

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

KINGSCOURT TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION SCHEME

Kingscourt, Co. Cavan

PLANNING STATEMENT

**incorporating Appropriate Assessment Screening Summary;
and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Summary**

To accompany

A planning application made under

Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2022

By

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds (CSR) is in support of a Part 8 planning application, on behalf of Cavan County Council, with development consisting the reconfiguration and redistribution of pedestrians and cycling facilities on Main Street and Market Square; provision of off-street car parking, refurbishment to two structures to use as new library and “remote working hub”. The application is made in accordance with Part XI of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 – 2022.

The purpose of this document is to assess the compliance of the development proposal against relevant development plan policies and objectives at national, regional and local levels. This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and other reports that have been prepared for the proposed development and are submitted with this application. This statement also considers the proposed development against the requirements for Appropriate Assessment Screening and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening.

Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration Scheme

The proposal comprises the Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration scheme which includes works to deliver an increase to civic space within the town core, the provision of new off street carparking in the town centre, the undergrounding of all overhead utilities, proposals for the addressing of dereliction including a new library on Market Square and a ‘Remote Working Hub’ on Main Street.

The Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration Scheme will aim to improve the streetscape and appearance of the town. It will create a focal point for increased activity and footfall, provide valuable space for new business in the town core and potentially open up back lands for development. It will also provide increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and vehicle users.

In addition, the scheme will make best use of civic space available, make the town centre greener and will improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to the town.

The design brief and objectives of Kingscourt Town Centre and Regeneration Scheme are as follows:

- Redesign of the Market Square to reduce car parking and increase civic space
- Redesign of Main Street between Market Square and the Kells Road Roundabout, to include the reduction of car parking to allow for increased civic space in the town,
- Identification of suitable buildings and sites for the provision of a new public building and provision of new off street carparking in the town centre.
- Refurbishment of suitable building to provide a new public building for use as a “Remote Working Hub”, to include an open plan office space with hot desks and meeting room and a ground floor open plan, multifunctional space for use by the both the community and local business and act as a catalyst for regeneration of neighbouring town centre buildings by their private sector owners.
- Clearance of suitable site to provide a new off—street carpark in the town centre and adjacent amenity area.

- Undergrounding of all overhead utilities through the town core
- Proposals for the addressing of dereliction within the town core including a façade painting scheme
- Proposals for the opening up of “back lands” for future development in the town core for potential housing and commercial use.

Integrated Design Team

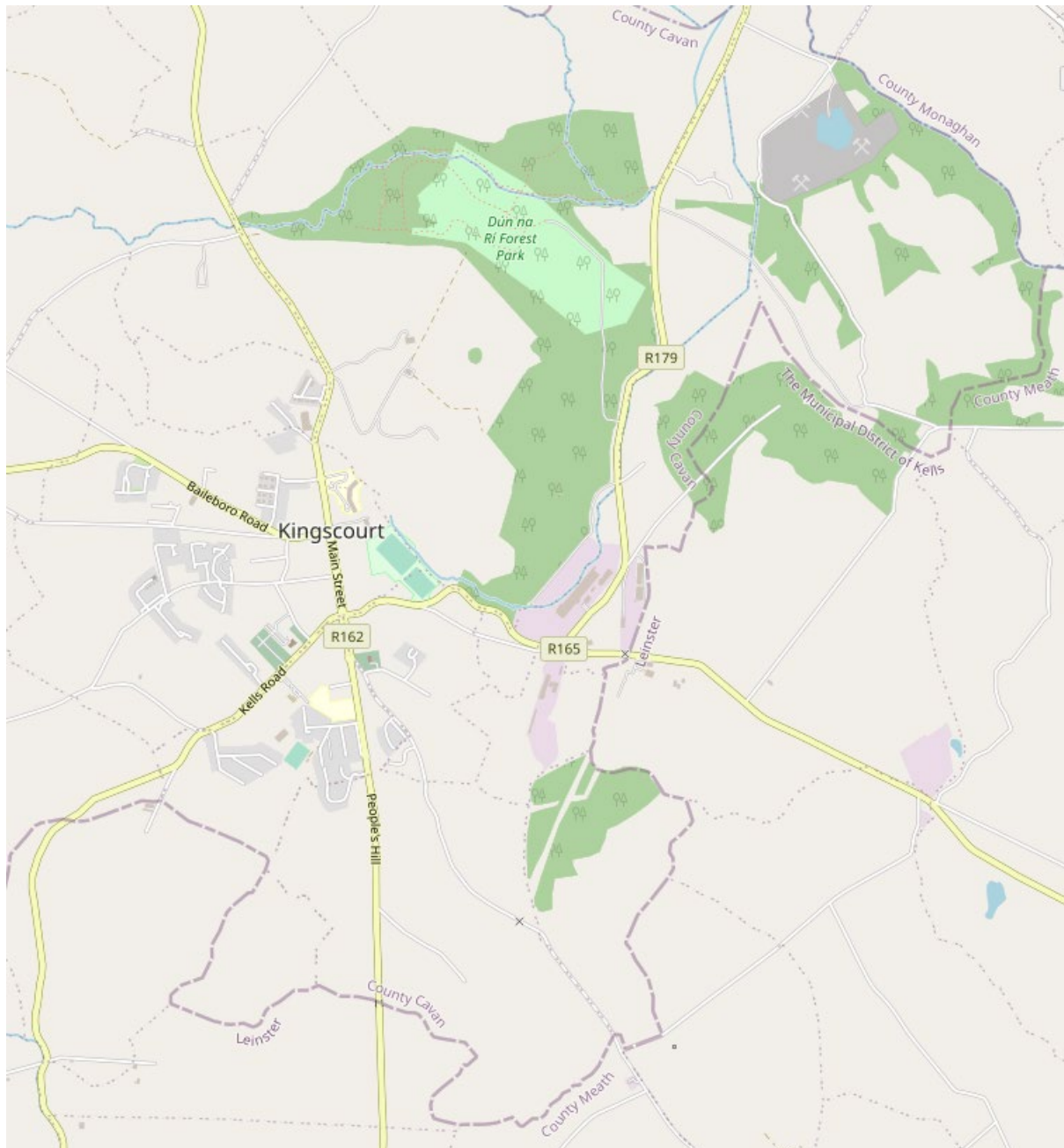
In 2021, Cavan County Council appointed an Integrated Design Team led by Tobins Consulting Engineers. The design team includes;

- Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Land Planning & Design (Urban Designers and Planning Lead for the team);
- Niall Smith Architects (who will provide the architectural design for the team);
- Architectural Conservation Professionals (who will deal with any structures with historical significance on the project); and
- Moore Group (who will provide Archaeological and Environmental input).

2. THE SITE, LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Kingscourt is a small market town and industrial centre in County Cavan, Ireland. The town is located in the most easterly part of County Cavan on the border with County Meath. The town is approximately 40km south east of Cavan Town, 13kms Bailieborough, 19kms from Carrickmacross, 24km from Ardee, 32km from Navan and 90km from Dublin. The Regional Routes R162, 164 and R165 meet in the town.

Figure 1: Kingscourt in Co. Cavan



2.1 History and Heritage

The Reverend Joseph Pratt established the town of Kingscourt in the mid-1700s. It is said to have taken its name from a visit made by King James II in the late 1680 when he held court for one night at Cabra Castle (then Corney Castle) on his way to the Battle of the Boyne.

There was an old village of Cabra near the site of Kingscourt, but in 1780 Mervyn Pratt laid out a new town of Kingscourt for the marketing of flax with its wide street - an Anglicisation of Dun A Ri. Patents allowing markets and fairs to be held in the town were granted and as roads were improved and a church built in the town, Kingscourt flourished as a market town.

Figure 2: Historic Picture of Market Square, Kingscourt in 1880s. Since Demolished. (Source: Irish Historic Picture Company)



Figure 3: Photo of Main Street, Kingscourt taken around 1901 by Lawrence Collection.

The town of Kingscourt however continued to flourish in the 19th century as it became the coach road from Dublin to Cootehill and the surrounding areas. It was linked to Navan by rail in 1875. In the 20th century Kingscourt became a hub of industry due to its ground natural resources and mines providing the formation of Gypsum Industries and Kingscourt Brick.

The town has retained its historic pattern with the town core focused on a wide and long main street with further streets radiating in a uniform pattern out from it.

Dun a'Ri Forest Park, Kingscourt

This forest park contains a rich archaeological, historical, architectural and cultural heritage. Apart from its rich forestland there are many buildings of significance dating from the 19th and 20th centuries such as Cabra Cottage, Flemings Castle and to its north is the site of the old Cabra village, which is marked on early editions of ordnance survey maps. Also in the park is a bridge known as 'Cromwell's Bridge', built most likely by Cromwellian forces. There are a number of features associated with the Pratt family, including a wishing well and an icehouse. The Forest Park was established in 1959 when the Forestry and Wildlife Service acquired the lands. It is a major tourist attraction and amenity for Kingscourt despite its distance to the town (1.7km).

2.2 Town Core

Kingscourt is characterised by a wide Main Street with some extensions to the east and west. It has a traditional, continuous building frontage with a mix of building heights and colours. The buildings on Main Street and Church Street are typical of 18th and 19th Century market

towns and are mainly two-storey with a mix of uses including a number of residential properties many now vacant or converted to other uses.

