

## 1.0 Village Context and Character

Crossakiel is located in the north west of County Meath. It is positioned on the R154 Athboy to Oldcastle regional road, approximately 13km south of Oldcastle, and 12km north of Athboy. It is also located approximately 9km west of Kells Town along the R163.

A settlement may have existed in Crossakiel since the Bronze Age, evidenced by the barrow mound in the village centre. The 19th century village today has developed around this mound. It is a picturesque village, with a well-defined village core, and strong sense of place, benefitting from attractive buildings and mature trees within the village core, and commanding views that connects it to its surrounding hinterland.

<b>Position in Settlement Hierarchy</b>	Village
<b>2016 Population</b>	181
<b>2011 Population</b>	180
<b>Percentage Change 2011-2016</b>	0.50%
<b>Housing stock 2016</b>	89
<b>Number of units completed 2016-2019</b>	0
<b>Committed units not yet built</b>	0
<b>Population Projection 2027</b>	231
<b>Education Facilities</b>	0

<b>Community Facilities</b>	Handball Club; and Credit Union Plus
<b>Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)</b>	None
<b>Protected Structures</b>	5
<b>Zone of Archaeological Potential</b>	There is a National Monument Services Zone of Archaeological Potential within the village.
<b>Natura 2000 Sites</b>	The Tremblestown River which is located c. 1.1km west of the village is a tributary of the River Blackwater which forms part of the River Boyne & River Blackwater SPA and SAC.
<b>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</b>	The settlement is outside lands identified Flood Zones A and B. Manage flood risk and development in line with approved policies and objectives as set out in Vol. 1 Chapter 6: Infrastructure.
<b>Water Services Infrastructure/Capacity</b>	Crossakiel Wastewater Treatment Plant-Capacity available.  Water supply from the Oldcastle / Kells Scheme-Capacity available.

## 2.0 Vision

To define, consolidate and strengthen the commercial and residential village centre, and encourage development which will improve the historic character and urban structure of the village core, preserve and enhance the quality of the village's built and natural environment, while catering for the needs of all sections of the local community to ensure that the village develops in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work, recreate and visit. Only natural/organic residential growth will be encouraged over the lifetime of the Development Plan in line with the Development Plan Core Strategy.

## 3.0 Opportunities

- There is potential for consolidation and enhancement of the village core, through refurbishment and reuse of existing derelict structures, and infill sites, also public realm improvements and enhanced permeability from new residential areas to the village core. This would enhance service demand within the village, to create a more sustainable settlement.
- There is also an opportunity to develop the tourist potential of the village, to contribute to the sustainable development of the village.

## 4.0 Land Use Strategy

In order to facilitate the delivery of the vision for Crossakiel, a village strategy is proposed, which builds on the opportunities within the village. There are a number of key elements to the Strategy as follows-consolidate the historic core, integrate existing residential development with the village green, and support the development of new residential and village centre uses contiguous and connected to the village centre. Also, to redefine the village green as a potential civic / community space and as a focus for the village, including enhancement of the public realm and development of pedestrian routes within and around the village. In addition, the Strategy will support the provision of community and recreational uses within the village that contribute to the recreational and visual amenity of the village.

## 4.1 Settlement and Housing

The historic core comprises the village green defined to the north by an urban block, and the 18thc dwelling and curtilage to the south east, and the curtilage of St. Schiria to the south west. To a large extent, the historic urban form has been maintained, however, there is dereliction and erosion of the boundaries to the north west of the urban block, and poor public realm along the R154 to the west of the village core. Vacancy and dereliction detract from the vibrancy and sustainability of the village.

The industrial development occupies a large expanse of land to the west of the village. And while largely concealed by high boundaries, and some historic structures, environmental improvements including landscape screening and enhancement of the entrance boundary to the development would improve the setting and visual amenity of the village core.

Infill developments to the west of the village have consolidated the village core. The most recent residential development at The Cairns, comprises a suburban built form that has a poor relationship to the historic form, and is poorly connected to the village core. Pedestrian links are needed to increase connectivity and to encourage pedestrian movement within the village. The Village has the potential to accommodate future infill development over the life of the Plan.

## 4.2 Economy and Employment

Crossakiel is identified as a level 5 retail centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. It has a small range of retail and business services, primarily a local convenience shop, Credit Union, hair salon and two public houses. Employment uses include the local services mentioned and PJ Carneys Aluminium Recycling Plant and motor repairs located at the entrance to the village from the north.

