



## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION / ANALYSIS

### 1.1 Introduction

This Local Area Plan (LAP) for the former Magee Barracks lands, shown in Figure 1 below, has been prepared in the context of the Kildare County Development Plan 2005 and the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2002. Objective O3.2.12 of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan aims to “encourage the redevelopment of the former barracks for an appropriate mix of uses”, and later expands on what is envisioned at the barracks lands:

*“(Magee Barracks) has been identified as being the subject of a separate Local Area Plan. It is envisaged that the barracks lands will be intensively developed with a mix of uses so as to ensure a new vibrant quarter of the town emerges. The Local Area Plan will identify the proposed uses, street pattern/urban form and mobility through the site. The Council intends that this area be knitted in to the existing urban fabric so that it becomes an integral part of the extended town centre.”*

*(Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2002, 2.9.2)*

Of particular significance to the redevelopment of these lands is the decision by the government to make Magee Barracks available as one of the initial sites for the Affordable Housing Initiative, announced by An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern in the context of the Sustaining Progress pay agreement with the social partners in 2003. It is the intention that the Affordable Housing Initiative will target those who in the past would have expected to purchase a house from their own resources but find that they are unable to do so in the current market.

#### **Key Objectives of the Local Area Plan**

- Creation of a vibrant urban quarter, linking to the town centre, that complements and enhances the development of Kildare town
- Provision of a range of housing, aimed at a balanced mix across the site, with an emphasis on Affordable Housing
- Enabling the provision of educational, community, cultural and amenity uses that serve the town as well as the residents of the subject lands
- Provision of a significant element of public open space
- Reflecting the historic military character of the lands

### 1.2 Site Description

#### 1.2.1 Historical Context

Kildare is a small cathedral town situated at the western end of the Curragh Plain. Its character is that of an established market town with a medieval type street pattern. The town of Kildare marks a site which has been sacred since pre-Christian times. The origin of the town can be traced back to pre-Norman times when it was an important religious site. A double monastery was founded by St. Brigid, which became the principal church of the Kingdom of Leinster. After the Norman invasion a castle was built and by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Kildare had developed as a small corporate town. It continued to grow in importance and in 1309 a Parliament was held in the town. The town lost much of its religious importance with the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1500s.

Kildare town has a long history of military association. The site of Magee barracks had been a British Army barracks since the early 1900s and subsequently was the first depot of An Garda Síochana following Independence. Magee Artillery Barracks was built in the 1930’s, and was one of the first military barracks to be built by the newly independent Irish Free State.



In 1996, there were approximately 165 army personnel and 30 civilians employed at the barracks.

In 1998, the barracks was closed and personnel moved to the Curragh Camp. Since then the barracks land has been used as a reception centre for Kosovar refugees, asylum seekers and more recently for traveller accommodation.

As part of the Affordable Housing Initiative, announced in the context of the Sustaining Progress pay agreement, Magee Barracks was made available for affordable housing. This was announced in a speech given by An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

Kildare town has experienced rapid population growth in recent years. It currently has a population of 5,694 (as per the 2002 census). This is an increase of 33% over the 4,278 population recorded in the 1996 census. Much of this population increase has been driven by the town's increased accessibility by road and rail to employment centres such as Naas, Newbridge, Leixlip and Dublin.

### **1.2.2 Location (in relation to the town centre)**

The Magee Barracks lands (shown in Diagram 1) are situated approximately 500m to the east of Kildare town centre, measured along Hospital Street / Dublin Street, between the Market Square and the main barracks entrance. The site also has potential vehicular access to the town centre and the railway station via Melitta Road and Station Road (each approximately 1km distant). The completion of Road Objective 03.8.1 of the Kildare Town Development Plan 2002 will link the barracks lands through the Ruanbeg residential development to the Dublin Road to the east.

### **1.2.3 Existing uses and zoning**

Existing land uses on the site are outlined in Diagram No. 2. The bulk of the site, having ceased to function as a military establishment, is not currently in use. The southern portion of the site however is occupied by various redundant military installations. Part of these lands are in use as a caravan park to provide temporary accommodation for asylum seekers. Part of the former parade ground has, in the recent past, housed Kosovar refugees. The area of the former Officers Quarters on the Dublin Road is in use as a temporary halting site for travellers, covering approximately 1 acre.

The barracks lands are currently zoned in the Kildare Town Development Plan 2002 for '*Industrial and Educational Uses*'. However, this zoning will only apply until the adoption of the Local Area Plan for the lands. This gives flexibility to allow a wide range of appropriate uses and activities on the site. Therefore, the current zoning is not a constraint on the development of the Local Area Plan area.

## **1.3 Site Analysis**

### **1.3.1 Shape, Area, Principal Dimensions, Topography**

Irregular in shape, the site, which comprises some 26 hectares, lies with its long axis (about 800m) running approximately south-west / north east. It is about 450m at its widest point, 250m at its narrowest. The northern part of the site is open, sloping gently to the north and east. The southern part of the site is partially developed and is quite flat. The barracks site has a nominal street frontage of about 340m to the south of the site.

### **1.3.2 Features, Ground Cover, Trees, etc.**

The principal features on site are the former military buildings, most of which are in a poor state of repair. These include various 2 storey concrete and brick barracks buildings, many of which have been vandalised or are burnt out. A number of timber and corrugated iron sheds and stables are sited in the vicinity of the barracks buildings and these are also in poor



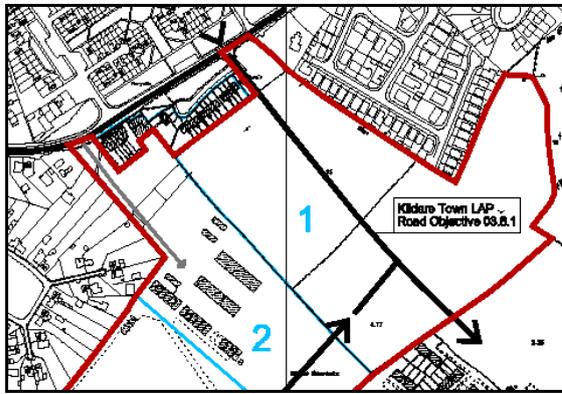
condition. The former shell store, which is surrounded by a high security steel fence, is very prominent as is the former, green painted, water tower. A major feature is the former Parade Ground, which, as it was designed for use by artillery, is of vast proportions. Of the barracks buildings only the former Officers Mess, which has its front entrance facing away from the barracks square, is a protected structure. The main splayed entrance gates and railings are also listed for protection in the County Development Plan.

