

## Chapter 6 Local Area Strategies

### 6.1 Introduction

The Development Strategy, Chapter 3, identified four areas (eight land parcels) within the plan boundary as being the most suitable to accommodate the majority of new development during the plan period. Refer to Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3. Of the four areas identified, three are within Birr town with the fourth being Crinkle village. Crinkle is dealt with as a village plan in Chapter 7.

### 6.2 Context

This approach is seen as the best way forward as it will allow a more consolidated built form to evolve by facilitating an orderly and sequential outcome. It is not the intention of these Local Area Strategies to formulate specific designs for entire areas but rather to identify the major elements involved, namely land use and distribution, main links, routes etc; and to put in place an efficient and robust framework for guidance that can react flexibly to facilitate good quality development thereby ensuring that a coherent and workable outcome is achieved.

It is expected that the development interests will work together and employ suitable professionals to take these schematic ideas forward to fully fledged designs, which will illustrate how the different elements will come together. The Council will co-operate to facilitate this process as it evolves.

The Local Area Plan Strategy areas comprise a number of land parcels, with their importance stemming from the fact that they are mainly “infill schemes”. These plans will require a sensitive approach in order to:

- Cater for in-depth schemes of comprehensive development with different land uses to create a coherent and well balanced settlement.
- Promote adequate critical mass in order to maintain and improve provision of local services and infrastructure.
- Ensure the new and existing elements complement one another and come together in a seamless manner to create an attractive, effective and interesting town.

### 6.3 Local Area Strategies

Refer to Map 3.1 for an overview of the areas and their context within the town. The areas in question are as follows:

**Table 6.1**

| Local Areas               | Location                | Site Area(s) approx                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <b>1. North East Area</b> | Land parcels 1, 2 and 3 | 1. 7.77<br>2. 12.22<br>3. 8.88<br>Total: <b>28.87ha</b> |
| <b>2. South East Area</b> | Land parcel 4           | <b>32.61ha</b>  |
| <b>3. Central Area</b>    | Land parcel 5           | <b>10.63ha</b>  |

### 6.4 North East Quadrant (Map 6.1)

**6.4.1** This local area strategy consists of three land parcels (Refer to Table 6.1 and Map 6.1) and they are taken together for the following reasons:

- i. These land parcels are strategically located in order to complete the northeast sector of the town in a coherent manner and to ensure coordinated development.
- ii. The parcels shall be developed in a comprehensive manner accommodating different land uses and their linkages in order to satisfy local needs and aspirations while bringing variety and vitality to the area.
- iii. Parcel No. 1 is in a prime location with parcels 2 and 3 being more “backland” in nature. However, the latter two will become more visible when the “Town Distributor Road” opens up the area.
- iv. The proposed Town Distributor Road from the N52 to the Kinnitty Road is a primary objective of this plan. While it may be funded partially by development, the complexity of such a project is such that the Councils will have to become involved in steering it to completion given the number of interests likely to be involved. The development of these land parcels will play a role in delivering a key part of this distributor road.

- v. As development comes on stream, it will bring pressures to bear on the adjoining areas and as such new proposals must show changes that are required to allow the existing developments to accommodate the new with the minimum amount of disruption.
- vi. Access and internal movement shall be catered for by a network of roads and footpaths as well as pedestrian routes/cycleways where necessary and suitable.

The outcome shall be a permeable urban fabric which allows people to move around and through the town by a variety of routes. Speed and volume of traffic will be regulated by use of indirect routing and tight horizontal geometry on bends as well as junction design and priority. Culs-de-sac, where used, shall be short, legible and only serve a small number of units thus allowing “shared surfaces” to be utilised adding further to the variety of the fabric. This will allow the different land uses to function effectively.

#### 6.4.2 Land Parcel 1

This area which lies between the N52, Tullamore Road, and the L07006-2, Burke's Hill Road, acts as a gateway and should be developed to create a good first impression of the town and an arrival experience.

The attached plan illustrates graphically the general disposition of the land uses visualised for this parcel namely:

- 1.A - Mixed Use,
- 1.B and 1C - Residential,
- 1.D - Open Space/ Sports/ Recreation/ Amenity
- 1.E - Town Distributor Road.

