

## Rathcairn Written Statement

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Rathcairn</b>
<b>Position in Settlement Hierarchy</b>	<b>Village – Serve a smaller rural catchment; provide local services with some smaller scale rural enterprises in a number of such villages.</b>
<b>Position in Retail Strategy</b>	<b>Level 5 retail centre</b>
<b>Population (based on Geodirectory statistics)</b>	<b>133 persons<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Committed Housing Units (Not built)</b>	<b>No committed units</b>
<b>Household Allocation (Core Strategy)</b>	<b>40 No. Units</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>There is both a national school and secondary school in the village.</b>
<b>Community Facilities</b>	<b>Community centre and clubhouse (An Bradán Feasa), library, church and football field.</b>
<b>Natura 2000 sites</b>	<b>There are no Natura 2000 in close proximity of the village. The River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater SAC &amp; SPA is positioned approx 2km to the southwest of the village.</b>
<b>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</b>	<b>No SFRA required. Implement Flood Risk Management policies from the CDP.</b>

### Goal

**To promote the development of the village in a manner that protects and enhances its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, while also providing for development which will allow Rathcairn to develop in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work, recreate and visit, reflecting its Gaeltacht distinctiveness.**

### 01 Village Context

Rathcairn is located in the centre of County Meath in the Kells Electoral Area. It is one of the two Gaeltacht areas in the county, with the other being Gibbstown. Rathcairn is located along a narrow local road network (L-40022) between the R154 (Athboy/Trim Regional Road) and the N51 (Athboy/Navan Road) and is approximately 3½km east of Athboy.

The statutory land use framework for Rathcairn promotes the future development of the village in a co-ordinated, planned and sustainable manner in order to protect and enhance its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness whilst also providing for development which is physically, economically and socially sustainable. It is an objective to create a built environment that is attractive and physically distinctive as a Gaeltacht village for those who live and work in Rathcairn in addition to being attractive to visitors.

Rathcairn is identified in the grouping of 'Key Villages' in the settlement hierarchy of the County Development Plan. Such villages tend to be located more remotely from major towns or centres and play a key local role for services for the local rural and adjoining village populations. In effect, they operate as rural service centres; a vital role to sustain rural communities

<sup>1</sup> 46 dwelling units multiplied by average household size of 2.9 for Co. Meath in Census 2011.

The future development of such villages as a key local centre for services and local enterprise development will be supported and growth beyond that which caters for local need or which would create unsustainable commuting patterns will not be considered appropriate.

In order to facilitate the delivery of the vision for Rathcairn, linguistic and cultural heritage, land-use, movement and access and natural and built heritage strategies have been identified. These strategies are augmented by policies & objectives and are described in the following sections.

### **Broad Objectives**

- To ensure the continued survival and promotion of the Irish Language as the spoken language of the Gaeltacht community.
- To facilitate the protection and promotion of all aspects of the Gaeltacht cultural identity.
- To promote development that protects and enhances the linguistic and cultural heritage of Rathcairn.
- To provide amenity and open spaces at appropriate strategic locations which would be of a high design quality and that promotes community participation.
- To ensure adequate provision of appropriate housing, commercial, community and educational facilities to serve existing and future residents and in a way that are both language and culture friendly.
- To provide a robust urban design framework that reflects the villages Gaeltacht distinctiveness.

## **02 Water and Wastewater Services**

Water supply is from the Athboy Water Supply Scheme which currently has limited capacity available. There are no immediate plans to upgrade/augment this supply. Water savings brought about through water conservation measures should provide a limited amount of additional water supply.

Rathcairn is serviced from the Athboy Wastewater Treatment System which had recent upgrade works carried out in 2010. The upgrade works included the construction of four new foul pumping stations in Rathcairn to serve the village and connect to the Athboy sewerage network. The new capacity of the Athboy WWTP is 5,800 P.E. The scheme has reserved 600 P.E for Rathcairn.

