

STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY & PLANNING REPORT

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mullavally, Louth Village, County Louth

Louth County Council

April 2024

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF:



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

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1.0 Introduction

Hughes Planning and Development Consultants, No. 85 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 have prepared this Statement of consistency with the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 on behalf of Louth County Council in support of a proposed housing development at Mullavally, Louth Village, County Louth. The proposed development, as per the description of development contained within the statutory planning notices, will consist of the following:

The construction of 58no. houses including 8no. 2-bed bungalows, 20no. two storey 2-bed houses, 24no. two storey 3-bed houses, 5no. two storey 4-bed houses, and 1no. 5-bed bungalow, on a site of 3.54 hectares in the townland of Mullavally, Louth Village, Co. Louth. The development will also include the construction of a new entrance onto the R171; provision of new cycleway, footpath, and public lighting along the boundary with the R171; new estate roads and homezones within the site; 109no. car parking spaces including both on-street and in-curtilage parking; cycle parking; hard and soft landscaping including public open spaces, playground, and private gardens; boundary treatments; ESB substation; lighting; laying of underground sewers, mains and pipes; underground attenuation tank; and all associated works.

This application is in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000(as amended) which exempts residential development from the requirements of Part 8 of the Act. This measure will allow for accelerated delivery of social, affordable and cost-rental housing by local authorities by way of exemption from the local authority's own development 'Part 8' process in section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act) in strictly defined circumstances.

The amendments to the Act and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (the regulations) are balanced with the need to provide for the accelerated delivery of social and affordable housing while also ensuring proper planning and sustainable development by means of the introduction of a temporary time-bound exemption from the 'Part 8' process for the approval of local authority own development housing projects on local authority or State-owned lands.

This planning amendment will assist local authorities in accelerating housing delivery. In order to comply with Section 179 of the Act, the planning authority must satisfy the requirements listed below in Table 1.0.









Requirement as per S.179a	Requirement Met
Development carried out by Local Authority	
Development does not materially contravene the development plan	
Accords with strategy in the development plan for the area	
Does not require EIAR	
Does not require Appropriate Assessment	
Land is owned by the planning authority/state	
Lands is zoned for residential use	
Land has access, or can be connected, to public infrastructure and facilities, including roads and footpaths, public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, necessary for dwellings to be developed and with sufficient service capacity available for such development	

Table 1.0 Compliance with Section 179a of the Planning and Development Act

The purpose of this report is to provide background information on the site, a description of the proposed development, and to assess the development against the policies of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027. This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017.

2.0 Site Location and Description

The proposed development seeks 58 residential dwellings site of 3.48 hectares situated at the north-eastern edge of Louth Village, approximately 11km south west of Dundalk. The subject site comprises a greenfield site bounded by residential, and agricultural uses. The subject site is accessible via public transport to Dundalk, namely the Bus Éireann Route No. 167, with a bus stop located within c. 250 m of the site. The immediate area to the south west is largely residential in nature comprising existing housing estates and the village centre, and Strategic Reserve lands currently in agricultural use. The site rises from approximately +36m along the R171 to a peak of +50m in the south-eastern portion of the site, before dropping again towards the southern boundary and a level of +40m.



Figure 1.0 Aerial image showing the immediate contact of the subject site (red outline)



Figure 2.0 Aerial image showing wider locational context surrounding the subject site (red star)

3.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of the construction of 58 no. dwellings comprising 28 no. 2-bed units, 24 no. 3-bed units, 5 no. 4-bed units and 1 no. 5-bed unit. 109 parking spaces are provided which includes in-curtilage (driveway) parking of 1 no. space per mid-terrace house and 2 no. spaces per end-terrace/semi-detached house, this also includes 2 disabled bays on street, with further in-curtilage for a minimum 6no. spaces. All houses will be provided with a rear back garden.

The development provides a diverse mix of unit types catering for 3-person households right up to 7-person households.

House Type	Details	Number Proposed
A	2-bed, 3-person	8
B	2-bed, 4-person	20
C	3-bed, 5-person	18
D	3-bed, 5-person	6
E	4-bed, 7-person	1
F	4-bed, 7-person	4
H	5-bed, 4-person + carer	1
TOTAL		58

Table 2.0 Proposed house types

Public open space will be provided at 2 locations throughout the site, with each area being overlooked by adjacent dwellings. The open space will be landscaped as per the accompanying Landscape Plan.



Figure 3.0 Site plan of proposed development

The development also provides for the provision of 1 no. new vehicular entrance from the R171 on the northern boundary of the subject site. The proposed development also provides for internal roads, street lighting, footpaths, cycle paths, foul and surface water drainage works, landscaping, and all associated site development works necessary to facilitate the development.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

This section of the report will examine the planning framework, including national, regional and local that informs the use and development of the subject lands and will assess the proposed development against the various policies and requirements contained therein. Documents of note include Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (2018), The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (2019) and the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027.

4.1 Relevant National and Regional Policy

This section of the statement will examine the planning framework, including national, regional and local, that informs the use and development of the subject land. Documents of note are as follows:

- Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (2018);
- Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021);
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (2019);
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007);
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Guidelines (2009); and
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).

4.1.1 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (2018)

The Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (2018) seeks more balanced and concentrated growth, particularly within the five major cities in Ireland. The following target is outlined in relation to national growth:

'We have five cities in Ireland today in terms of population size (>50,000 people): Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. In our plan, we are targeting these five cities for 50% of overall national growth between them, with Ireland's large and smaller towns, villages and rural areas accommodating the other 50% of growth.'

More specifically, strategies are included in Chapter 2.2 of the Planning Framework which seeks to target a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to be within and close to the existing 'footprint' of built-up areas. This target is to be achieved by making better use of under-utilised land and buildings, including 'infill', 'brownfield' and publicly owned sites and vacant and under-occupied buildings, with higher housing and jobs densities, better serviced by existing facilities and public transport.

The National Planning Framework outlines that:

'a major new policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements will be required, rather than continual expansion and sprawl of cities and towns out into the countryside, at the expense of town centres and smaller villages'.