Another strong feature of the Barracks site is the band of mature trees surrounding the entrance and fronting onto Hospital Street, and the tree-lined main avenue that gives access to the centre of the site. The predominant character of the site lies in its current spaciousness. Most of the built environment is dilapidated and redundant.

**1.3.3 Character areas, potential development zones**

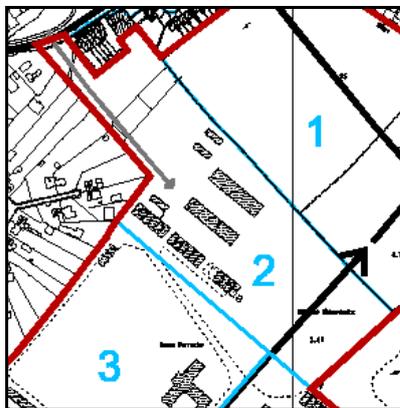
As presently constituted the site breaks down into five main sub zones that each has a distinct environmental character. These areas are indicated on Diagram No. 1.

Area 1



This greenfield (former horse grazing) area at the northernmost end of the site is about 9 hectares in extent. For the most part the land slopes gently in a north/north easterly direction. Houses back onto the western, northern and eastern boundaries. There is access to Melitta Road via the north western corner and to Hospital Street via the main avenue. Access to the area through a private housing estate on the eastern boundary is an objective of the development plan. There are some distant views of the Dublin Mountains from the Melitta Road end of this area.

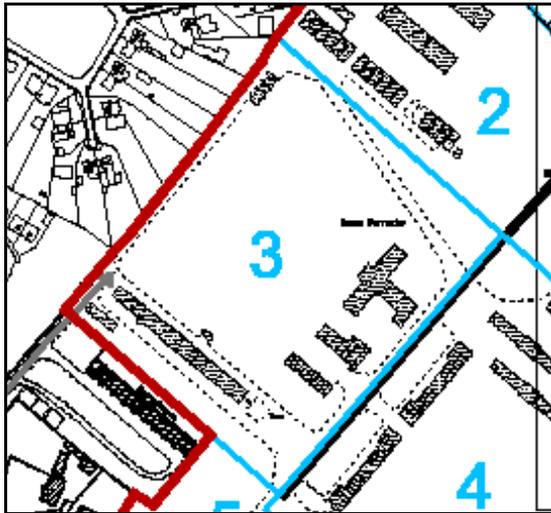
Area 2





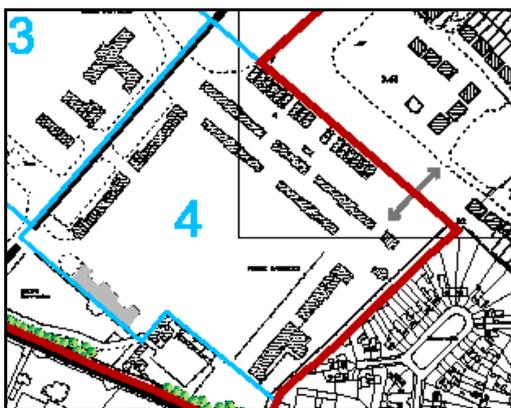
This area (about 4.2 hectares), situated in the ‘waist’ of the site, has access to Melitta Road and to Hospital Street via the main avenue. It comprises the former stables and transport sheds, gun sheds, vegetable plots and recreation area of the barracks. Both the eastern and western boundaries of the site are backed onto by residential development.

Area 3



About 4.2 hectares in extent, this area to the west of the main avenue, has (in places) a certain ‘park-like’ quality. It was described as a ‘recreation area’ and included buildings housing the former NCO’s Mess and the shell store (now surrounded by a security fence). A prefabricated structure serving the asylum seekers is also sited here. Residential properties back onto the north western and south western boundaries of this area. The water tower is a prominent feature of the area.

Area 4



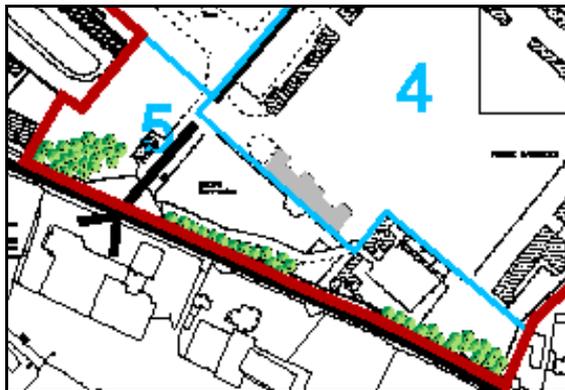
Lying to the east of the main avenue, this area, which is about 5.7 hectares in extent, was the main barracks. It includes the former Parade Ground, accommodation blocks, Officers Mess, administration and training schools and a number of smaller related structures including gun sheds and an ‘electronics’ building of recent origin. Whilst this area could be said to characterise the barracks as a whole, most of the buildings are in poor condition and are of questionable architectural value or potential usefulness. Mostly two stories in height, the buildings are long and narrow in section and unattractive. The parade ground itself is enormous and, even though it is partially occupied by mobile homes, it has a deserted



atmosphere. Houses back onto the eastern and north eastern boundaries of this part of the site.

The Officers Mess is a protected structure. It faces away from the parade ground in a southerly direction. In front of the Officers Mess is level ground forming a garden with a number of trees.

Area 5



This area has approximately 340m of frontage to Hospital Street and measures approximately 2 hectares. It includes the main entrance, a security area, and the former Officers Quarters which is now in use as a halting site for travellers. The gates and railings to the barracks are protected structures. The boundaries to the road are planted with trees. The mature trees to the west of the main gates are particularly attractive.

**1.3.4 Architectural features**

Whilst there are only two structures on site listed for protection, there are a number of buildings that might be deemed to have architectural or historic merit. As noted above, most of the other buildings are in poor condition and appear on casual inspection to have little architectural value or potential for practical reuse or conversion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that no concerted architectural survey has been carried out on the site and this will need to be done prior to the commencement of development on site.

