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Development Boundary Objective

Local Area Plan Objective Development Boundary Objectives for Conna	
Objective No.	
DB-01	Within the development boundary of Conna it is an objective to encourage the development of up to 30 houses in the plan period.
DB-02	The boundary of Conna overlaps with the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation. Development will only be permitted where it is shown that it is compatible with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the protection of this site.
DB-03	Appropriate and sustainable water and waste-water infrastructure, that secures the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the protection of the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation, must be available to accommodate development.

Specific Objectives

Local Area Plan Objective Specific Development Objectives for Conna		
Objective No.		Approx. Area (Ha)
Open Space, Sports, Recreation and Amenity		
O-01	Open space that will remain predominantly open and rural in character to preserve the setting of the village. Parts of this zone are within the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation and these areas are not suitable for development.	3.0
O-02	Provision of open space to preserve the setting of the Castle. Parts of this zone are within the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation and these areas are not suitable for development.	1.6
Special Policy Area		
X-01	Limited potential for individual dwellings, at very low density, subject to a single agreed landscape-based scheme for all of the lands, with detailed provision for retaining any existing trees and on site features. A design brief for individual dwellings should be part of the scheme along with a high quality informal layout of sites and based generally on a single entrance from the public road.	4.7

village and contribute to a reduction in commuting by providing local employment opportunities. The most appropriate and sustainable locations for small-scale commercial uses should be within the core subject to it not impinging on the residential amenities of the area. Elsewhere, consideration will be given to appropriate small-scale employment and tourist-related uses subject to its compatibility with the existing adjoining uses and other proper planning and sustainability principles.

- 4.6.18 The Conna area has significant tourism potential, which has yet to be exploited, and the village could have a role as a destination in a wider North Cork tourism initiative. There is opportunity to promote the heritage tourism aspect of Conna Castle, a National Monument, as a tourist destination and as part of the network of medieval Castles in the North Cork area. Conna is featured in the Blackwater Valley Drive tourism project and is internationally renowned for its horse breeding industry. It is considered that the promotion of angling on the River Bride, the development of walking and activity trails linking the scenic riverside setting of the village to heritage and activity destinations in the wider area would create the foundations of a tourism strategy. Additional B&Bs should be encouraged in the village in order to promote and support such tourism development.

Environment & Heritage

- 4.6.19 The River Bride, a tributary of the River Blackwater is located immediately north of the settlement and is subject to Special Area of Conservation designation under the Habitats Directive as it is a significant site containing important rare plants and species. It is also of high conservation value for the population of bird species that use it and accordingly is subject to Special Protection Area designation under the EU Birds Directive. The Blackwater River is also a proposed Natural Heritage Area which gives protection to the River under national legislation. Further policies to protect the County's environment and heritage are contained within the County Development Plan and reinforce the importance of the above designations.
- 4.6.20 The settlement is within the catchment of the Kilwinny, Tributary of Blackwater Water Body which falls under the Blackwater-Bride Water Management Unit.
- 4.6.21 There are three structures within the settlement, which are listed in the Record of Protected Structures in the Cork County Development Plan 2014 – Conna Bridge and Conna Catholic Church and Conna Castle (a 16th Century Tower House).
- 4.6.22 There are a number of interesting archaeological monuments in the village including the bridge and Conna Castle. These are afforded protection under national legislation and subject to further safeguards under policies prescribed in the County Development Plan 2014.
- 4.6.23 There is potential for the provision of public access and an amenity walk to the north of the village along the River Bride, however such development could impact on the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation and would require the provision of an ecological impact assessment report (Natura Impact Statement) in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats and Birds Directives. An amenity walkway may only proceed where it can be shown that it will not have a significant negative impact on these sites. In particular, regard should be had to the protection of otters and otter breeding sites along the river side and the prevention of disturbance to bird species.

