarlington will direct economic growth towards areas zoned for industrial and enterprise and employment uses as indicated in the accompanying zoning map. The strategy allows for a greater degree of co-ordination of employment, public infrastructure, amenities, community facilities, public transport through a plan led approach. The Plan seeks to create balanced development and to allow for future levels of economic growth. Appropriate policies and objectives to deliver on the economic strategy are presented in Section 5.

In order to promote the growth of Portarlington and assist in fulfilling its designation as a Key Service Town, the strategy will facilitate the development of an attractive and vibrant town centre that provides for current needs and future demands. The strategy also supports the regeneration and redevelopment of under-utilised areas within the town to consolidate development while ensuring that new development respects the existing built form, urban grain and residential amenities. It will also focus on the completion of unfinished estates throughout the town.

Underpinning this strategy is an emphasis on consolidation and the sequential approach to new residential and retail development whereby town centre and inner suburban locations will be favoured over those in the outer suburbs. Appropriate policies and objectives to deliver on the settlement strategy are presented in Sections 4 and 15.

In parallel with the provision of a more consolidated and compact urban form, together with the provision of employment opportunities is the need to create sustainable and socially inclusive communities. The Plan seeks to provide and facilitate the development of quality homes and neighbourhoods, catering for a wide range of household types. There is also a clear need to make

provision for the development of support infrastructure including social and community infrastructure in tandem with residential development. Appropriate policies and objectives to deliver on the settlement strategy are presented in Sections 11 and 14.

The built and natural heritage of Portarlinton are recognised as important environmental and economic resources both in their own right and more importantly in terms of the future sustainable development of the town. A key challenge is to balance the protection of the environment with the pressure for development. The Plan aims to protect local assets and to identify elements of key importance to the character and identify of Portarlinton and to protect these as appropriate.

A central part of the strategy is to facilitate the development and promotion of Portarlinton as a tourism and recreation centre based on a number of key local assets including the River Barrow and its unique cultural heritage. An important mechanism to achieve a balance between safeguarding the environment and encouraging socio-economic development is to formulate appropriate policies and objectives and these are presented in Sections 10, 12 and 13.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

DP 1: support and encourage the appropriate growth of Portarlinton over the plan period and facilitate such growth where it can be demonstrated that it is consistent with national, regional and local level policy [including core strategy], in accordance with the provisions of the Water Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive and any guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 and incorporate the following characteristics:

- *develop sequentially from the centre of existing settlements and maintain the existing pattern and character of settlements and;*
- *make efficient use of existing and proposed infrastructure and;*
- *integrate with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car;*

DP 2: prioritise the completion of development where works are ongoing in Portarlinton. In this regard, the relevant local authority will, where appropriate, engage with developers, landowners and agencies involved to resolve outstanding issues and reach a satisfactory conclusion;

DP 3: have regard to future DoECLG/Government guidance in relation to the satisfactory completion of developments where works are ongoing;

DP 4: monitor and manage the delivery of population and housing in Portarlinton, in line with national, regional and county level objectives, through the development strategy in this plan and also through the development management process. In this regard, it is Council policy to co-operate with the Midland Regional Authority, in relation to Portarlinton as part of the monitoring and review approach;

DP 5: in order to ensure the implementation of the respective Counties core strategies (which have been developed to ensure consistency between this Local area Plan and the objectives of higher order plans at a county, regional and national level), it is policy that residential development proposals for multiple housing units on lands identified as being 'strategic reserve/phased' will not generally be permitted by the Councils.

It is the objective of the Councils to:

DO 1: monitor the delivery of population and associated residential development in Portarlinton during the plan period through the development management process and also using accurate and recent statistics as and when they are published e.g. Census 2011;

DO 2: to direct development in such a manner as is appropriate to achieve the overall aims of the respective core strategies;

DO 3: to adequately address the completion of housing developments that are ongoing, in accordance with DoECLG/Government guidance being issued.

Section 5. Economic Development and Employment

Aim: Working in partnership with national, regional and local agencies, to build on the economic strengths of Portarlington in a balanced and sustainable manner by focusing on the opportunities afforded by its strategic location, infrastructure, environment, heritage assets and labour force and by reducing the unsustainable levels of commuting from the town.

In the higher order plans of the National Spatial Strategy, Midland Regional Planning Guidelines and Laois and Offaly County Development Plans, to which this joint Local Area Plan must align and be consistent with, there is a major emphasis on the importance of economic development and employment generation. For example, a key objective of the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines is to:

- *“support employment generation, including up-skilling and training, to create more self sustaining development for the population currently residing in the area, providing an alternative to commuting to the GDA for employment”.*

This emphasis follows through to the policies and objectives of this local area plan.

This section sets out how the Councils will proactively encourage the ongoing and long-term economic development of Portarlington in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Economic development is a key concern of the Councils because industrial, commercial and retail development and associated job creation are fundamental to maintaining and building sustainable communities and a strong economic base in Portarlington and its hinterland. A key challenge for the Councils is to tackle unemployment by supporting local entrepreneurship as well as attracting new foreign direct investment and small to medium sized enterprises to the town.

Socio-Economic Profile

According to census 2006, construction, manufacturing and retailing are the pre-eminent sources of employment in Portarlington accounting for just over 40% of the overall total. Detailed data for sectoral employment in census year 2011 are not yet available from the CSO.

The on-going recessionary conditions have exerted major pressure on employment levels in the town. The construction sector has borne the brunt of the downturn with males in the younger age-cohorts being particularly badly affected. It is estimated by the CSO that nationally more than 60% of the year-on-year fall in male employment is attributable to this sector. On a pro-rata basis the impact in Portarlington is actually worse.

Also, the town’s traditional industries such as steel, peat harvesting, electricity generation, food production and textiles are either static, in decline or have closed altogether. As a consequence, the numbers signing on the live register in Portarlington Social Welfare Office have **risen** dramatically [by 200%] since December 2007, as indicated in Table 4. [Specific unemployment statistics for the population within the town boundary are not available from the CSO].

Station	Dec. 2007	Dec. 2008	Dec. 2009	Dec. 2010	Dec. 2011
Portarlington	1,127	2,094	3,099	3,395	3,399

It is also noted that 23% [comprising sub-groups Employers and Managers, Higher Professional, Lower Professional] of the population of Portarlington aged 15+ are in the most favourable socio-economic group in terms of income earning potential whereas 32% are in the broad manual category [comprising sub-groups Manual Skilled, Semi-Skilled, Unskilled] which is the most vulnerable during recessionary times.

Dependency

The **dependency ratio** is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labour force (the *dependent* part) and those typically in the labour force (the *productive* part). It is used to measure the pressure on productive population. The dependent part usually includes those under the age of 15 and over the age of 64. The productive part makes up the population in between; ages 15 – 64.

According to Census 2006, Portarlington has a dependency rate of 42% compared to county dependency rates of 49% [County Laois] and 50% [County Offaly] respectively and a provincial dependency rate of 44%. Present indications are that dependency rates will increase in the short to medium term at least with knock-on repercussions for provision of health care, education and housing.

Strengths

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Portarlington has a number of valuable economic strengths which the Councils recognise and will seek to build on in the lifetime of the Local Area Plan. These include:

- a particularly **outstanding** location in relation to national road and especially national rail infrastructure, ensuring easy access to the GDA, Dublin Port, Dublin Airport and [to a lesser extent Rosslare Port],
- the availability of relatively cheap [compared to other locations in the region], zoned and serviced industrial and commercial land and existing floorspace, for example in the Enterprise Park and former Avon premises,
- a strong industrial and entrepreneurial tradition dating back to the Huguenot settlement of the seventeenth century,
- active involvement of local business and community groups including Portarlington Community Development Association which has just produced an economic blueprint for the town-“*Port’s Vision 2020*”,
- proximity to power generating sites in the Midlands and the National Grid,
- well established social infrastructure including leisure facilities, schools,
- tourism potential.

Portarlington Community Development Association

PCDA in association with a number of key stakeholders including both County Councils has prepared a long term socio-economic blueprint for the town and environs.

“*Port’s Vision 2020*” is an eight year strategic plan to create local jobs and increase social capital. The plan will stimulate an environment for job creation in the following key areas: Business, Tourism, Education, Community Resilience and Agriculture. The plan’s aim is that by 2020 Portarlington will be the most enterprising town in the Midlands by utilising all of its available resources.

The recommendations of “*Port’s Vision 2020*” have informed the preparation of the Joint Local Area Plan.

Role Of the County Councils

The Councils will ensure that this Local Area Plan will have a positive role to play in ensuring that its planning policies promote a wide range of enterprise and employment opportunities and that adequate land and infrastructure services are in place to attract investment so that ultimately the town will fulfill its role as a *Key Service Town* as envisaged under the Regional Planning Guidelines:

“Portarlington must **prioritise** its economic, social and community infrastructure base so as to support its own increased population and promote a balanced spatial structure to ensure its continued vitality and development”. (MRPGs)

A number of key land use factors influence the future economic potential of Portarlington and are considered in the preparation of this Plan. They include availability of zoned land, provision of infrastructure and quality of life considerations.

Through its land use zoning in the Local Area Plan, the Councils will seek to protect existing enterprises as well as provide sufficient land for new enterprises across a range of emerging sectors. The Councils are also charged with maintaining and providing for additional physical infrastructure (roads, water supply, wastewater treatment, electricity grid, gas pipeline network, broadband network, incubator centres etc) and social infrastructure (attractive town centre, good quality of life, childcare provision, mentoring of new enterprises). These actions will serve to sustain and attract industry and enterprise to Portarlington.

In addition, the Councils through their Community and Enterprise and Economic Development Sections, will provide a co-ordinating role between various businesses and community organisations and be available to provide information and mentoring for potential investors. It will also work and interact with other key agencies including IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, County Enterprise Boards, Partnership Companies to foster the necessary environment for job creation in Portarlington.

The modern economy is characterised by rapid change with new and sometimes unexpected areas of commercial opportunity emerging, while some traditional enterprises lose their competitive advantage. The Councils have identified the following sectors as having economic potential in Portarlington during the lifetime of this Plan:

- Logistics, freight, warehousing,
- Tourism,
- Events and festivals based on key local themes such as the French Huguenot connection,
- Green economy,
- Land-based, land associated and home-based economic activities in adjoining rural areas, in particular agri-food industry,
- Comparison retail sector and town centre market,
- Office decentralisation,
- Foreign direct investment

Tourism

The Councils recognise the contribution that tourism can make to the town's economy and the potential for significant further growth in this industry. Its strategic location at the intersection of key national rail links and in close proximity to the M7/M8 motorway network ensures that Portarlington is highly accessible to regional, national and international tourist markets.

Sufficient primary attractions as well as the availability of appropriate secondary support services and infrastructure are key to providing a viable tourism sector.

The main features of Portarlington's tourism product include:

- Cultural heritage associated with, for example the Huguenot settlement of the 17th century,
- Leisure activities including golfing at the nearby Killenard leisure complex,
- Angling and water sports centred on the River Barrow.

Also, there are preliminary plans in relation to a major water storage reservoir project on worked-out peatlands, northwest of the town at Garryhinch. While the primary purpose of the reservoir would be as a water supply source for the GDA, there would also be major tourism spin-offs in areas such as angling, boating, bird watching and walking. The following economic development policies will support the future economic progress of the town.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

ECDP 1: support and facilitate the sustainable economic development of Portarlington across a range of sectors while acknowledging in particular the growing importance of the knowledge economy and alternative energy sector in delivering sustainable employment opportunities;

ECDP 2: work in conjunction with the town's third level institution and neighbouring institutions including NUI Maynooth and Athlone and Carlow AIT's in the creation and fostering of enterprise and research and development;

ECDP 3: encourage the further development of the Portarlington third level institute as a centre of excellence for a range of education and research related uses;

ECDP 4: co-operate with local and national development agencies to maximise job creation opportunities and to engage with existing and future large scale employers in order to maximise job opportunities in the town and reduce the level of commuting;

ECDP 5: support and expand start-up enterprises such as those already established in Portarlington Enterprise Centre and the industrial estate on Botley Lane;

ECDP 6: maximise the exceptional locational advantages of Portarlington by promoting the town for enterprise and employment creation;

ECDP 7: ensure that sufficient serviced land is available for employment generation;

ECDP 8: facilitate the development of agriculture, horticultural and rural related enterprises in the rural environs of the town;

ECDP 9: facilitate home-working and innovative forms of working which reduce the need to travel but are subordinate to the main residential use of the dwelling and do not result in negative amenity to the area;

ECDP 10: promote, protect, improve, encourage and facilitate the development of tourism as an important contributor to job creation in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area;

ECDP 11: work with key stake holders and agencies with the aim of increasing overseas and domestic visitor numbers;

ECDP 12: promote Portarlington's cultural, historical, archaeological and architectural heritage as tourism generating opportunities;

ECDP 13: maximise opportunities for the appropriate sustainable use of waterways including the River Barrow as tourism and recreational amenities. In this regard the Councils will co-operate with Waterways Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service and community groups to develop the infrastructure, quality and amenity of these waterways;

ECDP 14: encourage walking and recreational facilities, where feasible and where development opportunities arise along waterways. In this regard land adjacent to river banks will be reserved, where possible, for linear parks for public access and where linear parks are designed and developed provision shall be made for walking and cycling routes;

ECDP 15: support and work with Bord na Móna and other relevant agencies in the sustainable diversification of former industrial peatlands in the Garryhich area to uses such as green energy, eco tourism, water storage;

ECDP 16: support the development of a heritage trail in association with the relevant stakeholders.

It is the objective of the Councils to:

ECO 1: ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for employment generating uses through the development plan and local area plans as appropriate. Such land will, normally, be protected from inappropriate development that would prejudice its long term development for employment uses;

ECO 2: ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate water and wastewater treatment facilities, in advance of development, to accommodate future economic growth and to reserve capacity in water services infrastructure for employment generating uses;

ECO 3: develop Portarlington as a tourism centre and seek the development of a museum/heritage centre/performing arts space in the town;

ECO 4: support start up businesses and small scale industrial enterprises, particularly those that have a creative and innovative dimension;

ECO 5: support further development of Portarlington Third Level Centre as a leading third level research and educational facility and work with and other third level institutes to develop and improve linkages between the College and high tech/FDI firms in the surrounding sub-region and county in general;

ECO 6: facilitate the development of tourism infrastructure and to work with adjoining local authorities and tourism bodies to develop the tourism potential of the region;

ECO 7: continue to facilitate the upgrade of broadband services throughout the plan area.



Plate 4: Odlums Mill complex on Canal Road [left] and SIAC steel mill complex on Lea Road [right].



Plate 5: Enterprise centre on Canal Road [left] and site of former ESB powerstation on Edenderry Road now partly redeveloped for warehousing [right]



Plate 6: Industrial units on industrial estate, Botley Lane, left and right

Section 6: Transportation

This section deals with road infrastructure and public transport.

Aim: To promote ease of access to and movement within Portarlington, by integrating sustainable land use planning with a high quality, integrated transport system; to support improvements to the road, rail and public transport network, together with cycleway and pedestrian facilities in a manner which is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

Road Infrastructure

Portarlington is linked to key neighbouring towns by a series of Regional Routes including the R419 [to Portlaoise], the R420 [to Tullamore and New Inn Interchange], the R424 [to Monasterevin] and the R423 [to Mountmellick and Rathangan]. Junction 15 at Monasterevin [enabling access to the M7 and M8] is only 10 kms distant. The ease of accessibility afforded by these road connections represents an invaluable asset in attracting industry and employment opportunities to the town.

Road infrastructure improvements carried out in the past include the construction of two inner relief roads [from Market Square to Main Street and from Foxcroft Street to French Church Street] and the upgrading of Spa Street to accommodate pedestrians and two-way traffic. Public car parking has been provided off these relief roads and Main Street and Foxcroft Street have been made one-way. In addition, Hope's Bridge, at Kilmullen on the R420 between Portarlington and the M7/M8 interchange at New Inn has been realigned thereby removing a major accident blackspot and improving travel time between the town and the motorway network.

In the absence of a by-pass, the town centre streets are prone to congestion. The locations of the schools are a contributing factor to this problem. Patrick Street to the north of the town is particularly affected. Moreover, there are only two bridge crossings of the River Barrow in the town, Spa Bridge and Barrow Bridge. Virtually all traffic travelling from the Laois side of the town to the Offaly side and vice versa must cross either bridge and this exacerbates town centre congestion.

Road Objectives

A number of road objectives in the plan area have been **prioritised** by Laois and Offaly County Councils. See Map 9 "Portarlington Objectives" on page 113.

In addition, In May 2011, Offaly and Laois County Councils entered into a **Section 85 Agreement** under the Local Government Act, 2001 to further investigate a route for a by-pass of the town. The route in question is the route which was identified as Route 2 in the Portarlington Land Use and Transportation Study 2004.

Rail Infrastructure

Portarlington has **excellent** mainline rail links being located on the national intercity network serving Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Galway, Westport, Ballina and Dublin. There are **23** daily commuter services to Heuston Station, Dublin at the following times:

5.50 am, 6.00 am, 6.30 am, 6.50 am, 7.00 am, 7.20 am, 7.40 am, 7.53 am, 9.31 am, 9.51 am, 10.57 am, 12.54 pm, 13.37 pm, 14.57 pm, 15.36 pm, 16.03 pm, 16.54 pm, 18.43 pm, 19.45 pm, 20.05 pm, 20.30 pm, 20.41 pm, 22.34 pm.

A major expansion of the railway carpark was carried out by Iarnród Éireann in 2009. Inadequate parking facilities at the railway station was identified as a major infrastructural deficiency in the 2004 LUTS study.

A modern, efficient and dependable **passenger** and **freight** rail network has a crucial role to play in terms of promoting Portarlinton for business, industrial, residential and recreational purposes. There are other benefits too in terms of greater sustainability, reduced congestion and car generated pollution.



Plate 7: Portarlinton train station and carpark

Bus Infrastructure

Conversely, Bus Éireann does not operate a service through Portarlinton and has no immediate plans to do so. Neither does the organisation consider the current demand from the hinterland of Portarlinton enough to warrant bus links to service the train station in the town. There is a Bus Éireann commuter service operating through nearby Mountmellick via Portlaoise. Portlaoise is fast becoming the hub for expressway bus services in the area. There are also a significant number of local services running from Kildare and Newbridge.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

TP 1: to jointly identify and agree a route for a by-pass of the town taking into account the requirements of the EIA, Habitats and Floods Directives as appropriate;

TP 2: ensure adequate access points are reserved and provided to open up areas [including backland areas] for development purposes;

TP 3: co-operate with relevant national and regional bodies and agencies to promote and facilitate the implementation of a sustainable transportation strategy for Portarlinton in accordance with the provisions of Transport 21 (2006-2015) and the Department of Transport's "Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020";

TP 4: work with all relevant public transport providers including Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann to improve and expand public transport facilities and services in Portarlinton and to link such facilities with the town centre and other nearby settlements;

TP 5: preserve free from development, proposed public transport and road realignment /improvement lines and associated corridors where such development would prejudice the implementation of County Council or public transport providers' plans (e.g. Iarnród Éireann);

TP 6: *To ensure provision of adequate parking facilities and set down areas [in terms of amount, location and finish] throughout the town including the town centre and in the vicinity of schools;*

TP 7: *To facilitate and encourage cycling as a more convenient, popular and safe method of transport. The existing cycle network shall be extended throughout the town linking population, commercial, community facilities and transport nodes.*

It is the objective of the Councils to:

TO 1: *identify and agree on a route for a future outer relief road with a view to constructing a northern by-pass of Portarlington;*

TO 2: *facilitate safe pedestrian movement by upgrading footpaths as required and facilitate the mobility of mobility impaired persons and to promote permeability and connectivity throughout the town;*

TO 3: *carry out an efficiency audit of the public lighting within the plan area;*

TO 4: *investigate, facilitate and implement possible measures to reduce traffic congestion associated with schools in the area;*

TO 5: *investigate and develop where possible a series of cycle lanes throughout the town.*

Section 7: Water and Related Services

This section deals with water, waste water and surface water drainage.