There is scope for consolidation of the central urban block in Crossakiel. Development should take account of the plot grain, and protection of the Barrow Mound. A site in the centre of the village provides an opportunity for new residential development over the plan period which must be designed to appropriately integrate with the historic character of the village.

Enterprise zoned land adjacent the aluminium Recycling Plant, provided to facilitate potential future expansion of the business.

### **4.3 Water Services Infrastructure**

The village of Crossakiel is served by the following water services infrastructure:

**Water:** Crossakiel is supplied by the Kells/Oldcastle Water Supply Scheme. Capacity exists to meet the development and growth provided for in the County Development Plan 2021-2027.

**Waste Water:** The Crossakiel Wastewater Treatment Plant serves the village. It has limited spare capacity but is considered adequate to meet the development and growth provided for in the County Development Plan 2021-2027.

### **4.4 Movement**

Crossakiel is defined by a road network linking the village to surrounding settlements. The roads converge to form a central quadrant in which the historic settlement of Crossakiel is located. The built-up area of Crossakiel is contained within a 400m walking band and approximately five minutes walking distance of the village centre. However, pedestrian connections to the village and in particular from The Cairns are compromised where indirect pedestrian routes and poor or no footpaths have been provided.

Crossakiel is not served by a public transport service. The nearest public transport connections to the village are at Kells, Athboy and Oldcastle which are served by public bus service.

Vehicular movement to and through the village occurs along the routes. The speeds at which vehicle pass through the village along the Kells / Killallon road, notwithstanding speed limits, has been identified as a local safety concern.

This Plan will promote sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling, and the enhancement of pedestrian facilities which will support the development of permeable and

connected streets and spaces. Footpaths extending from the village to existing and new developments are also proposed and rationalisation of carparking areas.

#### **4.5 Cultural and Natural Heritage**

Crossakiel benefits from a rich cultural heritage, and has the potential to enhance this heritage through public realm improvements and reuse, adaptation and infill of the existing built form, and reuse and adaptation of the historic structures within the village, including historic town house Hill House, and the conservation works to St. Schiria's Church and grounds.

The commanding view from the western junction of the Collinstown Road is considered worth preserving and affords a unique sense of place and connection between the village and the surrounding countryside.

#### **4.6 Green Infrastructure**

The landscape surrounding Crossakiel is characterised by rolling farmland with remnants of parkland landscapes. It is situated on a small hill which benefits from attractive views to the Loughcrew Hills and the countryside to the west south. Several mature and attractive trees are located around the village together with neat hedgerows. These characteristics create attractive routes within the village. The enhancement of these routes through public realm improvements while integrating existing green infrastructure is promoted in this Plan.

#### **4.7 Social Infrastructure**

The village contains a Handball Alley and local Post Office. BMC United FC is located outside of the village boundary in Thomastown. The existing level of civic and community facilities is insufficient to cater for the village's needs, having regard to the population now resident.

The enhancement of the handball alley with screen planting, such as Virginia Creeper, or replacement with a new community building, and the development of the public park has the potential to significantly enhance community provision within the village. The redevelopment and reuse of St. Schiria's Church also holds potential to contribute to the provision of community and civic use in the village.

#### **4.8 Urban Design and Public Realm**

The village core is defined by the triangular green known as the 'diamond', with connecting streets to the regional road to the north, and the local road to the south to Kilskyre. The entrances to the village are well defined with the mature trees, attractive boundaries, the rising topography when approached from the north and south, and 19th structures acting as landmarks announcing arrival to the village core, including the two 19th century houses, and St. Schiria's Church, now derelict, and attendant grounds. As landmark structures, both contribute and detract from the village character. The handball alley is located in a prominent position. The visual appearance of this building is poor, and warrants repair or replacement with screen planting such as a wall creeping plant that may help to improve the visual amenity of the building. St. Schiria's Church and attendant grounds also hold great potential, and the refurbishment and sustainable use of this site would significantly enhance the public realm of the village.

The village would benefit from public realm improvements within the village core, including consolidation of the urban block, enhancement of boundaries to the west of the block, at PJ Kearney, and at the Hill House, and the provision of improved pedestrian paths, public lighting and landscaping, all around the urban block, to create visual and pedestrian continuity within the core. The village would also benefit from enhancement of the village green, to create a more pedestrian friendly space, rationalize pedestrian and parking areas, and to create a high-quality finish space for residents and visitors. The upgrading of the handball alley would enhance the setting of the village, and would improve the provision of community facilities within the village.

