

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council



Rivermeade

Village Development Framework Plan and Design Guidance 2018



Rivermeade from the air; the red line delineates the proposed Local Area Plan (LAP) area, which incorporates some strong landscape

Rivermeade

Village Development Framework Plan and Design Guidance 2018

The Rivermeade Plan was produced between September 2010 and August 2011 and revised in 2017/8 by a team of architects and urban designers, Philip and Delphine Geoghegan of iCON Architecture and Urban Design, and Bernard Voortman of CUMMINS + VOORTMAN, Sustainable Architecture & Urban Design. The steering committee for Fingal County Council Planning Department included Marjorie O'Shee, Peter Byrne and Yolande McMahon. They compiled and developed the brief and liaised regularly during production of the Plan.

This **Village Development Framework Plan and Design Guidance [VDFP] 2018**, is published with the Rivermeade LAP, to provide guidance for the long term sustainable development of Rivermeade.

Fingal County Council seeks to maintain and strengthen the physical character of Rivermeade village, to guide village improvements and to plan for appropriate future growth.

In setting out this guidance, The following key issues are dealt with:

- Protecting and improving Rivermeade's distinctive character of place.
- Providing for sustainable growth and consolidation, with a diverse and flexible housing mix, while protecting the quality, character and distinctiveness of important landscape assets.



Contents

Section 1

The Context and Character of Rivermeade Village

1.0 Introduction	5
-Location	
1.1 Background	
1.2 Estate or Village?	
1.3 The Airport	
1.4 Rural Setting and Landscape Quality	5
1.5 Recreational Facilities	8
1.6 The urban form and built environment of Rivermeade	9
1.7 Economic and Social Context	10
1.8 Movement to and from and in and around Rivermeade	12

Section 2

Key Decisions and A Vision for the Future

2.1 The Village needs better accessibility	13
2.2 The Village Needs a Centre	13
2.3 Distinctive Quality of village	15
2.4 A Sustainable Energy Community	17
2.5 Rivermeade - The Vision	18
2.6 Environmental improvements within the village	19
2.7 Development Areas 1 to 11	24

Section 3

Rivermeade: Village Design Guidance

3.1 Sustainable Design Objectives	40
3.2 General Village Objectives	42
3.3 Residential Design Recommendations	44
3.4 Site Design statement (SDS)	46



The reservoir along the River Ward at Rivermeade has been disused for a number of years. As a result, nature has taken over; the river meanders through the partially dried river bed, the trees have grown up and it is now an exclusive world for wildlife, flora and fauna. Sensitive intervention could allow for controlled public access as part of the Ward River Valley Regional Park. This pencil drawing, depicting the security fence removed and a pathway substituted, was made by Tina Geoghegan at the time of the original VDFP in 2010.

Section 1

The Context and Character of Rivermeade Village

1.0 Introduction - Location

Rivermeade is located within the rural area of Fingal to the west of Swords and north of Dublin Airport. The village is about 7 km to the west of Swords, about 3 km from St. Margaret's to the south and about 8 Km from Finglas.

1.1 Background

The settlement of Rivermeade/Toberburr was constructed in the 1970's by Dublin County Council as a social housing estate principally to accommodate residents in the village of St. Margaret's who were displaced as a consequence of the expansion of Dublin airport. The only development which has occurred since the estate was built has been the construction of 24 houses and a community facility some years ago. Rivermeade is a well established community and there is continuing demand from connected families to live there.

1.2 Estate or Village?

Rivermeade was designed as a single housing estate. It has been extended in a limited way, and has the

character of an isolated housing estate with severely limited facilities comprising a primary school, a resource centre, playing fields, a playground and walking routes. Although it has the character of an *estate*, it has the potential to act as a *village*, if those attributes of a village could be incorporated into an expanding Rivermeade. This reappraisal of the area is an opportunity to set down the structure for a sustainable regenerated village.

The achievement of such a transformation over time is a key objective of this Village Development Framework Plan

1.3 The Airport

Dublin airport, a key employment area in the Dublin region is located in close proximity to Rivermeade.

The majority of the LAP lands are located within the Outer Airport Noise Zone, while the southern arm of the LAP lands is also within the Inner Airport Noise Zone which precludes new residential development. The immediate surroundings have particular landscape

1.4 Rural Setting and Landscape Quality

Rivermeade is located in a rural area, with productive agricultural land and a large agri-business on its doorstep. Keelings a major food producer and distributor is located beside Rivermeade, south of Killeek Lane. This area will be a key expanding employment area into the future.

The LAP lands are located within the designated ROLLING HILLS CHARACTER TYPE in the County Development Plan. These lands are characterised by the mature vegetation along the Ward River and the strong vegetative field boundaries. The undulating nature of the countryside together with trees and river valley help create a rich landscape both visually and ecologically.



Above: the unspoiled landscape quality of the reservoir is a consequence of its disuse for some time, allowing vegetation to take over and creating a true nature sanctuary.

Below: Dublin Airport is close to Rivermeade.

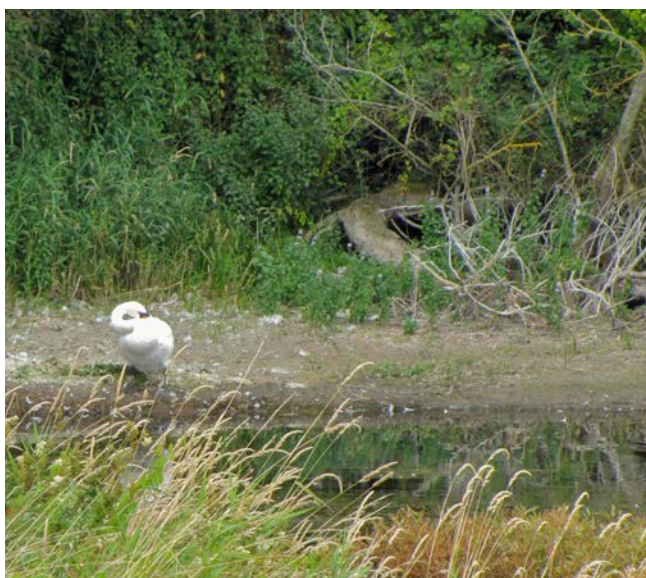
Swords town is seen, right of picture, expanding westwards. The connector which is most evident here is the Ward River - the pale blue dotted line - links Rivermeade to Swords as the river flows eastwards through the Ward Valley Regional Park to Broadmeadow Estuary. It could provide an excellent, continuous, greenway for walking or cycling.



quality. The Ward River creates a low-lying wetlands pool beside the bridge, curves around a steeply sloping northern slope and fills out into the reservoir, a sizable surface of water and an attractive amenity with great potential for recreational use. This area has mixed woodland and mature hedgerow trees, all of which are close to the houses and help to invest an arcadian quality in the tradition of garden villages of the early twentieth century.

The river is also the source of considerable ecological interest and biodiversity. The water surface is frequented by wild birds, ducks, swans and wintering geese, and the associated wetlands appear to contain a diversity of plants. To have such a natural resource so close to the village is a benefit at the same time as a challenge - how to maximise the use of the river, reservoir and banks for the benefit of the community without adversely affecting their habitat and biodiversity?

The survival of the traditional farm beside Rivermeade,



Above: Aerial view over part of Rivermeade, In the foreground is the St Margaret's golf course, 1, beyond the golf course to the left is a traditional farmhouse, 2, and undulating land with original field boundaries, and to the right is the northern end of Rivermeade, 3, which comes close to the reservoir, 4, and the intimate landscape along the river and around the reservoir. In the middle distance is Swords, 5, and the coast, 6, with Lambay Island visible offshore.

identified on the image, **left**, as No 2 and **below**, circled, is also an opportunity to strengthen the green infrastructure. Currently used in a limited way for grazing and rearing horses, the farm buildings and immediately adjacent fields could extend the recreational potential of the riverside.

The Ward River Valley Regional Park is a major element in the developing 'Green Infrastructure' network in Fingal. The Council proposes to extend this park westwards so that it will connect Rivermeade in time with Swords and the Broadmeadow Estuary. Providing pedestrian and cycle routes through the extended park will greatly improve links between Rivermeade and Swords.

1.6 The Urban Form and Built Environment of



Above: The traditional farm adjacent to Rivermeade is just above the line of the river, and has mature hedgerow trees surrounding, sheltering and screening the fields of the farm.

Planning for the long term development of Rivermeade is an opportunity to provide for the improvement, protection, enhancement and extension of existing Green Infrastructure in an integrated and coherent way for the benefit of both those living in Rivermeade and those living in the wider catchment area including Swords. The extension of the Regional Park westwards from Knocksedan to Rivermeade will greatly improve the amenity potential of the Ward River Valley and connectivity to Swords which is only 4 kilometers away, [about an hours walk) along the river valley.

The Ward River Valley Regional Park is described by the Council as follows:

“ This is a linear park on the banks of the Ward River South of Swords town.*

** It covers an area of 89 ha. (220 acres) between Swords Town Centre and Knocksedan Bridge.*

** Features of interest include some 12th century fortifications, woodland habitats, wetlands and rolling grassland.*

** There are exercise machines, a children’s play area and sports pitches*

The integration of future development with the proposed extension of the Ward Regional Park will provide a much improved regional recreational facility and an attractive green route between Swords and Rivermeade.



Above and Right: Cover to Chapter 8 of the County Development Plan 2017-2023, with an extract from the Plan, with Objectives G118 and Objective Swords 18

“ **Objective G 118 of CDP 2017-2023**

Require all Local area Plans to protect, enhance, provide and manage green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner addressing the 5 GI themes set out in the Development Plan - Biodiversity, Parks, Open Space and recreation, Sustainable Water Management, Archaeological and Architectural Heritage, and Landscape.

Objective Swords 18 of CDP 2017-2023

Prepare a Landscape and Recreation Strategy for the Ward River Valley, to facilitate its planned extension westwards, to improve passive supervision, accessibility and permeability of the park and to develop additional passive and active recreational facilities and amenities including a feasibility study to develop the Old Mill Pond for the purposes of angling, including the provision of angling docks, to promote the pastime of angling.

”

1.5 Recreational Facilities

The previous section ‘rural setting and landscape quality’ makes the case for planning for the long term development of existing green infrastructure in an integrated manner for the benefit of both those living in Rivermeade and those living in the wider catchment area including Swords. This section examines existing recreational and amenity facilities and makes recommendations to improve and extend existing facilities.