Figure 4: Historical OS Map - 6 inch Colour 1829-41



Figure 5: Historical OS Map - 25 inch B&W 1897-1913

2.3 Application Site

The application site area is 1.59 ha. It includes the Main Street stretching from Market Square to Kells Roundabout; Market Square; former National Irish Bank building and lands; formerly Bank of Ireland building and lands; former Shekelton's site; and Rocks Road and St. Mary's Road junction.

Figure 6: Application site



2.4 Record of Protected Structure

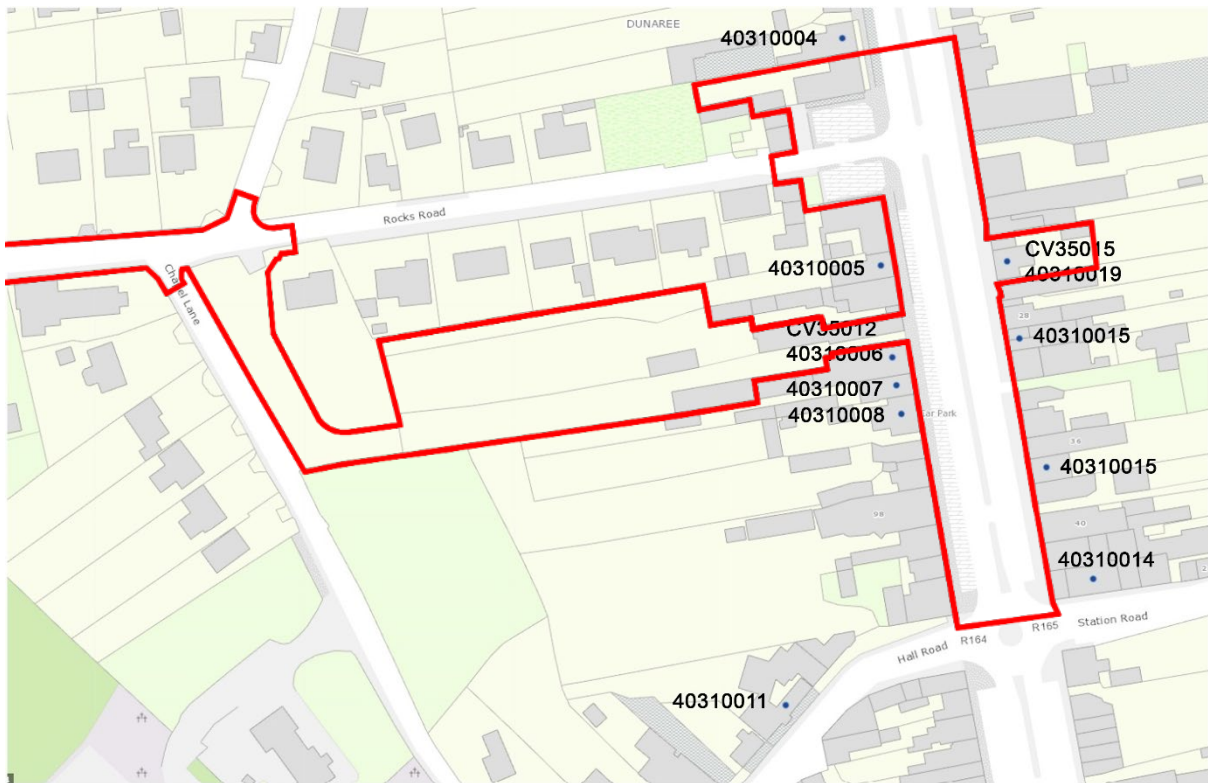
The proposed works are expected to impact on two Protected Structures and lands associated with them. These Protected Structures are the former Shekleton’s Store (CV35012) and formerly Bank of Ireland building (CV35015) on the Main Street.

There are a number of Protected Structures identified within the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) within the town centre. These are identified in the below table. The proposed works are largely within the curtilage of these structures, however not impacting on them directly. However, there is demolition proposed of an overhang to the protected structure on Main Street at Shekleton’s Store. The two most affected protected structures are the top two entries below in Table 1.

Table 1: Record of Protected Structures and Record of NIAH structures

Name of building	RPS Ref:	NIAH Ref:
Former Shekleton’s Store, Main Street	CV35012	40310006
Formerly Bank of Ireland, Main Street	CV35015	40310019
Ashoka Indian Restaurant, Main Street		40310005
M and F’s Bar, Main Street		40310007
J. McKiernan, Main Street		40310008
The Central Stores, Main Street		40310015
Dun a Ri House Hotel, Station Road		40310014
House on main Street, Main Street		40310015
Kingscourt Library, Hall Road		40310011
House on Main Street, Main Street		40310004

Figure 7: Record of NIAH structures



Please refer to the Heritage Statement and Architectural Impact Assessment Statement for further information on impacts and effects.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Planning History within Site

There are no significant planning applications on the application site in the past 10 years.

There was one planning application relating to Shekleton's in 2019.

Ref. no:	Development Description	Decision and Date
19152*	Development consisting of works to 'Shekleton's', a protected structure Reg. No. CV35012., the proposed works consist of: Change of use from retail unit to restaurant on ground floor, associated kitchen, dishwashing area, toilets, office and restaurant seating area on first floor, repair/redecorate front elevation, new signage, new awning and associated site works	Grant with conditions on 24/06/2019

** This planning permission for CCC ref: 19152 is still extant as it expires in July 2024.*

Planning History outside the Site

There are no significant planning applications in the immediate surroundings of this application site currently on the public planning register.

4. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The proposed development consists of:

- Refurbishment, adaptation and extension of the former National Irish Bank building on Market Square as a new library and part-demolition of existing outbuilding;
- Refurbishment works to Protected Structure (RPS: CV35015), formerly Bank of Ireland building on Main Street and adaptation as a new “remote working hub”, with demolition of rear extension and replacement with new extension for universal accessibility;
- Reconfiguration of the former Shekleton’s site (RPS: CV35012), including: the partial demolition of the overhanging room above entrance gate, demolition of outbuildings located to the rear of the main building and demolition of former salon building to the north of Shekleton’s to accommodate new access road from Main Street to proposed off-street car parking area;
- Reconfiguration of road layout, car parking, and public realm enhancements to Main Street between Market Square and Kells Road Roundabout;
- New segregated cycleway along Main Street;
- Reconfiguration of road layout, car parking and public realm enhancements to Market Square;
- Proposed off-street car parking off Main Street and rear of Shekleton’s to accommodate 126 no. car parking spaces; including 9 no. accessible car parking, 2 no. EV spaces and 1 no. occasional loading bay;
- Proposed new access road from Rocks Road to the proposed off-street car parking area incorporating repairs to existing boundary walls within the curtilage of Protected Structure (RPS: CV35012);
- Junction improvements and traffic calming measures on Rocks Road and St. Mary’s Road to facilitate new access to off-street parking area;
- Public realm enhancements including new tree planting, greening, paving, street furniture, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs), street lighting, undergrounding of overhead cables, and associated works and services to Main Street, Market Square, Rocks Road and proposed off-street car parking area.

5. STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This section of the report highlights the Strategic Planning Context of the subject lands, namely the key National and Regional Planning and Development Plans, Policies and Guidelines where they relate to the spatial organization of land use at the subject location and the development and activities proposed.

5.1 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

5.1.1 National Planning Framework (NPF), 2019

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government published the National Planning Framework (NPF) in 2019 and National Development Plan (NDP) in 2021. It is the spatial expression of Government Policy up until 2040.

The aim of the NPF is to direct future development and investment in Ireland to sustainable locations and to promote sustainable development and proper planning across the entire State. The National Development Plan (NDP) (Ireland 2040) articulates shared national development goals, including improved living standards, quality of life, prosperity, competitiveness and environmental sustainability and provide greater clarity for private sector investment.

The NPF recognizes the value of cultural heritage as a key component of, and contributor to, the attractiveness and sustainability of our cities, towns, villages and rural areas in terms of developing cultural creative spaces, private inward investment, and attracting and retaining talent and enterprise.

Planning for Ireland's Urban Growth – Rural Regeneration

The NPF emphasises the role of placemaking in economic prosperity as city regions are now the focal point for investment and seeks to develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.

The key national planning objectives in the context of Kingscourt, and all towns in the country of similar size and stature, are NPO4 which seeks to ensure that towns like Kingscourt are attractive, liveable, well designed, high-quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being and NPO6 which seeks to achieve the regeneration and rejuvenation of small towns as environmental assets that can accommodate changing roles and functions and increased residential population and employment activity as well as enhanced levels of amenity and design quality.

NPF strategy states;

“Supporting both urban regeneration and rural rejuvenation through a €3 Billion Regeneration and Development Fund and the establishment of a National Regeneration and Development Agency.”

It is noted that building vacancy in rural towns and villages has become increasingly prevalent, resulting in the demise of the historic vibrancy and vitality of town and village centres. The re-use and regeneration of these buildings are essential catalysts to transforming the capacity and potential of smaller towns and villages in Ireland, as per national planning policy.

NPO 16 Target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.

NPO 18a Support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.

Well Designed Places

NPO 27 Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

NPO 57 Enhance water quality and resource management by: Ensuring flood risk management informs place-making by avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities; Ensuring that River Basin Management Plan objectives are fully considered throughout the physical planning process; Integrating sustainable water management solutions, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS), nonporous surfacing and green roofs, to create safe places.