#### **5.0 Town/Village Development Objectives**

The Policies and Objectives set out below are in addition to those included in the Written Statement in Volume One of the County Development Plan. To avoid repetition Policies and Objectives have only been restated where they have particular relevance to the settlement. These Policies and Objectives should therefore be read in conjunction with the Policies and Objectives and Development Standards in Volume One of the County Development Plan.

## Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

### CRO POL 1

To define, consolidate and strengthen the commercial and residential village centre of Crossakiel, and encourage development which will improve the historic character and urban structure of the village core, preserve and enhance the quality of the village's built and natural environment, while catering for the needs of all sections of the local community to ensure that the village develops in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work recreate and visit.

## Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

## Settlement and Housing

### CRO OBJ 1

To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, in so far as is practicable, by ensuring the household allocation for Crossakiel as set out in Table 2.12 of the Core Strategy is not exceeded.

### CRO OBJ 2

To support and encourage residential development on under-utilised land and/or vacant lands including 'infill' and 'brownfield' sites, subject to a high standard of design and layout being achieved.

### CRO OBJ 3

To encourage the refurbishment of the existing underutilised dwellings in the village core and the Cosy Corner.

**CRO OBJ 4**

To encourage infill development in the village core. New development shall respect the scale, massing and character of the historic village.

**CRO OBJ 5**

To encourage the appropriate reuse of the Hill House to the south east of the village for community/amenity use ensuring the protection of the character of the structure.

## **Economy and Employment**

**CRO OBJ 6**

To encourage the development of the tourism potential of the village, to link with other towns, villages and tourism facilities in the area.

**CRO OBJ 7**

To support the development of mixed-use services in the village core, associated with new residential development.

## **Infrastructure**

**CRO OBJ 8**

To liaise with and support Irish Water to endeavour to provide adequate water services to meet the development needs of the Village within the Plan period.

## **Movement**

**CRO OBJ 9**

To improve pedestrian linkages from the Cairn residential development to the village green through the provision of vehicular and or pedestrian routes through the lands adjoining The Hill House.

**CRO OBJ 10**

To provide public realm improvements to include traffic calming and pedestrian priority at the village green.

**CRO OBJ 11**

To work with the National Transport Authority, Bus Éireann and other relevant organisations to improve the public transport connectivity from Crossakiel to the County Town and onto Regional and City Centres.

**Cultural and Natural Heritage****CRO OBJ 12**

To identify potential sources of funding for conservation works to St. Schiria's Church and associated grounds in conjunction with the local community.

**CRO OBJ 13**

To enhance and protect the special character and setting of St. Schiria Church, associated buildings and attendant grounds.

**CRO OBJ 14**

To facilitate the provision of continuous pedestrian routes that incorporate the attractive views, mature trees, and hedgerows along the Kells Road, and the entrances to the village.

**CAR OBJ 15**

To promote the preservation of individual trees or groups of trees as identified on the land use zoning map and to manage these trees in line with arboricultural best practice.

**Social****CRO OBJ 16**

To promote the refurbishment of the handball club to provide for the development of a multipurpose community facility.

**CRO OBJ 17**

To promote the development of an attractive and overlooked public park on the lands adjoining the handball club for the purposes of passive and active recreation.

**CRO OBJ 18**

To protect and enhance the open space amenities at the diamond with public realm improvements.

**CRO OBJ 19**

To promote the enhancement of open space amenities, in the Cairn housing estate to including modifications to the boundary treatment to enhance visual connection with the adjoining countryside.

## Urban Design and Public Realm

**CRO OBJ 20**

To provide for infill development within the village core that provides for a continuous building line and active street frontage, and that respects the scale of existing structures.

**CRO OBJ 21**

To provide for residential development to the west of the former Garda Station, that will appropriately negotiate the topography of the site, provide for active frontage along the Kells road, provide a strong sense of enclosure to the site, and establish a fine urban grain. New development should be aligned with the former Garda Station in order to protect mature trees adjacent the site.

**CRO OBJ 22**

Promote the provision of a landscaped urban space to the front of potential new development to the west of the former Garda Station.

**CRO OBJ 23**

To promote the enhancement of the public realm in the village core, along the existing road, to the west, north, east and the village green.

**CRO OBJ 24**

To promote the enhancement of the existing boundary surrounding the Aluminium Recycling Plant.

**CRO OBJ 25**

To promote the enhancement of the existing handball alley, through appropriate screen planting.

**CRO OBJ 26**

To ensure that all new development respects the scale, form and character of the village.