

Submission to the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029

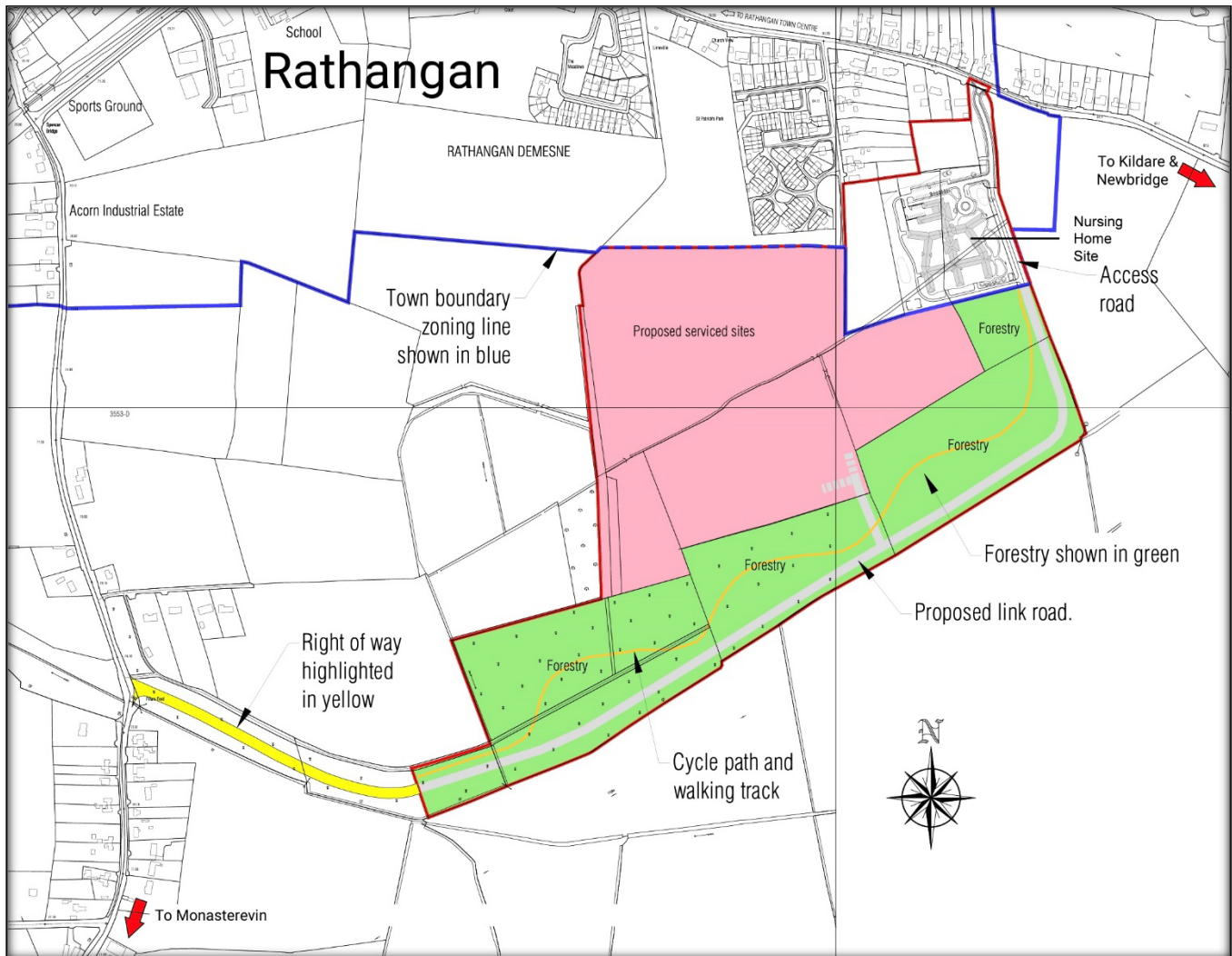
Proposing the zoning of land for the development of Green Infrastructure
and Serviced Sites at Rathangan Demesne, Rathangan, Co Kildare