The proposal is in accordance with each of the above.

5.1.2 National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030

The investment priorities of the NPF are reflected in the National Development Plan 2021-2030. Investment in cultural and civic services and infrastructure is a feature of the NDP that recognizes investment in high quality infrastructure as being critical for a vibrant heritage and culture sector and that investment in cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth. In terms of regional objectives, specific priorities are to enhance arts and culture centres throughout the country, develop the sustainable tourism potential of the State's culture and heritage infrastructure, and improve Ireland's outdoor recreation infrastructure and natural heritage. The proposed development set out in Section 3.0 below is directly aligned with national policy in the form of the NPF and the NDP.

5.1.3 Our Rural Future 2021-2025

Our Rural Future 2021-2025 outlines the vision for:

- Optimised digital connectivity
- Support of rural employment and careers
- Revitalising towns and villages
- Enhancing participation, leadership and resilience
- Transition to a climate neutral society.

The proposed development is consistent with this vision and in particular the revitalization of rural towns such as Kingscourt.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) is a commitment of €1 billion by government to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027. The purpose of the fund is to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas.

This Fund provides an opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, to make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities, and to address de-population in small rural towns, villages and rural areas. It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the NPF and to aid in the implementation of the RSES and the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Cavan County Council has secured funding from RRDF for the Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration project in 2020.

5.1.4 Town-Centre First Policy

The Town Centre First policy document aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

Irish towns are facing significant challenges and opportunities that require a coordinated and comprehensive response. This Town Centre First policy will facilitate that response by towns of all sizes across the country so that their centres can function as the sustainable and vibrant heart of the communities they serve, in ways that are adaptable and appropriate to 21st century needs. This proposal is very much town centre focused.

5.1.5 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) seeks to put well-designed streets at the heart of sustainable communities and supports boarder government policies on the environment, planning and transportation. DMURS provides the practical measures to achieve:

- *Highly connected street which allow people to walk and cycle to key destinations in a direct and easy-to find manner.*
- *A safe and comfortable street environment for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages.*
- *Streets that contribute to the creation of attractive and lively communities.*
- *Streets that calm traffic via a range of design measures that make drivers more aware of their environment.*

The proposed development is consistent from a technical perspective with DMURS.

5.1.6 Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)

These guidelines offer best practice in regard to conservation and works and development in respect of protected structures and development in conservation areas and architectural conservation. The guidelines identify 13 no. key principles in respect of conservation and the

proposals are considered in the context of these principles in the Heritage Statement produced by the ACP Group and which supports this planning application.

5.2 REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region, within which County Cavan, and Kingscourt is located, provides the broad roadmap for effective regional development in terms of coordinating and combining responses on design and innovation; the provision of business opportunities, delivering homes, building communities and value land-use thereby creating healthy places and promoting sustainable communities.

This RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region that supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government.

One of the key vision is *to manage future growth and ensure the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, study, visit and invest in*. A key objective of the Spatial Strategy is the regeneration and revitalisation of towns and villages, which is very much met by the proposed development.

Regeneration and Revitalisation

The RSES states: *“The future role and function of our large network of smaller towns and villages across the region need to be re-imagined, addressing economic, physical and social decline issues. The regeneration of our smaller towns and villages is now a major priority action for our region, which provides an opportunity to address legacy issues and to turn around their fortunes.”*

A number of regional objectives support the proposed development and these are as follows;

RPO 3.4 *To support the regeneration and renewal of small towns and villages in rural areas.*

RPO 3.9 *Identify suitable development opportunities for regeneration and development that are supported by a quality site selection process that also addresses environmental constraints and opportunities.*

RPO 3.10 *Ensure flood risk management informs development by avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SUDS, non-porous surfacing and green roofs) to create safe places. Development plans should assess flood risk by implementing the recommendations of the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (August 2014).*

RPO 3.13 *To support the role of smaller and medium sized towns, which demonstrate an important role in terms of service provision and employment for their catchments within the economic function of the county. Such settlements will be identified through the Development Plan process as part of the Settlement Hierarchy and the Core Strategy.*

Natural Assets

Dun a Rí Forest Park is in close proximity to the town and is an amenity for the town. In this instance the following objective supports the proposed development:

***RPO 5.5** Ensure efficient and sustainable use of all our natural resources, including inland waterways, peatlands, and forests in a manner which ensures a healthy society a clean environment and there is no net contribution to biodiversity loss arising from development supported in this strategy. Conserve and protect designated areas and natural heritage areas. Conserve and protect European sites and their integrity.*

The proposed development involves greening the town centre and enhancing town's biodiversity and is consistent with the above objectives.

5.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

5.3.1 CAVAN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

The County Cavan Development Plan 2022-2028 was adopted on July 11th 2022 (hereafter referred to as the Plan) and sets out the intentions and ambitions for the County over the six years of the plan.

Core Strategy

The Core Strategy Map is presented below with Kingscourt identified as a defined 'Self-Sustaining town'.

Relevant Policies include the following:

***CSD 03** Facilitate the delivery of sustainable, compact, sequential growth and regeneration of town and village centres by consolidating the build footprint through a focus on regeneration and development.*

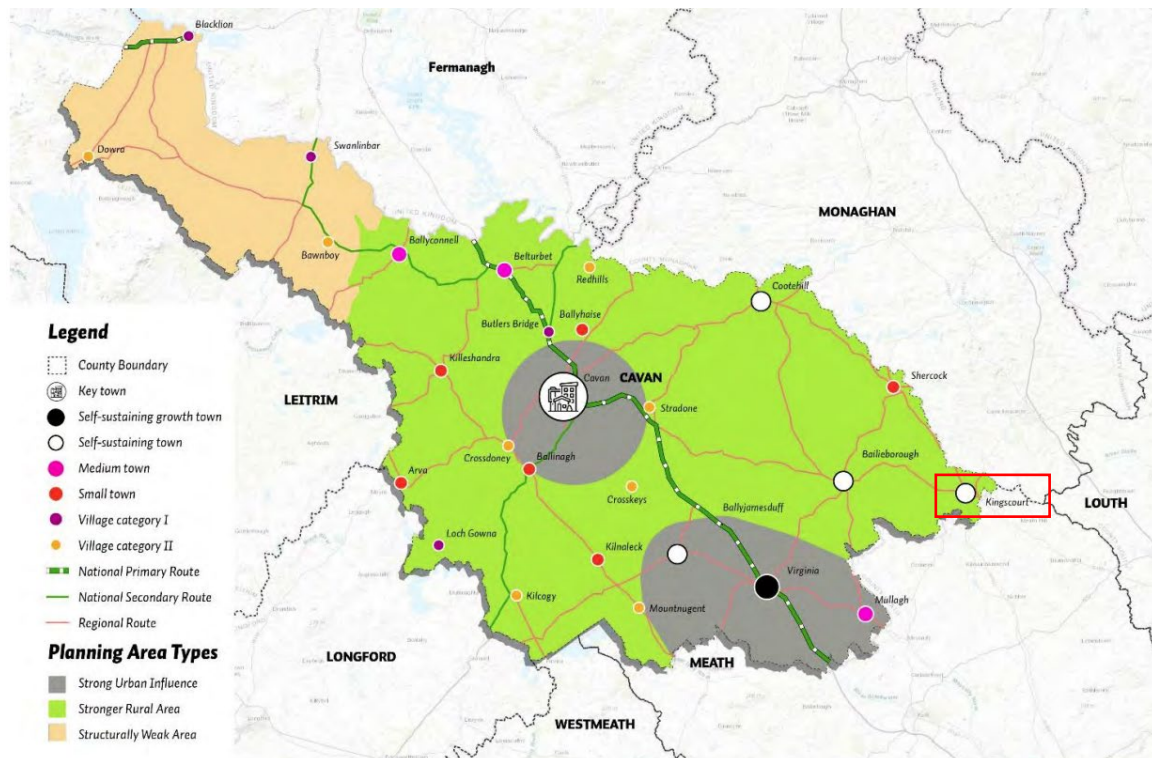
***CSD 06** Promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport.*

***CSD 08** Support the regeneration of underused town centre and brownfield / infill lands along with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands to facilitate population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth targets of 30% of all new housing to be built within the existing urban footprint of targeted settlements in the county.*

***CSD 09** Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres and targeted settlements in the county.*

The proposed development meets the above objectives with a focus on regeneration and town centre development being a priority (CSD 03); promotes walking and cycling (CSD 06); provides for the regeneration of underused town centre and infill lands (CSD 08); and reduces vacancy with the reuse proposed of both the former bank buildings on Market Square and Main Street (CSD 09). The proposed development will in time make the town centre a desirable place to live.

Figure 8: Core Strategy Map



Settlement Hierarchy

Kingscourt is identified as a ‘Self-Sustaining town’. The objective for ‘Self-Sustaining town’ is as follows:

“Self-Sustaining Towns with high levels of population growth but which require targeted ‘catch up’ investment to become more self-sustaining.”

Such investment as indicated above has been achieved. Cavan County Council secured €787,500 under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) for the Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration project in 2020.