**1.3.5 Influence of surrounding uses (sensitivity)**

Practically the whole of the site is bounded by existing residential development (as shown in Diagram 2). For the most part, the houses, a mixture of bungalows (such as Melitta Park or Campion Crescent) and two storey houses (as at Beechgrove and Ruanbeg) back onto the barracks site and, provided the normal rules relating to rights of light and privacy are observed, should not inhibit development. Because of the topography at the north east corner of the site, the adjoining houses would overlook development on the site. Similarly, development on the barracks site would overlook existing residential development on the eastern boundary. Residential density in the surrounding areas varies from one estate to another. Densities generally are low, in the traditional 8 – 12 units per acre range.

There are differences in levels at a number of points on the boundary of the site. The houses in Ruanbeg Manor to the north of the parade ground are approximately three metres below the level of the barracks site. At the northern boundary, the residential development at 'The Plains' is at a significantly higher level than the barracks site.

**1.3.6 Links to town centre**

Although the Market Square is less than 500m from the main gate of the site the road linking





the two elements - Hospital Street - is characterised by scattered commercial buildings and has little of urban quality or continuous street frontage. In visual terms, therefore, the link between the town centre and the development site is weak. However, it is recognised that the local authority is carrying out works on the road to create a more urban environment than the previous N7 national route designation allowed. The development of a Lidl store across the road from the barracks will increase movement between the town centre and this eastern part of the town.

The area of the site fronting Hospital Street (Area 5) rises quite steeply into the site and does not lend itself easily to the development of urban frontage. The entrance gates and railings are listed for protection, and this may need to be reviewed. Apart from the road frontage at the southern boundary, the site is hemmed in by residential development along the whole of its western (town side) boundary, and whilst there is some potential to improve pedestrian and possibly cycle access through these estates, new vehicular connection through existing residential roads would not be acceptable or appropriate.

The Melitta Road/Station Road route also allows linkage with the town centre and advantage should be taken of this to improve circulation, encourage provision of public transport and help to avoid congestion in the centre. This will be facilitated by implementation of Objective 03.8.1 (Kildare Town Development Plan) to provide a link between the Dublin Road and Melitta Road through the northern part of the Barracks site.

It is considered that the best way to improve linkage with the town centre is through provision of certain town centre type functions (e.g. retail, cultural, entertainment, etc.) on site thus creating linkage by association. These elements will need to be sited in the southern part of the site.

The development of the barracks lands provides the opportunity to carry out further works to create a strong urban environment along Dublin Street and Hospital Street, and bring about physical connection that further integrates the barracks lands to the town centre.

### **1.3.7 Existing services**

The site is capable of being serviced and has access to all of the principal service networks. Water, sewer, gas, communications and power networks, both on and off site, are shown in outline in Diagram 3. The Department of Defence is of the view that existing services on site will need to be upgraded and re-routed to enable the site to be developed fully. The town's sewerage treatment system is currently being upgraded. It is expected that this will be in place in time to serve the development of the proposed lands. The existing layout of services is not, however, a constraint on the potential development of the site.

#### **Site Summary**

- The bulk of the 64 acre site is available and suitable for development.
- There are few obvious constraints on the development of the site although care will be needed to protect the amenity and privacy of the residents of adjoining estates.
- Current physical linkage with the town centre is limited.
- However, circulation and interaction with the central area can be improved by availing of the opportunity to create new links with Hospital Street and Melitta Road.
- The introduction of appropriate urban functions on the site enables linkage by shared function and association.
- The site breaks down naturally into a number of 'character' areas that will assist in the definition of function and the creation of 'a sense of place' associated with these different areas.



- The vast proportions of the Parade Ground (Area 4) do not lend itself to easy integration with residential, neighbourhood scale development. It is possible and desirable, however, to reflect the military/parade theme in the detailed design and layout of the development. This could be achieved through the interspersal of small formal squares as a motif through the overall development.
- Subject to the findings of architectural survey, all structures other than those listed for protection will be subject to demolition.
- Certain baseline surveys will be necessary (topography, ground conditions, contamination check and architectural record) before proceeding to implementation of the development.

## **1.4 Adjoining Land Uses**

### **1.4.1 Surroundings – uses and character.**

With the exception of mixed commercial development on Hospital Street and Dublin Street, the barracks site is completely surrounded by residential development. The development to the west and north west of the site is predominantly local authority housing, whilst to the north and east (excepting Rowanville) most of the housing is private. The town centre and most of the existing retail, cultural, sporting and educational services lie to the west and south of the site, as do most of the tourist attractions. Public open space is scattered in relatively small self-contained units associated with the various individual residential estates. It is generally accepted that the area as a whole (east of the town centre) is poorly served with social and cultural facilities.

Hospital Street and Dublin Street do not have a strong urban presence. These streets are currently characterised by scattered commercial buildings and have little of urban quality or continuous street frontage. This reflects, among other factors, their status until 2004 as part of the N7.

### **1.4.2 Recent Development in Kildare town**

Significant recent developments in the town will help to attract employment and commercial activity to Kildare. At Claregate Street, a mixed use development of 15 retail units, library, office and 56 apartments was completed in 2004. In September 2004, Kildare County Council granted planning permission for a tourist outlet village of 53 units with a gross floor space of approximately 10,925m<sup>2</sup> at the Nurney Road (Ref. 04/927). This development is currently under construction. At land adjacent to the M7 interchange, a planning application was lodged in December 2004 for an industrial and business park, hotel and leisure centre, motor mall, bar, restaurants, and 330 residential units (Ref. 04/2974).

These developments, when complete, will increase the commercial base of the town and help to meet the employment needs of the town. Each of these developments is located to the west of the town centre. Development at Magee Barracks will help to rebalance the commercial activity of the town to the east.



## CHAPTER 2 – PLANNING CONTEXT

There are a number of important policy and guidance documents extant that have a bearing on the preparation of this Local Area Plan. These are set out as follows.

### **2.1 National Spatial Strategy**

The aim of the *National Spatial Strategy* is to improve the quality of life of all citizens, bringing jobs closer to where we live, improving our environment and building a strong sustainable economic future. The strategy sets out a framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development and population growth throughout the country. The National Spatial Strategy endorses the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area previously agreed for the Greater Dublin Area. The creation of sustainable settlements and communities is fundamental to the NSS. It seeks to direct development pressure and growth away from the Greater Dublin Area. The Naas / Newbridge / Kilcullen urban area - designated a Primary Development Centre under the Strategic Planning Guidelines – will be required to play a wider role under the National Spatial Strategy, both in terms of its own catchment area and its relationship with the midlands and the South Eastern region.

