PORTMARNOCK

URBAN CENTRE STRATEGY

FEBRUARY 2010

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council

Portmarnock
DRAFT Urban Centre Strategy

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1.0   Introduction

1.1   Need for a Strategy

Successful urban centres are an intrinsic element of place and society. This is recognised in the Fingal Development Plan 2005-2011 which affirms its support for revitalising and supporting urban cores as a means of achieving an *integrated network of vibrant socially and economically successful settlements*[1]. The purpose of this Urban Centre Strategy is to establish a vision for Portmarnock by way of preparation of detailed urban design guidelines and actions for the village centre and surrounding lands.

The Fingal Development Plan 2005-2011 (Part IV, pg 31-33) states under Objective UO2 that the primary purpose of an Urban Centre Strategy is to:

'create a realistic vision for the designated centres, drawing on the support of all interested parties and include a realistic programme of action to enhance the vitality and viability of these centre[s]'

It is clear that any urban rejuvenation or reinvention requires a set of clear ideas and concepts for the future. This comes from a process of survey, analysis and the development of urban design responses to the particular needs of the community and place.

1.2   Scope of Urban Strategy

The Urban Centre Strategy is a design guidance document. The scope of the Strategy is to:

- Create an overall urban design framework for the village core area;

- Provide guidance regarding improvements of the streetscape and public realm;

- Recommend design solutions that will define the commercial and civic core of the village and will foster community integration and cohesion;

- Enhance opportunities to introduce new commercial development into the village core area;

- Seek to protect the valuable elements of the existing built and natural environment as well as local heritage;

- Recommend changes to traffic and parking arrangements to increase the quantum and quality of the public realm.

1.3   Structure of the Document

The document is divided into five parts:

- **Context (section 2.0)** –The planning, geographical, social and historical context of the area;
- **Survey (Section 3.0)** – Overview of site surveys and description of the physical context;
- **Opportunities and Constraints (Section 4.0)** – Summary of analysis;
- **Vision (Section 5.0)** – The key principles and focus of the Strategy;
- **Strategy (Section 6.0)** –Urban design and planning proposals and guidelines.

The text is accompanied by corresponding drawings, illustrations and sketches detailing the proposed planning and urban design proposals.

1.4   Use of the Urban Strategy

This Urban Centre Strategy is formulated to be a focus for ideas and proposals in Portmarnock. The Strategy initially sets out an overall goal for future development and works in Portmarnock. It then identifies the sites that will play a key role in reinvigorating the settlement, and establishes guidelines on how development should respond to the setting. This will act as a reference point for developers and designers as well as the Planning Authority. Finally, the Strategy presents a series of proposals for treatment of the public realm and public spaces, which form an integral role in the reinvigoration of Portmarnock as an attractive and vibrant Urban Centre.

1.5   Consultation Submissions

A public consultation exercise was carried out as part of the preparation of this Strategy in order to obtain feedback. A public notice was published inviting submissions to be made to Fingal County Council between 6th of May 2008 and 10th of June 2008.

A total of six submissions were received. A summary of the issues raised is set out in Appendix 1 of this document. The community feedback obtained during the public consultation has informed the preparation of this Urban Centre Strategy.

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[1] Fingal County Council Development Plan 2005-2011, Section 1.2, Main Aims of the Development Plan

2.0   Context

2.1   Strategic Location

Portmarnock is a seaside suburban village north of the city of Dublin in the administrative area of Fingal County Council. (see Fig. 2.1)

Portmarnock is situated between Malahide and Baldoyle and is strategically positioned along the DART commuter service and the Dublin-Belfast railway line. The DART station on Station Road is approx. 1.5km from the village core.   The R106 Strand Road runs through the village and functions as a busy commuter route to and from the city.   The River Sluice and estuary form a natural boundary to the south of the settlement.

2.2   Profile of Portmarnock

Portmarnock can be characterised as a commuter village, owing to the prevailing residential land use pattern, its close proximity to Dublin City Centre.

The 2006 Census indicated that the village population was 8,979, a increase of 7.2% from 2002. This is comparable to settlements such as Wicklow or Skerries. The expansion zone of the village, designated in Portmarnock Local Area Plan, has 41 ha of additional zoned land with a development potential to accommodate approx. 1,500 no. new homes with a population equivalent of approximately 4,200 inhabitants.

Portmarnock is known for its Velvet Strand, and golf courses. Portmarnock Golf Club is a world famous links course. There are two hotels and a number of smaller B&Bs.

Local commercial services are limited compared to other suburban, coastal settlements in the Dublin region. Existing commercial services comprise a public house, a number of smaller fast food outlets, filling station, a number of smaller independent/franchise retailers, auctioneers and solicitors, a GP practice and post office. There are no significant public institutions or employers.

Community infrastructure includes three schools (2 primary and 1 secondary), a church and small community centre. The village has also a number of local sports clubs including Naomh Mearnóg GAA and Portmarnock Football Club. Sports infrastructure for residents is provided by Portmarnock Sports and Leisure Centre.

Figure 2.1 – Strategic Context Map

Figure 2.2 – Subject Area of the Strategy

2.3   Townscape and Village Character

The development of Portmarnock has generally occurred in the 20th Century. There is therefore, no identifiable village core in the traditional sense. While the rail station was built in the 1850s, it had no real influence on development. Rather, the village has developed along the Strand Road, which has functioned as the principal spine of the settlement. (see Figs. 2.4 and 2.5 overleaf).

The urban character of Portmarnock has been largely determined by significant growth in the seventies, when the majority of the housing estates were built. The expansion of the village was limited by the natural barriers such as river estuary and sea as well as the location of golf courses around the village, which has driven development northwards away from the core.

In terms of urban character, functions and typology there are five distinctive parts of the village (Fig. 2.3):

- Village Core Area – commercial, retail and social centre of the village;
- Portmarnock North – large residential areas to the north;
- Portmarnock Waterfront – distinct area to north of the village from the north, with hotels, and public access to the beach;
- Village Expansion Zone – separated zone around the commuter rail station and comprising mostly new apartments;
- River Sluice Corridor.
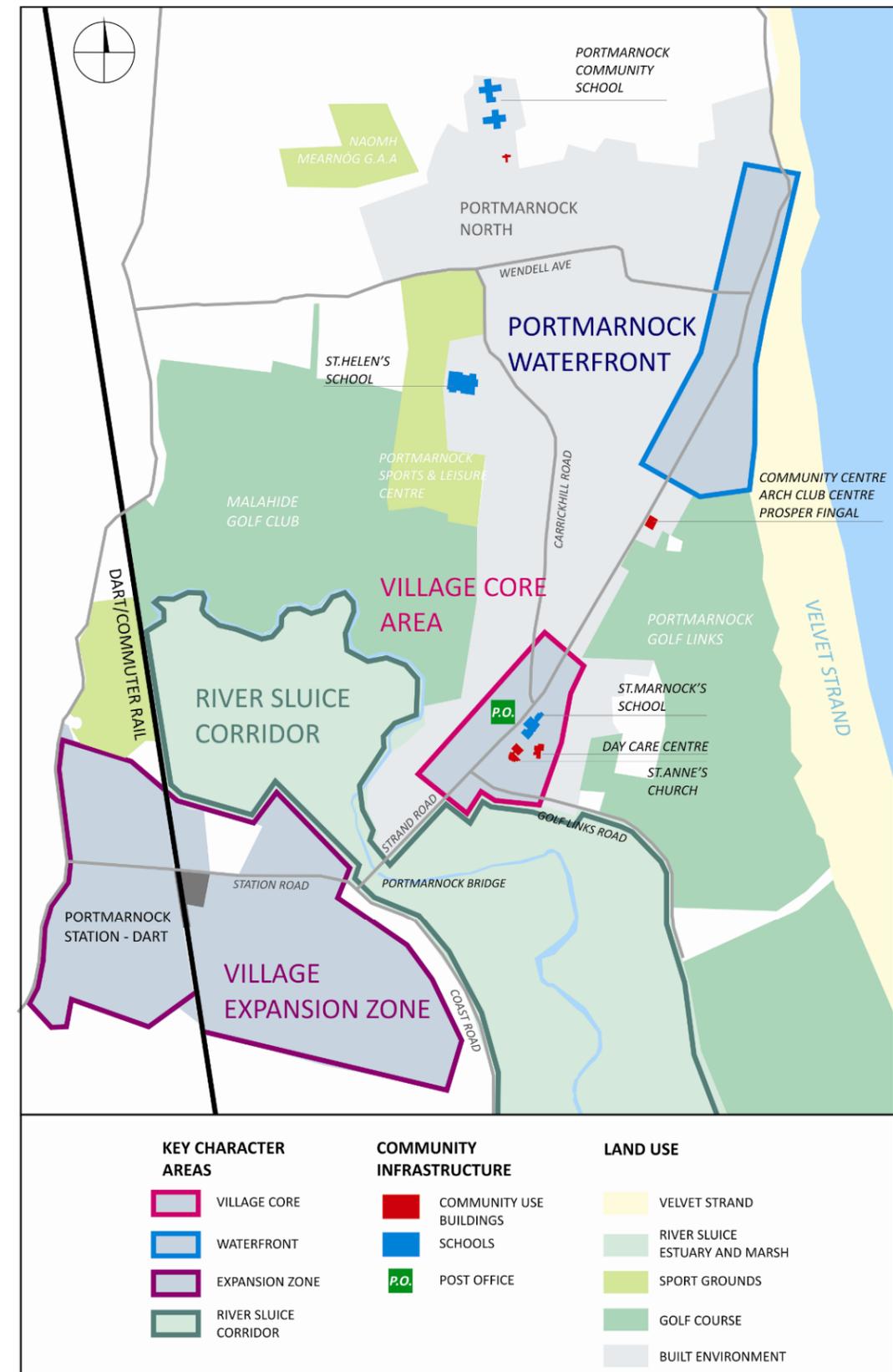
Figure 2.3 – Character Areas

Figure 2.4 – Portmarnock - Ordnance Survey Map – 1st edition 1837- 47
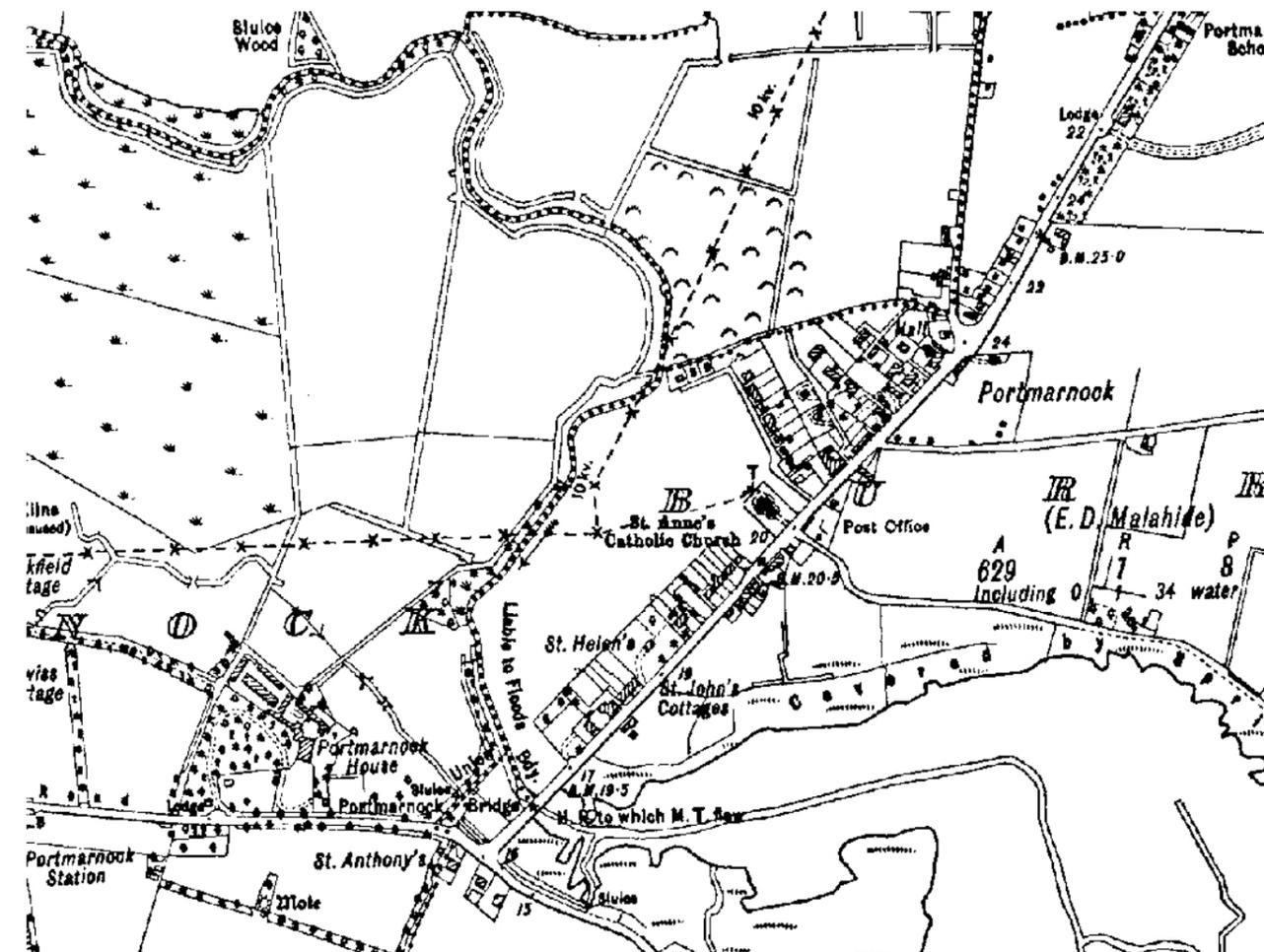
Figure 2.5 - Portmarnock - Ordnance Survey Map – early 20th century

While there are a small number of older structures and cottages situated along Strand Road, the majority of the buildings, including all public buildings in the village are modern. The village is predominantly characterised by single and two storey residential developments with the exception of the church (with belfry). New apartments to the south of the River Sluice are up to 3 storeys, but are distinctly separate from the main village core.