The proposed development is located on a greenfield site which is suitably zoned for residential development. The development of this site is consistent with the sequential development of lands in Louth Village, with all sites between the subject site and the town centre already developed along R171.

The subject site is located on a direct route into the town which is served by a bus service (167). The National Planning Framework also pushes for the growth in population in jobs in the counties surrounding Dublin and the provision of additional dwellings at this location will bolster the housing needs of the village. The proposed location of the site will ensure that growth is contained within the village boundary, and will offer *'improved housing choice, transport mobility and quality of life.'*

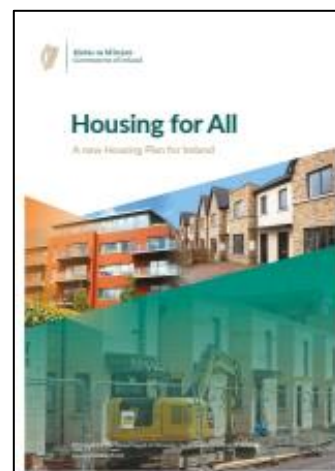
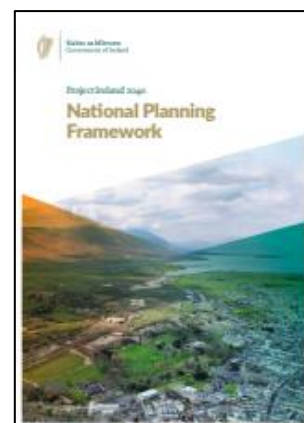
The proposed development is consistent with the above as it involves the development of underutilised land which is in close proximity to a number of public transport services. The proposed development complies with the relevant National Policy Objectives identified in the National Planning Framework.

4.1.2 Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland

The 'Housing for All - A new Housing Plan for Ireland' was published in September 2021 as part of the Irish Government's 'Our Shared Future' programme which, in turn, sets out the Government's mission to tackle the housing crisis. The objective of the plan is to ensure that everybody has *access to sustainable, good-quality housing to purchase or rent at an affordable price, built to a high standard, and located close to essential services, offering a high quality of life.*

The plan seeks to increase new housing supply to an average of at least 33,000 new units per year with specific pathways outlined to achieve the four overarching objectives of the plan which are:

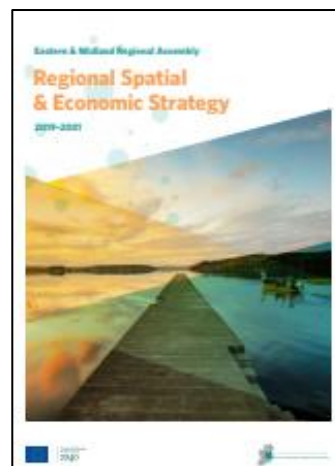
- *Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability;*
- *Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion;*
- *Increasing New Housing Supply; and*
- *Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock.*



We submit that the proposal is consistent with the above policy as it provides an appropriate quantum of residential accommodation on a zoned and serviced site. The provision of residential units on site, in the manner proposed under this application results in increased social housing provision and provides for the efficient use of zoned and serviced land. The proposed development responds to a recognised need, at a national level, for residential accommodation and is consistent with policy in this regard.

4.1.3 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region, 2019

The Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland's Regional Assembly (RSES) was published on 28th June 2019. It is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape future development and to better manage regional planning and economic development throughout the Region to 2031 and beyond. It identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. The RSES builds on the foundations of Government policy in Project Ireland 2040 and replaces the current Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs).



A key objective of the NPF is to enable all parts of the Country – both urban and rural – to achieve their full potential. The RSES reflects this core objective and aims to strengthen the fabric of rural Ireland, supporting rural towns and communities as well as the open countryside, improving connectivity, and supporting job creation, particularly in a more diverse range of sectors.

The following policy is relevant to the subject site:

RPO 4.83 *Support the consolidation of the town and village network to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, level and pace in line with the core strategies of the county development plans.*

The provision of 58 no. new dwellings in Louth Village comply with the goals of the RSES which seeks to consolidate rural villages. The additional dwellings will bolster the local economy and support local services.

4.1.4 Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)

The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in achieving the objectives for Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities contained in the Government Statement on Housing Policy which focuses on creating sustainable communities that are socially inclusive by promoting high standards in the design and construction and the provision of residential amenity and services in new housing schemes.

The subject site is located within 11 kilometres of Dundalk town centre which features several local amenities such as shops, restaurants, entertainment venues etc. Furthermore, the site is also situated within walking distance of a serviced bus stop located c 250m to the southeast of the site along R171.

Furthermore, the proposed house types have been designed having regard to these guidelines and in particular Table 5.1, which details the minimum space provision for new dwellings and rooms.



As per Table 5.1 of the guidelines, the proposed house types comply with the minimum space requirements as shown overleaf:

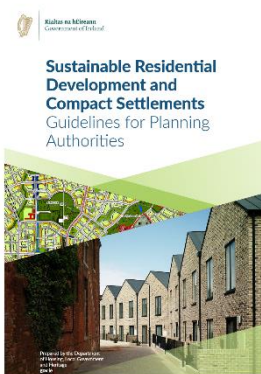
eml Type	House Type	Required GFA	Proposed GFA (SQ.M.)	Min. Living Room	Proposed Living Room	Min. Aggregate Living Area	Proposed Aggregate Living Area	Min. Aggregate Bedroom	Proposed Aggregate Bedroom	Min. Storage	Proposed Storage
A	2-bed, 3-person	60	64.5	13	27	28	27	20	21.2	3	3
B	2-bed, 4-person	80	82.6	13	13.1	30	30.5	25	24.7	4	4.7
C1	3-bed, 5-person	92	96.3	13	14.6	34	34	32	33.3	5	5.6
C2	3-bed, 5-person	92	96.2	13	19.9	34	34.7	32	31.8	5	5.5
D	3-bed, 5-person	92	106.4	13	15.8	34	34.4	32	34.3	5	9.9
E	4-bed, 7-person	110	138.1	15	18.2	40	39.8	43	49.1	6	8.6
F	4-bed, 7-person	110	114.8	15	17	40	39.8	43	43.7	6	6.5
H	5-bed, 4-person + carer	N/A	225.9	N/A	19.4	N/A	45.4	N/A	65.7	N/A	15.2

Table 3.0 Compliance with minimum standards for space and gross floor area as per Table 5.1 of the guidelines

The proposed house types largely comply with the standards listed above. There are a number of instances where the proposed aggregate living area and bedroom area are below the minimum requirement, however, the discrepancies range from 200 to 300 cm². This is not considered a material contravention of the guidelines.