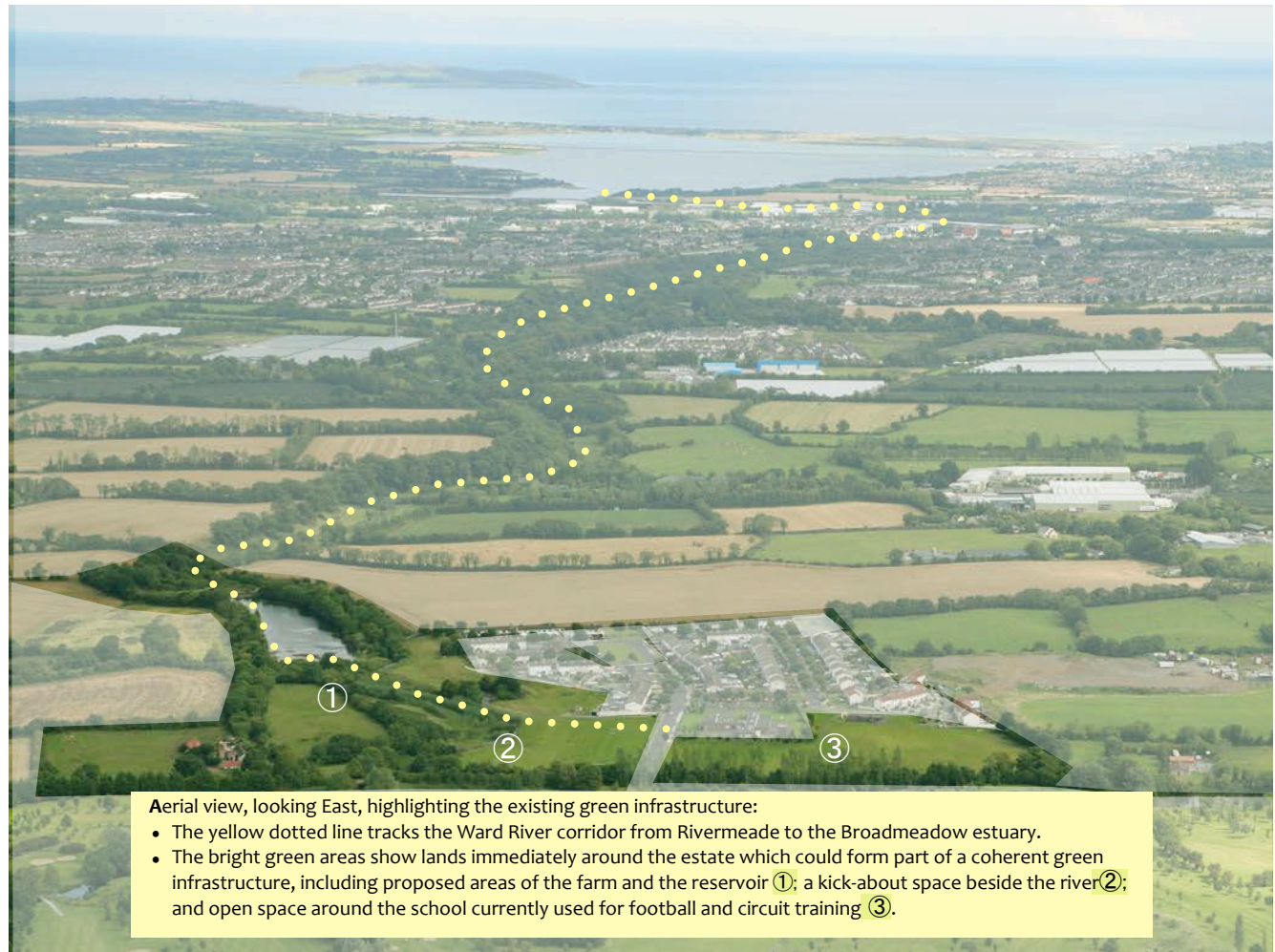
There is an abundance of public open space in Rivermeade, located both along the Ward River and adjoining the national school.

The public open space along the River Ward comprises an informally laid out grass football pitch at the entrance to Rivermeade and a linear area of public open space along the river with houses backing onto it providing a low level of informal supervision.

A large area of public open space around the school contains a multi - use all weather games area; a children’s playground and footpaths which loop around the open space and are well used for walking and running.

There is an opportunity to plan for the long term optimal use of existing and proposed public open spaces in Rivermeade. Improved and additional recreational and amenity facilities can be provided which will be of great benefit to residents in Rivermeade and its wider hinterland as follows:

- Improving the amenities of the linear open space along the Ward.
- Extending this Green Corridor into new public open spaces provided in the eastern section of the LAP lands. (This area could provide for an all weather



Aerial view, looking East, highlighting the existing green infrastructure:

- The yellow dotted line tracks the Ward River corridor from Rivermeade to the Broadmeadow estuary.
- The bright green areas show lands immediately around the estate which could form part of a coherent green infrastructure, including proposed areas of the farm and the reservoir ①; a kick-about space beside the river ②; and open space around the school currently used for football and circuit training ③.

floodlit football pitch, three tennis courts and basket ball courts.)

- Restoring the reservoir for recreational use for example canoeing, kayaking and fishing.
- Providing for improved amenities including additional active recreational facilities in the large area of public open space around the school for example a skateboard park.

- Providing for a network of pedestrian and cycle routes along the river valley which in time could be extended eastwards to Knockedan Bridge and through the Ward River Valley Park to Swords.
- Making small areas of public open spaces around the estate more useful and attractive.

The overall aim should be to maximise the use and amenities of public open space which over time can be integrated within an extended Ward Regional Park.

Rivermeade

Rivermeade was developed as a housing estate in the middle of the rural hinterland north of Dublin airport and west of Swords, with few services and amenities and very poor links to Swords, resulting in a high dependence on cars to access services.

Within those constraints the design of the area was carefully structured to present attractive streets wide enough for tree planting, green spaces within the housing area and larger spaces on the edge. Originally built as social housing, most of the houses are now privately owned. The *location* of Rivermeade in a rural area and its comparative isolation suggest that the development should have been planned for a higher degree of self-sufficiency. The fabric of the houses in Rivermeade, is of good quality, but each house is capable of greatly improving its insulation values, and reducing fuel costs. An estate wide scheme to reduce the carbon footprint of the community whilst achieving dramatically better comfort levels could be an effective pilot scheme for the County.

Some of the enclosures such as boundary walls are visually unattractive, because of an absence of coordination of material finishes and colour. Vehicular openings have been enlarged for car parking in an unregulated way, with assorted opening widths and gates. The estate, which was built in the 1970s, is generally well kept, but there are numerous opportunities for revitalising spaces and improving the visual appearance of boundaries and gates at the end of rear access lanes.

Mature trees produces a leafy, pleasant appearance and green areas are generally well maintained. Most of the gardens are well maintained. Promoting a sustainable village will take time and resources and sufficient growth to achieve a critical mass, which would allow for better facilities.

1.7 Economic and Social Context



Aerial View from East: compact form of the village, with its integrated spaces. The entrance avenue crosses a green area to arrive at the school, and then enters the estate where the street, with houses on either side gives a sense of enclosure. A secondary road system creates a loop, with link to the more recent housing extension, (top left). Links off the Main Street at the green, link to other parts of the estate. The houses have footpath rear access. It can be seen that most residents have added workshop type buildings or sheds at the end of their garden. Most streets have mature tree growth which contribute greatly to the settled character of the place. There is good provision of public open space, small and large green areas, within and around the houses.

The estate was developed as a social housing scheme by Dublin County Council. Those people living there were originally chosen from the Housing List, although since then over 80% of the houses have been bought out by the tenants.

The location of Rivermeade on the fringe of Dublin and close to Swords could be advantageous to further development of the village, with the possibility of increasing the number of residents to support basic services such as: incubator and small business units and local shopping and community based facilities, which could be used for health, recreation and educational purposes. Given that there is already good potential for outdoor recreation in a quality landscape, there is potential for transforming the estate into a village. This issue is incorporated into the Development guidelines.

Sustainable Infrastructure

Retrofitting* the housing and school for a more durable future means that an integrated, area-based retrofit programme can deliver economic, environmental and social co-benefits.

These works have the potential to:

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Make efficient use of resources
- Improve energy security
- Make places more resilient to the impacts of climate change
- Create local jobs
- Strengthen local economies
- Improve the quality and value of existing places
- Reduce fuel poverty
- Improve health and reduce health inequalities

• Strengthen communities and improve community interaction
 (Source: "The Future is Local", The Sustainable Commission, UK)

*retrofitting refers to installation of insulation or new energy-efficient heating into an existing dwelling.

1.8 Movement to and from, and in and around



What is an SEC?

A Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) is a community in which everyone works together to develop a sustainable-energy system. To do so, they aim as far as possible to be energy-efficient, to use renewable energy and to develop decentralised energy supplies. This integrated approach allows for a balance of demand and supply, which gives the community greater energy autonomy.

The Sustainable Energy Community model begins by establishing a clearly defined geographic area called the Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ). The SEZ establishes sustainable energy targets that are measured and monitored and creates a focal point for partners, projects and proposals to integrate in a structured way. This allows new technologies and techniques be tried and tested in an incubator or living laboratory environment.

A Sustainable Energy Community is the integration and collaborative action in the wider community (e.g. town or region) to expand and replicate ideas tested in the SEZ. [More...](#)

Above: The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland SEAI has a new programme promoting and supporting 'Sustainable Energy Communities' to identify community need. A 'Sustainable Energy Communities Toolkit' is under development (April 2011). Individual communities will have the facility of the Toolkit. www.seai.ie



Left: a 'word map' forms the cover for a valuable report produced for the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC). This publication shows the relationship between technological solutions and local capacity building, emphasises that every situation is different, and that infrastructure retrofit is 'an ongoing process rather than a one-off upgrade'. The content of the book is reasonably accessible to non-technical people.'SDC Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure: evidence base structure' www.sd-commission.org.uk/



Top, left: Entrance to the village, with National School boundary on right and open green area on left, proposed as location for a village centre. (Jan 2018)
Top, right: ‘Main Street’ of Rivermeade. Car parking is generally within the front garden area, however, on street parking is also prevalent on generously sized roads.(Jan 2018)
Left: a summertime view in Rivermeade (2010) where the lush canopy of trees and garden planting transforms the environment each year
Below: Open space is well provided for, giving a good sense of space in the existing development (Jan 2018)



Rivermeade

1.81 To and from Rivermeade

The road access to the estate is along a narrow country road. Rivermeade estate was constructed in the rural hinterland north of Dublin airport and west of Swords over 30 years ago. It is served by a very poor road network of narrow winding roads with no footpaths or facilities for cyclists. There is potential for local road improvements which could connect the area better with Swords:

