

An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## **S. 4(1) of Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016**

### **Inspector's Addendum Report ABP-313306-22**

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#### **Strategic Housing Development**

Demolition of existing structures on site, construction of 569 no. residential units (325 houses and 244 apartments), creche, neighbourhood centre, and all associated site works. Application includes an EIAR and NIS.

#### **Location**

Great Connell, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

#### **Website**

[www.greatconnellshdnewbridge.com](http://www.greatconnellshdnewbridge.com)

#### **Planning Authority**

Kildare County Council

#### **Applicant**

Aston Limited

#### **Prescribed Bodies**

1. Uisce Éireann (formally Irish Water)
2. National Transport Authority

3. Transport Infrastructure Ireland
4. Inland Fisheries Ireland
5. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage - DAU

**Observer(s)**

1. Brian, Colette & Amy Harte
2. Ces and Marian Smyth
3. Melanie Tierney
4. Optimise Design on behalf of Paul & Wendy Aitken
5. Perry and Kate Whitworth
6. Robert Dunne
7. Vladimir Sedyshev

**Inspector**

Paul O'Brien

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1. This Addendum Report (AR) should be read in conjunction with the Inspector's Report (IR) on file dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 prepared in respect of strategic housing development (SHD) application ABP-313306-22. This SHD application was submitted to the Board (now Commission) under section 4(1) of the Planning & Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act, 2016 (as amended).
- 1.2. Pursuant to Commission Direction CD-0200299-25, a limited agenda oral hearing was held<sup>1</sup> as provided for under section 18 of the Planning & Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act, 2016. The matters addressed at the limited agenda oral hearing were:

1. Given the expiration of the Newbridge Local Area Plan (2013–2019 – Extended to 2021), clarity as to the current zoning status of the subject site.
2. The relevant provisions of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, with particular regards to the 'Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy' and Table 2.8 which indicates a Housing Target for 2023-2029 of 1,601 units for Newbridge and the number of dwellings already approved within this timeframe (i.e. what is the remaining capacity?).

## **2.0 Relevant Planning Policies relating to the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing**

### **2.1 Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013-2021, extended to 2021 (expired)**

The following referred to the subject lands when the plan was in place:

The lands were subject to two different zonings:

- C – 'New Residential' with the objective 'To provide for new residential development'.

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<sup>1</sup> Remotely, on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

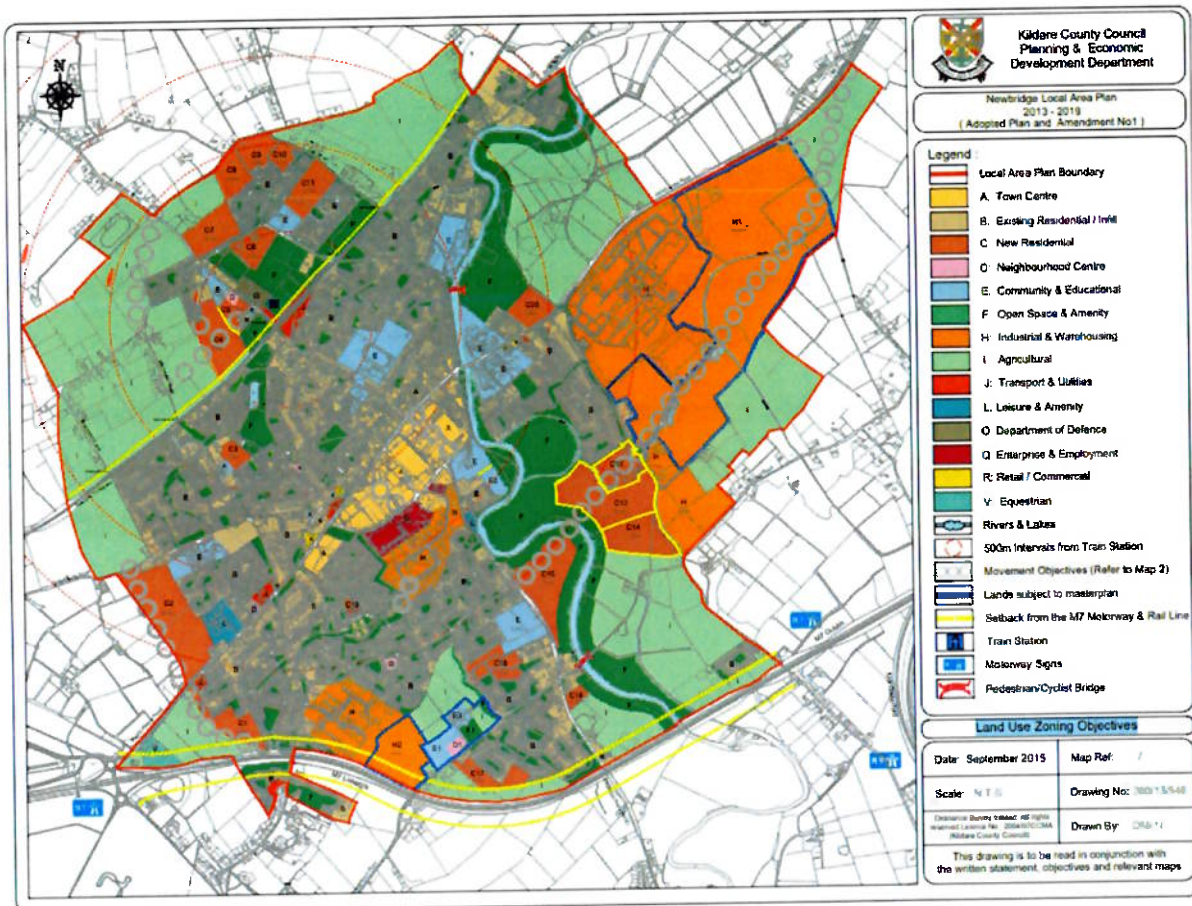
- F – ‘Open Space & Amenity’ with the objective ‘To protect and provide for open space, amenity and recreational provision’.
- A ‘Movement Objective’ is indicated crossing the site from the north east at the Great Connell roundabout (starts further to the north east with a connection to the R445 – Naas Road) and which heads in a south west direction over the River Liffey and on to the lands on the opposite bank of the river.
- The C (New Residential) zoned lands were broken into C12 and C13 and the C13 lands had a specific objective for ‘The provision of a small, high quality designed neighbourhood centre to serve the local population will be acceptable as part of the overall development of these lands’.

Table 4 provides the ‘Newbridge Housing Unit Allocation 2006 – 2019’ as follows:

Table 4: Newbridge Housing Unit Allocation 2006–2019

Settlement Type	Town	2006 Pop Census	2011 Pop Census	2017 Pop Target	2017 Housing Units Target	2019 Housing Units Target	Percentage of Allocated Growth for Newbridge in the County 2006–2019
Large Growth Town II	Newbridge LAP	18,520 (consisting of A & B below)	21,561	23,254	2,839	3,469	10.1%
A	Newbridge Legal Boundary (Town)	17,042	17,127 (+0.5%)				
B	Newbridge Environs	1,478	4,434 (+ 200%)				

The following is a screenshot of the ‘Land Use Zoning Objectives’ map – subject lands are C13 and C14 located to the centre of the map and the grey circles indicate the route of the proposed route to connect Greatconnell to the south of the town centre.



### Status of Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013-2019, extended to 2021

- The Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019, was in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended, extended by the members of Kildare – Newbridge Municipal District at their municipal district meeting on Wednesday 19th December 2018. The following resolution was adopted at this meeting:  
 'To extend the life, by a further 2 years (up to and including 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021), of the Newbridge Local Area Plan (2013-2019), in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, (as amended).'
- The adopted amendment to the Local Area Plan provided an extension to the life of the plan but also sets a clear end date for the operation of this plan, that of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2021.
- The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, under Chapter II - Local Area Plans sets out the following:

#### Local Area Plans

Section 18(4) of the Planning Act 2000, as amended states that:

*(a) A local area plan prepared under this section shall indicate the period for which the plan is to remain in force.*

*(b) A local area plan may remain in force in accordance with paragraph (a) notwithstanding the variation of a development plan or the making of a new development plan affecting the area to which the local area plan relates except that, where any provision of a local area plan conflicts with the provisions of the development plan as varied or the new development plan, the provision of the local area plan shall cease to have any effect.*

#### Application and Content of Local Area Plans

Section 19 (1) (c) of the Planning Act 2000, as amended states:

*Section 20 (3)(a) shall be complied with—*

*(i) in the case of the first local area plan, not later than 2 years after the making of a development plan under this Part, and*

*(ii) notwithstanding section 18 (5), at least every 6 years after the making of the previous local area plan.*

From the above, it is clear that the Local Area Plan expired in December 2021.

There was no further opportunity to extend the plan as this is not permitted under the Planning and Development Act. Potentially the Kildare Development Plan could have been varied to incorporate the Newbridge Local Area Plan, but this was not done. I am therefore of the opinion, having regard to the history of the Local Area Plan and the requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000 that the Newbridge Local Area Plan expired on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2022.

## **2.2 Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029**

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 was adopted on the 9th of December 2022 and came into effect on the 28th of January 2023 and is the current statutory plan for County Kildare, including Newbridge.

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 does not include a zoning map for Newbridge.

Section 2.3.4 of the Kildare County Development Plan sets the context of County Kildare within the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan and which forms part of the settlement strategy for Kildare with four settlements being within the area - Maynooth, Leixlip, Newbridge and Kilcock. These all contain large scale residential and economic development areas that can deliver significant development in a sustainable manner within the metropolitan area.

Newbridge is also one of the 'Self Sustaining Towns'. Self-Sustaining Towns are towns which have a high level of population growth and a weak employment base, with a moderate level of jobs and services. The objective is to strengthen their overall economic offering, through biotechnology, knowledge based digital enterprises, logistics, tourism etc.

Under Policy UD A3 it is an action of the Council to 'Prepare and implement on a phased basis Town/Village Renewal Masterplans for a number of settlements including Newbridge. The Town Renewal Masterplan for Newbridge will sit underneath the LAP on the planning hierarchy and in delivering the KCDP.

Kildare/ Newbridge is one of five Municipal Districts in County Kildare. The population of County Kildare, 2022 figures, is given in Table 2.2 of the County Development Plan:

County	2016	2022	2026	2031
Kildare	222,500	246,977	249,000 - 254,000	259,000 - 266,500

**Table 2.2 - Transitional Population Projections**

**Chapter 2 – 'Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy'** indicates that Newbridge is a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town' and is located on a Multi-Modal Transport Corridor which extends from Monasterevin to the west of the county and continues to Leixlip to the north east. This corridor includes the M7 motorway and the Dublin to Cork railway line.

Self-Sustaining Towns are described as having 'High levels of population growth and a weak employment base'. According to Table 2.3 'Housing Target for County Kildare', there is demand for 18,425 homes over the period of 2020 – 2031 and Table 2.4 – 'Methodology used to determine housing targets to the end of the Plan period', indicates a demand for 9,144 units over the period of this development plan which is 2023 to 2028 for County Kildare.

The following objectives are relevant to Newbridge/ the subject site:

CS O1 seeks to 'Ensure that the future growth and spatial development of County Kildare is in accordance with the population and housing allocations contained in the Core Strategy which aligns with the regional growth strategy as set out in the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region and further specified in the 'Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning'.'