4.1.5 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)

As of January 2024, the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines or Planning Authorities supersede the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009). With an emphasis on sustainable residential development and the formation of compact settlements, the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities establish national planning policy and guidelines pertaining to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements.



The key priorities for rural towns and villages in order of priority are to:

- (a) strengthen the existing urban core through the adaptation, re-use and intensification of existing building stock,
- (b) realise opportunities for infill and backland development, and
- (c) provide for sequential and sustainable housing development at the edge of the settlement at suitable locations that are closest to the urban core and are integrated into, or can be integrated into the existing built up footprint of the settlement and can be serviced by necessary supporting infrastructure.

Notable changes to this superseding policy document include:

- When considering a planning application for residential development, a separation distance of at least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms.
- It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that proposals for new houses meet the following minimum private open space standards:
 - 1 bed house 20 sq.m
 - 2 bed house 30 sq.m
 - 3 bed house 40 sq.m
 - 4 bed + house 50 sq.m
- The requirement in the development plan shall be for public open space provision of not less than a minimum of 10% of net site area and not more than a minimum of 15% of net site area save in exceptional circumstances.

The proposed development seeks the construction of no. 58 dwellings in close proximity to a bus route. It is submitted that these dwellings have been designed in line with a goal of consolidation, as

envisioned in the NPF and the new Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines. The proposed development on this site would achieve a site density to 17 units/ha, in a rural village area which, whilst slightly under the density recommended, is the most efficient use given the constraints of the site and the rural setting. In terms of sequential development, the subject site is the next available site along the R171 between the village centre and the site.

5.0 Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 is the relevant statutory development plan for the proposed application site.

5.1 Land Use Zoning

According to the zoning objectives contained within the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 the proposed development site is subject to two zoning objectives. The site is zoned 'A2', the objective of which is to:

'Provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate'

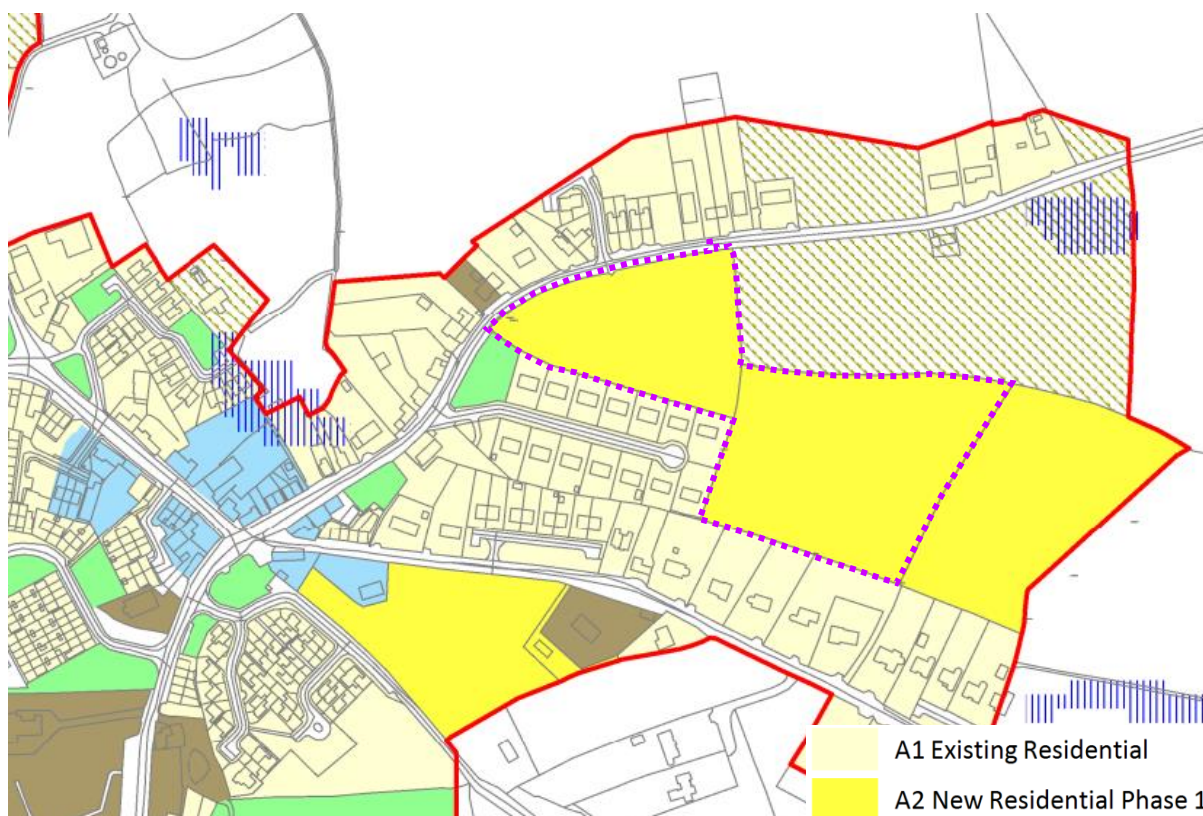


Figure 4.0 Extract from the Louth Village Zoning Map, showing the subject lands zoned A2 New Residential, in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (subject site outlined in purple).

The zoning matrix included in the Development Plan indicates 'permissible uses' and 'open for consideration uses' uses in 'A2' zones. Permissible uses are generally acceptable subject to the normal planning process and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements set out in the Plan. The following uses are 'permissible' in the 'A2' zones:

Generally Permitted Use

*Allotments, B&B/ Guest House, Childcare Facility, Community Facility, Education Facility (Primary or Second Level), E- Charging Facility, Home Based Economic Activities, Nursing Home, Park/Playgrounds, Place of Worship, Recreational/Amenity Open Space, Recreational/Sports Facility, **Residential**, Residential Institution, Retirement Village, Sheltered Accommodation, Third Level Student Accommodation, Traveller Accommodation, Utilities.*

In respect of the above, it is noted that residential is listed as a generally permitted use within A2 zoned lands, therefore the proposed development complies with the zoning objectives of the site.

