



**Chief Executive's Report under Section 13(4) of the Planning and
Development Act 2000 (as amended)
in Respect of**

**Proposed Variation No. 6
of
Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 – 2025**

November 2024

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1.0 Introduction

The current Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 (MCDP) was adopted on the 4th of March 2019 and provides an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Monaghan over the timescale of the Plan through specific objectives and policies. A variation to the MCDP is proposed, which is the sixth variation since the MCDP was adopted. This report provides an overview of the proposed variation, details of the consultation process, a summary of submissions and comments received, and the Chief Executive's opinion and recommendation on the submissions and comments received.

2.0 Context and Background

2.1 The Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2023 - CKDP1 Carrickmacross Town Centre identifies the area subject of this variation proposal zoned as "Existing Residential". The zoning objective of Existing Residential is "To protect and enhance existing residential amenities". Principal permitted land uses will be residential. However other uses open for consideration include education, nursing home, creche, health centres, community facilities, guesthouses provided that all such proposals are in keeping with the established built character of the area and do not adversely impact upon the amenity of existing residential properties. The comprehensive redevelopment of large residential plots for proposed residential development will be acceptable subject to the redevelopment proposal being in keeping with the character of the surrounding development.

2.2 The Development/Zoning Matrix Table 9.3 states that within land zoned as "Existing Residential" many town centre uses are not permitted uses. The supporting text outlines that a 'not permitted use' is a use that would be contrary to the zoning objectives and sustainable development. Extensions to existing non-conforming uses within any zoned area will be considered on their merits.

The current zoning map outlining this area is attached in appendix 1

2.3 Section 9.1 of the CDP sets out an overall vision for the Settlements including how the sustainable and co-ordinated growth and development of the towns in the county can be shaped in a planned manner which will also act as a catalyst for the economic, physical, cultural, and environmental development of the towns.

Within this overall vision Monaghan County Council aims to address the future sustainable development of the towns through:

- Establishment of a viable and growing population, sufficient to support a wide variety of employment and services.
- Development of infrastructure to support the existing towns and accommodate future growth within the towns.
- Improved transport links both within the County and destinations outside it.
- Re-development of back lands and derelict sites throughout the towns where appropriate.
- Provision of sufficient parking within the town centres where necessary.

In addition, SSO 17 outlines the need to promote and encourage the delivery of the refurbishment and regeneration of the back lands of the towns as well as appropriate development on infill sites, derelict sites, vacant plots and brownfield sites.

2.4 Specific to this area it is an objective in the Carrickmacross Public Realm Plan 2018 to reduce car parking on the Main Street in Carrickmacross to allow for the creation of better pedestrian friendly and visually attractive urban spaces. Whilst the longer-term goal is to move away from private cars to walking, cycling and public usage in the short-term, car parking must be able to migrate from on-street to off street locations to facilitate this goal.

- 2.5 In addition the Carrickmacross Town Centre First Plan 2024 identifies the Shirley House Lane area as an important location in the south west town centre area. It outlines that the area has scope for improvements helping support businesses on the Main Street, whilst alleviating pressures on the space there.

3.0 Proposed Variation

- 3.1 The proposed variation pertains to the change in zoning of the site from “Existing Residential” to “Town Centre” designation.

Reason: In the interests of the proper planning and development of the area

4.0 Legislative Context

Section 13(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that, “A Planning Authority may at any time, for stated reasons, decide to make a variation of a development plan which for the time being is in force.” Where a planning authority proposes to make a variation in a development plan, it shall-