CS O4 seeks to 'Ensure that sufficient zoned and adequately serviced lands are available to meet the planned population and housing growth of settlements throughout the county in line with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy.'

CS O5 seeks to 'Promote compact growth and the renewal of towns and villages through the development of underutilised town centres and brownfield sites, and where appropriate, pursue through active land management measures a co-ordinated planned approach to developing appropriately zoned lands at key locations, including regeneration areas, vacant sites and under-utilised areas in cooperation with state agencies, while also maintaining a 'live' baseline dataset to monitor the delivery of population growth on existing zoned and serviced lands to achieve the sustainable compact growth targets of 30% of all new housing within the existing urban footprint of settlements.'

CS O7 seeks to 'Promote and facilitate the development of sustainable and socially integrated communities through, a plan-led approach that is informed by settlement capacity audits and social infrastructure audits by providing for land use zoning designations capable of accommodating employment, environmental education, community, leisure, education campuses, childcare, recreational and cultural facilities having regard to the quality of the receiving environment, and any landscape character, archaeological and architectural heritage sensitivities.'

Objective CS 09 seeks to 'Review and prepare on an ongoing basis a portfolio of Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the mandatory LAP settlements (and environs, where appropriate) of Naas, Maynooth, **Newbridge**, Leixlip, Kildare, Athy, Newbridge, Kilcock, Monasterevin, Sallins, Clane and Kilcullen in accordance with the objectives of the County Development Plan and all relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Where any objectives of an LAP are deemed to be no longer wholly consistent with the County Development Plan, the Planning

Authority, will, where practical, consider options regarding the initiation of a review and/or prepare a statutory amendment to the LAP.

**Chapter 3 – Housing** provides appropriate densities in Table 3.1. In the case of 'Town Centre & Brownfield Sites' they have a 'Site Specific' density, and developments on 'Public Transport Corridors' would be 50 units per hectare, and 'Outer Suburban/ Greenfield' sites would be 30 to 50 units per hectare.

The section 'Development at the Edge of Larger Towns' refers to Circular Letter NRUP 02/2021 and for a town the size of Newbridge, regard to be had to the character of the area and 'the full range of outer suburban density, from a baseline figure of 30 dwellings per hectare (net) may be considered, with densities below that figure permissible to facilitate a choice of housing types provided that, within a neighbourhood or district as a whole, average densities achieve the minimum recommended standards of the Guidelines'.

A number of objectives are provided in this chapter, and the following are considered to be relevant to this development:

**HO 015:** 'a) Require that new residential developments provide for a wide variety of housing types, sizes and tenures.

b) Specify target housing mixes, as appropriate, for certain sites and settlements as part of the Local Area Plan process.

c) Require the submission of a 'Statement of Housing Mix' with all applications for 10 or more residential units.

d) Require that all new residential developments in excess of 5 residential units provide for a minimum of 20% universally designed units in accordance with the requirements of 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach' published by the National Disability Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. Further detail in respect of unit mix is set out in Chapter 15: Development Management Standards'.

**HO 016:** 'Promote the provision of high-quality apartments within sustainable neighbourhoods by achieving suitable levels of amenity within individual apartments, and within each apartment development, and ensuring that suitable social infrastructure and other support facilities are available in the neighbourhood. Apartment development must be designed in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15.2, 15.3 and 15.4 (Chapter 15), where relevant, to ensure a high standard

of amenity for future residents.’.

**Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 has been subject to a number of variations.**

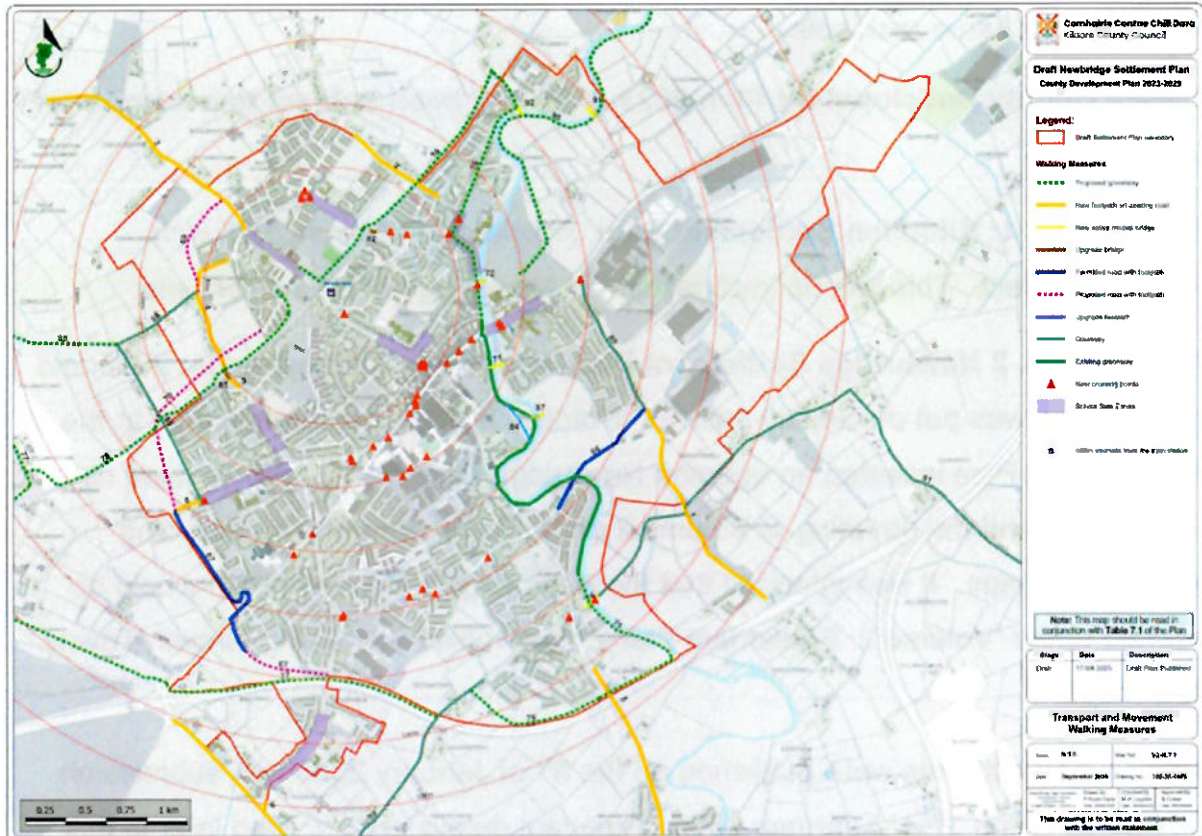
**Variation No 1: Kilcullen Settlement Plan.** Adopted 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 with immediate effect. This has no implications for Newbridge or the subject site.

**Variation No. 2 Newbridge Settlement Plan.** Published 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and this variation was put on display until 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The amendments to the Development Plan included an updated Newbridge Core Retail Area, revised naming of Volume 2 and the updating of Volume 2 of the Development Plan including revisions to maps. It was intended that the Newbridge Settlement Plan would be inserted under ‘Volume 2: Settlement Plans, Part 1: Self-Sustaining Growth Towns - Newbridge.’

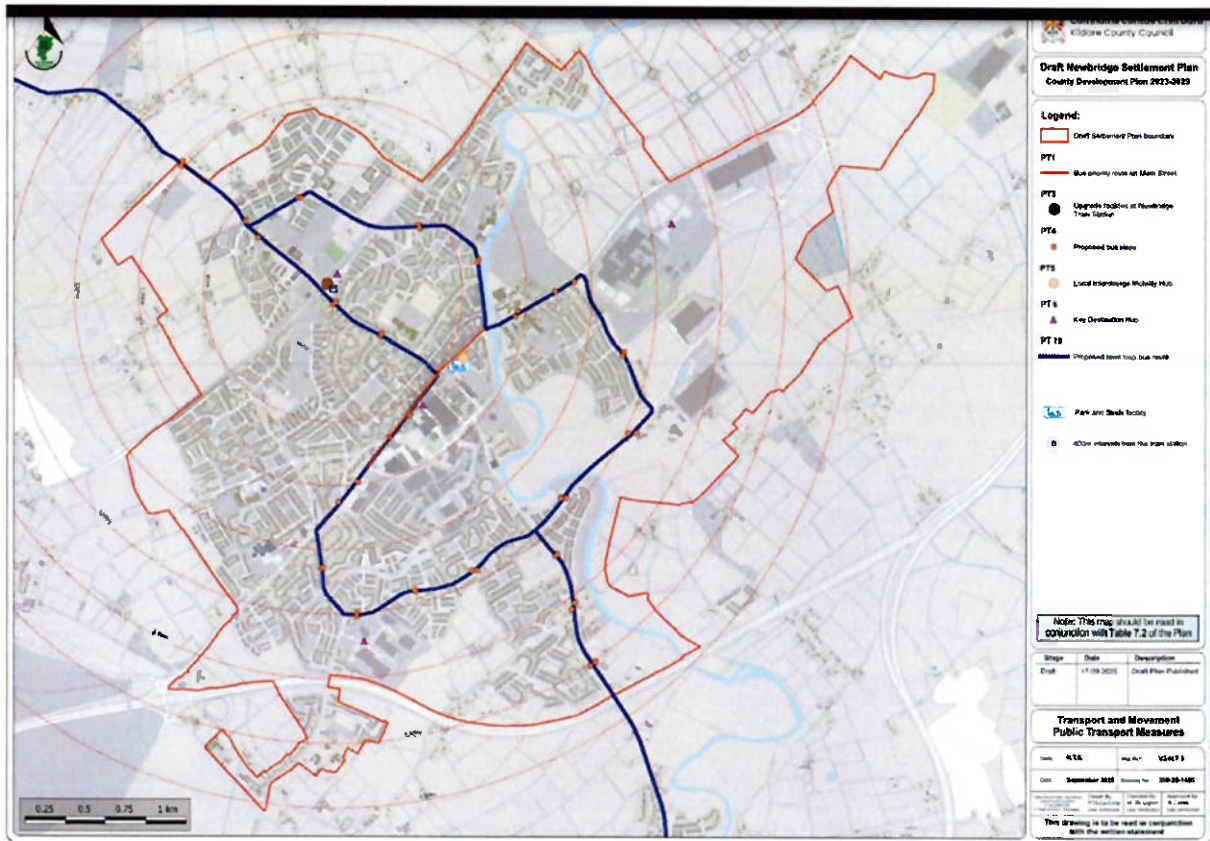
Material Amendments were published on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 with submission allowed up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2026. Relevant details are provided later in this report.