##### 1A Mixed Use

It is intended that this area shall accommodate:

- i. Mixed use development including offices, service facilities, social facilities, commercial recreation and residential. Any proposed retail development however, will have to be very carefully considered due to the amount of existing and approved retail floor space in the area and also having regard to policy BTEP 04-10. All of the above is not seen as an exhaustive list and it is expected that the final uses, their size and distribution would be subject to ongoing discussion between the development interests and the Council as the plan evolves.
- ii. It should take cognisance of the approved mixed-use development proposal on the western edge, refer to 1A.i on Map 6.1.
- iii. The area should have a strong urban theme with a “signature” building in the north western part of the site, close to the intersection of the N52 and the proposed “Town Distributor Road”, to act as a “gateway” and bring some height and legibility to the urban fabric in this quadrant.

##### 1B Residential

- i. This presents an opportunity to bring forward a well-designed relatively high-density low-rise urban housing development.
- ii. The scale and style should complement and reinforce the urban theme of 1A but still be robust enough so that it makes a clear architectural statement in its own right. Together these two elements, namely 1A and 1B are expected to bring variety to the built form and create an obvious “arrival zone” on entering the town.

##### 1C Residential

This element is seen as a transition zone between the tighter more urban grain and style envisaged for areas 1A and 1B and the existing low rise density development on the southern and eastern boundaries.

##### 1D Open Space

This area is seen as an opportunity for the creation of a “local park”.

##### 1E Town Distributor Road

This shall be designed as part of the overall exercise and its land-take will then give the final boundaries of the adjacent land parcels. This route is seen as the major element in allowing the Local Area Strategy to function properly and while

development alongside it may be phased, the road itself should be constructed as part of any 1<sup>st</sup> phase. Should it be agreed to bring forward the road in sections, no section may be constructed as a cul-de-sac and it must form part of a network thereby allowing traffic to permeate through the area. Furthermore, it should be noted that those developments shall be required to **complete** their road and pedestrian access networks up to their boundaries and that they shall **not** retain any areas of land as “ransom strips”.

It is an objective of this development plan to secure the provision of this road and it should be noted that in the event of compulsory purchase becoming necessary, the land required for the road will be treated as “reserved for this purpose”.

### Access and Movement

The evolving scheme shall be in line with the criteria already outlined (see section 6.4.1).

However the accompanying plan illustrates the relevant points:

- Red arrows – indicate where new road linkages shall join the existing/proposed road network.  
These points will be linked to create an internal road network through the development thus bringing permeability to the fabric.
- Blue arrows – indicate where pedestrian linkages shall occur.

It is understood that this schematic view may be required to alter as detailed design work comes forward and should this be required, consultation with the Councils should take place.

### 6.4.3 Land Parcel 2

**6.4.3.1** This area lies to the east of the L07006-2, Burke's Hill Road and to the north of the River Camcor. While much of the plan area is infill in nature, it will also have a very “public edge” in the form of the frontage facing the proposed “Town Distributor Road” which will open up to public view a prospect of the town which did not exist before.

The attached plan illustrates the general disposition of land uses visualised for this parcel namely:

- 2A - Mixed use,
- 2B - Public/Community/Educational,
- 2C - Town Distributor Road.
- with the remainder made up open space and residential

#### 2A Mixed Use

It is intended that this area shall accommodate:

- i. Mixed use development including shops, offices, service facilities, social facilities, commercial recreation and residential. It is expected that this area will be of a lower order and smaller scale than the “neighbourhood centre” envisaged at 1.A in land parcel 1. Therefore the final outcome would be the subject of discussion with development interest as the plan evolves.
- ii. The area may also be less “urban” than 1.A due to its suburban, town edge location. Notwithstanding this, the Councils will still expect well-designed buildings, which can bring legibility and a sense of place to the vicinity.

#### 2B Public/Community/Educational

It is intended that this area (approx 1ha) shall accommodate any use from the above sector as and when the demand and resources come together. To retain an element of flexibility within the area, to accommodate currently unforeseen circumstances, it is possible that area 2A and 2B may be looked at together provided the uses involved are seen as compatible and that the outcome is acceptable. Furthermore, it should be noted that those developments shall be required to **complete** their road and pedestrian access networks up to their boundaries and that they shall **not** retain any areas of land as “ransom strips”.