Aim: To develop, protect, improve and extend water, waste water and flood and related services throughout Portarlington and to prioritise the provision of water services infrastructure to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth and to achieve improved environmental protection.

Water Supply

There are currently three sources of water supply in Portarlington; Ballymorris Treatment Works and the Lough and La Bergerie wellfields. Ballymorris Treatment Works abstracts and treats water from the River Barrow and pumps to the storage tank/reservoir on Carrick Hill. The nominal production capacity of the treatment works is 1,500 cubic metres per day of treated water but it is currently producing approximately 700 cubic metres per day.

There are two existing storage reservoirs on Carrick Hill. Water is pumped to the older higher reservoir from the treatment works. Then the water flows by gravity via an inlet chamber to the larger reservoir from which the scheme is supplied. The combined capacity of the reservoirs is 1,300 cubic metres.

The second source of water is the groundwater supply from the Lough wellfield, which was originally developed around 1980. The yield from this wellfield is currently at approximately 1,500 cubic metres per day. This supply is pumped directly into the distribution network, as there is no available storage. The third source of water is the groundwater supply from the La Bergerie wellfield, which was developed in 2006. The yield from this wellfield is currently at approximately 960 cubic metres per day.

There are limited water storage facilities available in Portarlington. It is necessary to provide security storage to protect against burst mains, source failure or pump failure. The capacity of the reservoir is 1,300 cubic metres which provides less than the recommended 24 hours storage to the system.

The distribution network is a mainly dendritic network with dead ends, which do not provide security and continuity to the areas that they serve. The construction of ring mains to service these areas and provide for future development would help to ensure that water could be continuously supplied without interruption.

The existing network has most spare capacity to the south towards Carrick Hill and Lough Hill and to a lesser extent east towards Whelan's Bridge even though this area is supplied by only a single feed. However the proposed 300 mms. diameter main and ring main to the north potentially opens up development to the north/northwest and the proposed 250mm main from Derrymore close to Deerpark Cross increases the capacity of the supply to service the area.

Under the Laois County Council Water Services Investment Programme, future plans for Portarlington area include the further development of the 3 wellfields at Lough, Doolough and La Bergerie, a new Water Treatment Plant and reservoir at Carrick Hill and approximately 3 km of distribution mains.

Waste-Water

The waste-water treatment plant serving Portarlington was constructed at Lea Road in 1986 and is

owned and operated by Laois County Council. This plant treats effluent from the overall urban area and also from the outlying villages of Killenard and Ballybrittas. In future it is proposed to treat wastewater from the Emo catchment here as well.

The plant is an extended aeration plant consisting of preliminary treatment, biological treatment of the wastewater in an extended aeration tank, secondary clarification and sludge treatment. The final effluent discharges into the River Barrow approximately 300 ms. to the north of the wastewater treatment works [WwTW] site.

The current overall capacity of the treatment plant is 13,000 population equivalent [p.e.] inclusive of a recent temporary upgrade of 5,000 p.e.. There is a current application by Laois County Council under consideration by An Bord Pleanála for a significant upgrade of the plant. Stage 1 of the proposed WwTW capacity upgrade will increase its capacity to 15,000 p.e. in order to cope with current planned development needs and ensure the continued protection of the River Barrow.

Stages 2 and 3 of the WwTW capacity upgrade will increase capacity to 20,000 p.e. and 35,000 p.e. respectively to cope with the future development of the towns and villages above whilst ensuring the water quality and ecological interests of the River Barrow are adequately protected.

Sewerage Network

The sewerage network system is combined or partly separated. The catchment is predominantly level; consequently thirteen pumping stations are required to drain the agglomeration. There are nine storm water overflows to the River Barrow before the main pumping station behind the leisure centre in Portarlinton, with six of these being associated with pumping stations.

Surface Water Drainage

A major by-product of development in Portarlinton is surface water run-off. In the past, conventional drainage design was relatively simplistic and often resulted in increased potential for flooding of other areas further down the system, pollution of the natural environment and contamination of drinking water sources.

Current best practice centres on the **Sustainable Drainage Systems [SUDS]** approach. SUDs comprise a system of devices for managing surface water run-off in a manner that aims to simulate natural drainage, using cost effective solutions with low environmental impact to drain away surface water run-off through collection, storage and cleaning before its ultimate release into the receiving environment.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

WSP 1: secure priorities outlined in the Water Services Investment Programme - Assessment of Needs, and future needs of 2010 to 2012, subject to the availability of finance;

WSP 2: continue the development and upgrading of the water supply system so as to ensure that an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of piped water of suitable quality is available for the sustainable development of Portarlinton in accordance with the settlement structure identified in this Plan, the Needs Assessment of Laois and Offaly County Councils and as finances permit;

WSP 3: promote water conservation measures by requiring, where appropriate, the installation of water metres;

WSP 4: protect groundwater resources having regard to the counties Laois and Offaly Groundwater Protection Schemes;

WSP 5: co-operate with the EPA and other authorities, in the continued implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and assist and co-operate with the lead authorities for the South Eastern River Basin District;

WSP 6: ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan and associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water for the town and surface and groundwater quality and associated biodiversity;

WSP 7: encourage the use of on-site recovery of clean surface water for non-potable uses;

WSP 8: facilitate, as finances permit, the provision of an adequate wastewater collection and treatment system in Portarlinton to serve existing and future residential, commercial and industrial demand in accordance with the Settlement Strategy identified in this Plan and the Water Framework Directive;

WSP 9: ensure the separation of foul and surface water effluent through the provision of separate sewerage and surface water run-off networks;

WSP 10: prohibit permission, even permission in principle, for developments which will not have adequate wastewater disposal facilities available to them within a reasonable period to ensure an orderly expansion of the urban areas and in order to avoid making premature commitments of land while recognising the importance of low water services impact, high employment generating developments such as larger scale retail developments;

WSP 11: prohibit the proliferation of small private pumping stations within the development area for technical and environmental reasons. Regional pumping stations catering for full catchments will generally be allowed where gravity networks are unfeasible and impractical due to the local topography;

WSP 12: ensure the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in all cases where this is feasible and that all new developments utilise and connect to the existing wastewater infrastructure. The provision of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in Portarlinton will be strongly discouraged to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution;

WSP 13: require on site surface water attenuation measures, if, in the opinion of the local authority, a development is likely to cause flooding or potentially destructive storm surges in existing watercourses. These measures will be in accordance with the requirements of the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems scheme.

It is the objective of the Councils to:

WSO 1: upgrade the Sewerage Treatment Works to cater for the treatment of wastewater in Portarlinton;

WSO 2: carry out improvements as outlined in the Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012 and subsequent WSIPs as resources allow;

WSO 3: improve leak detection and resolve leakage, where possible, in the water supply network.

Section 8: Waste Management and Pollution Control

This section deals with waste management and pollution control.

Aim: To conform to European, National and Regional policies in relation to the provision of waste management and to protect and enhance water, air and noise quality.

Context

Protection of the physical environment is of primary importance. The Councils seek to ensure the provision of the highest standards of waste management facilities and collection and to prevent and control water, air and noise pollution.

In terms of waste management strategy, Laois and Offaly County Councils operate in the context of the Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2005-2010 which also includes the functional areas of Counties Longford, North Tipperary and Westmeath. The Plan is based on the EU waste management hierarchy, which prioritises waste prevention, minimisation, reuse/recycling, disposal with energy recovery ahead of landfill. The Councils will also have regard to the National Biodegradable Waste Strategy 2006 which has similar objectives to those of the Waste Management Plan. Central to the strategy is a focus on the promotion of environmental protection through education.

Recycling is a key component of the strategy for a sustainable approach to waste management in Counties Laois and Offaly. There is a public civic amenity site [at Lea Road] and 2 bring bank centres in Portarlington. There are plans to establish a further bring bank facility in Portarlington in 2012.

Litter

In accordance with the Litter Pollution Act 1997, Laois County Council adopted a Litter Management Plan covering the period 2012-2014. The Plan details the measures proposed by the Council in relation to litter prevention and control and also sets out areas where joint co-operation is sought.

Comprehensive action is to be achieved in five key areas:

- Education and information
- Litter prevention and control
- Enforcement
- Community involvement
- Recycling and recovery.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

WMP 1: encourage waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste;

WMP 2: promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community-based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives;

WMP 3: preserve and maintain water, air and noise quality in the town in accordance with good practice and relevant legislation;

WMP 4: *ensure that noise levels caused by new and existing developments throughout the town do not exceed normally accepted standards and that new developments shall incorporate measures to ensure compliance with the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 and any subsequent revision of these Regulations;*

WMP 5: *where appropriate, to comply with the SEVESO II Directive and to reduce the risk and limit the consequences of major industrial accidents by taking into account the advice of the Health and Safety Authority and the Fire Authority where proposals for new developments are considered.*

It is the objective of the Councils to:

WMO 1: *ensure the availability of adequate litter collection, storage and disposal facilities and recycling facilities.*

Section 9: Telecommunications, Information Technology and Gas

This section deals with telecommunications, information technology and gas supply.

Aim: To develop, improve and extend telecommunications, information technology and related services throughout Portarlinton to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth and to achieve improved environmental protection.

Broadband

There is a recognition of the essential need for a high quality communications network in maximizing the competitiveness of the economy of Portarlinton and its role in supporting regional and national development generally.

The development of broadband access is taking place mainly on foot of two national schemes; the **County and Group Broadband Scheme** and **Metropolitan Area Networks Scheme [MANS]**. As a result, all bandwidth requirements can be satisfied and the vast majority of businesses in the town now have the option of accessing high speed broadband services delivered on fibre network.

Telecommunications

In addition to broadband, provision of masts and associated antennae is an essential element in the development of a modern telecommunications network in Portarlinton. It will be the policy of the Councils to consider proposals for such infrastructure in the light of the recommendations of the document *"Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" [DoEHLG, 1996]*.

It shall be the preferred approach that all new support structures meet fully the co-location or clustering policy of the guidelines and that shared use of existing structures will be required where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration.

Due to the physical size of mast structures and the materials used to construct them, they can [especially latticework versions] severely impact on urban landscapes. When dealing with applications, great care will be taken to minimise damage through discreet siting and good design. In the assessment of individual proposals, the Councils will also take the impact on rights of way and walking routes into account.

This type of development will not however be permitted in the following areas:

- Adjoining or within the curtilage of protected structures;
- On or within the setting of archaeological sites, structures and zones;
- Sites beside schools.

If the proposal is contrary to any of the above, the County Councils will need to be satisfied that the installation is of strategic importance if permission is to be granted.

In relation to health and safety aspects, it is a requirement for operators to provide a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines (Health Physics, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan) 1988) or the equivalent European Pre-standard 50166-2. A report as to the public safety implications of the proposal should accompany any planning application. Regard

should be had to locating new masts in existing industrial areas, where their visual impact would be less.

In assessing telecommunications facilities and structures, the Planning Authorities will have regard to the technical advice of the Irish Aviation Authority where such proposed locations may have an inappropriate or detrimental impact on flight paths.

Gas

The provision of piped gas to the town helps to ensure reliable energy sources are available to meet the future needs of Portarlington.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

TCP 1: *facilitate the on-going provision and expansion of electricity and telecommunications within the town, subject to residential, visual and preservation requirements, as set out in this Plan. Ducting should be shared where possible and underground services should be placed where they create minimum disturbance to road users;*

TCP 2: *encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures and to require documentary evidence as to the non availability of this option in proposals for new structures. The shared use of existing structures will be insisted upon where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration;*

TCP 3: *encourage the further co-ordinated development and extension of broadband technology as a means of improving economic competitiveness and enabling more flexible work practices e.g. tele-working;*

TCP 4: *seek to have appropriate modern information technology, including a carrier neutral, multi-duct infrastructure servicing every unit, incorporated into the overall design and layout of all new developments where feasible;*

TCP 5: *require the undergrounding of telephone and TV cables, in the interest of visual amenity;*

TCP 6: *ensure that telecommunications infrastructure is adequately screened, integrated and /or landscaped so as to minimise any adverse visual impacts;*

TCP 7: *liaise with the ESB to investigate and encourage where possible the ducting and continued underground routing of overhead powerlines in Portarlington, in tandem with other work programmes, such as road resurfacing and footpath construction works;*

TCP 8: *protect the existing gas pipe work and facilitate the expansion of gas supply network around the town.*

It is the objective of the Councils to:

TCO 1: *facilitate the expansion, where possible, of the broadband service for domestic and commercial customers.*

Section 10: Flood Risk

Aim: To develop, improve and extend flood alleviation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland so as to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth and to achieve improved physical and environmental protection.

Background



Plate 8: Flood scenes in Portarlinton

Flooding is a natural process that can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations. The health, social, economic and environmental impacts of flooding can be significant and have a wide community impact.

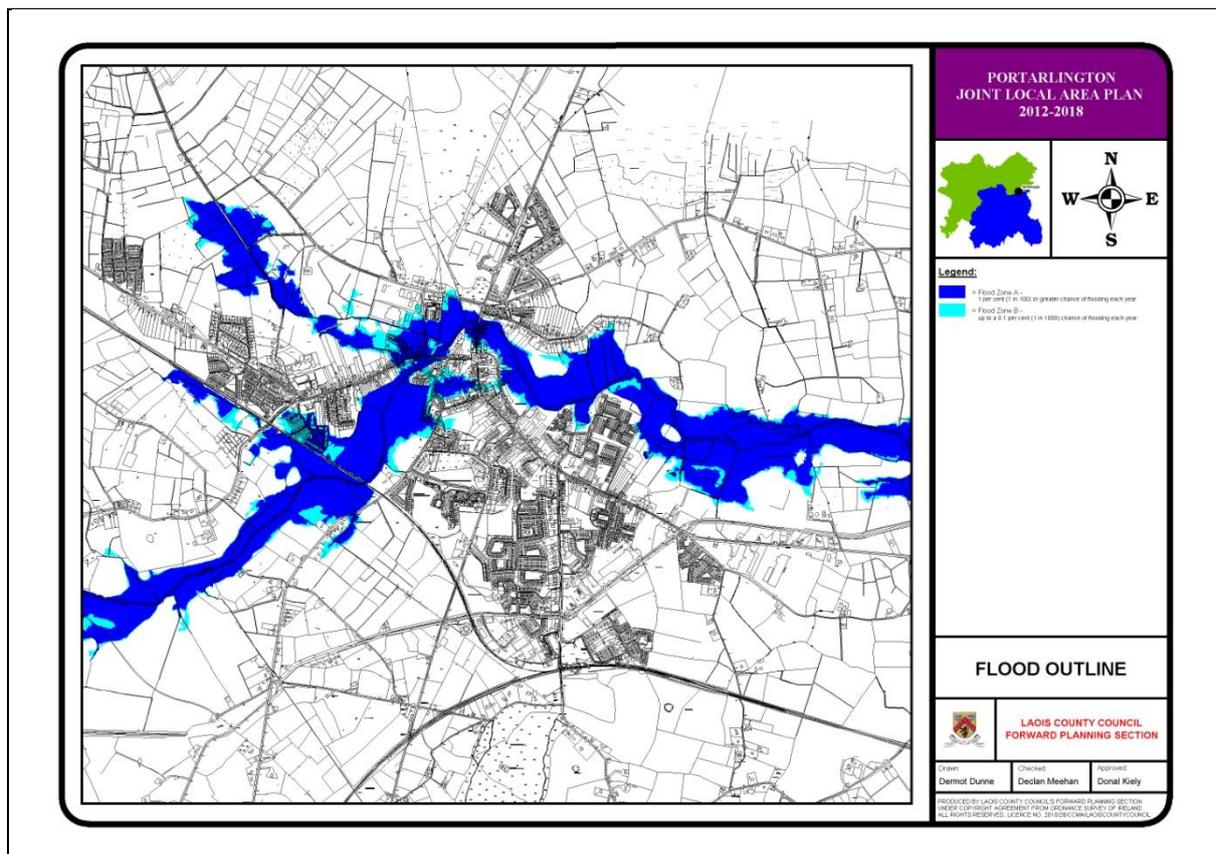
Laois and Offaly Local Authorities recognise that flooding, or the risk of flooding, constrains development in key areas of Portarlinton especially the town centre. The Councils will strive to ensure that proper flood risk identification, assessment and management avoidance are integrated with the planning system to safeguard and provide for the future sustainable development of the town.

There is a history of flooding of the River Barrow in Portarlinton. **Significant** flood events have occurred at regular intervals including in **1924, 1935, 1947, 1954, 1968, 1990, 2008 and 2009**. Flood hazard map[s] for the Portarlinton area, prepared as part of the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans, indicate that there is considerable flood risk within the town generally adjacent to the River Barrow. The Local Authorities of Laois, Kildare & Offaly, acting through the joint committee known as the **Barrow Drainage Board** are responsible for maintaining the Barrow and its tributaries from its source in the Slieve Bloom mountains to the Horse Bridge in Athy.

The OPW has three hydrometric stations in the Joint Local Area Plan area:

Station No	Station Reference	River	Catchment	Organisation
14005	Portarlinton	Cushina	Barrow	OPW
14009	Cushina	Barrow	Barrow	OPW
14107	Baylough Bridge	Barrow	Barrow	LAO

Map 4: Flood Potential Map for Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan area



Portarlington Flood Risk Management Strategy 2007

Laois and Offaly County Councils in association with the OPW commissioned a strategic study to evaluate and quantify flood risk in Portarlington.

The study, *Portarlington Strategic Flood Risk and Management Strategy*, recommends a series of mitigation measures in the form of floodwalls, levees, embankments and attenuation areas provided at various locations through the centre of Portarlington along the banks of the River Barrow and the Blackstick Drain.

The Strategy sets out 3 phases of works to address flood risk in the town. Phase 1 will reduce the risk of flooding to existing properties, primarily the town centre area including Spa Street and Patrick Street. This phase will also reduce the flood risk to a section of undeveloped land to the rear of Patrick Street, representing a key opportunity for Town Centre development.

Phase 2, will improve the growth potential of the town between the Railway Bridge and Rosecourt, and will require a partnership approach between both Laois and Offaly County Councils. This phase cannot be carried out until phase 1 is implemented.

Phase 3, will also improve the growth potential of the town in the area south of Marian Hill, on the Laois side of the town. This phase cannot be carried out until phase 1 is implemented.

Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009

The *Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DoEHLG, 2009]* introduced comprehensive mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and

management into the planning process. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will evaluate and quantify the flood risk in the town and facilitate a more strategic approach to land use zoning with due consideration of the risks as well as assessment of likely options to help alleviate the problem.

Sequential Approach and Justification Test

Central to the SFRA process is the application of the **Sequential Approach** and the **Justification Test**.

Where possible, development in areas identified as being at flood risk should be avoided; this may necessitate de-zoning lands within the Local Area Plan. If de-zoning is not possible, then rezoning from a higher vulnerability land use, such as residential, to a less vulnerable use, such as open space may be required.