- 4.6.9 The layout and design of new development must pay particular attention to the retention of important views and setting of landmark buildings within the settlement, including some attractive views of the river and surrounding countryside and the retention of the trees adjacent to the Castle as part of a wider public amenity area.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Physical Infrastructure

- 4.6.10 Conna enjoys good road based transport connections. The village abuts the Regional Route R628, which offers direct access to County Waterford, Rathcormack and the N8, southwards to Cork City and northwards to Fermoy. A public bus service is available from Bus Eireann, departing at Dungarvan to Fermoy (via Conna) on a daily basis.
- 4.6.11 The existing waste water treatment system serving the village provides secondary level treatment and discharges to the River Bride, a Drinking Water Protected Area. The plant however is overloaded and upgrade of WWTP plant and upgrade of some sewers is required. Water quality impacts and/or licence compliance issues associated with waste water infrastructure serving Conna will need to be addressed to accommodate further growth.
- 4.6.12 There is capacity in the drinking water supply to facilitate the level of growth envisaged for Conna. Any proposal to increase freshwater abstraction from within the River Blackwater SAC for the purposes of improving the supply of drinking water for Conna will be subject to Habitats Directive Assessment and will only be permitted where it is shown that the abstraction can be achieved without interfering with the achievement of the conservation objectives which are established for this SAC.
- 4.6.13 Parts of Conna have been identified as being at risk of flooding. The area affected is a small area following the path of the River Bride to the north of the village as illustrated on the settlement map. The approach to Flood Risk Management is set out in Section One of this document (see also GO-01).

Community / Social Infrastructure

- 4.6.14 A community centre offers a range of services to the local community, including amongst others, a community hall and a sports complex (with outdoor tennis courts), and a crèche and after-school services. Additional community facilities include a playing pitch and national school (outside the development boundary), a nursing / convalescence home, church and cemetery.

Employment and Economic Activity

- 4.6.15 The primary source of employment in Conna is agriculture and agriculture based activities. Conna Bride Plastics constitutes a significant business in Conna. Other sources of employment are within the service and commercial sector including the convenience shops, public houses, cafe, post office, credit union and nursing home.
- 4.6.16 Land zoned in the past for industrial use was not developed so a more flexible employment approach is being taken in an attempt to diversify the economic base of this settlement and provide opportunities to capitalise on building the local tourist industry optimising its scenic location by the River Bride and the area's international reputation for horse breeding. The area should be packaged as part of a wider North Cork tourism trail.
- 4.6.17 The Council seeks to encourage the provision of small-scale employment uses within the settlement which can add to the vitality of the village, diversify the narrow employment base of the

4.6 Conna

Vision

- 4.6.1 The vision for Conna over the lifetime of the Plan is to capitalise on the tourism potential of the village, strengthen the range of services and employment opportunities available and ensure new development is in keeping with the scale and character of the village.

Context

- 4.6.2 Conna is a key village located on the R628 within the scenic valley of the River Bride, which flows just north of the village. The village is close to the County Waterford border and enjoys good access to Rathcormack to the west and Fermoy is located 17km to the north west. The village is located in the North Strategic Planning Area, as defined in the County Development Plan 2014.
- 4.6.3 The River Bride creates the topography of this area, which is that of a broad fertile lowland valley. The ground level slopes downwards in a northerly direction towards the village and remains relatively flat around the flood plain for the River Bride.
- 4.6.4 The character of Conna is defined by its linear nature along a single axis of the main street. Buildings on the main street are generally rendered and of 2-storey form with more modern bungalows on the edges or as infill. More recent suburban style estates have been developed on the northern and western fringes. To the east of the settlement, Conna Castle, a 16th century towerhouse, creates an attractive entrance to the settlement and to the west the Catholic Church frames the visual entrance to the village.
- 4.6.5 On the periphery, outside the development boundary, ribboning is an issue and blurs the distinction in character between the village proper and the attractive surrounding agricultural landscape.

Planning Considerations and Proposals

Population and Housing

- 4.6.6 The population recorded for Conna in census 2011 was 470, an increase of 25% over the 2006 population figure.
- 4.6.7 Most of the more recent new housing development in the village had been in the form of suburban style housing estates comprising of a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced 2-storey units. The scale of these developments is somewhat excessive relative to the original village form although the developments are well located and the village retains a compact settlement form. It is the Council's aim to continue to encourage cluster type development near the village centre and to promote infill development and self-build/serviced site options as an alternative to one-off housing in the rural hinterland of the village.
- 4.6.8 As per GO-01 and table 4.1 the scale of growth envisaged for the village is up to 30 units during the period of this plan with the number of houses in any particular group not normally exceeding 20 units. While this scale of development is significantly less than the outstanding planning permissions it is considered a more reasonable and sustainable growth target for this village. Nonetheless it is acknowledged that planning permissions may continue to be implemented within their lifetime.