#### 2C Town Distributor Road

This shall be designed as part of the overall exercise and its land-take will then give the final boundaries of the adjacent land parcels. This route is seen as the major element in allowing the Local Area Strategy to function properly and while

development alongside it may be phased the road itself should be constructed in any 1<sup>st</sup> phase. Should it be agreed to bring forward the road in sections, no section may be constructed as a cul-de-sac and it must form part of a network thereby allowing traffic to permeate through the area. Furthermore, it should be noted that those developments shall be required to **complete** their road and pedestrian access networks up to their boundaries and that they shall **not** retain any areas of land as “ransom strips”.

It is an objective of this development plan to secure the provision of this road and it should be noted that in the event of compulsory purchase becoming necessary, the land required for the road will be treated as “reserved for this purpose”.

### 2D Residential

The residentially zoned areas should be developed as high quality well designed housing. It must be recognised that some of the lands are “land-locked” and as such they will impact on the surrounding development. They should therefore be handled in a sensitive manner and in line with the character of the surrounding area. Parts of the residentially zoned areas should cater for the demand for low rise, low density housing. This will also provide a viable alternative to “one-off” housing.

### 2E Open Space

The Council will expect open space to account for a minimum of 15% of the site area and that the designs, as they evolve, will utilise this space in an imaginative manner so as to make the best use of the land. The Council may consider a revision of open space requirements as part of a development proposal for development proposals that are located directly adjacent to Camcor Linear Park, where provision of the park adjacent to the residentially zoned lands forms part of the overall scheme.

### Access and Movement

The evolving scheme shall be in line with the criteria already discussed regarding these elements (See 6.4.1).

However the accompanying plan illustrates the relevant points:

- Red arrows – indicate where new road linkages shall join the existing network. These points will be linked to create an internal road network through the development thus bringing permeability to the fabric.
- Blue arrows – indicate where pedestrian linkages shall occur.

It is understood that this schematic view may be required to alter as detailed design work comes forward and should this be required, consultation with the Councils should take place.

#### 6.4.4 Land Parcel 3

This area lies to the south of the River Camcor and north of R440-1, Kinnitty Road. This plan area is basically “backland” in nature but will, over time, have a very public edge by virtue of the “Town Distributor Road” which will form its eastern boundary. The attached plan illustrates the general disposition of the land uses visualised for this parcel namely:

- 3A, 3B and 3C - Residential,
- 3D - Open Space/Buffer zone,
- 3E - Mixed Use and
- 3F - Town Distributor Road.

### 3A Residential

Low-rise low density housing should be developed to act as a transition zone between the existing development and the bulk of the site.

### 3B Residential

It is intended that this area be developed as a well-designed low rise, medium density housing area.

### 3C Residential

It is intended that this area be an opportunity for a high quality relatively high-density housing development to bring variety and legibility to this quarter of the town.

### 3D Open Space/Buffer Zone

This area is seen as a landscaped “buffer zone” between the housing and town distributor by treating the interfaces between development and the road using different approaches to create variety and amenity value.

### 3E Mixed Use

This area of mixed-use development shall be accessed from 3Ei but only after this junction is modified to an acceptable and safe configuration. Potential uses will be discussed at an early stage, as the existing distillery building will require extremely sensitive interventions.

### 3F Town Distributor Road

This shall be designed as part of the overall exercise and its land-take will then give the final boundaries of the adjacent land parcels. This route is seen as the major element in allowing the Local Area Strategy to function properly and while development alongside it may be phased the road itself should be constructed in any 1<sup>st</sup> phase. Should it be agreed to bring forward the road in sections, no section may be constructed as a cul-de-sac and it must form part of a network thereby allowing traffic to permeate through the area. Furthermore, it should be noted that those developments shall be required to **complete** their road and pedestrian access networks up to their boundaries and that they shall **not** retain any areas of land as “ransom strips”.

It is an objective of this development plan to secure the provision of this road and it should be noted that in the event of compulsory purchase becoming necessary, the land required for the road will be treated as “reserved for this purpose”.

### 3G Internal Open Space

The minimum of 15% open space required in housing developments shall, in this area, be concentrated to create an area, which is more flexible and will allow the residents more potential opportunities to use it. The Councils may consider a revision of open space requirements as part of a development proposal for development proposals that are located directly adjacent to Camcor Linear Park, where provision of the park adjacent to the residentially zoned lands forms part of the overall scheme.