5.2 Relevant Development Plan Policy

The Vision of the Core Strategy is to ‘and promote a more consolidated compact urban form and ensures *that future growth is based on the principles of sustainable development, delivering a high-quality living and working environment meeting the needs of all residents.* As noted in the County Development Plan, the settlement of Louth Village is included within the core strategy of Louth County. The plan states that there is a:

‘The growth strategy for the Small Towns and Villages in this Plan will focus on localised sustainable growth that meets the needs of the local population.’

Moreover, the following Core Strategy Objectives are noted:

Policy Objective

CS 1	To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy and the Settlement Strategy in so far as practicable, by directing sustainable growth towards the designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services.
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The subject site is accessible via bus route in Louth Village. Additionally, Louth Village is approximately 11km south west of Dundalk town centre. The town centre, bus station and train station are all accessible via bus. The subject site is located amongst developed lands and therefore satisfies the sequential test.

Policy Objective

CS 2	To achieve compact growth through the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes in urban areas within the existing built up footprint of settlements, by developing infill, brownfield and regeneration sites and redeveloping underutilised land in preference to greenfield sites.
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The subject site is located amongst developed lands and therefore satisfies the sequential test. The site is also directly connected to the necessary infrastructure to facilitate residential development.

Policy Objective

CS 3	To support and manage the self-sufficient sustainable development of all settlements in a planned manner, with population growth occurring in tandem with the provision of economic, physical and social infrastructure.
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The proposed development will add additional houses to Louth Village on zoned lands. As noted in the development plan, residential development in the village has been low in recent years. The proposed development complies with Policy Objective CS3.

Policy Objective	
CS 4	To apply phasing to the delivery of new residential development as indicated on the zoning maps for the applicable settlements, whereby residential development, other than infill, brownfield or mixed use development will generally only be permitted on Phase 1 lands. Where lands zoned 'New Residential Phase 1' are not being brought forward for development in particular areas and this is impeding the achievement of Core Strategy projections and restricting the growth of the settlement as envisaged in national and regional policy, consideration may be given to releasing during the lifetime of this Plan appropriately located 'New Residential Phase 2' lands, subject to the lands contributing to compact and consolidated patterns of development.

The subject site is zone A2 New Residential Phase 1. The delivery of housing on this site complies with Objective CS4.

Policy Objective	
CS 5	To support the progression and delivery of projects that would facilitate the creation of vibrant, sustainable communities and the rejuvenation of towns and villages, including any project to be funded by the Urban or Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

The proposed development will add additional housing to an area of Louth Village that has been earmarked for growth.

The proposed development will provide for the intensification of uses on an undeveloped site which is zoned for residential development and is situated within close proximity to high-capacity public transport services, in terms of bus routes, which are less than 250m to the southwest of the site. It is submitted that the proposed development is therefore in accordance with the objectives of the 'Core Strategy' as set out in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027.

5.2.1 Housing and Social Infrastructure Policy

Policy Objective	
HOU 10	To continue to support the creation of sustainable communities throughout the County for people across all the life stages by facilitating the creation of attractive neighbourhoods where there are strong links and connections to local services, community facilities and employment areas and where walking, cycling, and public transport is prioritised.

The proposed development includes the provision of single-storey units and ensures universal access. The R171 is well served by public transport, therefore allowing for sustainable modes of transport for future residents of the scheme. This complies with Policy Objective HOU10.

Policy Objective

HOU 15	To promote development that facilitates a higher, sustainable density that supports compact growth and the consolidation of urban areas, which will be appropriate to the local context and enhance the local environment in which it is located.
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The proposed development will have a density of 17 dwellings per hectare, there is no stated minimum density for a village, therefore the proposed development is not in contravention of Policy Objective HOU15.

Policy Objective

HOU 17	To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of a high quality built environment where there is a distinctive sense of place in attractive streets, spaces, and neighbourhoods that are accessible and safe places for all members of the community to meet and socialise.
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The proposed development has been designed by eml Architects and is distinct in its design and character. The design has regard to the Urban Design Manual and creates a sense of place for future residents through landscaped streets, provision of high-quality open space, and the use of quality architecture for the house designs. This complies with Policy Objective HOU17.

Policy Objective

HOU 18	To develop sustainable and successful neighbourhoods through the consolidation and redevelopment of built-up areas and promote new compact mixed-use urban and rural villages served by public transport and green infrastructure.
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The proposed residential development is located along a bus route providing services to the village centre, bus station and train station. This complies with Policy Objective HOU18.

Policy Objective

HOU 19	To enhance and develop the fabric of existing urban and rural settlements in accordance with the principles of good urban design including the promotion of high quality well-designed visually attractive main entries into our towns and villages.
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The proposed development utilises landscaping across the streetscape to create pleasant spaces for people to traverse. This complies with Policy Objective HOU19.

Policy Objective

HOU 20	To require a design led approach to be taken to sustainable residential development in accordance with the 12 urban design principles set out in the ' <i>Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (2009)</i> ' and any subsequent guidance, to ensure the creation of quality, attractive, and well connected residential areas and neighbourhoods.
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The proposed development has been designed in the context of the Urban Design Manual. This complies with Policy Objective HOU20.

Policy Objective

HOU 21	To ensure that new residential developments are consistent, in so far as practicable, with the ' <i>Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas</i> ' in creating attractive, sustainable, climate resilient and healthy communities.
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The proposed development has been designed in the context of the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development. This complies with Policy Objective HOU21.

Policy Objective

HOU 22	To require residential developments to prioritise and facilitate walking, cycling, and public transport and to include provision for links and connections to existing facilities and public transport nodes in the wider neighbourhood.
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The proposed development has been provided with adequately designed footpaths which connect to the R171 footpaths and cycle paths. There is a public transport route along R171. This complies with the Policy Objective HOU22.