On behalf of the joint landowners at Rathangan Demesne
Date: 23rd May 2022

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this submission is to demonstrate the benefits of Zoning Lands at Rathangan Demesne for the purpose of developing Green Infrastructure in conjunction with Serviced Sites. The lands available extend to c.84 hectares (as highlighted in pink and green on the map below) and are a mix of Commercial Forestry Plantation and Green Field located at Rathangan Demesne south of Rathangan Town Centre, accessible from the R401 Kildare Road and the R414 Monasterevin Road. On the Landowners adjoining land, there is extant planning permission for a 96 bed Nursing Home granted under planning ref: ABP-300392-17 & KCC: 17/215. Construction is expected to commence on the Nursing Home in 2023 with a view to being operational by 2025. Access to the proposed lands is provided alongside the proposed Nursing Home.



This proposal is to zone the lands so the existing forestry can be converted into a Native Woodland with walkways, segregated cycle paths and general green infrastructure surrounding serviced sites creating a very attractive environment within 1.3 km of Rathangan Town Centre.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



Green Infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces and ecological areas that traverse our urban and rural areas. This can include parks, open spaces, rivers, farmland, playing fields, woodlands, private gardens and allotments which surround and intersperse our towns and villages. When appropriately planned and designed, Green Infrastructure can create many social, economic and environmental benefits especially when it is proximate to where people live and work. Section 12.14.4 of the Draft Kildare County Development Plan identifies some of the benefits of Green Infrastructure as:

- Attracting businesses and inward investment by creating an attractive environment;
- Access nature, outdoor recreation and for social interaction;
- Space for nature and wildlife to flourish;
- Recreational, tourism and cultural roles;
- Climate change adaptation - for example flood alleviation and cooling urban heat islands,
- Forestry, crop production, agriculture and energy development;

- Local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture;
- Provides green buffers /green wedges between built up areas;
- Improves air quality;
- Environmental education
- Improves health and well-being;
- Creating a sense of place and local distinctiveness
- Encouraging physical activity and improved health and well-being by providing quality green spaces for walking and cycling and other physical activity.

This green infrastructure proposal is consistent with the recommendations relating to Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity as outlined in the Environmental Health Service Consultation report by the HSE dated 16th February 2021 in relation to the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 which recommends:

“The provision of pedestrian and cycle route through green areas should be a key provision of the design. The landscaping or ‘greening’ of these pedestrian / cycle routes should be considered at design stage, not only in the interest of making them more attractive but also to facilitate the movement of fauna, creating ecological corridors and thus having a positive effect on biodiversity. Towns and Villages in Kildare should be explored to identify areas where biodiversity can be integrated into the urban fabric.”

This proposal is also consistent with the policies, objectives and actions published in draft Kildare CDP 2023 – 2029 pertaining to Green Infrastructure as outlined below:

BI P11 Recognise the importance of Green Infrastructure in Kildare and to put measures in place to protect this valued biological resource.

BI A19 Protect and maintain a Green Infrastructure network in the county.

BI A20 Map tree canopy coverage in urban areas in conjunction with the preparation of statutory Local Area Plans with a view to increasing same by, where possible, 30%, as a minimum.

BI P12 Recognise the importance of Green Infrastructure in Kildare and protect this valued biological resource, the ecosystem services it provides and the contribution to climate resilience.

BI O39 Ensure the protection, enhancement and maintenance of Green Infrastructure in Kildare.

BI O40 Support the development of a Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy and the identification, management, development and protection of strategic GI connections in co-operation with Kildare’s neighbouring counties and the Midland and Eastern Regional Assembly.

BI O42 Require that all Local Area Plans protect and manage the Green Infrastructure network in an integrated and coherent manner and add additional local Green Infrastructure corridors where possible.

BI O4 Promote a network of paths and cycle tracks to enhance accessibility to the Green Infrastructure network across the County, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes respect, and where possible, enhance the ecological potential of each site.

BI A21 Complete the mapping of Green Infrastructure for each town and village in County Kildare and to develop specific policies and objectives for each town specifically by incorporating green infrastructure policies and objectives into the various Local Area Plans as they are being prepared.