### Access and Movement

The evolving scheme shall be in line with the criteria already outlined regarding these elements (see section 6.4.1).

However the accompanying plan illustrates the relevant points:

- Red arrows – indicate where new road linkages shall join the existing network. These points will be linked to create an internal road network through the development thus bringing permeability to the fabric.
- Blue arrows – indicate where pedestrian linkages shall occur.

It is understood that this schematic view may be required to alter as detailed design work comes forward and should this be required, consultation with the Councils should take place.

## 6.5 South East Quadrant (Map 6.2)

**6.5.1** This local area strategy consists of one land parcel (Refer to Table 6.1 and Map 6.2) and is the largest of the three proposed. It lies south of the River Camcor between the N52, Roscrea Road and the R404-1, Kinnitty Road. The strategic issues relating to this plan area are as follows:

- i. While the area is currently “backland/infill” in nature it is an extremely important location which requires judicious development in order to “complete” this segment of the town.
- ii. In order to function properly, alleviate traffic volumes and create a coherent, permeable urban fabric the construction of the southern section of the “Town Distributor Road” will be required. This road links the two roads mentioned above.
- iii. Development facing the “Town Distributor Road” shall present a strong urban edge to the corridor.
- iv. The construction of this road will be an integral part of the implementation of the plan and while it may be funded partially by development, the complexity of such a project is such that the Council will have to be involved in steering it to completion given the number of disparate interests likely to be involved.

- v. As development comes on stream, it will bring pressures to bear on the adjoining areas and as such the plans will bring forward any changes that are required to allow existing developments to accommodate the new with the minimum amount of disruption.
- vi. Access and internal movement shall be catered for by a network of roads and footpaths as well as pedestrian routes/cycleways where necessary and suitable.

The outcome shall be a permeable urban fabric which will allow people to move around and through the town by a variety of routes. Speed and volume of traffic will be regulated by use of indirect routing and tight horizontal geometry on bends as well as junction design and priority. Culs-de-sac, where used, shall be short, legible and only serve a small number of units thus allowing “shared surfaces” to be utilised adding further to the variety of the fabric. This will allow the different land uses to function effectively.

#### 6.5.2 Land Parcel 4

The attached plan illustrates the general disposition of land uses visualised for this parcel namely the following:

- 4A - Mixed Use,
- 4B and 4D - Public/ Community/ Educational,
- 4C and 4E - Residential,
- 4F - Town Distributor Route,
- 4G - Open Space/ Sports/ Recreation/ Amenity

##### 4A Mixed Use

It is intended that this area shall accommodate mixed use development including shops, offices, service facilities, commercial, recreation and residential. While it is not expected to be a large-scale urban neighbourhood centre due to its suburban type location, it presents an opportunity to enable a variety of uses/services etc. to be brought to the area. Notwithstanding this, the Councils will still expect well designed buildings, which can bring legibility and a sense of place to the area. With this in mind, there is the possibility of developing a ‘signature’ type building in this area.

##### 4B and 4D Public/Community/Educational

It is intended that this area shall accommodate any use from the above sector as and when the demand and resources come together.

##### 4C, 4E and 4F Residential

The bulk of this land parcel is zoned for residential use. It is intended that these areas shall accommodate integrated well-designed housing developments that shall bring variety to the town. General principles which will be required are as follows:

- Strong urban style and design and the area may contain, signature style developments.
- Strong and interesting streetscape to the proposed “Town Distributor Road”.
- Utilise the access points shown and create an internal road network that gives permeability to the fabric, allows convenient movement for local residents but does not create “short-cutting” opportunities for through traffic.

4Ci This element shall:

- Bring some urban style elements to the town edge by creating a well-designed medium density low-rise development.
- Utilise the access points shown and create an internal road network that gives permeability to the fabric.

4E This element shall:

- Be developed as high quality well designed housing catering for the demand for low rise, low density housing. This will also provide a viable alternative to “one-off” housing.

##### 4F Town Distributor Road

This shall be designed as part of the overall exercise and its land-take will then give the final boundaries of the adjacent land parcels. This route is seen as the major element in allowing the masterplans to function properly and while

development alongside it may be phased the road itself should be constructed in any 1<sup>st</sup> phase. Should it be agreed to bring forward the road in sections, no section may be constructed, as a cul-de-sac and it must form part of a network thereby allowing traffic to permeate through the area. Furthermore, it should be noted that those developments shall be required to **complete** their road and pedestrian access networks up to their boundaries and that they shall **not** retain any areas of land as “ransom strips”.