Policy Objective

HOU 23	To require the layout of residential developments to take account of the <i>Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)</i> in the provision of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and crossing points and the design of estate roads and junctions.
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All roads and footpaths have been designed having regard to DMURS. This complies with the Policy Objective HOU23.

Policy Objective

HOU 24	To require the provision of high quality areas of public open space in new residential developments that are functional spaces, centrally located, and passively overlooked.
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Public open space has been provided at two locations throughout the site, providing easy access for future residents. The open space will be landscaped as per the Landscape Plan prepared by Áit Urbanism and Landscape. All spaces are located next to clusters of housing which overlook the spaces. This complies with the Policy Objective HOU24.

Policy Objective

HOU 26	To require the provision of an appropriate mix of house types and sizes in residential developments throughout the County that would meet the needs of the population and support the creation of balanced and inclusive communities.
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The scheme provides a mix of dwellings types including 28 no. two bed (48% of scheme) (8 of which are single storey), 24 no. 3-bed (41% of scheme), 5 no. 4 bed units (9% of scheme), and 1 no. 5 bed supported-living) units (2% of scheme). This is considered a balanced mix and provides for a diverse mix of residents upon completion. This complies with the Policy Objective HOU26.

Policy Objective

HOU 27	To require the provision of single storey properties in residential developments in excess of 100 units at a rate of at least 1% single storey units per 100 residential units unless it can be demonstrated by evidence based research carried out by an appropriately qualified professional that there is no demand for this type of accommodation.
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The scheme provides 58 no. dwellings and therefore is exempt from providing 1% single storey units. Nonetheless, the scheme provides for 15.52% of the scheme as single storey units.

Policy Objective

HOU 28	To encourage innovation in design that delivers buildings of a high quality that positively contribute to the built environment and local streetscape.
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The scheme has been designed having regard to the contextual location of the site. It provides for 58 no. dwellings in a range of sizes that will encourage sustainable development. This complies with the Policy Objective HOU28.

Policy Objective

HOU 29	To seek that all new residential developments in excess of 20 residential units provide for a minimum of 30% universally designed units in accordance with the requirements of <i>'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach'</i> published by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design.
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The scheme provides 26% universally designed units. This is below the requirement of 30%, however it is considered that this is not a material contravention of the development plan.

Policy Objective

HOU 30	To encourage building design and layout that maximises daylight and natural ventilation and incorporates energy efficiency and conservation measures that will improve the environmental performance of buildings in line with best practice.
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All units will receive adequate daylight and have been provided with ventilation. They will be A-rated dwellings upon completion. This complies with the Policy Objective HOU30.

Chapter 4 of the Development Plan has regard to Social and Community. The Development Plan also includes several Policy Objectives relating to the provision of Social Infrastructure as noted below:

Policy Objective

SC 11	To require that all new residential development applications on lands greater than 1ha or for 100 units or more are accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment to determine if community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for all future residents. Where deficiencies are identified proposals will be required to accompany the planning application to address the deficiency, either through direct provision on site or such other means, and in a manner acceptable to the Council.
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A Social Infrastructure Audit has been prepared by Thorton O'Connor Town Planning and submitted under a separate leaf. The audit submitted with the application complies with Policy Objective SC11.

Policy Objective	
SC 17	To require the provision of play features that can be used for recreational purposes in all new housing developments exceeding 100 residential units or more.

The proposed development comprises 58 no. dwellings and is below the threshold.

Policy Objective	
SC 35	To support and facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate and suitable locations and seek their provision concurrent with new residential development, all having regard to the <i>Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)</i> and <i>Childcare Regulations (2006)</i> and any subsequent guidelines, in consultation with the Louth County Childcare Committee. Such facilities will be directed to settlements identified in the Settlement Hierarchy.

The proposed development comprises less than 75 no. dwellings and therefore will not provide a creche.

It is submitted that the proposed development is therefore in accordance with the objectives of the 'Core Strategy' as set out in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027.

5.2.2 Movement and Transport Policy

Policy Objective	
MOV 3	To facilitate the integration of land use with sustainable transportation infrastructure in accordance with the requirements of RPO 8.1 in the RSES by supporting the creation of a critical mass of population and employment related development that would maximise investment in public transport infrastructure and create compact, sustainable settlements.
Policy Objective	
MOV 4	To promote sustainable higher density development along public transport corridors.

The subject site is located on the R171 which is served by Bus Éireann route 167 from Dundalk to Mullingar via Ardee. The proposed density is in keeping with the established pattern of low-density development in what is a rural village. This complies with Policy Objectives MOV3 and MOV4.

Policy Objective	
MOV 6	To promote and support the principles of universal design ensuring that all environments are inclusive and are accessible to and can be used to the fullest extent possible by all users regardless of age, ability or disability.

The streetscape of the proposed development has been designed in compliance with DMURS and provides universal access for future residents. In addition, 26% of the proposed housing units are designed as per universal access guidelines. This complies with Policy Objective MOV6

Policy Objective	
MOV 7	To support a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking and the attainment of any national targets relating to modal change published during the life of this Plan.

The subject site is located on R171 which is served by Bus Éireann route 167. The site is also accessible via footpaths and cycle paths on the R171. This complies with Policy Objectives MOV7.

5.2.3 Natural Heritage, Environment, and Green Infrastructure

Policy Objective	
NBG 9	To ensure that proposals for development, where appropriate, protect and conserve biodiversity sites outside designated sites and require an appropriate level of ecological assessment by suitably qualified professionals to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such sites.

As part of the application, an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Ecological Impact Assessment have been prepared by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants. The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report concluded that based on their professional opinion and in view of the best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) are not likely to have any significant effects on nearby designated sites. Therefore, progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

The Ecological Impact Assessment Report concluded that no habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive or ecologically sensitive habitats were noted. No protected mammal species were found to occur within or surrounding the proposed development area, apart from badgers. A survey of bat habitat within and surrounding the study area found no potential bat roost habitat areas. A number of measures have been described to mitigate any impacts on commuting and foraging bat populations during the construction and operation of this residential development. No Annex II (Birds Directive) bird species or red-listed species were recorded during field surveys of the site and surrounds. Mitigation measures have been drawn up to address any potential impacts on local bird populations.