- a) *Send notice and copies of the proposed variation of the development plan to the Minister, the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Office of the Planning Regulator, the Board, the relevant regional assembly, and, where appropriate, to any adjoining planning authority, the prescribed authorities, and any local community development committee within the area of the development plan.*
- b) *Publish notice of the proposed variation of the development plan in one or more newspapers circulating in that area.*
- c) *Not later than 8 weeks after giving notice under subsection 2 (b), the Chief Executive of a planning authority shall prepare a report on any submissions or observations received under that subsection and shall submit a report to the members of the authority for their consideration.*
- d) *A report shall list the persons or bodies who made submissions or observations, provide a summary of the recommendations, submissions or observations made by the Minister, where the notice under paragraph (a) of subsection (2) was sent before the establishment of the Office of the Planning Regulator, the recommendations, submissions and observations made by the Office of the Planning Regulator, and the submissions and observations made by any other persons, in relation to the draft development plan in accordance with this section, give the response of the chief executive to the issues raised, taking account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government.*
- e) *The Members of a planning authority shall consider the proposed variation and the report of the chief executive, and may as they consider appropriate, by resolution make the variation, with or without modifications, or they may refuse to make it. A further modification to the variation may be made where it is minor in nature and therefore not likely to have significant effects on the environment or adversely affect the integrity of a European site shall not be made where it refers to an increase in the area of land zoned for any purpose, or an addition to or deletion from the record of protected structures.*

5.0 Screening Exercises

An Appropriate Assessment screening exercise in respect of the potential impacts of the proposed variation upon Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) was carried out in accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It was determined that the proposed variation would have no impacts upon designated sites within or adjoining the County and therefore no Appropriate Assessment was required in respect of this proposed variation.

A screening exercise in accordance with Article 13K of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 was also carried out. It was determined that the proposed variation is not likely to have any significant impacts on the environment and therefore a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was not required in respect of this proposed variation.

6.0 Consultation, Submissions and Observations Received

A presentation on the Proposed Variation was given to Council Members at the Council meeting on 2nd September 2024 and it was agreed to place the proposed variation on public display for comment. Notice of the proposed variation to the County Development Plan was initially advertised in the Northern Standard on the 12th September but due to a minor error was re- advertised in the Northern Standard on the 19th September 2024. This newspaper notice provided details on the nature of the proposed variation (change of zoning of lands in the settlements of Carrickmacross, where a copy of the proposed variation could be viewed, how written submissions or observations could be made and the closing date/time for such submissions to be received. The period for submissions and observations to be submitted closed at 5pm on the 18th October 2024.

Notice of Proposal to vary the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-205 was also published on the Council's website, alongside the variation Explanatory Document, SEA Screening Report and AA Screening Report. Public notification of the proposed variation was also promoted on the Council's Social Media platforms (Facebook & Twitter/X).

Consultation letters were issued to the prescribed bodies as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) on 12th September 2024 and submissions and observations were invited on the proposed variation up to 5pm on 18th October 2024.

A total of ten submissions were received from the following.

1. OPR
2. Department of Transport
3. HSE National Health Service
4. Uisce Eireann
5. Department of Education
6. Meath County Council
7. Louth County Council
8. Office of Public Works
9. National Transport Authority
10. EPA

An overview of content of each submission is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary and assessment of submissions and responses

Ref.	Name	Organisation / Body
1	Anne Marie O Connor	Office of the Planning Regulator
Issue raised:		

Office does not wish to make a recommendation or observation to the Planning Authority in this instance

Overview

OPR recognises the proposed Variation will support the delivery of the County Development Plan's strategic objective SSO 17, to promote and encourage the refurbishment and regeneration of the back lands of Carrickmacross, as well as appropriate development on infill sites, derelict sites, vacant plots and brownfield sites.

OPR broadly welcomes the proposed Variation and the changes proposed to land zoning in the County Development Plan which are part of a wider objective to assist the Planning Authority in implementing modal shift and sustainable development in accordance with the policy objectives of the NPF and the RSES.

OPR notes the objective in the draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 for the preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Carrickmacross. This will allow the Planning Authority to consider, in an integrated manner, how the proposed Variation will support the reallocation of public car parking, provide for improved public realm and deliver on projects such as Cycle Connects. The Planning Authority is strongly advised to consult with the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland at an early stage in the preparation of the future LTP.

Core Strategy and Sequential Development

OPR satisfied that the zoning of these lands from Existing Residential to Town Centre will not have any detrimental implications for the implementation of the core strategy of the County Development Plan, nor will it prejudice the achievement of the housing supply targets and housing delivery for Carrickmacross.

