

1.0 Village Context and Character

Drumconrath is located in the north-eastern corner of County Meath, 3km west of the N52 which links Kells to Ardee / Dundalk. It is located 7km from Ardee, 10km from Nobber and 12km from Kingscourt.

Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Village
2016 Population	345
2011 Population	370
Percentage Change 2011-2016	-6.70%
Housing stock 2016	157
Number of units completed 2016-2019	0
Committed units not yet built	2
Population Projection 2027	395
Education Facilities	‘Scoil Naisúnta Pheadair agus Phoil’ National School; and, Ladybird Childcare
Community Facilities	7
Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)	None

Protected Structures	11
Zone of Archaeological Potential	There are three National Monument Service Zones of Archaeological Potential within the village.
Natura 2000 Sites	The nearest Natura 2000 site is the Stabannon-Braganstown SPA approximately 12.5km to the north east.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Manage flood risk and development in line with approved policies and objectives as set out in Vol. 1 Chapter 6: Infrastructure.
Water Services Infrastructure/Capacity	Drumconrath Wastewater Treatment Plant-Capacity Available. Water supply from Lough Bracken-Capacity Available.

A settlement has existed in Drumconrath since ancient times evidenced by its rich archaeology including ringforts, motte and castles, medieval field patterns, and medieval settlement itself in and adjoining the village, which are recorded as national monuments. The physical attributes of this heritage are evident today in the building lines and plots extending from the main street and backlands, including St Peter and Paul's Church of Ireland and graveyard.

The historic core of the village is compact, with a wider plot grain along the approach roads to the core. The built heritage includes common building typologies mainly from the

nineteenth century including single and two storey vernacular structures, larger houses, in the form of a parochial house, and rectory, and church buildings, and graveyards within and at the entrance to the village, as well as more contemporary infill dwellings, national school, community hall and ball alley, all of which contribute to its character. A number of structures are protected. The configuration of buildings permit views towards the motte to the north of the main street which contribute to its character, however there is potential for infill development and consolidation along the main street.

There are distinctive gateways to the village from each of the approach roads and nodes within the village structure which create a distinctive sense of place and identity.

2.0 Vision

The vision of this Plan is to promote the identity of Drumconrath, to reflect its rich historical and cultural assets and to enhance its sense of place and identity through protection of the scale, character and the built and natural heritage of the village. To encourage development which will improve and enhance the public realm, the character and structure of the village core and existing streetscape, to engage and connect with the river and riverbank open space, Castle, Motte and Bailey and the wider landscape and to provide for development that will allow the village to develop 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 are distinctive gateways to the village from each of the approach roads and nodes within the village structure which create a distinctive sense of place and identity. There is a further opportunity to enhance these as points of arrival into the village.
- The village core suffers from a poor, discordant public realm, vacancy and dereliction, and loss of original features, including sash windows and lime render, which detracts from the character of the village. There is great potential to enhance the physical environment, and maximize the rich historic and cultural assets of the village for the benefit of the residents and visitors.

4.0 Land Use Strategy

In order to facilitate the delivery of the vision for Drumconrath, a village strategy is proposed, which contains a number of elements; to maximize the historic and cultural assets of the village; regenerate and enhance the natural and physical environment; to reuse and adapt historic structures, and infill with new development to sensitively integrate with the existing built form.

4.1 Settlement and Housing

The urban form of Drumconrath can be divided into two development areas; to the west of and east of the Drumconrath River. There is a distinctive change in the character of both areas reflected in the nature and pattern of development and land uses. The lands to the north west are dominated by the community uses, while the development to the east, comprises the village core, and generally represents more compact development forms.

The village benefits from a variety of dwelling types from the 19th and early 20th century in the historic core, including detached and semidetached cottages, terraces and town houses. New residential areas are located at the edge of the village in suburban development forms, and connected by footpath, at De Valera Park housing development located to the south west of the town, Hillside View to the north west, and Amharc Fáda to the north east. The capacity to accommodate multi house residential development is low because of its elevated position, however appropriate residential development forms could readily integrate with the existing built form and natural environment through use of appropriate dwelling typologies, that are informed by the vernacular, and appropriate siting and landscaping.