Where rezoning is not possible, exceptions to the development restrictions are provided for through the **Justification Test**. Many towns such as Portarlington have central areas that are affected by flood risk and have been targeted for growth. To allow the sustainable and compact development of these urban centres, development in areas of flood risk may be considered necessary. For development in such areas to be allowed, the Justification Test must be passed.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

FRP 1: *comply with DoEHLG document “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)” in carrying out functions during the period of this Plan;*

FRP 2: *avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and ensure new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run off;*

FRP 3: *have regard to the recommendations of the South Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study and to ensure that any development adjacent to these watercourses or their tributaries take cognisance of these reports/studies and to ensure that the landuse is appropriate to the risk of flooding identified subject to the development management justification test.*

FRP 4: *seek to ensure that development will not interfere with or interrupt existing surface water drainage systems;*

FRP 5: *ensure that development adjacent to watercourses is set back from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel clearing/maintenance;*

FRP 6: *ensure that the requirements of Inland Fisheries Ireland and National Parks and Wildlife Service are adhered to in the construction of flood alleviation measures including walls, embankments and levees in Portarlington;*

FRP 7: *comply with relevant provisions of the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945 and the Arterial Drainage (Amendment) Act 1995;*

FRP 8: *liaise with the Barrow Drainage Board in the exercise of its functions for the alleviation of flood risk in the study area and for regular maintenance of the River Barrow taking into account the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive [Article 6] and the Appropriate assessment thereof;*

FRP 9: *ensure protection of Natura 2000 sites supporting rivers and streams by avoiding development on flood plains and ensure flood risk assessment policies, plans or projects are compliant with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and avoid or mitigate negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites.*

It is the objective of the Councils to:

FRO 1: *continue to undertake works under the Arterial Drainage Programme, as prioritised and as may be amended over the period of this Plan;*

FRO 2: *liaise with adjoining local authorities, all relevant departments and agencies including National Parks and Wildlife Service in the alleviation of flood risk in the study area.*

Section 11: Education and Social Infrastructure

This section examines education, community services, social inclusion, youth, disability, the elderly, childcare, travelling community, the arts, ethnic minority and crime prevention.

Aim: To ensure that Portarlington is an attractive place to live and work by building strong inclusive communities that have a sense of place and belonging coupled with the provision of accessible social and community facilities.

Introduction

The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 requires development plans to include objectives for the integration of the planning and sustainable development of an area with considerations of a social, community and cultural nature which are fundamental to promoting personal enhancement in and social cohesion amongst the population of that area.

Building strong, inclusive communities is an integral component to achieving sustainable development objectives. Apart from housing and employment opportunities, sustainable communities require the provision of and access to a myriad of support infrastructure in the areas of education, childcare, health and community support services, recreational and leisure and a good quality built environment.

There has been substantial development in this overall sector in Portarlington over the course of the last decade especially in the areas of education, leisure and community infrastructure. For example, a new national school has opened on Station Road while a leisure centre, playground, crèche, fire station and all-weather pitches have been developed on the Eastern Inner Relief Road. In addition, Laois County Council has given *Part VIII* consent for a replacement library and civic centre also on the Eastern Inner Relief Road.

In general, the facilities have been provided by public sector bodies such as Laois County Council and the Department of Education and Skills.



Plate 9: New crèche [left] and leisure centre [right] on Eastern Inner Relief Road

Education

Education is critical to achieving the full socio-economic potential of the study area. Even allowing for the current economic downturn, CSO and Department of Education and Skills projections indicate that birth rates will remain relatively high for the foreseeable future at least, resulting in a growing percentage of those in the standard school-going age cohorts of 0-18. This in turn has

implications for provision of childcare facilities and primary and secondary level schools infrastructure in the plan area.



Plate 10: Presentation National School on Station Road [left] and St. Patricks National School on Patrick Street [right]

Enrolment

Enrolment figures in respect of the existing primary and post-primary schools in Portarlington for academic year 2010/2011 are indicated in Tables 5 & 6.

- Table 5: Enrolment in primary schools in Portarlington catchment for academic year 2010/11

School Name	Total Enrolment
PRESENTATION PRIMARY SCHOOL	520
CLONEYHURKE N S	41
NAOMH MHUIRE N S	102
SCOIL PHADRAIG	303
S N MHUIRE	106
CUL AN TSUDAIRE N S	69
S N NAOMH EOIN	384
Totals	1525

- Table 6: Enrolment in post-primary schools in Portarlington catchment for academic year 2010/11

School Name	Total Enrolment
COLAISTE IOSAGAIN	713
Totals	713

In terms of planning for the provision of education infrastructure in Portarlington, the **primary** role of the Planning Authority is to identify and reserve sufficient lands at the most **optimum** locations within the study area. In addition, the Planning Authority will continue to liaise with and advise the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant stakeholders, both denominational and non-denominational, in the development of adequate education centres serving the population of the town and outlying catchments.

In general, where new schools are required, they should be located close to, or within the main residential areas of the town so that as many students [and teachers] as possible can walk or cycle to

school. The opportunity should be taken to locate the schools so that they naturally contribute to the development of a sense of community.

School and other educational premises represent a valuable resource in terms of land and buildings, which generally are only used on a partial basis. The dual use of educational facilities, where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service can contribute to meeting the wider needs of the community, by helping to satisfy demand for a variety of activities.

Site for new national school

During the initial public consultation stage of the joint Local Area Plan process, one of the main issues brought to the attention of the Councils by the relevant stakeholders was insufficient capacity in the education sector especially at primary school level, notwithstanding the opening of the Presentation National School on Station Road in 2005. In this regard, a Site Selection and Suitability Assessment exercise, based on the 2011 Department of Education and Skills reference document *Identification and Suitability Assessment of Sites for Primary Schools*, was carried out by the Councils for the purposes of identifying potential locations for a new national school site in Portarlington.

Education Attainments

Education statistics for the population of Portarlington [and for comparative purposes Counties Laois and Offaly] are shown in Table 7. These are expressed in terms of persons aged 15 and over classified by their highest level of education completed in census year 2006.

Table 7: Education Levels in Portarlington, Co. Laois, Co. Offaly as at CSO 2006							
	Total whose full-time education ceased	Primary Level	Secondary level lower	Secondary level upper	3 rd level non-degree	3 rd level or higher	Not Stated
Portarlington	4,091	641	977	1,369	422	512	170
County Laois	44,934	8,521	10,284	13,547	4,472	5,543	2,567
County Offaly	47,453	9,909	11,244	14,046	4,450	5,415	2,389

Source: CSO, Ireland

The highest and most prestigious education achievement category is “third level degree or higher”. Approximately 12% of those in Portarlington whose full-time education has ceased had reached this category. This percentage is similar to that for Counties Laois and Offaly.

Third level Education and Training

Since its establishment in 2003, Portarlington Adult Education Centre has made a significant contribution to the range and quality of educational opportunities in Portarlington and the wider region.

The Centre provides a range of FETAC certified morning and afternoon classes to adults who wish to return to education on a flexible part-time basis under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) and the Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme (VTOS). It also provides classes as part of the Laois Third Level Degree Programme and has developed close collaborative links with a number of keynote national third level centres such as University of Maynooth and U.C.D.

The Councils fully recognise the pivotal role of Portarlington Adult Education Centre in the economic and social regeneration of Portarlington.



Plate 11: Portarlington 3rd level VEC centre on Bracklone Street

Social Inclusion and Community Development

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 recognises the distinct groups in society and the needs of each in achieving social inclusion, tackling poverty and access to quality services. The Councils recognise the direct impact of planning on the well-being of individuals and communities and in particular the potential for good planning to promote social inclusion.

Recreation and Amenity

The 2006 Census indicates that Portarlington has a comparatively youthful population with 22% under 15 compared with 20.4% at a national level. Current indications are that this percentage will remain constant for the foreseeable future at least. This has a bearing on the present and future need for facilities such as childcare, play areas for children, sports facilities, schools and safe walking and cycling routes in the respective counties. Therefore the provision of youth facilities will be a priority in future planning for Portarlington. There is also a need to recognise the recreational needs of teenagers and young adults.

The Councils acknowledge the importance of the provision of open space and play areas for children as part of the development of communities. All play areas should be located where they can be overlooked by dwellings but will not cause unreasonable nuisance problems for residents. Play areas shall be designed specifically for children's play and include play equipment and safety surfacing which conforms to relevant safety standards.

Play can also be provided for in a less formal way. Children use their whole environment to play and it is possible through careful design and landscaping to provide play features that would not have the insurance, supervision, security or maintenance implications of traditional play areas. It is the intention of the Councils to encourage the development of built environments, where living predominates over traffic to facilitate this.

Regardless of the form of play provision, planning applications from private developers will be required to contain full details of design, management and maintenance for all play provision. The Councils will endeavour to ensure that such facilities are inclusive and accessible to relevant age groups.

Apart from facilities provided as part of private development schemes, the Councils have developed an impressive portfolio of youth related facilities in their own right and in collaboration with other

agencies including an extensive play park and multi-use games area, crèche and leisure complex at the Eastern Inner Relief Road.



Plate 12: Peoples Park [left] and New Astro turf pitches [right] at Eastern Inner Relief Road

Ethnic Minority Groups

In recent years a more ethnic and culturally diverse population has developed in Portarlington. Provision of service and community facilities should reflect the varying needs of these new communities.

Local Development and Community Groups

The Councils recognise the important role played by local development and community groups in the overall development of Portarlington.

The respective County Development Boards, which are representative of the major statutory, voluntary and community sectors, are the main driver of integrated service delivery at local level and promotes partnership and collaboration. The Councils will continue to support and facilitate the County Development Boards in their key objectives of strengthening the community sector throughout the town and developing a long-term strategy of social investment at community level.

Arts, Culture and Library Services

The Arts Development Plans for Laois and Offaly outline a framework for arts development in the plan area. The plans are interactive, flexible and responsive to the citizens of Portarlington. The plans are underpinned by two key themes, cultural inclusion and co-operative networking. The Councils Library Services lead and support a wide range of activities and programmes including public libraries, arts services, local studies, genealogy, archives and services to primary schools.

Laois County Council has given *Part VIII* approval for a new state of the art library facility at the Eastern Inner Relief Road.

Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities, in its various forms, is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to participate more fully in society.

Laois and Offaly County Councils work closely with the local Childcare Committee to improve the quality, provision and affordability of childcare in the town. Laois and Offaly County Childcare Committee Strategic Plans 2007-2010 set out key objectives with the aim of delivering quality

childcare and educational services centred on the needs of the child.

The Councils will have regard to the criteria specified in the *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG, (2001)* regarding the provision of such facilities, together with the requirements of Section 17, Development Management Standards.

Health Services

Provision of public health care services for Portarlinton is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE is seeking to rebalance its approach with a shift from secondary care to primary care provision which places a stronger emphasis on working with communities and individuals to improve their health and well-being. Primary care centres will be facilitated on suitably zoned lands and in close proximity to new and existing residential areas to allow communities access to multidisciplinary health care in easily accessible locations throughout the county.

In new development areas, medical practices should be provided for at the planning and design stage, either within the town, neighbourhood centres or within housing areas, preferably in purpose built premises, the locations of which should have minimal impact on residential amenity.

Location of medical practices within housing areas is generally only appropriate for smaller-scale practices (excluding veterinary practices). In such cases, the locations should have minimal impact on residential amenity, adequate parking provision and located on a main road, or on a public transport route

A major new primary care centre has opened on the grounds of Kilnacourt House.

Burial Grounds

The Portarlinton burial grounds are located on the south-western outskirts of the town and are managed by the Portarlinton Joint Burial Board. The Local Area Plan will ensure that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with the future needs of the town.

Social, Community and Cultural Events

Annual social, community and cultural events, such as Saint Patricks Day parade and French Festival take place in Portarlinton. The Councils will continue to support such events in accordance with planning regulations and health and safety requirements. The locations for these events will take into account the needs of local residents including noise levels, traffic management and car parking arrangements, security, liaison with Gardaí, health and safety issues and litter prevention.

Crime Prevention

Informed, positive planning, particularly when co-ordinated with other measures, can make a significant contribution to tackling crime.

Designing out crime and designing in community safety should be central to the planning and delivery of new development.

There are seven attributes of sustainable communities that are particularly relevant to crime prevention. The attributes have emerged from in-depth research into crime prevention and urban design practice and theory. These are set out below:-

Access and movement: places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security.

Structure: places that are structured so that different uses do not cause conflict.

Surveillance: places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked.

Ownership: places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community.

Physical protection: places that include necessary, well-designed security features.

Activity: places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times.

Management and maintenance: places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

SIP 1: continue to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills, Laois and Offaly VEC's and other relevant stakeholders in the provision of adequate education infrastructure for all age groups;

SIP 2: ensure the provision of educational, community, cultural and related facilities in tandem with residential, commercial and other developments. In certain large mixed use schemes the frontloading of such infrastructure may be required prior to the commencement of development. In this regard, applicants will be required to submit a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA);

SIP 3: encourage shared use of existing educational and community facilities for community and non-school purposes where possible, in order to promote sustainable use of such infrastructure;

SIP 4: promote equality of access to services and facilities and assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society;

SIP 5: ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Councils are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these facilities as focal points for the community;

SIP 6: consider the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities;

SIP 7: ensure that all buildings, public and open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to the Building Regulations, the objectives of 'Building for Everyone' (National Disability Authority) and 'Access for the Disabled' (No. 1 to 3) (National Rehabilitation Board);

SIP 8: facilitate the provision of continuing care facilities for the elderly, such as: own homes (designed to meet the needs of elderly people), sheltered housing, day-care facilities, nursing homes and specialised care units (e.g. dementia specific units) at appropriate locations throughout the town;

SIP 9: cater for the diversity of older people's needs by promoting adaptability and flexibility in the design of homes, and the promotion of appropriate commercial and community facilities in population centres with higher proportions of older people;

SIP 10: require the provision of childcare facilities in all new residential developments, in accordance with the "Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG, 2001". The indicative standard [of

one childcare facility, accommodating 20 children, for every 75 dwellings] may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so;

SIP 11: support and co-operate with promoters or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations that are easily accessible to members of the wider community;

SIP 12: protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within the town and to encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with good conservation principles;

SIP 13: provide or assist in the provision of burial grounds and extensions to existing burial grounds at appropriate locations throughout the town;

SIP 14: ensure that development proposals adopt suitable “designing out crime” standards;

SIP 15: develop, in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders, an Open Space strategy for Portarlington;

SIP 16: ensure private open space is developed in accordance with the relevant standards as set out in the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

It is the objective of the Councils to:

SIO 1: assess, in conjunction with the County Childcare Committee, the continuing needs for childcare and related facilities in the town and to identify appropriate sites for such uses;

SIO 2: assess the suitability and demand for care facilities for the elderly and to facilitate the use of appropriate sites within town for such uses;

SIO 3: develop open spaces and play areas throughout the study area which will encourage a range of recreational and amenity activities that will cater for both active and passive recreation;

SIO 4: carry out an audit of leisure facilities and to facilitate local community groups and sporting organisations in the development of sport and recreational facilities, in particular, through land use zoning as appropriate;

SIO 5: improve library provision and services by developing the Part VIII approved library facility on the Eastern Inner Relief Road, subject to the availability of resources and finance;

SIO 6: co-operate with An Garda Siochana in the roll-out of community policing and neighbourhood watch schemes;

SIO 7: make provision for additional carparking adjoining the graveyard on the Mountmellick Road.

Section 12: Built Heritage

This section examines protected structures, architecture and archaeology.

Aim: To protect, conserve and manage the archaeological and architectural and archaeological heritage of Portarlington and to encourage sensitive sustainable development so as to ensure its survival and maintenance for future generations.

The built heritage of Portarlington is fundamental to the cultural identity of the town and the quality of life of its citizens. This includes 18th and 19th century two-, three- and four-storey town houses and walled gardens and burgages, vernacular structures, industrial heritage, Huguenot artefacts, ecclesiastical architecture and a considerable amount of features of interest including stone walls and street furniture. On the whole, Portarlington town centre presents as an attractive streetscape. The main focus of the town centre is the lengthy Main Street, Patrick Street and Market Square. None of the central area is pedestrianised and connectivity between focal points of interest is deficient. The Barrow river walk is intermittent.

Record of Protected Structures

Portarlington contains a wealth of architectural and archaeological heritage. There are 96 Protected Structures as well as a zone of archaeological significance [situated in the town centre] in the greater Portarlington urban area. The protected structures for Portarlington are contained within the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in the respective County Development Plans for Laois and Offaly County Councils Buildings are designated protected structures if they are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

Map 5 below, locates these structures. Within the Plan area, protected structures are predominately located around the Square, on Main Street, Patrick Street and French Church Street.

The Councils recognise the value of protected structures and the importance of maintaining them in active usage. A good example of this is the redevelopment of the once derelict and disused Kilnacourt House to a primary care centre. See “before” and “after” montages below.