### **2.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2004)**

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (RPGGDA) provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of the Greater Dublin Area in the 12 year period up to 2016 within the NSS vision for 2020, succeeding the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (1999).

With regard to the hinterland areas, of which Kildare town is a part, the RPGGDA promote the consolidation of development within the defined development centres with the objective of achieving increasingly self-sustaining growth through expansion of both population and local economic activity. The Guidelines also seek to encourage employment to development centres such as Kildare town to ensure that they are sustainable settlements. Kildare town within these guidelines is noted as a Moderate Growth Town and combined with Monasterevin as a Secondary Dynamic Cluster.

The Regional Planning Guidelines includes a 'Vision for Housing & Physical Infrastructure in 2012'. This states that the policy for residential development takes the various issues of affordability and social housing into account and plans for the construction of private, public and voluntary housing units to cater for demand. The vision also favours social mixing of housing developments where people of different age groups, backgrounds and family make-up live side-by-side allowing for greater social inclusion.

### **2.3 Kildare County Development Plan 2005**

The County Development Plan sets the strategic development policies and objectives for the county at large. Within the framework for the county separate local area plans have been prepared for particular towns, including Kildare town. All Local Area Plans will be examined in the strategic context of the review of the new County Development Plan. Any submissions for additional zonings of land will be considered at the review of the existing or preparation of new Local Areas Plans. Within the Plan, in relation to Kildare town, there will be a re-utilisation of suitable redundant, obsolete and protected structures. The plan also states that the Council will support the provision of a museum in the county and in Kildare town (Section 13).



### **2.1.4 Kildare and Monasterevin Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation**

The Kildare Town and Monasterevin Draft Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation (IFPLUT) is presently being produced. This plan seeks to ensure that future development in the town will be sustainable and that alternative modes of transport other than the car will be provided for the communities created by new development in the town. The Draft Integrated Framework Plan identifies Magee Barracks Local Area as of significant development potential to the town.

### **2.1.5 Kildare County Housing Strategy**

The Housing Strategy, adopted by Kildare County Council in the 2005 County Development Plan, assesses the need for housing in the county and puts forward strategies for dealing with it. The strategy notes that County Kildare continues to experience significant housing affordability problems. It is anticipated that demand for social and affordable housing will continue to exceed the anticipated supply, and 20%, the statutory maximum that is transferable for the provision of social and affordable housing under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, applies to housing development in the county. Of this 20%, 8% is for social housing and 12% for affordable.

### **2.1.6 Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2002**

The development plan is based on a future population projection in the town area of 12,000 by 2006, representing a 300% increase in the population in 10 years.

The development strategy as set out in the local area plan is to consolidate the town as part of the Kildare-Monasterevin secondary growth centre. Kildare will evolve with a range of employment, recreational, cultural, retail and educational facilities appropriate for a town of its size. The plan aims to redirect the growth of the town to the north and west, rather than the existing trend to the east. The plan aims to ensure that the redevelopment of the barracks makes a positive contribution to the town.

The plan identifies three areas of the town as requiring Area Plans; the South Green area to the northwest of the town centre (identified for future residential growth) and the town centre as Action Area Plans and former barracks as a Local Area Plan.

*“(Magee Barracks) has been identified as being the subject of a separate Local Area Plan...The Local Area Plan will identify the proposed uses, street pattern/urban form and mobility through the site.*

The plan includes an objective to develop a county museum (or branch of the National Museum of Ireland) at an appropriate location in Kildare town.

### **2.1.7 South Green Action Area Plan 2004**

The South Green area to the northwest of the town centre is identified in the Kildare Town Development Plan 2002 as being the most appropriate location for the future expansion of the residential area of the town. The plan identifies lands to be developed for high, medium and low density housing, amenity and recreational use and other commercial and community development. The plan sets out the planned phasing of development, including both the residential and other uses and the infrastructure necessary to support it. Approximately 1,690 residential units are planned in the area over the two phases of development, which will extend beyond the life of the existing Kildare Town Development Plan 2002.



As part of the first phase of the plan, a site is provided for the amalgamation on one site of the town's three secondary schools, along with supporting sports and recreational facilities.

**Commentary:**

At national and regional level, the key theme throughout is the development of sustainable settlements. Kildare town has been noted as a 'Moderate Growth Town' in which sustainability will be achieved through consolidation.

Again, in all of the documents alternative modes of transport are being sought and a move away from private transportation encouraged, maximising accessibility to the public transport network is advocated. This approach is articulated by the DTO and is echoed in the Kildare Town Plan and in the Kildare and Monasterevin IFPLUT which is presently in preparation.

The Kildare County Development Plan 2005-2011 calls for the re-utilisation of suitable redundant, obsolete and protected structures. The Council also states (Section 13) that it will support the provision of a Museum in the County and in Kildare town.

The existing town plan proposes that Magee Barracks should be the subject of a Local Area Plan and that it should develop as a new vibrant quarter, intensively developed with a mix of uses. The Council also intends that this area will be knitted in to the existing urban fabric so that it becomes an integral part of the extended town centre.



## CHAPTER 3 – DEVELOPING THE VISION

The decision to prepare the Magee Barracks Local Area Plan in Kildare town arises from the policies and objectives of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2002.

As stated in the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2002;

*“The Magee Barracks has been identified as being the subject of a separate Local Area Plan. It is envisaged that the barracks lands will be intensively developed with a mix of uses so as to ensure that a new vibrant quarter to the town emerges. The Local Area Plan will identify the proposed uses, street pattern/urban form and mobility through the site. The Council intends that this area be knitted-in to the existing urban fabric so that it becomes an integral part of the extended town centre. Pending the adoption of the Local Area Plan the existing zoning will remain in effect”*

The nature of the proposed development is further refined by the need to provide a significant number of residential units to contribute to the Affordable Housing Initiative. Residential development, consistent with the need to integrate with, and knit into the urban fabric of, the town is the key objective of the plan.

### 3.1 Concept

The central concepts in the development of a vision of the lands are ‘intensive mixed development’ and ‘vibrancy’. Key too is the idea that the area should become part of the town centre. This vision extends to establishing a community that is viable and sustainable and to creating an environment that has a sense of place and identity of which the residents and the town as a whole can be proud.