**Maps:**

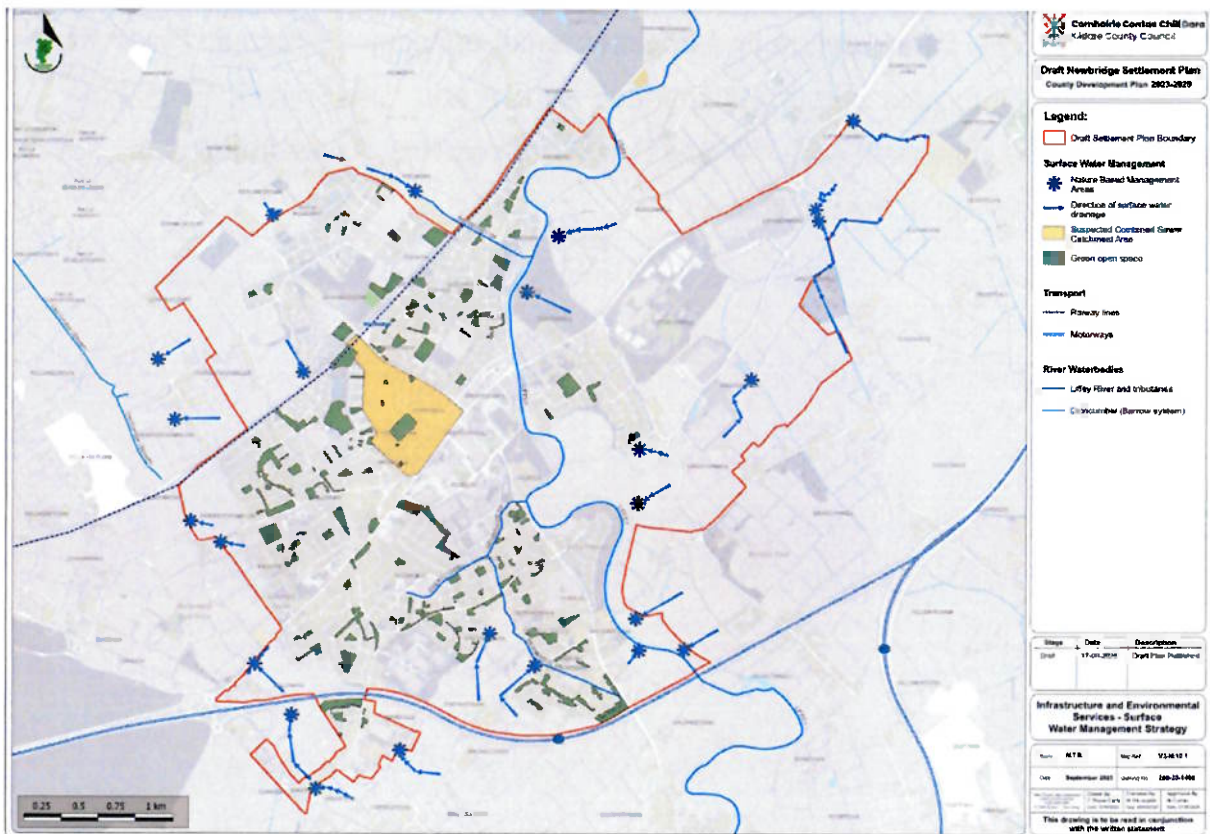
A number of Maps are provided, and I have included screenshots of those relevant to this development in the following sections of this report:



Map Ref. V2-N:7.1 – Transport and Movement Walking Measures – Indicates the alignment of the Newbridge South Outer Ring Road (NSORR). This and a road to the west of Newbridge would provide for improved movement to/ from the town centre.



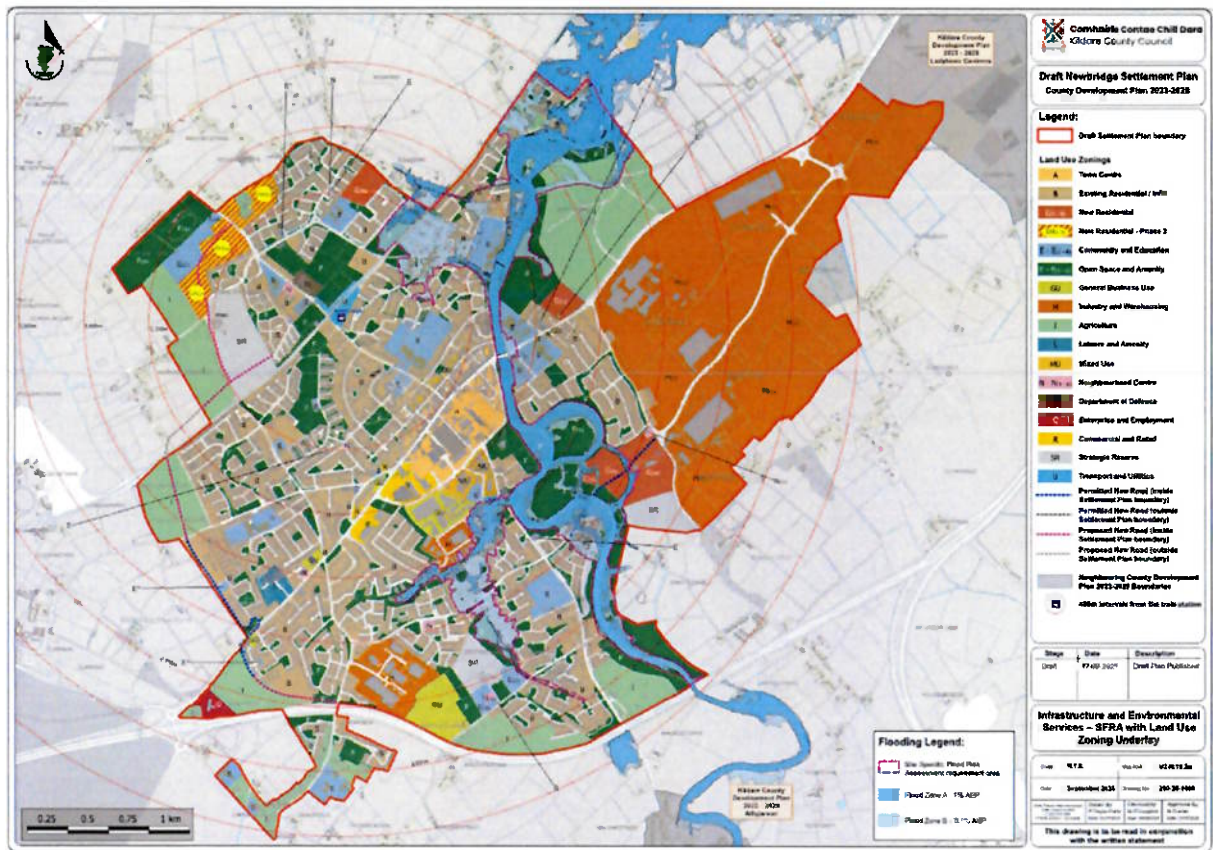
Map Ref. V2-N:7.3 – Transport and Movement Public Transport Measures – Indicates a 'Proposed town loop bus route' which passes through the subject site.



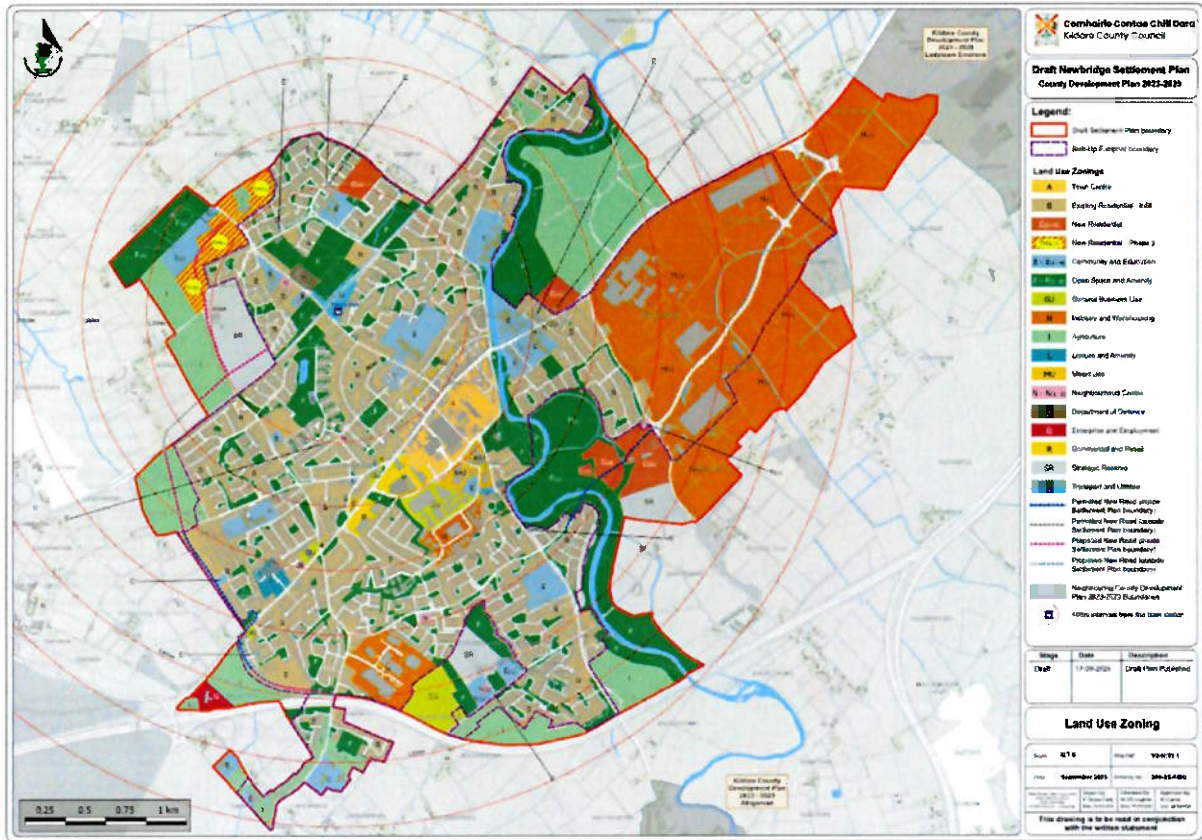
Map V2-N:10.1 – Infrastructure and Environmental Services – Surface Water Management Strategy – Two Nature Based Management Areas are indicated on the subject site lands.



Map V2-N:10.2 – Infrastructure and Environmental Services – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Indicates section within Flood Zone A and ‘Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment requirement area.’ A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment was provided in support of the application.



Map V2-N:10.2a – Infrastructure and Environmental Services – SFRA with Land Use Zoning Underlay. Site is zoned for New Residential development. Lands to the south are zoned for Strategic Reserve and they do not form part of this application site. The NSORR is indicated on this map.



Map Ref. V2-N:11.1 – Land Use Zoning – Site is zoned for New Residential and Open Space and Amenity with NSORR also indicated on this map. This map does not indicate the flood zone extents.



## 11. Implementation

### Appendix A: Maps

### Appendix B: Overview of Site Infrastructure Requirements

#### **In terms of the subject site:**

- Site is zoned C - New Residential and F – Open Space and Amenity. There is no change in the zonings from the previous local area plan.
- The Newbridge South Outer Orbital Route (NSORR) is indicated on the maps.
- Chapter 11 – ‘Implementation’ includes Section 11.1 Key Development Areas (KDAs) of which there are two and one includes the subject site under the ‘Greatconnell KDA’. Table 11.1 provides details for this KDA which I have summarised as follows:
  - Site area is 14.9 hectares consisting of the C3 – New Residential zoned lands. The indicative net density is given as 45 dph and this provides for an estimated yield of 570 units.
  - Under the heading ‘Vision’ it seeks ‘To provide for the creation of a compact residential neighbourhood that consolidates development within the eastern part of the town. To contribute to the delivery of a portion of an urban neighbourhood park for Newbridge, in addition to the realisation of the final section of the Newbridge Southern Outer Orbital Ring Road (NSOORR), including the bridge over the River Liffey.’ Under the section on ‘Built Form and Urban Structure’ the proposed development of these lands should ensure good integration with Wellesley Manor to the north and development to include for green/ blue infrastructure features. Street blocks to be 80-120m in dimension as per DMURS and a mix of housing types/ styles to be provided. Proposed areas of open spaces to be suitably overlooked with good legibility provided throughout the development area. A neighbourhood centre to be provided to the north of the NSRR and which should be developed as a local landmark.
  - Under the heading ‘Connectivity and Movement’ the NSRR to be provided in full and in accordance with the phased development of residential units here. Suitable pedestrian/ cycle links to be provided within the site and to adjoining lands.