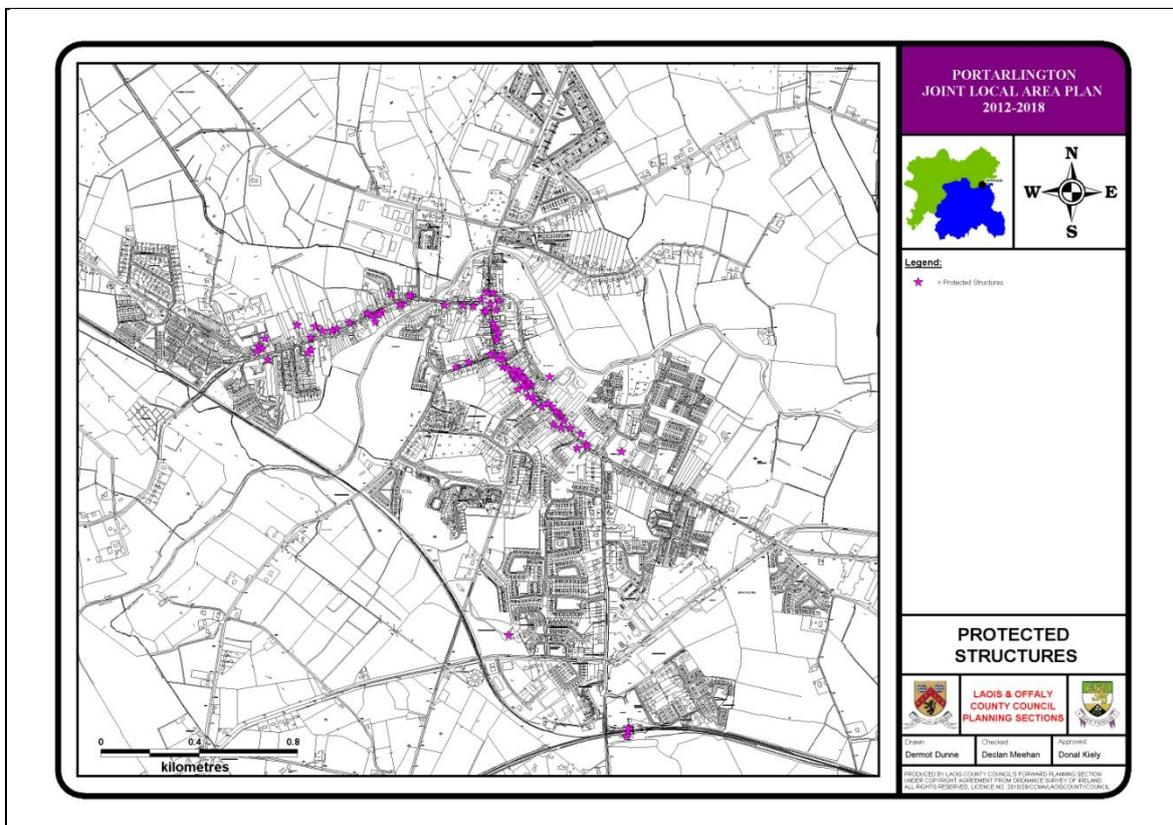


Plate 13: Kilnacourt House, Bracklone Street in its original derelict condition [left] and following re-development [right]



Plate 14: Kilnacourt House, Bracklone Street following re-development

Map 5: Location of Protected Structures in Portarlington

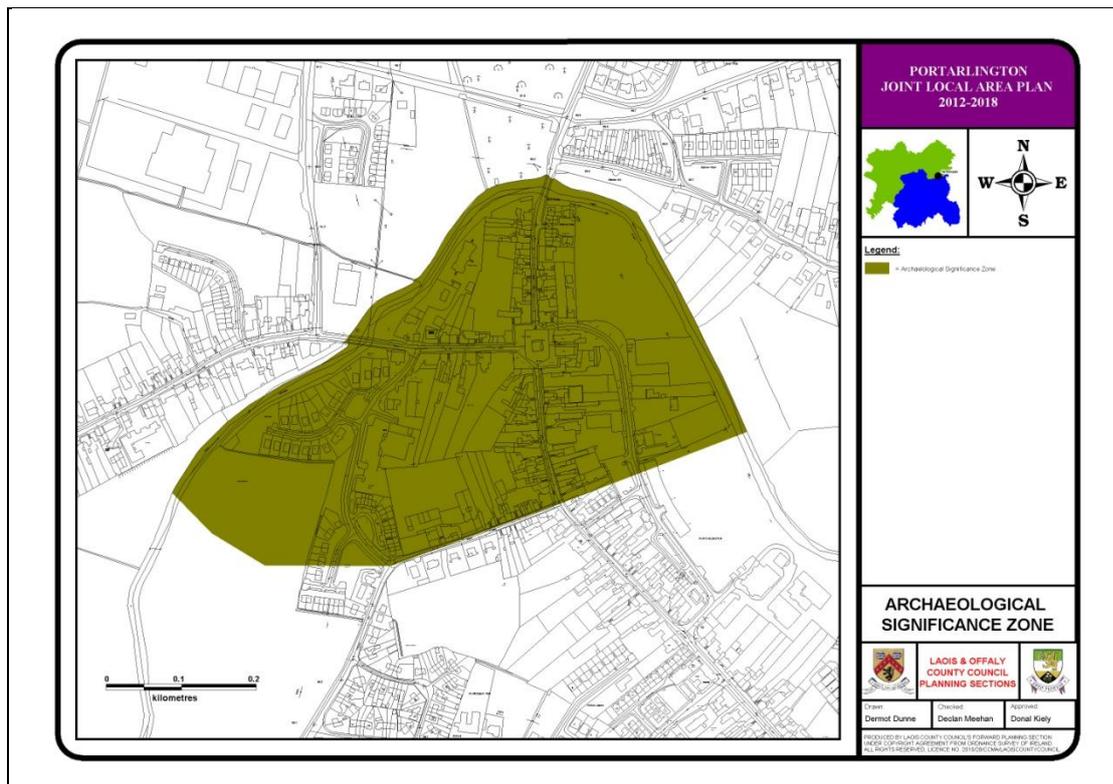


Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological heritage consists of material remains (whether in the form of sites and monuments or artefacts in the sense of moveable objects) and environmental evidence. As archaeological heritage can be used to gain knowledge and understanding of the past, it is of great cultural and scientific importance.

A substantial part of the town centre of Portarlington is in a zone of archaeological significance as indicated in Map 6.

Map 6: Archaeological Significance Zone in Portarlington



When considering development proposals within this zone, the Councils will have regard to the provisions of Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, or as may be amended from time to time. The Councils will also have regard to the observations and recommendations of the Office of Public Works and the Heritage and Planning Division of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

When considering such proposals regard will be had to the nature of sub-surface works which could impact on archaeological remains (e.g. foundation type and design, layout and location of services, road works, landscaping schemes etc).

The Councils may require the developer to submit a report prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist on the archaeological implications of the proposed development. In appropriate circumstances, the Councils when granting permission for development may impose conditions requiring:

- professional archaeological supervision of site excavations;
- the funding by the applicant of archaeological assessment, monitoring, testing or excavation of the site and the submission of a report thereon, prior to the commencement of development
- the preservation of all or part of any archaeological remains on the site.

Record of Monuments and Places

A recorded monument is a monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) set out county by county under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest which have so far been identified.

Architectural Conservation Areas

The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 provides that all development plans must now include objectives for preserving the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).

An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, or which contribute to the appreciation of protected structures. In these areas the protection of the architectural heritage is best achieved by controlling and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure.

At present there are no designated ACAs in Portarlinton. It is Council policy to preserve the special character of the Portarlinton town centre streetscape and in this regard it is an objective of this plan to examine the feasibility of designating a particular area as An Architectural Conservation Area.

Archways and Doorways

The archways and doorways and associated fenestration in the town centre are a distinctive feature of the streetscape. Many of the keystones over the doorways feature unique decorative designs and these contribute positively as a point of interest along the street. Many of the original decorative fanlights are retained over the doorways also.

The carriage arches are prominent features in themselves and provide access to the rear of properties. All new developments, refurbishments and redevelopments should seek to retain these features and to treat both archways and such existing doorways with particular care. Keystone decorations should be retained and they should be incorporated sensitively into any redesigned shop fronts.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

BHP 1: conserve and protect buildings, structures and sites contained in the counties respective Record of Protected Structures of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;

BHP 2: protect the curtilage of protected structures or proposed protected structures and to refuse planning permission for inappropriate development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure which would adversely impact on the special character of the protected structure;

BHP 3: require that new works will not obscure views of principal elevations of protected structures;

BHP 4: promote best practice and the use of skilled specialist practitioners in the conservation of, and any works to, protected structures. Method statements should make reference to the DoECLG's Advice Series on how best to repair and maintain historic buildings;

BHP 5: encourage high quality design in relation to planning applications that are made for the construction of extensions or new buildings affecting protected structures or older buildings of architectural merit not included in the RPS;

BHP 6: favourably consider the change of use of any structure included on the Record of Protected Structures provided such a change of use does not adversely impact on its intrinsic character. In certain cases, the Planning Authority may relax site zoning restrictions / development standards in order to secure the preservation and restoration of the structure;

BHP 7: promote the retention [and re-instatement where appropriate] of original or early building

fabric including timber sash windows, stonework, brickwork, joinery, render and slate;

BHP 8: *require an architectural heritage assessment report, as described in “Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities”, DoEHLG, 2011, in all applications involving a protected structure;*

BHP 9: *protect and retain important elements of the built and vernacular heritage including historic gardens, stone walls, curtilage features, doorways and archways and archaeological features;*

BHP 10: *protect and preserve all archaeological sites and their settings including those recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places [RMP] and those not yet discovered.*

It is the objective of the Councils to:

BHO 1: *designate an Architectural Conservation Area at an appropriate location in the town;*

BHO 2: *request archaeological excavation and testing or preservation wherever archaeological material is likely to be affected by a proposed development.*

Section 13: Natural Heritage

This section deals with natural heritage, European designated sites and tree preservation orders.

Aim: To protect, conserve and manage natural heritage including sites designated at national and EU level and protected species and habitats outside of designated sites and to secure conservation objectives in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of Portarlington.

Background

The greater Portarlington urban area supports a wide diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats. These habitats host a wide range of wild plant and animal species, which are coming under threat due to development pressures and the increasing demand for new development land. These lands include significant expanses of fresh water and associated habitats along the River Barrow.

The River Barrow, which is protected by way of ecological designation, runs west to east through the heart of the town interacting with both the natural and built heritage to give a unique and distinct character.



Plate 15: River Barrow in Portarlington

Man-made habitats within the urban area are also important biodiversity areas. These urban green spaces, however small, are therefore of importance as they form part of a network of green spaces across the study area including gardens, parks, graveyards, amenity walks, railway lines and patches of woodland and scrub within which animals and plants continue to thrive.

An area of mixed and natural woodland is found within the Plan area, located in the original rear curtilage of Kilnacourt House [formerly Odlums Wood], just off the town centre while scattered broad-leaved trees occur throughout. The main broadleaved species are Oak, Birch and Ash. These provide potential habitat for badgers, bats and breeding birds.

There is an area of coniferous forest cover on the Edenderry approach road, north of the town centre. Norway Spruce, Sitka Spruce and Japanese Larch the predominant coniferous species. The habitat range in this area is negligible by comparison.

Improved grassland, semi-improved grassland, peatland are the main habitat type in the outskirts of the town. With the exception of individual sections of mature hedgerows which offer potential habitat for breeding birds and foraging bats, these habitat types are of low ecological significance.

Other habitats of note in the plan area include mature hedgerows and rush pastures which provide cover for breeding and wintering birds and foraging bats.

Special Area of Conservation

Throughout the Plan area the River Barrow is designated as a cSAC. See Map 7. SACs are areas of special importance for wildlife, habitats and species, and form part of the Irish contribution to the EU Natura 2000 network.

The cSAC is designated for supporting Priority I Habitats listed in Annex I of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora namely alluvial wet woodlands, petrifying springs, oak woodlands, floating river vegetation, estuary, tidal mudflats, Salicornia mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, dry heath and eutrophic tall herbs. The alluvial wet woodland and floating river vegetation habitat could be affected by water quality changes within the River Barrow.

The cSAC is also designated for supporting the following species listed in Annex II; sea lamprey river lamprey, brook lamprey, Atlantic salmon, freshwater pearl mussel, Nore freshwater pearl mussel, white-clawed crayfish, twaite shad, otter and Desmoulin's Whorl Snail the populations of which could be affected water quality changes within the River Barrow.

Tree Preservation Orders

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) enable Local Authorities to preserve any single tree or group of trees in the interests of the amenity of the area. The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 outlines the legal framework and procedures provided to make a TPO. At present there are no TPOs in the study area.

Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated due to their national conservation value for ecological and/or geological/geomorphological heritage. At present there are no NHAs in the study area.

Ecological Networks

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna.

Ecological networks are composed of linear features, such as tree-lines, hedgerows, rivers and canals, which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range. Within and surrounding the Plan area, the ecological networks are made up of components including the River Barrow, its tributaries and banks, the various woodlands, as detailed above, and hedgerows as well as suburban lands used for agriculture.

new developments. A management plan should be provided to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development;

NHP 7: require the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment where deemed necessary by the planning authority (and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment in relation to Natura 2000 sites) including bat and otter surveys for developments along river, stream and canal corridors;

NHP 8: seek the creation of a riparian buffer strip along either side of all watercourses where practicable;

NHP 9: ensure that floodplains and wetlands, where appropriate, are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection value;

NHP 10: implement the South East River Basin Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures to protect surface and ground water resources;

NHP 11: develop a Green Infrastructure strategy for the Plan area, to protect ecological networks within the Plan area.

It is the objective of the Councils to:

NHO 1: undertake a study to survey, document and map significant mature trees and groups of trees of high amenity or biodiversity value within the town;

NHO 2: utilise Tree Preservation Orders under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 to protect significant trees as identified in tree surveys;

NHO 3: undertake habitat mapping (including wetlands) within the Plan area. This habitat mapping will identify Local Important Biodiversity areas in co-operation with NPWS, DoEHLG and Inland Fisheries Ireland;

NHO 4: seek the creation of a riverside walk along the banks of the River Barrow;

NHO 5: develop a series of local walks around the Plan area focusing on features of natural, historic, architectural, scientific and cultural interest.

Section 14: Housing and Urban Design

This section deals with housing and urban design.

Aim: To facilitate the provision of high quality residential developments at appropriate locations in line with the settlement strategy in Section 4. To ensure the provision of appropriate densities at suitable locations in accordance with the Sequential Approach; to include an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet different household needs; and to promote balanced and integrated communities.

Background

The Councils have statutory obligations to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the projected housing requirements of the study area over the Plan period. Section 4 of this Plan has outlined the town settlement strategy, including the quantum of land required for residential purposes over the period of the Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

The strategy for the provision of housing in Portarlinton is based on achieving the following:

- Providing sufficient zoned land to accommodate the projected demand;
- Promoting sustainable communities that deliver quality well-designed housing;
- Counteracting social segregation and facilitate the development of balanced communities through promoting mixed housing development and to minimise the extent of further social housing where there is a disproportionate concentration of social housing in a particular area;
- Providing for changing household sizes and promote an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sizes, and tenures to facilitate the creation of balanced communities;
- Promoting residential densities to ensure the efficient use of land at appropriate locations. The efficient use of lands for residential purposes shall not compromise the need for social inclusion and shall provide for an appropriate mix of housing types;
- Securing implementation of the Councils Housing Strategies and Traveller Accommodation Programmes;
- Providing for changing housing needs and promoting the provision of affordable and social housing and housing for groups with particular needs;
- Promoting the consolidation of existing built-up areas by adopting the Sequential Approach, facilitating good quality appropriate infill development, whilst protecting essential amenities and valued open space.

The guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas [DoEHLG, 2009]* identify sustainable neighbourhoods as areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure, combine to create places people want to live in. In planning for future development and in assessing future development proposals, the Councils will seek to ensure that:

- The overall design approach is to create a community rather than a new housing development. While residentially zoned areas are intended primarily for housing development, a range of other uses, particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities, may be considered e.g. crèches, schools, nursing homes or elderly peoples' homes, open space, recreation and amenity uses.
- To create high standards of layout, design, and landscaping, and to achieve a general segregation from roads used by through traffic from the outset.

- Appropriate provision is made for amenity and public open space as an integral part of new development proposals.
- The physical design of a proposed development should accord with the development standards set out in Section 17 (Development Management Standards) of this Plan.
- Proposed developments must also have regard to the policies and objectives for social infrastructure and built and natural heritage as set out in Sections 11 & 13 of this Plan.
- Duplex Units will only be considered in very limited circumstances where it can be demonstrated that they are appropriately designed to the highest design standards.

Design

High quality design should be guided by the principle of universal design - the design of an environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. The design of new residential communities should consider people's diverse needs and abilities throughout the design process and design for adaptable environments that meet the needs of all.

Housing Mix

The average household size is continuing to decline. This trend indicates that a greater proportion of units to serve smaller settlements will be required in the future.

The mix of house types proposed in an area should therefore be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Consideration of the nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area;
- The desirability of providing for mixed communities;
- Provision of a range of housing types and tenures;
- The need to provide a choice of housing, suitable to all age groups and persons at different stages of the life cycle;
- The need to cater for special needs groups such as the elderly, travellers and disabled and the marketability of different types of housing.
- Housing variety and mix will be assessed when considering planning applications for multi-unit residential development. Where required a statement should detail the proposed housing mix and why it is considered appropriate, having regard to the issues outlined above.

Social and Affordable Housing

The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 requires each Local Authority to adopt a Housing Strategy for their administrative area. The Housing Strategies for Counties Laois and Offaly, which are contained in their respective County Development Plans, provide an estimate of existing and future need for social and affordable housing throughout the counties including Portarlington.

Special Needs Housing

Planning for the provision of housing for the overall population of Portarlington includes provisions for the needs of persons with special needs, such as persons with physical disabilities and learning disabilities. The importance of access to public transport, local community services and facilities is a significant factor for a mobility-impaired person in improving quality of life. House design and compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations has expanded the range of options available to people with a disability. The Councils will continue to address particular identified needs through the provision of purpose built, adaptable dwellings, where feasible.

Homelessness

The Councils will continue to provide an important role alongside voluntary groups and other agencies in the provision of emergency accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of crisis facilities.

Elderly

Changing demographics requires greater consideration of the housing needs of the elderly in Portarlington. Specific needs must be considered relating to access, public transport, provision of local services, medical care, security and personal safety among other issues. In this regard, dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes.

For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live.

Traveller Accommodation

The Councils recognise the distinct culture and lifestyle of the travelling community and they will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for travellers who are indigenous to the area. The continuing implementation by both Councils of their respective Traveller Accommodation Programmes will address the provision of accommodation appropriate to the particular needs of Travellers. The promotion of mainstream public services that are accessible, relevant and welcoming to Travellers is vital. So also is ensuring that members of the Travelling Community can easily access facilities such as shops, schools, childcare and community facilities.

Laos County Council has secured *Part VIII* consent for the redevelopment of the disused former halting site at Ballymorris for a traveller group housing scheme.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

HP 1: encourage urban consolidation through adhering to the Sequential Approach and facilitating well designed, infill developments in existing residential areas, in accordance with Section 4 of this Local Area Plan;

HP 2: ensure that sufficient and suitably located land is zoned to satisfy development needs within the period of this Plan and in accordance with the settlement strategy;

HP 3: implement the respective Housing Strategies prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012;

HP 4: have regard to the provisions of various DoEHLG's guidelines including "Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Design Guidelines" (2007), "Sustainable Urban Housing, Design Standards for New Apartments" (2007)", "Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas" and the accompanying "Urban Design Manual", in assessing applications for housing development;

HP 5: encourage appropriate densities for new housing development in different locations while recognising the need to protect existing residential communities and the established character of the area;

HP 6: secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes to meet the needs of the likely future population and ensure the housing mix of new schemes takes account of the needs of the elderly and those with special needs in terms of appropriately designed and sized units;

HP 7: facilitate higher standard of apartments for life long living through the retrofitting and amalgamation of units where appropriate and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area;

HP 8: provide adequate accommodation for Travellers in accordance with the Councils Traveller Accommodation Programme;

HP 9: permit backland development generally only where development is carried out in a comprehensive redevelopment of the backland to secure a co-ordinated scheme. Each application will be considered on its merits;

HP 10: facilitate the provision of a family [granny] flat in circumstances where the planning authority is satisfied that there is a valid case and where the proposal has regard to the standards and requirements outlined in Section 17, Development Management;

HP 11: secure the completion of unfinished estates where finances permit.

It is the objective of the Councils to:

HO 1: secure the implementation of the respective Housing Strategies;

HO 2: provide adequate accommodation for Travellers in accordance with the Councils Traveller Accommodation Programmes;

HO 3: identify locations to cater for the needs of the elderly and promote co-location of other facilities where appropriate;

HO 4: promote estate management in all schemes in Portarlinton in order to foster the creation of sustainable communities.



Plate 16: New housing development off Ballymorris Road [left] and at rear of Main Street [right]

Section 15: Town Centre, Retailing, Connectivity, Renewal, Opportunity Sites

This section deals with the town centre, retailing, connectivity, renewal and opportunity sites.

Aim: To identify and increase awareness of the historic town centre focused on Patrick Street, Market Square and Main Street; to ensure that the quality of the public realm is maintained and expanded where possible, to protect the retail function and primacy of the town centre and to tackle dereliction and disuse.

Background

Portarlington Town Centre plays a key role in the provision of employment and services to the town and its hinterland.

Despite market pressures for development at the periphery of the town and some retail schemes slightly removed from the historic core, the busy town centre remains at the heart of social and economic activity. The attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and do business is a product of investment over generations. It is the strategy of the Councils to capitalise on this investment and ensure that the town centre continues to act as the economic and social hub for the people of Portarlington.

Town Centre

Portarlington is arranged around a long linear historical core which includes which runs west to east from Patrick Street, through Market Square, to Main Street.