An important issue in the consideration of the potential of the Magee Barracks site is how the development of the barracks land will relate to, and integrate with, the already developed residential areas surrounding the site and the town centre from both a physical and functional viewpoint.

### 3.2 Factors Affecting Layout and Uses of the Site

Certain policies and proposals, taken at national level since the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2002 was adopted, impinge on the attainment of the vision and overall objectives for this site. These include:

- The specific requirement of the Department of Environment, for use of the site for the provision of a significant amount of housing under the Affordable Housing Initiative.
- The Department of Justice have confirmed that there is no long term need for the use of the site for asylum seeker accommodation and that they will have vacated the site by the end of 2006.
- The potential location of 380 additional jobs in Kildare town, due to the decentralisation of Revenue Commissioners IT staff.
- The commitment to the local community on the sale of the barracks, given by the (then) Minister for Defence in regard to open space and community facilities representing about 10 acres of the site.

Limiting development of the site to the provision of housing for the Affordable Housing Initiative would result in the infusion of a large mono-social unit in an area already largely surrounded by local authority built housing. This would run counter to national housing policy and against the objective of creating integrated communities and reducing social segregation. For this reason, the residential component on the site will be made up of a range of residential types to provide a better social balance, albeit weighted towards Affordable Housing.



Other factors affecting the mix and layout of uses on the site include:

- The accommodation of the travelling family currently on the site.
- Provision of the new distributor road between Melitta Road and the Dublin Road.
- The development of commercial and employment uses on a number of sites to the west of the town centre.
- The need to protect the amenities of adjoining residents.
- Provision of pedestrian and cycle networks.
- Parking provision.
- Protected structures on the site

The potential opportunities and constraints on development and the wishes of the various interested parties, as expressed through the various consultations and submissions received, were fully considered in the formulation of the plan.

### **3.3 Social, Economic & Cultural Development**

A mix of uses and activities are proposed for the site that help to achieve the vibrancy and scale of development that is implied in this vision, and are considered necessary to integrate the development to the town centre and adjoining area. These are set out below and considered more fully in the following section:

<b>Range of Uses Proposed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mix of housing, meeting the needs of a wide range of groups, at a variety of densities, design and unit sizes, spread throughout the site, with an emphasis on providing affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Initiative.</li> <li>• Associated crèche and childcare facilities.</li> <li>• A neighbourhood centre, own door offices, hotel / guest house, restaurant/café</li> <li>• Provision of a site or office suite suitable for occupation by a decentralised government department.</li> <li>• Site for a medical clinic and/or vet clinic.</li> <li>• A town-serving cultural/civic centre to incorporate identified need such as a performing arts centre, community facility, museum, library.</li> <li>• Provision of a site for educational and related use.</li> <li>• Children’s playground</li> <li>• A network of linked functional and landscaped open spaces</li> <li>• Consideration of the need for pre-school facilities.</li> <li>• Ann appropriate hierarchy of access roads, and cycle and pedestrian ways.</li> <li>• Strategic screen planting and landscaping as necessary</li> </ul>

The analysis of the site, the review of national, regional and local policy and the consultations and submissions received all support this broad vision, which, having regard to the needs of the existing community in terms of employment opportunities, social and cultural provision



and the opportunities for the creation of a new civic and tourist attractions in the town, the site is deemed well capable of fulfilling.



## CHAPTER 4 – REALISING THE VISION

### 4.1 *Layout and Scope of Development Proposed*

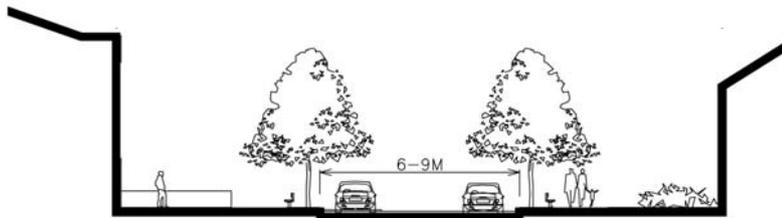
The draft layout is shown in Diagram 4. This layout is influenced by a number of 'givens' adapted to the needs of the plan, e.g. the objective of linking the Dublin road with the Melitta road, the desirability of retaining and enhancing the existing Main Avenue as a distributor and of retaining some aspects of the military use of the site, including the Officers Mess. These factors in themselves dictate a plan that allows the area to be developed to serve a resident population of approximately 1,500 to 1,800 persons (projected average household size of 2.5 - 3.0 over the life of the plan) at an average density of 35 units per hectare (14 units/acre).



### 4.2 *Land-use and Urban Form Strategy*

#### 4.2.1 *Access and Internal Movement*

The main access to the Magee barracks development will be via the existing entrance gateway. Further access points will be via the new distributor road (03.8.1 of the Kildare Town Development Plan) at Ruanbeg and via Melitta Road, adjacent to Barbaras Park. The main roads through the development connect at the proposed Magee Park. It is proposed to realign the new distributor road from that shown in the development plan. This arrangement would allow for the creation of more readily developable parcels of land, especially in the northernmost part of the site, and it would also allow better integration of potential open space and would facilitate development of future bus routes serving this part of the town. Local vehicular roads connected to these routes serve the various development parcels.



**Cross Section of proposed Boulevard**

Pedestrian linkages will also form an important element in connecting the proposed development to the existing urban framework. The pedestrian connections proposed enable closer links to the town centre and to adjacent residential developments. In addition to access via the road network, pedestrian access is proposed from the proposed cultural Plaza at the Officers Mess, via the existing (currently closed) gateway at the officers' quarters and to Melitta Road. These links to the barracks lands will enable the proposed community, amenity and cultural uses to be more accessible from adjacent residential areas and will encourage social integration.

#### 4.2.2 *Residential*

The primary land use across the site will be residential development. This will be developed at a range of densities and types. Primarily, units should be developed in accordance with the requirements of the Affordable Housing Initiative. However, to fully develop the site in an appropriate and sustainable way, a wider mix of residential types should be allowed. In total it



is envisioned that approximately 550 to 650 units could be developed on the site at densities of between 30 to 40 dwelling per hectare (11 to 16 dwellings per acre). An indication of the possible mix of residential types is set out in the following table

<b>Residential Type</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>
<i>Affordable Housing Initiative</i>	<i>350 units</i>
<i>Social units</i>	<i>50 units</i>
<i>Open Market Sale</i>	<i>200 units</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>600 units</i>

**Table 4.1 Indicative Residential Split**

To ensure that a balanced mix of housing be provided within the site, 60% of the open market sale units should be made up of “trade-up” type dwelling units of a floor area not less than 1600sqft/150sqm, in order to cater for the local market and enable persons within the town to upgrade/trade-up.