2.4   Built Heritage

There are a small number of historical structures that are within the village area or in close proximity. The sites include:

- Ruins of St. Marnock's Church from the 12th Century and the graveyard at Drumnigh Road,
- Ruins of the Church and the graveyard and Ogham stones off the Strand Road,
- XIXth Century Martello Tower at the Strand Road,
- Thatched cottage at Strand Road,
- Mound at Station Road,
- Ruins of the old water mill located at the lands adjoining Portmarnock Bridge and River Sluice.

2.5   National Spatial Strategy/ Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), show Portmarnock is located within the Metropolitan Area of the GDA. The settlement is not given a distinct designation, but is essentially regarded as part of Dublin City and suburbs.

The current population level (approx. 9,000), exceeds 5,000 and places Portmarnock in the Moderate Growth Town category (Tier 4 settlement).

The NSS includes an indicative diagram showing the recommended social infrastructure for the corresponding scale of the settlement (See Fig 2.6). This suggests that there has been a disparity between the growth in population and the provision of an adequate level of services.

Figure 2.6 –National Spatial Strategy (NSS) Community Infrastructure Diagram

2.6   Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008 – 2016

The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016, designates Portmarnock as a Level 4 retail centre (Small Town/Village). The Strategy recommends that the Planning Authority should seek to protect existing facilities which provide for people's day to day shopping needs and seek to remedy deficiencies to avoid social exclusion and isolation. Encouragement should therefore be given to uses which support the community and help solidify the role of the village as an important local centre such as medical clinics, social services, pharmacies, cafes and post offices (Section 6.20, p. 70). In general, the Strategy recommends that the importance of shops and services to the local community should be taken into account when assessing proposals which would result in their loss to another use. Local Authorities are also encouraged to adopt a positive position for the conversion and extension of shops which are designed to improve their viability (Section 6.22).

Appropriate retail formats for Level 4 centres include a food supermarket (defined as less than 2,500 sq. m net food retail floorspace) or lower order comparison, limited to a small number of shops meeting local needs. The strategy confirms that on average in the Irish context, a supermarket usually attracts a catchment of approximately 3,000 – 5,000 people (Section 6.18).

The strategy recommends *'supporting a good distribution of easily accessible centrally located district centres providing for the local needs of towns such as … Portmarnock, Baldoyle and Howth'* (section 6.33)*.*

2.7   Fingal Development Plan 2005 - 2011

The *'Fingal Development Plan 2005 -2011'*. describes Portmarnock as (p.176):

> "*A distinct linear coastal suburban town within the Dublin metropolitan area. As a centre, it lacks urban structure especially with regard to urban design cohesiveness, permeability and identity. The urban structure and identity of Portmarnock needs to be strengthened and consolidated through definition of the street frontage and upgrading of the streetscape*".

The development Strategy envisioned for Portmarnock includes:

> "***consolidation****,* ***definition*** *and* ***enhancement*** *of the existing urban form and retention of amenities. The long term development area for Portmarnock is based on the existing development area (with the exception of the lands adjacent to the railway station). It is intended to encourage more intensive commerical development, to integrate lands at South Portmarnock adjacent to the rail line, and to rejuvenate the existing village core*"

The following objectives (section 10.3) for Portmarnock are set out to support this strategic aim:

1. To develop the town as a centre providing services for both the residential population and for tourists, particularly in relation to golf tourism.
2. To prepare an Urban Centre Strategy including design guidelines for Portmarnock's urban centre, which shall aim to improve the commercial streetscape, define the village centre and promote the more intensive commercial development of this area.
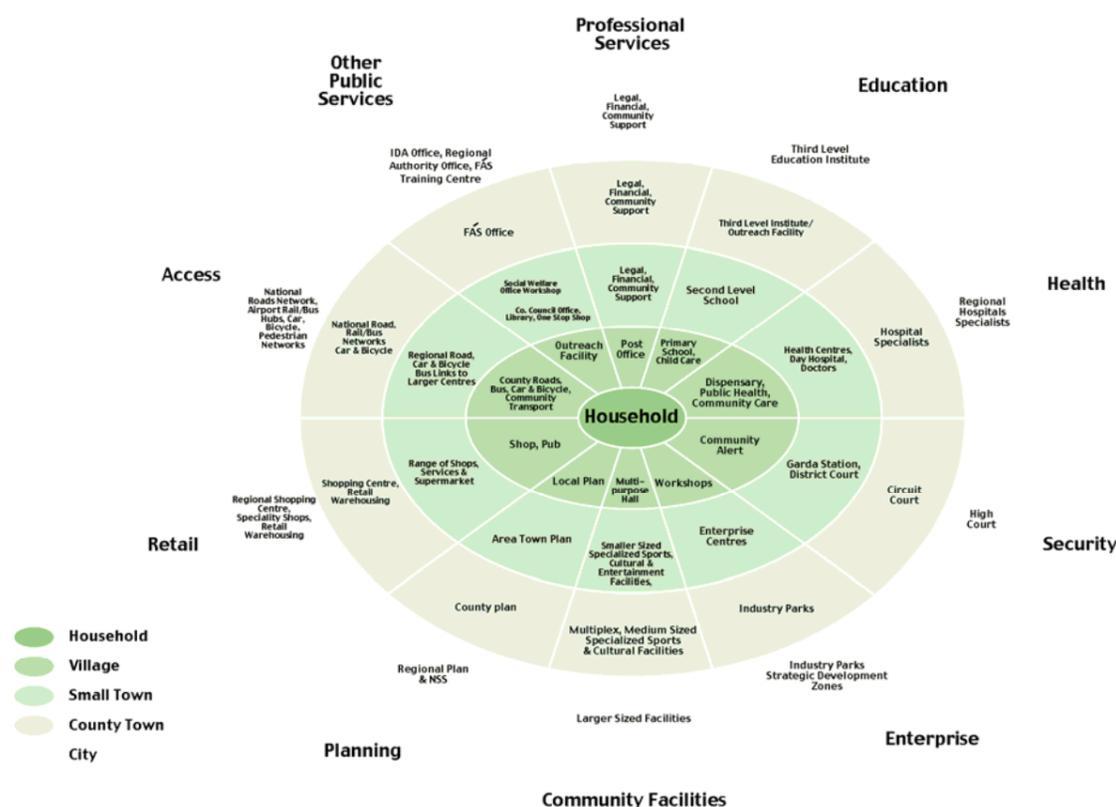
3. To preserve the identity of the town by securing its physical separation from Malahide by greenbelts.
4. To improve the physical character and environment of the area so that it can act as a service, social, recreational and tourist centre.
5. To carry out an environmental improvement scheme in the village.
6. To promote an enhanced rail station and improved rail service, together with the provision of a local feeder bus service.

The focus of the Strategy is on the village core. The relevant zoning objectives for the subject area comprise:

SC – Suburban Centres – "to protect and enhance the special physical and social character of major suburban centres and provide and/or improve urban facilities"

RS – Residential – "to provide for residential development and to protect and improve residential amenity"

OS – Open Space – "to preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities"

HA – High Amenity – "to protect and improve high amenity areas"

The Development Plan also identifies a number of map based objectives, they comprise the following:

Local Objective No. 244 – "To provide for the improvement of the junction between Carrickhill Road and Strand Road"

Local Objective No. 248 – "To facilitate further golf related accomodation/hotel at Portmarnock Golf Links. Any proposed accommodation/hotel should be accompanied by a Visual Impact Statement"

Local Objective No. 250 – "To create a riverside walkway in Portmarnock from the estuary to the sluice marsh area and extend westwards to Old Portmarnock and northwards to Portmarnock"

Local Objective No. 253 – "To extend the existing core of Portmarnock so as to provide good civic links to the rail station area lands

Airport Noise and Safety Zones

Parts of Portmarnock are located within the approach zones of Dublin Airport's existing and proposed runways. The Outer Public Safety Zone over Portmarnock (blue line on Fig. 2.7)is used to prevent inappropriate use of land where the risk to the public is greatest. It is Policy **DAP8** *"To promote appropriate land use patterns in the vicinity of the flight paths serving the Airport, having regard to the existing and anticipated environmental impacts of aircraft movements."*

Much of Portmarnock is also covered by the Outer Airport Noise Zone (yellow line on Fig. 2.7). It is Policy **DAP11 "***To strictly control inappropriate development and to require noise insulation where appropriate within the Outer Noise Zone, and to resist new provision for residential development and other noise sensitive uses within the Inner Noise Zone, as shown on the Development Plan maps".*

Figure 2.7 – Fingal County Council Development Plan 2005 – 2011 - Zoning Map

2.8   Fingal Retail Strategy

The County Retail Strategy (Appendix F of the Development Plan) notes there is scope for change and improvement of the existing retail provision within the village. Specifically, it is highlighted that there is a need to '*address the convenience needs issues'* of the Portmarnock area (Appendix F; p. 12/13).

The Retail Strategy (Strategy SS14) also highlights that there is an opportunity to further exploit Portmarnock's attractiveness and potential through promoting the development of tourism-leisure related retailing, facilities and infrastructure including '*heritage, the seaside, waterfronts/ water based activity, golf and quality supporting tourism infrastructure (hotels/ restaurants/ cafes/ bars/ speciality retailing) being the key attractions'* (Appendix F; p.17).

2.9   Portmarnock Local Area Plan

The Portmarnock Local Area plan was adopted by Fingal County Council in May 2006. The lands when developed will provide approximately 1,500 new homes (with population equivalent of 4,200 inhabitants) and a new neighbourhood centre, all situated in close proximity to Portmarnock commuter station (see Fig. 2.3).

The LAP aims to achieve a greater degree of social cohesion and integration between the LAP lands and the settlement core by harnessing the benefits of the new population by to facilitate investment and improvements to the town environment that can benefit the whole community.

The LAP cites potential positive effects of growth which may comprise improvements in shopping facilites, recreational facilities, improved access to public transport and new pedestrian and cycle routes. In this context the quality of the public realm and community infrastructure of the village core will play a crucial role in providing 'a meeting place' for the old and new community.

The LAP also recommends the creation of the "Station Road Boulevard" – with improvements to the public realm, landscaping, traffic and parking management on Station Road. These measures are intended to increase the quality of access to the station and integrate new development with the existing residential estates to the north.

2.10   Baldoyle/Portmarnock Action Area Plan (2000)

The Baldoyle/Portmarnock Action Plan was adopted by Fingal County Council in November 2001. It covers the area of land between the LAP lands and Baldoyle to the south. The AAP includes provision for a strategic green belt to the south of Portmarnock down to North Fringe area of the city.

2.11   Natura 2000 sites (SAC and SPA designations under habitats directive) and NHA

Portmarnock enjoys a unique setting on the estuary of the River Sluice and the coast There are two key important areas of conservation within the immediate environs of the village core area:

- **Baldoyle Bay - SAC (Special Area of Conservation) no. 000199 , SPA (Special Protection Area) no. 004016 and NHA (National Heritage Area)** – Baldoyle Bay is a tidal estuarine bay protected from the open sea by a large sand-dune system. Two smaller rivers, the Sluice and Maine, flow into the bay. It contains four habitats listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive and has two legally protected plant species: Borrer's Saltmarsh Grass and Meadow Barley. The site is is protected under the EU Birds Directive, as well as being a Statutory Natural Reserve. The area supports internationally important numbers of Brent Geese and nationally important numbers of six other species including Annex I Birds Directive: Golden Plover and Bar – tailed Godwit.