The need for investment schemes and jobs is developed in Objective SST 01 below:

SST 01 *Promote commensurate population and employment growth in the designated Self-Sustaining towns, providing for natural increases and to become more economically self-sustaining, in line with the quality and capacity of public transport, services and infrastructure available.*

The Development Plan fully supports the provision of fully functioning, healthy and vibrant town centres, that are enjoyable places for living, working in and visiting, in line with the Government’s “Town Centre First” policy approach which supports the proposed development.

The Plan seeks to support the regeneration of underused town centres throughout the county and encourages their appropriate redevelopment to ensure better permeability with a strong focus on pedestrian movement and access. It is acknowledged that town centres are appropriate for a mix of developments alongside appropriately designed and sized pocket

parks, public realm spaces, with an increased focus on walking and cycling. A strong emphasis is also placed on high quality urban design within the County's town centres.

These objectives very much support the proposed development. The proposed development is further supported by Objective TCFO 1 which states:

TCFO 1 Reconsider the approach to town centres in light of their changing functions and encourage and support the incorporation of appropriate public realm spaces and the need to strengthen pedestrianisation within town centres, thus enhancing their vitality.

Climate Change

Climate change is increasingly becoming a key planning consideration when determining planning applications. The proposed development, which is regeneration based, is well aligned with Objective CSCC 01:

CSCC 01 Facilitate the delivery of sustainable, compact, sequential growth and regeneration of town and village centres by consolidating the build footprint through a focus on regeneration and development.

Kingscourt

Section 2.7 of the Plan sets out policies and objectives for Kingscourt.

Strategy and Vision

Kingscourt remains as a defined 'Self-Sustaining Town' in the County Settlement Hierarchy of the Plan. It has experienced high levels of population growth and requires targeted levels of investment to become more self-sustaining.

Cavan County Council has secured funding from RRDF for this project and this planning application is consistent with the Plan objectives KG 01, KG 02 and KG 03 set out below:

KG 01 Promote the development of Kingscourt as a driver of economic growth in the south east of the county and fulfil its role as a designated Self-Sustaining Town.

KG 02 Support the expansion of a range of services and facilities available to residents and the wider rural hinterland.

KG 03 Engage with the community and relevant stakeholders to promote and support the regeneration of Kingscourt through identification of significant regeneration projects along with associated funding streams including Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

The proposed development applies principles of universal design and is consistent with KG 05:

KG 05 Encourage and foster the creation of attractive, mixed use, sustainable communities that include a suitable mix of housing types and tenures with supporting facilities, amenities and services, that meet the needs of the entire community and accord with the principles of universal design and Age Friendly standards.

Physical Infrastructure

The proposed public realm improvements of Main Street and Market Square are pedestrian and cyclists focused, according with KI 02:

KI 02 *Support improvements in the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in the town that will improve connectivity and permeability and promote more sustainable modes of transport.*

Tourism

The enhancement of town centre as envisioned will make the town centre a more attractive location for tourists consistent with Objectives KT 02 and KT 08.

KT 02 *Encourage sustainable and suitable tourism related development.*

KT 08 *Promote the tourism potential of Kingscourt by supporting tourist related development and enhancement of existing amenities.*

Commercial and Retail Development

KCR 03 *Reinforce the centre of Kingscourt as the property location for new commercial and retail development, with emphasis on quality of design, positive contribution to the existing streetscape and protection of existing heritage landscapes.*

KCR 04 *Support the provision of mixed-use developments in the town centre which create opportunities to live, work, shop etc. within the town and reduce the car-based travel.*

KCR 05 *Encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.*

KCR C07 *Support proposals for traffic management of the Main Street to encourage and prioritise pedestrian usage.*

The proposed commercial activity is a flexible modern post-covid format as proposed and is consistent with KCR 02 and KCR 03 of the Plan. The environmental and streetscape enhancements proposed will encourage and stimulate development consistent with KCR 04. The reuse of the currently redundant 2 no. protected structures within the application site area is encouraged by KCR 05. The proposed reconfiguration of Main Street and greening of market square are supported by KCR 07.

Regeneration and Placemaking

The proposed development provides for a first stage redevelopment and enhancement for the town centre which is part of a planned and coordinated approach to the development of backlands in Kingscourt. It is recognised in the Plan that there is an opportunity at this central or central site to develop sustainable communities with appropriate mixed use developments, along with the creation of access for vehicular as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

RRDF funding has been approved for the Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration Scheme. This scheme proposes a redesign of the Market Square and Main Street (between Market

Square and Kells Rd. roundabout) to reduce car parking and increase civic space. It will also identify a suitable building for socio economic use and off-street car parking.

This proposal, if approved, will deliver the project for which RRDF funding has been achieved. The following Kingscourt specific objectives are relevant:

KRP 01 Encourage the appropriate reuse and regeneration of derelict and underused premises and sites in Kingscourt town.

KRP 02 Promote the regeneration of backland of Kingscourt in accordance with and agreed Masterplan as identified in the Kingscourt Land Use Zoning Map.

KRP 03 Continue to identify sites in poor state of repair or neglect under the Derelicts Sites Act and support their regeneration.

The proposed reuse and refurbishment of former bank buildings as a new library and 'Remote Working hub' is consistent with KRP 01, KRP 02 and KRP 03.

KRP 04 Support the implementation of the Kingscourt Revitalisation Plan 2018.

KRP 05 Ensure that the town centre is accessible to all members of the community, including people with mobility issues, the elderly and people with young children.

The proposed development takes design recommendations from the Kingscourt Revitalisation Plan 2018 and is also consistent with KRP 04 and ensures accessibility to all as per KRP 05.

KRP 06 Actively engage with the community, developers and other agencies to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the Kingscourt town.

KRP 07 Support the RRDF funded Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration Scheme.

The proposed development is supported by both KRP 06 and KRP 07.

Heritage

The Kingscourt Town centre is identified as an 'Architectural Conservation Area' (ACA). The extent of the ACA is shown in Figure 9 below. Kingscourt has a distinctive wide streetscape running on a north-south axis. Some notable buildings include Kingscourt Parochial Hall, the Market House, Masonic Hall, the Roman Catholic Church, Gartlan's Pub and St. Ernan's Church of Ireland.

The following objectives for Kingscourt developed in the Plan are relevant:

KH 06 Carry out and require planting of native trees, hedgerows and vegetation on all new developments. All planting should be pollinator friendly and in accordance with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and Pollinator Guidelines for Communities as contained in Appendix 23.

Figure 9: Kingscourt ACA



The proposed landscaping scheme includes native trees and vegetation with the development. See Landscape Masterplan and Design Statement for details.

KH 08 Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of Kingscourt including all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, Main Street ACA, Records of Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.

KH 09 Positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change of use of protected structures to accommodate for modern use, subject to suitably qualified conservation architects and other relevant experts, suitable design, materials and consultation methods. This should demonstrate that the structure, character, appearance and setting will not be adversely affected.

KH 10 Support the re-introduction of traditional features on protected structures of the Main Street ACA particularly where there is evidence these features previously existed.

KH 11 Support schemes for the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the traditional town core of Kingscourt.

KH 12 Ensure heritage assets which are the focus for heritage development in Kingscourt are appropriately managed and their special interest is conserved from potential adverse effects from visitors or development in general and that best practice in relation to the environmental management of tourism enterprises is adhered to.

The above policies and objectives are taken from the Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) and are complied with in this instance subject to necessary mitigation measures set out in the accompanying Architectural Design Statement and Architectural Impact Assessment undertaken by ACP.

Protected Structures

A number of protected Structures are located within the town core and within the site. These are identified in Table 1 and Figure 7 of this statement. There are policies in support of re-use and refurbishment of Protected Structures, and those relevant policies include:

RPS1 *Protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of County Cavan and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations.*

RPS3 *Positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change use of Protected Structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to suitably qualified Conservation Architects and / or other relevant experts, suitable design materials and construction methods.*

RPS4 *Quality contemporary and innovative designs will be supported. These designs should not detract from the historic fabric of a Protected Structure.*

RPS5 *Ensure all development works on or at the sites of Protected Structures, including site works necessary are carried out using best heritage practice for the protection and preservation of those aspects or features of the structures /site that render it worthy of protection. The form and structural integrity of Protected Structures should be retained as part of any redevelopment proposal and the relationship between the Protected Structure and any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, or designed views and vistas from to the structure should be considered.*

RPS6 *Support the re-introduction of traditional features on Protected Structures where there is evidence that such features previously existed.*

RPS7 *Applications for works to Protected Structures will be assessed in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011. Works should ensure that the special character and integrity of the Protected Structure is preserved.*

RPS8 *Resist the demolition and inappropriate alteration of Protected Structures.*

RPS9 *Support the rehabilitation, renovation and re-use of existing Protected Structures for their own economic benefit and that area in which they are located.*

RPS11 *Carry out an audit of Protected Structures within the council's ownership and devise a management / maintenance plan for these structures.*

RPS12 *Identify Protected Structures in council ownership that are under threat directly or indirectly through climate change.*

RPS13 *Seek to integrate climate adaptation measures into future conservation and management plans for Protected Structures.*

RPS14 *Support owners / occupiers of Protected Structures seeking to upgrade energy efficiency and climate resilience measures. Works to upgrade the environmental performance and the implementation of measures to address the impacts of climate change will be encouraged to ensure the sustainability of Protected Structures and*

buildings sited within an ACA. Such works should not adversely impact the special character of a structure.