Housing for the elderly has been identified as of particular concern in the town and will also form part of the housing on the site. The actual breakdown in the residential types will be based on the identified need in each type at the time of development. The residential units available for open market sale may be distributed through each of the proposed development parcels rather than concentrated in one part of the site to provide an opportunity for people to trade up from starter homes to larger units.

Higher density development is suited to the lands adjoining the proposed village centre to the west and east (see below). This will be developed at a density of between 33 – 40 units to the hectare (13-16 units per acre). The northern part of the site, about 9 hectares (23 acres), would be developed for low to medium density residential use 30 – 33 units/hectare (11-13 units per acre).

It is considered that traveller specific housing may not be required on this site. A site has been identified on the South Green Action Area Plan and this should be used to meet the town’s requirement for traveller specific accommodation. However, travellers can be accommodated on the site in standard housing if this is their preferred option.



**Indicative sketch of residential street**

**4.2.3 Parade Ground**

It is not recommended that the military parade ground be retained in its entirety as this is vastly out of scale with normal residential development. Instead it is proposed that a ‘cultural plaza’ is created addressing the Officers Mess facing onto Hospital Street as the gateway to the new quarter of the town. The ‘plaza’ will be designed to reflect the military associations of the site and its links to the town. It will be a hard landscaped





area that will act as a civic park opening directly onto Hospital Street. This landscaped area will complement the cultural uses surrounding it. It is envisioned that it would be used for performances and outdoor civic occasions.

#### **4.2.4 Open Space**

A 3.5 acre area has been used to create Magee Park, which serves not just the development at the barracks but also provides a dedicated park for neighbouring estates such as Ruanbeg Manor, where the open space is set out in a more piecemeal manner.

Gross open space based on this approach would be about 6.5 acres and with about 2 acres devoted to community/cultural use and about 2 acre in pedestrian/cycle paths and local 'village greens', this would represent about 15% of the gross area of the site. Normal open space requirements apply for each individual development block, in addition to the open space network set out above, as set out in the development plan.

A fully equipped children's playground could be provided in the proposed Magee Park at the centre of the development, or alternatively this playground could be incorporated into the design of the village square at the heart of the proposed neighbourhood centre.

The existing road north from the main gates of the barracks will be developed as a tree-lined boulevard with generous pedestrian space between the carriageway and the building line. This will strengthen the ties between the park and the proposed commercial and cultural area of the development and to the town centre.

#### **4.2.5 Village Centre**

A Village Centre is created around a small 'village square' that would occupy about a quarter of the existing parade ground. It is proposed that the theme of 'village squares' be maintained to create an open space system designed around a series of linked 'village greens', that, in turn would become the nodal points on a cycle and pedestrian way system. The series of squares is not designed as competing with the primacy of the Market Square in the town centre but as complementary spaces serving the immediate residential area and helping to link the former barracks into the urban setting of the town. The village square is at the heart of a mixed-use zone and will be a pedestrianised zone. Comprising of an area of about 5 acres, this zone would typically include:

- Landscaped area to the rear of the Officers Mess which could facilitate the display of military hardware.
- Retail neighbourhood shops/service units (e.g. hairdresser, newsagents, ATM, etc.)
- Suite of 'own-door' offices.
- Apartments over the shops and offices
- Medical and/or vet clinic or similar (e.g. physiotherapist clinic)
- Restaurant and/or B&B / Family Hotel.
- Parking to rear

This location is also suited to the accommodation of a decentralised government office or other high quality employment facilities.



Indicative Image of Village Centre area

#### **4.2.6 Civic / Community Use**

This area, based on the Officers Mess and opening directly via a pedestrian plaza onto Hospital Street, would adjoin and be linked directly to the Village Square, and will have a tourism and cultural focus accommodating civic and cultural uses. It is envisioned that the Officers Mess will be retained and will be reserved to accommodate a museum use that is suited to its design. This block also reserves a site for the provision of a cultural centre, including performance arts centre, gallery, multipurpose theatre/lecture hall, library and similar facilities. The particular cultural use will be determined by further study, taking into account the particular requirements of potential users, its viability and issues surrounding its ongoing management. However, the delivery of accommodation for the uses identified, shall, at no cost to Kildare County Council or the community, be an intrinsic part of the development of the area. No residential or commercial development shall be permitted in advance of an agreement on the design, delivery and management of the community facilities including all costs involved. Such community facilities, and/or the cost thereof, shall be not less than the current market value of ten acres, to be assessed by independent valuation, prior to the development of the master plan. This is the Council's response to the original commitment made by the Minister for Defence to provide ten acres or the value thereof, for the benefit of the community of Kildare Town. Arrangement shall be made in consultation with Kildare Area Councillors and the agreement of Kildare County Council.

These facilities are located in the southern part of the site forming the sides of the main gateway plaza in conjunction with the Officers Mess. The cultural and commercial uses reflect and are intended to complement the nearby Kildare town centre.

In order to open the plaza out to Hospital Street and to allow for the optimum development of the site it may be necessary to remove the railings at the front of the site.

#### **4.2.7 Educational and Related Use**

A site of approximately 3 acres has been made available for use as a primary school site or educational related use. The site is located adjacent to the proposed park. The site is also centrally located within the barracks site and is easily accessible to serve the expanding educational needs of the town.

#### **4.2.8 Linkages to the town centre**

The development of the barracks lands provides the opportunity to create an urban edge and character to Dublin Street and Hospital Street, strengthening the connection with the town



centre. Improved movement between these two areas is likely to generate demand for redevelopment of the intervening streets. This affords the opportunity to encourage buildings of an urban scale and form to develop, providing a more defined streetscape and allowing the pedestrian environment to be significantly enhanced.

#### **4.2.9 Development Control**

Typically, buildings will be two to three storeys in height. Three storey development is appropriate to creating the urban scale necessary at the proposed cultural plaza and public squares. Two storey development will be more appropriate to the medium density residential lands to the north of the site. Building heights on the upper portions of the site should have regard to southward views particularly from Melitta Road. Facing onto the boulevard and addressing the public spaces, such as the cultural plaza, the village square and Magee Park, buildings will have a strong urban frontage to define the spaces and increase passive surveillance. Buildings on the cultural plaza shall contribute to the creation of an urban plaza, and shall respect the character and the setting of the protected structure.