Infill/brownfield and backland development will be promoted over the lifetime of this Plan. The form of development will be required to integrate with the existing context, and with new lanes and walkways proposed as part of the strategy to create a more permeable urban structure.

4.2 Economy and Employment

Drumconrath is identified as a level 4 retail centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. It has a small range of retail and business services, including 2 local convenience shops, and a petrol station, Post Office, health care centre, car sales garage, beauty salon, three public houses and a butcher / takeaway. Employment uses include the local services and Clarke Rewinds and Fastway Couriers located to the south of the village. The town acts as a dormitory settlement for other towns, such as Ardee, Kingscourt and Kells which have established employment opportunities. There is sufficient development capacity within the industrial and village centre land use zones to facilitate the strengthening and consolidation of commercial, economic and retail uses in the village. This strategy promotes the village to maximise its tourist potential as another means to enhance economic development, and to achieve a more sustainable settlement form.

4.3 Water Services Infrastructure

The village is served by the following water services infrastructure:

Water: The village of Drumconrath is supplied by the water treatment plant at Lough Bracken. There is spare capacity which is considered adequate to serve the development and growth provided for in this County Development Plan.

Wastewater: The village is served by the Drumconrath Wastewater Treatment Plant. This plant is considered to have adequate spare capacity to serve the development and growth provided for in this County Development Plan.

4.4 Movement

Drumconrath has a dispersed road layout for its size, and the topography has contributed to a disjointed settlement form, with poor connections between residential areas and the village centre. The Main Street is wide, but is poorly defined, and is dominated by the car.

Drumconrath is not served by public transport, the nearest public transport connections to the village are located at Kingscourt, Nobber, Ardee and Carrickmacross which are served by public bus services.

This plan will promote sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling, through the development of permeable and connected streets and spaces, and the enhancement of pedestrian facilities. Footpaths extending from the village to existing and new housing developments are also proposed, and to integrate with amenity walks along the Drumconrath River and adjoining open space, and routes to the Castle Motte and Bailey to the north of the village. Rationalisation of carparking areas on the main street as part of overall public realm improvements are also proposed. The provision of a public bus service to the village is promoted in this Plan, and the Authority will liaise with the National Transport Authority in this regard.

4.5 Cultural and Natural Heritage

The built and natural heritage of Drumconrath are important resources that must be protected and enhanced to contribute to the sense of place, and identity. The protection of these resources and presentation of their heritage value are promoted in the development strategy. This includes the protection of the buildings and structures of historical significance, enhancing the setting of the protected structures along Main Street, also the setting of Drumconrath Rectory. The land use strategy expands the high amenity area to the front of the structures as it faces the Slane Road. It is also proposed to integrate pedestrian routes to facilitate ease of access to heritage and amenity assets.

4.6 Green Infrastructure

The village is set in forested drumlin countryside and the Drumconrath River, and tributaries of the River Garra and River Dee run through and around the centre of the village. Mature and attractive trees define the landscape setting of the Rectory and St. Peters Church and Castle Motte to the south west of the village. There are protected views to the north of the Motte and Bailey, which provides a backdrop to the village, and views eastwards from the Ardee Road. These protected views contribute to the natural heritage and setting of the village and are retained in this strategy. Although outside the settlement boundary, the protected views are identified on the Land Use Zoning Map.

4.7 Social Infrastructure

Drumconrath contains one primary school ‘Scoil Naisúnta Pheadair agus Phoil’ located on the Kingscourt Road to the north west of the village. The village also contains a pitch and putt course, a community centre adjoining the course, and a post office adjoining the convenience store. The GAA pitch is located to the south of the village outside the development boundary on the Nobber Road. The Health Care centre is located to the east of the town, adjoining the local cemeteries.

The Drumconrath Community Plan was prepared under the Renaissance Breathing Life into Rural Villages by Meath Partnership in January 2013. A number of key projects in the community plan complement the land use and village strategy contained in this Plan.

In this regard, while it is considered that the level of civic and community facilities is sufficient to cater for the Village’s needs having regard to the population now resident, the village would benefit from focused improvement of the existing amenities, and the provision of recreational space for all as promoted in the Community Plan.