Plate 17: Patrick Street from the west [left] and Market Square from the north [right]

Much of the early growth of the town in the 17th century is associated with the arrival of the Huguenot settlers from mainland Europe whose legacy survives through local place names, surnames and building heritage. Portarlinton developed into a town of exceptional architectural quality. The resident gentry built fine town mansions with high quality cut-stone facades. The town centre was dominated by Market Square which marked the intersection of four streets: Bennett Street, Kings Street, Queens Street and James Street. Unfortunately some properties notably the protected Arlington House have fallen into an unkempt and derelict condition. It is also dominated by vehicular traffic. Nonetheless the Market Square area retains the potential to become a major focal point for the town including as part of a potential Architectural Conservation Area.

Keynote buildings in the town centre include the protected Saint Pauls, the “French Church” Church Of Ireland and its attendant graveyard [originally established by the Huguenots] and Market House and a series of prominent three and four-storey formerly residential buildings many of which are also on the Record of Protected Structures.



Saint Michaels, Catholic Church [left], Saint Pauls, Church Of Ireland [middle], and Market Hse. [right]



Plates 18 [above] & 19: Residential properties on RPS on Patrick Street and Main Street

From this linear core, the remainder of the town emanates. The town centre is the traditional centre of trade and commerce for the town and its hinterland and it continues to provide these functions with predominant land uses including retail, services and banking and there is also a noteworthy presence of residential use within the town centre. The layout of this historic core dates principally from the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Public Realm

The public realm in Portarlington relates to streetscapes, parks, green spaces, public buildings, cycling and pedestrian facilities. It is therefore a critical element in achieving an overall sense of place, increasing safety and enhancing visual amenity.

In maintaining and improving the quality of the public realm in Portarlington a collaborative approach between central government (funding), the local authority, local businesses and voluntary associations is required.



Figure 2: Market Square– Public Realm Possibilities



Figure 3: Main Street– Public Realm Possibilities



The following measures could have a positive impact on Market Square and town centre area, if implemented under a public realm programme;

- Planting of street trees
- Pedestrian friendly measures
- Re- rearrangement of car parking
- Traditional shop-fronts
- Street furniture

Plate 20: Existing view of Market House from Main Street

Access and Movement

Notwithstanding the opening of two mini internal relief roads in the 1990's, Patrick Street, Market Square and Main Street are the main vehicular distributors through the town and still carry large volumes of through traffic to Tullamore, Edenderry, Mountmellick, Portlaoise and Dublin.

The reduction and diversion of through traffic [reference Section 6: Transportation] and the provision and extension of facilities for cycling and walking is a key objective of this Plan.

Pay parking operates within the town centre and there are also a large number of free public parking spaces available within the town, notably off the Eastern Inner Relief Road. Public parking provision

within the town centre will be under constant review within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan in order to ensure that it continues to achieve the objective of benefiting the businesses and residents within the town centre.

Shop fronts

The town centre contains a wide variety of shop fronts. Shop fronts provide colour and add variation to main streets; older shop fronts can contain clues of the history of commerce and the development of the town. New shop fronts may reflect a more traditional design or be more contemporary in approach but they should have regard to the features of the building that they front, particularly when they occur in protected structures.

Retail

Main Street along with Patrick Street, Bracklone Street, and to a lesser extent French Church Street comprise the traditional retailing centre of Portarlington accommodating a diverse range of retail services mainly in the control of independent operators. In recent years, a Lidl store and another Centra store were opened in suburban locations on Canal Road and Station Road respectively while an Aldi store opened in 2011 at Lower Main Street.

A Health Check assessment indicates that Portarlington is trading reasonably well. It has a mix of convenience and comparison retailing, financial institutions and service providers, signifying that it is healthy, vibrant and vital town centre. For the most part, retailing activity is concentrated in the town centre and edge of centre though there are a number of approved developments [not yet developed] in outlying areas such as at Ballymorris.

Portarlington (South) is identified as being in the second tier in the retail hierarchy as outlined in the Laois County Retail Strategy. It is important that new retail development in the town conforms to Portarlington's role in the retail hierarchy and its role as a **Key Service Town** as outlined in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines and within the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans so that it provides an appropriate level of comparison and convenient retail for its surrounding hinterland.

Retail Planning: Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DoEHLG, 2012] focus on the maintenance of the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre and recommend that Planning Authorities adopt a **Sequential Approach** to the location of retail development in towns. In accordance with this recommendation, the Councils will assess the size, availability, accessibility and feasibility of developing both sites and premises, firstly within the town centre of Portarlington and secondly on the edge of the town centre. It is considered that no further large-scale, out of town, retail space is required within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan.

Derelict Sites

The Derelict Sites Act 1990 requires that owners or occupiers of any land take all reasonable steps to ensure that the land and any structure within, does not become, or continue to be, a derelict site. There are a number of derelict sites within the town centre and it has been the policy of the Planning Authority to tackle these, imposing levies where appropriate. The Councils will continue to monitor the levels of dereliction in the town centre and take appropriate action where necessary including application of levies and CPO powers.

The redevelopment of the protected Kilnacourt House [to a primary health care centre] is a prime example of what can be achieved through the application of legislation available under the Derelict Sites Act.

It is the policy of the Councils to:

TCP 1: encourage and enhance the role of Portarlington Town Centre as a retail and commercial centre serving the town and its wider hinterland;

TCP 2: guide major retail development in accordance with the framework provided by the County Retail Hierarchy to enable an efficient, equitable and sustainable distribution of floorspace;

TCP 3: adopt the Sequential Approach in determining the location of new retail development. The Sequential Approach recognises the importance of sustaining the vitality and viability of the town centre of Portarlington. In the first instance, the priority should be in locating retail development in the town centre. Proposals, which would undermine the vitality and viability of the Town Centre will not be permitted;

TCP 4: require that new developments within the Town Centre respect the existing established heritage and architectural character insofar as possible to ensure continuity of street frontage and definition of public and private space, observe historic building lines, avoiding unnecessary set backs or protrusions and enhance pedestrian movement within the Town Centre;

TCP 5: conserve and upgrade the streetscape of Patrick Street, Market Square and Main Street recognising the value of these locations in the creation and promotion of positive visual impressions of the town;

TCP 6: facilitate the appropriate redevelopment of the opportunity sites identified in this Local Area Plan. Any proposal brought forward for opportunity sites will include a comprehensive masterplan;

TCP 7: facilitate the development of backland and brownfield sites and the reuse of existing buildings;

TCP 8: reduce the levels of dereliction in the town centre and take action where necessary in accordance with the Derelict Sites Act 1990, as amended;

TCP 9: maintain and improve accessibility and permeability to and within the town centre and develop a comprehensive approach to the provision of access by pedestrians and cyclists;

TCP 10: encourage the retention of quality traditional shopfronts and to ensure that all new shop fronts including signage and lighting are designed to a high standard and in character with the streetscape. Good quality contemporary design will also be encouraged;

TCP 11: In the case of proposed development adjoining the River Barrow, it is the Councils policy that any such development should address and integrate with the river in an appropriate manner.

It is the objective of the Councils to:

TCO 1: further improve the streetscape and public realm including paving and street furniture in particular;

TCO 2: underground the overhead cables on Market Square;

TCO 3: provide loading bays of adequate capacity where they are needed most in order to ensure that traffic flows are not restricted;

TCO 4: *maintain unique vernacular features and ensure that they are sensitively incorporated into any new development;*

TCO 5: *explore the feasibility of providing a piece of civic art within the town centre.*

Opportunity Sites In Portarlington

Aim: To regenerate brownfield and underutilised lands, to create a vibrant and bustling town and to enhance the quality of the built environment.

Background

The joint Local Area Plan has identified key opportunity sites and character areas the development of which will complement the towns existing assets and act as catalysts for positive change.

A total of 7 no. opportunity sites and character areas have been identified in the study area.

Opportunity Site 1: Former timber yard, junction of Station Road/Canal Road.

Site Code: OP1



Zoning: Enterprise and Employment

Site Area: 1.56 ha

Comments:

- Outstanding location directly adjacent to Portarlington Railway Station and ancillary expanded carpark. Also close to new roundabout at junction of Station Road and Canal Road. Allows for easy access to GDA;
- Brownfield site, formerly used as a timber and hardware retail outlet. Buildings have been cleared and site is currently vacant;

- Level, fully serviced site and located outside of critical flood zones;
- Has valid permission [until March 2013] for major redevelopment to office/retail useage incorporating 4,430 sq. ms. of new build over five storeys;
- Variety of uses in vicinity including residential, industrial [Odlums milling] and retail [Lidl];
- No protected structures on site;
- Suitable for a wide variety of business and commercial uses;
- An opportunity exists to intensify development at this location to provide a key landmark or gateway building, to signify the approach and entrance to the town from the train station in order to create a sense of arrival and departure;
- Care should be taken that this building addresses each of the three street frontages and be designed to an exceptional standard on all elevations. Development shall comprise of high quality design, fine grained active frontage blocks providing a strong built edge to the surrounding public thoroughfare. New buildings should be permanent, timeless and contemporary structures. Car parking should be provided to the rear of the building or within the structure itself;
- The built form should comprise of buildings following a perimeter block/courtyard form, with a quality public realm. Buildings should provide a strong frontage that delineate the public realm. Development should comprise of active frontages at ground floor level with commercial and or residential uses above;
- Development to the rear or adjacent to existing built form should have regard to amenity of these buildings. Quality public realm shall be achieved using a high standard of quality finishes and treatments.

Opportunity Site 2: Landholding off Sandy Lane/Ballymorris Road.

Site Code: OP 2



Zoning: Neighbourhood Centre

Site Area: 3.84 ha

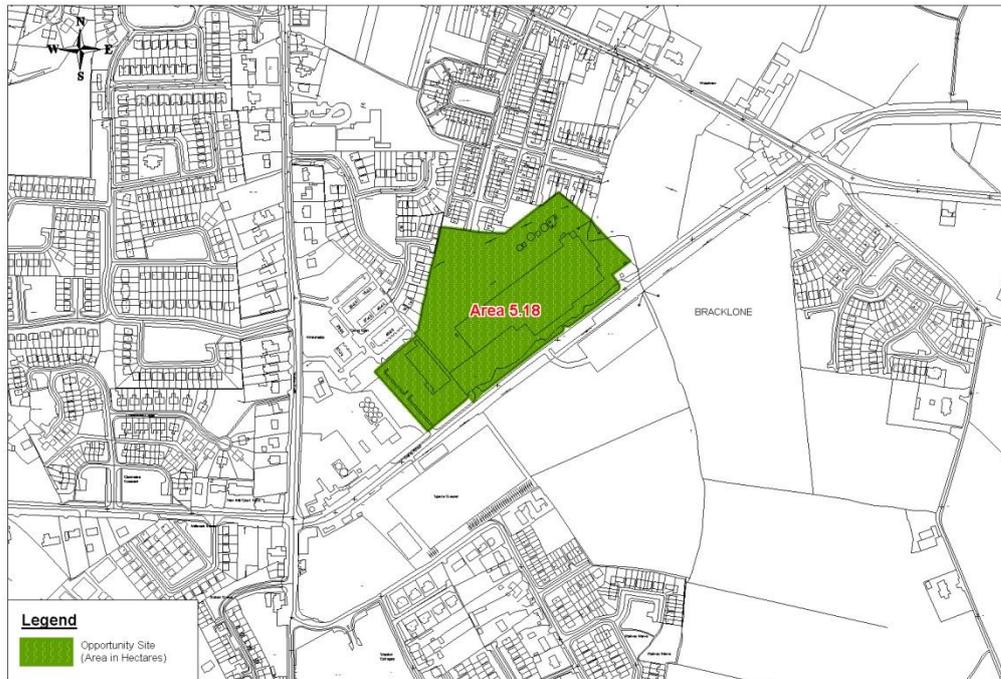
Comments:

- Prime location in close proximity to town centre;
- Greenfield site with full range of services;
- Level, fully serviced site and located outside of critical flood zones;
- Has valid permission [until June 2015] for major retail and ancillary development incorporating c. 7,000 sq. ms. of new build;
- Variety of uses in vicinity including residential and education;
- No protected structures on site;
- Suitable for a wide variety of business, commercial and residential [apartment] uses [subject to Justification Test];
- The intensive use of these lands through re-development presents an opportunity to create a sustainable urban quarter with a mix of uses. New development should seek to create a compact area with priority for pedestrians;
- Mixed use buildings/schemes will be encouraged where compliant with the relevant zoning provisions. A potential mix of retail [subject to Sequential Approach], community, offices, leisure and residential uses is envisaged;
- Pocket parks and green links should be incorporated throughout the layout to provide recreation for residents and amenity areas for the adjacent employment uses. A quality public realm should be achieved using high standard finishes and treatments;
- Provision of high quality pedestrian and cycleway linkages throughout the site and

connecting to Sandy Lane and Ballymorris Road will be prioritised.

Opportunity Site 3: Avon factory site, off Canal Road.

Site Code: OP 3



Zoning: Enterprise and Employment

Site Area: 5.18 ha

Comments:

- Prime location in close proximity to Portarlington Railway Station and ancillary expanded carpark. Also close to Regional Route R420 [to New Inn Interchange and M7, M8 Motorway]. Allows for easy access to GDA;
- Has the largest site curtilage of all the opportunity sites, incorporating extensive factory premises and large surface carpark; currently vacant, suitable for one large enterprise or sub-division to smaller units;
- Level, fully serviced site with substantial frontage onto Canal Road and located outside of critical flood zones;
- Variety of uses in vicinity including residential, industrial [Odlums milling] and retail [Lidl];
- No protected structures on site;
- Suitable for a wide variety of business enterprise and commercial uses including low input and emission manufacturing, campus-style offices, storage, wholesaling and distribution with high space and parking requirements.

Opportunity Site 4: Landholding off Foxcroft Street.

Site Code: OP 4



Zoning: Town Centre

Site Area: 4.08 ha

Comments:

- Prime location directly adjacent to town centre. Existing vehicular access from Foxcroft Street, potential pedestrian access from Main Street;
- Extensive site curtilage of c. 4 hectares;
- Level, fully serviced site;
- Variety of uses in vicinity including residential, education, business and retail;
- Minor proportion of site is located in Flood Zone B (moderate flood risk category, 0.1% to 1% probability –between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 –for river flooding);
- No protected structures on site;
- Suitable for a wide variety of business and commercial uses including retail;
- The intensive use of these lands through re-development presents an opportunity to create a sustainable urban quarter with a mix of uses. New development should seek to create a compact area with priority for pedestrians;
- It is envisaged that development should be provided in the form of clearly defined blocks with semi-private enclosed courtyard type open spaces providing car parking, rear access and communal spaces. Mixed use buildings/schemes will be encouraged where compliant with the relevant zoning provisions. A potential combination of retail, offices, housing, leisure and community uses is envisaged;
- Pocket parks and green links should be incorporated throughout the layout to provide recreation for residents and amenity areas for the adjacent employment uses. In addition

provision of high quality pedestrian and cycleway routes throughout the site and connecting to Main Street, Sandy Lane and Foxcroft Street will be prioritised. A quality public realm should be achieved using high standard finishes and treatments. Private and public areas should be clearly delineated. Private areas should be protected from undue overlooking and public areas easily accessible and overlooked. Good public lighting should be provided to the edge of open space, cycleways and pedestrian routes.

Opportunity Site 5: Arlington House, Foxcroft Street.

Site Code: OP 5



Zoning: Residential 1, Established

Site Area: 0.08 ha

Comments:

- Prime location in close proximity to town centre and on the main approach road [Regional Route R420] to Tullamore Gateway;
- Level, fully serviced site and located outside of critical flood zones;
- Has valid permission [until October 2014] for major redevelopment to licensed premises /café usage incorporating 699 sq. ms. of new build over three storeys;
- Variety of uses in vicinity including residential, retail [Supervalu], town centre, leisure [River Barrow];
- Protected structure on site with rich heritage associated with Huguenot settlement of 17th century;
- Key objective is protection of established residential amenity and enhancement with associated open space, community uses and where an acceptable standard of amenity can be maintained, a limited range of other uses that are compliant with the overall residential function of the area;
- Site has potential to accommodate a gateway or landmark building [in association with Arlington House] to emphasise the high profile urban identity of the place. Its purpose is to provide a signal of a significant place either in terms of movement or use, to ensure visual interest and develop a stimulating streetscape in association with [and not to the detriment of] Arlington House;
- Proposals for new build in this area should have regard to the surrounding character and

comprise a high quality design with fine grained active frontage blocks. Buildings should provide a strong street frontage that delineates spaces. Development to the rear or adjacent to existing built form should have regard to amenity.

Opportunity Site 6: Lands at junction of Botley Lane and Patrick Street

Site Code: OP 6



Zoning: Town Centre

Site Area: 0.63 ha

Comments:

- Prime location in close proximity to town centre and on the main approach road [Regional Route R420] to Tullamore Gateway;
- Site currently contains an industrial garage and extensive parking and storage areas;
- Level, fully serviced site;
- Attractive vista over River Barrow;
- Variety of uses in vicinity including residential, retail [Supervalu], town centre, leisure [River Barrow];
- Site is located in Flood Zone A (high probability of flooding, more than 1% probability-1 in 100-for river flooding) and Flood Zone B (moderate flood risk category, 0.1% to 1% probability –between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 –for river flooding);
- Suitable for a wide variety of business and commercial uses [subject to Justification Test].
- An opportunity exists to intensify development at this location to provide a key landmark or gateway building, to signify the approach and entrance to the town centre in order to create a sense of arrival and departure;
- Care should be taken that this building addresses both street frontages and be designed to an exceptional standard on all elevations. Appropriate scale and massing of this structure are critical to ensure the landmark does not become too bulky. In particular any new development should provide a strong built edge to the surrounding streets. Car parking should be provided to the rear of the building;

- The built form should comprise of buildings following a perimeter block/courtyard form, with a quality public realm. Buildings should provide a strong frontage that delineates the public realm;
- Development should comprise of active frontages at ground floor level with commercial and or residential uses above.

Opportunity Site 7: Lands at Kilmalogue Cross Roads

Site Code: OP 7



Zoning: Neighbourhood Centre

Site Area: 0.54 ha

Comments:

- Prime location in close proximity to town centre and on the main approach road [Regional Route R420] to Tullamore Gateway;
- Site currently contains convenience retail space;
- Level, fully serviced site and located outside of critical flood zones;
- Variety of uses in vicinity including residential, retail, educational, leisure;
- Suitable for a wide variety of business, commercial and residential [apartment] uses [subject to Justification Test];
- An opportunity exists to intensify development at this location to provide a key landmark or gateway building, to signify the approach and entrance to the town from the Tullamore approach and to cater for the needs of the residential and educational landuses in close proximity;
- Care should be taken that this building addresses both street frontages and be designed to an exceptional standard on all elevations. Appropriate scale and massing of this structure are critical to ensure the landmark does not become too bulky. In particular any new development should provide a strong built edge to the surrounding streets. Car parking should be provided to the rear of the building;
- The built form should comprise of buildings following a perimeter block/courtyard form, with a quality public realm. Buildings should provide a strong frontage that delineates the public realm;

- Development should comprise of active frontages at ground floor level with commercial and or residential uses above;
- No protected structures on site.

Section 16: Landuse Zoning Objectives

Introduction

This section of the plan sets out the Land Use Zoning objectives which the Councils intend to secure in the town over the plan period. Whereas policies are broad statements that set preferred courses of action, objectives are specific statements that carry out a plan in the short term. Objectives are measurable benchmarks that can be used to assess incremental progress in achieving the broader purposes expressed in policies.

