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Ratoath Local Area Plan

Submission to

Meath County Council

On behalf of

Mr George Williams

Draft Development Plan 2020 - 2026



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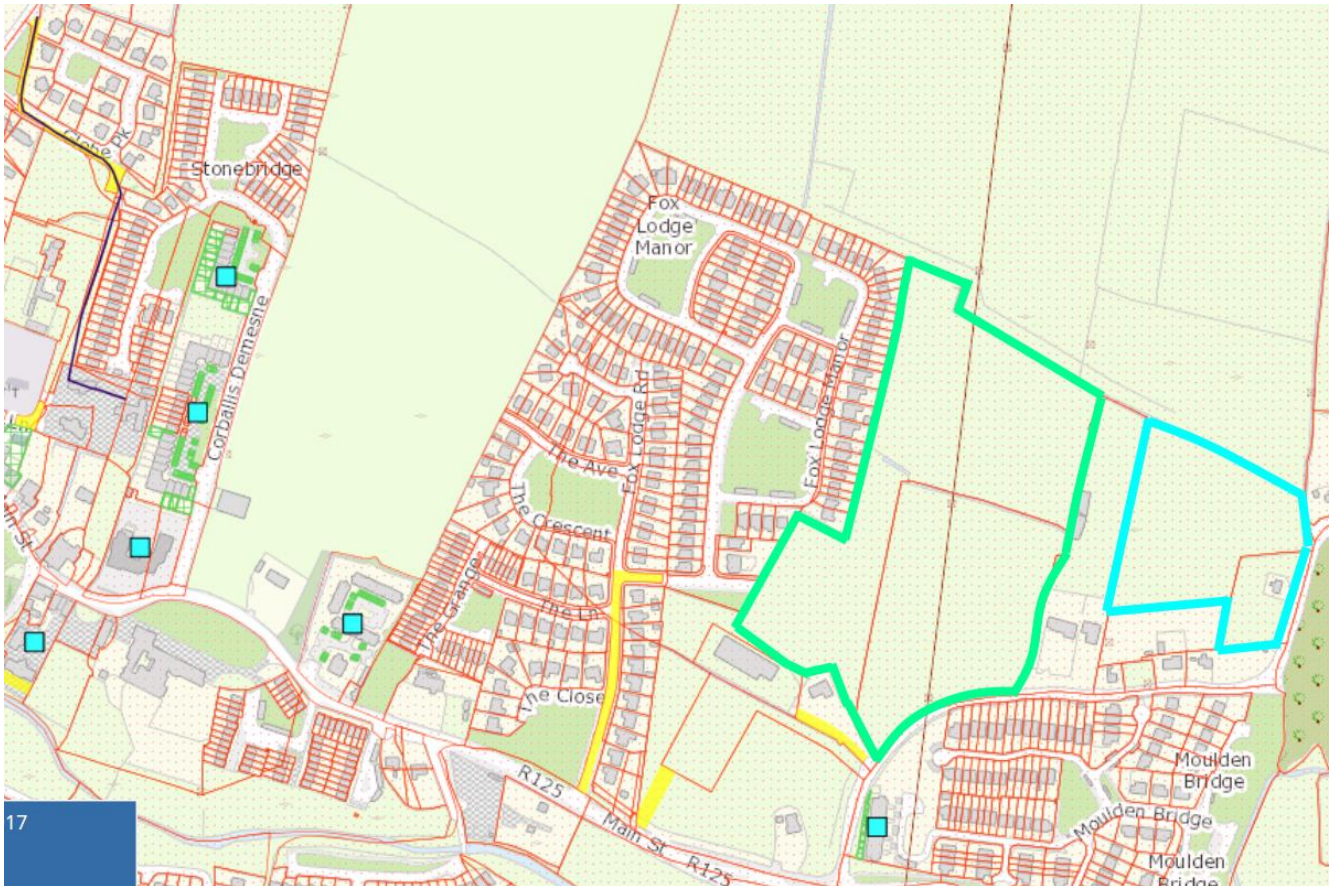
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mr. George Williams is the owner of approximately 7.2 hectares of land in Ratoath. Gaffney & Cullivan Architects Ltd has been instructed by Mr George Williams to make a submission in respect of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2020 – 2026. This submission addresses the development strategy for the northern section of Ratoath town.



1.1 Overview of Proposal

This submission intends to provide Meath County Council with a clear rationale for the designation of new zoning for the Northern part of the town. Ratoath is classified as a “Self-Sustaining Growth Town” as per the 2019 Regional Spatial Strategy (RSES) by the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) being on the edge of the Dublin Metropolitan Area with excellent transport links and capacity for continued growth. The zoning proposal meets the Asset Test for strategic location for new residential developments which was set out in the EMRA’s Regional Spatial Strategy.