RPS15 *Support schemes which encourage the conservation of Protected Structures e.g. Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Structures Fund, Historic Towns Initiative.*

The proposed development is in its entirety including the refurbishment and reuse of the protected former Bank of Ireland building on Main Street is consistent with these objectives and a justification for the proposed interventions into the historic built environment in this location is set out in the accompanying Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment supporting the application.

Architectural Conservation Areas

Kingscourt Town Centre is identified as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in the recently adopted County Plan. The ACA covers the Main Street buildings and associated lands. A majority of the site falls within the ACA. Relevant Policies include:

ACA1 *Ensure that all development proposals within the boundaries of the ACA will enhance rather than detract from the historic and architectural character and settings of the buildings within the ACA. Proposals within ACAs should be in accordance with Statement of Characters prepared for ACAs.*

ACA2 *Avoid the removal of structures and distinctive elements (such as boundary treatments, street furniture, paving and landscaping) that positively contribute to the character of Architectural Conservation Areas.*

ACA3 *Ensure that Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), including any associated public realm area, are protected and ensure that any new development or alteration of a building within or adjoining an ACA positively enhances the character of the area and is appropriate in terms of plot size, proposed design, including: scale, mass, height, proportions, density, layout, materials, plot ratio and building lines. Planning permission will not normally be approved for developments that are not consistent with and complementary to the character of the ACA.*

ACA4 *Support and promote best practice conservation in works to Protected Structures and buildings within ACAs and to encourage the use of tradespeople, professionals trained in the use of traditional skills, materials, and building techniques.*

ACA5 *Protect and enhance the special character of the public domain of an ACA. Features of the public domain including traffic and parking infrastructure, signage, public utilities, street furniture, and street lighting must be appropriately designed to enhance and preserve the character of the ACA.*

ACA6 *Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of derelict and vacant sites within an ACA.*

The entire proposal addresses where possible the policy requirements of the ACA.

Zoning

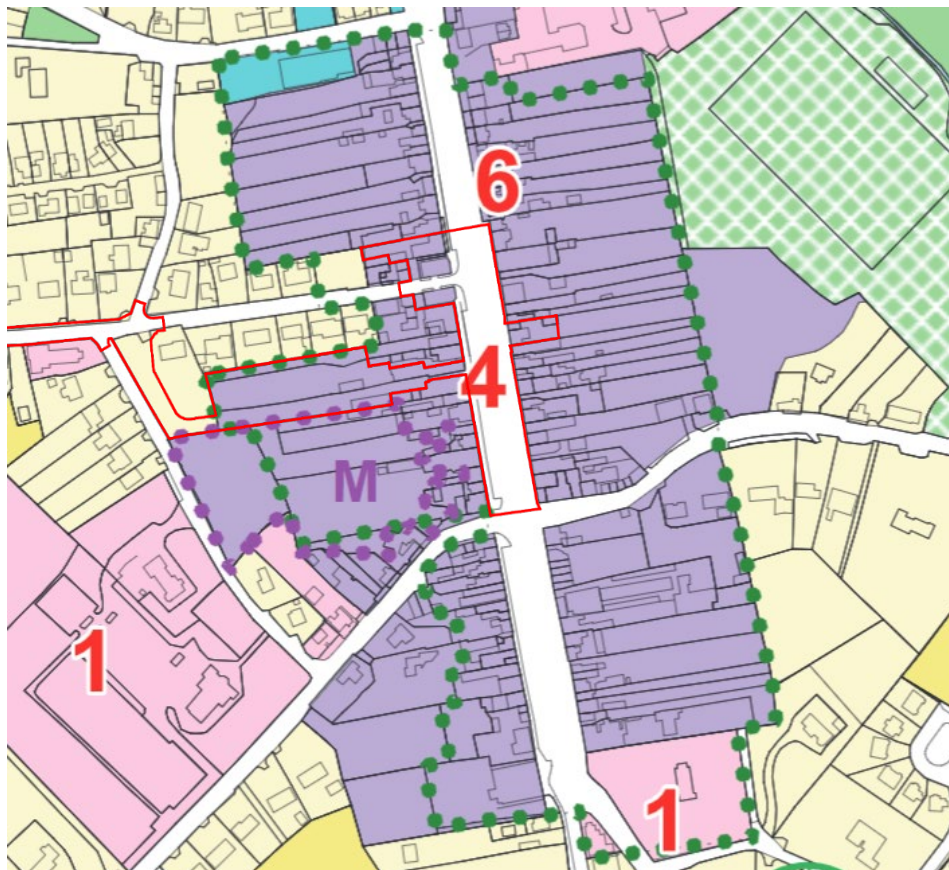
The site is predominantly zoned as Town Core to include the former banks buildings on Main Street and off-street car parking area, and is also partly zoned as Existing Residential. The respective zoning objectives are as follows:

Town Core: *Protect and enhance the special physical and social character of the town and village core while providing and/or improving town/village centre facilities.*

Existing Residential: *Protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.*

Figure 16 below is an excerpt of the zoning map of the application site as in the County Plan. The proposed provision of an access off Main Street, back land car park, greening of Market Square and reuse of the former bank buildings are consistent with the Town Core Zoning and its objective of improving town centre facilities and protecting and enhancing the physical and social characteristics of the town core. The proposed roads access off Rocks Road and junction improvements specifically are consistent with maintaining the amenity of residents and is aligned with the zoning objective for the Existing Residential land use zoning of the adopted Plan.

Figure 10: Land use Zoning Map (extract from the County Plan)



LEGEND							
Development Boundary	Amenity & Open Space	Public & Community	Existing Residential	Proposed Low Density Residential	National Monument	Masterplan Area	
Specific Objectives (Refer to Text)	Sport & Recreation	Town Core	Proposed Residential	General Enterprise & Employment	ACA Boundary	Rivers & Lakes	

In the adopted County Plan, the majority of town core and Main Street are contained within a designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as indicated above.

An area rear of the Main Street is subject to preparation of a Masterplan advocated in the Plan as set out below. Local Objectives 4 and 6, shown above on the zoning extract, are relevant and apply to the proposed development

Map-based Specific Objective include:

The preparation of a Masterplan for back lands is identified within the adopted County Plan as follows:

Masterplan 1

Prepare a Masterplan, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, for backlands development subject to the following:

- a. *The construction of a new access road from the Kells Road to the Rocks Road to serve the Masterplan area.*
- b. *Development shall support, contribute to and consolidate the town core function while complying with the highest urban design standards.*
- c. *Development shall provide safe and accessible pedestrian linkages between the development and the existing town core, amenity areas and community facilities.*
- d. *The location of the proposed access points will be determined at planning application stage. Access roads shall be improved in order to accommodate additional traffic.*
- e. *Necessary social and physical infrastructure is to be provided, as appropriate.*

The above masterplan requirements are further sought through the following in the adopted County Plan:

Objective 4: *Support the delivery of an off-street car park in close proximity to the town centre in order to enhance public realm and alleviate vehicular dominance in Kingscourt town core.*

Objective 6: *Support the delivery of plans and proposals in the Kingscourt Revitalisation Plan 2018.*

The proposed development is consistent with the above objectives the Plan.

Car Parking

Section 7.6 of the County Development Plan identifies car parking requirements for proposed development. Relevant car parking based objectives are listed below:

CP 03 *Allow for the reduction in car parking standards in suitable town centre locations in order to encourage a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking.*

CP 04 *Manage the provision of on-street parking by encouraging short term business/ shopping activity, whilst discouraging long stay on street commuter parking and parking by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).*

CP 05 *Facilitate and support purpose built off-street car parks including multi storey carpark, in preference to on street car parking*

CP 06 *Ensure that applications for surface car parking are accompanied by landscaping proposals.*

The proposed design is consistent with the above policy objectives especially CP 03 with encouragement given in this case to pedestrian and cycle access. Car parking on Main Street is reduced and reorganised and a new off-street car parking is proposed. Objective CP 05 is met with consolidation and better management of on street car parking and the proposed car park is entirely consistent with Objective CP 05. There is a significant amount of landscaping and environmental enhancement proposed consistent with CP 06. Highly accessible disabled spaces are provided in the Market Square element of the proposed development.

CP 08 *Ensure all applications for car parking are accompanied with EV Charging points.*

CP 09 *Require proposed car parks to include the provision of necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future Electric Vehicle charging points, at a rate of 10% of total space numbers.*

The proposal will provide EV spaces to meet expected demand and additional EV spaces will be provided demand requires this.

CP 10 *Ensure that car parking or EV charging infrastructure does not detract from the comfort and safety of pedestrians and cyclists.*

EV charging points are limited to ensure safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

CP12 *Encourage the use of materials and engineering solutions that optimise natural surface water drainage as part of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) associated with large scale car parks.*

The proposed development includes integrated tree pits and other SUDs feature in support of objective CP12.

Bike Parking Facilities

Section 7.7 of the Plan covers Bike Parking. Bike parking and segregated bicycle lane are proposed in line with Policy BPD 01:

BPD 01 *Ensure the provision of appropriate Bicycle parking facilities as per Table 7.4 below as part of any new applications in urban areas to assist with supporting modal shift away from private cars to more sustainable modes of transport i.e. cycling, walking, public transport.*

Section 7.14 Roads and Infrastructure Climate Context and Development Objectives

A number of Climate objectives are relevant to the proposed development.