Land use Zoning Objectives

The Land Use Zoning Objectives for this Local Area Plan are set out in the policies and illustrated on the accompanying maps. The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate to property owners and to the general public the types of development, which the Councils consider most appropriate in each zone. In the promotion of redevelopment and urban renewal, this allows the developer to plan investment with some certainty. In the control of development, zoning seeks to limit competing and incompatible uses in order to promote greater environmental quality and residential amenity.

For example, the Town Centre zoning is intended as a means of encouraging the redevelopment of under-utilised or derelict land but also to safeguard the amenity of residential enclaves and to protect certain areas with high amenity value.

Zoning of lands outside the Town Centre, on the other hand, is intended primarily to guide and facilitate the physical development of land for specific purposes, to protect existing amenities and to allow for changes in land use over time in an orderly fashion.

In considering the extent and types of use zoning objectives, the following factors have been taken into consideration;

- The present development area and trends in development since 2007;
- Current land use zoning objectives as contained in the Portarlington Local Area Plan 2007-2013 as adopted by Laois County Council and the Portarlington Town Plan [included in the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015] as adopted by Offaly County Council;
- The amount of committed and uncommitted land within the existing development area;
- The accessibility, availability and location of land for development;
- The location and adequacy of existing physical and social infrastructure;
- The character of the town with regard to the scale and pattern of development;
- The need to promote proper planning and sustainable development in accordance with National, Regional and Local Policies which are set out in higher order plans including National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines, Laois and Offaly County Development Plans;
- Physical features and amenities of the plan area;
- The presence of an important aquifer and the need to facilitate the orbital road system;
- The use of the **Sequential Approach** in guiding the location of planned development;
- The implications of flood risk analysis and environmental designations;
- The housing land requirement as determined in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines and the respective County Development Plans.

The following land use zoning objectives have been established for Portarlington having regard to the zoning objectives as set out in the Laois and Offaly Development Plans.

USE	OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE
<p>LCC-Town Centre (Primary/Core Retail Area)</p>	<p><i>To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of the existing Town Centre and to provide for and improve retailing and commercial activities.</i></p>	<p>The purpose of this zone is to protect and enhance the special character of the Town Centre and to provide for and improve retailing, residential, commercial, office, cultural, public facilities and other uses appropriate to the centre of a developing urban core.</p> <p>It will be an objective of the Council to encourage the use of buildings and backlands and especially the full use of upper floors, preferably for residential purposes. Warehousing and other industrial uses will not generally be permitted in the urban core of towns and villages.</p> <p>Proposals for new development in areas at risk of flooding as identified on the land use maps within this zone will be subject to the development management justification test as outlined in “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines”2009.</p>
<p>OCC-Town Centre/Mixed Use Zoning</p>		<p>The use of land as Town Centre / Mixed shall be taken to include the use of land for a mix of uses, making provisions, where appropriate for “primary” uses i.e. primarily commercial/retail and combined with other compatible uses e.g. residential as “secondary”. These secondary uses will be considered by the Local Authority, having regard to the particular character of the area. A diversity of uses for both day and evening is encouraged. These areas require high levels of accessibility, including pedestrian, cyclists and public transport (where feasible).</p> <p>Compatible uses within this zoning objective include;- banks and other financial institutions, cafes, community buildings, civic buildings, entertainment, hotels, leisure and recreation, offices, professional / specialist services, restaurants etc. The Council will continue to ensure that any development proposed is in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development, and serves to reinforce the vitality and viability of town centres, whilst meeting the needs of its community and surrounding hinterland.</p>

USE	OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE
LCC-Residential 1	<i>To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities</i>	<p>This zone is intended primarily for established housing development but may include a range of other uses particularly those that have the potential to improve the residential amenity of residential communities such as schools, crèches, small shops, doctors surgeries, playing fields etc. It is an objective on land zoned for residential 1 to protect the established residential amenity and enhance with associated open space, community uses and where an acceptable standard of amenity can be maintained, a limited range of other uses that support the overall residential function of the area.</p> <p>Within this zoning category the improved quality of existing residential areas will be the Council’s priority. In established residential areas in areas at risk of flooding as identified on the land use maps, where the replacement or the reconstruction of an existing dwelling is considered appropriate for wider planning reasons the planning authority should require that Development management justification test is carried out in accordance with the “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines”2009;</p> <p>There will be no increase in the number of residential units or households. There will be no adverse impact on the function of the floodplain , watercourse or conveyancing routes;</p> <p>Residual risk is addressed and reduced where possible, for example through relocation of buildings, and /or flood resilience /resistance measures applied to the site and buildings.</p>
LCC-Residential 2	<i>To provide for new residential development, residential services and community facilities within the Plan period 2012-2018</i>	<p>This zone is intended primarily for housing development but may include a range of other uses particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities such as schools, crèches, small shops, doctors surgeries, playing fields etc. It is an objective, on land zoned for residential 2 to promote development mainly for housing, associated open space, community uses and where an acceptable standard of amenity can be maintained, a limited range of other uses that support the overall residential function of the area.</p> <p>Within this zoning category the improved quality of residential areas and the servicing of orderly development will be the Council’s priority. New housing and infill developments should be of sensitive design, which are complimentary to their surroundings. No piecemeal development can take place unless it does not conflict with the possible future development of the reserved development areas of the town. Adequate undeveloped lands have been zoned in the Plan for residential use to meet the requirements for both public and private house building over the Plan period.</p>

USE	OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE
OCC-Residential		The use 'Residential' shall be taken to primarily include the use of land for domestic dwellings (including group housing for members of the travelling community), convents and civic institutions. It may also provide for a range of other uses particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities for example, schools, crèches, local convenience store, doctor / dental surgeries, open space (formal and informal) etc.
LCC-Strategic Reserve	<i>To provide lands for future development in line with national and regional targets over the next Plan period 2018-2024</i>	Regarding lands included in the Strategic Reserve land bank, it is important to highlight that the inclusion of such lands will not in any way infer a prior commitment on the part of Laois County Council regarding their future zoning during the review of the subsequent development plan. Such a decision will be considered within the framework of national and regional population targets applicable at that time and the proper planning and sustainable development of the County. In areas at risk of flooding as identified on the land use maps, where the development is considered appropriate for wider planning reasons the planning authority should require that Development Management Justification test is carried out in accordance with "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009". There will be no increase in the number of residential units or households. There will be no adverse impact on the function of the floodplain, watercourse or conveyancing routes; Residual risk is addressed and reduced where possible, for example through relocation of buildings, and/or flood resilience/resistance measures applied to the site and buildings.
OCC-Phasing		Lands which are phased are identified as being surplus to the housing land requirement identified in the MRPGs. Phased Lands are lands that are zoned for residential use and are being excluded from being developed for housing over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, as per Section 4.
LCC-Community & Educational & Institutional	<i>To provide for and improve local neighbourhood, community, ecclesiastical, recreational and educational facilities</i>	This zoning of lands provides for local civic, religious, community, educational and other facilities ancillary to neighbourhood uses and services. Proposals for new development in areas at risk of flooding as identified on the land use maps within this zone will be subject to the development management justification test as outlined in "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines" 2009.
OCC-Public/Community/Education		The use of land as 'Public / Community / Education' shall be taken to include the use of land for the above stated uses, which generally include community related development (including the provision of schools, community halls, health care institutions, utilities, libraries and development for other community uses). Ancillary facilities such as dedicated open space or sports facilities will normally be facilitated within this zoning objective.
LCC-Tourism	<i>To provide for and improve tourist amenities in the County</i>	The areas included in this zoning objective are intended to meet with the needs of the tourist in the town and county. Uses such as accommodation of all types and ancillary services such as food and beverage establishments will be encouraged within the use zone.

USE	OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE
LCC-Open Space and Amenity	<i>To preserve, provide for and improve active and passive recreational public and private open space</i>	The areas included in this zoning objective cover both private and public open space and are dispersed throughout the urban centre. The Council will not normally permit development that would result in a loss of open space.
OCC-Open Space		The use of land as 'Open Space' shall be taken to include the use of land for; afforestation, playgrounds, housing estate open spaces, parks and development incidental to the enjoyment of open space including sports centres, outdoor recreation centres and landscaped areas, the provision of shelters, walks, walls, sanitary conveniences, play equipment, dressing rooms and similar facilities. It also provides for the use of such land or such facilities for games, educational and recreational purposes. High standards of accessibility are essential.
LCC-Industrial & Warehousing	<i>To provide for and improve industrial and warehousing development</i>	<p>This zoning provides for industrial and warehousing uses. Other uses, ancillary or similar to industry and warehousing will be considered on the merits of each Planning application and may be acceptable in this zone. Where employment is a high generator of traffic, the location of new employment at appropriate scale, density, type and location will be encouraged to reduce the demand for travel. The layout of new employment sites will have to have regard for alternative sustainable modes of transport. Site layout should emphasize the necessary connections to the wider local and strategic public transport, walking and cycling networks. Residential or Retail uses (including retail warehousing) will not be acceptable in this zone. Where any Industrial/Warehousing land adjoins other land uses, the Council will require that a buffer zone is provided for and landscaped accordingly in accordance with the Development Control Standards section of this Plan.</p> <p>To provide for industrial development, in particular for heavy industry associated with environmental emissions, including noise and odour and with intensive or hazardous processing and also provide for light industry, technology related office development and general office development that exceed 400 square metres. In areas at risk of flooding as identified on the land use maps, where the development is considered appropriate for wider planning reasons the planning authority should require that Development Management Justification test is carried out in accordance with "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009". There will be no increase in the number of residential units or households. There will be no adverse impact on the function of the floodplain, watercourse or conveyancing routes. Residual risk is addressed and reduced where possible, for example through relocation of buildings, and/or flood resilience/resistance measures applied to the site and buildings.</p>
OCC-Industry		The use of land as 'Industry' shall be taken to include the use of land for industry / manufacturing, repairs, warehousing, distribution, open-storage, waste materials treatment and recovery and transport operating centres. The development of inappropriate mixes of uses, such as 'office-based development' and 'retailing' will not normally be encouraged.

USE	OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE
LCC-Enterprise and Employment	<i>To provide lands for Enterprise and Employment use, more specifically low input and emission manufacturing, campus-style offices, storage uses, wholesaling and distribution, commercial services with high space and parking requirements that may not be suitable for town centre locations</i>	<p>The purpose of this zone is to provide for activities which will generate employment and encourage enterprise. It is the policy of the Council to ensure that there is adequate land available to facilitate opportunities for employment creation, and the Council will accommodate commercial and enterprise uses that are incapable of being situated in a town centre location, provided that such development does not detract from the town centre’s commercial function. Warehousing, commercial, enterprise and ancillary services should be provided in high quality landscaped campus style environments, incorporating a range of amenities. The uses in this zone are likely to generate a considerable amount of traffic by both employees and service traffic. Sites should therefore have good vehicular and public transport access. The implementation of Mobility Management Plans will provide important means of managing accessibility to these sites. Proposals for new development in areas at risk of flooding as identified on the land use maps within this zone will be subject to the development management justification test as outlined in “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines”2009.</p>
OCC–Business Employment		<p>The use of land as ‘Business / Employment’ shall be taken to include the use of land for primarily commercial and business use, including light industry / warehousing and the facilitation of enterprise park / office park type use, as appropriate. It is important to reserve these lands for possible commercial / business uses and therefore, to re-direct other uses where it is considered that such uses would be more appropriately sited within other land zoning categories for example ‘town centre / mixed’ and ‘industry’.</p> <p>This will provide for uses that are compatible with, or reinforce, the commercial / business function of the subject area as a whole. Retailing is open to consideration within this zoning objective, subject to appropriateness in applying the sequential test on identifying the optimum location and the County’s Retail Strategy, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>The development of inappropriate uses, such as heavy industry and retailing which would be more appropriately located in ‘industrial zoned lands’ and ‘town centre’ in particular will not normally be permitted. Proposals, particularly those involving retail uses, will need to be accessed in relation to a number of considerations including the County’s Retail Strategy and their impact on the vibrancy and importance of town and village centres. By their nature, proposals for these areas involve large-scale buildings and require a high degree of accessibility and parking space for car users and delivery vehicles.</p>

USE	OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE
LCC-Transport and Utilities	<i>To provide for the needs of all transport users and other utility providers.</i>	<p>Car parks and commercial development associated with the provision of public transport services are considered appropriate in this zoning. This zoning also provides for and preserves land in the ownership of the Council or other bodies charged with the provision of services such as electricity, telecommunications, water, wastewater etc. to the town.</p> <p>The Planning Guidelines allow for consideration of the development of essential infrastructure such as primary transport and utilities distribution (including electricity generation) within flood zones as identified provided that it cannot be located elsewhere. Reconstruction or replacement and minor extensions or alterations to such infrastructure will not be required to satisfy the justification test. However and appropriate level of flood risk assessment should be carried out in accordance with “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines”2009.</p>

Zoning Matrix

Uses other than the primary use for which an area is zoned may be permitted provided they are not in conflict with the primary use-zoning objective. The Zoning Matrix below (which relates to the functional area of Laois County Council) illustrates the acceptability or unacceptability of various uses for each of the zoning objectives. The land use zoning matrix is intended to provide guidance to potential developers. It is not intended to supplant the normal planning process. An indication that a proposal would be ‘permitted in principle’ from the matrix should not be taken to imply a granting of permission, or indeed that a planning application may be necessarily successful. Individual applications are a matter for the Planning Authority to decide and the final decision rests with them, taking into consideration the merits of individual cases and circumstances that may be relevant at a specific time or at a specific location. The matrix relates to land use only and important factors such as density, building height, design standards, traffic generation, etc., are also relevant in establishing whether or not a development proposal would be acceptable in a particular location.

Y= Will Normally be Acceptable	A use, which will normally be acceptable, is one, which the Local Authority accepts in principle in the relevant zone. However, it is still subject to the normal planning process including policies and objectives outlined in the Plan.
O= Are Open for Consideration	A use, which is open for consideration, means that the use is generally acceptable except where indicated otherwise and where specific considerations associated with a given proposal (i.e. scale) would be unacceptable, or where the development would be contrary to the objective for a given area. Not a Material Contravention.
N= Will Not Normally be Acceptable	Development, which is classified as not normally being acceptable in a particular zone, is one, which will not be entertained by the Local Authority except in exceptional circumstances. This may be due to its perceived effect on existing and permitted uses, its incompatibility with the policies and objectives contained in this Plan or the fact that it may be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The expansion of established and approved uses not conforming to land use zone objectives will be considered on their merits.

For the Zoning Matrix relating to the functional area of Offaly County Council, please refer to Table 18.1, Volume 1 of the Offaly County Development Plan, 2009-2015.

Established/Non-Conforming Uses

Where an established use does not conform with the designated land use zoning objective of the area as set out in the LAP, development works may be permitted where it is considered by the relevant Planning Authority that the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of

the area. Within reason, it is not intended that existing uses within the zones outlined in this plan which appear to be inconsistent with the primary use zoning objective should be curtailed.

Table 8 General Zoning Matrix *Specific Zoning Objectives for functional area of Laois County Council.

Land Use	Village / Town Centre	Residential 1	Residential 2	Enterprise & Employment	Neigh Centre	Com/Education/ institutional	Open Space	Tourism	Horticulture	Industrial	Transport and Utilities
Apartment	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	O	N	N	N	N	N
Car Park	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Animal Housing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	y	N	O
Café	Y	O	O	Y	Y	N	N	Y	O	O	N
Caravan Camping	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	Y	N	N	O
Cemetery	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	O
Cinema, Dancehall, Disco	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Community Hall	O	Y	Y	O	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Craft Industry	Y	O	O	Y	O	O	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Crèche/ Playschool	Y	Y	Y	O	Y	O	N	Y	O	O	N
Cultural Uses/ Library	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	O
Dwelling	O	Y	Y	N	N	O	N	Y	N	N	N
Funeral Home	O	N	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N
Garages, Panel, Beating, Car Repairs	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Garden Centre	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Guest House/Hostel/Hotel	Y	O	O	O	N	O	N	Y	N	N	N
Halting Site	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N
Health Centre	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	N	N	N	N	N
Heavy Commercial Vehicle Parks	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Hot Food Takeaway	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Industry	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Industry (Light)	O	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Medical and Related Consultants	Y	O	O	O	O	O	N	N	N	N	N
Motor Sales	O	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Nursing Home/ Sheltered Housing	O	O	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	O	N
Offices < 100 sq m	Y	O	O	Y	O	O	N	N	Y	Y	N
Offices > 100 sq m	Y	N	N	Y	O	O	N	N	N	O	N
Park Playground	Y	Y	Y	Y	O	Y	Y	Y	O	O	N

Land Use	Village / Town Centre	Residential 1	Residential 2	Enterprise & Employment	Neigh Centre	Com/Education/Institutional	Open Space	Tourism	Horticulture	Industrial	Transport and Utilities
Petrol Station	Y	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	O	N
Place of Worship	Y	O	O	N	O	Y	N	O	N	N	N
Playing Fields	N	Y	Y	N	N	O	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Pub	Y	N	N	N	O	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Recreational Building (Commercial)	O	O	O	O	O	O	N	Y	N	N	N
Recreational Building (Community)	Y	Y	Y	O	Y	Y	O	Y	O	N	O
Restaurant	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	N	O	O	O	N
Retail Warehouse	Y	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
School/Educational Facilities	Y	O	O	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	N
Scrap Yard	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	N
Retail < 100sqm (Comparison)	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	O	O	N	N
Retail > 100sqm (Comparison)	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Retail < 100 sq m (Convenience)	Y	O	O	O	Y	N	N	O	O	N	N
Retail > 100 sq m (Convenience)	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Sport/Leisure Complex	Y	O	O	Y	O	O	Y	Y	O	N	N
Utility structures	Y	O	O	Y	O	O	N	O	Y	Y	Y
Warehouse (Wholesale)	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Workshops	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N

It is intended that the land-use zoning matrix will facilitate and afford sufficient flexibility to develop the land for a range of uses.

Neighbourhood Centres

Two Neighbourhood Centres are shown in the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan. The purpose of these Neighbourhood Centres is to serve the local community through the provision of retail facilities and other services. Ideally these should be within walking distance of the area they are intended to serve. The retail element of these local centres will be controlled so as not to negatively impact on the existing town centres. These controls will usually take the form of setting a maximum retail floor area for the shop units to be provided in these neighbourhood centres. The largest size of a convenience store in a Neighbourhood Centre shall be restricted to not more than 100 sq. ms.

Section 17: Development Management Standards

Aim: To ensure the orderly and sustainable development of Portarlington through the setting out of objectives and standards for the management of development.

Introduction

In order to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of Portarlington, it is essential that development should conform to a number of requirements, which are set out in this section under the following main headings:

- Residential Development;
- Extensions/alterations to and conversion of Dwellings;
- Commercial Development;
- Conservation and Archaeology;
- Community Development;
- Car-parking Standards;
- Development Contribution Scheme.

The Development Management Policies and Standards have been formulated to take into account: legislative requirements, contextual government guidelines and regulations in addition to the policies and objectives set out in the Laois and Offaly County Development Plan[s].

Residential Development

Both quantitative and qualitative criteria are included in requirements for new residential developments set out below. These requirements will form the basis for evaluating planning applications for new residential development with a view to improving the quality of development in Portarlington.

Housing development in an urban context will be guided by the guidelines for Planning Authorities on residential density and the need for good quality of design in terms of buildings and layout and the desire to improve quality of life.