This submission seeks to deliver a sustainable A2 residential development with “age friendly” step-down housing within walking distance of the town centre along with G1 zoning to support the provision of essential senior care home facilities. These lands provide a unique opportunity to deliver quality residential housing and to support local employment which is in line with Meath County Councils strategic aims for the town.





2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 Site Location

The lands which are included in this submission lie to the North-East of the town centre and between the R155 and the Ballybin Road to Ashbourne R135. The land is bounded to the south by Foxlodge Woods and Foxlodge Manor housing estates, to the east by Moulden Bridge housing estate and to the west Foxbrook housing estate.

The land owned by Mr George Williams is within 1km of Ratoath town centre, and a significant portion of the lands are located within the town core. The land lies between 2 established residential developments and is therefore a natural “infill site” within the existing settlement.



The existing use of the land is agricultural and the conditions with regard to the levels, drainage and access suggest that the site is ideal for a medium density residential development consisting of family type traditional housing units. The lands are not liable to flooding and there is adequate watercourse within the site to cater for surface water run-off. The boundary hedgerows are in good condition and consist of mainly Hawthorn and Ash, with many mature specimens.



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3.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT

Ratoath is the fourth largest town in County Meath and had a population in 2016 of 9,533 with the population continuing to grow at a consistent rate. Ratoath is strategically located between the M2 and the M3 and between the town of Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne. This zoning submission for the lands at to the North of Ratoath are consistent with strategic planning policy for the County and Region.



3.1 Eastern Midlands Regional Assembly

Meath is located in the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly and will be guided by the policy formulated by the assembly under the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The Eastern and Midlands Region includes Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow, Louth, Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Longford.

The Eastern Midlands Region expects population increases in both the region and in Meath. Meath population is expected to grow to 225,000 – 231,000 by 2031. With this expected population increase, there will be additional demand for housing in Ratoath.



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The principal purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the NPF and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region.

It is noted that the preferred spatial strategy outlined in the RSES is for the consolidation of Dublin and the Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Dundalk and Drogheda, supported by planned focused growth of a limited number of self – sustaining settlements that have the assets and capacity to grow in a sustainable manner while minimising impact on the receiving environment.

Ratoath has the potential to strengthen its employment base and develop as an important centre of employment as a result of its strategic location, its proximity to Fingal, North Kildare, Dublin airport and port, its proximity to surrounding towns such as Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin and Dunboyne and the availability of a highly skilled workforce.

3.2 Metropolitan Area

Dunboyne is the only town in Meath which is part of the Dublin Metropolitan Area. There are strong economic advantages to being part of the Metropolitan Area, evidenced by the arrival of Facebook, Takeda and Avoca to the Dunboyne area. Ratoath benefits from the historic and unique links to the equine industry with Fairyhouse Race Course and Tattersalls Sales and International Eventing facilities on the outskirts of the town.

Meath County Council has strongly advocated the inclusion of Ashbourne and Ratoath into the Metropolitan area, outlining that improving the links between Ashbourne and Ratoath to Dublin would add to the attractiveness of these towns as a place for investors and therefore increase employment.

3.3 National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040:

The National Planning Framework Ireland 2040 defines the future planning and development of Ireland. The National Development Plan 2018 -2027 (NDP) outlines the Governments primary capital projects up to 2027.

The NPF seeks to prioritise urban areas as preferred areas to accommodate the country population and to drive employment opportunities in these areas. Policy object 5 states “*Develop cities and towns of sufficient size and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity*”. Development of such areas allows for critical mass which provides for the more efficient and effective roll out of services and infrastructure. To allow for this NPO 9 allows for *selected settlements to be identified for significant rates (greater than 30% above 2016 population levels) of population growth at regional and local planning stages.*

Section 3.4.9 of the Draft Development Plan states in relation to Ratoath:

The highest levels of growth have been in Ratoath and the East Meath settlements. Social and physical infrastructure and employment provision in these settlements has struggled to keep pace with population growth.

This indicates that Ratoath should effectively receive a “weighting” relative to other comparable settlements in recognition of it’s uniquely advantageous location which is fuelling growth and therefore demand for housing.



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4.0 RATOATH IN CONTEXT

4.1 Ratoath Expanse

Ratoath is the fourth largest town in Meath and is situated approximately 25km north of Dublin city centre. It is located between Ashbourne and Dunshauglin on the R125 Regional Road and is one of a number of rapidly developing centres within the East Meath Fringe. Ratoath is strategically located between the M2 and M3 motorways, within easy access to the M50 Dublin orbital motorway, Dublin International Airport and Dublin Port. Ratoath is located 7km northwest of the M3 Parkway Park and Ride facility. The extension of the rail to Navan will make Ratoath a more connected settlement.