Policy Objective	
NBG 13	Development sites must be investigated for the presence of invasive species, which if present must be treated and/or eradicated in accordance with best practice. Where appropriate, Invasive Species Management Plans will be prepared for such sites.

A search of records for invasive non-native species on the National Biodiversity Data Centre was carried out as part of this project. No Third Schedule and Non-third Schedule Invasive species were recorded on the NBDC database within 2km of any of the works. No invasive species noted on the 3rd Schedule of the of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 were noted on site.

Policy Objective	
ENV 38	To retain and protect significant stands of existing trees/ hedgerows/woodlands, and seek increased planting of native trees, where appropriate, in new developments.

Policy Objective	
ENV 39	Protect and preserve existing hedgerows in new developments, particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, and where their removal is necessary during the course of road works or other works seek their replacement with new hedgerows of native species indigenous to the area.



Figure 5.0 Extract from the Louth Village composite Map, showing significant trees and hedgerows surrounding the subject lands, in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (subject site outlined in purple).

As noted on the landscape plan prepared by Áit Urbanism + Landscape, hedgerows and/or field margin vegetation is being retained on all boundaries except the boundary fronting the R171. The hedgerows on this boundary will be removed to facilitate the required visibility splays and sightlines to ensure safe access to the site. This boundary will be replanted with native hedgerows as per the Landscape Plan. This complies with Policy Objectives ENV 38 and ENV 39.



Figure 6.0 Landscape Plan prepared by Áit Urbanism + Landscape.

5.3 Development Management

The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 requires a high standard of residential development, which provides good quality accommodation and also protects the character and amenities of the area. This is embedded in the zoning objective of the lands, which seeks to provide high-quality residential development. This is in accordance with the following national policy documents which have been discussed previously in this report:

- i) *The Guidelines on Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, DEHLG, (2007);*
- ii) *The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG, (2009);*
- iii) *Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG, (2009);*
- iv) *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, DHPLG, (2018);*
- v) *Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines, DHPLG, (2018);*
- vi) *The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTAS and DECLG, (2013 and updated in 2019); and*
- vii) *Permeability Best Practice Guide, NTA, (2015).*

The proposed development has been designed having regard to the guidelines and policies listed above.

5.3.1 Density and Plot Ratio

Section 13.8.4 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the standards in relation to density and plot ratio, having regard to guidelines set by *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)*, 2009. With respect to multi-unit developments, the plan states:

'The plot ratio would be a more applicable method, as this is more reflective of the range of unit sizes'

As Louth Village is categorised as Small Towns and Villages, with respect to these, the plan states:

*'In the Self-Sustaining Towns and Small Towns and Villages, the density and plot ratio of a development will be **reflective of the character of the settlement and the existing pattern of development in the area**. In designing a development, it is important that a higher density does not reduce the quality of the development. If there are site constraints such as topography or the shape of the site that compromise the quality of a development, the density/number of units may have to be reduced.'*

This overall development will provide a density of 17 units per hectare and the plot ratio is 0.15. This is considered acceptable given the rural character of the village. Furthermore, this is supported by Section 13.8.4 of the Development Plan notes that *in designing a development, it is important that a higher density does not reduce the quality of the development. If there are site constraints such as topography or the shape of the site that compromise the quality of development, the density/number of units may have to be reduced.*

The proposed development site challenging in terms of its shape, the existing site levels and for access due to its elevated position above the road. The site rises from approximately +36m along the R171 to a peak of +50m in the south-eastern portion of the site, before dropping again towards the southern boundary and a level of +40m. It is submitted that the proposed development accords with Section 13.8.4 of the Development Plan and provides for an appropriate density of development on the developable areas of the site.

5.3.2 Privacy

Section 13.8.9.1 of the Louth County Development Plan sets out standards of residential amenity with a particular focus on privacy. The plan emphasises that:

*'Whilst some degree of overlooking between properties is likely to occur in urban areas, efforts shall be made to minimise the extent of this overlooking where this is possible. A minimum of **22 metres separation** between directly opposing first floor habitable rooms in residential properties shall generally be observed. This separation distance is not required for windows in non-habitable rooms such as bathrooms, stairwells or landings.'*

It is noted that this requirement is affected by the introduction of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities in 2023. The guidelines allow for a reduction in separation distances to 16 m as per SPPR1 which states:

It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that statutory development plans shall not include an objective in respect of minimum separation distances that exceed 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units or apartment units above ground floor level. When considering a planning application for residential development, a separation distance of at least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units and apartment units, above ground floor level shall be maintained. Separation distances below 16 metres may be considered acceptable in circumstances where there are no opposing windows serving habitable rooms and where suitable privacy measures have been designed into the scheme to prevent undue overlooking of habitable rooms and private amenity spaces.

There shall be no specified minimum separation distance at ground level or to the front of houses, duplex units and apartment units in statutory development plans and planning applications shall be determined on a case-by-case basis to prevent undue loss of privacy.

All of the proposed dwellings contain appropriate separation distances as per the above guidelines.

5.3.3 Private Open Space

Private open space requirements for houses are set out in table 13.5 of the Development Plan. Each house is provided with a rear back garden all of which exceed the minimum requirements listed below.

Unit Type	Town Centre and Infill / Brownfield Locations	Greenfield / Suburban locations
	Dwelling	Minimum private open space requirement (m ²)
1-2 Bedroom	50	60
3 or More Bedrooms	60	80

Figure 7.0 Louth County Development Plan table 13.4 displaying private open space requirements for houses.

It is noted that this requirement is affected by the introduction of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities in 2023. The guidelines allow for a reduction in the size of private open space as per SPPR2 which states:

It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that proposals for new houses meet the following minimum private open space standards:

- 1 bed house 20 sq.m
- 2 bed house 30 sq.m
- 3 bed house 40 sq.m
- 4 bed + house 50 sq.m

All rear gardens comply with the above guidelines.