- Under the heading 'Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Spaces and Surface Water Drainage' development should retain/ reuse existing vegetation as far as practicable. New landscaping to be provided and all open spaces to be completed to a high quality. The development of these lands should provide for a MUGA and surface water management should utilise Nature-based solutions where possible.
- Under the heading 'Boundaries and Entrance Treatments' development should provide for understated boundaries and interface areas and details shall be in accordance with Section 15.4.5 of the Kildare County Development Plan.

Figure 11.1 provides a plan of the 'Greatconnell KDA Urban Design Framework'.

**Note on Greatconnell KDA:**

The subject site in terms of the C3 lands forms the indicative residential elements of the KDA, though the layout of the residential blocks is different to that provided in Figure 11.1. The subject application provides for greater vehicular/ pedestrian and cycle permeability through these lands, and the layout of open space is also different. The location of the NSORR routing is also different to that indicated in Figure 11.1.

**Other Documents:**

An Appropriate Assessment Screening/ Determination and a SEA Screening/ Determination were undertaken.

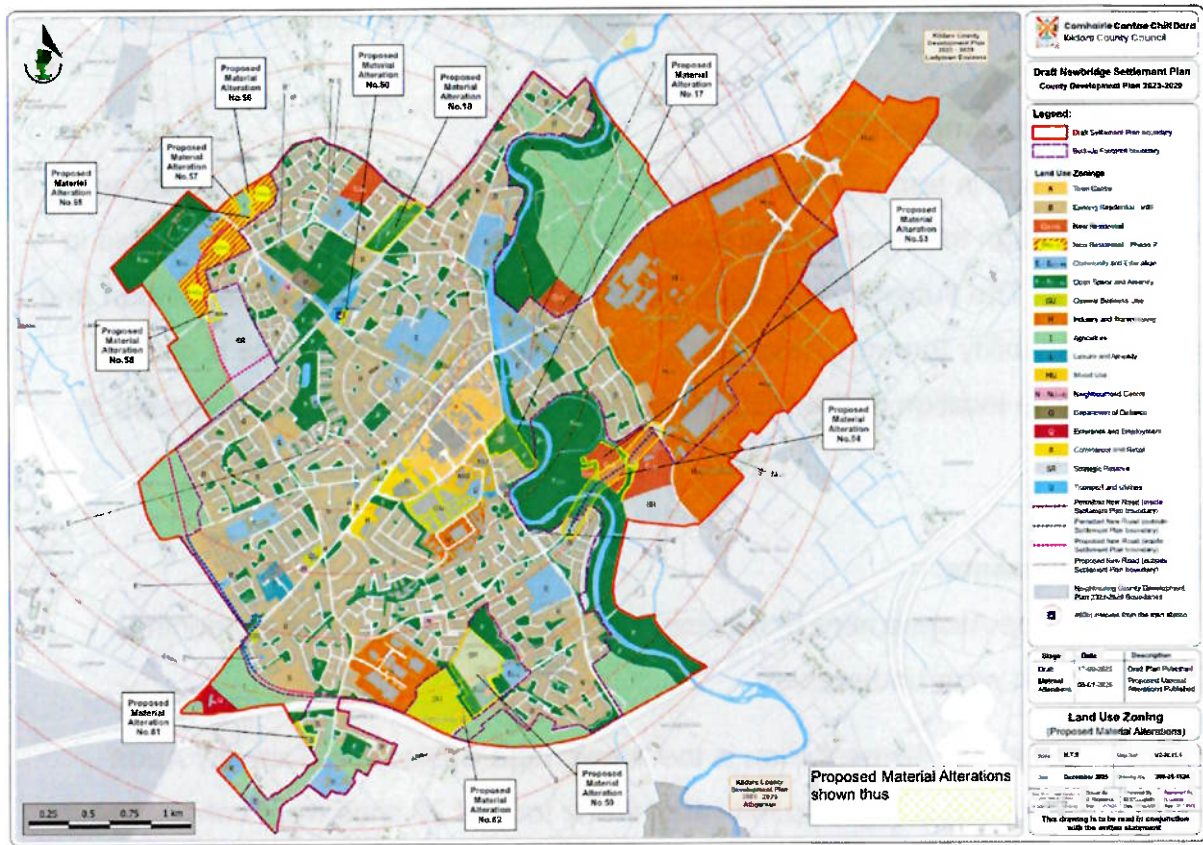
In support of the Settlement Plan is the 'Newbridge Settlement Capacity Audit'. Table 3.1 and supporting map indicates that a total of 28 sites were considered for residential development with a total area of 346.36 hectares identified. Table 4.1 provides a 'Matrix Assessment Criteria' and which assigned a weighting to the identified lands. The subject site was given the ID designation of 6 and achieved a site score of 547 putting it second of the Tier 2 sites. Under Section 7.1 – Residential Lands it states '...the Tier 2 sites considered under the sustainable planning criteria scoring are all serviceable during the lifetime of the Plan.'

**OPR Submission**

I note that the OPR made a submission on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2025 on Proposed Variation No. 2. The submission made no specific comments on the subject site. Comments on flooding and the provision of a bus route could have implications on this site, though such impacts were not explicitly stated.

### Proposed Material Alterations to Proposed Variation No 2

Material alterations were prepared and published on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2026. Submissions could be made from the 6<sup>th</sup> of January until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2026. A number of the alterations are relevant to the subject site/ proposed development. Map Ref. V2-N:11.1 indicates the location of proposed material alterations and I have included a screenshot of this map for the benefit of the Commission as follows:



As per the above map, Material Alteration No.53 and No. 54 are relevant to the subject site.

Material Alteration No. 53 states:

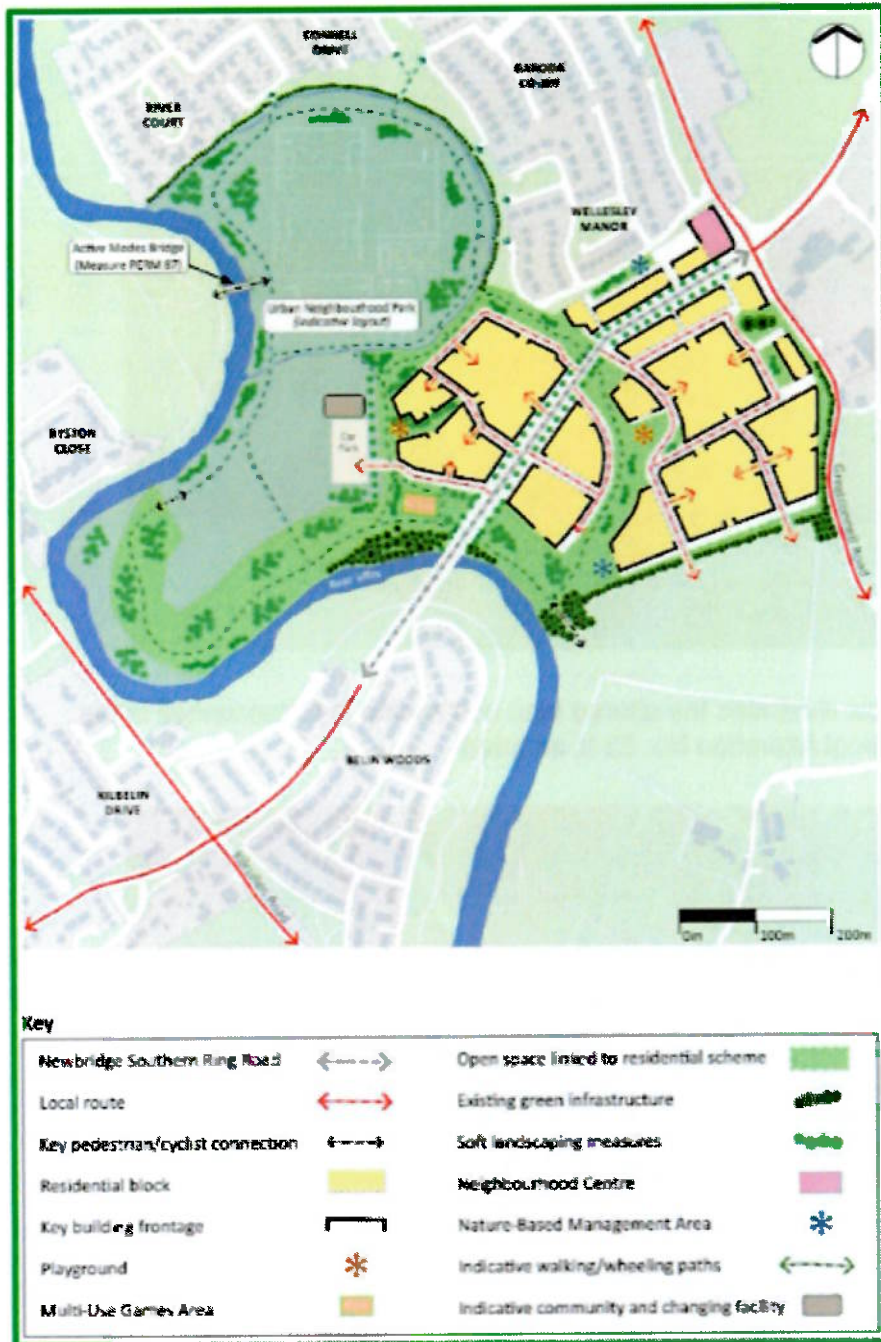
Amend Map Ref: V2 - N:11.1 Land Use Zoning, circa 0.71 hectares (as outlined in yellow) of 'F: Open Space and Amenity' to C: New Residential as follows:



**Note:** the image below illustrates the altered land use zoning in Greatconnell in the event Proposed Material Alteration No. 53 is adopted.



As a consequence, the Greatconnell KDA Urban Design Framework is revised as a result of the revised zoning on these lands. The revised Framework map is as follows:



Material Alteration No. 54 includes the following revisions to the Newbridge South Outer Ring Road (NSORR):

Map Ref: V2-N:11.1 Land Use Zoning, amend alignment of the Newbridge Southern Ring Road within the area highlighted yellow below:



**Note:** the yellow dotted line in the image below illustrates the amended alignment of the Newbridge Southern Ring Road in the event Proposed Material Alteration No. 54 is adopted.