A Masterplan will be required prior to the grant of planning permission, setting out an overall urban design framework for the development of the barracks lands. A three dimensional Masterplan shall be prepared, in consultation with Kildare County Council and shall be agreed with the Planning Authority, prior to its formal submission with any planning application on the site. Any development on the barracks lands thereafter shall accord with this Masterplan.

The Masterplan shall, inter alia, set out:

- Proposals in relation to the overall design of the proposed development (including building height); the cultural plaza, the village square, the boulevard and the residential development.
- Show how development links with town centre;
- Show how development would integrate with surrounding development and land uses;
- A comprehensive mobility management plan with proposals in relation to transportation including public transportation and non motorised modes, vehicular roads layout and access arrangements, loading/unloading provision, the provision of parking spaces and traffic management;
- Show how the proposed development relates to Hospital Street/ Dublin Street and other road frontage.
- A full conservation inventory /report on the architectural features on the site

All development shall be in accordance with the development control requirements of the Kildare County Development Plan 2005 and the Kildare Town Development Plan 2002.

The zonings described above for the local area plan area and shown on Figure 5 indicate the council's intentions for the lands within the site boundary. A range of land uses are listed in the matrix shown in the following Table 4.2 together with an indication of their broad acceptability in the different land use zones.



Land Use	Mixed Use	Residential	Educational & Related	Open Space	Community Civic and Cultural
Dwelling	Y	Y	N	N	N
Guest house/hotel/hostel	Y	O	N	N	N
Restaurant	Y	O	N	N	O
Pub	Y	N	N	N	N
Shop (convenience)	Y	O	N	N	N
Shop (comparison)	Y	N	N	N	N
Retail warehouse	N	N	N	N	N
School	N	N	Y	N	N
Medical and Related Consultant	Y	O	Y	N	O
Health centre	Y	N	Y	N	O
Nursing home	N	N	Y	N	N
Community hall & Sports halls	O	O	Y	Y	Y
Recreational buildings	Y	O	Y	Y	Y
Cultural uses, library	O	O	O	N	Y
Offices	Y	N	N	N	N
Garages, panel beating and car repairs	N	N	N	N	N
Petrol station	N	N	N	N	N
Motor sales	N	N	N	N	N
Car parks	Y	N	O	O	O
Heavy commercial vehicle parks	N	N	N	N	N
Cinema, dancehall, disco	N	N	N	N	N
Warehouse (wholesale)	N	N	N	N	N
Repository, store, depot	N	N	N	N	N
Industry	N	N	N	N	N
Industry (light)	N	N	N	N	N
Workshops	N	N	N	N	N
Playing fields	N	O	Y	Y	N
Place of worship	Y	O	Y	Y	Y
Park/playground	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tourist camping site	N	N	N	N	N
Tourist caravan park	N	N	N	N	N
Halting site	N	N	N	N	N
Cattle shed/slatted unit	N	N	N	N	N
Broiler house	N	N	N	N	N
Stable yard	N	N	N	N	N
Amusement Arcade	N	N	N	N	N
Hot food take-away	O	N	N	N	N
Utility structures	Y	O	O	O	O
Funeral homes	O	N	N	N	N
Crèche/playschool	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Incinerator	N	N	N	N	N

Y = permitted in principal, O = open for consideration, N = not permitted

**Table 4.2 Land Use Zoning Matrix**



## CHAPTER 5 POSSIBLE PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Phasing Principles

It is considered that the development can be broken down into a number of separate blocks. Due to the site's importance in the Affordable Housing Initiative, it is essential that a significant element of affordable housing is provided in the early phase of development. It is also of key importance that the community, cultural and commercial elements of the scheme will be developed in parallel with the housing element to ensure that the necessary facilities are put in place to support the new residents. However, the precise phasing may only be determined at the planning phase when fuller information from site investigations is available.

The cultural element will be linked to the commercial part of the development to ensure its timely provision. However, it is likely that the realisation of this part of the development will take place over a longer timescale, due to the need for restoration work on the protected structure, setting out of the public space and confirmation of the uses and structures that will surround the cultural plaza.

The proposed phasing blocks are set out in Diagram 5. It is proposed that the development of the site take place in three basic phases. The pace of development will depend on the availability of infrastructure and services, however the pattern suggested is as follows:

- Phase one comprising the mixed use zone, village square, cultural plaza and higher density residential development.
- Phase two comprising medium to high density residential development, the initial laying out of the proposed Magee Park and the development a community facility on a reserved site in Magee Park.
- Phase three comprising medium density development to the west and to the east of the main distributor

### 5.2 Phase One

The first phase of development will comprise a number of separate parts.

- Initiation works across the site
- Higher density residential development at area P1B.
- Reserving and setting out of the cultural plaza and village square (Area P1A)
- Potential for decentralised office or other high quality employment facilities in area P2A.

#### 5.2.1 Initiation

- Preparatory studies and investigations as noted above in Section 1.
- Redesign and up-grading of the lower section of the existing Main Avenue as a main distributor, cycleway (and future bus corridor.)
- Clearance of derelict buildings and other redundant structures.
- Protection and upgrading of existing planting (trees and shrubs).
- Completion of 'strategic planting' in the areas indicated in diagram 4 and in other boundary locations where the need for sensitive treatment is identified, to protect the privacy and setting of neighbouring developments.

#### 5.2.2 Residential Development

The first phase of residential development in the area will take place in area P1B. This area has fewer constraints on its development as it is not restricted by the longer term works in



creating the cultural plaza. This area is closest to the town centre and will also provide a significant population that can be served by the proposed village centre and developing community facilities on the site. An estimated 180 residential units can be provided in this development area.

### **5.2.3 Cultural plaza and Village Square**

The first phase of development will also see the initiation of works on the cultural plaza and the commercial village square (area P1A). Work on this can take place concurrently with the residential development, but is likely to be completed over a longer period. This phase will also include a residential element of approximately 35 units, but these are unlikely to be completed early in the development period.

