

LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

OMEATH

Volume 2
Small Towns and Villages

12. OMEATH

12.1 Context/Character

Omeath is a rural, coastal village located 6km north of Carlingford, 10km south of Newry and 3km from the border with Northern Ireland. It is sited on the Cooley peninsula, on the southern shore of Carlingford Lough. The settlement is surrounded by dramatic landscapes with the Carlingford Lough coastline and expansive views of the Mourne Mountains to the east and the Cooley Mountains and Slieve Foye to the west. The village is set within a designated Area of High Scenic Quality (AHSQ).

Omeath is a long linear settlement, which has evolved primarily along the Greenore-Newry Regional road (R173). The village comprises a 'commercial centre' at the R178/ Station Road junction and a 'civic centre' towards the southern end of the village. A number of landmark buildings are located within the settlement, which helps to define the village's character; they include Howe's public house, Dublin House, Prospect House and Nucella Lodge.

Table 12.1: Settlement Overview

Settlement Overview - Omeath	
Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Village
2016 Population	603
2011 Population	503
Percentage Change 2011-2016	19.9%
Housing Stock 2016	339
Residential Units granted since 2015	No recent development activity
Education Facilities	Scoil Naomh Lorcan (village) and Scoil Naomh Bríd (Ardaghy)
Community Facilities	Dolmen Centre, Omeath recreational park, Garda station, Cuchulainn Gaels
Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)	None
Protected Structures	12
Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP)	No
Views and Prospects	No
Adjacent to European Site	Carlingford Shore SAC
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Flood Zones A and B on land located along the River Ryland and on lands adjacent to the coast. Manage flood risk and development in line with Policy Objectives as set out in Vol. 1 Chapter 10: Infrastructure and Public Utilities.

Settlement Overview - Omeath

<p>Water Services Infrastructure/Capacity</p>	<p>Omeath is located within the Cavan Hill and North Louth Water Resource Zone, which had capacity available at the time of writing.</p> <p>There was no capacity in the Omeath Waste Water Treatment Plant at the time of writing. In 2019, permission was granted for a new wastewater treatment plant, with construction due to commence in Q4 of 2020, subject to funding.</p>
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12.2 Opportunities

- Capitalise on Omeath’s strategic location along The Great Eastern Greenway.
- Creation of a dynamic and flexible village hub.
- The redefinition of the heart of the village. This will be considered in terms of increasing pedestrian and cycling priority and linkages to the Great Eastern Greenway, reduction in the dominance of the R173, and improvements to the public realm.

12.3 Settlement and Housing

The land use strategy for Omeath aims to protect its mountainous and coastal setting by consolidating development within the existing footprint.

In the late 1990’s and early 2000’s Omeath experienced significant demand for residential development, where development took place to the west of the village centre towards the mountains.

In more recent years, development within the settlement has been restricted by capacity issues at the Omeath Waste Water Treatment Plant.

The 2016 census revealed that on census night 13.9% of dwelling units were vacant. This was the second highest vacancy rate for any settlement in the County and is an indication of the quantity of second/holiday homes located within the village and the desirability of Omeath as a holiday destination.

12.4 Economy and Employment

Omeath is identified as a Level 4 retail centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. Commercial, retail and retail service units are mainly located in the village centre and include service stations, supermarket, pharmacy, post office, hairdressers, hotels, public house and restaurants.

The Job:Workforce ratio in Omeath is 0.38, which is an indication of a weak employment base and has resulted in the majority of residents being required to travel outside the settlement for employment

Omeath has long been established as a tourism centre particularly for day-trippers and caravan holidays.

It is strategically located along the Great Eastern Greenway.

The Greenway is an important asset in the development of the village as a tourist destination.

An opportunity exists to improve connectivity between the Greenway and the village centre through landscaping and improvements to the public realm.

The pier area of the village is considered a potential location for casual trading and social and community events, which in turn would attract additional visitors.

The limited employment opportunities in the village are provided mainly by the school, retail and hospitality sectors.

It is recognised that certain occupations lend themselves to employees working remotely. The provision of co-working facilities and a digital hub at Dublin House would provide flexibility for businesses, reduce carbon emissions and improve quality of life by reducing the need to commute. The provision of such a facility could act as a catalyst for further economic investment in the village.