Chapter 3 of the Written Statement is to be revised due to Proposed Material Alteration No.1 and which includes revisions to the Section B table as follows:

Section B						
Revised Housing Targets Growth Core Strategy Allocation <sup>1</sup>						
Units allocated to Phase 2 New Residential to prepare for Revised Housing Growth	Cp2 (1)	No	Tier 1	5.91	207	50 dph
	Cp2 (2)	No	Tier 2	<del>5.35</del> 6.19	<del>225</del> 260	60 dph
	Cp2 (3)	No	Tier 2	<del>4.39</del> 3.77	<del>176</del> 151	50 dph
	Cp2 (4)	No	Tier 2	8.41	252	40 dph
<b>Sub Total:</b>				<del>16.65</del> 24.28	<del>608</del> 870 units	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<del>59.04</del> 62.87 ha	<del>1,796</del> 1,984 units	

In addition, Proposed Material Alteration No. 2 also revises Chapter 3 and 11 and the following revisions are relevant to the subject site:

The full build-out of the residential units will be ~~fully dependent on the completion of the bridge and delivered in tandem with~~ the Newbridge Southern Ring Road.

Chapter 11 Implementation, Section 11.1.1, Table 11.1 Greatconnell KDA Design Brief, amend the first line under Connectivity and Movement, as follows:

Vehicular access to this KDA shall be provided via the Newbridge Southern Ring Road (NSRR) which shall be constructed ~~in full~~, in tandem with the phased residential development within the KDA.

**Note on the Proposed Material Alterations (PMA):**

PMA No. 53: There is an increase in the area of C3 residential lands by 0.71 hectares which was previously proposed to be zoned F – Open Space and Amenity. The indicative layout does not align with that submitted by the applicant as there are now sections zoned F that are proposed for residential development/ streets by the applicant. There are also section of lands zoned C3 that are proposed for open space use. I note that the KDA provides for an area of open space that runs from north west to south west through the site and which incorporates the existing watercourse through the site; this is not provided for on the submitted plans in the applicant’s proposal.

The KDA is also proposed to be revised as this reflects revised flood zone details. This allows for the additional C3 zoned lands, which are greater in area than

previously indicated and allows for a greater number of residential units on these sections of the subject site.

PMA No. 54: This provides for an amended alignment of the NSORR. I am satisfied that this alignment is closer to that indicated by the applicant. The 'missing' section of the NSORR has received planning permission with its alignment known and the route should not be considered indicative at this time.

**Variation No.3 To give effect to the Ministerial Guidelines published in accordance with Section 28 of the P&D Act 2000 (as amended).**

The relevant guidelines are:

1. NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025), which were published to give effect to the National Planning Framework First Revision (2025).
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).

The Variation includes 'Settlement and Site Capacity Audit. A supporting document of Proposed Variation No. 3 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied)' published on the 29th of October 2025. This was on display until 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025.<sup>2</sup>

While not adopted to date, in the interest of completeness I have set out proposed amendments that are of relevance to Newbridge/ subject lands:

**'Variation No. 3:**

Proposed Variation No. 3 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied) comprises of amendments to Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 15 of the Written Statement (Volume 1) of the Plan, to include the following overarching policy amendments to the Plan:

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<sup>2</sup> This Variation as outlined was on public display 29<sup>th</sup> October to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025. KCC outlined at the OH that it is envisaged that the Variation would go before the Council in January. Like any variation of a CDP there is potential for material alterations and further display period as such the Variation on display is not necessarily the one which may ultimately be adopted by Kildare County Council public representatives.

- Updated Chapter 1 (Introduction & Strategic Context) and Chapter 2 (Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy) to include an increased housing growth requirement for the remaining 3 years of the Plan to align with the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025).
- Updated Chapter 2 (Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy) and Chapter 3 (Housing) to include revised density ranges and criteria for new residential developments, as required by the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).
- Updated Chapter 15 (Development Management Standards) to include new standards for residential developments to align with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).'

### **Implications for Newbridge:**

#### **Amendment No. 2**

The 'Aim' of Chapter 2 is revised 'To provide for the delivery of an additional 16,970 housing units to accommodate an additional 46,498 people, and to continue to create the environment...'. The increase in unit numbers to include additional units in Newbridge.

#### **Amendment No. 3 and No. 4**

Amend the text to reflect the National Planning Framework – First Revision (2025) and the National Development Plan Review 2025, and also to include the updated National Planning Objectives (NPOs).

#### **Amendment No. 5**

Amend text to reflect the National Planning Framework – First Revision (2025) and the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025).

#### **Amendment No. 6**

Amend text to incorporate Ministerial Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, following the adoption of the Kildare County Development Plan. These include the 'NPF Implementation: Housing

Growth Requirements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (July 2025)' and the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)'.

**Amendment No. 8**

To amend text and figures to reflect the National Planning Framework – First Revision (2025) and the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025).

**Amendment No. 10**

To amend the text and insert tables to incorporate the National Planning Framework – First Revision (2025) and also the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025). This gives an additional 7,826 residential units up to 2028.

**Amendment No. 11**

This provides an update of the Residential Density Section of the Development Plan in relation to the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).

**Amendment No. 13**

This provides an update of Table 2.8 to have regard to the 2022 Census and the also the density ranges under the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024). The following is the relevant section for Newbridge:

Settlement Name	Census 2022 Population	Settlements percentage per total County Population	Housing & Population Target %	Population Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4) (persons)	Housing Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4) (units) in accordance with HSTGs	Residential Zoned Land Requirement (ha)	Residential Density Range (UPH DPH) – Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024)
Newbridge	24,366	9.83%	11.60%	2917	1061	35	35-150

**Amendment No. 14**

This includes new table 2.8A/ 2.8B and also Maps V1-2.3 to V1-2.9. Footnote 14 states: 'It is noted that the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan was published for public consultation on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 as part of Proposed Variation No. 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Objective CS O29 provides for the release of lands zoned 'New Residential – Phase 2' in the adopted Newbridge Settlement Plan.'

### **Amendment No. 16, and No. 16**

These are updates to the Core Strategy. Objective CS 029 states (as relevant to Newbridge):

'Facilitate the sequential development of urban areas by releasing the lands zoned Phase 2' specified in Table 2.8A so that appropriate residential developments and ancillary uses may be progressed. The lands to which this objective refers to are:

(ii) Land zoned 'New Residential - Phase 2' in the Newbridge Settlement Plan <sup>22</sup>,'

The footnote states: "It is noted that the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan was published for public consultation on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 as part of Proposed Variation No. 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Objective CS O29 provides for the release of lands zoned 'New Residential – Phase 2' in the adopted Newbridge Settlement Plan.'

### **Amendment No. 17 and No. 19**

Updates to the Development Plan to incorporate the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024). This results in a Net Density Range of 40 – 100 dph to be generally applied for within Newbridge.

### **Amendment No. 23 to No. 31**

Updates the Development Management Standards in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).

A number of documents were provided in support of this variation, and which includes AA Screening/ Determination, SEA Screening/ Determination and a Settlement and Site Capacity Audit. The purpose of the Settlement and Site

Capacity Audit is to tier lands in accordance with the National Planning Framework (2025) and the Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022). Newbridge is only referenced in this document in the context of the Newbridge Settlement Plan, and which includes its own 'Newbridge Settlement Capacity Audit – A supporting document of the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan' (Kildare County Council, 2025)

I note that the OPR made a submission on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2025 on Proposed Variation No. 3 and there were no specific comments made on Newbridge. Areas of land included in the variation were to be amended but no reference was made to Newbridge including the subject lands.

### **2.3 National Planning Framework (2025)**

The National Planning Framework 2025 sets out that the 'major policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements established under the NPF 2018 will be continued, rather than allowing the continual expansion and sprawl of cities and towns out into the countryside, at the expense of town centres and smaller villages.'

Of relevance to the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing is:

- **National Policy Objective 11:** Planned growth at a settlement level shall be determined at development plan-making stage and addressed within the objectives of the plan. The consideration of individual development proposals on zoned and serviced land subject of consenting processes under the Planning and Development Act shall have regard to a broader set of considerations beyond the targets including in particular the receiving capacity of the environment.

In the interest of completeness this section should be reading conjunction with section 6 of the original IR dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

## **3.0 Oral Hearing**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This section summarises the online Limited Agenda Oral Hearing that took place on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2025. A complete recording of the oral hearing is available

for the Commission's consideration and is attached to the file. It commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.07am. The following parties were represented at the hearing:

Applicant –

- Declan Brassil - DBCL
- Michael Durkin – Murphy Group
- David Browne – Senior Counsel
- Mark Thuillier – Arthur Cox

Kildare County Council –

- Martin Ryan (Senior Executive Planner).

Third Party Observers –

- Conor Cassidy
- Sara Shine (on behalf of Kate Whitworth)
- Richard Kelly

A submission was received by the Commission from the applicant and Kildare County Council in advance of the hearing and these were circulated to all parties.

### **3.1 Inspector's Opening Statement**

I made an opening statement setting out relevant procedural aspects of the hearing, including the rationale for the holding of the hearing. Housekeeping procedures were set out and a clear statement that only the matters provided in the limited agenda could be raised and commented on. Those participating and those observing were requested to identify themselves and I have listed these above.

### **3.2 Submission to the Hearing on Behalf of the Applicant**

- 3.2.1** Declan Brassil led the submission on behalf of the applicant providing an overview of the proposed development and followed on to detail specific Item no. 1 - status of the zoning, and also Item no. 2 – core strategy figures, as raised in the limited agenda. The background information included details on the site layout plan, nature of the development (as per public notices), the status of the proposed bridge over the River

Liffey forming part of the Newbridge Southern Orbital Ring Road (NSORR) which was subject to Local Objective over a number of years, provision of public open space, again subject to Local Objective over a number of development plans, and the status of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029.

The NSORR has received a grant of permission from Kildare County Council following the receipt of further information. In response to a further information request under PA Ref. 221504, a number of residential units within the subject site were indicated to be removed as part of the road development. The submitted EIAR indicated that there would be no impact on the residential amenity of proposed units forming part of this development, and there would be no need for the removal of these residential units.

Note: The Planning Authority requested the removal of these units under PA Ref. 221504, the applicant submitted revised plans and details indicating their removal through a further information response. No specific condition was included in the grant of permission for the road requiring setbacks etc. that would give rise to the removal of units within the subject SHD proposal.

### **3.2.2 Agenda Item No. 1:**

Mr Brassil referred to an April 2024 grant of permission under ABP Ref. 315884-23 on lands in Newbridge with the Zoning Objective C, and no issue was raised about the zoning of this site in the context of the LAP having expired.

In terms of Draft Variation No. 2 – Newbridge Settlement Plan. This includes the rezoning of part of the site for Objective F – Open Space due to flooding but there was no requirement for this as per the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and a Justification test, which was passed. Residential development can be provided here without the need for any housing units to be removed due to flooding.

The decision on this permission may be premature pending the completion of the variation process though the applicant considered that the Commission can make a decision having regard to the planning precedent here.

### **3.2.3 Agenda Item No. 2**

There two separate issues here. Firstly, the number of units permissible through the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 and details are provided in the

applicant's response submission. The number of units permissible is well within the number of units allowed here, 1061 was permissible.

Secondly the Issue of Material Contravention Statement submitted with the application. This MC Statement refers to the previous Development Plan when the application was lodged. Material changes have occurred through the adoption of the new Development Plan in 2023 and through the additional allocation of housing permitted. The revised National Planning Framework was issued in 2025 and a draft Variation aligning the Development Plan with the NPF guidance was issued on the day of the Oral Hearing. This amendment allows for an additional 850 units to the already allowed for 1061 units for Newbridge.