### **5.2.4 Decentralised Office**

A location for a proposed decentralised office or other high quality employment facilities is reserved in area P2A. Should this site be chosen by the OPW, it can be made available in the early phase of development of the barracks lands. This would provide a strong impetus that would improve the attractiveness of the overall barracks lands (and of the town in general) and encourage early development of the remaining village centre lands for the other suitable uses identified.

## **5.3 Phase Two**

The second phase of development is again concentrated to the south of the barracks lands. It will feature a strong residential component at medium to high density. In addition it will involve the setting out of Magee Park and the provision of community facilities in the vicinity.

### **5.3.1 Residential Development**

This phase of residential development will take place in area P2A. Development will be to a density in the range 33-40 per hectare. The area would accommodate approximately 140 units. Should the decentralised department or other high quality employment facilities not locate at the barracks, the identified site on Block P2A will be reserved for development in this phase for use as a hotel or county council local office.

### **5.3.2 Park**

This phase will include the definition, layout and initial landscaping of the proposed Magee Public Park (P2B). The park measures approximately 3.5 acres and will serve the broader area to the east of Kildare town. Community facilities will be provided adjacent to the park in area P2C. These may include childcare facilities, playground and a local convenience shop.

## **5.4 Phase Three**

The third phase of development involves the development of the medium density parts to the north of the site. This can, if desired be broken into two parcels, divided by the proposed distributor road. They will be facilitated by the completion of the realignment and upgrading of the distributor roads, namely the connection from the former Main Avenue ('Parkway') and of the road linking Ruanbeg Manor estate with Melitta Road.

### **5.4.1 Residential**

Phase three would commence on completion of the distributor roads. It would comprise Medium Density residential development situated, yielding approximately 125 units on area P3A to the west of the main distributor road and 170 units on site P3B. These developments would be served with local open space provision in addition to their prominent locations adjacent to Magee Park.



## 5.5 Summary

The potential numbers of residential units that can be accommodated in the layout described above may be summarised as follows:

Area	Area (ha)	Density	No. of Units (Approx)
P1A	3.6	Medium / High	35
P1B	4.8	Medium / High	180
P2A	3.9	Medium / High	90
P2B	2.0		0
P2C	0.1		0
P3A	4.0	Low / Medium	125
P4	5.3	Low / Medium	170
<b>Total</b>			<b>600</b>

**Table 5.1** Indication of Phasing of Residential Development

This would yield a population of between 1,500 and 1,800 persons assuming household sizes of between 2.5 and 3.0 persons per residential unit. The actual final numbers of residential units will only be determined following detailed design and planning.



## Appendix I

### Statement on the likely Significant Impact on the Environment of Implementing the Plan

The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires all statutory plans to contain information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan. The requirement is in fulfilment of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, introduced in July 2001, as incorporated into the Planning and Development Act 2000.

The assessment required is similar to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) insofar as it attempts to assess in a systematic way the consequences for the environment of implementing proposals. Unlike an EIS however, this assessment attempts to assess the impact on the environment of implementing a whole plan rather than a particular project. Consequently, it must take a more strategic approach than an EIA.

This statement on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the *Magee Barracks Local Area Plan* is based on methodologies developed for Heritage Appraisal. However, in place of the relatively narrow scope of a heritage appraisal it was decided to assess the policies of the plan under the wider range of topics as defined by EIS regulations, namely;

- Human Beings,
- Flora,
- Fauna,
- Soil,
- Water,
- Air
- Climate,
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal,
- Material Assets,
- Cultural Heritage,
- Interaction of the Foregoing

The various policies of the plan are assessed against sustainable development principles and presented as a matrix on the following page. Policies are considered on the basis of the likely significant impact they will have on the environment if implemented. The impacts are assessed as to whether they will be positive, negative, neutral or insignificant or uncertain.

Policies are considered positive if, on balance, they are likely to lead to the conservation or enrichment of the environment, negative if, on balance they are likely to lead to the degradation of the environment, neutral or insignificant if they are unlikely to have a significant impact one way or the other and uncertain if the impact depends on the nature and scale of development.

Environmental assessment such as this must be considered as a process rather than an end product. It entails a systematic assessment of the environmental consequences of implementing the plan carried out at the various stages of drawing up a plan.

As one of the principal reasons for drawing up and implementing a development plan is to ensure that development is environmentally sustainable it is to be expected that none of the policies is anticipated to have a significant negative impact on the environment. The environmental assessment does, however, highlight those policies whose impact on the environment is uncertain, depending on how they are implemented.



Topic	Human Beings	Flora	Fauna	Soil	Water	Air	Climate	Landscape and Visual Appraisal	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Interaction of Foregoing	Comments
Land use and Urban Form	+	n	n	n	n	+	n	?	+	n	n	Policies on land use and urban form are intended to recognise that land is a scarce resource and should be used efficiently.
Land Use Zoning	+	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+	+	Policies on land use zoning are intended to minimise negative environmental impacts deriving from incompatible neighbouring land uses.
Movement and Transportation	+	n	n	n	n	+	+	n	+	n	+	Policies on transportation are designed to promote sustainable transportation modes.
Integration with town centre	+	n	n	n	n	n	n	+	+	+	+	This policy aims to expand the town centre and link the development into the local community
Recreation and Public Realm	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Policies on the protection of the natural environment are designed to protect and enhance the natural environment by protecting watercourses, the landscape, mature trees and hedgerows and preventing development likely to create a serious risk of pollution.
Community	+	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+	+	+	Policies on community facilities aim to widen the range of facilities available to the town
Social, Economic and Cultural Development	+	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+	n	n	Policies on social, cultural and economic development are unlikely to have significant impacts on the environment.
Heritage	+	n	n	n	n	n	n	+	n	+	+	Policy on heritage is designed to identify the value of historic structures on the site.
Sustainability	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	n	n	n	n	Policies on sustainability are intended to minimise energy demand and maximise the viability of public transport.
Infrastructure and Servicing	+	n	n	n	+	n	n	n	+	n	+	Policies on the provision of infrastructure are in line with current thinking on sustainable development. Policies on the disposal of surface water and sewage treatment in particular should minimise negative environmental impacts.
Phasing	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	Policies on phasing are designed to ensure development takes place in an orderly manner and that the necessary infrastructure is in place to cater for new development.

**Table A1 Likely Significant Impact on the Environment of implementing the policies of the plan**  
 + = positive, - = negative, ? = uncertain, n = neutral or insignificant