12.5 Water Services Infrastructure

Omeath is served by the following water services infrastructure:

Water: Omeath is located within the Cavan Hill and North Louth Water Resource Zone, which had capacity available at the time of writing.

Waste Water: There was no capacity in the Omeath Waste Water Treatment Plant at the time of writing. In 2019, permission was granted for a new waste water treatment plant, with construction due to commence in Q4 of 2020, subject to funding.

12.6 Movement

Omeath is located along the R173, which connects the village with Newry, Carlingford, and Dundalk. The village benefits from a public bus service to Dundalk and Newry, which operates four times daily.

This is augmented by a limited number of additional services provided by private operators. The village would benefit from improved bus infrastructure including a shelter and seating.

The heart of the linear settlement is dominated by the Regional road resulting in conflict between road vehicles and pedestrians.

To promote the social and economic well-being of the village there is a need to reduce the dominance of the regional road and provide increased priority for pedestrians and cyclists.

Omeath is strategically located along the Great Eastern Greenway, further phases of which will provide pedestrian and cyclist connection to the centre of Carlingford, the border and eventually Victoria Lock in Northern Ireland.

Provision of additional footpaths and lighting throughout the village will provide greater connection to community facilities such as the playing fields and will reduce reliance on the private car. To the south of the village, the River Ryland flows into Carlingford Lough. Access to the Great Eastern Greenway is also available at this point. The provision of a 10m riparian strip either side of the riverbank will facilitate the future development of the river for recreational purposes.

There is also the potential to improve links to the river through existing undeveloped lands. It is acknowledged that comprehensive renewal works are required in Omeath, which would include upgrading the road and footpaths through the centre of the village and the installation of traffic calming measures. These works however are pending the provision of sewerage infrastructure, which may be laid along this route.

12.7 Natural and Built Heritage

The natural heritage of the Omeath shoreline and the Cooley Mountains are afforded protection under both national and European legislation. The Omeath shore lies within a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The village is also set in an Area of High Scenic Quality (AHSQ).

There are 12 Protected Structures within the boundary of the village as detailed in Table 12.2 and the locations of which are illustrated on the Omeath Composite Map. Omeath has a network of tree stands and hedgerows which are identified as having a special amenity value, the location of which are identified on the Composite Map for the village.

Table 12.2: Protected Structures in Omeath

ID Number	Name
LHS 002-001	(Former) St. Andrew's Church 1838
LHS 002-004	(Former) St. Andrew's National School c.1840
LHS 002-005	Omra Park Drummullagh c.1800
LHS 005-001	Former coastguard house c.1800
LHS 005-002	Former coastguard house c.1800
LHS 005-003	Former coastguard house c.1800
LHS 005-004	Former coastguard house c.1800
LHS 005-066	Bayview House c.1800
LHS 005-067	Prospect House c.1740
LHS 005-068	Nucella Lodge c.1840
LHS 005-069	Oberon Villa c.1880
LHS 005-072	Foresters Hall

12.8 Social Infrastructure

Omeath has a range of services, which include *inter alia*: shops, pubs, restaurants and cafes, fast food outlets, hotel, petrol station in addition to a church, national schools, community centre, caravan park, playground and playing fields, crèche, post office and credit union. Playing fields, which are home to the Cuchulainn Gaels Gaelic Athletic Club, are located to the south of the village.

12.9 Urban Design and Public Realm

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is a funding mechanism designed to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. Projects eligible under this scheme include environmental improvements and public realm projects, such as upgrades to civic spaces, and investment in street furniture, footpaths, and cycle ways. This Plan will support any funding applications under this scheme or similar schemes that would enhance the public realm, built environment, and environmental quality of Omeath.

The Omeath Village Design Statement 2013 identified a number of areas which would benefit from public realm improvements. This includes works to the R173/Station Road junction, the Pier, Shore Road and the area around Dublin House. These works would benefit residents and visitors by promoting regeneration, enhancing the environment and appearance of the village as well as slowing traffic. Furthermore, it is anticipated that greater connection between the greenway and village would encourage more people to stop, visit and explore, which would bring social and economic benefits to Omeath.

12.10 Policy Objectives

The Policy Objectives set out below are in addition to those included in the Written Statement in Volume 1 of the County Development Plan. To avoid repetition Policy Objectives have only been restated where they have particular relevance to the settlement.