- **River Sluice Marsh – pNHA no. 001763 (proposed National Heritage Area)** – The area has been proposed as an NHA by The National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoEHLG because it is a rare example of an intact freshwater marsh, in Fingal and the Dublin region generally. Proposed National Heritage Areas (pNHA) are protected by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000.
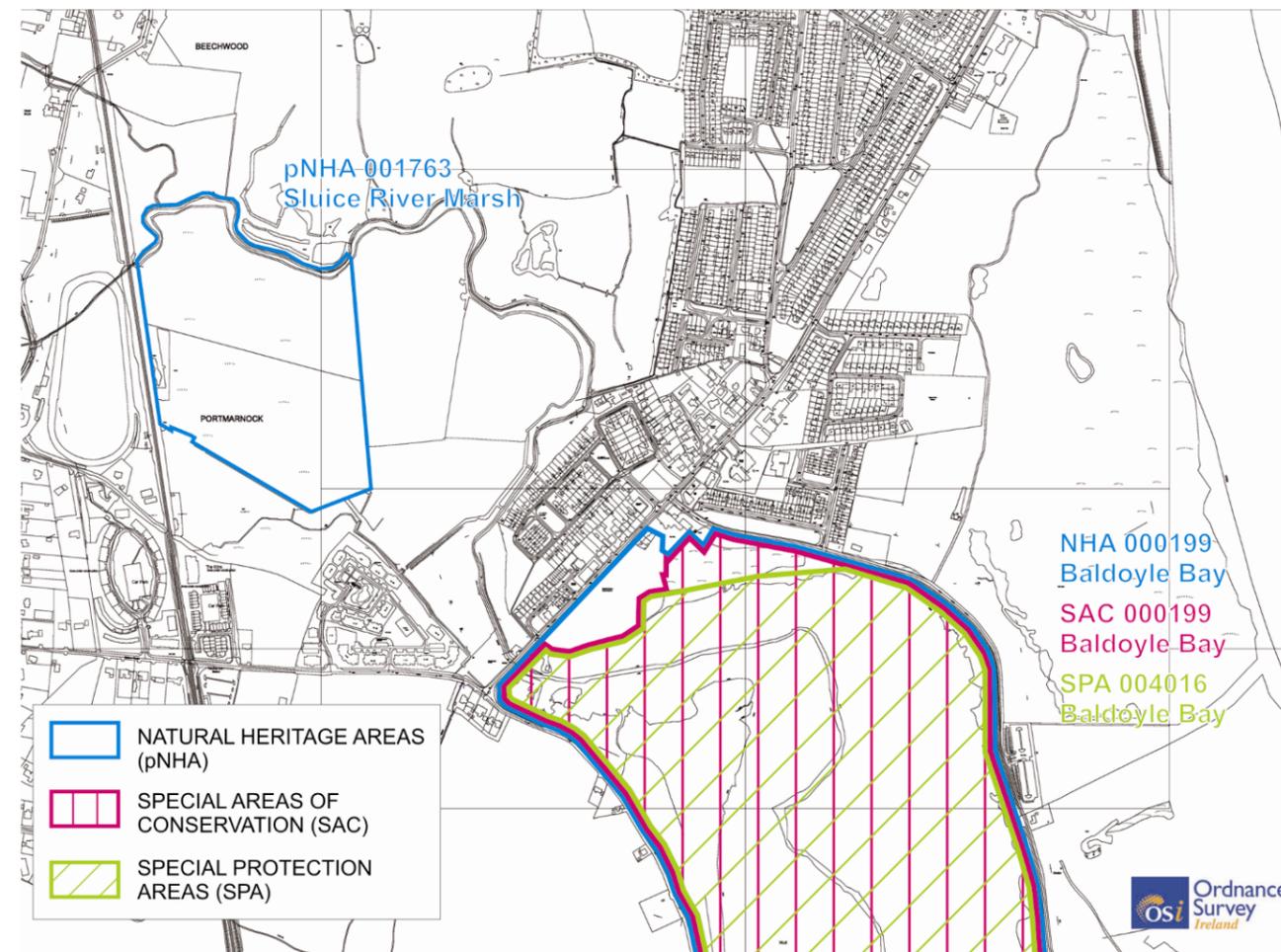
Figure 2.8 – Natural Heritage - Protected Areas in Portmarnock

SPA and SAC designations present an extremely high level of protection for these areas under the European Habitats Directive. A plan should only ever propose development in such locations in exceptional circumstances. The NHA designation, while of lesser magnitude, presents a protection of habitat at a national policy level. Again, proposals should not interfere with the site's integrity. The role of the designated sites as a natural amenity asset should also be recognised.

2.12   Flooding and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Portmarnock is located within the Sluice River catchment. Development within this catchment will have regard to FEM-FRAMS (Strategic Catchment Based Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study of 19 rivers and streams), and to the recommendations of the draft Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2008).

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be used by development where possible, with the aim of preventing water pollution and minimising surface water runoff. Ponds, Detention Basins, Pervious Pavements, Swales, Infiltration Trenches, Soakaways, Green Roofs and Bio-retention areas are all approved SUDS devices.

3.0　Survey

A number of surveys and analysis were undertaken during the preparation of this Strategy in order to explore the existing patterns of development and identify potential constraints and opportunities. The analysis of the key problems and opportunities during the survey stage have informed the proposed vision, detailed in Section 5.0, as well as the proposed development solutions, which are detailed in Section 6.0.

3.1　Land Use

As a commuter settlement, the dominant landuse in Portmarnock is clearly residential (Fig. 3.1) Appoximately half of the lands within the Strategy area comprised of detached and semi-detached residential units, one or two storeys in height This ranges from the established varied profile of Strand Road to more recent higher density schemes near the station.

The village core is located on Strand Road between the Golf Links Road junction and Carrickhill Road junctions where the majority of the shops and commercial services are located.   The location of the key retail areas within Portmarnock are illustrated on Fig. 3.2.
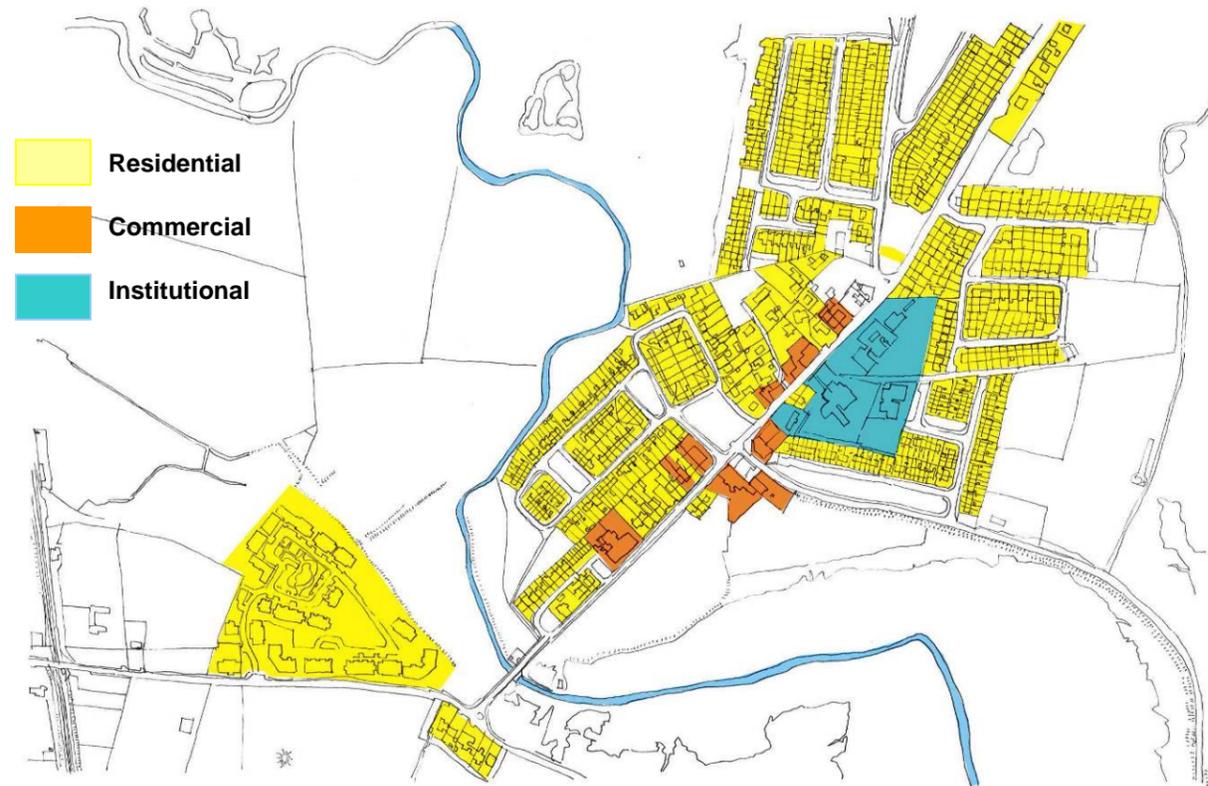

Fig. 3.1 – Land Use

Fig. 3.2 –Existing and Planned Retail Catchments

Given the population levels of Portmarnock the current retail offer in the village is quite basic. There are three small shopping parades in the village, including a small number of shops and a post office, situated in a row of cottages at Strand Road in close proximity to Carrickhill Road junction (Fig 3.7). There is a row of shops at the junction of Golf Links Road and Strand Road (Fig. 3.9) and a local shopping centre opposite the church. In addition to the commercial services above there is an existing Petrol Station at the Strand Road.

Important institutional and community uses are located in the village core. St. Anne's Church and St. Marnock's Primary School are located in the centre of the village. They are important buildings for the village community and function as focal points for the residents. The primary school is situated on a site of approx 1 Ha. The school comprises a single/two storey building, setback from the street boundary. The school's forecourt is covered with tarmac and functions as a play area and staff car park. The site has two entrances (one pedestrian and one vehicular), and is accessible from Strand Road only.

The church site is located at the heart of the village. It comprises the church building, free standing belfry, St, Anne's Parish Centre as well as a day care centre at the back of the site, and a large car park. The path at the back of the site provides pedestrian access to the Pitch and Putt course and adjoining residential estates at Strandmill.

Other community uses include 'Portmarnock Adventure Centre' –a voluntary run youth café and club, which is centrally located in the heart of the village. 'The Nest' – appears to be the only crèche in village centre area and is located on the corner of St. Marnock's Avenue and St. Anne's Square.

3.2   Visual Context - Townscape

The village has a strong linear character with Strand Road acting as a spine for the settlement. The street is characterised by a relatively wide carriageway, narrow pavements and there is a notable lack of street planting. The predominant scale of the buildings in the village is low-rise with the majority of structures between one and two storeys.

There are no significant communal or civic spaces within the village core. The majority of open spaces are provided within the residential estates. The church ground provides some focal point for the local community but the land itself does not provide any public/civic space. There are small cafes with some seating areas outside (on the narrow footpath) within the commercial core. The Strand promenade in the northern part of the village provides a key recreational area with walking and seating places. As a result the village core appears as a 'transitional space' on the way to the waterfront.

The quality of the main street frontages varies significantly. Generally, the visual quality of the village is significantly diminished by the random, 'ad-hoc' appearance of its commercial core. Large parts of the street frontage are under-utilised with the northern part of the subject area (between the Church and Carrickhill Junction Road) dominated by the school site fencing and derelict structures. The architecture of the commercial core is typically of low quality with frontages dominated by car parking. Probably the most pleasant part of the commercial core is situated vis-à-vis the church site with a small shopping parade with a butchers shop and café (Fig. 3.8). In spite of its appearance, the village core provides vital town centre uses to the local community.

The estuary frontage provides one of the most interesting spaces in the village core area with wide vistas of the bay and estuary. However its quality is diminished by the existing petrol station, with the canopy dominating the local streetscape.

Fig. 3.3 Entrance to village core from south

Fig. 3.4 Entrance to village core from north

Fig. 3.5 Strand Road – Opposite St. Marnock's School

Fig. 3.8 – Local shops at Strand Road

Fig. 3.11 – Recent Infill Dwelling on Strand Road

Fig. 3.6 – Random off-street parking on Strand Rd. in village core

Fig. 3.9 – Local shops at junction of Golf Links Rd and Strand Rd.

Fig. 3.12 – New residential development at Station Road (the Kilns)

Fig. 3.7 – Retail units at Strand Road

Fig. 3.10 – Typical Housing on Strand Road

Fig. 3.13 – St. Anne's Church – Portmarnock

3.2.1 Open Space

The local waterfront promenade and Velvet Strand (Fig. 3.15) function as the main recreational and open space areas for the local population. The other main open space that services the local population forms part of Portmarnock Sports and Leisure Centre. Additionally, there are three major golf clubs near the village – Portmarnock Golf Club, Portmarnock Hotel and Golf Links and Malahide Golf Club.

The majority of open space available for residents is provided as smaller parks within the residential estates. Some play areas are provided ie. at Hazelgrove Estate and St. Anne's. A local Pitch and Putt course is also accessible through the Church lands. There is a large open space area at the junction of Strand Road and Carrickhill Road. This site lacks any landscaping or distinctive landscape features (see Fig. 3.16). Baldoyle estuary also functions as an informal amenity open space area. However access to this area is limited due to its protected ecological status.

Fig. 3.16- Open space at the site between Strand Road and Carrickhill Road

Figure 3.14 – View towards the Baldoyle Estuary
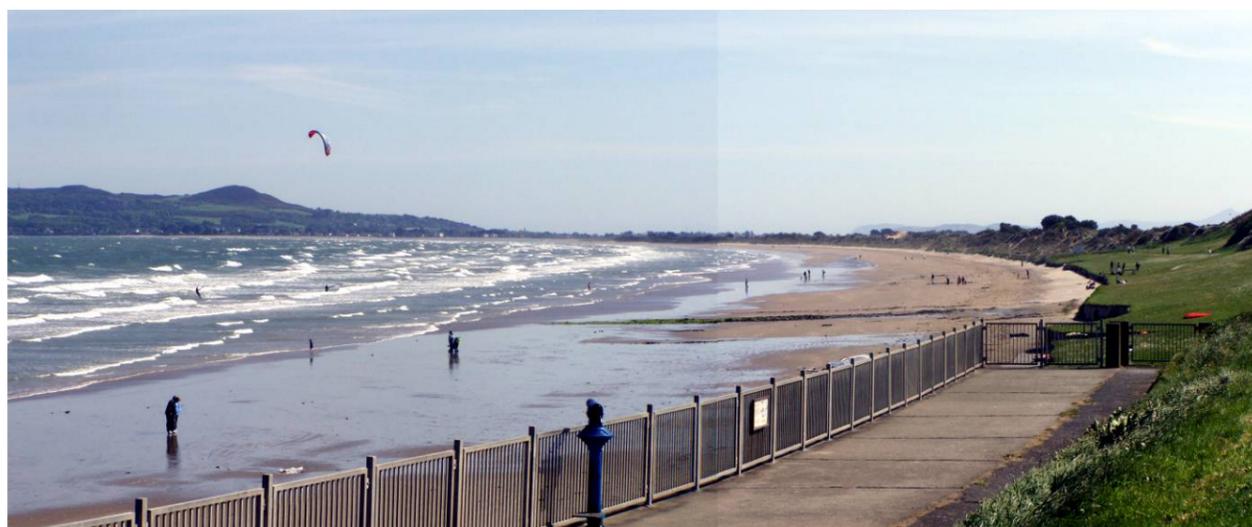

Fig. 3.17 Golf Links Road

Fig. 3.15 – Velvet Strand – view from the promenade

Fig. 3.18 River Sluice Corridor

3.2.2   Environmental Context

The environment and amenities of the general Portmarnock area have had a profound impact on the form and character of the settlement. The location of golf courses to the east and west have greatly constrained the development of the village core, and driven suburban expansion to the north of the village. The estuarine environment of the River Sluice to the south of the village core has limited expansion primarily through poor ground conditions, and now through high level environmental designations (see Fig. 2.8). The Velvet Strand and coastal setting provide excellent beaches, dunes and picturesque seascapes; all within easy reach of the city centre.