5.3.4 Boundary treatments

Boundary treatments in residential developments shall consist of the following:

- i) The rear boundary shall consist of a 2-metre-high block wall;
- ii) Side boundaries between properties shall be 2 metres in height. If timber boundaries are to be used they must be bonded and supported by concrete posts;
- iii) Walls bounding any public areas shall be rendered and capped on both sides; and
- iv) Front boundaries along the estate road and between properties shall be agreed upon as part of the planning application. They can be open plan, planted, consist of a low-level wall or railing, or as otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

It is considered appropriate. Please refer to the Boundaries Layout Drawing prepared by eml Architects for further details.

5.3.5 Landscaping

The development plan requires a landscape plan to be submitted with all planning applications for residential development. A Landscape Plan has been prepared by Áit Urbanism and Landscape.

5.3.6 Dwelling Design and Mix

The development plan seeks to support a variety of household types and tenures, new residential developments, and in particular larger schemes in excess of 25 units shall endeavour to provide an appropriate mix of residential accommodation. Greater consideration shall be given to providing suitable accommodation for older persons and people with a disability. This includes adaptable homes that can be altered to meet the needs of residents through the different stages of life. Developments in excess of 50 units are encouraged to provide single-storey units to meet the needs of older persons.

The scheme provides a mix of dwellings types including 28 no. two bed (48% of scheme) (8 of which are single storey), 24 no. 3-bed (41% of scheme), 5 no. 4 bed units (9% of scheme), and 1 no. 5 bed supported-living) units (2% of scheme). This is considered a balanced mix and provides for a diverse mix of residents upon completion. This complies with the Policy Objective HOU26 as noted below:

Policy Objective	
HOU 26	To require the provision of an appropriate mix of house types and sizes in residential developments throughout the County that would meet the needs of the population and support the creation of balanced and inclusive communities.

The scheme provides 58 no. dwellings and therefore is exempt from providing 1% single-storey units. Nonetheless, the scheme provides for 15.52% of the scheme as single-storey units.

The scheme has been designed having regard to the contextual location of the site. It provides for 58 no. dwellings in a range of sizes that will encourage sustainable development.

The scheme provides 26% universally designed units. This is below the requirement of 30%, however, it is considered that this is not a material contravention of the development plan.

The proposed dwelling mix is largely in compliance with the development plan standards.

5.3.7 Car and Bicycle Parking

Figure 8.0 and figure 9.0 (below) set out the appropriate standards in relation to car and bicycle parking respectively. Section 13.8.18 'Car and Cycle Parking' provides further guidance on parking provisions for new residential schemes. It is the Planning Authority's recommendation that:

'In new housing areas, car parking is normally provided at the front of properties creating a linear streetscape dominated by hard surfacing.'

Development Type	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3
Residential Dwelling	1 per unit	1 per unit	2 per unit
Apartment	1 apartment	1 per apartment	2 per apartment

Figure 8.0 Car Parking requirements as per the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The proposed development is located in Area 2 (Lands located adjacent to high level public transport

services or lands serving a local catchment area) and therefore requires 58 no. spaces for 58 no. dwellings. The car parking is in accordance with the County Development Plan 2021-2027 as there are 109 no. (in-curtilage & on-street) spaces provided.

EV Charging

Section 13.16.9 of the development plan requires car parking areas to provide electric charging points, stating:

In all car parking areas, provision shall be made for charging points for electric vehicles. This shall include the necessary wiring and ducting. Pending the publication of guidance on the minimum requirement of these spaces, an assessment shall be made on a case-by-case basis; however, applicants shall strive to provide these charging points in a minimum of 20% of the total spaces.

The proposed development provides 100% ducting, 20% install EV charging spaces.

Disabled Parking

Section 13.16.7 requires new developments to provide disabled parking at a rate of 5%. The proposed development provides 7 no. disabled parking spaces which equates to 6 %. This complies with Section 13.16.7 of the development plan.

Cycle Parking

Development Type	Cycle Parking Requirement	
	Long term	Visitor/Short Stay
Apartment, Flat , Sheltered Housing	Minimum of 1 cycle space per bedroom. For Studio units at least 1 cycle space.	1 space per 2 units
Residential dwelling	1 space per unit	1 space per 5 units

Figure 9.0 Bicycle Parking requirements as per the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

In terms of cycle parking, the development plan notes that 1 cycle space is provided for each residential unit, plus 1 per 5 units for visitors. This has been achieved.

5.3.8 Public Open Space

Section 13.8.15 of the development plan requires new residential developments to provide public open space at a rate of 15% of the total site area. The proposed development seeks to provide 28% public open space and is therefore compliant with the development plan standards. All public open spaces will be designed as per the Landscape Plan and will provide high-quality amenity areas for future residents.

5.3.9 Play Facilities in Residential Developments

Section 13.8.16 of the development states that *developments of 50 units or more shall include proposals for the provision of a dedicated children's play area designed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.*

The proposed development includes a designated playground for children and complies with Section 13.8.16 of the development plan.

6.0 Appropriate Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment screening exercise has been completed by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants and is included under separate cover. The Appropriate Assessment Screening concluded that based on their professional opinion and in view of the best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) are not likely to have any significant effects on nearby designated sites. Therefore, progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

The Ecological Impact Assessment Screening concluded that no habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive or ecologically sensitive habitats were noted. No protected mammal species were found to occur within or surrounding the proposed development area, apart from badgers. A survey of bat habitat within and surrounding the study area found no potential bat roost habitat areas. A number of measures have been described to mitigate any impacts on commuting and foraging bat populations during the construction and operation of this residential development. No Annex II (Birds Directive) bird species or red-listed species were recorded during field surveys of the site and surrounds. Mitigation measures have been drawn up to address any potential impacts to local bird populations.

7.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

An Environmental Impact Assessment screening exercise has been completed by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants and is included under separate cover. In summary, the screening report has concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development. In terms of scale, the proposed housing development falls significantly below the threshold set out in Class 10 (b)(i) in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations. A sub-threshold EIA Screening exercise was carried out to determine the potential for the proposed development to have significant environmental effects or not. No significant negative effects on the environment have been identified during the construction or operational phase of the proposed development. The overall conclusion of this screening exercise is that there should be no specific requirement for a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development.