These should therefore be read in conjunction with the Policy Objectives and Development Standards and Guidance set out in Volume 1 of the County Development Plan.

12.10.1 Settlement and Housing

Policy Objective

OTH 1	To support the role of Omeath by facilitating development that will contribute to the character of the village, and complement and enhance the quality of the village's built and natural environment.
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Policy Objective

OTH 2	To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, in so far as is practicable, by ensuring the housing allocation for Omeath is not exceeded.
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Policy Objective

OTH 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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12.10.2 Economy and Employment

Policy Objective

OTH 4	To support and promote sustainable tourism development in Omeath.
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Policy Objective

OTH 5	To work in conjunction with adjoining authorities including Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to extend and design new walking and cycling routes, such as the Great Eastern Greenway and ensure all proposals include appraisal of environmental impacts and take full account of the potential for negative impacts on European Sites through the process of Habitats Directive Assessment Screening.
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Policy Objective

OTH 6	To support the provision of co-working facilities and a digital hub at Dublin House.
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Policy Objective

OTH 7	To support and promote events and festivals.
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Policy Objective

OTH 8	To encourage the return of vacant buildings in the settlement to uses which complement the existing scale and character of the village.
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12.10.3 Infrastructure

Policy Objective

OTH 9	To liaise with and support Irish Water to endeavour to provide adequate water services to meet the development needs of Omeath within the Plan period.
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Policy Objective

OTH 10	To support existing public, community and sporting facilities and the provision of any additional facilities.
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Policy Objective

OTH 11	To support the progression and delivery of social and community projects.
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Policy Objective

OTH 12	To avoid land uses or development identified as 'highly vulnerable development' in Table 3.1 of <i>'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009)'</i> on lands at risk of flooding and where development in floodplains cannot be avoided, take a sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and adaptation to the risk.
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12.10.4 Movement

Policy Objective

OTH 13	To promote and facilitate the development of walkways and cycleways at appropriate locations throughout Omeath, including adjacent to the river.
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Policy Objective

OTH 14	To protect the integrity and scenic quality of existing and future walking and cycling routes and their setting.
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Policy Objective

OTH 15	To ensure that no development including clearing or storage of materials takes place within a minimum distance of 10m measured from each bank of any river, stream or watercourse.
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Policy Objective

OTH 16	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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Policy Objective

OTH 17	To facilitate with service providers the provision of additional bus infrastructure within the village.
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12.10.5 Built and Natural Heritage

Policy Objective

OTH 18	To protect and enhance the unique characteristics and setting of Omeath, including its archaeological features and built and natural heritage elements.
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Policy Objective

OTH 19	To protect the Area of High Scenic Quality (AHSQ) in the landscape setting of Omeath.
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Policy Objective

OTH 20	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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12.10.6 Urban Design and Public Realm

Policy Objective

OTH 21	To promote and support the utilisation of available funding and the implementation of any projects or schemes for which funding has been received that would improve and revitalise Omeath.
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Policy Objective

OTH 22	To ensure that any new development enhances the character and streetscape of the village.
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Policy Objective