3.2.3   Vacant plots

Currently there are a number of vacant plots and unused buildings that may provide opportunities for redevelopment. There is a significant 0.4 ha site at the junction of Strand Road and St. Anne's Square (Fig 3.19), which is currently undeveloped. Directly opposite this site at the junction of Strand Road and Golf Links Road is a small site, occupied by a car garage at present. Both of these sites are subject to a current planning permission. There is also 0.4 ha site at the junction of Carrickhill Road and Strand Road which is now under construction (Fig. 3.20).

Fig. 3.19 – Site at the junction of St. Anne's Square and Strand Road

Fig. 3.20 – Site at the junction of Carrickhill Road and Strand Road (Site now under construction)

3.3   Roads and Transport

3.3.1   Existing Vehicular Routes

The Strand Road (Regional route R106) serves a dual function as the main thoroughfare/ local access road for Portmarnock, and secondly as a regional commuter route linking Portmarnock, Malahide and coastal areas to the city. Minor works were recently undertaken on the road to calm traffic with street cushions and pinch points. The road acts as a distributor to a number of local roads, laneways and access points.

Other important vehicular routes within the village core area include Station Road which serves as the main link to the commuter station, and Carrickhill Road which provides access to the residential areas to the north-west as well as the Portmarnock Sports and Leisure Centre.

The Golf Links Road functions as an access road to the Velvet Strand visitors car park and golf course.

3.3.2   Car Parking

The main car parking areas within the subject area include:

- Parallel parking at Strand Road in front of the commercial premises;
- Parking at the rear of St. Anne's Church.

There are also other facilities within the village area comprising:

- Two car parks for Velvet Strand visitors managed by the Fingal County Council;
- Commuter car parking at the station.

The off-street car parking at St. Anne's Church appears to be under-utilised. The Park and Ride car park at the station, following a recent extension has some capacity remaining, while cycle parking facilities here are under-utilised.

3.3.3   Public Transport

Portmarnock is well served by public transport. There are several bus routes serviced by Dublin Bus that connect the village to Dublin City Centre - Connolly Station, Eden Quay, Dawson Street, and Rathmines. There are also buses going to Dublin Airport and adjoining towns and suburbs – Malahide, Sutton, Howth. The village is served by the routes of the night buses and Xpresso – commuter buses. Bus stops are evenly distributed within the village area. (Bus Routes: 32A, 32B, 32X, 42, 42N, 102, 142).

The village is located on the Dublin – Drogheda – Belfast railway route. The DART commuter railway and suburban services stop at Portmarnock station (Fig.3.21). Frequency of services is good, with an average of 3 trains per hour in each direction.. The station has a park and ride facility.

Fig. 3.21 – DART station in Portmarnock

Fingal Development Plan planning policy supports the creation of a feeder bus route (Objective PORTMARNOCK 6). The Portmarnock LAP (2006) supports the upgrade of the station facilities to include a bus turning and set down area near the DART station as well as QBC improvements south to the Main Road.

3.3.4   Cycling and Walking

The existing pedestrian routes within the study area are as follows:

- Strand Road – including the linkages to Malahide;
- Station Road – providing main access to the commuter rail station;
- Golf Links Road –provides access to the Velvet Strand, allows for recreational walks with excellent vistas towards the Baldoyle Estuary;
- Pedestrian walkway through St.Anne's Church lands – provides access to the Pitch and Putt course;
- Carrickhill Road – linking the village core area to Portmarnock North.

There are no existing, designated cycle routes and there is little or no evidence of bicycle usage in Portmarnock. There are no bicycle stands in the village core. However, a walkway/cycleway to Baldoyle and to extend along the coast in both directions is proposed.

3.4   Services

For foul drainage there are 3 pumping stations at Portmarnock Strand, Portmarnock Bridge and Mayne Bridge Station Pump Stations, which are linked to Baldoyle and on for treatment at Ringsend Waste Water Treatment Plant. While there are currently no capacity issues, future development may be constrained subject to works being carried out on the network.

Surface Water Drainage is served by a single 225mm diameter main running from the junction of Carrickhill and Strand Road to the outfall at the mouth of the Sluice River. Future proposals must take account of SUDS mitigation and the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study – Regional Drainage Policy. Portmarnock village is served by a 4 inch water main running along Strand Road.

4.0   Constraints and Opportunities

This constraints and opportunities analysis summarises the key problems and limitations facing Portmarnock, and identifies opportunities and solutions which may create a viable strategy. This analysis forms the basis of the proposed strategy and development options detailed in Section 6.0.

4.1   Constraints

The existing constraints which have been identified within the subject area are as follows:

Inadequate services and facilities for scale of settlement

With a population of approx. 9,000, Portmarnock is a sizeable town in Irish terms. However, the level of services and facilities for such a population is entirely inadequate. While there is a supermarket in the northern residential area, there is none in the village core. Restaurant facilities are limited in the village as a whole with none in the village core. There is one pub in the village core. There is little or no comparison retailing. This is clear evidence of an outlflow of expenditure to surrounding settlements and the city for shopping and socialising needs.

The existing village core lacks its own distinctive identity

The existing village centre architecture and character are typical of suburban neighbourhood centres, rather than a traditional village core. The village core area is primarily car oriented. There are no attractive places, streetscapes or architecture to encourage people to stay in this area longer than necessary.

Village core acting as a by-pass for visitors – existing attractions are 'not there'

Key attractions of Portmarnock – the strand and golf clubs require the visitor to pass through the village core area. The River Sluice Marsh and Baldoyle Estuary Natural Reserve provide a valuable estuarine environment close to the city. However, people are not encouraged to stop.

Village is separated between 'new' and 'old' suburban development

New expansion area of the village to the south, designated by the Portmarnock LAP, will eventually create a new suburban quarter in Portmarnock around the train station. This area is approx. 1.5km from the village core which is beyond typical walking distance. Integration and social interaction between the old and new areas are unlikely in such circumstances.

Strand Road functions as a busy regional road

At present, Strand Road distributes the traffic between Sutton, Malahide and Swords. Due to its function in a transportation network, the introduction of traffic calming and on-street parking may be limited.

Village centre is car-dominated and the pedestrian realm is underdeveloped

The urban environment of Portmarnock is dominated by moving and parked vehicles. The pavements are narrow, there are no seating places and the amount and quality of on-street planting is minimal. There is no encouragement to walk, cycle or linger in the village. Cars have priority over people. There are no parks or plazas within the village centre. The quality of pavements, railings, street planting, lighting and walls is uncoordinated and of poor quality.

Deficiencies in community infrastructure

The school and church are important functions to retain in the village centre, which support activity and potential vitality.

Lack of integration between the important community uses and public realm

The local community uses are not integrated with the adjoining public realm. The school presents a blank frontage onto the Strand Road, while the landscape treatment in front of the church site does not integrate with the public realm.

Fragmented streetscape of Strand Road

The streetscape of Strand Road is fragmented.. There is little sense of traditional frontage as the village centre was not built with a traditional core, typical of 18th and 19th Century Irish villages.

Functional segregation of uses, lack of traditional mixed-use development patterns

The majority of the existing development at Strand Road is mono-functional.

Car parking spaces

There is good availability of off-street parking in Portmarnock within the Church lands. However, off-street facilities are not utilised, as on-street parking dominates. If improvements are to occur to the public realm, and the pedestrian environment improved, a simple change to parking habits is necessry as implemented in towns and villages throughout the country.

4.2   Opportunities

Existing setting and character of the village

Portmarnock is well known for its links courses and golf clubs. The estuary is a wildlife resouce for birdwatchers while the Strand provides good opportunities for water sports – kite and wind surfing. The surrounding environment provides a unique and attractive setting for any settlement in close proximity to Dublin City.

Population

The local population of Portmarnock, at 9,000 persons has the capacity to support a wider range of services, and higher order of facilities. Services and facilities can be diversified and improved within the village.

Access

Portmarnock has excellent access to the DART rail service to Dublin city centre and mainline network. The village has good access to the regional and national road network. Dublin Airport is in close proximity.

Strand 'Road' has the potential to change into a 'Street'

The Strand Road can change its predominant traffic oriented character by improving the pedestrian realm and quality of 'streetscape'. Design solutions and the introduction of new development can help to gradually transform Strand Road into a public space and pleasant village street. Tree planting should be provided as part of the improvement scheme.

Improvements to the quality of street frontage

The quality of the street frontage can be improved by the introduction of new development, redeveloping and intensifying existing sites and managing the space between the property line and the building line. Guidance on building lines, typologies and grain will contribute to an improved and more coherent built environment.

New infill development can act as an 'urban acupuncture' and play a crucial role in defining the future village character

There are several opportunity sites that can be redeveloped within the village core area. New development can provide an opportunity for immediate change of the village built environment. All of the new, major development sites front onto the main street and are located at key junctions thus allowing for improvements of the public realm. New schemes can also provide financial leverage required to finance the environmental improvements within the village.

Improvements to community infrastructure, potential to extend the public realm

The opportunity sites could be used to enhance the public realm and introduce new community uses into the village. Potential setbacks and staggering of the building line of new development can help to create smaller pocket parks and plazas and landscaped seating areas. Development of unused lands in public ownership as plazas and public uses should be considered.

Protection of the River Sluice Corridor as a 'green belt'

River Sluice acts as an area of ecological importance and natural beauty. The vista at the village entrance creates a natural break and is one of the distinctive sights when entering Portmarnock. Preserving this land intact will enhance the biodiversity and amenity of the village.

Manage the use of the existing natural heritage sites, help to realise their potential as a visual amenity/nature trail

The area of the River Sluice estuary that is not under protection can potentially be developed to accommodate walking trails and educational nature trails. Additional signage information can help residents and visitors to appreciate the value of the natural heritage.

Improve the physical linkages, encourage walking and cycling

An opportunity exists to encourage walking and cycling by increasing the width and quality of the existing footpaths, designating safe crossing points and designating new bicycle routes. There is a opportunity to provide quality linkages to the station area and southern part of the village.

Use of the existing roads and parking infrastructure

Car parking can be provided by utilising the existing off-street space (mainly at the Church). A pay and display system for parking within the Church site and Golf Links Road could address any need for overflow on-street parking.

5.0   Vision

There are a range of issues that have influenced the historic development of Portmarnock, current weaknesses and strengths in its physical character and its functionality as an urban place. Any urban rejuvenation or reinvention requires a set of clear ideas and concepts for the future. The following items intend to highlight the key principles the strategy should address:

1. **Re-brand Portmarnock as a unique village set in the estuarine and coastal environment, rich in amenity, scenery and bio-diversity.**

2. **Improve and upgrade facilities and services appropriate to a town of 10,000 people.**

3. **Transform the core of Portmarnock from a sububurban neighbourhood centre to a vibrant village.**

4. **Increase density, support a mix of uses, and create public places.**

5. **Reclaim village space from cars for people, and move parking to off-street locations.**

6. **Create a high quality public realm by reducing road width, improving footpaths, and introducing coherent lighting, street planting, and street furniture.**

"In a Society becoming steadily more privatized with private homes, cars, computers, offices and shopping centers, the public component of our lives is disappearing. It is more and more important to make the cities inviting, so we can meet our fellow citizens face to face and experience directly through our senses. Public life in good quality public spaces is an important part of a democratic life and a full life."

"First life, then spaces, then buildings – the other way around never works."

- Jan Gehl

6.0 Strategy

6.1   Introduction

This Urban Centre Strategy aims to provide guidance on the development of the key urban spaces in the village core of Portmarnock, to promote change and rejuvenation, and to ultimately provide a vital and viable village centre that can support and nurture the social life in Portmarnock.

The overall Urban Design Strategy (Fig.6.1) identifies the important spaces, where proposals are identified and then examined in greater detail under the opportunity sites.

In addition to the opportunity sites, the Strategy focuses on the common thread that links all elements in the village; - Strand Road. This can become an important linear space (as well as a transport corridor), where a series of pubic realm improvements and other measures can help; to establish a new character for the village core. The strategy is set out as follows:

6.2	Urban Design Strategy and Opportunity Sites
6.3	Public Realm Improvement
6.4	Landscaped Open Spaces
6.5	Pedestrian Links and Cycle Lanes
6.6	Traffic Related Issues

OPPORTUNITY SITE A
'SPAR' STORE

POTENTIAL SITE FOR A NEW MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT (RETAIL, OFFICE, LIVING OVER THE SHOP)

NEW SIGNAGE

(i) POTENTIAL LOCATION OF THE VISITOR'S INFORMATION POINT

OPPORTUNITY SITE C
SITE AT ST.ANNE'S SQUARE

POTENTIAL SITE FOR A NEW DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL RETAIL, OFFICES AND RESIDENTIAL. ARCHITECTURE SHOULD ADDRESS ST. ANNE'S SQUARE AS AN ENTRANCE POINT TO THE VILLAGE CORE.