### **3.3 Submission to the Hearing by Kildare County Council**

In relation to Question 1 of the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing: Martin Ryan on behalf of Kildare County Council confirmed that the subject site was zoned C12 and C13 and which allowed for residential development. Adjoining lands, which form part of the development allow for the provision of open space.

Kildare County Council has received legal opinion and is of the view that the Newbridge Local area Plan, whilst extended up to 2021 and which has not been further extended, reviewed or revoked, and therefore is considered, in conjunction with the Kildare County Development Plan (as varied) is the appropriate planning policy framework for the consideration of development proposals in accordance with section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It was not stated if the legal opinion considered that these lands were zoned for residential or similar development.

Note: I have not seen this legal opinion, and which was not provided at the Oral Hearing.

Kildare County Council have made full regard to the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan and the subject lands to be developed are zoned for residential development and open space.

Mr Ryan on behalf of Kildare County Council stated that the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan was put on display, and the public consultation phase would conclude on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2025. It was planned to hold a Council Meeting in

December 2025. The Statutory process would be expected to be completed in March 2026. The PA is of the opinion that the Newbridge LAP is still in place, and the site is zoned residential.

Question 2 of the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing: Housing provision of 1,061 units to 2028, housing completions from 2023 of 703, therefore capacity of 358 units remain. Details are provided in the draft Newbridge Settlement Plan, published on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025. 537 valid permitted units in the life of the plan.

Reference is made to Variation No.3 which was published on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, the day of the Oral Hearing and this variation allocates an additional 850 units. This variation is proposed to go before the elected members in January 2026.

At this point I asked the Planning Authority two questions:

Q1: Does the Residential Zoning remain in place: Mr Ryan confirmed that zoning of the site is C12 and C13 – Residential, and Kildare County Council consider that the LAP is still in place.

Q2: What is the unit allocation for Newbridge: Mr Ryan confirmed that 358 residential units remain in the allocation post completion of approved development. This does not take into account this application.

### **3.4 Submissions to the Hearing by Observers**

None of the third-party observers who attended the hearing submitted a written submission prior to the hearing. Sara Shine, who spoke on behalf of a number of residents including Kate Whitworth, was the only third-party observer to speak.

- 3.4.1. **Sara Shine** – Requested that there be a reduction in the number of units proposed, but she was informed that such an issue was outside of the scope of the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing and she had no further issues to raise at this time.

Full details are contained in the audio recording of the hearing and in KCC and the applicant's written submissions, which are on file.

A break was taken from 10.33 and the Hearing resumed at 10.47.

### **3.5 Question put to/ response of Senior Counsel David Browne**

- 3.5.1 On resumption of the Hearing I asked could David Browne, Senior Counsel, to give his opinion on the status of the site zoning.

3.5.2 He responded that it was his opinion that the zoning status of this site continues until replaced with a new or revised zoning. There was nothing precluding the granting of permission on this site having regard to the status of Newbridge as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town.

3.5.3 I asked the question in the interest of clarity, has the LAP expired but at the same time does the zoning continue to be in place. Mr Browne confirmed that it was his opinion that the Newbridge LAP has expired but the zonings indicated in the LAP continue on. This remains the case until it is formally replaced with another zoning.

### **3.6 Questioning**

#### **3.6.1 Questions from Planning Authority to Applicant**

Kildare County Council had no questions to ask the applicant.

#### **3.6.2 Questions from Observers**

- Richard Kelly – No questions to ask at this time.
- Sarah Shine – Wished to raise points outside of the Limited Agenda and was informed that this was not possible at this point in the process. Informed that comments already made to the appeal would be considered in the Inspector's original report. No further questions to make at this time.

#### **3.6.2 Questions from Applicant to Planning Authority**

No particular questions to ask the Planning Authority. Short oral submission was made in relation to the numbers listed and was in accordance with Item No. 2.

Kildare County Council residential unit numbers are in accordance with the Newbridge Settlement Strategy. Developed lands will change from New to Existing Residential. Allocation is from the current plan in place. Methodology is consistent with Guidelines for the Making of a Development Plan, and the applicant had no dispute with this method. Planning applications use a different methodology and it is the number of units permitted since the variation in 2020. Core Strategy came in, in 2010. Newbridge Settlement Plan includes reference to SHDs permitted and other sites. 50% of permission is expected to be completed by 2028, and balance after that. The NPF growth requirements have included an additional 850 units which will

be in place in January 2026 and provides for adequate capacity to serve Newbridge and to include the subject development.

I noted the Draft Newbridge Settlement Strategy and Section 3.2. The Planning Authority had no further comment to make on this other than the site would be developed for residential use and about 50% would be complete in the lifetime of the Kildare Development Plan. Variation No.3 was only published on the day of the Oral Hearing.

### **3.7 Closing Submissions**

The applicant made a closing statement. Mr Browne SC, states that their position was that the Commission should wait until Variation No. 2 – preparation of the Newbridge Settlement Plan, is complete before making a decision on this application as this would give clarity on the zoning status of the site, even though the Commission are not precluded from making a decision on this application. It would be preferable both legally and from a planning point of view to await the finalisation of Variation No.2 and there is nothing in the 2016 Act that prevents the Commission from awaiting the completion of the plan process.

I queried if the Newbridge Settlement Plan could be adopted in 16 weeks if there were no material alterations<sup>3</sup> on this. Mr Ryan expected that Material Variations would be raised, but yes, the Settlement Plan could be adopted within the 16 week period.

Neither Kildare County Council nor any of the Third Party Observers made Closing submissions.

### **3.8 Inspector's Closing Comments**

I made a brief closing statement and then closed the limited agenda oral hearing at 11.07.

## **4.0 Assessment**

- 4.1 This Addendum Report should be read in conjunction with the IR on file dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

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<sup>3</sup> Material Alterations were put on display on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2026, with submissions accepted up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2026. A report on submissions will be required after the public display period is complete, and this report will be brought before the elected members of Kildare County Council to accept/ reject or amend the Newbridge Settlement Plan.

- 4.2 The reason the Commission directed that a limited agenda oral hearing be held was because the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013- 2019, extended to 2021 under which the application site was mainly zoned C – *New Residential* with the objective: ‘To provide for new residential development’, has expired. The Commission was precluded from seeking further information and circulating the response to all parties under the Strategic Housing Development legislation, so it took the decision in the interest of natural justice to have a limited agenda oral hearing, as provided for under section 18 of the Planning & Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act, 2016, as it is the only mechanism by which these issues could have been addressed in a public forum.
- 4.3 Having regard to the contents of the Inspector’s Report and the information presented at the limited agenda oral hearing, I am satisfied that the only outstanding matters to be addressed are the two matters for which the limited agenda oral hearing was held. These are individually considered in this section.

**Clarity as to the current zoning status of the subject site.**

- 4.4 The first issue on the agenda of the Oral Hearing was to clarify the status of zoning of the site. The applicants’ submission highlights how they are of the view that the Newbridge LAP 2013-2019, extended to 2021, including the zoning, remains in force until such time as the LAP is reviewed or another plan is made (irrespective of the period of 2013- 2019, extended to 2021 referred to within the LAP). In particular, Section 1.1 – ‘Local Area Plans Status and Process’ of the LAP states that: ‘The plan shall cease to have effect at the expiration of the six years from that date unless this period is extended by resolution in accordance with Section 19(1)(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2013.’
- 4.5 The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (CDP) was adopted on the 9th of December 2022 and came into effect on the 28th of January 2023. Section 2.7.1 of the CDP prescribes zoning objectives only for small towns and villages and provides that individual LAPs will be prepared for higher-order settlements such as Newbridge. The Newbridge Local Area Plan expired in 2021 and the process of replacing this plan is currently underway with the closing date for submissions on the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan having concluded on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2025. From the

information provided in the Oral Hearing, it is expected that this Settlement Plan will be adopted in the first half of 2026.

- 4.6 The applicant submits that although the Newbridge LAP has expired, the zoning as indicated within the LAP remains in place, and the site is therefore zoned for a mix of residential and open space uses. Mr David Browne, SC, confirmed this opinion, without specific reference to legislation, when directly asked in the Oral Hearing. Kildare County Council were of a similar opinion; the LAP has expired but the zonings continue in place until such time as they are changed through the adoption of a new Plan.
- 4.7 From the available information it can therefore be stated that the Newbridge Local Area Plan has expired. I note the applicant's reference to the April 2024 grant of permission under ABP Ref. 315884-23, not a SHD application, also within Newbridge but post the 2021 expiration of the LAP. Other development has been permitted since this date in Newbridge. The applicant and the Planning Authority have reported that the Newbridge LAP has expired. I am of the opinion that the Newbridge Local Area Plan expired in 2021, and no plan has operated since that date. Applications have been made and can be considered in terms of the 'proper planning and sustainable development of the area', but which are not SHD applications as is the case here.
- 4.8 The subject application was made under the Strategic Housing Development process and under the Residential Tenancies Act 2016 (the 'SHD Act') was limited to development 'on land zoned for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses'. The applicant and the Planning Authority have both stated that they consider that the subject site remains zoned for residential development. The applicant's legal opinion was clear in the Oral Hearing; the Newbridge LAP has expired but the zoning continues until such time as it is replaced. No specific legal justification was provided here. The process is underway for the preparation of a new plan for Newbridge, and the draft Settlement Plan indicates that the relevant lands will be zoned for residential development.
- 4.9 In my view, the Newbridge Local Area Plan has expired and whilst extended to December 2021, the period of extension has now expired, with no opportunity to further extend the Newbridge Local Area Plan. The statement under Section 2.7.1 of the current Kildare County Development Plan prescribes zoning objectives only for small towns and villages and states that individual LAPs will be prepared for higher-

order settlements such as Newbridge. I note Policy Objective CS 09 which sets out the intention to 'Review and prepare on an ongoing basis a portfolio of Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the mandatory LAP settlements (and environs, where appropriate) of Naas, Maynooth, Newbridge, Leixlip, Kildare, Athy, Celbridge, Kilcock, Monasterevin, Sallins, Clane and Kilcullen in accordance with the objectives of the County Development Plan and all relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.'

4.10 Therefore at the time of writing this report there is no LAP for Newbridge in place, and I note that the process to provide for a replacement has commenced and I also wish to highlight Variation No. 2 of the Kildare CDP 2023-2029 which went on display and receipt of submissions closed on the 16th of October 2025. The stated reason for this variation is to '...provide a Settlement Plan for Newbridge to replace the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 - 2019 (as amended and extended to 2021). The Settlement Plan will provide a planning policy framework to guide the future sustainable development of housing, employment, transportation, retail and social infrastructure for the town of Newbridge. The Settlement Plan aligns with the overarching plan hierarchy which has been set out at national, regional and county level.'

4.11 At the centre of the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing was the question, whether the zonings on site are still in place despite the expiration of the Newbridge Local Area Plan, and whether the proposal can be considered on the basis of the County Development Plan in place. As outlined above I am of the view that the Newbridge LAP has expired. I note that notwithstanding the expiry of the Local Area Plan I am satisfied that there are clear policies and objectives within the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 that refer to development in the settlement of Newbridge that could be relied on to assess proposals for development, in particular I refer to Chapter 2 and the Core Strategy.

