

1.0 Town Context/Character

Longwood is a small town located in south east County Meath. The River Boyne flows approximately 2km west of Longwood and the Enfield/Kildare River Blackwater flows to the east of the development boundary. The amenity and heritage qualities of Longwood are largely derived from the quality of the central area of the Town. Longwood evolved as a market town and serves a broadly rural hinterland. The historic main street is orientated roughly east-west with a large triangular shaped village green to the western end and a graveyard to the eastern end. Whilst the town provides for a moderate level of facilities and services, there are a substantial number of vacant units and run-down buildings which detract from the environment of the town.

Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Small Town
2016 Population	1,581
2011 Population	1,378
Percentage Change 2011-2016	14.70%
Housing stock 2016	530
Number of units completed 2016-2019	16
Committed units not yet built	68
Core Strategy Household Allocation 2020-2027¹	104 units
Population Projection 2027	1,781

¹ The unbuilt extant units have been included in this allocation

Education Facilities	St. Nicholas Primary School; Colaiste Clavin; and a Montessori.
Community Facilities	10
Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)	Longwood Architectural Conservation Area
Protected Structures	9
Zone of Archaeological Potential	None
Natura 2000 Sites	The nearest Natura 2000 site is the River Boyne & River Blackwater SPA and SAC which is located approximately 1.36km to the west.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Flood Zones A and /or B encroach on lands to the south of the settlement on existing developed lands. 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	Longwood Water Treatment Plant-Capacity Available. Longwood Wastewater Treatment Plant-Limited Capacity Available.

2.0 Vision

The vision for the development of Longwood over the lifetime of the Development Plan is to consolidate and strengthen the town core through public realm improvement works, increase connectivity within the town, and prioritise infill and backland development and the re-use of underutilised buildings. The conservation and enhancement of the town's built and natural environment is also recognised as being of significant importance to the future sustainable development of the town.

3.0 Opportunities

Longwood has notable amenity and heritage qualities, and the central town core has urban design qualities with potential to be further enhanced through public realm improvement works. The town has a range of services but sustainable connections between these (e.g. walking and cycling) and residential areas could be improved. Wastewater treatment requires investment to facilitate residential development. Longwood is well provided for in terms of community facilities and services which are predominantly to the eastern side of the town and there remains scope to improve connections between these and residential areas surrounding the town.

Longwood is 2km east of the Boyne Aqueduct at the junction with the Royal Canal. At its closest, the Royal Canal is approximately 720 metres from the development boundary of the town. There is potential to enhance recreational and tourism links between the two.

4.0 Land Use Strategy

The land use strategy for Longwood aims to maintain and add to a built environment that is both attractive and distinctive, to create a unique sense of place for those who both live and work within, as well as those who visit the town. This will be achieved through the sensitive treatment of infill development and the conservation of important or key buildings particularly within the Architectural Conservation Area at the town core. The provision of a compact and vibrant town centre is essential if Longwood is to cater for its current and future population needs in a manner that is sustainable.

4.1 Settlement and Housing

Longwood experienced a seven-fold population increase between 1996-2011 (from 186 to 1,378 persons) and this placed significant pressure on physical and social infrastructure. Incremental and natural growth is to be facilitated over the period of this Development Plan. Having regard to the housing allocation for the town in the **Core Strategy and the availability** of infill and backland sites there is adequate land zoned in Longwood to cater for the future housing needs of the town over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

4.2 Economy and Employment

The town provides for an adequate range of retail / commercial services broadly commensurate with its level 4 position in the County retail hierarchy. These include a pharmacy (just outside the town), funeral directors, a take-away, two hair salons, post office, convenience shop, bookmakers, two pubs, credit union, antiques shop, and a hardware store. There is notable vacancy in the town with many buildings in a run-down / under-utilised condition. There remains scope for further retail/commercial growth should need /demand arises and underutilised units and backland sites in the town core provide an opportunity to realise this. The proposed land use strategy also seeks to retain and extend the commercial core of the town with an area identified for expansion on the Enfield Road opposite the former secondary school site. There is therefore sufficient land designated for town centre uses.

4.3 Water Services Infrastructure

The town is currently served by the following water services infrastructure:

Water: The town is served by the Longwood Water Treatment Plant. There is considered to be sufficient spare capacity to facilitate the development and growth provided for in this County Development Plan.

Wastewater: The Longwood Wastewater Treatment Plant has limited spare capacity. All development proposals shall be considered in the context of the available capacity.

4.4 Movement

Whilst several roads converge in the town core, permeability away from these roads requires improvement. There is significant potential to develop cycling/walking routes off the main roads to improve linkages between the community/educational uses and open spaces.

In terms of public transport, the development of public transport bus links is critical to ensure a better modal split in favour of public transport away from the private motor vehicle. It is noted that the 115/115A Dublin to Mullingar Bus Eireann route stops at Longwood. The provision of a scheduled bus service from Longwood to the railway station in Enfield approximately 9km to the south east would be beneficial. Furthermore, it is essential that a town the size of Longwood maintains good transportation links to surrounding urban areas, such as Trim, in order to attract future population and potential business opportunities.

4.5 Cultural and Natural Heritage

The continued protection of the built heritage of Longwood is important to the success and viability of the town itself. The central core of the town is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area. There are also a number of buildings in the town included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) with the former Garda station and Roman Catholic Church most notable.