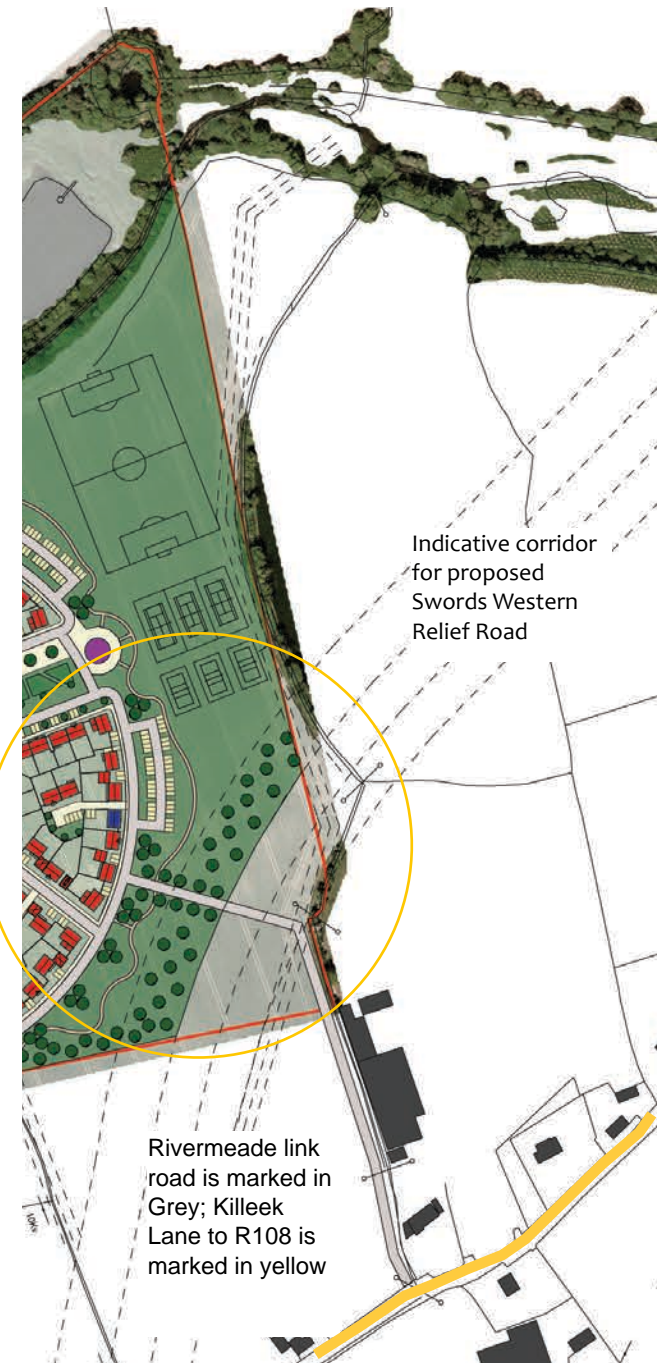
- The entrance to Rivermeade is off Toberburr Road. Killeek Lane connecting the Toberburr Road to the Naul Road adjoins the LAP lands to the south.
- The proposed Swords Western Relief Road [SWRR] crosses through the southeast edge of the LAP lands. This road is planned as long term strategic road connecting the M1 north of Lissenhall to the N2 north of the M50 (via the Airport Box roads system). It will provide a strategic bypass for Swords providing a high quality, fast route to the N2, M50 and other national primary roads.
- There is a need to improve road connections between Swords and Rivermeade which will facilitate movement in and out of the village and lessen the sense of isolation felt by the residents. The proposed new link road connecting Rivermeade to an improved Killeek Lane will greatly improve access in and out of Rivermeade and the connections between Rivermeade and to Swords. It would contribute to a coherent overall plan, providing two entrances / exits to the renewed village.

1.82 In and around Rivermeade

Right: The southeast corner of the proposed LAP, showing the boundaries of the field within the LAP.

The entrance avenue is very open, giving no emphasis to the entry into the estate, although the school is located in a pivotal position beside the entry. The estate entry is marked solely by the blank gable of a terrace of houses. There is a bus service to and from the estate. Circulation within the estate comprises the Main Street and the loop. In order to promote low traffic speeds, it would be possible to introduce traffic calming measures. For example raised paved areas which may be used also to effect environmental improvement. There is no conflict between drivers and pedestrians as the widths of streets and pavements are generous, but in the process of expansion, the provision of cycleway / footpaths to create loop walks within the estate should be explored. These would be integrated with green corridors extending throughout a new village structure. Apart from the bus service, access for heavy vehicles within the village needs to be restricted.

Far right: The LAP for Rivermeade shows the proposed long term SWRR cutting across the south-east corner. There is an opportunity to link Rivermeade and its new development with Killeek Lane, the R108 and Swords.



Section 2

Key Decisions and A Vision for the Future

2.1 The Village needs better accessibility

A sense of isolation of Rivermeade has much to do with the impression of a housing estate ‘parachuted’ into a rural area, although in reality it is close to the airport and Swords. There is a need to improve road connections between Swords and Rivermeade. The proposed new link road connecting Rivermeade to an improved Killeek lane will greatly improve access to and from Rivermeade and connections between it and Swords, lessening the sense of isolation.

2.2 The Village Needs a Centre

The well-established community of Rivermeade has made the place its own, despite deficiencies in typical provision of services for a small community. The creation of a new village centre is an ambitious goal which seeks to develop the existing estate into a vibrant village with a degree of self-sufficiency. The School is in a positive, pivotal position at the entrance to Rivermeade. The location of a village centre opposite the school could strengthen the perception of Rivermeade as a village and create a hub which would become the village centre.



Left: Small-scale version of VDFP for Rivermeade. It is reduced in scale to show proposed road improvements which will help to lessen the sense of isolation



Right: Aerial view of the existing village . The arrow and circle show how the school is in a pivotal position to form part of a new village ‘hub’, opposite the school across the entrance road .

2.21 Generating a Village Centre

There could be a long wish list for the desirable services within a village centre, especially if it serves a large hinterland. Planning for a reasonable balance of services in the long term makes sense. It may need an incremental approach to its development. Given the location close to Swords, a village may be able to offer specialised services to a large local market.

- A **village centre** is also an opportunity to create a **public space** which will act as a focal point and draw people to it or through it. The public space provided as an integral element of the centre is as important as the uses which may surround it, and should include good lighting, attractive surfaces, durable planting, passive surveillance, seating, shelter against rain. A public space may be adapted for use as a farmers' market, and/or an open air festival for special occasions
- **Buildings** fronting onto the Main Street and the civic space shall be designed to accommodate future demands which may arise for commercial, retail, service or community uses at ground floor level.
- A **crèche** shall be provided as required. Small business units/work spaces may be developed in place of the proposed creche if there is no future requirement for a creche.
- **Food - Cafe / restaurant** could draw from a wide catchment area. It may be an attractive proposition for food producer Keelings to operate a display shop as a promotional activity which could help Keelings to identify Rivermeade as part of it locality.
- **Social centre:** a community centre may provide a wide range of services to local people, such as day care centre and meals for older people, sporting activities, reading clubs, special interest groups, educational programmes, and many more activities depending on the specific interests and needs for the area and social services provision.





2.3 The Distinctive quality of the village is integrated with its attractive landscape setting

The special local landscape and the generous green space around Rivermeade make it special, along with the impact of the growth of vegetation over the thirty year life of the estate, and the care with which many residents have looked after their gardens. There is an opportunity now to draw on the character and quality of the surrounding landscape as an integral, recreational part of the village, more than just a setting. The gentle shaping of the landscape and proposed areas for development allow for imaginative uses:

- There is already a loop walk within the recreation area surrounding the school. There is an opportunity to provide a network of paths for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the village.
- The reservoir clearly has amenity value as well as being an area where nature predominates. Use for water sports/ fishing/ boating might be uses compatible with retention as a nature environment.
- The traditional farm and its immediate fields is an opportunity to conserve a part of country life in a real setting, for example a model open farm retaining active use with horses and/or other animals, incorporating a community garden for the

growing of vegetables and flowers and using the buildings as a small museum of artefacts. This would be of benefit to existing and future residents and could be an 'attractor', drawing in visitors, especially school children to the facility. Combining the visit with a nature walk and possible water-based adventure pursuits on and around the reservoir, canoeing for example, could generate regular active visits. Should Keelings be interested in sponsoring such a venture they might wish to install a promotional fruit and vegetable shop outlet. Possibly, it could effect a 'green box' weekly delivery to the village houses of its locally produced fruit and vegetables according to season.



- A model farm is one such possible use for the farm buildings and adjacent land but there are other possible uses including promoting a “Sustainable Living Centre” which would provide popular destinations as the western hub of the Ward River Valley Regional Park. It would also secure the retention and refurbishment of the vernacular farm buildings for a positive and compatible new use.
- Extending the ‘riparian corridor’, the river banks and margins of the Ward River, will extend the Regional Park whilst creating an unrivalled green infrastructure for Rivermeade as a spine for recreational amenity, a ‘greenway’.



In summary:

- There is a real opportunity to integrate the distinctive quality of the village with its landscape setting.
- The riparian corridor could be improved to provide a greenway recreation / amenity spine for the expanding village.
- There is potential for this greenway to widen out to include new active recreational facilities including the reservoir which could be brought also into recreational use
- The greenway could combine in a positive way with for example the model open farm proposal, creating a synergy of uses.
- The realisation of these could achieve a remarkable transformation of the whole village environment for the residents of Rivermeade, as well as making a regional quality destination for visitors on foot by bicycle or by car.



Above: Hamptonne Country Life Museum is a remarkable example of careful restoration and the promotion of events associated with traditional agricultural life in Jersey, Channel Islands. (Photo, Jersey Heritage Trust)

Below: In Ireland, at Avoca village, Co Wicklow, the Weavers sheds and cottage have been retained in their simplicity as a promotional outlet as well as a working mill and shop. The buildings are good vernacular local buildings which have been sensitively and minimally conserved.



Left, and far left: Traditional farm and fields and Ward River boundary are an opportunity to conserve the farm as an active museum of country life in Fingal with agricultural artefacts and, traditional furnishing of the cottage. The outbuildings might be used as a shop, much in the way the Avoca Hand weavers have retained their traditional buildings in Avoca village. Within the village, it is an attractive opportunity to incorporate an active recreational and educational purpose with county wide interest as a sustainable conservation project for both buildings and landscape.

2.4 Developing a ‘Sustainable Energy Community, particularly in energy and food will help create a model sustainable village

Looking to the future, there would be merit in achieving high standards of insulation and draught-proofing in the existing houses, as well as applying today’s expected standards in new development. The following might help to develop energy and food efficiency in the village:

- Consider joining up Rivermeade to the *Transition towns and Villages movement* which focuses on how to make the transition from high energy use to low. (See *Transition Initiatives Primer*, available on internet). This is a community- based movement which recognises the importance of working with local government.
- Aim to become a ‘Sustainable Energy Community’ and benefit from valuable support from SEAI (See SEAI ‘Guidelines for a Sustainable Energy Community’).
- Consider developing a *cooperative for Rivermeade* which would coordinate a specific energy policy to apply to both existing and new buildings. Locally based trades could work together with Council support to effect an upgrading of existing houses and the school.
- Providing an area for *allotments* to meet local requirements.
- Providing a community garden.
- A food cooperative, based on allotment yields may be viable for a local distribution, and may be able to benefit from direct buying from Keelings.
- Consider developing a Sustainable Living Centre on the farm and its adjacent lands.
- Consider developing a wind turbine close to the reservoir.



Rivermeade cycle routes

Greenways may be connected by shared existing country lanes provided that they are clearly signalled. Wexford County Council, for example is implementing a network of cycle routes using quiet country roads away from trafficked routes. For Rivermeade there is a promising prospect of developing new shared cycle and pedestrian routes which are safely away from vehicular traffic.

The best opportunity is to connect in to the Ward River Valley Regional Park. Image, **above**, shows The Broadmeadow Estuary Cycle Route, a “family friendly traffic-free route” which it may be possible to link with Rivermeade. Photo from the National Cycle Policy 2007

Below, Left: Cyclists on the Rivers of Mount Leinster trail which begins in Carlow. There are many tourism initiatives throughout the country to improve bicycle routes. In Northern Ireland there are over one thousand routes in operation. Photograph from Discover Ireland promotion.

Below, right: Example of a priority given to cyclists where the cycleway meets a country road.





New Earswick Model Village

Above:: Summertime allotment area is flourishing.

Below: Shopping Mall in the centre of the village. Convenience shop on corner provides just about everything.



2.5 Rivermeade as a renewed garden village - The Vision

A renewed vision for Rivermeade can generate a fresh interpretation of the future village, with a greater diversity of housing provision, connectivity between the zones of the village, with safe pedestrian and cycle routes, an attractive landscape, and a new village centre which incorporates recreational, retail and community facilities. Also envisaged in the village is the retrofitting of existing houses. The achievement of this renewal will probably extend over a longer timescale than the life time of the LAP, with the support of the local community and in partnership with the County Council.