OPR broadly welcomes the proposed Variation which will result in underutilised lands that are sequential to the town centre of Carrickmacross being made available for town centre uses.

Response: Noted and guidance welcomed

Ref.	Name	Organisation / Body
2	Jacqui Traynor	Department of Transport

Issue raised:

No observation to make at this point in time.

Submission attached from the Department of Transport containing guidance for Monaghan County Council in the drafting of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, the contents of which are also applicable to the County Development Plan

Response: Noted

Ref.	Name	Organisation / Body
3	Marie McCaffrey	National Environmental Health Service

Issue raised:

Outlines the background to the variation.

The NEHS has considered the variation and made comments in the context of protecting and promoting population health.

The following observations are made under the remit of Healthy Ireland and relevant health supporting policies, strategies and plans

Climate Change, Air Quality and Noise

Climate Change is widely regarded as the greatest threat to global health this century. The proposed rezoning has potential implications for public health in the context of wider sustainable development, which the rezoning is described as facilitating.

From a public health point of view the provision of additional spaces on land at Shirley House Lane has the potential to impact on health. The generation of green-house gases from the combustion of fossil fuels by vehicles using the site has global and local public health consequences. The NEHS did not find reference to the Monaghan County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 within the background report of August 2024.

The combustion of fossil fuels in an urban environment generates air quality issues for the people who live and visit there. The draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025 – 2031 sets an air quality objective to promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development. The draft plan also recognises that increased traffic as a source of air pollution, is likely to have a detrimental impact on our environment.

The movement of vehicles into and out of the area also generates noise that has potential health implications for the residents of Carrickmacross. As stated in the written statement of the Draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025 – 2031 “the impact of noise pollution is an important consideration in assessing all development proposals as it can impact on peoples’ quality of life and health” (pg 210).

The proposed variation does not adequately assess the potential implications for public health. There is no assessment of the potential effects on public health set out in the background report.

Transport and Infrastructure

The draft written statement of the upcoming Monaghan County Development Plan 2025 – 2031 focuses on the issue of Transport and Infrastructure under Chapter 7. Transport Objective No. 4 in particular sets the objective “to support the creation of an integrated and sustainable transport system to promote a choice of transport modes and low-carbon travel options, including public transport and transport sharing, cycling and walking facilities...”

Strong reference is made under this chapter to the National Climate Action Plan 2024 and the acknowledgement that meeting our 2030 transport abatement targets “will require transformational change and accelerated action across the transport sector.”

Reference is also made to the Monaghan County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 which includes an ambition to “achieve emissions reductions in line with national targets” with relevant actions including implementation of the county walking and cycling strategy, to deliver active travel, to promote transport modal shift and examine the feasibility of a Park and Stride system.

In addition, reference is made to the National Sustainable Mobility Strategy published in April 2022

The proposed variation doesn’t seem to support some of the ambitions set for Monaghan in the draft County Development Plan 2025 – 2031 and the Monaghan County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029.

Response:

Climate Change, Air Quality and Noise

Observations are noted.

The provision of car parking spaces on the subject lands has been considered in the context of the overall parking strategy for Carrickmacross. It is intended that there will be a transfer of parking from Main Street onto Shirley House Lane thereby not resulting in an overall increase in parking spaces in the area. The relocation of parking spaces is intended to accommodate pedestrian/public realm/greening improvements along the main street thereby allowing for improved environment and the encouragement of modal shift from car based usage to cycling and walking. In conjunction with this there will be a parking management strategy to address short and long term parking in the town. In the short term there is the need for the provision of a certain number of parking spaces along Shirley House Lane.

In the context of the potential noise pollution any form of development will need to be measured and assess emissions generated by the proposal and regard will be had to these considerations as part of any future Part VIII application for these lands

Transport and Infrastructure

Observations are noted.