It is an objective of this development plan to secure the provision of this road and it should be noted that in the event of compulsory purchase becoming necessary, the land required for the road will be treated as “reserved for this purpose”.

Pedestrian movement will be affected by the presence of the distributor route, and consequently the adjoining designs must accommodate this. The internal routes should concentrate and lead the pedestrians to a number of points where the Distributor can be safely traversed. Use of the “splitter” islands at the three roundabouts along with pedestrian controlled management facilities should be investigated.

#### 4G Open Space

The Councils will expect a minimum of 15% of the land to be given over to open space not including the buffer zone along the proposed town distributor road.

#### Access and Movement

The evolving scheme shall be in line with the criteria already discussed regarding these elements.

However the accompanying plan illustrates the relevant points:

- Red arrows – indicate where new road linkages shall join the existing network. These points will be linked to create an internal road network through the development thus bringing permeability to the fabric.
- Blue arrows – indicate where pedestrian linkages shall occur.

It is understood that this schematic view may be required to alter as detailed design work comes forward and should this be required, consultation with the Councils should take place.

## 6.6 Central (Map 6.1)

**6.6.1** This local area strategy comprises one land parcel (Refer to Table 6.1 and Map 6.1). It is located to the east of the N52 and north of the R404-0, Kinnitty Road to the north east of Emmet Square.

Because of its central and contained position, a very sensitive approach will be required to bring forward an acceptable outcome.

The strategic background of this area is as follows:

- i. Strategically important as an “edge of centre” site.
- ii. It is “backland/infill” in nature.
- iii. It is currently undeveloped and is a rather isolated piece of land which adversely affects the morphology of the town.
- iv. Access and internal movement shall be catered for by a network of roads and footpaths as well as pedestrian routes/cycleways where necessary and suitable.

The outcome shall be a permeable urban fabric, which allows people to move around and through the town by a variety of routes. Speed and volume of traffic will be regulated by use of indirect routing and tight horizontal geometry on bends as well as junction design and priority. Culs-de-sac, where used, shall be short, legible and only serve a small number of units thus allowing “shared surfaces” to be utilised adding further to the variety of the fabric. This will allow the different land uses to function effectively.

#### 6.6.2 Land Parcel 5

The attached plan illustrates graphically the general disposition of land uses visualised for this parcel namely:

- 5A, 5B and 5C - Public/Community /Educational,
- 5.D and 5.E - Residential,

- 5.F - open space and the attendant access ways, both vehicular and pedestrian.

#### 5A Public/Community/Education

This area is seen as a site for educational purposes to accommodate future demand as the town expands.

#### 5B Public/Community/Education

This is seen as an area suitable for the creation of car parking to allow more scope for the town centre to evolve. It will be an objective of this element to provide for pedestrian linkages to the town centre and the N52.

#### 5C Public/Community/Educational

This area presents an opportunity to re-use the existing protected structure and have enough space to cater for future Public/Community/Educational uses without impinging on its integrity and siting.

#### 5D Residential

This area is seen as an opportunity to allow a small number of well-designed, traditional, classical or innovative houses to be introduced sympathetically into the urban fabric.

#### 5E Residential

This element is seen as an opportunity to bring forward a well-designed relatively high-density low-rise urban housing development. It should however respect the scale and massing of the adjoining existing development on the eastern and southern boundaries.

#### 5F Open Space

There is an existing playing field at the north end of the parcel and this should be retained as such with an objective for a pedestrian link to be provided as the area grows.

There is an opportunity for the provision of an amenity open space utilising the element of high ground to the west of Sandymount Avenue. This should incorporate a pedestrian link.

#### Access and Movement

The evolving scheme shall be in line with the criteria already outlined regarding these elements (see section 6.5.1).

However the accompanying plan illustrates the relevant points:

- Red arrows – indicates where new road linkages shall join the existing network.  
These points will be linked to create an internal road network through the development thus bringing permeability to the fabric.
- Blue arrows – indicates where pedestrian linkages shall occur.

It is understood that this schematic view may be required to alter as detailed design work comes forward and should this be required, consultation with the Councils should take place.