4.12 However, the current proposal before the Commission is for a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application. Under the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016, Strategic Housing Development under Section 3(a) is defined as:

*Section 3 of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act of 2016 set out the definition of SHD as,*

*(a) the development of 100 or more houses on land zoned for residential use or for a*

*mixture of residential and other uses,*

*(b) the development of student accommodation units which, when combined, contain 200 or more bed spaces, on land the zoning of which facilitates the provision of student accommodation or a mixture of student accommodation and other uses thereon,*

*(c) development that includes developments of the type referred to in paragraph (a) and of the type referred to in paragraph (b), or containing a mix of houses and student accommodation or*

*(d) the alteration of an existing planning permission granted under section 34 (other than under subsection (3A)) where the proposed alteration relates to development specified in paragraph (a), (b), or (c).*

- 4.13 The wording of the SHD legislation is prescriptive in that it must be on land that is specifically zoned for residential use. The legal advice provided by the applicant was clear in that they consider the subject lands to be zoned for residential and amenity purposes, even though they accept that the LAP has expired. The Planning Authority agreed with the applicant that the land remains zoned. I note that the application was lodged in April 2022, after the expiration of the LAP and the application was considered to be valid at this time. It is my opinion that there are no zonings in place on these lands at present. There is nothing in legislation to state what happens on the expiry of an LAP, in the absence of a replacement plan. In this case the LAP was extended by an additional two years, but the objectives and zonings were not incorporated into the County Development Plan or other plan. The SHD legislation requires a site to be suitably zoned for residential development, my opinion is that the subject lands are not zoned and that permission should be refused for this development.

**Conclusion on the current zoning status of the subject site:**

- 4.14 Having regard to the available information and details provided through the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing, I consider that the Newbridge Local Area Plan has expired. The subject lands are located within the area of the expired Newbridge Local Area Plan. The applicant, and the Planning Authority are of the opinion that the zoning status of the LAP remains in place, even though the LAP has expired. No supporting evidence in terms of legal reference was provided to justify this opinion. Whilst I note that there are policies and objectives within the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 that refer to development in the settlement of Newbridge, these do not include the

zoning of lands for particular uses, and it is a requirement of the 2016 Act that SHD applications be made on lands zoned for residential development. There is no such zoning in place considering the expiration of the LAP and the development cannot be considered appropriate in the absence of necessary zonings specifically residential zoning. I therefore recommend that permission be refused for this development.

Note to the Commission: The applicant requested that a decision on this development be held off until the adoption of Variation No.2 of the Kildare County Development Plan and which would put in place a Newbridge Settlement Plan. This is considered in further depth under Section 4.29 of this report.

### **Core Strategy and Unit Numbers**

- 4.15 Agenda item no. 2 sought clarity with particular regard to the 'Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy' including Table 2.8 of the Kildare County Development Plan indicates a Housing Target for 2023 - 2029 of 1061 units for Newbridge and a residential zoned land requirement of 35 hectares. My assessment will focus on these points as raised in the Oral Hearing direction.
- 4.16 The proposed development entails the provision of 569 residential units (325 no. houses, 244 apartments, neighbourhood centre and a creche) on a greenfield site located on the eastern side of Newbridge, on the eastern side of the River Liffey. The subject site and the lands to the south/ south east are in agricultural use. To the north is residential development consisting of Wellesley Manor, River Court and Liffey Drive.
- 4.17 The primary purpose of the Core Strategy is to provide an 'evidence-based rationale for the quantum of land proposed to be zoned specifically for housing, population and employment or mixed-use to accommodate and align with projected demand.' The Core Strategy identifies Newbridge as one of the four Self-Sustaining Growth Towns under the Kildare Settlement Hierarchy (Table 2.7).
- 4.18 Core Strategy Table 2.8 indicates a Housing Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4) (units) in accordance with HSTGs of 1061 units for Newbridge. Within the Core Strategy regard has been had to extant planning permissions and the zoned land provisions at the time of preparation which included the subject site as part of the Newbridge LAP and at the time of the adoption of KCDP in 2023 the allocation for Newbridge was 1061 units. The 1061 units is significantly less than the 3,459 housing units up to 2019 as per Table 4 of the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019. The net allocation as per

Table 5 was 2,609 units – the difference with the 3,459 units is the exclusion of units that were permitted but not yet constructed.

- 4.19 Table 2.8 also establishes a residential zoned land requirement of 35 hectares for the town of Newbridge to accommodate this housing target of 1061 units. This is also below the figure of 102 hectares set out in Table 10 of the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019.
- 4.20 Table 3.1 of the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan indicates a housing target of 1,061 units for the period 2023 – 2028, which is in line with the Core Strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan. Table 3.2 provides Housing Completions and there is capacity for 358 units.

**Table 3.2: Housing Completions**

Housing Completions	Units
Core Strategy Allocation to Q4 2028	1,061 units
Housing Completions 2023 within the BUA (subtract)	225 units
Housing Completions 2024 within the BUA (subtract)	158 units
Housing Completions 2025 Q1 within the BUA (subtract)	79 units
Constructed Units 2023, 2024 and 2025 outside of the BUA (subtract)	241 units <sup>5</sup>
	<b>358 units remaining</b>

- 4.21 Table 3.3 provides details on ‘Significant Extant Planning Permissions’ and there are 537 units permitted and which are expected to be delivered in the period Q3 2025 and Q4 2028. Table 3.4 provides details on ‘Live and Pipeline Future Housing Schemes’, with two sites referenced including the subject site. A footnote on the subject site indicates that this is approximately half of the total of 569 units, with 285 units to be provided over the lifetime of this plane.
- 4.22 The applicant has set out their opinion on what capacity is available, 1,061 units were allocated through the Kildare County Development Plan in 2023. 200 units have been granted since then, leaving a capacity of 861 units, which the applicant has described as a shortfall on the 2023 – 2028 allocation. The proposed development will meet

some of this allocation and there will remain 292 units to be provided through other development in the Newbridge area. The applicant has reported that the development is in accordance with the Core Strategy and Table 2.8 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029.

4.23 The applicant has also referred to the ‘NFP Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, 2025 and which is a material change in circumstances that they consider to be relevant to the Commission’s assessment. Appendix 1 of these guidelines provides the housing growth requirements for each Local Authority area and those for Kildare are in Table 4.3 which I have included below:

Existing 2020 Requirement (Housing Target)	Annual Housing Supply	Housing Requirement (Housing Target) Supply Adopted Development Plan - Annual Housing Requirement (Housing Target)	New Annual Housing Requirement to 2034	New Annual Growth to 2035	New Annual Housing Requirement to 2040
1,535		1,524	2,755		1,918

The increase in housing allocation is 81%, though this is up to 2034 and which is a longer time period than the Development Plan period from 2023 – 2029. The applicant refers to Policy and Objective 2 of the guidelines and which states: ‘It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that ‘additional provision’ of up to 50% over and above the housing growth requirement for each local authority set out in Appendix 1 is reflected within the relevant City or County Development Plan, subject to consistency with the policies and objectives of the National Planning Framework – First Revision (2025), relevant Ministerial Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), relevant Government policy, and the undertaking of necessary environmental assessments.’ The applicant has calculated there to be a requirement for 4,133 units up to 2034 or to 2028, the end of the Development Plan period.

4.24 As Table 2.8 allocated 11.6% of the County Kildare housing requirement to Newbridge, then applying this to 4,133 units gives a requirement for an additional 1,438 units for Newbridge. Excluding the 50% over provision, there would be a housing allocation of 959 units in the period to 2028 (note the Kildare Development Plan is up to 2029). The proposed development would be consistent with the Kildare County Development Plan in terms of securing implementation of the Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and the Housing Strategy.

4.25 Having regard to the above, I concur that there is adequate capacity available to accommodate this development within the current Kildare County Development Plan Core Strategy. I refer the Commission to Proposed Variation No.3 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 with public consultation having closed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2025. This variation has not been adopted to date, but it incorporates much of what was in the ‘NFP Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities’. Some key figures listed in this variation are a Housing Demand for County Kildare of 1,535 units per annum in the period 2020 – 2031. Table 2.4 provides the ‘Methodology used to determine housing targets to the end of the Plan period (as of Q1 2023)’.

Step	Source	Calculation
1.	Housing demand 2020-2031 <sup>2</sup>	18,425
2.	CSO – dwelling completions for 2020	- 1,661 <sup>3</sup>
		<b>= 16,764/11<sup>4</sup></b>
3.	Annual housing completion target for Kildare 2021- 2031 <sup>5</sup>	= 1,524 x 8 <sup>6</sup>
		<b>= 12,192</b>
4.	Housing completion estimates for 2021 and 2022	- 3,048 <sup>7</sup>
5.	CDP housing target to end of Plan period	<b>= 9,144</b>

The housing demand for County Kildare is therefore 9,144 units to the end of the plan period which is 2029. As per Table 2.8, the Housing Target number in the period to 2028 is 1,061 units or 11.6% of the total housing population target. A new Table 3.1 provides for a density of ‘30 – 50 dph shall be applied. Densities of up to 80 dph shall be open for consideration at ‘accessible’ suburban/ urban extension locations’.

4.26 The Office of the Planning Regulator made a submission on this variation. In general, they were supportive of the approach taken by Kildare County Council. Recommendation 1 included, revisions to table 2.8A and 2.8B to omit lands in Celbridge and Leixlip in the calculations, consider zoning additional lands in Celbridge/ Leixlip, revised Objective CS 029 so that all Phase 2 Residential lands in all settlements be available for development and revised objectives CS 030 and CS 031 to provide a timeline for review of settlement plans for Athy, Monasterevin, Kilcock and Sallins to ensure that residential development is delivered here over the remaining period of the Development Plan. I note that no specific reference is made to Newbridge and other than revisions to the plan to provide for the release of Phase 2 lands, there are no specific implications for Newbridge from the OPR submission.

4.27 **Conclusion on Core Strategy and Unit Numbers:** Having regard to the above, I consider that the proposed development would not have adverse consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The applicant has outlined that there is existing capacity in the number of units that can be delivered within the Core Strategy figures of the Kildare County Development Plan and which will result in remaining capacity for 292 units to be provided through other development within the Newbridge area. These totals will be further increased if Variation No. 3 of the Kildare County Development Plan is adopted with a housing allocation for Newbridge of 959 units up to 2029 or 1,438 units if the 50% overprovision is included. The proposed development, whilst significant in terms of numbers, would not exceed the numbers of the current Kildare County Development Plan.



4.28 I also note that the OPR has recommended that Phase 2 residential lands within the County Development Plan be brought forward for development. The subject site is effectively first phase lands and as such there is an expectation that these lands be developed during the course of the development plan which will expire in 2029. The Newbridge Settlement Plan, which is not adopted to date, has designated the subject lands as a Key Development Area (KDA) and has provided an indicative plan as to how these lands can be developed. The Draft Settlement Plan has indicated that the site has the capacity to provide for 570 residential units; the proposed development is for 569 residential units. I note that the OPR did not refer to a specific need for a Newbridge Local Area Plan in their submission on Variation No. 3, though they are clearly aware that the process is ongoing in the preparation of a plan for this

settlement. The proposed development is acceptable in terms of the number of units proposed and in terms of density. The proposal would also appear to be acceptable in terms of the Draft Newbridge Settlement Plan in terms of the number of units proposed.