Longwood does not contain any Natura 2000 sites. The nearest sites are the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002299) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004232) which are approximately 2km away to the north-west.

A Community Biodiversity Action Plan was prepared for Longwood by the Council in collaboration with the local community. The aim of the Plan is to raise awareness of biodiversity and to empower the local community to undertake actions for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in their local area.

There are also tree stands in the town which are considered worthy of protection.

4.6 Green Infrastructure

Longwood benefits from several structural/landscaped open space areas of high quality: The Fair Green, the large green space laid out in front of the graveyard, the open space and trees within Pine Grove, and the linear open space running south of Brackinrainey Manor adjacent to the stream. The existing open spaces have the potential to provide a framework for the development of a green movement network in the town.

4.7 Social Infrastructure

Longwood benefits from two new school campuses; St. Nicholas Primary School and Colaiste Clavin Secondary School. Within the town there is a, post office and a community centre. There is a soccer pitch and GAA grounds located to the west of the town represents a substantial area of recreational open space. The development of a playground would be beneficial to improve the social infrastructure of the town, in tandem with improving cycling/walking connections.

The former school site could potentially cater for additional social infrastructure needs should demand arise. The Council is satisfied that sufficient lands have been reserved for social/community infrastructure to accommodate both existing and future populations over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

The Longwood Renaissance Community Plan is also acknowledged as setting out the community's aspirations for the town.

4.8 Urban Design and Public Realm

Longwood has a wide main street and this acts as a natural focal point, with the Fair Green located just beyond this. The town core is well defined and retains a rural character. The town Architectural Conservation Area reflect this. Many buildings display traditional design features and materials. It would be desirable to see the public realm and streetscape improved to enhance the rural character, reduce the actual/perceived dominance of roads and vehicles and improved town aesthetics.

5.0 Town 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

It is the policy of the Council:

Settlement and Housing

LON POL 1

To promote the future sustainable development of Longwood as a compact settlement with a pedestrian friendly environment and variety of land uses and amenities while protecting its built and natural heritage and catering for the needs of all sections of the local community to ensure that the town 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

LON 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.

Economy and Employment

LON OBJ 2

To promote enterprise creation opportunities and encourage job/creation initiatives in line with the sustainable growth of Longwood and on appropriately zoned and serviced land.

LON OBJ 3

To prioritise infill and backland development to meet the commercial needs of the town over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

LON OBJ 4

To consolidate the central area of the town for commercial uses.

LON OBJ 5

To facilitate the provision of an Enterprise Centre or similar facility in Longwood.

Infrastructure

LON OBJ 6

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

LON OBJ 7

To manage flood risk and development in line with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. (see Volume 4 Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment).

Movement

LON OBJ 8

To seek to facilitate the provision of a pedestrian crossing outside St. Mary's RC Church.

LON OBJ 9

To seek to facilitate the provision of a sheltered bus stop within the town in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.

LON OBJ 10

To seek to improve the junction in the main road through Longwood.

LON OBJ 11

To seek to facilitate a pedestrian/cycle path along the stream running to the south of Brackinrainey Manor, and along Ribbontail lane linking the town and the Royal Canal.

LON OBJ 12

To implement appropriate traffic management and environmental improvement measures throughout the town.

Cultural and Natural Heritage

LON OBJ 13

To require that all development proposals within or contiguous to the Architectural Conservation Area be sympathetic to the character of the area, that the design is appropriate in terms of height, scale, plot density, layout, materials and finishes and is appropriately sited and designed in accordance with advice given in Longwood Architectural Conservation Area Character Statement.

LON OBJ 14

To protect existing wildlife corridors including watercourses, wetlands, trees and hedgerows and promote new corridors alongside new pedestrian / cycle paths.

LON OBJ 15

To facilitate and support the implementation of the Longwood Community Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020 and any revisions thereof.

LON OBJ 16

To promote connections, through signage and road improvement works, from the town along Ribbontail Way to the Royal Canal.

LON OBJ 17

To promote the preservation of individual trees or groups of trees as identified on the land use zoning map including those to the north of Fair Green and those within Pine Grove and to manage these trees in line with arboricultural best practice

LON OBJ 18

To facilitate works complimentary to Fair Green such as picnic benches, vehicle parking bays, bicycle stands, and pathways through / alongside the Green.

Social

LON OBJ 19

To protect existing community facilities/infrastructure where appropriate and support their further development and expansion if required.

LON OBJ 20

To support the provision of a community park/playground.

LON OBJ 21

To promote the redevelopment of the former St. Fintina's school site and adjoining lands with particular emphasis on connectivity and reinforcing the town centre.

LON OBJ 22

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

Urban Design and Public Realm

LON OBJ 23

To consolidate the town core and increase the intensity of development within it, particularly on backland sites, subject to development management requirements.

LON OBJ 24

To facilitate public realm improvement works to the town core focusing on traffic-calming to achieve better balance between the needs of the pedestrian / cyclist / public transport and those of the private car. Measures may include "greening" of the town with native trees, build-out of footpaths, introducing angled parking, pedestrian crossing(s) to define the street, improved public lighting, and use of textured surfacing.

LON OBJ 25

To enhance landmark/focal points in Longwood by redeveloping neglected sites and obsolete areas.

LON OBJ 26

To encourage the maintenance of original shop fronts and pub fronts, or the reinstatement of traditional shop fronts where poor replacements have been installed.