8.0 Archaeology and Heritage

An Archaeological Appraisal report has been completed by Claire Walsh and is included under separate cover.

Strategic Objective

SO 7	Protect and enhance the built, cultural and natural heritage assets of Louth, the intrinsic value of which helps to define the character of both urban and rural areas, contributes to the attractiveness, vibrancy and sense of place for residents, tourists and visitors, including improved access to the countryside through the development of greenways, walking trails and blueways in support of and advancing sustainable communities.
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The subject site is located on the eastern edge of the village and is not located close to any of the village's archaeological assets. Nonetheless, the scheme has had regard to the historic character of the village and has been appropriately designed.

Policy Objective

NBG 24	To ensure development reflects and, where possible, reinforces the distinctiveness and sense of place of the landscape character types including the retention of important features or characteristics, taking into account the various elements, which contribute to their distinctiveness such as scenic quality, habitats, settlement pattern, historic heritage and land use.
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The proposed development will maintain existing hedgerows which are characteristic of the rural setting. This complies with Policy Objective NBG24.

Policy Objective	
BHC 1	To protect and enhance archaeological sites and monuments, underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and/or the Register of Historic Monuments and seek their preservation (i.e. presumption in favour of preservation in situ or in exceptional cases, at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process and having regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the principles as set out in the 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999).
Policy Objective	
BHC 2	To protect the built heritage assets of the county and ensure they are managed and preserved in a manner that does not adversely impact on the intrinsic value of these assets whilst supporting economic renewal and sustainable development.
Policy Objective	
BHC 3	To protect known and unknown archaeological areas, sites, monuments, structures and objects, having regard to the advice of the National Monuments Services of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Policy Objective	
BHC 5	To protect all sites and features of archaeological interest discovered subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional circumstances, at a minimum preservation by record) having regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The subject site is located on the eastern edge of the village and is not located close to any of the village's archaeological assets. Nonetheless, the scheme has had regard to the historic character of the village and has been appropriately designed.

9.0 Services

Section 13.20.4 of the development plan requires new developments to incorporate SUDs as part of the development. The site has been assessed by Hayes Higgins Partnership, the project engineers, and they determined that the subject site in this instance is not suitable for infiltration. They noted in their report that:

A site investigation was undertaken to establish the permeability of the site. The site investigation advises the site does not have any available infiltration and as such permeable surfaces and natural infiltration are not viable, refer to appendix F. As the conditions on site are not favourable to infiltration a modular attenuation system connected to the existing surface drainage network, via a hydrobrake limiting discharge to 2 L/s/ha, is to be used to dispose of the surface water from the developed site.

The development plan states:

In some exceptional cases, and at the discretion of the Council, where it is demonstrated that SuDS devices are not feasible, approval may be given to install underground attenuation tanks or enlarged pipes in conjunction with other devices to achieve the required water quality.

Despite the above, it is proposed to install SUDs measures in the form of tree pits. The proposal for the subject site is considered to comply with Section 13.20.4 of the development plan.

10.0 Louth Village

Volume 2 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out policies pertaining to Louth Village.

Policy Objective

LOU 1	To support the role of Louth Village by facilitating development that will contribute to the character of the Village, and complement and enhance the quality of the Village's attractive built and natural environment.
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The proposed development will provide 58 no. high-quality dwellings which will be bolstered by landscaped public open space and streetscapes. The proposed development is consistent with the above policy objective.

Policy Objective

LOU 2	To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, in so far as is practicable, by ensuring that the housing allocation for Louth Village is not exceeded.
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The proposed development is consistent with the above policy objective. The proposed development seeks 58 additional houses, this is under the 414 housing allocation for Small Towns & Villages.

Policy Objective

LOU 3	To support and encourage residential development on under-utilised and/or vacant lands including 'infill' and 'brownfield' sites, subject to a high standard of design and layout being achieved.
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The proposed development is consistent with the above policy objective, the proposal seeks residential development on an under-utilised site within walking distance from schools and services in the village.

Policy Objective

LOU 14	To promote and facilitate the development and enhancement of footpaths, pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures which increase pedestrian priority and improve road safety.
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Footpaths have been provided throughout the development allowing for permeability across the site. The proposed development is consistent with the above policy objective.

Policy Objective

LOU 17	To promote the preservation of significant trees and hedgerows including those identified on the Composite Map and to manage these trees in line with arboricultural best practice.
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As previously discussed, existing hedgerows will be maintained. The proposed development is consistent with the above policy objective.

Policy Objective	
LOU 19	To protect and enhance the character of the Village by requiring that the height, scale, design and materials of any proposed development has regard to the archaeological importance of the Village and does not diminish its distinctiveness of place.

The proposed development has been designed having regard to the character of the village. The development of the subject site is consistent with the above policy.

11.0 Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed residential development is generally in accordance with the relevant policies and objectives as set out within the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027. In this regard, it is highlighted that the proposed residential development will provide additional accommodation to serve the growing population of Louth Village.

It is considered that the proposal will result in the appropriate and efficient use of the subject lands which are well-located in proximity to the surrounding national and regional road network, with easy access available to Louth Village. The subject site is located within close proximity to Dundalk which offers employment and education opportunities as well as strong public transport links to Dublin city centre, has the capacity to accommodate additional residential accommodation and respond to the current housing shortage.

This development is being provided in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and must meet the requirements of the Act as shown in Table 4.0 below.









Requirement as per S.179a	Requirement Met
Development carried out by Local Authority	
Development does not materially contravene the development plan	
Accords with strategy in the development plan for the area	
Does not require EIAR	
Does not require Appropriate Assessment	
Land is owned by the planning authority/state	
Lands is zoned for residential use	
Land has access, or can be connected, to public infrastructure and facilities, including roads and footpaths, public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, necessary for dwellings to be developed and with sufficient service capacity available for such development	

Table 4.0 Compliance with Section 179a of the Planning and Development Act

It is submitted that this proposal lends itself to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and complies with the development plan.



Kevin Hughes MIPI MRTPI
Director
For HPDC Ltd.