“A neighbourhood partnership’s role is to drive and coordinate the planning and delivery of sustainability improvements at a local level, which have been identified as priorities by the community. These partnerships should aim to improve infrastructure at a local level to deliver carbon reduction and adaptation measures while at the same time achieving wider economic, environmental and social benefits.

Partnerships should gather a team interested in taking forward the neighbourhood retrofit work, develop a vision and targets, produce spatial neighbourhood retrofit plans, and develop a delivery and funding model.” (The Future is Local - Sustainable Development Commission, UK, 2010)

2.51 Housing Refurbishment and New-Build in a garden environment

The net density of the current estate is under 30 houses per hectare: circa 10 per acre. This is a modest density compared with targets set out over recent years, but it allows for good sized gardens and green spaces which will maintain the arcadian, garden village identity, and will facilitate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The development of the village in future as a **‘sustainable energy community’** is an opportunity to improve the living quality and economics of energy conservation, for existing as well as new residents. A programme for upgrading the insulation of existing houses, private and public, could be driven by a local cooperative with active

support from Sustainable Environment Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and the County Council.

New houses will be expected to meet the highest insulation and draught proof standards.

The vision will provide for the increasing needs of older people for ‘lifetime’ and sheltered Housing. Larger houses incorporating home offices might also be provided.

2.52 Recreation, Leisure and Open Space

Opportunities for recreation are limited in a village due to a lack of ‘critical mass’, sufficient numbers to support specific activities. Overcoming this can be a challenge to create within the structure of the village, an attraction which will work at a regional as well as local level, so that, for example people in Swords may choose to travel out to Rivermeade to participate in an activity. The proposal for a ‘living farm’ as a museum of country life, or a sustainable living centre linked with recreational activities, including a network of walks, and active water recreational use could add up to a country park for the county. A suggestion for a pedestrian/ cycle link along the Ward river area through the Ward River Valley Regional Park and onto Swords would not only improve the connectivity of the place, but would also locate proposals for Rivermeade in the broader strategic structure in the county for active recreation.

A centre for fitness and well-being in the Village Centre could also draw on a wider population than that of the village, and could offer outdoors activities.

Allotment gardens as proposed will not only encourage a degree of self-sufficiency, but will also act as significant recreational outlets.

Added to this, the development of additional sports areas beside the playground and school with the possibility of a full sized football pitch within the village envelope, and a good network of walking routes in the Rivermeade development areas, could help to offer a wide range of recreational facilities, more than commensurate with comparable small villages.

2.6 Environmental Improvements within the village

Overall, Rivermeade is well looked after, with regular maintenance of public areas. However, there is ‘always room for improvement’ and this list of opportunities is aiming to complement the actions proposed to make the estate a better, connected place to live. This list is focussed on the existing built environment and measures which may help towards a better appearance, safer movement for pedestrians, a strategy for tidying up the entire village, improvement in off street parking and ways of further greening the main avenues of the village. These measures will help to create a positive climate for growing the village and its facilities.

It is crucial for the success of any of these proposals that they have the consent and participation of the community of Rivermeade in their implementation, following consultations.

2.61 Improving appearance at entrance to Rivermeade.

The general appearance of Rivermeade at its only entry point is attractive because the country road (Toberburr Rd) that connects Rivermeade to the outside world is special, restricted in width and has traditional hedgerows enclosing it. It heightens the feeling of Rivermeade being located in the countryside. Beyond the village entrance and off the Toberburr Rd is open space. To the right the National School fronts the road and to the left open fields have a gently wooded horizon. This transition is very open with an absence of planting, unlike the streets within the estate which create a canopy over many parts of the main streets. The School contributes in announcing the settlement, with its frontage onto the entrance road.

The entrance zone would be greatly enhanced with some planting of avenue trees. The proposal to locate a village centre and Square will also help to give character to the village at its entrance. A change in surface treatment with associated parking will help to reduce traffic speeds and congestion outside the school. An idea derived from the work of Gordon Young, is to make unique signage which will identify Rivermeade at its entrance. Street signs should be surveyed and replaced where they may be faded, damaged or broken. Such improvements will add to the sense of renewal.

2.62 Better parking arrangements and off street parking for large vehicles

The location of Rivermeade and the need to travel outward for work, shopping, secondary education and entertainment / relaxation means that a high level of car ownership is essential. Mostly the car is kept within the front garden, but there is pressure on the roadways for parking space. The strategy is to provide off street parking spaces in existing situations where there are generous grass corner verges which may be edged by parking strips demarcated on the ground with paved surface (1). Some parking spaces for heavy trucks are needed (2).

2.63 Better pedestrian and cycle routes and crossings

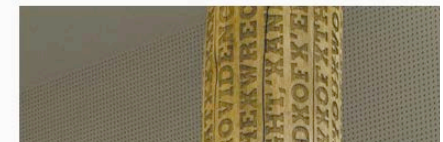
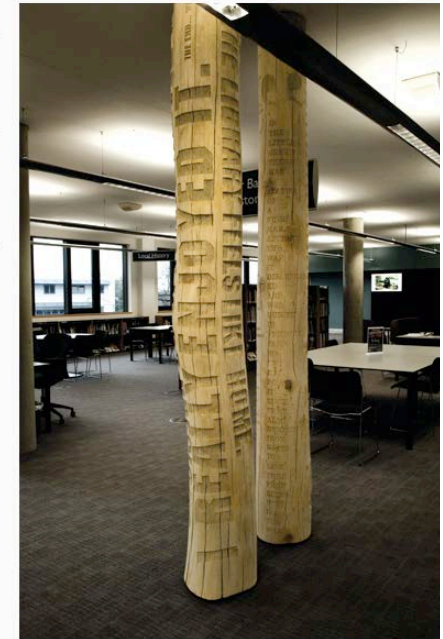
The key objective in proposing better pedestrian and cycle routes is to give priority to the safety of people



Projects
Recent
Information

Gordon Young is a visual artist who focuses on creating art for the public domain. His work ranges from sculptures to typographic pavements for places as disparate as government headquarters and village squares. The common denominator for all projects is the basis of relevance to the surroundings.

Previous / Next



Above: Illustrations of some of Gordon Young’s public art work. Whilst this example is interior most of it is outdoors. This example is for a public library in Crawley, London. It received a UK Design Council award 2011.

Left: diagram of the entrance junction to Rivermeade. The circle might be literally applied as bronze casting in the surface of the road, with radius curves marked in the paving. Two ‘totem poles’ might contain graphic information about the village and might be in wood, steel, concrete or stone and sculpted by a local artist. Should the proposal to identify the lake and vernacular farm area as part of the Ward River Valley Regional Park, then one totem might bear this name. The paved surface would be extended along the front of the School, and avenue trees planted on either side.

who would choose to walk or cycle. Within the existing road system it is fortunate that there is ample dimension in the streets and relatively low traffic, so sharing as at present should not be a problem.

2.64 Street Improvements (edges) and Lane Security Review

The appearance of the street is affected by its edges, and in the case of Rivermeade, by the type and condition of the boundary walls and hedges. For the most part there is great care taken to make the front garden attractive, allowing for the reality that most people choose to keep their vehicles within the boundary of the house. The mixed appearance of the boundaries and gardens in a few places is not something that can be regulated, but if there is a general wish to improve the appearance, it can be done. Tidy towns communities around Ireland take up those challenges, sometimes with dramatic beneficial impact.

Local initiatives in Rivermeade on a street by street basis may yield good results.

Rear lanes present a challenge in terms of residential and visual amenity. The best lane security for households is to provide lockable gates. Currently, those gates are unattractive. Their appearance might be softened by attaching a robust timber boarded finish, which could be painted and would look more garden-like and fit in with the green environment.



A. Raised surface would achieve traffic moderation as well as heightening the sense of arrival. Tree-planting on either side of the road helps to take away the bleakness of the open grass area.

B. Parking as part of traffic moderation measures to facilitate parking for the commercial units, community and recreation areas who may arrive by car and wish to continue on foot.

C. Pedestrian crossings are made with stripes of different material rather than painted on the road surface. These two shown play a significant role in giving priority for pedestrians who would choose to travel to and from the proposed Village Square in Development Area 1 and across to the school.

2.65 Landscaping of existing public spaces

The existing public spaces of the village are pleasant and well used. The parkland around the National School is gently contoured which helps its overall appearance, although the openness of the area is somewhat bleak. The VDFP shows a strategic approach to planting which includes the existing areas as well as those within proposed new development areas.

Strategic planting focuses on the use of trees and shrubs to define the boundaries, to screen and to shelter and to strengthen routes defined as corridors or greenways which are seen as future recreational amenities. Responsibility for detailed planting is likely to be vested in a local group, where responsibility for planters or specific flower beds would be carried out and managed on a seasonal basis. The larger scale maintenance of recreation areas and playing fields and 'strategic planting' would be carried out, as happens currently, by the County Council.

2.66 Further Greening of the village

Within the estate there are many examples of exemplary gardens which contribute to the overall quality of environment.

Further enhancement of the green surroundings to the housing, with the addition of strategic planting would strengthen the landscape character and setting of Rivermeade.



Above and Below: Rivermeade Drive, the **Main Street** of Rivermeade is an opportunity to reinforce the sense of being part of the centre of the village, starting with the New Village Square and using a change of road surface; this has the potential to act as traffic-calming for vehicles. In areas like

Rivermeade, both cycling and pedestrian movement is light and likely to continue to be so. The grey coloured area on plan is an indication that re-surfacing the whole width should be examined to improve the visual quality of the street ..



2.67 Strategic Landscaping

The landscape component of the existing estate is unusually generous, and has helped to ground the scheme well into its larger landscape context. The proposed extension of the estate in the creation of a village should not detract from the existing sense of connection with the surrounding landscape. Strategic landscaping will be used to help strengthen the identity of place and to define, screen and shelter where appropriate.



Left, above and below: very good examples of front gardens which contribute to the enjoyment of the whole area. Use of hanging baskets as additional colour in both pictures softens the frontage of the house, and attractive, well, maintained hedging between houses looks good and encloses the garden, encouraging wildlife to find a home in the garden. This is below the canopy of trees which so effectively characterises parts of the street.

Areas where strategic landscaping will help the development of the village are as follows, next page:

Right: A sign on a grand scale for Blackpool as part of a large urban park linking the new station with the beach. The sign is part of an adventure course climbing structure (people can be seen climbing up the facade). It is an example of how Ward River Valley Regional Park could be signalled by a large, compelling and useful sign. Design by Gordon Young with why not associates, graphic designers.

Far Right: a stand of young trees , an example of strategic planting, are growing to create a shelter belt, which is permeable at ground level; even in wintertime it has a strong visual presence.