These requirements are informed by a number of key principles to:

- build on the positive elements of the Town's character through new high quality residential development;
- provide a good quality of life for persons living in and visiting the Town;
- create new residential areas with a distinctive sense of place;
- create new sustainable residential areas which allow for new and improved access to public transport and local facilities and make the best use of development land and infrastructure;
- use a range of design "tools" or methods, guidelines and standards, to achieve better residential development;
- encourage the concept of energy efficiency and re-use of on-site materials;

- encourage high densities through innovative design in appropriate locations.

Residential Density

The Planning Authority in assessing applications for residential developments in Portarlington will have regard to the policies and objectives outlined in the *“Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities”*, [DoEHLG, 2009].

The appropriate residential density in any location will be determined by a number of considerations including:

- existing topography, landscape and other site features;
- existing densities in nearby residential areas;
- infrastructure capacity including social, community and educational facilities;
- proximity to public transport nodes and routes;
- the extent to which the site by virtue of its attributes proposes its own density through quality design concepts aimed at creating a sustainable living residential environment;
- compliance with qualitative and quantitative criteria set out in the Development Plan.

Higher residential density will not be appropriate in every circumstance. Higher densities must not be achieved at an unacceptable amenity cost to the surrounding dwellings and the residents of the proposed development. A high quality of design and layout and a good quality living environment, including the availability of adequate shopping, social, transport and leisure infrastructure, are necessary if increased residential densities are to be acceptable. The following criteria will be taken into account when assessing applications incorporating higher densities:

- Size of Site;
- Proximity to Town Centre facilities and to existing public transport corridors;
- Quality of Proposed Layout and Elevation Design;
- Mix of Dwelling Types;
- Quality of Proposed Open Space and General Landscaping;
- Quality of Pedestrian Linkages between Open Spaces and to and from local facilities;
- Levels of Privacy and Amenity;
- Traffic Safety;
- Energy Efficiency;
- Management Arrangements;
- Site Ecology;
- Ancillary Facilities including facilities for children and the elderly.

Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategies for Counties Laois and Offaly, which are contained in their respective County Development Plans, provide an estimate of existing and future need for social and affordable housing throughout the counties including for Portarlington.

Every applicant for permission for residential development, other than for exempt residential development, must specify in the planning application how it is intended to meet the requirements of the housing strategy.

Such proposals will be taken into account in determining planning applications for such development.

Layout of Housing Schemes

In the interests of optimising layouts, incorporation of the following will be sought:

- Division of the estate into groups of houses, giving each group a sense of spatial enclosure;
- Pedestrian routes and footpaths which provide access to local shops, bus stops etc.;
- Orientation in accordance with sustainable development concepts, taking account of existing views, overlooking, overshadowing and energy efficiency;
- Separation of through traffic from local housing traffic;
- Layout which discourages on-street parking;
- Curves and changes in surface colour and texture of the road layout which discourages speeding and promotes pedestrian priority;
- Houses situated in order to ensure that overlooking and privacy issues are addressed;
- Road widths, which reflect the number of houses being served. A reduction in width may be appropriate where small numbers of houses are being served;
- Back to back distance of 30 ms. in conventional housing layouts on Greenfield sites;
- Rear Garden Depths of 15 ms. in respect of Greenfield sites. Exceptions of a reduced standard will be permitted where deemed appropriate and in infill urban housing and proximity to public/private open space facilities;
- New houses should be encouraged to use alternative energy systems such as solar panels and or under floor heating systems to allow for energy conservation where appropriate;
- Recycling 'Bring banks' should be included.

Layout of Apartment Developments

The DoEHLG has issued guidelines '*Sustainable Urban Housing, Design Standards for New Apartments*' (2007). The aim of these guidelines is to promote sustainable urban housing, by ensuring that the design and layout of new apartments will provide satisfactory accommodation for a variety of household types and sizes. The guidelines provide recommended minimum standards for: floor areas for different types of apartments, storage spaces, sizes for apartment balconies / patios, and room dimensions for certain rooms.

The provision of apartment schemes may be considered at appropriate locations in the town centre, and specifically at locations close to the railway station or in exceptional circumstances where a significant demand for smaller units of accommodation is evident.

The layout of apartment developments should:

- Incorporate common spaces, terraces and courtyards, steps which are of good design and will encourage use by residents;
- Provide for access for all disabilities;
- Incorporate spaces which are designed so as to provide a safe and pleasant environment, which are multifunctional and allow for fire brigade access, parking and passive recreation;
- Provide concealed refuse bin storage areas, bicycle storage areas and washing and drying facilities for, and accessible to each of the apartments;
- Present a live edge to the street by locating doors and windows onto the street frontage;
- In the case of residential accommodation over shops or other business premises, a separate access should be provided for the upper floor accommodation;
- In addition to planning requirements, building control and fire prevention requirements must be met;
- Underground car parking will be encouraged where appropriate;
- Should encourage dual aspect orientation;
- Provide private open space for each apartment;
- Dual aspect design;
- Provision for general internal storage, particularly for bulky items not in daily use (e.g. suitcases, sports gear, winter clothing etc).

The overriding concern should be the quality of the proposed residential environment and higher densities should only be acceptable if the criteria, which contribute to the creation of this environment, are satisfied.

House and Apartment Design

A high quality of house and apartment design will be sought. All new housing and apartment developments should:

- Reflect the existing character of the street by respecting the proportion, pattern, massing, density and materials of surrounding buildings where appropriate;
- Maintain existing building lines, roof pitches and window proportions;
- Incorporate variations in window design, roof type etc around a common theme, in housing estates of more than 20 houses;
- Provide access for 'wheelie bins';
- Provide facilities to incorporate satellite dishes where appropriate.

Any policy, which promotes the incorporation of higher residential densities, must take into account the need for proper internal space planning which ensures adequate standards in relation to overall dwelling and individual room sizes.

The Planning Authority will encourage the provision of dwellings in higher density developments, which are capable of being extended. Aside from the normal single storey extensions, the conversion of the attic space for additional floor space will be promoted as a method of providing extra living/sleeping space or storage without increasing site coverage.

The Councils encourages the use of hardwood for windows and doors in all new structures rather than uPVC, which is considered to be environmentally unsustainable.

Housing Estate Completion

Developers will be required to give security to the Councils in the form of an adequate cash deposit, bank bond or insurance company bond or other such security, to ensure satisfactory completion and maintenance of the estate. Developments should be phased to ensure that new residents have the benefit of proper access and services when the houses are occupied. A Construction Management Plan shall be submitted with planning applications for large-scale developments. At the commencement of any development the developer will be required, both in the interests of existing residential amenity and in the interests of health and safety to complete work on the boundaries/perimeters of the site in accordance with the permission granted. The phasing of such work will be submitted and agreed with the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority insists that "Taking in Charge" requests are made immediately upon completion and/or in phases.

The use of Management Style Companies is not considered generally acceptable for the traditional form of residential layout and is to be discouraged.

Housing in Existing Built-Up Areas

The development of new housing, which respects the amenity and character of the existing residential area and is coherent and well-designed, can contribute to enhancing the vibrancy and character of an existing area while also contributing to the efficient sustainable use of serviced lands.

Infill Housing

Infill developments may comprise small gap infill, unused or derelict land, backland areas, larger residual sites or sites assembled from multiple owners. A balance has to be struck between protection of amenities, privacy and established character and the need to provide residential infill. Innovative and contemporary design solutions will be encouraged to maximise the potential of the site, subject to the protection and enhancement of residential amenity.

In-fill housing should reflect adjoining premises and where appropriate attention should be paid to the existing character of the street including proportions, height of structures, massing and materials as well as existing building lines, roof pitches, height and window detailing. A minimum distance of 2.5 ms. between semi-detached and detached housing is required. In general, this distance should be equally divided between dwellings so as to allow for a usable side entrance.

Where proposed development of significant height is located close to existing development the Planning Authority may require daylight and shadow projection diagrams to be submitted. The recommendations of 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice' (BRE 1991) or 'B.S. Lighting for Buildings Part 2 1992: Code of Practice for Daylighting' should be followed in this regard.

Backland Development

The development of backland sites in a coherent and well-designed manner can contribute to enhancing the vibrancy and character of an existing settlement while also contributing to the efficient use of serviced lands. Backland development will generally be considered where the proposed development forms part of a comprehensive plan for development of the entire backland area. New dwellings that closely overlook the rear curtilage and thereby reduce the residential amenity of existing dwellings will not normally be permitted.

There are numerous backland areas in the Plan area particularly on the eastern and north-western approaches [Regional Route 420 to Tullamore and New Inn] to the town.

Naming of Streets, Housing Estates

Naming of streets and residential estates shall reflect the local place names and local people of note, heritage, language or topographical features as appropriate and shall incorporate old place names from the locality as much as possible. The use of bi-lingual and Irish-Language signs will be encouraged. Naming and numbering of residential estates shall be approved in advance by the Place Names Committee of the Council [Laois]. Along with suggested estate names, developers must submit reasons for their choice. A Council Committee has been formed in Laois County Council to advise on naming of new residential developments. Signage should be of appropriate size and material and shall be erected in a timely manner.

Street Lighting & Public Utilities

Street lighting should be to the standards set out in the ESB publication Public Lighting in Residential Developments. Pedestrian links must also be illuminated. Lighting levels within a new development must create a secure environment. Dark corners and alleyways should be avoided. The use of low pressure sodium lighting and full cut off lighting shall be encouraged for environmental, economic and road safety reasons. Lampposts in prominent positions can help to define an area and promote a sense of place among the residents.

To preserve the amenity and visual character of an area, and in the interests of public safety, all services including electricity, public lighting cables, telephone and television cables shall be provided underground in all new developments. Provision should be made for the unobtrusive siting of transformer stations, pumping stations and other necessary service buildings. Pole mounted equipment (such as transformers) will not be permitted.

Public Open Space

Public open space should be well designed from a visual perspective as well as being functionally accessible to the maximum number of dwellings within a residential area. A well-designed open space will be based on the principles of adequate overlooking, supervision and accessibility. The emphasis should be placed on the retention of existing natural features and good proportions. Narrow tracts of open spaces are non-functional, hard to maintain, therefore unacceptable and will not be considered in assessing the adequacy or otherwise of open space provision in a new residential development.

In new development areas, provision for open spaces should be identified at an early stage. It is important to plan for hard surface play areas. A hierarchy of open space provision in residential areas to meet the needs of children in different age groups will be encouraged.

Appropriate pedestrian and cycle linkages between open spaces should be clearly indicated on the site layout plan.

Opportunities for providing new public open space may be limited due to site constraints and the need to protect the established pattern of streets and spaces. Public open space will be required at the rate of 10% of the gross site area with a minimum unit of open space of 200 sq. ms. and 10 ms. as a minimum dimension of any side.

A minimum of 80 sq. ms. of public open space per dwelling will be required in new residential developments. Where this cannot be provided or where it is not appropriate to provide this, a contribution to local amenity facilities in lieu of the shortfall will be required. The provision of public open space should be cross referenced with County Laois and Offaly Play Strategies which gives guidance on the types of recreational facilities required for all age groups with residential layouts.

Planning applications for major schemes should include a landscaping plan and a planting schedule. Proposals for the management of open space should also be included. As a first preference, consideration should be given to the use of native species of trees and shrubs.

Private Open Space

In Town Centre and urban areas the quality of private open space will be crucial to successful residential development.

In apartment developments, private open space should be provided in a number of ways including, balconies, winter gardens, indoor amenity spaces, shared internal courtyards and roof gardens. In townhouse and mews developments private open space should be provided in small rear yards and balconies.

A detailed landscape plan should be submitted with any application for development containing shared semi-private open space. In Suburban Areas focus must be placed on the quality of private open space rather than quantity alone.

Table 9: Private Open Space Standards

Unit Type	Town Centre	Suburban Areas
Apartments (1 Bedroom)	10 sq. ms.	15-20 sq. ms.
Apartments (2&3 Bedrooms)	15-20 sq. ms.	30-40 sq. ms.
Dwellings (1&2 Bedrooms)	48-60 sq. ms.	48-60 sq. ms.
Dwellings (3 or more Bedrooms)	48-60 sq. ms.	60-75 sq. ms.

Soft Landscaping

Planting and landscaping can be used to incorporate new buildings into their surroundings and provide privacy between dwellings. New planting should consist of local plant types indigenous to the area and be incorporated into the site so as to enhance the overall appearance. When selecting plant species for landscaping, consideration should be taken of the proposed location of the site and its attendant character such as soil conditions, pollution, safety, maintenance requirements, the possibility of vandalism of the site, and aesthetic potential.

Hard Landscaping

Hard landscaping design, including paving and street furniture, is an important element in defining the character of the spaces between buildings and public open spaces. Hard landscaping works can help to:

- provide a visual link to the surroundings;
- define and enclose space, and delineate public from private space;
- provide security to private areas;
- distinguish between pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movement;
- provide suitable play space for children.

Materials must be appropriate, durable and of a good quality. Careful consideration must be given to the design of hard surfaces such as streets, squares, open spaces, paved areas, footpaths and driveways. The textures and colours of the materials chosen must be sympathetic to the locality and be an integral part of the design. Walls, fences, metal railings and gates used to define spaces and their usage have a major impact on the visual character of the development. These should be carefully selected with local distinctiveness in mind and will need to be an integral part of the overall design concept. The sitting of street furniture should allow for unobstructed access for all.

The integration of art into public domain can contribute positively to the urban form creating local distinctiveness and enhancing a public space. Major development schemes will be expected to contribute to public art in the locality.

Following underground works, it is an objective of the Councils to ensure the reinstatement of material or the replacement with materials of similar style and quality.

Cycle Provision

Cycle Provision (access and storage) will be particularly important in respect of developments for apartments and details of such provision will be required as part of any planning application for such development.

Undergrounding and Concealing of Services

In new urban housing developments all services including E.S.B., telephone and television cables shall be placed underground. Service buildings or structures should be sited as unobtrusively as possible and must be screened. Care should also be given to the treatment of maintenance

boxes, electrical boxes and bin storage on facades so that such items are concealed as unobtrusively as possible.

Required Distances from Sewerage Treatment Works

Proposals to develop in close proximity to existing or proposed sewerage treatment plants and Pumping stations will be assessed having regard to:

- the nature of the effluent being treated;
- prevailing wind direction;
- noise;
- type of treatment process employed;
- sludge treatment;
- visibility and screening of treatment plant.

Development will not be allowed within the buffer zone around the existing waste water treatment works or 50 ms. of a foul sewage pumping station. This distance may be increased if significant environmental issues are likely to arise and will be judged on a site by site basis. The buffer area may be used to fulfill open space requirements. Road gullies in an area of extreme vulnerability will be required to include measures to prohibit contaminated surface water from entering ground water sources.

Extensions to Dwelling Houses

Domestic extensions are an effective way for homeowners to provide extra space without having to move house when their accommodation needs change. Primarily the design and layout of extensions should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly as regards sunlight, daylight and privacy.

The character and form of the existing building should be respected and external finishes and window types should match the existing. Extensions should:

- follow the pattern of the existing building as much as possible;
- be constructed with similar finishes and with similar windows to the existing building so that they will integrate with it;
- have a pitched roof, particularly when visible from the public road or when the building is two or three stories high. It is difficult to obtain a satisfactory external appearance with flat roofs:
- dormer extensions should not obscure the main features of the existing roof, i.e. should not break the ridge or eaves lines of roof. Box dormers will not be permitted where visible from a public area;
- traditional style dormers should provide the design basis;
- front dormers should normally be set back at least three-tile courses from the eaves line and should be clad in a material matching the existing house.

Sheltered Housing Extensions

Sheltered Housing extensions (including granny flats) shall be an integral part of the main dwelling unit capable of reintegration for single-family use. The following criteria must be met:

- where a bona fide need for such a unit exists;
- where the unit acts as a physical extension to the main house with full integration between the existing house and proposed extension;
- where such a unit is located at ground floor level;
- where the unit is capable of re-integration for use as part of the main dwelling following its cessation of use as a sheltered dwelling;
- entrances should be via the main dwelling unit, where own door entrances are proposed these should be located to the side or rear of the dwelling.

Conversion of Existing Houses to Flat Accommodation

The subdivision of houses and housing above business premises and housing on primary traffic routes may be permitted. Permission to convert to flats will not normally be granted unless:

- the minimum size of unit is 38 square metres for a 1-bed unit;
- there are areas available for necessary amenity purposes, parking etc;
- development meets the requirements of the building regulations;
- each flat has a refuse bin storage areas and washing/drying facilities which are accessible to the occupants of that unit and there is
- adequate provision made for general internal storage, particularly for bulky items not in daily uses (e.g. suitcases, sports gear, winter clothing etc)

Proposals for conversion into flats should take account of standards set out in the *“Sustainable Urban Housing, Design Standards for New Apartments” (DoEHLG, 2007)*.

Commercial Development

In assessing planning applications for commercial development, a number of considerations will be taken into account including:

- conformity with the land use policies in respect of Commercial Development;
- the design, quality and mix of uses being proposed particularly in town centre where redevelopment and changes of use need to be orientated towards creating a vibrant and lively, quality directed commercial core;
- the requirement that design quality protects but also enhances the architectural character of the town, particularly in relation to landmark structures and viewpoints;
- the potential impact to be generated in terms of traffic movement, parking provision and desirability thereof and whether or not consideration has been given to access and commuter movements;
- whether or not the proposed development will have a significant detrimental effect on the amenities of the surrounding areas;
- the energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the development which includes practical considerations, such as servicing, deliveries, waste/recycling and overall management thereof;
- whether or not a land contamination assessment is necessary and is required as part of the Planning Authority requirements;

- whether or not an E. I. S. has been deemed necessary and provided as part of the Planning Authority requirements.

Warehouses and Industrial Uses/Business Campuses

The guiding policy considerations are set out in the Section 5 on Economic Development and Employment. In cases where these developments generate heavy traffic, they may not be sited where they would encourage movement of heavy vehicles through residential areas.

The criteria for assessment of such developments will include:

- the nature/activities/processes of the proposed development and site location factors;
- the compatibility with adjoining uses;
- the traffic implications and alternative access, servicing and sustainable mobility plans/commuting arrangements;
- the quality of building design;
- the site layout including car parking arrangements;
- landscaping plans;
- the energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the proposed developments.

A landscaped buffer zone will be a requirement of planning permission for any Industrial/Warehousing development where it adjoins another zoning or where it would seriously injure the amenities of adjoining land uses.

Public Houses/Late Night Clubs/Disco

Night clubs and disco bars play a role in urban areas providing a night use, which adds, to the attraction of a town. They will not, however, be permitted in residential areas. Noise levels at the boundaries of these establishments will be monitored as circumstances require and mitigation measures will be required at the time of the submission of the planning application.

Filling Stations

Applications for filling stations should take account of the following:

- access to filling stations will not be permitted closer than 35 metres to a road junction;
- frontage on public roads must be at least 20 metres in length;
- all pumps and installations shall be set back at least 5 metres from the road;
- a wall, of a minimum height of 0.5 metres, must separate the forecourt from the public footpath;
- all external lighting should be cowled and directed away from the public roadway to prevent traffic hazard;
- a proliferation of large illuminated projecting signs will not be permitted at filling stations. Generally only one such sign will be permitted;
- turbo-drying or car washing facilities will be located so as not to interfere with residential amenities;

- any shop being provided shall be ancillary to the principal use of the premises as a filling station and shall be a maximum size of 100 sq. ms. excluding storage;
- an undue concentration of filling stations shall not be permitted, as in the past oversupply has led to closures with resulting unsightly derelict filling stations;
- late night opening will only be permitted if it does not impact adversely on nearby residences;
- a landscaping plan will form part of any planning application.