Community, Social and recreational land uses have been retained in the land use strategy that will facilitate potential expansion of the facilities. Also, there is potential for the provision of an extensive network of amenity walks along the river, within the proposed green spaces, and connecting the village centre to the Motte and Baily.

4.8 Urban Design and Public Realm

This Plan promotes the enhancement of the entrance gateways to the village in the form of public realm improvements incorporating signage / branding for the village.

The village core is defined by the linear space in the historic village centre. Public realm improvements are proposed to enhance the environmental quality of this space, to include the provision of additional and improved pedestrian paths, public lighting and landscaping, incorporating cycleways as appropriate. Also, to rationalise pedestrian and parking areas and to create a high-quality finished space along the main street to make it a pedestrian friendly space for residents, and visitors to linger.

This strategy promotes the creation of connections between existing communities and amenities from De Valera Park, and that any new development areas would similarly connect to the main street.

5.0 Village Development Policies and 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

Settlement and Housing

It is the policy of the Council:

DRUM POL 1

To promote the identity of Drumconrath, to reflect its rich historical and cultural assets and to enhance its sense of place and identity through protection of the scale, character and the built and natural heritage of the village, and to encourage development which will improve and enhance the public realm, the character and structure of the village core and existing streetscape, to engage and connect with the river and riverbank open space, Castle, Motte and Bailey and the wider landscape, and to provide for development that will allow the village to develop 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

DRUM OBJ 1

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.

DRUM OBJ 2

To encourage the refurbishment of existing underutilised dwellings in the village core, Doyles Garage and reuse of idle structures along the main street.

DRUM OBJ 3

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

Economy and Employment

DRUM OBJ 4

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

DRUM OBJ 5

To support the creation of an identity for Drumconrath that reflects its rich cultural heritage, medieval past, and to connect with a potential tourist trail that could link Drumconrath to other towns and villages in the area.

DRUM OBJ 6

To protect and enhance the village core and promote consolidation of the commercial core around the main street, and reuse of sites and underutilised buildings for residential, commercial or heritage / tourism related uses.

Infrastructure

DRUM OBJ 7

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

DRUM OBJ 8

To improve pedestrian linkages from De Valera Park to the main street through the Drumconrath River green space.

DRUM OBJ 9

To provide public realm improvements to include traffic calming and pedestrian priority on the Main Street.

DRUM OBJ 10

To liaise with the National Transport Authority with regard to the provision of a public bus service in Drumconrath.

Cultural and Natural Heritage

DRUM OBJ 11

To enhance and protect the special character and setting of St. Peters Church of Ireland, associated buildings and attendant grounds, and to integrate public realm improvements as part of the main street to the building.

DRUM OBJ 12

To protect views from the Ardee Road and towards the Motte and Bailey which lie outside of the settlement boundary.

DRUM OBJ 13

To promote the preservation of individual trees or groups of trees as identified on the land use zoning map.

Social

DRUM OBJ 14

To enhance community and recreational uses including support for the development of a children's play area within the village, and the identification of public open space along the river.

DRUM OBJ 15

To support the development of interconnected amenity walkways along streams and hedgerows, and to the archaeological sites within and adjoining the village to facilitate an appreciation of the built and natural heritage within the village for residents and visitors.

DRUM OBJ 16

To promote the development of an attractive and overlooked public park on the green space lands adjoining the Drumconrath River.

DRUM OBJ 17

To facilitate and support the implementation of the Drumconrath Renaissance Community Plan and other community led projects to generally enhance the village while ensuring that the projects which emanate from same are consistent with the development objectives contained in this Written Statement for the village.

Urban Design and Public Realm

DRUM OBJ 18

To enhance the entrance gateways to the village in the form of public realm improvements incorporating branding for the village.

DRUM OBJ 19

To enhance the existing nodes and spaces within the village, through the provision of additional and improved pedestrian paths, public lighting and landscaping, incorporating cycleways as appropriate. Rationalise pedestrian and parking areas and create identifiable, and high-quality finished spaces along the main street for residents, and visitors to linger.

DRUM OBJ 20

To promote new development areas to complement and integrate with the proposed amenity walks.

DRUM OBJ 21

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