- **Southeast corner (1):** a buffer zone to reduce sound, and visual impact of the Swords Western Relief Road.
- **South boundary of LAP (2):** a tree screen to hide the unsightly development to the south. Planting here would have to be undertaken on lands outside the LAP boundary, subject to the agreement of the landowner.
- **At the entrance to Rivermeade, West (3):** to soften and emphasise the avenue of arrival.
- **Behind the School (4):** to provide a backdrop and to articulate the different zones of the parkland space.
- **Western boundary to Rivermeade LAP (5):** to screen the proposed residential units from the Toberburr Road
- **Northern boundary to Rivermeade LAP:** to screen and strengthen the transition of proposed development from the rural area



2.68 Street and greenway lighting

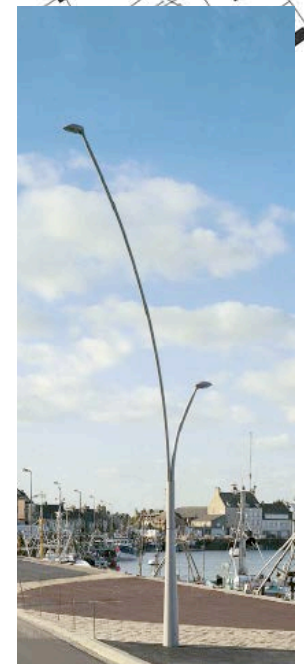
Street lamps in Rivermeade are simple and utilitarian. The new opportunity is to give attention to providing lights along greenways, which need not be at such a high level as the streets. Examples of suitable light fixtures include:

- lighting bollards, as a street light suitable for the Avenue into Rivermeade and,
- contemporary street lighting for pedestrian lighting.

These can be chosen from a wide selection of available products for using lighting to contribute to the atmosphere, character and safety along streets, greenways and footpaths in housing areas. These lighting fittings are designed to reflect light downwards, and avoid lighting up the night sky.

Above: reduced scale version of proposed 2018 Plan, indicating strategic landscaping plan as described on the left and shown key areas proposed for improvement.

Below: street lighting contributes to atmosphere character and safety along streets, greenways and footpaths. These examples avoid lighting up the night sky



The Development Areas show designed schemes which are quite realistic in their visual presentation. They should be viewed as a snapshot in time; an image of what *might* be, to facilitate long term planning of amenities and infrastructure, and primarily to act as a vehicle for illustrating and promoting the guidelines in Section 3. These reflect a longer term strategy to achieve a sustainable development process in the village, with each scheme or zone being evaluated at the time of submission against these development criteria.

2.7 Development Areas

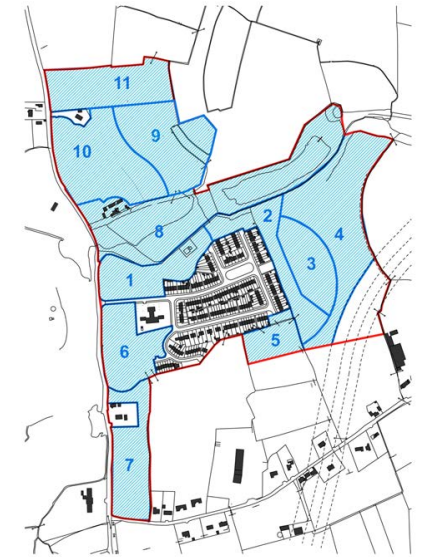
Development Areas are divided into 11 parcels for convenience of development.

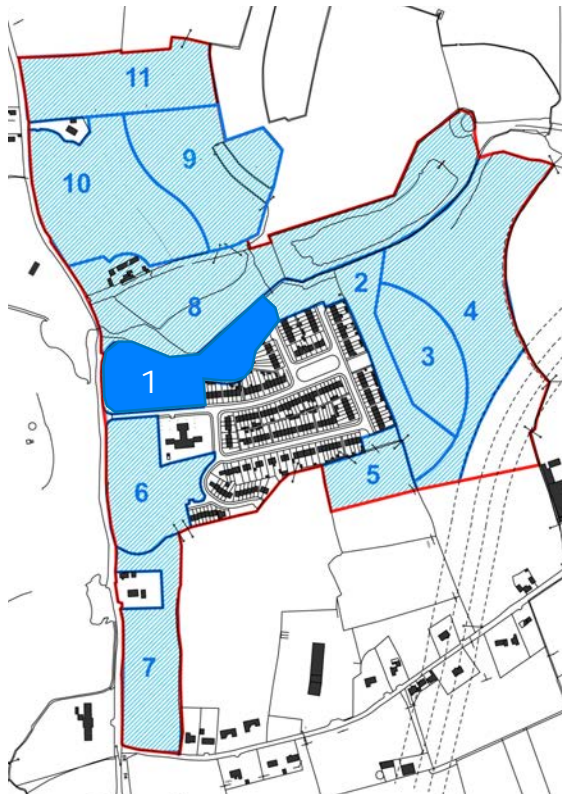
Area 1 is focussed on a new village square with mixed uses designed to create an active place for work, retail / commercial / community uses, a creche and residential development.

Close to the village, **Areas 2,3 and 5** provide a consolidating phase of residential development, each incorporating some housing for older or special needs people.

Areas for recreational purposes are at **4, 6, 7 and 8**, and an outlying layout for housing development includes **Areas 9,10 and 11**.

The Development Areas may be seen in context on this aerial view, **below**, of existing development and development areas surrounding the village.





2.71 Development Area 1

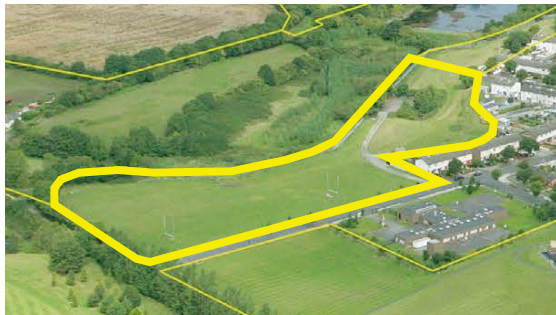
Development Area 1 is a key development site located opposite the school and adjoining the entrance to Rivermeade on lands owned by Fingal County Council and currently used as a football pitch. Proposed development in this area comprises mixed uses including retail, commercial, services, community and residential uses. The main focus of the Development Area is the creation of a central village square at the point of convergence for routes into and within the village. It should provide a new, active heart for Rivermeade.



Area 1: (2.14 Ha) Potential density residential area: 14 units/ Ha

- Retail / commercial / community uses
- Creche or longer term business uses
- Public open space
- Public civic space

- Potential yield of 22 residential dwelling units
- Potential yield of 4 residential apartment units
- Potential yield of 4 dwellings suitable for the elderly

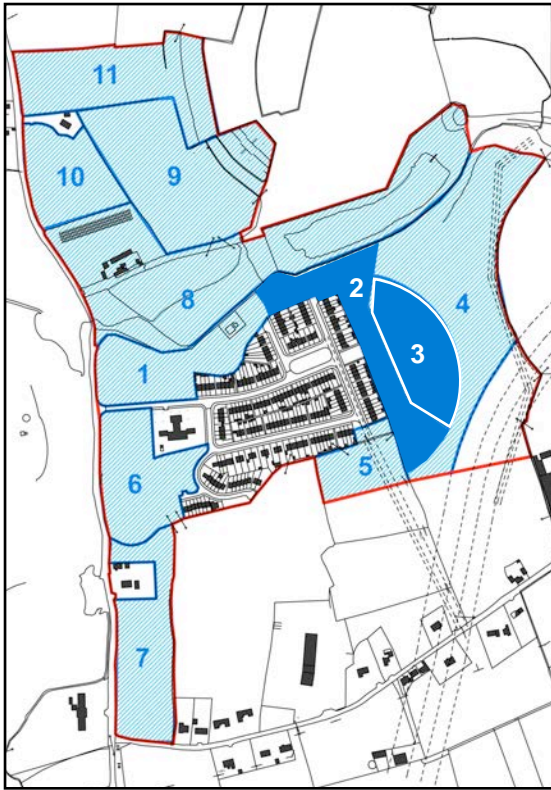


2.7.2 Development Areas 2 and 3

Development areas 2 and 3 are greenfield sites which adjoin existing housing at Rivermeade to the east. Circa 28 and 34 residential units are proposed within Development areas 2 and 3 respectively.

The layout is designed to make a built edge to the expanded village, fronting onto green areas for sports use with hedgerow trees beyond. The central green area connects to the existing green and strengthens the 'axis' of the village along the Main Street.

These Areas are close to the existing residential area and are well-connected with a generous pedestrian link.



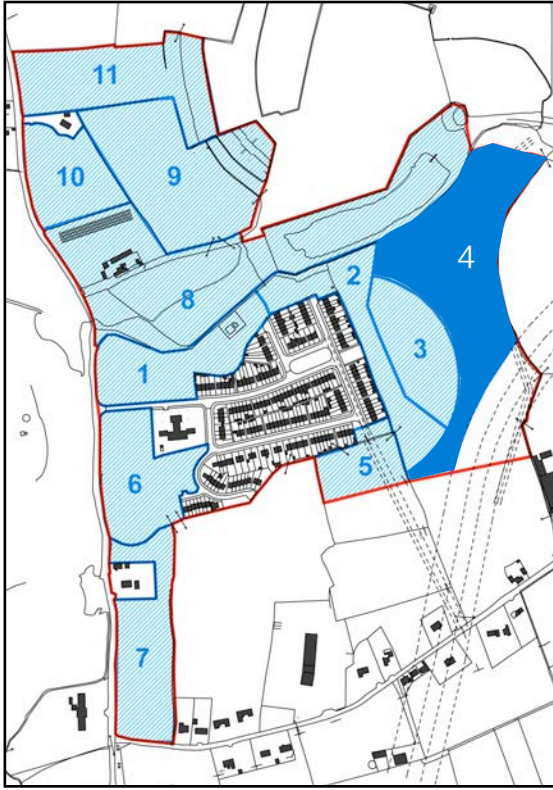
Area 2: (2.14 Ha) Potential density residential area: 13.3 units/ Ha

- potential yield of 24 residential units
- potential yield of 4 dwellings suitable for the elderly

Area 3: (1.87 Ha) Potential density: 18 units/ Ha

- potential yield of 32 residential units
- potential yield of 2 dwellings suitable for the elderly
- public open space





2.74 Development Area 4

This area is located within the eastern part of the LAP lands, adjoining the River Ward and the reservoir. Provision is made for the development of active recreational facilities within this area including a new floodlit soccer football pitch, tennis courts, basketball courts and multi-sport pitches as well as ancillary supporting facilities,



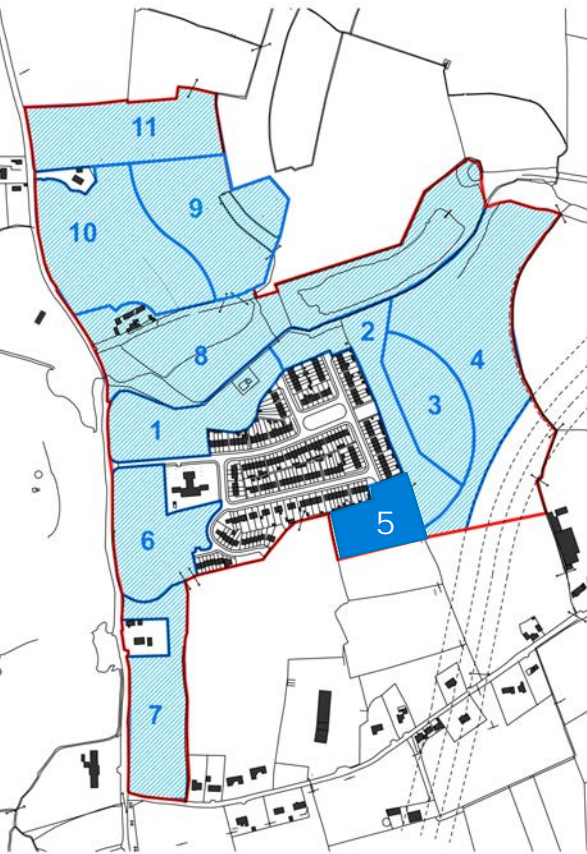
- Area 4: (4.04 Ha)**
- Public open space
 - 3 tennis courts, 1 soccer pitch & 3 multi-sport pitches
 - Sports changing facility & cafe/meeting area
 - Proposed detention basin



2.75 Development Area 5

Development area 5 adjoins existing housing at Rivermeade to the south east. Circa 19 residential units are proposed within Development areas 5.