Ratoath has a highly skilled workforce with 46% of the workforce in Managing Director / Senior Officials, Professional and Associated Professional & Technical roles. Ratoath operates as a commuter settlement with almost 75% of the workforce travelling outside the town for employment, with 70% of those travelling to the Dublin Region and 36% of those travelling to Dublin city centre. This confirms the strong connectivity between the Metropolitan Area and Ratoath.



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Ratoath's current population shows that 31% is made up of young period i.e. under the age of 14 and half of households have pre-school, early school, pre-adolescent or adolescent children. The average size of household in Ratoath is 3.48 persons, with the majority of households comprising of 4 people (30%) and 5 people (23%). The average household size in Ratoath at 3.48 persons is higher than the national average of 2.78 persons. There is a need for larger family homes in the Ratoath area.

The population of Ratoath has increased steadily over the last 10 years and is expected to continue to 2026 and beyond. The majority of people residing in Ratoath own their house (63%) either with or without a mortgage with 17% renting.

In 2016 Ratoath supported approx. 950 jobs. Ratoath's proximity to the new foreign direct investment at Dunboyne of Facebook, Takeda and Avoca along with its proximity to North Kildare and Fingal adds to its attractiveness as a preferred settlement for people to live in.

Ratoath's proximity to the recently established foreign direct investments of Facebook, Avoca and Takeda, and to the more established industries such as Ashbourne Visitors Centre, Fairy House Race Course and Tattersalls; coupled with indicators that the population will continue to increase over the next number of years; all highlight the need for increased residential development in Ratoath close to the town centre to cater for an increasing demand for residential housing.

Ratoath's proximity to Dublin has seen a rapid increase in the population in recent years. The population of Ratoath at the 2016 census stood at 9,533, with 31% of the population under 14 years.



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5.0 PROPOSED ZONING

Our proposal divides the land zoning into two different uses as follows:-

A2 New Residential

To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for status of the centre in the settlement hierarchy.

The current housing stock in Ratoath is not sufficient to serve the requirements of this town. There is a huge demand for 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses in the town.

Our site is a natural in-fill site between Foxlodge Woods, Foxlodge Manor, Moulden Bridge and Foxbrook.

The site is currently serviced with water, foul water and surface water.



F1 Open Space

To provide for and improved open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.

G1 Community

To provide for senior care home facilities to include long stay, convalescence, respite and end of life.

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6.0 CONCLUSION

The land owned by Mr George Williams in Ratoath, is ideally located to provide for future residential housing needs. The future development of the subject lands for residential development, upon the adoption of the County Development Plan and subsequent Local Area Plan for Ratoath, would be carried out in a manner to provide an adequate mix of dwelling units with generous open spaces. Along all roadways semi-mature trees shall be planted, and all open spaces shall be landscaped to a high specification to ensure passive recreation for all members of the community. The provision of a park area with a playground area, picnic area, skateboard area and open green planted area for active recreational use is in accordance with the objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Self-Sustaining Town
2016 Population	9,533
2011 Population	9,043
Percentage Change 2011-2016	5.40%
Housing stock 2016	2,960
Number of units completed 2016-2019	175
Committed units not yet built	72
Core Strategy Household Allocation 2020-2026	803 units This includes 72 extant units not built at the time of writing
Population Projection 2026	11,033
Resident Workers 2016	4,260
Total Jobs 2016	922
Job - Workforce Ratio 2016	0.21
Recommended density of future developments	35 units/ha

The statistics in the Draft Development Plan for Ratoath indicate that the level of housing relative to the projected increase in population over the life time of the Plan allows for little if any headroom. Given that Ratoath has shown itself to be expanding faster than the average settlement, this is a cause for concern.

This site is a natural *infill site* that is already serviced and requires minimal infrastructural investment to provide affordable housing for which there is currently a demand. The site, if zoned residential would offer the greatest convenience of zoned land in Ratoath to the established childcare facilities and schools. This offers the opportunity for a truly sustainable community.



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The projected increase in population clearly demonstrates that there is a need for development of high quality additional housing close to Ratoath town centre. These lands offer such an opportunity.

We respectfully suggest that Meath County Council favourably consider the contents of this submission and zone the additional lands in accordance with the detail of this submission in the adopted Ratoath Local Area Plan 2020 – 2026.

Yours sincerely



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