OPPORTUNITY SITE F
SHOPPING CENTRE

SITE WITH POTENTIAL FOR REDEVELOPMENT. NEW DEVELOPMENT COULD INCREASE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF EXISTING USES AND IMPROVE ARCHITECTURE

STAGGERING OF THE BUILDING LINE AND REMOVING CAR PARKING CAN ALLOW FOR CREATING A POCKET PLAZA.

OPPORTUNITY SITE G
EXISTING HOUSES

POTENTIAL FOR INTENSIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT. NEW BUILDING SHOULD ADDRESS THE STRAND ROAD FRONTAGE. LOCAL POST OFFICE AND RETAIL SHOULD BE RETAINED ON SITE AS VALUABLE LOCAL SERVICES.

OPPORTUNITY SITE H
VACANT SITE AT THE JUNCTION OF STRAND ROAD AND CARRICKHILL ROAD

IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT SITE FOR VILLAGE CORE AREA A NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL RETAIL, AND RESIDENTIAL SCHEME HAS COMMENCED CONSTRUCTION

OPPORTUNITY SITE I
OPEN SPACE

POTENTIAL SITE FOR A NEW COMMUNITY/ PUBLIC USE BUILDING (LIBRARY, DAY CARE CENTRE, COMMUNITY/ ARTS CENTRE)

ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INTEGRATE A LANDSCAPED, PUBLIC PARK INTO ITS DESIGN

VILLAGE CORE ENTRANCE

INTRODUCE A LANDSCAPE FEATURE SIGNIFYING ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE CORE

REDEVELOPMENT OF ST. ANNE'S SQUARE

PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SURFACES SEATING AREAS, STREET FURNITURE TREE PLANTING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DETAILED LANDSCAPE DESIGN

PROVIDE TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES - COMPRISING CHANGING THE SURFACE FINISHING MATERIAL/PROVIDING VERTICAL CHANGE OF STREET LEVEL (RAISED AREA)

OPPORTUNITY SITE B
EXISTING GARAGE

POTENTIAL SITE FOR A NEW MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE NEW STREET FRONTAGE ONTO STRAND ROAD AND GOLF LINKS ROAD

PROVIDE NEW TREE PLANTING

ON STREET CAR PARKING

P CONSIDER INTRODUCING OVERFLOW, PARALLEL ON STREET PARKING

OPPORTUNITY SITE D
PORTMARNOCK ADVENTURE CLUB

POTENTIAL SITE FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING COMMUNITY USE OR NEW MIXED USE BUILDING. DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ADDRESS STRAND ROAD FRONTAGE

PROVIDE NEW TREE PLANTING

OPPORTUNITY SITE E
EXISTING COTTAGES

POTENTIAL SITE FOR REDEVELOPMENT COMPRISING NEW MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT. NEW BUILDING TO CREATE A LOCAL FEATURE

STAGGERING OF THE BUILDING LINE CAN ALLOW FOR CREATING A POCKET PLAZA. ALLOW THE BUILDING LINE TO MOVE FORWARD TO CREATE THE PINCH POINT

CAR PARK AT THE CHURCH SITE

P FORMALISE CAR PARKING CONSIDER INTRODUCING PAY AND DISPLAY

STRAND ROAD ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS - CORE AREA

PROVIDE NEW, HIGH QUALITY PAVING AND STREET FURNITURE, CONSIDER 'DE-CLUTTERING' OF THE STREET

PROVIDE TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES COMPRISING CHANGING THE SURFACE FINISHING MATERIAL/PROVIDING PINCH POINTS OR 'BUILD-OUTS' POTENTIAL FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

PROVIDE NEW TREE PLANTING

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN SCHOOL SITE

POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE MORE AREAS WITH 'SOFT LANDSCAPING' AND SEATING AREAS FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE LANDSCAPING STRIP ALONG STRAND ROAD

CARRICKHILL ROAD AND STRAND ROAD JUNCTION

PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SURFACES SEATING AREAS, STREET FURNITURE TREE PLANTING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN

PROVIDE TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES - COMPRISING CHANGING THE SURFACE FINISHING MATERIAL/PROVIDING VERTICAL CHANGE OF STREET LEVEL (RAISED AREA) OR REDUCING THE SCALE OF THE JUNCTION

LANDSCAPE THE UNDERUSED OPEN SPACE AT THE NORTHERN PART OF THE JUNCTION AS A SMALL POCKET PARK
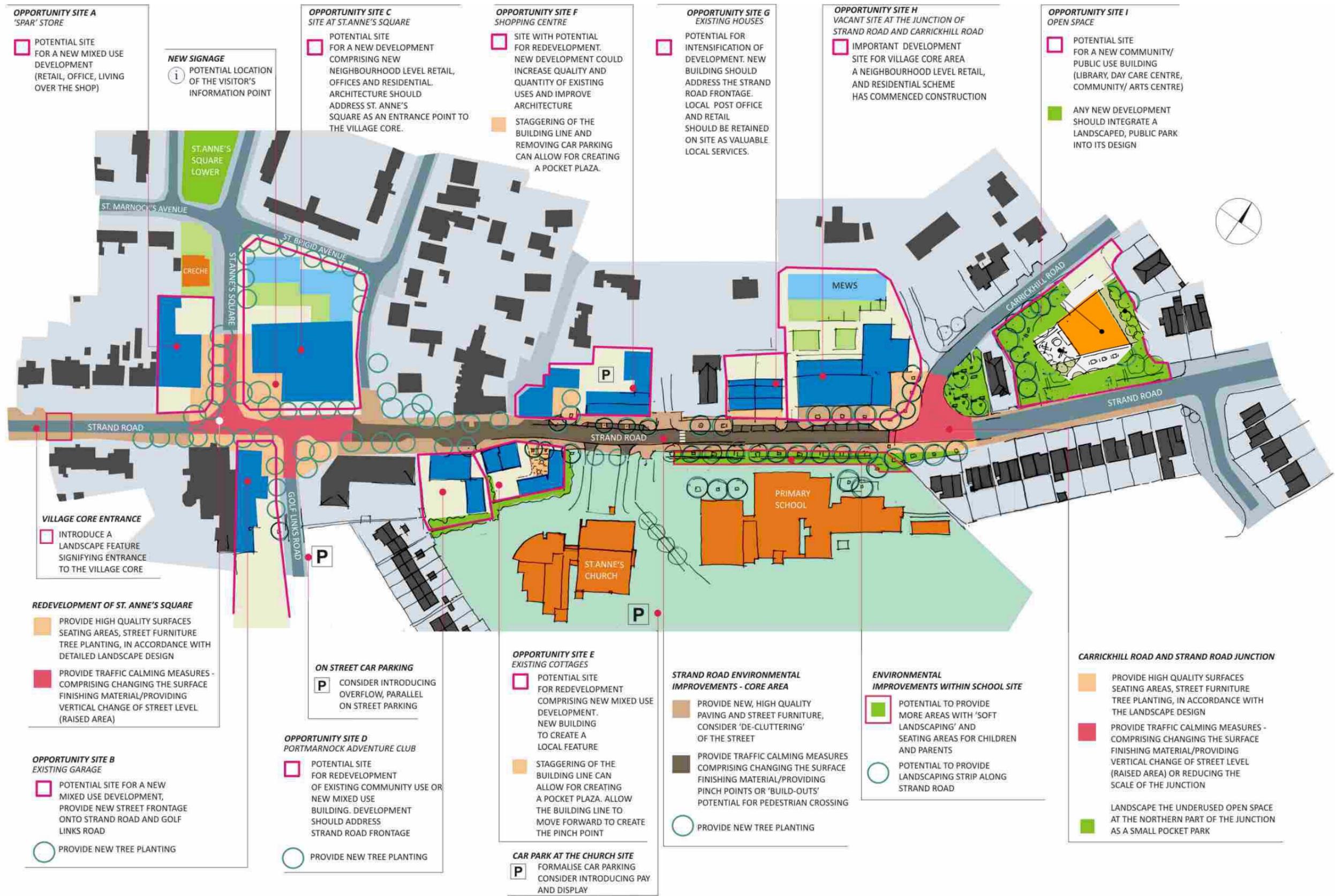
Fig. 6.1 –Urban design strategy

6.2 Urban Design Strategy and Opportunity Sites

There are a number of potential development sites in the village. The sites have been selected on the basis of their development potential or importance in village urban structure. The selected sites include a mix of vacant plots, brownfield sites and sites that are currently developed but have potential to improve and intensify the development on site. Proposed interventions are illustrated on Fig 6.1.

6.2.1 Opportunity Site – A

This is a small plot (0.13 ha), currently occupied by a single storey, commercial building of poor architectural quality. The site provides an opportunity for redevelopment and provision of a mixed-use village centre scheme.

Recommendations:

- Site could be subject to redevelopment with a new mixed use scheme including retail and other uses above (residential, office). Maximum height of the structure could reach three storeys;
- Any new building should address the proposed civic plaza through architectural detail, increase in height or treatment of the façade;
- Additional landscaping including planters and trees could be added to the street frontage;
- Consideration should be given to limiting the amount of car parking space at the portion of the site that adjoins St Anne's Square and the Strand Road junction. This space could be developed for pedestrians with quality paving and seating areas.

6.2.2 Opportunity Site – B – Brooks Garage Site

This is a 0.22 ha site situated at the southern corner of Strand Road and Golf Links Road. The site was subject to a number of planning applications. The most recent permission provided for a three storey mixed use commercial development. The site plays an important role in framing the entrance to the village core, and also to Golf Links Road.

Recommendations:

- The street frontage could be addressed by providing active uses and key entrances to the premises at ground floor level.
- Landscaping including planters and trees could be located at the street frontage.
- Any new building could keep the building line of the adjoining premises (Golf Links Pub).
- The design of any new development could take into account any potential impacts on the landscape of the Baldoyle estuary.

6.2.3 Opportunity Site – C – Vacant site at St. Anne's Square

This is a larger, 0.4 ha site situated at the northern corner of Strand Road and St. Anne's Square, with planning permission for a mixed use scheme. It is the major opportunity site in the village. Any new scheme at this site should include neighbourhood level retail and other uses appropriate for a village centre. The architecture of any development at this site will play a significant role in defining the entrance to the village central core. Ground floor uses facing the public plaza, should integrate with that space (i.e. coffee shop with outdoor seating), rather than solely serve as functional access to space for the stores.
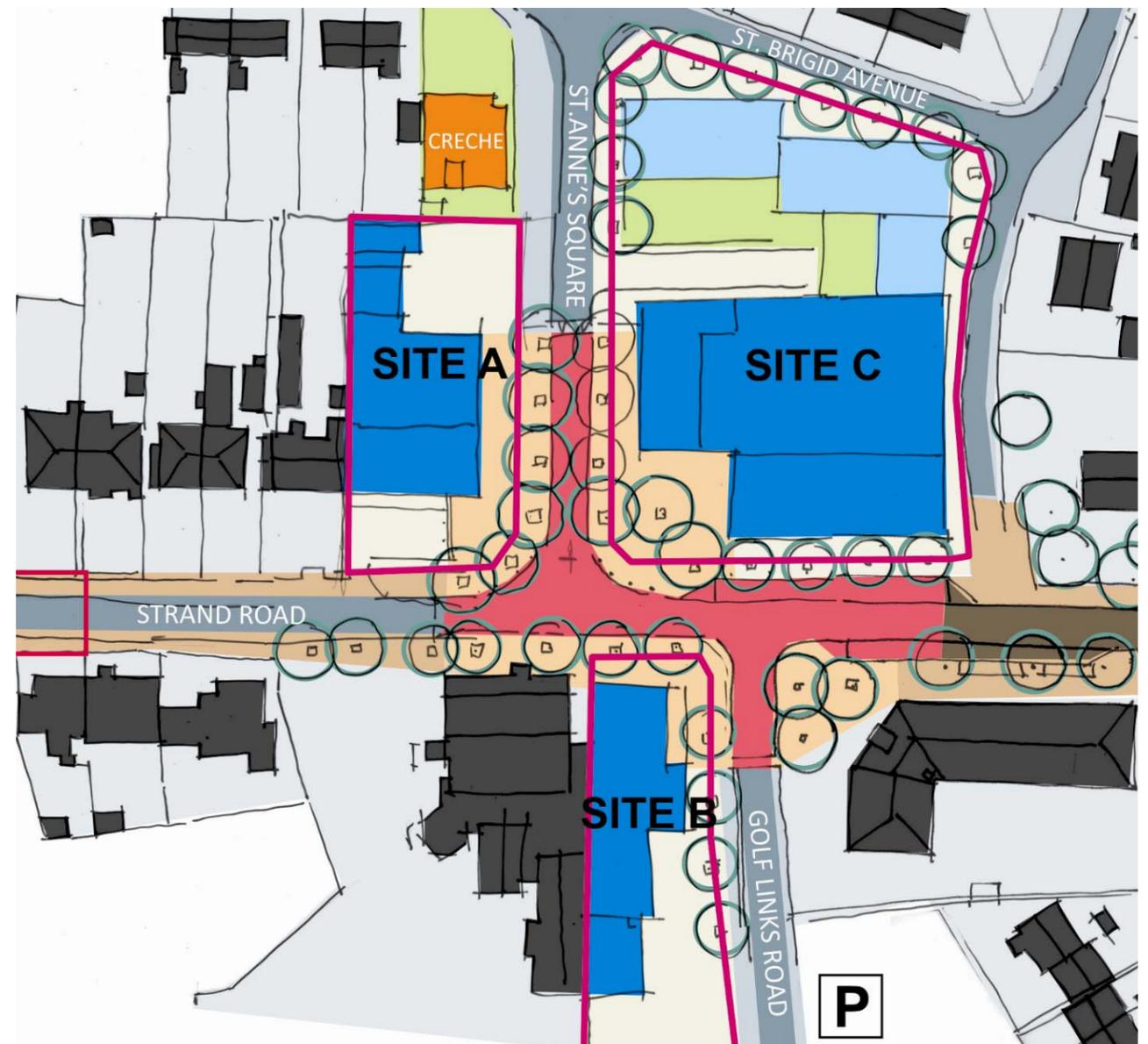

Fig. 6.2 – Opportunity Sites A, B and C

Recommendations:

- The street frontage could be addressed by providing active uses and key entrances to the premises at ground floor level.
- Building design should contribute towards the creation of a civic space at the junction of St. Anne's Square and Strand Road. Due to its configuration, the corner of the site will enjoy a good aspect to natural sunlight. The site is also situated where pedestrian routes converge making it suitable for the location of a civic space – a small plaza with seating area, public art and planting.
- A potential public plaza could include a visitors information point provided as an information board or a small interpretative centre.
- The urban form of any new development should signify an entry point to the village centre. This articulation can be achieved by a combination of an increase in height, detailing, and use of high quality materials. A setback with public plaza, could be provided to create a suitable forecourt for the accented corner.
- The development of the site should seek to provide a robust, mixed-use scheme including a commercial and retail element and residential uses. The residential use should be provided as a mix of different typologies including apartments and townhouses.
- Landscaping including planters and trees should be located at the Strand Road frontage in order to increase the quality of the streetscape.