The proposal has been considered in the context of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, the emerging Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031, the National Climate Plan 2024, the Monaghan County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the National Sustainable Mobility Strategy.

4	Elaine Heneghan	Uisce Eireann
Issue raised:		
No objection to the variation		
Please note that in order to maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water, the discharge of additional surface water to Uisce Éireann sewers is not permitted. Available GIS information indicates a stormwater sewer network exists in the road which could potentially cater for the proposed car parking development.		
Response: Observation and advisory commentary are noted		
5	Alan Hanlon	Department of Education
Issue raised:		
Department acknowledges the rationale for the proposed change of zoning and wishes to state that the proposed change has no impact on future education provision within Carrickmacross		

Response: Observation and advisory commentary are noted		
6	Alan Russell	Meath County Council
Issue raised:		
No comments to make in relation to proposed variation		
Response: Noted		
7	Gareth McShane	Louth County Council
Issue raised:		
No objections to the proposed variation No 6 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025		
Response: Noted		
8	Conor Galvin	Office of Public Works
Issue raised:		
<p>OPW welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed Variation No. 6 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 - 2025.</p> <p>Submission is made specifically with regards to flood risk and the application of the Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DECLG/OPW, 2009), hereafter referred to as the 'Guidelines'. Further submissions on the draft Plan may be made by the OPW with regards to the estate portfolio, heritage and other areas of responsibility.</p> <p>OPW has carried out a review of the documents and note the continued commitment to adhere to the appropriate application of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) and Circular PL02/2014.</p> <p>Should any changes to zoning designations in areas of flood risk be implemented in future, it is important that a flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail is carried out and that there is appropriate justification for any decisions made as set out in the Guidelines</p>		
Response: Noted		
9	Michael MacAree	National Transport Authority
Issue raised:		
<p>It is noted that the consultation document states that Monaghan County Council has prepared a 'Carrickmacross Town Parking Strategy'. However, it does not appear that this document is included in the consultation documents as part of the Variation, the NTA were unable to find the document online. The consultation states that '<i>From the exercise it was demonstrated that there was a clear lack of car parking spaces available within the town centre.</i>' No figures of existing, proposed or short-fall figures are provided as part of the consultation document.</p> <p>The NTA acknowledges that while the proposed Variation solely relates to the proposed re-zoning of the site for 'Town Centre' use, the consultation documents specifically refer to car parking as the justification for the proposed rezoning.</p> <p>It is noted that the consultation document states that the <i>Carrickmacross Public Realm Plan 2019</i> includes that the '<i>objective is to reduce car parking on the Main Street in Carrickmacross to allow for the creation of</i></p>		

better pedestrian friendly and visually attractive urban spaces. Whilst the longer-term goal is to move away from private cars to walking, cycling and public usage in the short-term, car parking must be able to migrate from on-street to off-street locations to facilitate this goal'. It is further noted that the Town Centre First Plan for Carrickmacross (2024) includes an action 'Development of town centre car parking and associated pedestrian linkages off Shirley House Lane'.

It is noted that a Local Transport Plan has not been prepared for Carrickmacross and that both the existing *Development Plan* and the *Draft Monaghan Development Plan 2025-2031* call for the preparation of such a Plan (referred to as a Transport Study in the former).

P 6 To prepare a Transportation Study for Carrickmacross Town and environs subject to the availability of resources (Monaghan Development Plan 2019-2025).

TP 2 To prepare Local Transport Plans using the Area Based Transport Assessments process in Monaghan Town and Carrickmacross, and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans for the towns of Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay during the lifetime of this plan, subject to funding and available resources (Draft Monaghan Development Plan 2025-2031).

The above studies - the Car Parking Strategy, the Public Realm Plan and the Town Centre First Plan have all been prepared in the absence of a Local Transport Plan and therefore there is a risk that any interventions proposed, such as car parking, are developed in the absence of a holistic look at all transport modes and required networks and infrastructure which would be identified therein.