There will be 2 no. fast charging EV spaces outside of the scheme area on the southern end of Main Street between the Nobber Road roundabout and the Kells/Carrickmacross Road roundabout. It is expected that these will be installed in 2023. Additional EV charging points will be accommodated at a later date should there be sufficient demand.

RIC 01 *Support the use of Electric Vehicles (EV) at all Cavan County Council public service locations, and the use of EV vehicles.*

The proposal provides EV charging points as indicated above consistent with RIC 01. The proposal includes adequate bike parking facilities and proposed cycle route within the scheme, consistent with RIC 06 and RIC 07:

RIC 06 Require all developments to provide bicycle parking in accordance with Table 7.4. Bicycle parking shall be well lit, sheltered, with cycle racks fixed to a permanent structure.

RIC 07 Prepare a feasibility study (to include route options) for a cycle route on approach and through each town within its functional area.

The proposed Market Square uses a unique and environmentally enhanced design solution to reduce vehicular speeds and incorporates shared surfaces, consistent with RIC 13:

RIC 13 Support the introduction of speed reduction zones, incorporating shared surfaces and pedestrian only streets in towns throughout the County.

The proposed development follows the Green Street concept and incorporates Tree Pits and SuDS solution consistent with RIC 19 and RIC 21:

RIC 19 Seek to implement the principals of the 'Green Street' concept for all future, urban regeneration of streets, prioritising the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

RIC 21 Require the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) for all future developments with an identified need.

Urban Design

Section 13.3.12 covers Urban Design principles. The proposed development include public realm enhancement is consistent with UD 05:

UD 05 Enhance the visual amenity of existing town and village centres, minimising unnecessary clutters, and provide guidance on public realm design including wirescapes, shopfront design, street furniture and signage.

5.3.2 LOCAL GUIDANCE

Kingscourt Town Improvement Study (1996) prepared by Shaffery Associates

This Town Improvement study prepared by Shaffery Associates was published in June 1996. This report was commissioned by Kingscourt Community Council. It is a non-statutory document and is quite dated at this stage but is of use in assessing the merits of this application.

The purpose of the above Study was to provide a design framework which guides future developments and improvements. The study potentially looked at 14 areas for improvement. The relevant areas are: Main Street (1), Market Square (2) and Back Areas (9) – Main Street, West. These areas constitute this application site. In the broader context, the Dun a 'Ri Forest Park and its connections to the town are recognised as important.

The following are recommendations for the relevant areas affecting this application:

1. Main Street

“In recent years major “improvements” have been carried out along the Main Street. This however has changed the essential character of the town. What was previously a potentially great civic space, although undulating and somewhat disorganised, has been turned into a fast dual carriageway road, with arterial road lighting, all more appropriate to the outskirts of a large city than the centre of a small country town. There is now a major design challenge to reshape, if possible, the overall appearance of the Main Street.”

The street today functions essentially as a large car park and service area with the cars generally parked end on to the pavement. Such conditions erode its potential spatial qualities and do not encourage a passing visitor to stop and linger. This represents one of the major challenges to the future improvement of Kingscourt - how to present the Main Street in a more environmentally acceptable but economically efficient manner?

The challenge identified in this document by Shafferys for the main street of the town is embraced by this proposal.

2. Market Square

The proposed development has been informed by the following:

The present arrangement of flower beds, railings, footpaths, roads, etc., all tend to be rather fussy and take away from the civic potential of the space. The improvement of the Market Square should be one of the priority elements in the overall plan.

It is recommended that the levels be realigned. flower beds railing removed; long term parking eliminated, and the square paved and planted; the old archway restored between the two buildings. Existing access and rights of way would be retained. This project, if Implemented generally along the lines indicated, would provide a new focus for Kingscourt and act as a catalyst for many other developments throughout the town. It is likely to provide an existing setting for local social events, band recitals, outdoor activities, and also to be a source of attraction tor visitors and a source of pride for the residents.

This proposal involves significant upgrade of the Market Square and its use for activities other than parking is encouraged in this proposal. The proposal will provide a new focus for the town and will surely act as a catalyst for other developments in close proximity.

9. Back Areas - Main Street West

This back land area comprises that for which new access to the Main Street and the car park are now proposed is consistent with the respect of this assessment by Shaffery.

This is a large tract of land immediately behind the main shopping area, with an access from Hall Street. At present the land is generally underused. The area could be developed with pedestrian access to the Main Street via the laneways and yards along which there are old buildings. There is much potential here for off-street parking, shops, craft units, housing, apartments, etc., which would greatly develop the social and economic character of Kingscourt’s historic centre. Future developments should, wherever possible, retain any features of interest, e.g. the old orchard, mature trees,

old buildings, and on the upper slopes capitalise on the fine views eastwards over the town. Such a development will of course require the cooperation of the occupiers and property owners, together with the backing of the County Council and other agencies. However, the potential of these and other back areas in the town should be more widely appreciated.

Significant off-street parking is now proposed consistent with Shaffreys assessment of the potential to redistribute parking from the main street through the town. There is a significant focus to the back land area and improving access between that area and Main Street consistent with Shaffrey's advice and suggestions set out in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Indicative Masterplan for back areas

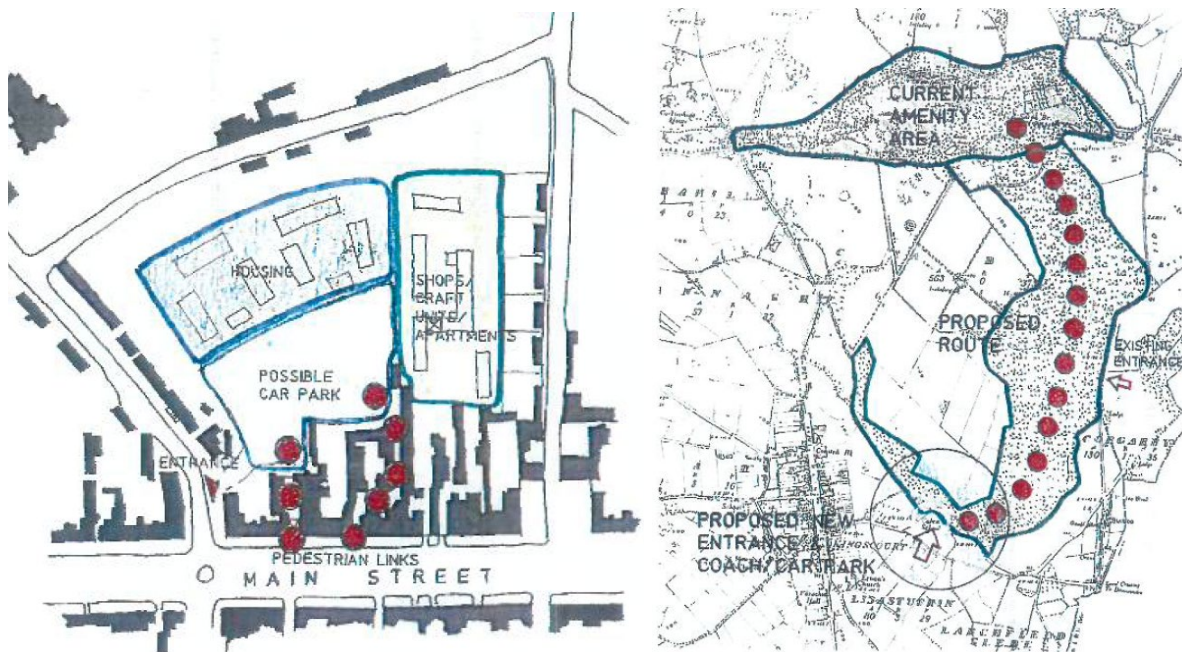


Figure 12: Proposed route connection to Dun a’Ri Forest Park from Kingscourt

Further research and identification of the potential of the town centre for future development is set out in the Kingscourt LAP (2008 and updated in 2010), which although outdated, indicates key concepts, opportunities and constraints for the sustainable development of this area.

Master Plan in respect of M5 Lands as identified by the Kingscourt LAP (2008) & Surroundings Development Area, November 2010

This Masterplan was intended to act as a framework to guide the future development of the back lands specifically.

The land area covered by this Master Plan extends to 1.8 hectares and is more extensive than that identified under objective M5 in the Kingscourt LAP. The wider area covered by the Master Plan area shown in Figure 13 below enables more comprehensive analysis of the area bounded by Main Street, Rocks Road, Hall Street and Chapel Lane. This approach ensures a more robust study area and a more comprehensive and integrated Master Plan.

Figure 13: Concept Master Plan for backlands



A key aspect of the Master Plan relevant to the proposed development is the 'Access and Movement' covered under Section 5.1 of the Masterplan document with which the current proposals are consistent.

The Master Plan identified four access points to the backlands. One of the proposed access points was from Rocks Road to the back lands, exactly where the proposed access to off-street car parking area is proposed in this instance.

The proposed has considered the recommendation of Master Plan for back lands while preparing the proposed development, although this does not directly apply for the proposed development.

County Cavan Town and Village Revitalisation Plan 2018

Kingscourt Revitalisation Plan 2018, was prepared by Tyréns and Gaffney and Cullivan Architects for County Cavan.

This Revitalisation plan sought to support and develop the physical and social fabric of the County's towns. The objective was to enhance the Towns and Villages as more attractive places to live and to work.