6.2.4   Opportunity Site – D – Portmarnock Adventure Club

This is a small site (0.11 ha) occupied by a single storey structure. The building hosts a youth café and club house. The community centre has been voluntarily run since 1972. It also serves as premises for other local clubs. The physical quality of the space is poor, and covered with tarmac. There are at least two potential development options which include keeping the community use on site and support further financial investment or redevelop the land for commercial uses whilst supporting the provision of a youth café/club elsewhere

Recommendations:

Scenario A - Keep the community uses on site and invest in environmental improvements/ redevelopment:

- With this option, a small public use building comprising a youth café/club and facilities for local activity groups could be developed on site. The form of the building should create a greater degree of interaction between the proposed use and the public realm of the street.
- A public use building at this site can provide an opportunity to deliver unique infill architectural design, radically improving the quality of the local environment. The public library in Baldoyle/Sutton is an example of comparable and successful intervention in a local fabric.
- If developed as a public building, the new structure could be accompanied by dedicated open space, created as a small pocket park or plaza. The landscaping could allow for the location of a small outdoor area for play. Landscape design should also seek to increase the area of green space and reduction of existing tarmac surfaces.
- Alteration of the building line can help to extend the public realm and enhance the streetscape.

Scenario B – Redevelop as a commercial use, move the community uses elsewhere within the village core area:

- In this scenario a small mixed use commercial building could be developed on site. The structure could include commercial uses at the ground floor level and commercial or residential uses at the upper floors.
- The development could include elements of public gain such as extended pedestrian space or small public space provided by staggering of the building line.
- The scale of the building should follow the scale of the adjoining mixed-use building to the west.
- Car parking can be provided on site at the back of the premises, with a limited amount of short term car parking spaces at the front of the building.
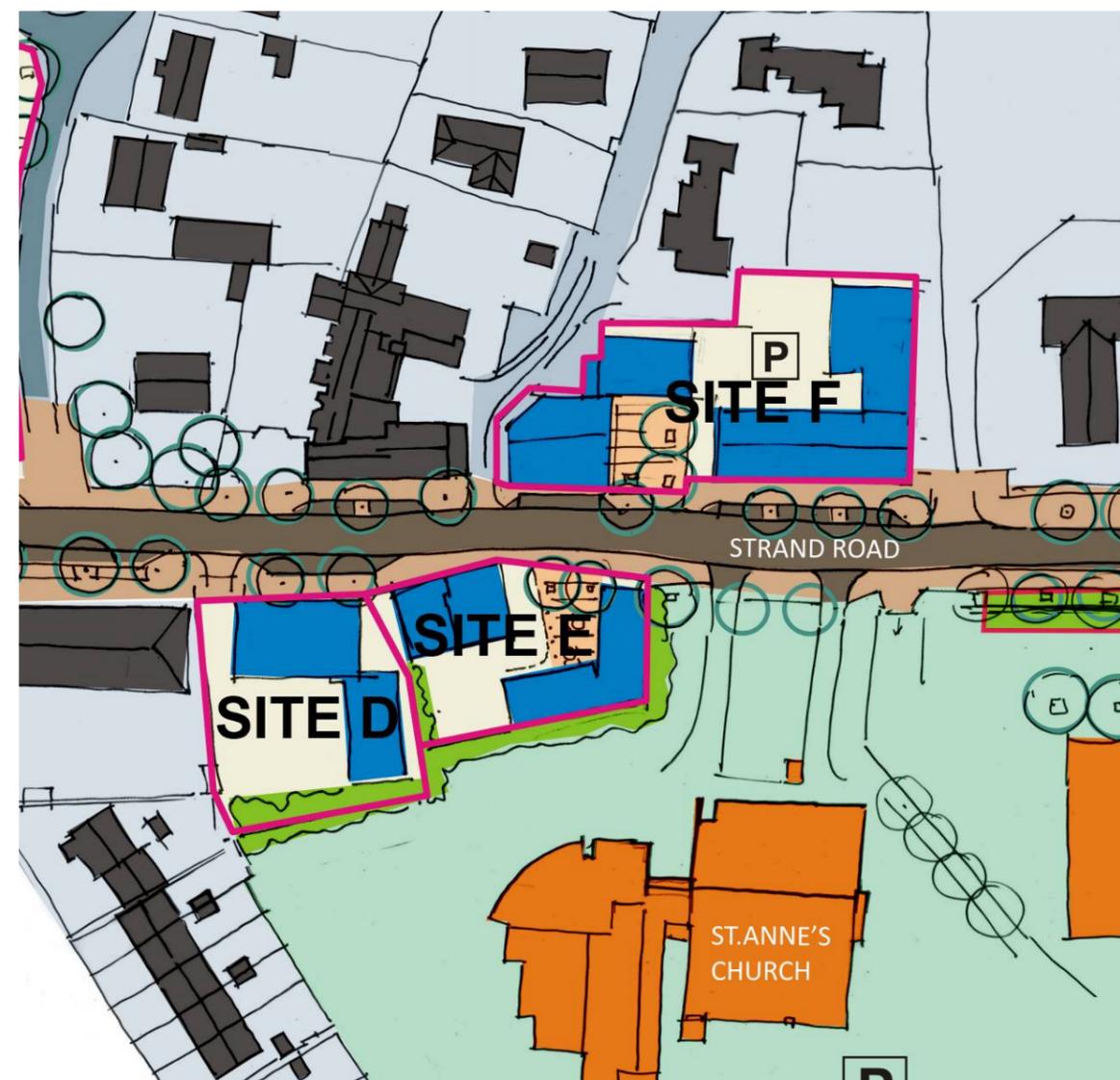

Fig. 6.3 - Opportunity Sites D, E and F

6.2.5   Opportunity Site – E – Existing Cottages, Strand Road

This small site (0.08 ha) is occupied by two semi-detached single storey cottages. This site could be developed for village centre use alone or in conjunction with the adjoining site, currently occupied by Portmarnock Adventure Club.

Recommendations:

- If integrated as part of Portmarnock Adventure Club, the site can provide an additional area for landscaping or open space. The design recommendations are similar to those for Site D.
- If the site is acquired for redevelopment on its own, this can provide an alternative to the rigid building line by placing the buildings closer to the street frontage. This would provide a visual pinch-point along the vista of Strand Road.
- With regard to the envisaged land uses the site is located in close proximity to established local retail uses, within the commercial core of the village. The most preferred development scenario would seek to maximise the commercial potential and ensure provision of retail and commercial services within a small, mixed-use development. Alternatively a residential use development, respecting the low scale of the village could be considered for this site.

6.2.6   Opportunity Site – F – Shopping Centre site, bounded by Strand Road and Suncroft Avenue

This site (0.16 ha) currently inlcudes a local shopping centre with a number of smaller convenience shops, take-away's and commercial services including financiers, betting office, GP practice, hairdressers and beauty salons. The development comprises a number of single storey bungalow shaped structures with a considerable area of car parking in front of the building. The site is conveniently located opposite the church and school and in front of the bus stop, making it well suited for any retail and commercial development. The potential redevelopment scenario of this land could focus on densification of the site and improvements to the pedestrian and public domain.

Recommendations:

- Development can seek to maximise the commercial potential of the site by increasing the commercial floorspace. The site could be redeveloped to allow for creation of mixed-use scheme.
- Introduction of commercial uses such as small scale office space or additional retail could be considered as part of the future redevelopment. Alternatively 'living over the shop' scenarios could be considered at this site.
- The site requires improvements in the quality of the pedestrian and public realm to capitalise on the location in close proximity to school and the church. Public car parking at the front of the building can be reduced to allow for more space for pedestrians and shoppers. This has the potential to provide a sheltered courtyard area, which would enjoy a sunny aspect. Landscaping elements could include tree planting, planters and seating.

6.2.7 Opportunity Site – G – Existing buildings with commercial uses and post office, Strand Road

This is a small area occupied by a number of cottages, currently in commercial use (0.08 ha). This area functions as a small shopping parade including a newsagent, pharmacy, barber shop, vet and post office.   While the current builiding is not of strong architectural quality, this diversity of uses and services is important for the village. The emphasis for this site must therefore be on the removal of 'frontage parking' so that the space to the front of the buildings can be used for people instead of cars.

Recommendations:

- The site could be redeveloped in the future at a higher density to support a higher quality development. However, the commercial uses at this site such as post office and pharmacy should be retained as they play an important role in the life of a local community.
- The space at the front of the site could be paved/surfaced with higher quality finishes and street planting.
- A coherent commercial signage strategy could be agreed with the landowners. The shops would benefit from the provision of new high quality shopfronts, designed as coherent commercial frontage for all premises on site.

6.2.8 Opportunity Site – H – Site at the Junction of Carrickhill and Strand Road

This is an important development site (0.4 ha) on the western corner of Carrrickhill Road and Strand Road. The development on this site will determine the character of the junction and act as another entrance point to the village centre area. Planning permission has been granted for a 3 storey mixed-use scheme on the site and construction has commenced.

Recommendations:

- The development should generally keep the height of 3 storeys with the possibility to increase the height at the junction of Carrickhill Road and Strand Road.
- The prominent corner at the junction of Carrickhill Road and Strand Road could be accented by architectural articulation, finishing materials and height.
- Proposed uses should try to address and animate the Strand Road frontage. The location of building entrances, active uses (retail/café) should be encouraged.
- Any landscaping proposals for the area in front of the building should include seating areas.

Fig. 6.4 – Opportunity Sites G,H and I

Opportunity Site – I – Existing open space, bungalow and small vacant site bounded by Carrickhill Road and Strand Road

This site comprises an area of open space, a solitary bungalow and a small portion of the land at the corner of Carrickhill Road and Strand Road. Although it functions as open space it is not landscaped and its quality as a civic space is limited. Potential improvements to the site could result in the creation of a new park for the community. The potential synergy of this open space land with the school has not been realised, but has considerable potential. It is also a site that could be considered for the location of a building with community oriented uses – including a library, day care centre, youth café, arts and community centre.

Recommendations:

- Consideration could be given for location of a landscaped town park with tree planting, seating areas, and playing areas for children at this site.
- New town park at the site could be accompanied by a public use building with community uses. Inclusion of complementary commercial functions such as cafes, restaurants, and tourist interpretative centre should be encouraged at this site.
- Any development on this site, including landscaping, placement of the play areas and location of any built structures should take into account the amenity of the established residential uses in the area including the existing bungalow. The adequate landscape screening should be included in the design.

POTENTIAL TO LOCATE SEATING AREAS
POTENTIAL TO LOCATE ACTIVE USES AT THE GROUND FLOOR LEVEL
RECOMMENDED GENEROUS SETBACK TO EXTEND THE PUBLIC DOMAIN
AND CREATE A NEW PLAZA

OPPORTUNITY SITE H

PROVIDE PLANTING BUFFER
TO PROTECT PRIVACY AND AMENITY OF
ADJOINING HOUSE

PROPOSED SETBACK AND PROVISION OF
TREE PLANTING AND PARALLEL PARKING/
LOADING AREAS

POTENTIAL TO LOCATE
A POCKET PARK WITH
SEATING AREA AND PLANTING

STRAND ROAD

POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE LANDSCAPING
STRIP WITHIN THE SCHOOL SITE

RECOMMENDED TRAFFIC CALMING:
POTENTIAL OPTION INCLUDE CHANGING THE FINISHING SURFACE,
NARROWING THE ROADWAY OR PROVIDING VERTICAL CHANGE

Fig. 6.6 – Site at the junction of Strand Road and Carrickhill Road – public realm strategy

BUNGALOW RETAINED ON SITE

LANDSCAPED TOWN PARK

CARRICKHILL ROAD

NEW COMMUNITY USE BUILDING
FRONTING ONTO STRAND ROAD

STRAND ROAD

PLANTING BUFFER
TO PROTECT PRIVACY
AND AMENITY OF
ADJOINING HOUSES

POCKET PARK
FRONTING ONTO THE JUNCTION

PLAT AREAS / IOPEN SPACE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BUILDING

Fig. 6.5 – Opportunity Site I – Development Option

6.3   Public Realm Improvements

One of the key elements of this Strategy is guidance in relation to improvements of the public realm. The following section comprises the recommendations and design standards in relation to design of public spaces – plazas, streetscape, street furniture, signage and planting.