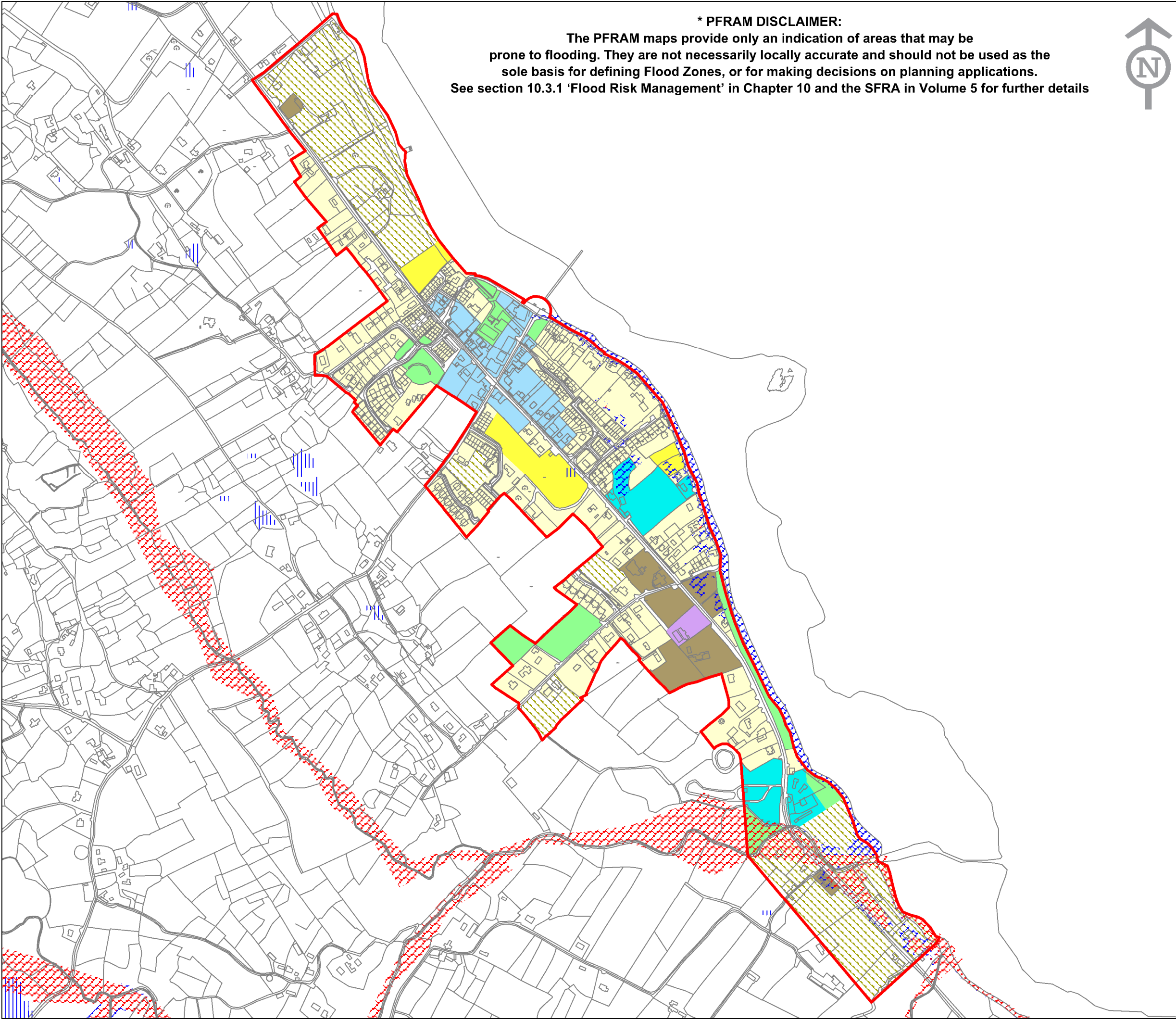
OTH 23	To seek to implement the provisions of the Omeath Village Design Statement.
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Policy Objective

OTH 24	To seek to enhance the streets and spaces within Omeath through public realm improvements to areas including the R173/Station Road junction, the Pier, Shore Road and around Dublin House.
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Policy Objective

OTH 25	To undertake comprehensive renewal works including upgrading footpaths and the roads through the centre of the village and installation of traffic calming measures, pending the provision of sewage infrastructure, a Village Design Statement and availability of funding.
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*** PFRAM DISCLAIMER:**
 The PFRAM maps provide only an indication of areas that may be prone to flooding. They are not necessarily locally accurate and should not be used as the sole basis for defining Flood Zones, or for making decisions on planning applications. See section 10.3.1 'Flood Risk Management' in Chapter 10 and the SFRA in Volume 5 for further details



LEGEND

- Land Use Category**
- A1 Existing Residential
 - A2 New Residential Phase 1
 - B1 Town or Village Centre
 - E1 General Employment
 - G1 Community Facilities
 - H1 Open Space
 - I1 Tourism and Leisure
 - L1 Strategic Reserve