The NTA in conjunction with the local authority is currently investing in active travel infrastructure in Carrickmacross and it would be the intention that further active travel infrastructure would be facilitated within the town. The *CycleConnects Ireland's Cycle Network* for Carrickmacross includes a range of primary and secondary cycle routes within the town, including a primary route on Main Street and a secondary route on Shirley House Lane.

It is noted that Main Street is an important public transport route with corresponding bus stops located on it. However, the bus stops have no proper stopping area and are not accessible. The NTA are currently investing in the *Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan* which aims to greatly enhance bus services throughout the Country, including further serving Carrickmacross town. The provision of off-street car parking could be tied to the freeing up of space on the Main Street to provide improved bus-stop infrastructure.

The development of off-street car parking within towns should be clearly linked to the removal of on-street parking in order not to jeopardise the investment in both active travel and public transport infrastructure and services. Where further car parking is provided without any corresponding reduction in car parking on-street, the benefit of the provision of off-street parking in terms of potential public realm gain for the Main Street is also lost.

Recommendation

The NTA recommends that the planning authority ensures that the proposed Variation does not undermine the objective to prepare a Local Transport Plan for Carrickmacross and that it does not specifically relate to an assumption with regard to an appropriate level of car parking for the town.

Response: The comments submitted by the NTA are noted

A Transportation Study and Transport Plans for Carrickmacross are identified within the emerging plan as necessary to be prepared and will be required to inform any future infrastructure plans and levels of car parking within the town. It is acknowledged that the issues require a holistic view of all transport mode to enable modal shift to occur.

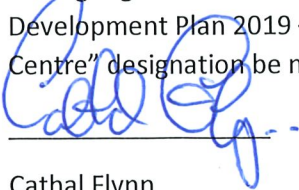
The local authority would concur with the identified aim of improving bus infrastructure along the Main Street and agree that this should be linked with freeing up on street parking spaces in this location.

10	Cian O' Mahoney	E.P.A
Issue raised:		
<p>EPA functions as an SEA environmental authority do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans or programmes.</p> <p>EPA provides a self-service approach' via our guidance document '<i>SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources</i>' which sets out our key recommendations for integrating environmental considerations into Local Authority land use plans, and recommends this document is taken into account. Guidance on the SEA process, including an SEA pack and checklist, is available at: https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-resources-and-guidance-/ and recommends that it is taken into account.</p> <p>EPA <i>Good Practice Guidance for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening</i> (EPA, 2021) provides specific stand-alone guidance.</p> <p>The <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities</i> (DHLGH, 2022) provides advice on carrying out SEA in the land-use planning sector.</p> <p>Must ensure that the plan or programme is consistent with the need for proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>Adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure should be in place, or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the plan or programme.</p> <p>Must take into account the need to align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as incorporating any relevant recommendations in sectoral, regional and local climate adaptation plans.</p> <p>Must ensure that the plan or programme aligns with any key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p> <p>The recommendations, key issues and challenges described in our published State of the Environment Report <i>Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 (EPA, 2020)</i> should be considered.</p> <p>Our website contains various SEA resources and guidance, which can be accessed at: https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-topic-and-sector-specific-guidance-/</p> <p>Refers to the Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) WebTool and EPA SEA WebGIS Tool.</p> <p>Refers to EPA website Catchments.ie</p> <p>Any modifications to the plan following its adoption should be screened for potential for likely significant effects.</p> <p>Must ensure that the plan complies with the requirements of the Habitats Directive where relevant and refers to EPA AA GeoTool.</p> <p>A copy of the screening determination should be sent to the relevant environmental authorities consulted and made available for public inspection in your offices and on your website.</p>		
<p>Response: The advice and recommendations have been taken into consideration in the finalisation of the SEA Screening Determination.</p>		

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Following the consultation in respect of the proposed variation all submissions were considered and summarised.