The overall strategy for the design of the public realm and creation of new civic linkages is illustrated on Fig. 6.11.

6.3.1   Plazas

New plazas should be hard-surfaced with quality paving materials that will help to distinguish them as special focal and civic places. Development of all adjoining properties and their corresponding frontages and public realm should support the provision of one coherent civic space. This is particularly important in the case of the plaza at the junction of St.Anne's Square, Strand Road and Golf Links Road (see Fig. 6.7).

The landscape design of these spaces should consider the needs of the various different users: children, teenagers, elderly, residents, shoppers and visitors. It is important to create a social space for all groups.

The plazas should be designed with adequate provision of seating areas, bins and cycle parking facilities. Good planting – including trees and planters need to be incorporated as integrated features of the space. Plazas should be adequately lit to increase safety and security. Use of light can help to shape the public space. Proposed lighting fixtures and lamps can have a unique design and be used as architectural elements.

Location of street cafes, shops and restaurants fronting onto the plaza should be encouraged. Due to their central location, a tourist information board with map and summary of local attractions should be situated on one of the plazas. The plazas should also be capable of supporting occasional events such as farmers markets, small scale social or music events. Public art projects can be also commissioned to support the design of these spaces.

Fig. 6.7 - Plaza at the junction of St.Anne's Square, Strand Road and Golf Links Road – proposed intervention

6.3.2 Streetscape

Streets play an important role in the provision of friendly and well-designed civic and social spaces for the residents of Portmarnock. The strategy recommends distinctive treatment for different types of streets in the study area.

6.3.2.1 Village Core Area – Strand Road

Prime streetscape character generators of this street will be:

- Open boundary treatment for ease of circulation;
- Integration of the street design with key plazas at St. Anne Square/ Golf Links Road junction and at Carrickhill Road junction;
- Natural stone pathway/cycleway surfacing (paviors / setts);
- Granite kerbs;
- Amenity grass seeding to public open space (where suitable);
- Ornamental shrub planting to public space (where suitable);
- Street tree planting to pathways. (single species);
- Specimen tree planting at junctions (where suitable);
- Widening of pathways for better pedestrian environment;
- Use of build outs to accommodate tree planting along with provision of parallel parking bays;
- High quality finishes to all landscape elements;
- Continuity in high grade street furniture types;
- Continuity in lighting types used in public areas and along Strand Road. Reduction of the 'wirescape' – location of the existing overhead cabling underground (where feasible) and to be secured in the case of new developments.

6.3.2.2 Estuary Frontage/ Roundabout area – Strand Road

Prime character streetscape generators of this street will be:

- Native Hedgerow planting to boundaries; and/or
- Uniform timber/stone wall impermeable boundary;
- Coloured resin bound path/cycleway surfacing;
- Small unit paving trim to pathways;
- Countryside Kerbs;
- Amenity grass seeding//Shrub planting to verge;
- Tree planting to verge;
- Adequate paving widths for combined pedestrian/ cycle routes;
- Clear demarcation of cycle/pedestrian routes;
- Parking provision for public amenity area, nature reserve;
- Continuity in high grade street furniture;
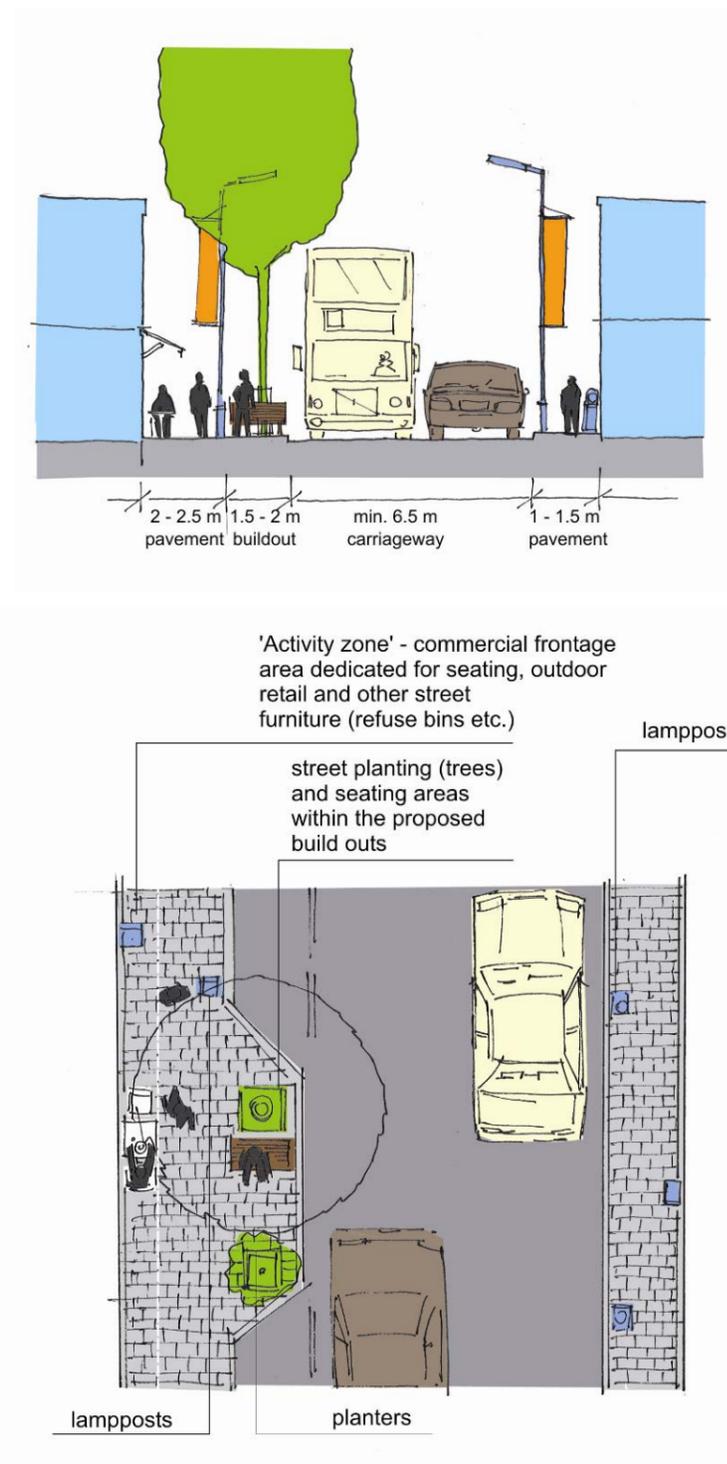- Signage;
- Site specific information panels.

2 - 2.5 m   1.5 - 2 m   min. 6.5 m   1 - 1.5 m
pavement   buildout   carriageway   pavement

'Activity zone' - commercial frontage area dedicated for seating, outdoor retail and other street furniture (refuse bins etc.)

lampposts

street planting (trees) and seating areas within the proposed build outs

lampposts   planters

Fig. 6.8 – Cross-section of the Strand Road within the Village Core Area

6.3.3   Street Furniture

The choice of materials, design and colour of signage, public lighting, etc must be integrated with any landscape proposal as a standard range of furniture to allow consistency of approach along the existing road corridor ie. seating, litter bins, traffic crossings, phone boxes, bus stops, and street names, signs, bicycle racks and bollards. Where possible it is recommended that street signage is incorporated within the urban fabric rather than as freestanding entities.

Fig. 6.9 – Examples of seating and planters

Fig. 6.10 Examples of seating from Madrid (left) and Greystones (Meridian Centre)

Fig. 6.11 – Examples of different types of lighting posts – traditional (left) and contemporary (right)

6.3.4   Streetscape - Finishing Materials

6.3.4.1   Pavements

Road and footpath surfaces will provide a clear indication of priority of use and reflect the relevant townscape character.

A hierarchy of character areas should be created using specific materials for each street (Village Core, River Sluice Corridor etc.).

The Village Core Area will be more urban in character with an increase in quality of finish using a variety of small unit granite paving slabs / setts.

A gravel resin bond finish is recommended for paving the remaining streets within the subject area. Granite setts can be used to separate pedestrian and cyclist use. They also can be used to the rear of the kerb.

Fig. 6.12 – Surfaces: Quality granite finish (left) and gravel resin bond (right)

Fig. 6.13 – Example of the shared surface streets: Birmingham (left), Ashford (right), UK

6.3.4.2 Kerbs

It is proposed to select a kerb design that reflects the individual character areas. High quality granite kerbs are proposed in the Village Core Area. This will change to concrete/granite aggregate countryside kerbs for the remaining streets.

6.3.4.3 Shared Surfaces

The use of shared surfaces, incorporating different surfacing for the carriageway is recommended for the key open spaces within the village core. The introduction of a different surface will act as a traffic calming measure and increase the quality of the public realm. Use of natural stone surfaces is recommended for these areas where suitable. However a detailed design proposal will be needed that reflects the pavement and road design standards of Fingal County Council.. Examples of the implementation of the shared surfaces within the urban environment are illustrated on the photos below (Fig. 6.13 and 6.14)

Fig. 6.14 – Example of the shared surface streets: Girona, Spain (left), from US (right)

6.3.5   Street Planting

In the hustle and bustle of an avenue or street it is essential for plants to provide an element of calm and at the same time be of interest as a road decoration that reflects the character areas. A succession of coordinated species (colours) and forms is ideal in this situation. Alteration in the height of planting can be used to define gateways, open vistas or signage locations. On the Coast Road & Strand Road, Portmarnock roadside planting will play an important role in setting the tone contributing to and responding to landscape character.

Careful choice of tree species and use of root restraints in tree pits will prevent future damage to footpaths and service runs. A palette of suitable tree and shrub species has been selected to allow each character area to be easily recognised. Plant selection will be influenced by the cold coastal location and need for species that will survive in sometimes harsh urban settings within paved areas.

Trees with narrow columnar shape have been recommended. *Acer platanoides* "Cleveland" and *Fraxinus ornus* "Obelisk" growing to 8 or 10m both have initial narrow compact shapes that later broaden making them ideal street trees. Both will also survive well in confined planted areas/pits and are very suitable for roadsides.

Fig. 6.15 – Trees – (from the left) *Quercus Robur 'Fastigitate Koster'* **(English Oak),** *Acer platanoides* **"Cleveland" (Cleveland Norway Maple),** *Fraxinus Ornus 'Obelisk'* **(Flowering Ash)**

Fig. 6.16 – Street Planting – Glasthule, Co. Dublin – Street trees and Planters form barrier with parked cars and traffic

Further suitable species of roadside/street planting include:

- *Acer campestre* "Elsrijk";
- *Carpinus betulus* "Frans Fontaine";
- *Malus baccata* "Street Parade";
- *Prunus* "Spire";
- *Quercus robur* "Fastigiate Koster".

6.3.6   Signage - Town information system

Signs are communication devices used to give the public information about a location and provide orientation. Good quality signage can increase public awareness and make urban areas more legible. Signage presents an image and provides identity to the village area.

Well designed and informative signage will present an image of a successful, inviting townscape. In order to achieve this objective the signage should be designed as a coherent, legible system.

The proposed elements of the information system can include:

- Visitors information boards – maps, information about local attractions etc., that can be placed at key public spaces and/or DART commuter station– (Fig. 6.17)
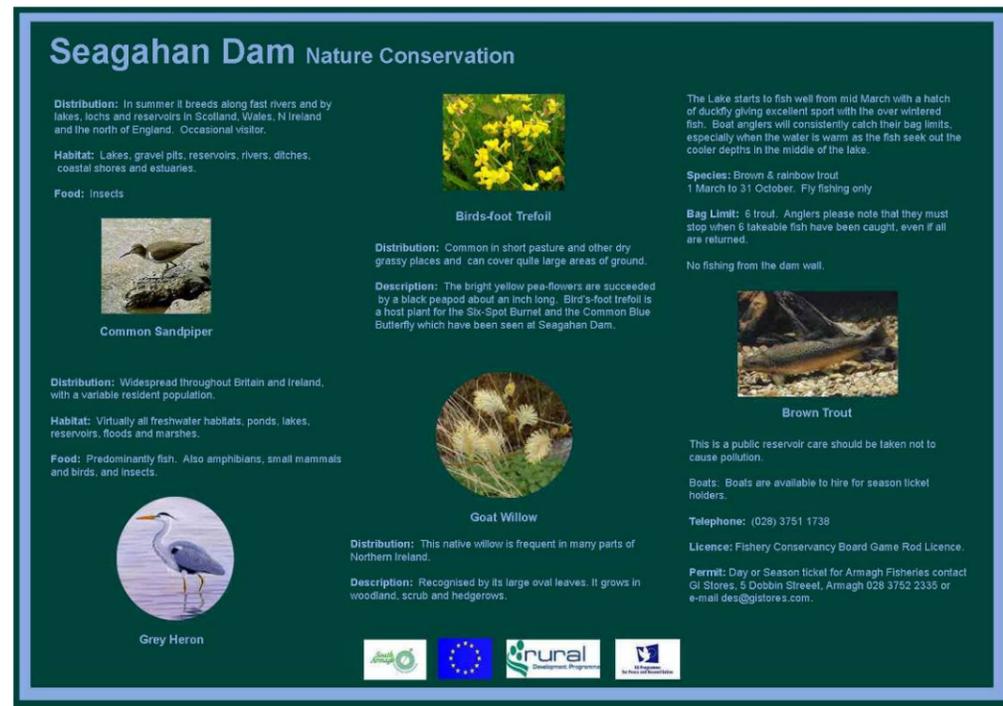

Fig. 6.17 – Example of the information board to be placed at the site of Natural Conservation Area

- Boards with information about the natural amenity, placed at the Baldoyle Estuary frontage – (Fig 6.18)

Fig. 6.18– Examples of tourist information signage – boards with the town plan (left) and 'Welcome to Portmarnock' sign (right)

- Tourist walking and cycle route information – placed on route as a way finders/ finger or maps placed at the Portmarnock Commuter Station (Fig 6.19)

Fig. 6.19 – Walking trail sign (left), existing finger sign in Portmarnock (right)

6.3.7   Shopfront Design and Commercial Signage

Well designed shopfronts can enhance the quality of the street and help to create the distinctive character of the streetscape. Retail and commercial uses will remain one of the dominant functions within the village centre. The appearance of shopfronts will largely determine the quality and appearance of the street frontage. The Strategy recommends that the following design principles should be taken into account when designing the shopping frontages within the subject area:

Shopfront and signage design:

- Design of new shopfronts should have regard to the grain, detail and rhythm of the street (see Fig 6.20 below).
- Creative use of shopfront design principles in their contemporary form can be accepted.
- Form and character of the shopfront should respect the architecture of the building in which the retail unit is located.
- If a shop is introduced as a part of mixed-use or multi storey building, there should be a reasonable gap between the shopfront (esp. its fascia) and the upper floor windows.
- Any access ramps should be placed at street level and their slope should be minimised.
- The signage should be incorporated into the overall design of the shopfront, use of 'ready made', corporate signage should be limited.
- The use of canopies is encouraged.
- Use of high quality materials (timber, bronze, steel, coated aluminium, natural stone) is recommended.
- Security shutters should be placed inside the shop and not outside, and not become a visible feature of the shopfront.