SERVICED SITES



CGI of Serviced Sites at Walker Hall

According to the CSO, in 2021 the number of completed one off houses was 4,682 which accounted for 22.9 % of total house completions. It is clear that demand for one off houses remains high and needs to be provided for in a sustainable manner by way of fully serviced sites that are within walking distance of town centres.

Most new homes being built in Kildare are in large scale developments providing 2, 3 and 4 bed homes aimed predominantly at first time buyers, however there are very few new homes available for people who require a little more space. Rathangan Demesne has the capacity to offer Serviced Sites of varying sizes to suit the individual needs of families to build their own homes.



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One of the most recent developments of Serviced Sites in Kildare is Walker Hall in Kildare Town. Walker Hall comprises 11 serviced sites and was in high demand prior to selling out in 2020. One of the most consistent requests that could not be met at Walker Hall was the need for a larger site enough to facilitate a house and granny flat for a family and elderly parent/s. For every one of these sites, two dwellings become available and released onto the market.

Carton Demesne and The K Club are some of the most sought after places to live in County Kildare, but unaffordable for most due to the premium associated with a 5 star hotel and golf course that many of their respective residents don't even use. Rathangan Demesne can offer a similar sought after living environment but at an affordable level without the premium for a 5 star hotel and golf course. Serviced sites to build the required home in a Woodland Setting, with Designated Cycle Paths, Walk Ways, Easily Accessible and all within 1.3km of Rathangan Town Centre

The draft Kildare CDP 2023-2029 envisages the establishment of a "County Kildare Serviced Sites Initiative" that will attract new residents in to live in our towns, villages and sustain the communities which is consistent with the intentions of Project Ireland 2040.

This proposal is consistent with the policies, objectives and actions published in draft Kildare CDP 2023 – 2029 pertaining to section **3.13.7 Providing a sustainable alternative to One Off Housing**

HO O55

Ensure that the development of any serviced sites;

- Adequately addresses infrastructural requirements, including water, wastewater and surface water drainage as well as footpaths and lighting which shall link with the respective town/village/rural settlement
- Provide for small scale housing developments (no more than 10 units per hectare)
- Include a Design Statement for the overall site to inform the design, mix and type of the proposed dwellings
- Include a clear timeframe for the delivery of the required infrastructure to service the development proposed

HO A7

Engage with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to leverage funding through the 'Croí Cónaithe' (Towns) Fund6 to deliver serviced sites in towns and villages to cater for sustainable alternatives to one off housing in accordance with NPO 18b of the National Planning Framework

HO A8

Prepare a Kildare County Council Serviced Sites Scheme Policy Document to guide the development of serviced sites, no later than 6 months after the adoption of this Plan. This policy document shall;

- 1) Ensure that the delivery of 'serviced sites' be determined following close consultation with the relevant landowners, service providers and all other relevant stakeholders
- 2) Consider how best to deliver the overall scheme whether by co-operative group(s) or otherwise
- 3) Explore mechanisms to support the delivery of affordable homes

POSSIBLE FUTURE LINK ROAD

CGI of Road and Path through Rathangan Demesne

This proposal also provides the option of a link road between R401 Kildare Road and the R414 Monasterevin Road, if required. The benefits of this include: diverting HGV traffic from passing Ardscoil Primary School and the bottle neck at Rathangan Bridge and general implementation of measures to reduce the volumes of through traffic, especially HGV's in town centres and in the vicinity of schools.



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CONCLUSION

This proposal seeks that the subject lands are considered for zoning for the development of Green Infrastructure and Serviced Sites at Rathangan Demesne in a phased coherent manner to facilitate a timely delivery of serviced sites and green infrastructure that will create an attractive environment to live, work and play and where biodiversity can be integrated into the urban fabric while contributing to climate resilience.

We trust Kildare County Council will take this submission into consideration in making the County Development Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pierce Fagan".

Pierce Fagan MSc(Surv) MRICS MSCSI
Chartered Planning & Development Surveyor