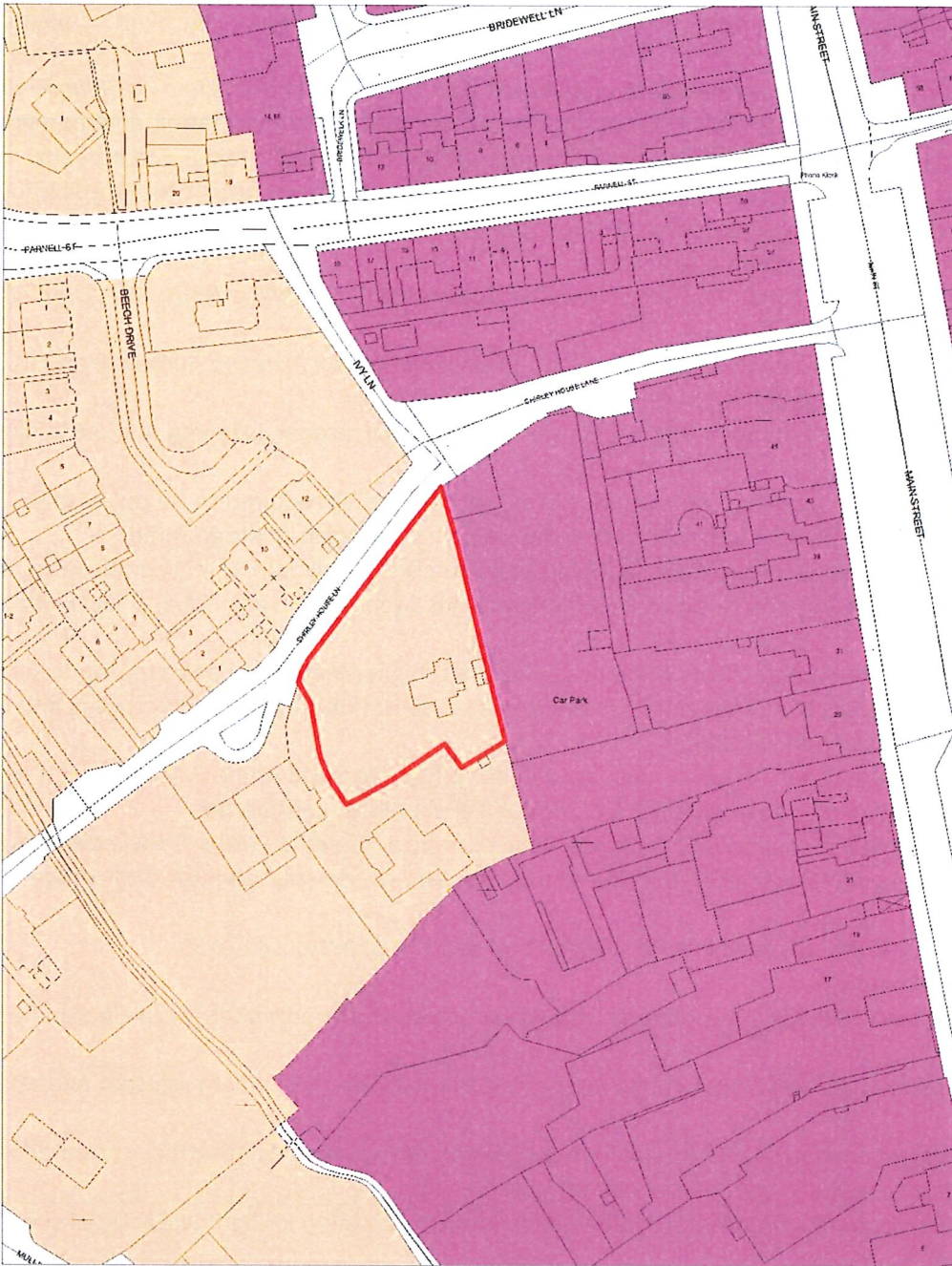
Having regard to the above, it is recommended that this proposed variation of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 – 2025, to change the zoning of the lands from “Existing residential” to “Town Centre” designation be made, with no modifications