Fig. 6.21 – Example of the contemporary shopfront design in Greystones

6.4   Landscaped and secondary open spaces

In addition to the proposed plazas there are also additional open spaces within the subject area including the Baldoyle Estuary frontage, River Sluice estuary and secondary open spaces (smaller parks and plazas). The following section includes recommendations for these areas.

6.4.1   Estuary frontage/ River Marsh

Baldoyle Estuary occupies considerable frontage along the Strand Road. The site has great recreational potential. Due to its importance as a natural heritage site and high level of environmental designations the opportunity for intervention within this area is very limited. Baldoyle Estuary functions as a high visual amenity area and attraction for local residents and birdwatchers. It is recommended to provide a lay-by at the Strand Road with parking spaces for visitors and an observation point with information board comprising the details of the protected species and the habitat.

The River Sluice estuary and marsh provides an additional green buffer to the village. The area is susceptible to flooding and generally it is not suitable for development. Due to its environmental importance it is recommended that this area be retained as a 'green corridor/wedge' with zoning 'Open Space'. The introduction of a recreational and educational trail and location of an observation point for birdwatchers should be considered. The design should be sensitive to is context, and avoid any roosting sites.

Fig. 6.20 – Example of the contemporary shopfront design in Malahide

Fig. 6.22 – Birdwatchers (left), example of the low-impact timber walkway (right)

The strategy recommends the removal of the building spoil/rubble /illegal infill of the River Sluice floodplain, increased maintenance (dredging and cleaning of the river), improvements to the sluice gates and pumping station as well as a clean up of the former mill site are undertaken within this area.

6.4.2   Pocket Parks and Plazas

In section 6.2 the strategy recommends the creation of a number of smaller open spaces – pocket plazas and parks. These spaces can be created either as a part of commercial development or as a Local Authority scheme. They will primarily act as smaller focal points of communal life, providing seating areas and landscaping. Due to the limited width of the Strand Road – these areas will play a crucial role in improving the quality of the public realm of Portmarnock's core area.

Fig. 6.23 – Example of the small open spaces – outdoor café in Greystones (left), library garden in Bray

6.5   Pedestrian Links and Cycle Lanes

Provision of safe and comfortable cycling and pedestrian linkages will be important in order to create real alternatives to extensive private car usage. In order to increase the quality of the pedestrian realm the strategy recommends considering the narrowing of the carriageway of Strand Road in order to widen some of the narrower footpaths. The widening of the footpaths should be also considered as part of the future improvements within designated Opportunity Areas with setbacks provided to facilitate additional space for pedestrians (section 6.2).

It is also recommended that separate cycle lanes are provided where feasible. This is particularly important outside the built area where separation of cars and cycles may be required for traffic safety reasons.

Provision of the cycle paths within the village area may be difficult to achieve due to the limited width of the Strand Road corridor. The alternative recommended by the strategy is to slow down the traffic within the village core in order to enable cycle and car traffic to share the carriageway. Traffic calming measures, recommended by this strategy can help to achieve this objective.

The feasibility for the expansion of the existing carpark on Golf Links Road, together with the pathway to the beach, should be investigated by the Council's Transportation Dept., the Parks Dept. and the Heritage Officer.

6.6   Traffic Issues

The issue of traffic flow, traffic calming and car parking within the village is important and the Council's Transportation Dept. will investigate measures to address these issues .

7.0   Implementation

The implementation of this strategy will be largely dependent on working with individual landowners and developers to deliver key objectives of this document as guided by the Planning Authority. The strategy is designed to guide emerging development and coordinate its outcome. Therefore, the implementation of this Urban Centre Strategy will be long-term and gradual.

Public investment in linear landscape works, and public spaces within Portmarnock can act as a leverage to the private sector, where improvements of the public realm could have a knock-on effect on village centre activity, and commercial viability.

Implementation of the key public realm improvement proposals will require involvement and investment by the Local Authority. These tasks include improvements to the streetscape, introduction of traffic calming measures, new lighting, planting and street furniture. The environmental improvements to the main street area can be considered as a more immediate design objective.

Development of the new civic centre and a public park will also require the significant involvement of the Local Authority and will be a long term objective.
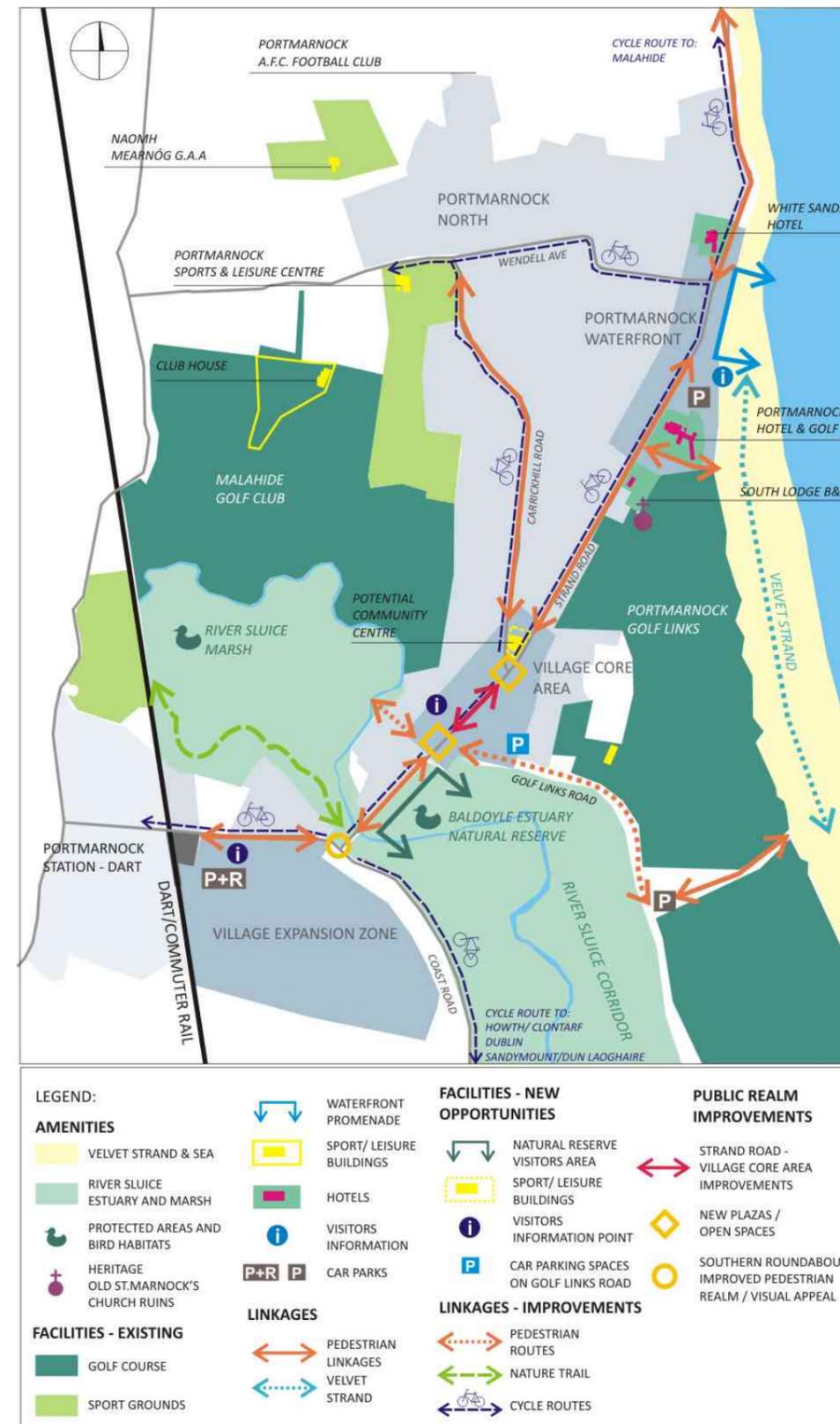

Fig. 6.24 – Public Realm, Leisure and Open Space – proposed improvements

Appendix 1

Summary of issues raised in submissions received on the
PORTMARNOCK URBAN CENTRE STRATEGY

Summary of issues raised in submissions received as part of Public Consultation process

Development of the village

- Submissions noted that there is a need for a comprehensive plan to which all future development should adhere

Height of the development

- Recommendations in relation to permitted height of new development were varied. All submissions from the local residents recommended limiting the height to two storeys. Submissions from the local developers and land owners recommended increasing the height at the key development sites to 5 storeys.

Type of development

- Submissions from local residents recommended more conservative pattern of development with more high quality, detached housing as opposed to more urban, higher density apartment developments.
- Submissions from local developer advocated inclusion of more mixed-use, higher density pattern of development including apartments/townhouses.

Need for a Civic Centre, Use of Portmarnock Adventure Club

- Submissions recommended the redevelopment of the Portmarnock Adventure Club area. New development could comprise a public use building. Various submissions confirmed the need for new public and community uses such as a day care centre, a local library, medical services and a drop in centre for the elderly.

Streetscape and pedestrian realm improvements – Strand Road, Golf Links Road

- Various submissions noted that the current streetscape requires improvements.
- Submissions included recommendations for replacement of the existing 'wirescape' and provision of new lighting (with an underground cabling).
- Tree planting was recommended outside the 'credit union' area.
- Recreational/seating areas should be introduced within the village core area.
- There is a need to upgrade the waterfront Promenade.

Roads and traffic

- Strand Road is considered as too narrow to cater for the current levels of traffic. Articulated lorries using this road are seen as a problem.

Car parking considered a problem, 'Pay and display' car parking within the village

- Submissions confirm that private car is the predominant form of transport within the area and there is a need for more parking. Introduction of a 'Pay and display' facility within village centre was recommended in one of the submissions.
- Parking strategy is too conservative. Rigid application of the parking standards is difficult. Better access by pedestrians, cycles, and bus warrant reduction of the car parking requirements.

Public transport connections

- Introduction of a Shuttle bus (or a village/district level loop line) to the station, the Velvet Strand, Dunnes Stores is recommended by the residents
- There is demand to introduce a bus route to Beaumont Hospital

Need for improved visitors/tourist information

- Submissions indicate the need for better visitor information including local maps, 'Welcome to Portmarnock' sign and more information for the visitors at the local railway station.

Retention of the Post office

- Submissions recommend the retention of the Post Office and a pharmacy as important social uses.

Cycle lanes

- Number of submissions recommended the provision of safe, separated cycle lanes linking the Railway station with the village and within the village core area.

Pedestrian Walkways

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- Submissions recommended provision of a walkway linking Portmarnock and Baldoyle.

Street Calming

- Street cushions as a traffic calming measure are considered ineffective,
- Roundabout is seen as a major area of crashes. Submissions recommended introduction of better signage,
- Location of the traffic lights at the junction of St. Anne's/Strand Road/Golf Links is also recommended.

Noise Pollution – Air Traffic

- Noise pollution as a result of air traffic is seen as one of the major inconveniences for the local population.

Protection of the Built Heritage

- Submissions recommend preservation and exposition of the St. Marnock's Church ruins and cemetery.

Lands adjacent to Portmarnock Bridge and River Sluice Estuary and River Sluice Marsh

- Suggest reconstruction of the mill/partial reconstruction/exposing the remains of this structure,
- Suggest repair of the sluice gate/ replacement with more robust system,
- Consider that sea walls near Roundabout need urgent upgrade and strengthening,
- Recommended CPO of these land and maintaining the 'Open Space' designation
- Need for protection, removal of the building spoil, need for increased maintenance of the river (dredging and cleaning),
- Local pumping station needs upgrade – currently it's causing sewage spillage to the River Sluice
- The infill of this land causing flooding further upstream.

Baldoyle Estuary

- Location of Bus Bay and car parking area on Strand Road near Texaco petrol station
- Removal of informal footpaths
- Removal of trees and shrubbery
- Removal of rubble near the roundabout area
- Location of public art related to the local protected species

Underdeveloped site at Carrickhill Road

- Purchase by the Council and redevelopment was recommended in a submission, preferred uses included 'small village garden'.