The High Priority Proposals / Recommendation with this Revitalisation Plan are as follows:

Redesign of Main Street

The linear form of Main Street currently lends itself to a car dominated streetscape that is prioritised by vehicles, parking and through traffic. There should be a reduction in the amount of on-street parking, associated road markings, and widening of pavements to allow for a more animated, safe and pedestrian friendly Main Street.

Similarly, the streetscape is currently severed by a wide landscaped median. There are no formal or signalised crossing points, and the median is not wide enough to be an inviting space. This median could be removed, which could subsequently give for a

more compact and central road, allowing for wider pavements and activity along the streetscape.

This objective is very largely achieved with the proposed development. The proposal results in the developing of a more accessible and safe Main Street for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

Explore Car Park Locations

As indicated in the proposals map multiple potential locations for car parks in close proximity to the Main Street have been identified. This should be explored in order to reduce on-street parking and make for a more safe and friendly town centre for users and visitors. Car parks should be integrated with well designed footpaths, lighting and signage.

Street Parking

Within the centre of Kingscourt, vehicles can often be found to be over hanging the pavements, which can obscure shopfronts and disrupt the traffic flow. Areas to consider for a potential reduction or realignment to parallel parking-only are illustrated on the proposals map. The total number of parking spots could still be retained through both re-design and identifying sites for car parks behind the Main Street.

These aims are directly addressed with the proposed access from Main Street to the now proposed off-street car park and the proposed reduction of car parking on Main Street and Market Square. On street car parking is clearly reduced in the proposed scheme and te proposed replacement car parking is indeed placed to the rear of the Main Street.

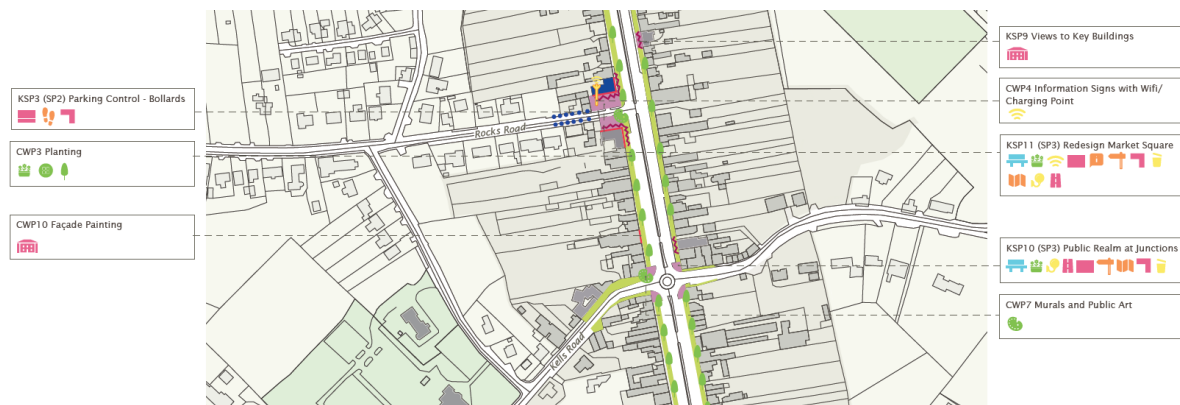
Market Place

The Market Square is a valuable town centre public space that could host civic, social and retail activities, but is currently predominantly used for parking.

Redesign Market Square to create a flexible landscaped civic space on a temporary or permanent basis. Existing parking should be reduced or relocated to enable a more active and pedestrian friendly space. Charging and wifi points should be integrated with urban furniture.

The concerns raised regrading the existing Market Square are directly, comprehensively and positively addressed in the subject application. The redesign and public realm enhancements are aimed to be flexible landscape civic space that could host civic, social and retail activities in this location.

Figure 14: Extract of Revitalisation Plan



High Priority Recommendation made under the Revitalisation Plan shown in Figure 14 above that are relevant to and are largely met by the proposed development are:

Main Street

- *Redesign of the Main Street*
- *Removal of parking from Main Street*
- *Public realm improvements – materials and facilities*
- *Façade treatments and improvements*
- *Landscaped Areas and pocket parks*
- *Removal of parking in front of prominent buildings*

Market Square

- *Redesign Market Square to give the civic space back to the public*
- *Restore the old archway, which was a landmark in the area*
- *Remove all car parking and redesign the junction, but retain existing right of way*
- *To provide an existing setting for local social events, band recitals, outdoor activities, and also to be a source of attraction for visitors and a source of pride for the residents.*

Backlands

- *Potential to provide mixed-use development*
- *Potential for new square and public space within the backlands*
- *Creation of permeable and fine urban grain urban blocks*
- *Potential to relocate most or all parking to backlands overground or underground.*

Relevant recommendations identified above have been carefully considered while developing the proposed design. The Main Street is redesigned to provide more public space; Market Square is free of parking and redesigned to include a more useable civic space; new access is proposed from Main Street to back land areas; and off-street car parking is proposed in the back lands as envisaged above.

The proposed access could also facilitate access to back lands for future development in the longer term beyond the scope of this application.

Summary of Local Guidance

The Kingscourt Town Improvement Study (1996), Masterplan for M5 lands (2008) and Revitalisation Plan (2018) have all identified the need to improve of the Main Street, Market Square and potential of developing the back lands (including Shekleton’s site) for mixed-use and off-street car parking areas. These studies have been taken into account by the design team while preparing the design and deliverables for this scheme.

It is considered that the best ideas of these somewhat historic documents have been incorporated into the proposed scheme whilst at the same time retaining and enhancing importance of Main Street and addressing dereliction on Market Square and Main Street consistent with the more recent national guidance including ‘Town Centre First’ policy.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Planning Assessment

This Section is presented under the following headings:

- Compliance with national planning policy and guidance;
- Compliance with regional planning advice;
- Compliance with County Development Plan Policy;
- Other planning merits.

This planning assessment concludes the following:

Compliance with national planning policy and guidance

Section 5.1 above sets out key national planning policy and advice.

The proposal is consistent with the NPF which sets out development goals which encourage sustainable development of and proper planning in the State's towns. These goals seek to improve living standards, quality of life and environmental sustainability whilst seeking to reconcile national advice and international commitments on sustainability, energy efficiency and consumption, and climate change. It is essential that towns, and town centres in particular, are attractive places for people to live, work in and visit all of which will be achieved in this instance. National Planning Outcome NPO4 seeks to ensure that towns like Kingscourt are attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places. This will be achieved with the proposed development proceeding. Regeneration, rejuvenation and revitalisation as proposed in this application is crucial to achieving these highly desirable aims. NPO16 is achieved in this instance where the proposed development seeks to strengthen the core of the town and seeks to address the long term vacancy of two key buildings in this location. The proposal is particularly supported by NPO18a which seeks to stimulate regeneration and renewal through improvements to the public realm, provision of amenities and the provision of services. This is in essence the proposed development. The proposal is supported by NPO27 which seeks the provision of sustainable urban drainage systems. (SUDS).

The proposal is also supported by the NPF and in particular investment for cultural services and infrastructure.

The proposed development is also supported by relatively recent Government advice encouraging investment in town and village centres in the form of 'Our Rural Future 2021-2025).

The proposed development is also supported by more recent national advice in the form of 'Town Centre First' which seeks to make town centres viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live in, work in, and visit and seeks to ensure that such locations function as service, social, cultural and recreational hubs for their communities. We believe that the proposal 'fits the bill' in each instance. This is a town centre first regeneration project also consistent with this national strategy.

The proposed development and particularly those elements relating to parking and roads are consistent with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019).' Para 5.1.5 above refers.

Compliance with regional planning advice

The relevant regional planning advice and guidance for the Northern and Western Region is complied with in this instance. There are several regional planning objectives that support the proposed development including: RPO3.4 which supports the renewal of small towns such as Kingscourt; RPO3.9 which encourages the identification of development opportunities for regeneration that is mindful of environmental impact; RPO3.10 which seeks the provision of sustainable drainage solutions; RPO3.13 which supports service provision and employment in small towns. Regional guidance also supports the protection and sustainable use of all natural resources and in this case the proposed development involving the greening of the town could be linked to sensitive and sustainable use of Dun a' Ri Forest Park with potential for environmentally sustainable cycling and walking links between the two locations (i.e. the town centre and the forest park) with a green corridor culminating in access to a greener Main Street.

Compliance with adopted County Development Plan Policy

The 2014 to 2020 County Plan and the adopted 2022-2028 County Development have both informed this planning scheme with the key policies and objectives relating to Kingscourt very closely aligned. The proposed scheme was at a formative stage before the current County Plan was adopted in the summer of 2022.

The 2014-2020 County Plan identifies the importance of strong, vital and vibrant town centres within its Core Strategy and the proposed development is consistent with that key objective or principle. Central to that Core Strategy is that of development being concentrated or focussed initially in the town centre as a preference and thereafter outwards. The focus is, and will remain, on the development and well-being of the town centre consistent with the town centre first approach before that guidance became formally recognised.