This area extends one of the key roads in the existing development into an enclave with an overlooked green area: safe as a 'home zone' for children's play.



Area 5: (1.10 Ha) Potential density: 17.2 units/ Ha

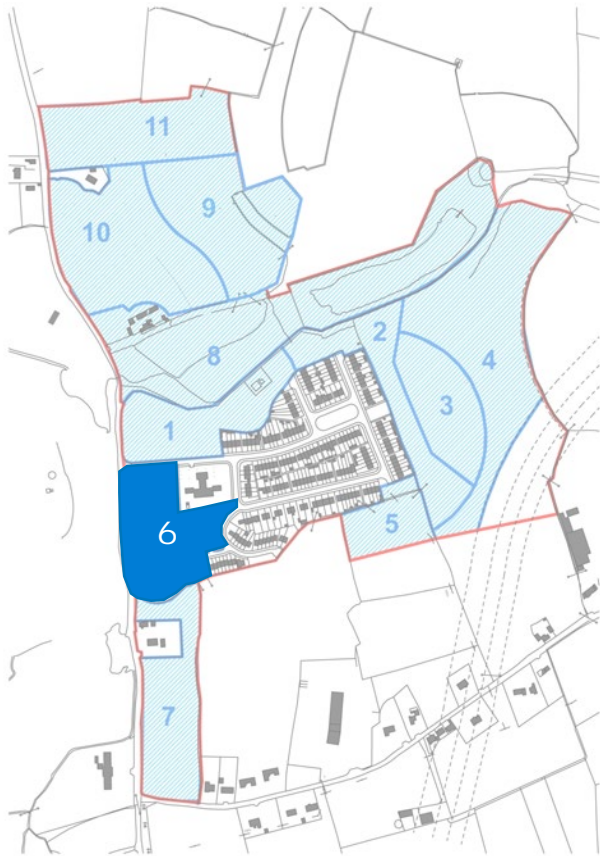
- Potential yield of 18 residential units
- Potential yield of 1 dwellings suitable for the elderly
- Public open space



2.76 Development Area 6

This area is located at the entrance to Rivermeade forming the boundary with the Toberburr Road and the entrance road to the west and north respectively. The national school adjoins these lands to the east. Fingal County Council owns most of these lands. Existing recreational facilities include a playground, a mini all weather pitch and a passive recreational area.

There is an opportunity as part of the development of the LAP lands to enhance this area to provide for improved amenities and additional recreational facilities (for example a skate board park; exercise stations etc) for the benefit of the expanding community in the village.



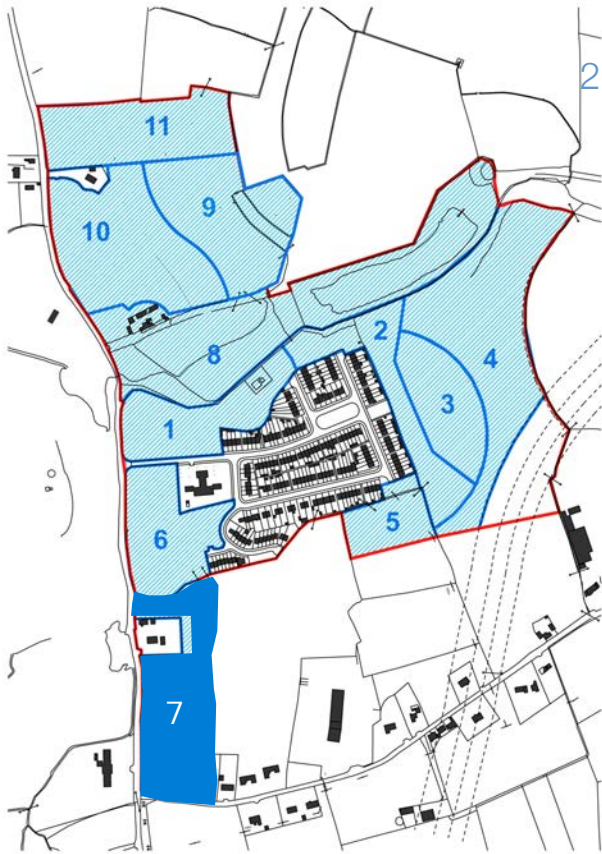
Area 6: (2.22 Ha)

- Public open space
- Existing sports ground
- Existing playground
- Proposed all weather skateboard facility



2.77 Development Area 7

This area is bound by Toberburr Road and Killeek Lane to the west and south respectively. These lands are located within the Inner Airport Noise Zone which precludes new residential development. No new residential development shall be constructed in this area. This area is reserved for the development of 36 allotments ranging from 150 sq.m. to 350 sq.m.



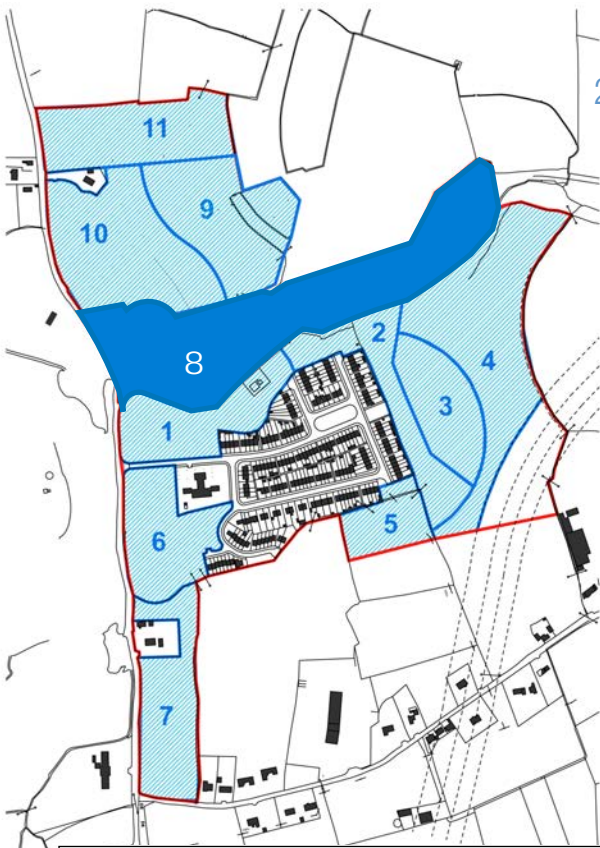
Area 7: (2.40 Ha)

- Proposed allotments



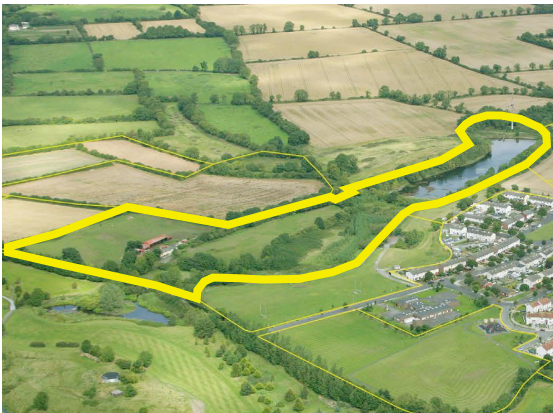
2.78 Development Area 8

This Development area comprises 6.55 ha, including the existing disused reservoir (owned by Fingal County Council) which adjoins the River Ward to the north. Ground levels rise in a northerly direction across this site from circa 56 to 60 metres OD. Adjoining the Ward River, it is characterised by its location and by mature trees and hedging. This Development Area accommodates attractive vernacular buildings (comprising existing cottage and farm buildings) with access off the Toberburr Road north of Owen's bridge. It is intended to preserve the farm buildings and the mature landscape hedgerows to create a regional attraction such as a model farm or a sustainable living centre



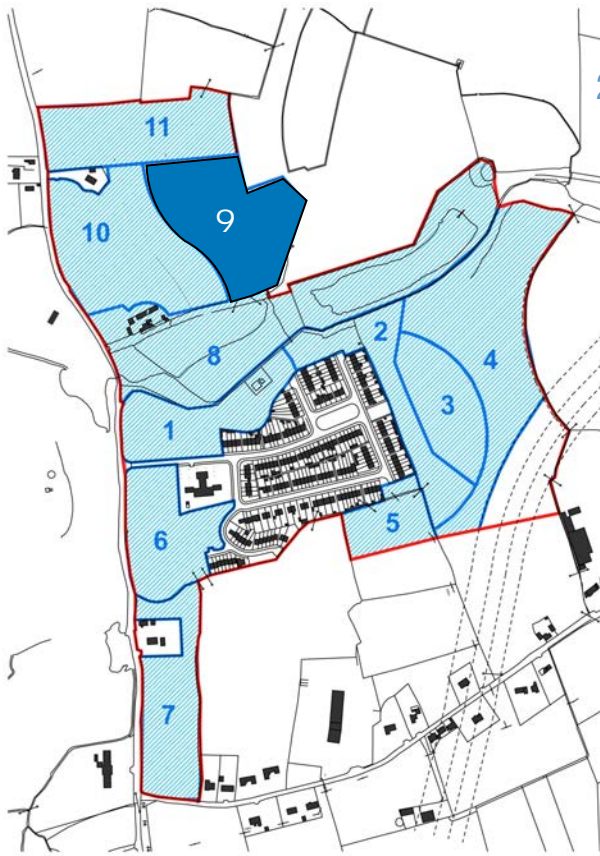
Area 8: (6.55 Ha)

- Model farm/ Sustainable Living Centre
- Public open space
- Proposed detention basin



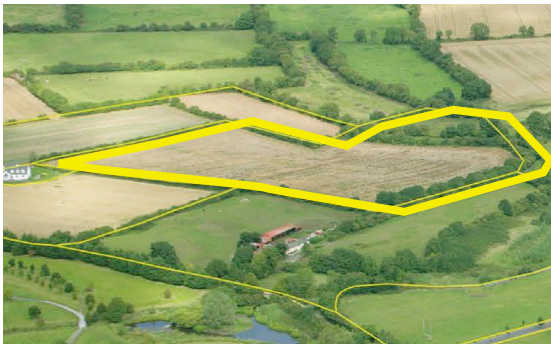
2.79 Development Areas 9

Development area 9 is located north of the River Ward. Access is proposed via the new planted avenue and river crossing. Circa 63 residential units are proposed within Development Area 9 together with public open space.