Taxi/Hackney Cab Base

The importance of taxi and cab services as a means of transport in the town is recognised. However, cab bases will not be permitted where they are likely to interfere with traffic flows or on street parking. Taxi and cab bases should be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Hot Food Take-Aways

Within the commercial core of the town a proliferation of hot food “take-aways” will not be encouraged. Additional takeaways will not be permitted where there is a loss of office and retail frontage, in order to preserve the character of these areas. Regard will be had to the impact of hot food take-aways on the residential amenities in an area. ‘Stand alone’ take-aways, not attached to restaurants, will not be encouraged. The Councils may impose restrictions on opening hours of hot food take-aways where these are permitted.

Childcare Facilities

The Planning Authority recognises the need for properly run and conveniently located childcare facilities throughout the town. It is the policy of the Councils to implement the *Planning Guidelines on Child Care Facilities, [DoEHLG, 2001]*.

Applications for childcare facilities in a residential area will be assessed on the basis of their impact in terms of noise, loss of residential amenity, traffic generation and general disturbance.

In general, the factors to be considered in determining a planning application for a childcare facility include:

- having regard to the provisions of Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996, in relation to the planning implications of these Regulations;
- suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed;
- availability of outdoor play area and details of management of same;
- convenient to public transport nodes;
- safe access and convenient parking for customers and staff;
- number of such facilities in the area;
- intended hours of operation (in certain residential areas, 24 hour operations could be problematic).

Access for People with Disabilities

Where buildings are intended for public access they should be accessible to people with a disability and their facilities should be so designed as to accommodate people with a disability

without difficulty. Part M of the Building Regulations 2000 aims to ensure that buildings should be accessible and usable by everyone.

Dwellings should be designed and constructed so that:

- people with disabilities can safely and conveniently approach and gain access;
- people with disabilities can have access to the main habitable room. At this level, it is considered adequate to provide for access to habitable rooms on the storey containing the main living room;
- at entry level a WC should be provided, or where there are no habitable rooms at entry level, in the storey containing the main living room, with adequate provision for access and use of the WC by people with disabilities;
- design consideration for public buildings and areas should include the provision of tactile surfaces, new technologies and appropriate signage light and symbols as well as appropriate hierarchy of lighting to meet different types of accessibility issues. When access is being planned for people with disabilities it should be through the same entrance as others;
- access considerations will be extended to the public realm with the position of street furniture and other elements being assessed on an ongoing basis. The siting of street furniture such as bins etc. should be where it does not substantially reduce the width of pavement available.

Signage and Advertising

Advertising Hoardings: Billboards Location

The Councils will not normally permit the erection of large non-local advertisement structures or hoarding. These large-scale structures are detrimental to the amenities of the area and also give rise to creation of a traffic hazard. Outdoor advertising hoardings will normally be restricted and will not be permitted:

- close to a listed building, a public open space or an important view;
- in predominantly residential areas, especially on prominent gable walls;
- where a proliferation of them already exist;
- on street elevations;
- on buildings in the central commercial core;
- on stone walls in suburban areas;
- where they may cause a road hazard;
- where there may be a detrimental visual implication.

Advertising on Buildings

In general, advertising on buildings should conform to the following:

- be sympathetic in design and colouring both to the building on which they will be displayed and their surroundings;
- not obscure architectural features such as cornices or window openings;

- illuminated signs or other advertising structures will not be allowed above the eaves or parapet level on buildings;
- shop front advertising should be designed as an integral part of the shop.

Fingerpost Signs

The erection of fingerpost signs will require a licence or a grant of planning permission from the Councils and should comply with the following:

- directional signs for major tourist attractions and community purposes will be considered but product advertising will not be permitted;
- signs must be of a standard size and colour which will be decided by the Councils;
- signs, which interfere with road safety and the Councils or N.R.A directional signs will not be permitted.

The basic principle is to reduce visual clutter and to improve the overall visual and environmental character of the town.

Shopfronts and Commercial Facades

The Councils objective is to maintain, and over a period of time, raise the general quality of advertisement and shopfront design in Portarlinton. The scope of these standards encompasses not only shops, but also all other business frontages such as restaurants, pubs, banks and offices.

Statutory protection is given to buildings of special architectural merit or historic interest, which have been listed in the respective County Development Plans. The fundamental effect of listing is that works, which otherwise would be exempted development, require planning permission. Any alterations to shopfronts that are part of such should be consistent with the age and style of the buildings.

In general the need to change old shopfronts will be closely examined, as it is the policy of the Councils to preserve and retain traditional shopfronts of townscape importance. The condition of the existing frontage should be expertly examined, as the replacement of shopfronts in a poor condition may be a premature solution. A careful repair can make good a neglected shopfront without incurring the cost of a new shopfront. In addition, refurbishment of shopfronts can often offer an opportunity to strip away later additions and to re-establish the proportions and details of the original framework.

The repair, restoration and replacement of shopfronts must be sympathetically carried out to protect the architectural character of the town. It may be necessary to accept that modern shopfronts are not appropriate in certain old buildings or traditional shopping parades. Where new shopfronts are acceptable in these situations the quality of design and finish should be of the highest standard and accurate facsimiles of period fronts may be necessary.

Where existing shopfronts are of no special merit, total replacement is acceptable and a modern design to a high standard will be encouraged provided it respects good architectural and conservation principles.

Fascia Signage and Illuminative and Projecting Signs

As a general principle fascia signs and protecting signs should be simple in design, not excessive in number, illumination or size. The following basic guidelines will be applied in assessing planning applications:

- plastic derived fascias with product advertising will not be permitted;
- quality signage is strongly encouraged in all circumstances;
- projecting signs should be of 2.4m clearance above street level;
- internally illuminated fascias will not be permitted;
- overall illumination of fascia signage or shopfronts or distinctive architectural features should be discreet and limited to spot-lighting, up-lighting or disguised minimalist strip lighting;
- the use of banners, flags, billboards and other forms of commercial and cultural advertising will be strictly controlled in town centres and essentially restricted to those outlets of a cultural and/or entertainment activity.

Security Screens

The following standards shall be applied in respect of security screens:

- planning permission is required for the erection of roller shutters;
- external roller shutters will not generally be permitted in the county;
- box housing for shutters, mounted externally or concealed behind a large projecting fascia is a material alteration which is unlikely to be permitted in any shopping street;
- security screens located inside the shop window or to the rear of the display area do not require planning permission as a general rule and are encouraged;
- demountable metal-grills or wrought iron-work grills may also be acceptable.

Canopies

Planning permission is required for the erection of canopies. Canopies of traditional design and materials, which are retractable, will be favoured. In all circumstances canopies should not illustrate products unrelated to the primary activity of the premises and also should not be a hazard to pedestrians, visitors or shoppers.

Bus Shelters/other structures

Advertising on bus shelters will be permitted in locations, which do not detract from the primary purpose of the transport shelter. General advertisements and promotional design advertisements on telephone kiosks within town centres will not be permitted.

Cycle Provision

Cycle Provision (access and storage) will be particularly important in respect of developments for public services, hospitals, colleges and community facilities and details of such provision will be required as part of any planning application for such development.

Undergrounding and Concealing of Services

In new urban developments all services including E.S.B., telephone and television cables shall be placed underground. Service buildings or structures should be sited as unobtrusively as possible and must be screened. Care should also be given to the treatment of maintenance boxes, electrical boxes and bin storage on facades so that such items are concealed as unobtrusively as possible.

Required Distances from Sewerage Treatment Works

Proposals to develop in close proximity to existing or proposed sewerage treatment plants and Pumping stations will be assessed having regard to:

- the nature of the effluent being treated;
- prevailing wind direction;
- noise;
- type of treatment process employed;
- sludge treatment;
- visibility and screening of treatment plant.

Development will not be allowed within the buffer zone around the existing waste water treatment works or 50 ms. of a foul sewage pumping station. This distance may be increased if significant environmental issues are likely to arise and will be judged on a site by site basis. The buffer area may be used to fulfill open space requirements. Road gullies in an area of extreme vulnerability will be required to include measures to prohibit contaminated surface water from entering ground water sources.

Environmental Impact Statements

In compliance with E.U. Directives, Environmental Impact Statements (E.I.S.) are required for projects, which are likely to have significant affects on the environment. E.I.S.'s are obligatory for certain major developments and may be required for a wide range of other developments. The E.U. (E.I.A.) Regulations, 1989-99, specify the types of development and threshold levels for which E.I.S.'s are required.

Major Accident Directive, Seveso II

Unlike the earlier Seveso 1 Directive (82/501/EEC), Seveso II includes provisions in relation to land use planning. Article 12 of the Directive requires Member States to ensure that the objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting the consequences of such accidents are taken into account in land use policies and/or other relevant policies. These objectives must be pursued through controls on the following:

- the siting of new establishments;
- modifications to existing establishments;
- development in the vicinity of an establishment, which, by virtue of its type or siting, is likely to increase the risk or consequences of a major accident;
- Article 12 of the Directive provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place so as to ensure that, before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of relevant establishments. The Health & Safety Authority provides such advice.

Such technical advice will be taken into account in the consideration of any such application for planning permission.

Conservation & Archaeology

Development in relation to Protected Structures

In assessing proposals for development affecting Protected Structures it is the intention of the Councils that works, both to the exterior and interior, which materially affect the character of a protected structure or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest require planning permission. What might be regarded normally as minor alterations to buildings may not necessarily be regarded as such in the case of protected structures.

The Record of Protected Structures for Portarlington are contained in the respective County Development Plans for Laois and Offaly County Councils.

Such works can include:

- window replacement and fenestration changes;
- wholesale plastering/pointing/painting or painting of previously unpainted elements;
- modifications of brickwork and stonework;
- the removal/alteration of architectural detailing including joinery and decorative plasterwork;
- inappropriate interior works including the removal of walls, the creation of openings and partitioning of rooms;
- works to roofs and railings involving the removal of original materials and replacement with inappropriate materials.

In considering applications for alterations and/or additions to a protected structure, the Councils shall have regard to:

- the various elements of the structure which gives the protected structure its special character and how these would be impacted on by the proposed development;
- in the case of a proposal to materially change the use of a protected structure, the suitability of such use having regard to its potential impact on the structure including works necessary to comply with Fire & Safety, Building Regulations which the proposed use change would give rise to;
- the reversibility of the proposed alterations In the case of buildings within the curtilage of a protected structure whether such buildings are of heritage values or not.

Windows made from aluminium, uPVC or similar material will not be acceptable in protected structures. In twentieth century buildings, the original twentieth century metal windows shall be retained. A detailed conservation report shall accompany planning applications for works to protected structures.

This report shall:

- Outline the significance of the building;
- Include a detailed survey of the building, including a photographic survey;
- Detail the proposed works it is intended to carry out;
- Contain a full assessment on the materials and method proposed to carry out these works, their impact on the character of the structure and the reversibility of the proposed works.

The detail required to be submitted will be dependent on the significance of the building and the nature of works proposed. All works to protected structures shall be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice.

Development within the Curtilage and Setting of Protected Structures

In considering applications for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, the Councils shall have regard to the following:

- The various elements of the structure which gives the protected structure its special character and how these would be impacted on by the proposed development;
- Proximity of any new development to the main protected structure and any other buildings of heritage value;
- The design of the new development which should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure;
- High quality design will be a foremost consideration when assessing proposals for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, with particular emphasis on siting, building lines, proportions, scale, massing, height, roof treatment and materials. This does not preclude innovative contemporary buildings. Development proposals should include appraisal of the wider context of the site and structure.

Archaeology

In relation to archaeological requirements, please refer to Section 12: Built Heritage.

Community Development

As a general principle the location and provision of Community Development facilities is a pre-requisite to the enhancement of viable, enjoyable, sustainable and attractive local communities. In assessing planning applications for leisure facilities, sports grounds, playing fields, play areas, community halls, organisational meeting facilities, medical facilities, childcare facilities new school provision and other community orientated developments, regard will be taken of considerations such as:

- overall need in terms of necessity, deficiency and opportunity to enhance or develop local facilities;
- practicalities of site location in terms of site location, uses, impact on local amenities, desirability, and accessibility;
- conformity with the requirements of appropriate legislative guidelines: such as childcare and education facilities.

Car-parking Standards

Residential Parking Standards

Parking is an integral element of overall land use and transportation policy within the town. The purpose of the parking standards is to ensure that an appropriate level of parking is provided to serve new development. Where a developer cannot provide the specified number of car-parking spaces within the site, a financial contribution in lieu will be required towards the cost of providing such spaces off the site or planning permission will be refused. The issue of car parking in Portarlinton has become a critical factor in deciding on the appropriateness of developments in the town centre. Strict consideration will be given to the amount of parking spaces likely to be generated by new developments and the ability to provide that amount of parking on site.

Table 10: Parking Standards for Residential Developments

Location	Parking Space per unit
Town Centre Apartments / Mews Type developments	1.25
Dwelling House (Town Centre)	1
Dwelling House (Suburban)	2

Group and clustered parking will be required where spaces cannot be provided on individual sites. Construction and layout standards for multi-storey and underground car parks are set out in the document, 'Design Recommendation for Multi-Storey and Underground Car Parks' (current edition), published by the Joint Committee of the Institute of Structural Engineers and the Institution of Highways and Transportation.

Car Parking should be considered having regard to;

- The potential of the site to accommodate it;
- The needs of the residents and proximity to local public transport and local services;
- It should be located where it will not detract from the quality of the street or the development;
- It should satisfy appropriate layout standards.

Other Car Parking Standards

Units for which one car parking space is to be provided are set out in table below. Development Contributions will be required in cases where there is a shortfall in on site car parking.

Table 11: Areas Other than Residential for which Parking Space is required

Development	Unit
Shop < 250 sq. ms.	1 space per 23 sq. ms.
Shop > 250 sq. ms.	1 space per 23 sq. ms.
Large stores > 1000 sq. ms.	1 space per 30 sq. ms.
Banks Financial Institutions	1 space per 23 sq. ms.
Offices	1 space per 23 sq. ms.
Industry/Manufacturing	1 space per 50 sq. ms.
Warehousing	1 space per 100 sq. ms
Theatre/Cinema/Church/Stadium	1 space per 5 seats
Hotels Guest Houses (excluding function rooms	1 space per bedroom
Public Houses/Lounge Bars	1 space per 10 sq. ms.
Restaurants	1 space per 10 sq. ms.
Function Rooms/Dance Halls/Clubs	1 space per 10 sq. ms.
Playing Fields	25 spaces per pitch
Primary Schools	2 spaces per classroom and 1 space per staff
Secondary Schools	2 spaces per classroom and 1 space per staff
Nursing Homes	1 space per employee and 1 space per 4 residents
Hospitals	1.5 spaces per bed
Childcare Facilities	1 space per staff member plus 1 space per 4 children
Clinics and Group Medical Practices	2 spaces per consultant/practitioner

The lack of any or adequate car parking for a development is sufficient reason, in its own right, to refuse planning permission.

Development Contribution Scheme

The Councils, taking into consideration the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of infrastructure, will require the payment of financial contributions in accordance with the Development Contributions Scheme. Developers may also be required to carry out works at their

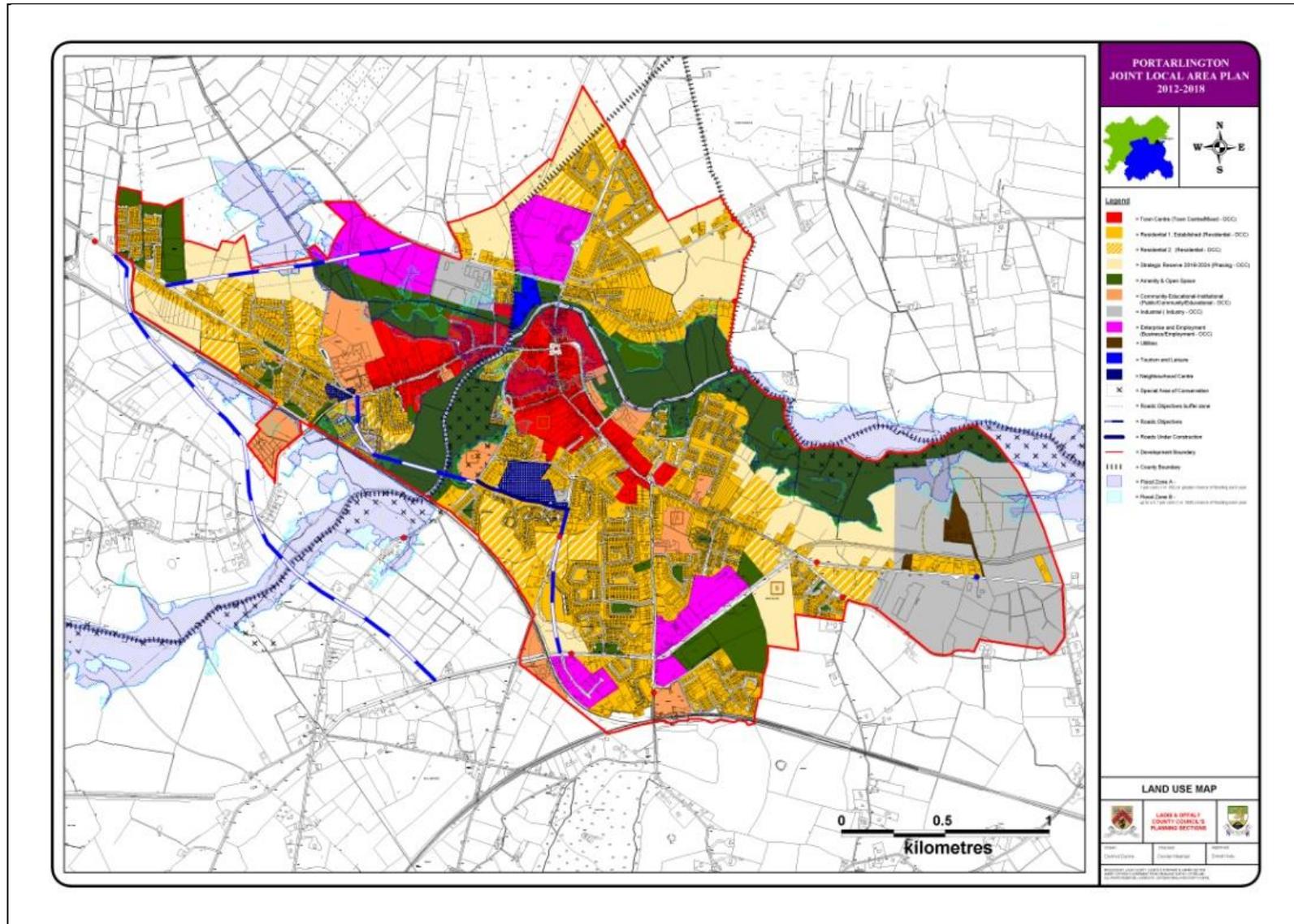
own expense which facilitates their development and these will be specified as a condition of their planning permission.

The Councils may grant exemption from contribution in accordance with Development Contribution Scheme in relation to the following;

- Churches, Community Halls, development for public social purposes, provision of sporting facilities (excluding licensed premises attached to clubhouses) and extensions to dwellings;
- Renovation, to a high standard of a protected structure or other building of architectural interest currently in poor condition, provided the renovation is faithful to the building's design and period.

The details and basis for the determination of the contributions will be set out in a Development Contribution Scheme in accordance with the provision of section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012.

Map 8: Land-Use Zoning Map for Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018



Map 9: Objectives Map for Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012-2018