Cathal Flynn

Director of Services

Appendix 1

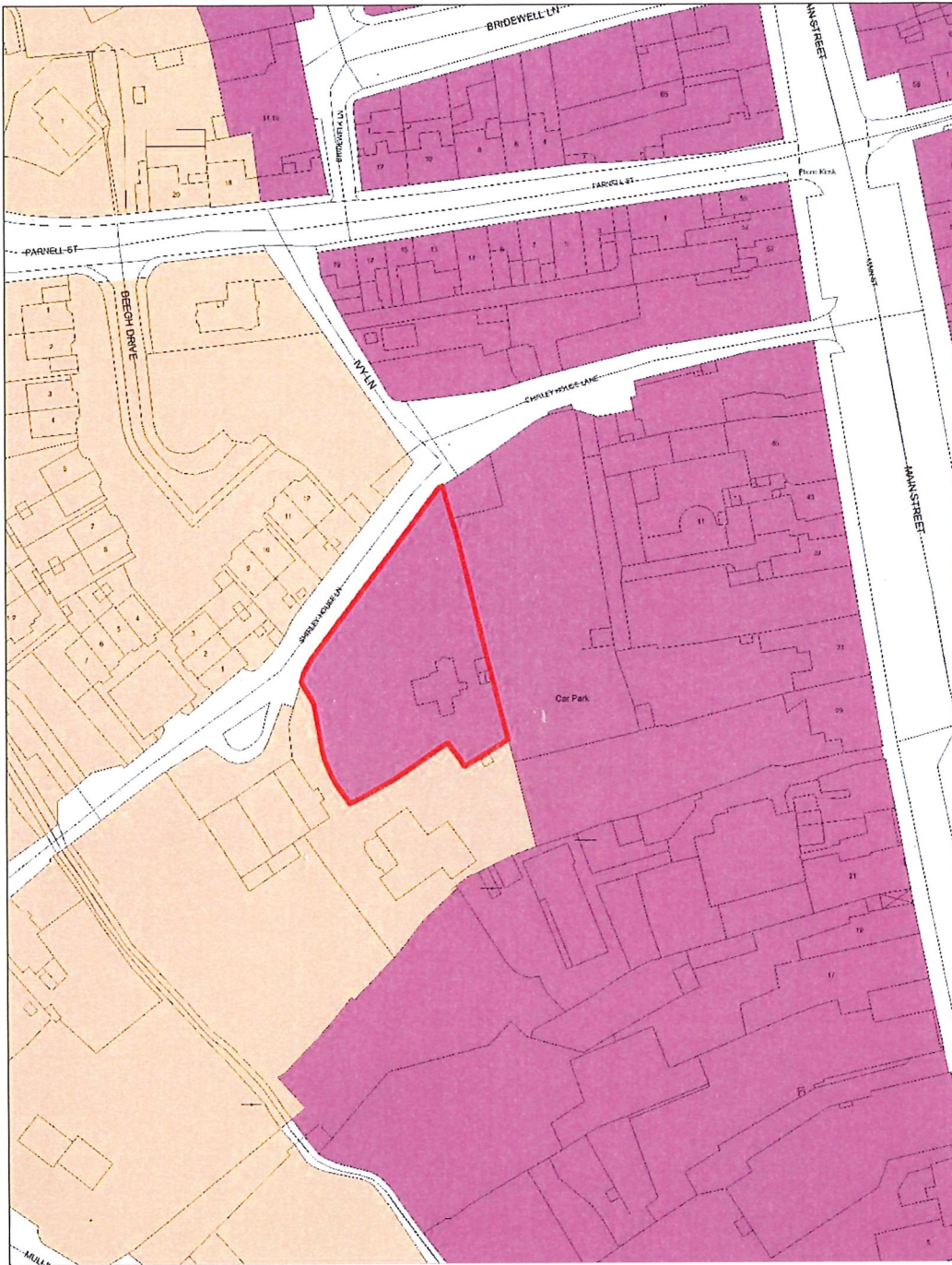


Carrickmacross Town

Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 (Existing Zoning)

 Site Location

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Carrickmacross Town

Proposed Variation to Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025

 Site Location

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