Area 9: (3.197 Ha) Potential density: 19.7 units/ Ha

- Potential yield of 56 residential units
- Potential yield of 2 dwellings suitable for the elderly
- potential yield of 5 residential units on private serviced sites
- public open space



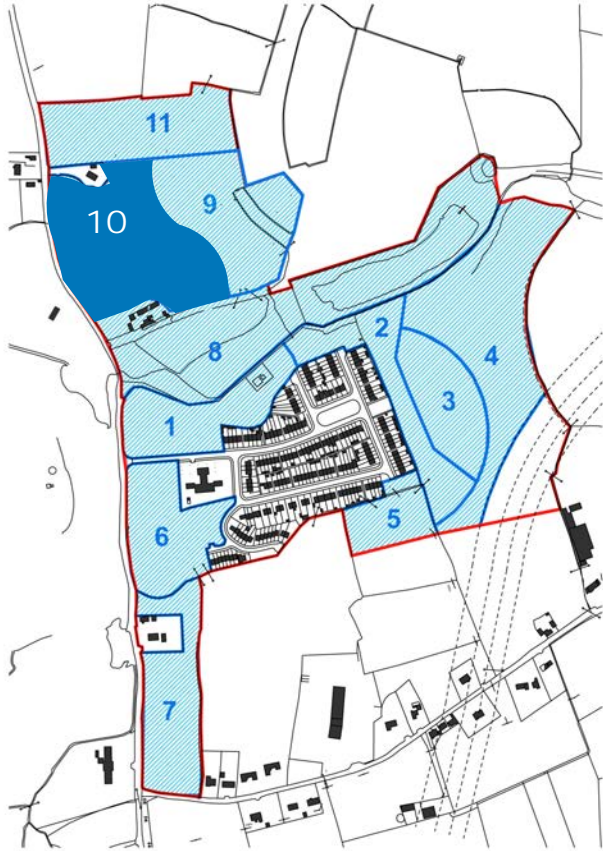


Avenue leading to Areas 9, 10 and 11, illustrating the value of strategic planting, with appropriate street trees in the centre of the Avenue as a measure to increase the visual and environmental quality and enclosure. It will contribute to maintaining moderate vehicle speeds in family areas.



2.80 Development Area 10

Development Areas 10 is located within the northern section of the LAP lands and inside the northern and western boundaries. Access is proposed via the new planted avenue and river crossing which curves between the two development areas, 9 and 10 and continues into Area 11. Circa 66 residential units are proposed



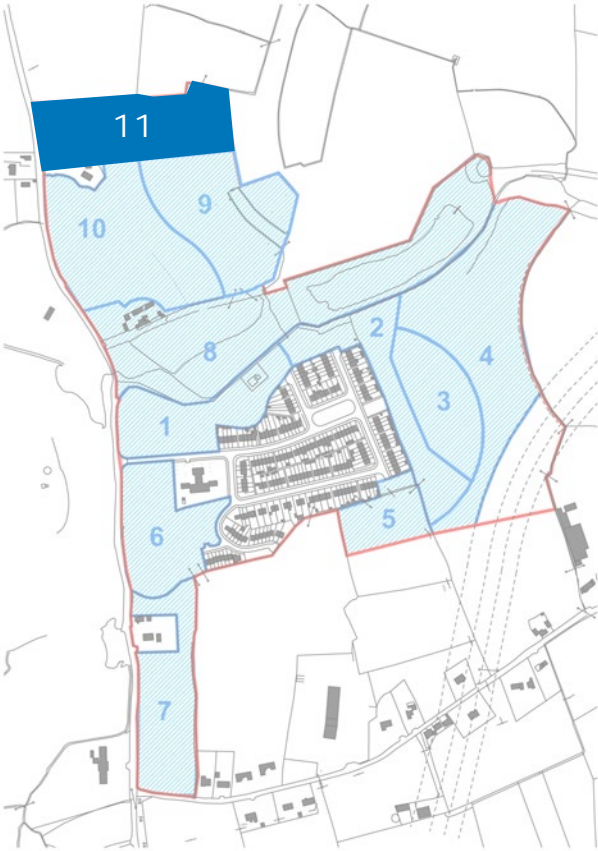
Area 10: (3.96 Ha) Potential density: 16.6 units/ Ha

- Potential yield of 62 residential units
- Potential yield of 4 dwellings suitable for the elderly
- public open space



2.81 Development Area 11

Development Area 11 is located within the northern section of the LAP lands and inside the northern boundary. Access is proposed via the new planted avenue and river crossing. Circa 36 residential units are proposed, including 3 residential units on private serviced residential sites, arranged inside the western boundary. Strategic planting is required inside the northern site boundary



Area 11: (2.78) Potential density: 12.9 units/ Ha

- Potential yield of 32 residential units
- Potential yield of 1 dwelling suitable for the elderly
- potential yield of 3 residential units on private serviced sites
- public open space





2.82 Village Development Framework Plan

Note: The Plans in this Section are **not to scale**. A larger map is available, scale 1:2500, which includes the information on each of the Development Areas.

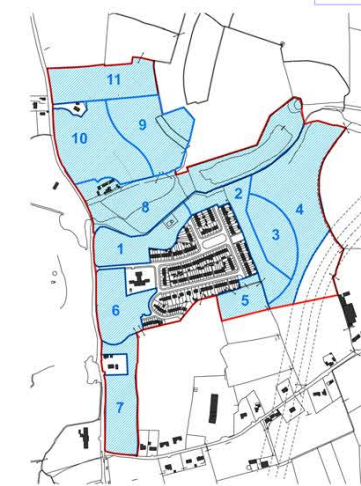
Site Layout Plan

1:2500

- Area 1: (2.14 Ha)** Potential density residential area: 14 units/Ha
 - Retail / commercial / community uses
 - Creche or longer term business uses
 - Public open space
 - Public civic space
 - Potential yield of 22 residential dwelling units
 - Potential yield of 4 residential apartment units
 - Potential yield of 4 dwellings suitable for the elderly
- Area 2: (2.14 Ha)** Potential density residential area: 13.3 units/Ha
 - Potential yield of 24 residential units
 - potential yield of 4 dwellings suitable for the elderly
- Area 3: (1.87 Ha)** Potential density: 18 units/Ha
 - potential yield of 32 residential units
 - potential yield of 2 dwellings suitable for the elderly
 - public open space
- Area 4: (4.04 Ha)**
 - Public open space
 - 3 tennis courts, 1 soccer pitch & 3 multi-sport pitches
 - Sports changing facility & cafe/meeting area
 - Proposed detention basin
- Area 5: (1.10 Ha)** Potential density: 17.2 units/Ha
 - Potential yield of 18 residential units
 - Potential yield of 1 dwellings suitable for the elderly
 - Public open space
- Area 6: (2.22 Ha)**
 - Public open space
 - Existing sports ground
 - Existing playground
 - Proposed all weather skateboard facility
- Area 7: (2.40 Ha)**
 - Proposed allotments
- Area 8: (6.55 Ha)**
 - Model farm / Sustainable Living Centre
 - Public open space
 - Proposed retention basin
- Area 9: (3.197 Ha)** Potential density: 19.7 units/Ha
 - Potential yield of 56 residential units
 - Potential yield of 2 dwellings suitable for the elderly
 - potential yield of 5 residential units on private serviced sites
 - public open space
- Area 10: (3.96 Ha)** Potential density: 16.6 units/Ha
 - Potential yield of 62 residential units
 - Potential yield of 4 dwellings suitable for the elderly
 - public open space
- Area 11: (2.78 Ha)** Potential density: 12.9 units/Ha
 - Potential yield of 32 residential units
 - Potential yield of 1 dwelling suitable for the elderly
 - potential yield of 3 residential units on private serviced sites
 - public open space

LEGEND

- The river Ward and Reservoir
- Existing and proposed public open space
- Existing trees
- Proposed trees with associated hedges
- Proposed Sports Grounds
- Proposed ancillary sports building
- Proposed pontoon + ancillary building
- Existing Sports ground
- Proposed Community garden
- Proposed Retention Basins
- Proposed Allotments
- Proposed communal facilities serving allotments
- Existing playground
- Proposed Private Space
- Hedgerows and trees to be retained
- Proposed Civic Space
- Proposed Paths / cycleways
- Proposed Car park areas
- Proposed truck parking
- Proposed Pedestrian priority space
- Proposed Street
- Proposed Pedestrian Crossing
- Existing Buildings
- Existing National School
- Indicative extension to school
- Proposed three storey town houses with flexible long term ground floor uses
- Proposed ground floor commercial with overhead apartment units
- Proposed single storey dwellings suitable for the elderly
- Proposed two storey dwellings
- Indicative corridor for SWRR
- 1 in 100 years flood risk area
- 1 in 1000 years flood risk area



Revision	Code	Date
###	###	###

iCON
Sustainable Architecture & Urban Design
Architects

iCON
Sustainable Architecture & Urban Design
Typography - Identity - Public

Job Title & Location
Rivermeade VDFF

Client:
Fingal CoCo

Drawing Title
Rivermeade

Drawing Status
Layout Strategy

Drawn by
Bernard Voortman

Checked by
Philip Geoghegan

Date
30 11 2017

Scales
As Shown

Project Number
1152

Drawing Number
01

06695777
Tel: 00353 1 4520000
Fax: 00353 1 4520000
Email: info@icon.ie
Web: www.icon.ie
Company Registered in Ireland No. 41112

06695777
Tel: 00353 1 4520000
Fax: 00353 1 4520000
Email: info@icon.ie
Web: www.icon.ie
Company Registered in Ireland No. 41112



Village Development Framework Plan, showing proposals for all areas of Rivermeade

Original Oblique Aerial Photograph taken 27 August 2010



Village Development Framework Plan, showing proposals for inner areas of Rivermeade
Original Oblique Aerial Photograph taken 27 August 2010



Rivermeade, aerial view 2010 with numbered Development Areas for VDFP
Original Oblique Aerial Photograph taken 27 August 2010

Section 3

Rivermeade: Village Design Guidance



Section 3

Rivermeade: Village Design Guidance

3.1 Sustainable Design Objectives

Environmental Sustainability

Reduce pressure on the environment:

- Foster walking and cycling by provision of safe, attractive, clutter-free pedestrian and cycling routes between attractors of activity: school, community facilities, shops, recreation areas and proposed village parkland areas
- Promote biodiversity by conserving existing indigenous hedgerows, trees and water surfaces. Introduce 'green' pathways close to the village. Encourage community-led planting programmes
- Provide opportunities for food production through allotments and/or community gardens
- Recognise the microclimatic advantages of tree belts and hedgerows
- Use quality, sustainable materials and detailing to make streets and spaces more attractive, accessible and inclusive
- Make the best use of land – a finite resource.
- Foster waste reduction. Provide a convenient, attractive and well-maintained recycling area in the village

3.1 Sustainable Design Objectives

3.2 General Village Objectives

- 3.21 Entrances to the Village
- 3.22 The Public Realm
- 3.23 Public Buildings
- 3.24 New Village Centre

3.3 New Residential Design

- 3.31 Aims
- 3.32 Form
- 3.33 Materials
- 3.34 Landscaping and Sustainable Drainage
- 3.35 Soft Landscaping
- 3.36 Hard Landscaping

3.4 Site Design Statement (SDS)

Making Rivermeade more attractive and sustainable: Local Identity


- Recognising and building on the distinctive locational identity of Rivermeade will assist community and economic regeneration. A quality environment with pride of place will benefit the community, attract visitors and promote long-term economic, social and environmental well-being
- A quality public realm is very important as the outdoors meeting place for all people of Rivermeade

Heritage and Culture

- Conserve the older farm buildings in Rivermeade, and find sustainable opportunity for its sensitive reuse
- Cherish distinctive local features, especially the landscape quality – provide good signage and develop cultural tourism by creating attractors for people in Swords and the county area surrounding Rivermeade

Community

- Assets that help constitute local identity include a strong community spirit, a culture of friendliness and neighbourliness, and a strong and unique local brand that is born of history and shared experience.
- Promote community participation in the implementation of proposals for the public realm
- Erect and manage a public notice board for events, local news, and possibly a local website

An aerial photograph of a rural village, likely Rivermeade, showing a mix of residential buildings, green fields, and a large reservoir in the background. The image is used as a background for the text.