The proposed development in its entirety is consistent with the Core Strategy of the 2022-2028 Plan. The provision of key infrastructure in the form of roads and off street parking will enable the key or core objectives of the Plan to be met. The focus of the proposed development is very much on regeneration consistent with CSD 3; the promotion of cycling and walking in the town is greatly assisted in this instance consistent with CD 6; the regeneration of underused town centre lands is proposed as per CSD 8; reuse and refurbishment is sought consistent with CSD 9. Objective TCFO 1 in particular is met as it seeks provision of new or enhanced public realm and identifies the need to increase pedestrianisation as a means of enhancing town centre vitality. The proposal achieves increased pedestrianisation and we are confident it will also consequently increase the vitality of and sustainable development in the town centre. The proposal is consistent with CSCC 1 in regard to climate change limiting new build, making best use of existing structures and greening the town centre.

The proposal is also consistent with the Kingscourt General Development Objectives of the recently adopted County Plan. The work hub proposed is consistent with KG 1 (driving economic growth); KG 2 (expanding the range of services); KG 3 (support town regeneration); KG 4 (making best use of new land and identifying new development opportunities).

The proposal also assists the achievement of tourism objectives including facilitating tourism development (KT 2 and KT 8 in particular) The proposal is also supported by commercial objectives KCR 2 (support economic growth); enhancing the existing streetscape under KCR

3; provision of mixed-use developments under KCR 4; and support traffic management of the Main Street to encourage and prioritise pedestrian usage as per KCR 7 which is a key element of this Part 8 application.

The proposed reuse and refurbishment of former bank buildings as a new library and 'Remote Working hub' is consistent with KRP 1 (regeneration of derelict and underused premises); KRP 2 (promotion of back land sites in accordance with the agreed Masterplan in the Kingscourt Land Use Zoning Map); KRP 3 (support for regeneration of sites on the Vacant Sites Register); KRP 4 (support for the Kingscourt Revitalisation Plan 2018); KRP 5 (improve accessibility); KRP 6 (enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the town); and KRP 07 (which promotes and seeks planning permission for the RRDF funded Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration Scheme).

The overall proposal is consistent with policies and objectives in relation to heritage. The proposed demolition of the overhang and rear outbuildings within the curtilage of Shekletons to the rear are considered to be consistent with objectives RPS 1 (protect, conserve and manage the built heritage); RPS 3 (positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change use of Protected Structures to render them viable for modern use); RPS 4 (where quality contemporary and innovative designs should be proposed consistent with the historic fabric of a Protected Structure); RPS 5 (use of best heritage practice); RPS 7 Assessment of proposals for Protected Structures in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011; and RPS 9 supports renovation and reuse. We believe the proposal is consistent with RPS 8 which seeks to resist demolition and inappropriate alteration of protected structures. In this case the demolition proposed is only partial demolition of a Protected Structure and the removal of rear outbuildings. Mitigation measures are proposed and contained within the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment accompanying this application to ensure policy compliance with the above.

The proposal, taken in its entirety, is also consistent with the policies/objectives in relation to the ACA designation and ACA 1 to ACA 6 inclusive.

The proposed development is also consistent with the masterplan carried forward in the recently adopted County Plan and the consolidation and enhancement of the function of the village core. Pedestrian linkages are significantly increased and the proposed junction improvements are supported under item (d) of the map based objectives (for the masterplan) set out in the County Plan. The proposal significantly upgrades social and physical infrastructure which is a cornerstone of the masterplan envisaged for the town core area. The proposal is consistent with Objective 4 which seeks to enhance public realm and alleviate vehicular dominance in Kingscourt town core. The proposal is also consistent with Objective 6 for Kingscourt which supports realisation of the plans and proposals of Kingscourt Revitalization Plan 2018.

The proposal is also consistent with the parking requirements set out in Section 7.6 (Car Parking) of the Plan. The proposal is consistent with CP 9 which requires the necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future Electrical Vehicle charging points at a rate of 10% of total space numbers. It is considered that the ducting and wiring can be provided without providing the actual spaces at this moment but that the need for further EV spaces to the 10% threshold will be considered at a later date. It is considered that CP 09 is partially complied with currently and will be fully complied with at a later date when electric car use justifies an increase to 10% and if future demand requires further provision. The proposal is

also consistent with RIC 1 supporting the use of Electronic Vehicles (EVs). Bicycle use and bicycle parking are provided for consistent with RIC 6; the greening of the Main Street is consistent with RIC 19; and sustainable urban drainage is proposed consistent with RIC 21.

The proposal is also consistent with UD 2 whereby resource consumption is minimised, solar gain and use of laylight is maximised, sustainable urban drainage is promoted and an enhanced outside environment is promoted in the proposed development at Market Square. The proposal clearly visually enhances the town centre – reusing vacant building, reducing clutter including vehicle clutter and enhances public realm including improvements to street furniture and public amenities.

The proposal is consistent with the objectives set out in Section 7.14 (Roads and Infrastructure Climate Context and Development Objectives).

The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with the provisions of the recently adopted County Development Plan.

Other Planning Matters

A pre-demolition or re-construction inspection for bats, carried out by a qualified and experienced bat specialist, will be undertaken on site. If bats are found to be present on site during this inspection a Bats Derogation Licence will be required. This requirement would be covered by a planning condition attached to any Part 8 planning permission.

There may be asbestos on site and necessary steps shall be taken to ensure that this does not present a hazard or danger to human health and environment. It is suggested that the necessary detailed surveys and inspection shall be undertaken by appropriate experts prior to any demolition. The following planning condition shall be applied in any grant of planning permission: *“A construction and demolition waste management plan shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site. The Plan shall contain details of the various waste streams to be generated during site clearance and construction phases and volumes of export/importation of soil and stone material for the site.”*

Other Planning Merits

The proposal is consistent with the many and varied non-statutory plans for the town and the core area in particular. The proposal is consistent with the Kingscourt Town Improvement Study 1996; the masterplan contained within the Kingscourt LAP (2008) (minus the supermarket to the rear of the main street which has been overtaken as a preferred location for a car park in subsequent plans and strategies; and the Cavan Town and Village Revitalisation Plan 2018 which is referenced and for which compliance is required within the adopted 2022-2028 County Development Plan.

The proposal also represents significant confidence and investment in the town for which funding is available.

There are a number of planning merits and advantages associated with the proposed development. The proposal is consistent with the ‘town centre first’ approach to settlement planning. There is a net gain in car parking in the town, with off street car parking now predominating, giving the streets to pedestrians and cyclists for a safer and cleaner environment consistent with national and international climate and environmental obligations

without compromising access for those using private vehicles and public transport. The car parking is extremely well located in regard to community, retail and business activities in the town core.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING SUMMARY

The proposed development is assessed to fall outside of the requirement for mandatory EIA by virtue of the below threshold size of the site, its developed context and proposed activity typology. Having regard to the **characteristics of the proposed development** sub threshold EIA is not considered to be required, due to scale and type of development.

In relation to the **location of the proposed development**, the site is located within an area substantially developed and which would benefit greatly in planning, regeneration, streetscape and environmental and social terms from Part 8 permission being granted in this instance. The subject site is removed from any Natura 2000 sites with no pathways, direct or indirect to same. The AA Screening Report accompanying this Part 8 application found that there is no likelihood of any significant effects on any European sites arising from the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Characteristics of the potential impacts of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant in this location. Any impact associated with noise, vibration, air, and traffic are likely to be insignificant during the construction and operational phases.

Having regard to the criteria outlined in Section 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, it is concluded that the proposed development will have no likely significant effects, indirect or direct, on the receiving environment, either on its own or cumulatively with other development. It is our professional opinion that no adverse impacts occur such as to warrant an Environmental Impact Assessment for a sub threshold development.

In summary, the proposed development has been screened to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required, and it has been concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an EIA is not required.

8. APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING SUMMARY

This AA screening report has been prepared to assess whether the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, and in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on any European site(s).

The screening exercise was completed in compliance with the relevant European Commission guidance, national guidance and case law. The potential impacts of the proposed development have been considered in the context of the European sites potentially affected, their qualifying interests or special conservation interests, and their conservation objectives.

Through an assessment of the source-pathway-receptor model, which considered the zone of influence of effects from the proposed development and the potential in-combination effects with other plans or projects, the following findings were reported:

The proposed Development, either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects, does not have the potential to significantly affect any European site, in light of their conservation objectives. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is deemed not to be required.

9. CONCLUSION

The proposed development complies with the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The proposal is consistent with the many and varied non statutory plans for the town and the core area in particular. The proposal is consistent with the Kingscourt Town Improvement Study 1996; the masterplan contained within the Kingscourt LAP 2008 minus the supermarket to the rear of the main street which has been overtaken as a preferred location for a car park in subsequent plans and strategies); and the Cavan Town and Village Revitalisation Plan 2018.

The proposal also represents significant confidence in and investment in the town for which funding is available.

The proposed development will result in a major improvement of the public realm in the town core of Kingscourt. The off-street parking facilities will ease parking on Main Street and provide more space for public life. The new library and 'Remote Working Hub' as proposed would provide additional town core uses and generate substantial footfall in the core area. The greening of the town centre is also a significant benefit to the town.

There are a number of planning merits and advantages associated with the proposed development. The proposal is consistent with the 'town centre first' approach to settlement planning. There is a net gain in car parking in the town, with off street car parking now predominating, giving the streets to pedestrians and cyclists for a safer and cleaner environment consistent with national and international climate and environmental obligations without compromising access for those using private vehicles and public transport. The car parking is extremely well located in regard to community, retail and business activities in the town core. The proposed development will bring back to productive and sympathetic use 2 no. prominent and derelict buildings.

The proposed development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.