OPW PFRAM Study
See Disclaimer

- Flood Zone A
- Flood Zone B
- Pluvial Flooding

Settlement Boundary

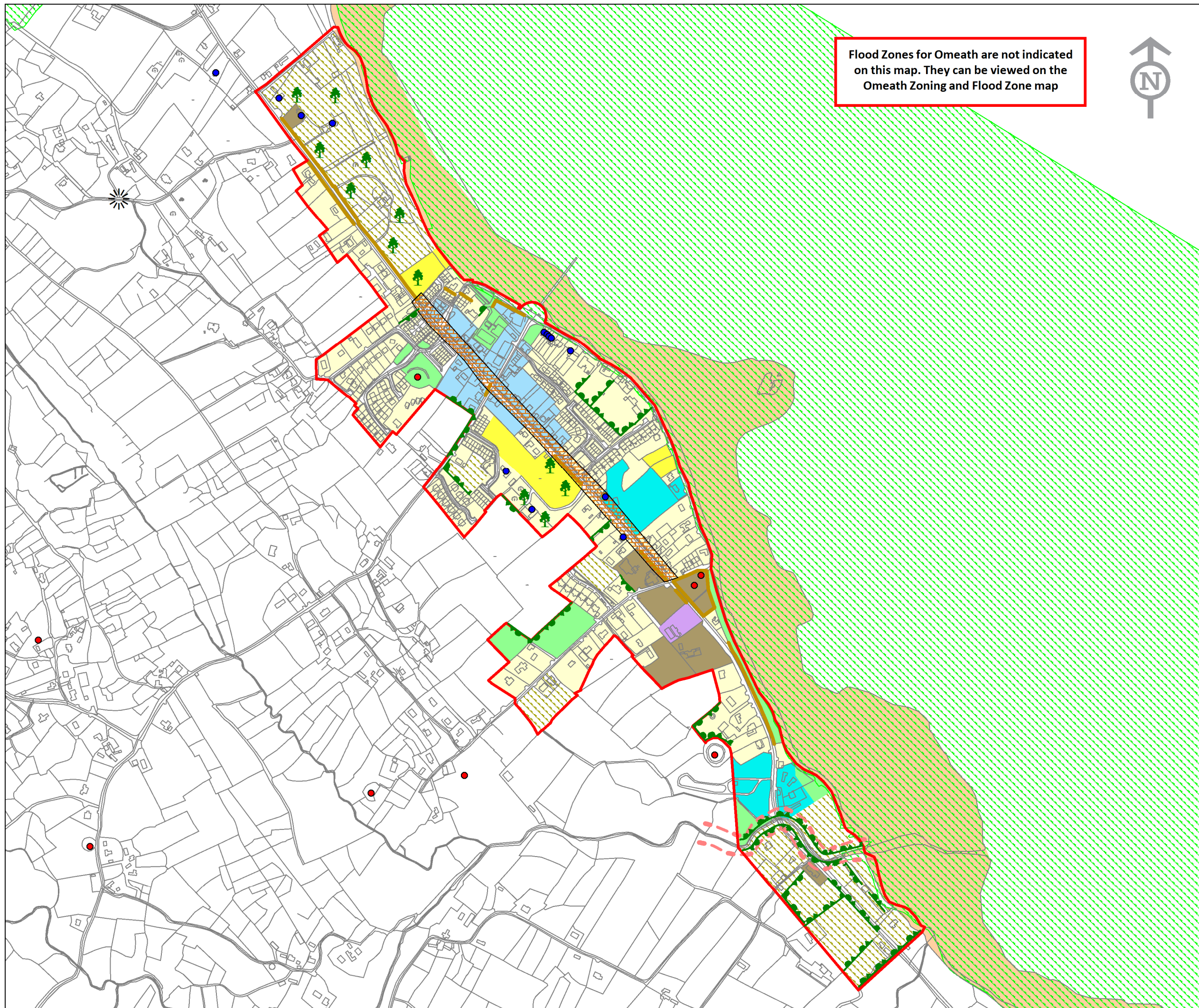


Osi Vector Mapping





Flood Zones for Omeath are not indicated on this map. They can be viewed on the Omeath Zoning and Flood Zone map



LEGEND

Land Use Category

- A1 Existing Residential
- A2 New Residential Phase 1
- B1 Town or Village Centre
- E1 General Employment
- G1 Community Facilities
- H1 Open Space
- I1 Tourism and Leisure
- L1 Strategic Reserve

- Settlement Boundary
- Special Area of Conservation (NPWS)
- Proposed Natural Heritage Area (NPWS)
- Potential for Green Infrastructure Enhancement (see Appendix 8)
- Significant Trees & Hedgerows
- Stone Walls & Louth Banks
- Riparian Buffer Zone
- Sites & Monuments (NMS)
- Record of Protected Structures
- Osi Vector Mapping