Leisure

- Strengthen existing amenities and leisure and make them accessible to all sectors and age groups
- Diversify: Target additional leisure activities that could act as attractors to the village, especially for walking and potential use of the reservoir for water-based activities

Natural Beauty

- Recognise the extraordinary value of the unspoilt rural environment around Rivermeade and strive to maintain it
- Confining development within the village envelope will increase its identity and strengthen the distinction between village and open countryside
- Maintain views from the village to the countryside
- Develop good walking trails from village into countryside incorporating special features. Identify 'green' roads around the village and help make them pedestrian friendly

Economy and Destination

- Identifying what attracts visitors to an area is important in enhancing distinctiveness – look for untapped opportunities relating to the quality landscape surrounding Rivermeade
- Village shops within convenient walking distance play a vital economic and social role in rural areas and are important for essential day-to-day needs. Consider providing a local shop and some specialised shops such as crafts, coffee shop etc, in the village to make it more attractive to visitors.
- Local country markets devoted to indigenous agricultural and craft produce are good for the rural economy and the village, becoming attractors of visitors. Explore ways to further develop this activity, possibly with active cooperation from Keelings, the locally based food producer
- Encourage further home-based office and economic activities provided they do not cause traffic problems in their neighbourhood

New Buildings

- Site-sensitive, contemporary, sustainable design recognising the special character of place will be encouraged
- Design for adaptability and flexibility – to promote long building life and socially sustainable settlements which are adaptable to life change
- Conserve energy in buildings. Aim for zero carbon design and incorporate high insulation, passive design and energy-efficient components. Exploit orientation. (www.seai.ie)
- Shape building form to create attractive, usable public and private spaces. Design to minimise wind and overshadowing, and to enhance shelter and sunlight. The examples shown in the VDFP Plan show how this might be done
- Use environmentally friendly and sustainable materials for construction. Minimise construction waste and spoil by careful specification and segregation
- Reduce water consumption through water-sparing sanitary equipment. Encourage rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling in new development

3.2 General Village Objectives

3.2 General Village Objectives

3.21 Entrances to the village

Currently, there is one entrance only to the village, off the Toberburr Road.

- Toberburr Road is a delightful country lane, difficult for drivers because of its restricted width. It is nevertheless an attractive way to approach Rivermeade, with mature tree hedgerows, as can be seen on the introductory page to Section 3. The approach to Rivermeade becomes more open and the turn into the village does not announce the village as may be expected. Several measures are suggested in Section 2.6 to overcome this, including avenue tree planting, a change in road surface treatment and a proposal to make unique signage which will identify Rivermeade at its entrance

3.22 The Public Realm

Generally:

- Establish a principle of unfettered pedestrian and disabled mobility - this should be applied to the Main Street first
- Reduce visual clutter, on-street signage and planters
- Keep green in the public realm by retaining trees, grass, shrubs, preserving glimpses to countryside etc
- Provide for village outdoor furniture (seats, litter bins, lighting); it should be contemporary in style and similar in type throughout the village to provide cohesive identity
- Provide litter bins as necessary using attractive, contemporary types
- Provide seats in proposed new civic space; maintain seats in good repair
- New, contemporary street lighting of village scale relating to pedestrian routes and traffic will enhance safety and look better - contributing towards overall civic quality
- Protect existing trees; proposed new tree planting should be deciduous.
- Encourage the implementation of a 'litter-free' village
- Bollards are visually intrusive and best avoided in village locations, except where safety is a priority. Favour trees or planting instead
- Reduce traffic speed with further traffic calming where necessary and provide accessible pedestrian crossings

Opportunities

- Opportunities identified in Rivermeade aim to complement the actions proposed to make the estate a better, connected place to live. They are focussed on the *existing* built environment and measures which may help towards a better appearance, safer movement for pedestrians, a strategy for tidying up the entire village, improvement in off-street parking and ways of further greening the main avenues of the village.
- The entrance zone would be greatly enhanced with some planting of avenue trees
- The proposal to locate a village centre and Square will also help to give character to the village at its entrance
- A change in surface treatment with associated parking will help to reduce traffic speeds and congestion outside the school.
- Street signs should be surveyed and replaced where they may be faded, damaged or broken
- Provide off street parking spaces in existing situations where there are generous grass corner verges
- Some parking spaces for heavy trucks are needed.
- Better pedestrian and cycle routes are proposed to give priority to the safety of people who would choose to walk or cycle.
- The mixed appearance of some of the boundaries and gardens (although in a few places only) is not something that can be easily regulated, but if there is a general wish and sensitive drive to improve the appearance, it may be achieved.

3.23 Public Buildings

Generally

- Rivermeade would benefit from new village centre buildings which could act as landmarks for the place, albeit modest in scale.

Primary School

- Provide pedestrian crossing and traffic calming to school approaches, as proposed in Section 2.6 of the VDFFP
- The railings to the school grounds are quite severe. Although it is well maintained, its appearance could be softened, perhaps with more planting in front of the buildings as well as at the entrance

Community Centre

- The present community centre is small and located away from the central part of the village
- Plan for future community resources as part of the village growth and locate in the new central square, as shown in the VDFFP Plan
- A community centre in the proposed square may be able to act as a focal point to develop potential for local tourism development in the village
- Consider making provision for an outdoor market within the square

3.24 New Village Centre

Generally

- Adhere to the design requirements of the County Development Plan
- New designs should establish the architectural quality, character of a renewed village, and be in scale with the surroundings
- New designs should use a limited palette that does not conflict with existing materials, scale and rhythm
- In new design, find a contemporary, simple, modern expression derived from context, and design creatively with it
- Avoid fussy detailing, porches, dormers, overhanging eaves, heavy barge boards - simple is best
- Make quality boundaries, where fronting streets. There are many combined wall and hedge/shrub versions in Rivermeade, which point towards attractive local quality solutions
- There is no need to introduce 'fussy' landscaping – learn from what is there
- Ensure quality 'finishing' of all development in and around the village
- Maturing trees in the village and mature trees around the village are an important part of the distinct character of the village, especially along the river and around the reservoir

3.3 Residential Design Recommendations

Provide a Site Design Statement, (See 3.4), to precede or accompany a planning application.

3.31 Recommendations:

- Design with careful regard to the objectives set out in Fingal County Development Plan and the Local Area Plan. The achievement of high quality, innovative, safe and pleasant residential environments is a key objective
- Avoid typical patterns of estate housing - creative, site-sensitive innovation is desirable
- Allow the form of the land and landscape to shape design
- Residential amenity, environmental sustainability, high standards, quality materials and attractive forms are significant factors
- Apply Sustainable Design Objectives
- Avoid long straight roads in favour of gentle curves
- Provide for cycle and pedestrian routes in development areas to increase permeability and access
- Make a secure, attractive, intimate feeling within development, creating shared space and safe play areas
- Shape design for easy access by children to green areas; design for safe children's play in public areas close to home
- Optimise outlook to green / open space to provide passive surveillance
- Reduce the options of 'front of house' car parking: consider shared and supervised small groups or garage solutions; it will help to create a more attractive, less repetitive environment
- Exploit orientation to increase light and passive solar gain
- Design to reduce the visual clutter associated with rear gardens - sheds, washing lines etc
- Zero carbon design is the aspiration - creating a house which makes a positive contribution to energy conservation
- Avoid overshadowing where light and sunshine may be seriously affected by the adjacency of dwellings
- Use materials judiciously on site to enhance the ambience and create a sense of identity and place
- Create special places of intimate scale within the design
- Promote views to landscape to continue the quality and enjoyment of the landscape around Rivermeade

3.3 New Residential Design Recommendations

3.32 Form:

To provide:

- Simple legible forms of varying size and type
- High standard of detailing and workmanship
- Natural roofing materials
- Contemporary design
- Sustainable design

3.33 Materials:

- High quality sustainable materials
- Rendered elevations
- Timber windows and doors preferred
- Provide quality boundary walls, planters, seats and other special areas

3.34 Landscaping and Sustainable Drainage:

- Design and incorporate suitable landscaping, hard and soft
- Design to maximise microclimatic advantage
- New residential development should incorporate planting which takes into account existing tree types and patterns
- Identify plant and tree types at the outset. All external landscaping will require a completion certification to be submitted to Fingal County Council before residential units may be placed on the market

3.35 Soft Landscaping and Sustainable Drainage:

- Make it meaningful - to enhance privacy, to create attractive neighbourhoods or to provide play area
- Learn from existing on-site planting and local planting
- Retain and protect all existing mature, healthy trees and hedgerows
- Promote co-ordinated planting at boundary edges
- Be creative but keep it simple – identify specific types to bring simplicity and cohesion
- Use soft landscaping as an opportunity for permeable drainage surfaces, and make swales (shallow channels in green areas which have the capacity to hold surface water and slow down the entry of water into the local stream).
- Use pervious materials on areas which may normally be hard such as parking areas, and recreational areas. These must be designed as engineering contributions with a high landscape sensitivity.

3.36 Hard Landscaping:

- Minimise hard landscaping; use permeable gravel or hogging where appropriate.
- Quality materials; resist the tendency to cover paved surfaces with cobble effect concrete bricks. The appearance of these areas deteriorates with use, whereas natural stone, appropriate to location, has a more durable lifespan
- Hard landscape space should have a useful purpose. Left over hard surface space may be a future liability.

3.4 Site Design Statement (SDS)

All development must reflect the need to safeguard the quality of village life in Rivermeade, to protect, and to enhance, the character of its environmental assets.

Successful design relies on effective contextual analysis to identify the characteristics of place - scale, character, rhythm, materials, opportunities, challenges and even the oddities in a particular streetscape. The aim should be to stimulate contemporary interpretation and place-making.

This document suggests that all planning applications within Rivermeade should be preceded or accompanied by a Site Design Statement with accompanying contextual photographs and maps. This checklist is not intended to be prescriptive, since each proposal will have its own specific influences and requirements.

3.4 Site Design Statements (SDS)

An SDS should include the following:

- Introduction - the applicant, the proposal, existing use and planning history if any.
- Planning Requirements - County Development Plan, Local Area Plan, zoning, designations applicable to site or adjoining lands, protected structures, archaeological interest, National Monuments in vicinity
- Development context – existing pattern language, neighbouring buildings, uses, character, materials, scale, rhythm, frontage widths, landscape, etc
- The Site - Site dimensions, topography, orientation, overlooking, views and prospects drainage, plot ratio, site coverage, location and capacity of services and relevant planning conditions
- Proposed Use - main issues, attractor/generator of activity, benefits, challenges
- Urban Opportunity - identify benefits to village
- Design Opportunities - identify the main design issues, including sustainable drainage proposals
- Landscaping Opportunity - vegetation and landscape features
- Vehicular and Pedestrian Opportunities – safe pedestrian routes and linkages
- Preliminary Design Proposal - Summary of design aims, preliminary sketches including Before and After sketches of the streetscape



Rivermeade, aerial view 2010, with numbered Development Areas for VDFP

Original Oblique Aerial Photograph taken 27 August 2010



Village Development Framework Plan with Development Areas numbered

Original Oblique Aerial Photograph taken 27 August 2010