**Variation No.2 – Newbridge Settlement Plan**

4.29 I have already referred to a request made by the applicant that the Commission do not make a decision on this application until March 2026 or at such time as Variation No. 2 – Newbridge Settlement Plan is adopted by the elected members of Kildare County Council. I note this request and it is for the Commission to decide whether or not the decision on this SHD application is made at that or any other time. I note that this application was submitted in April 2022 and almost four years have passed since that date. I note the progress of the Newbridge Settlement Plan, the Proposed Material Alterations, the comments of the OPR on this plan process and also Variation No.3 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 in relation to revised housing growth requirements.

4.30 Material Alterations of the Newbridge Settlement Plan went on public display on the 6th of January 2026 with submissions accepted up to the 3rd of February 2026. A Chief Executive’s report will be required on any submissions received (note: two received to date) and further consideration will be required by the members. To assist the Commission, I have used the OPR’s plan making calculator to estimate the date, which is from the 6<sup>th</sup> of January – date that public consultation on Material Amendments starts, that the new Settlement Plan may be operative from:

 <b>Material Alterations</b>	5	Public consultation on material amendments of the draft local area plan starts.	06-January-2026	Maximum
	6	Public consultation on material amendments of the draft local area plan ends.	03-February-2026	Minimum
	7	Chief executive prepares report on the material amendments consultation	03-March-2026	Maximum
 <b>Making of Plan</b>	8	Members decide to make/adopt the local area plan.	14-April-2026	Maximum
	9	Adopted local area plan comes into effect.	26-May-2026	N/A

4.31 I have listed a number of revisions to the Settlement Plan that are proposed under Material Alterations No. 53 and 54 that would directly impact the subject site. I wish to advise the Commission that if the development is considered under the Newbridge Settlement Plan the following implications should be noted:

- The area of residential zoned lands under the Settlement Plan is less than that under the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019 extended to 2021 and the applicant's proposal includes residential units on lands that are proposed for open space uses. This would be contrary to the zoning objective for such lands. Material Alteration No. 53 has increased the area of residential zoned lands, but which still falls below that of the expired Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019, contrary to the zoning requirements of the plan.
- The Greatconnell KDA Urban Design Framework is based on the zoning objectives of the Newbridge Settlement Plan. Whilst the Urban Design Framework may be considered to be indicative, the proposed development does not align with aspects of this including the location of key building frontages, the location of open space and residential units would be provided on lands outside of the residential zoned lands. Material Alteration No. 53 reduces the conflict between the proposal and the Urban Design Framework but issues of residential zoning on lands proposed for open space and the lack of suitable key building frontages persist.
- Material Alteration No. 54 indicates the location of the NSORR, which is a similar route to that permitted by the Planning Authority. If this Material Alteration is not adopted by Kildare County Council, then the road alignment indicated would be significantly different to what was permitted and the applicant's submitted layout would require significant revisions.

For the benefit of the Commission, I have outlined the Material Alterations as they directly impact the subject site. Whilst elements of maps included with County Development Plans, and Settlement Plans may be considered as indicative, the issue of zoning is more critical, and specific, as land budgets are based on available land, demand for particular land uses and also the need to provide for suitable services. The Newbridge Settlement Plan as prepared and as per the Material Alterations, specifically No.53 and No.54 would require significant revisions to the proposed development as significant areas of land proposed for housing are now proposed to

be located on lands that are indicated for open space uses. The removal of housing to align with the zoning on the maps, would result in a loss of units, a reduction in density and other potential adverse effects on the proposed layout and how it interacts with the existing area. Potentially 45 to 55 units may have to be omitted, however the impact on layout could be more restrictive and require more units to be removed with a potential for negative impact on the residential amenity of future occupants of this development.

### **Other Matters**

- 4.30 Third-party observers made submissions to the hearing raising concerns that are outside the scope of the limited agenda oral hearing in the context of the proposed development. I would refer to the Inspector's Report dated the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2025 which addresses original submissions and concerns raised.

## **5.0 Overall Conclusion:**

- 5.1 The Commission directed that a Limited Agenda Oral Hearing be held and two issues were to be raised – the issue of zoning/ status of the Local Area Plan and the issue of residential unit numbers in accordance with the Core Strategy.
- 5.2 Taking the second item first, I am satisfied that the number of residential units proposed is within the total allowed in the Core Strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029. The applicant has outlined the number of units that can be provided during the life of the County Development Plan and has calculated that an excess remains, even allowing for the subject development.
- 5.3 Through the updating of the core strategy figures in accordance with the National Planning Framework, First Revision, the number of units allocated to Newbridge has increased and the proposed 569 units remain within the revised total allocation, and which will allow for other residential development within the lifetime of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029.
- 5.4 I note the proposed Newbridge Settlement Strategy. The Greatconnell area, and specifically the C3 residential zoned lands, are designated as a Key Development Area (KDA), with a housing target of 570 units as per the draft Newbridge Settlement Strategy. The proposed development provides for 569 residential units, and I note that the OPR have raised no issues of concern in relation to the designation of these

lands as a Key Development Area, or in terms of the number of units proposed here. As I have outlined, this Settlement Plan is likely to be put into force during the Summer of 2026, and the proposed layout does not align with the zoned lands or layout indicated. The Material alterations of the Newbridge Settlement Plan would be more sympathetic to the submitted layout but would still require a significant loss of residential units, potentially in the range of 45 to 55 units. This is not a simple case of removing a block or section of units and impact of unit removal on the overall site layout may be adversely significant on the overall development.

5.5 The first issue, raised in the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing, to do with the status of the site zoning is not as clearcut. I have outlined that the application for this SHD was lodged after the expiration of the Newbridge Local Area Plan, and the applicant considers through their Planning Consultant and Senior Counsel that the lands remained zoned whilst acknowledging that the Newbridge Local Area Plan has expired. The Planning Authority are also of the opinion that that the lands remain zoned for residential and open space purposes, even though the Local Area Plan has expired. No specific legal justification was provided to support these opinions from either the applicant or Kildare County Council.

5.5 I have to disagree with these opinions in that I have found nothing to suggest otherwise that the zoning of lands continue even though the relevant plan has expired. I refer to the 'Local Area Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2013' and which set out when a Local Area Plan is required and in particular, I note Section 2.1 General – 'Obligation to Make a Local Area Plan' and 'Lifespan of Local Area Plans'. Section 19 of the Act requires that the review of the plan commence six years after the making of the previous plan, but this review can be deferred if:

- not more than five years after the making of the previous local area plan, the planning authority by resolution defers commencing the review process for a further period not exceeding five years; and

- in considering this resolution, the planning authority has sought and obtained the Manager's opinion that the local area plan remains consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the development plan and that the objectives of the development plan remain to be secured.'

Kildare County Council extended the Newbridge Local Area Plan from its original expiry in 2019 to December 2021. There is nothing in the guidelines about the status zoned lands post expiry of the Local Area Plan.

- 5.6 I am therefore of the opinion that these lands are no longer zoned for residential and open space purposes, considering the expiration of the Newbridge Local Area Plan in 2021. As the Newbridge Local Area Plan has expired, there is no statutory zoning applicable to this site, specifically for residential development, and the proposed development is therefore not consistent with the legislative requirements for a Strategic Housing Development. For the avoidance of doubt, the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016, states 'strategic housing development means – (a) the development of 100 or more houses on land zoned for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses,'. If the land is not zoned for residential development, then an application cannot be considered under the SHD legislation and permission has to be refused.
- 5.7 It is accepted that a recommendation on this application has taken some time. The holding of the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing allowed for specific issues to be addressed by the applicant, Kildare County Council and third parties. Whilst I am satisfied that the issue of unit numbers demonstrating compliance with the Kildare County Development Plan Core Strategy has been addressed in a satisfactory manner, the issue of zoning status has not been so conclusively addressed. In the absence of clear information to suggest otherwise, I am of the opinion that the site is no longer zoned, and I cannot recommend that permission be granted for this development.
- 5.8 I have set out in my report that the Commission may defer a decision on this application until such time as the Newbridge Settlement Plan is in place, which is potentially in early Summer 2026, though this is not certain as it may be delayed by legal or other factors. As I have outlined, I would caution the taking of such an approach as the revisions made to the land use zoning in the Greatconnell area would require the loss of a significant number of units but also would require a significant revision in the site layout plan. I am not convinced that these amendments could be done by condition and the layout of this development does not allow for the simple omission of areas/ blocks of the site which can be replaced with revised layouts through a new application. As outlined, in the original Inspectors Report, the proposed layout, scale, density and nature of development is generally acceptable and allows

for the development of the Newbridge South Outer Ring Road ensuring good integration with Newbridge town centre and the adjoining area. Revising the layout through condition could adversely impact on this layout and result in a poor level of residential amenity for future occupants of the scheme.

## 6.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission be **REFUSED** for the proposed development, for the reasons and considerations set out below.

## 7.0 Recommended Draft Commission Order

**Application:** for permission under section 4 of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016, in accordance with plans and particulars, lodged with An Bord Pleanála on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 by Declan Brassil + Company on behalf of Aston Limited.

The Proposed Development consists of the following:

- Demolition of two houses, a detached garage, sheds and outhouses,
- Construction of a residential development comprising of 569 residential units which consists of 325 no. houses, 244 no. apartments, a neighbourhood centre, a creche, car parking, bicycle parking, internal roads, services infrastructure, bin stores and bicycle store; landscaping, open space, play areas, boundary treatment and public lighting.
- An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development of these lands.
- The application contains a statement setting out how the proposal will be consistent with the objectives of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 and the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019, which was extended to 2021. It is submitted that the proposed apartments have been designed to fully accord with the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2018 (these are superseded by the 2020 Guidelines). A full Housing Quality Assessment is submitted which provides details on compliance with all

relevant standards including private open space, room sizes, storage and residential amenity areas.

The application contains a statement indicating why permission should be granted for the proposed development, having regard to a consideration specified in section 37(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, notwithstanding that the proposed development materially contravenes the Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 and the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 - 2019 other than in relation to the zoning of the land.

**Decision:**

Refuse permission for the above proposed development based on the reasons and considerations set out below.

**Matters Considered:**

In making its decision, the Commission had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

**Reasons and Considerations**

In coming to its decision, the Commission had regard to the specific legislative preconditions which apply to Strategic Housing Infrastructure (SHD), set out under Section 3 of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act of 2016 and to the definition of SHD under Section 3 as,

- (a) the development of 100 or more houses on land zoned for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses,
- (b) the development of student accommodation units which, when combined, contain 200 or more bed spaces, on land the zoning of which facilitates the provision of student accommodation or a mixture of student accommodation and other uses 'thereon,
- (c) development that includes developments of the type referred to in paragraph (a) and of the type referred to in paragraph (b), or containing a mix of houses and student accommodation or

(d) the alteration of an existing planning permission granted under section 34 (other than under subsection (3A)) where the proposed alteration relates to development specified in paragraph (a), (b), or (c).

Having regard to the expiration of the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019, which was extended to December 2021, it is considered that no statutory zoning applies to the subject site. In this context, the proposed development is not consistent with the legislative preconditions for a Strategic Housing Development, insofar as it is not on land the zoning of which facilitates its use for the purposes proposed in the application. In this context, the Board is precluded from granting permission for the proposed development.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.



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Paul O'Brien

Inspectorate

27<sup>th</sup> January 2026