## **03 Land Use**

The principal land uses in Rathcairn comprise of local service and employment uses, educational and residential uses. These have already been outlined in Section 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 respectively. The principal land uses surrounding and adjoining the village comprise of land used for agricultural purposes.

The village centre should continue to meet the social and community needs of the existing and future population while creating an identifiable and legible centre for the village.

The lands identified for community use to the south of the secondary school will facilitate potential associated educational uses, and to the south of the primary school will facilitate potential additional community use expansion.

The F1 land use zoning objective for recreational amenity is proposed adjoining the church to reflect existing land uses and to protect the amenity of this area. A new F1 Land Use Zoning Objective is proposed to the north of the village to improve village recreational amenity. It is noted that planning permission has been granted to facilitate this intended use.

The land use strategy for Ráth Cairn seeks to provide a '*distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community facilities*'. The land use zoning map for the village includes three distinct zones which include;

- 1) The village centre and community uses,
- 2) The primary school and residential cluster and,
- 3) The industrial lands to the north of the village which are at a remove from the centre.

It is intended that future residential development in Ráth Cairn will be low density to provide a sustainable alternative to one-off housing and to retain the overall rural character of the area. It is proposed that these areas can intensify in the future to ensure the sustainable use of serviced land.

#### **04 Residential Development**

The principal population policies seek to ensure that the existing population can continue to exist and thrive as a distinctive cultural community. New residents should predominantly be prepared to integrate with the Irish speaking culture to ensure the protection of the language and culture in the area.

Residential uses are located within and adjoining the village development boundary. These mainly comprise the historic Land Commission dwellings and more recent one-off houses in the form of ribbon development and small cul de sac clusters. There has been no significant residential development in the village during recent times other than individual dwellings on sites controlled by Comharcumann Rathcairn.

The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan (Table 2.4 refers) provides a housing allocation of 40 units to Rathcairn over the 2013 – 2019 period. The land use zoning objectives map has identified the lands required to accommodate the allocation of 40 no. units provided for under the Core Strategy. This followed the carrying out of an examination of the lands previously identified for residential land use in the 2009 Rathcairn Local Area Plan and still available for development. The lands which have been identified for residential land use arising from this evaluation largely arise following the application of the sequential approach from the village centre with regard to the Rathcairn Master Plan which was prepared as part of the 2009 Local Area Plan. This has sought to concentrate development between the 2 schools with additional commercial development promoted at the junction opposite Áras Pobal Ráth Cairn / Áras Uí Ghramhnaigh.

The Ráth Cairn Master Plan is presented in Section 10.0. The Master Plan, which was developed as part of the Ráth Cairn Local Area Plan (2009), is indicative only and is intended to provide design guidance with respect to the built form and layout of the village. Whilst the extent and nature of the land use zoning objectives are no longer consistent with those contained in the 2009 Local Area Plan for Ráth Cairn for which the Master Plan was developed, there is considerable merit in retaining the urban design framework for the village. The indicative Master Plan will continue to provide guidance for development management proposals in the village for the life of the County Development Plan. It should be considered in conjunction with the land use zoning objectives map which is the statutory land use framework for the village.

The Planning Authority has identified 6.7 hectares of land for residential purposes which includes an area (1.54 hectares) adjoining the residential development by Comharcumann Rathcairn. The application of a standardised 20 units per hectare would fail to respect the vernacular design evident within the Gaeltacht Area. Future residential development should

be low density and be cognisant of the traditional building form and styles in the area. Low density residential development is proposed to provide a sustainable alternative to one-off housing and to retain the overall rural character of the area. The proposed Master Plan for the village assisted in the selection of areas for residential development in the land use zoning objectives map noting that the proposed sites identified for village centre facilities and uses would also contain residential development. It shall be a requirement of any application for residential development on the subject lands to demonstrate consistency with the Master Plan for the village as it applies to such sites. All other lands are identified as Phase II and are not intended for release within the life of this County Development Plan.

New residential areas adjoining the village core will be subject to detailed design statements. These dwellings should be designed in the form of clusters, with varied building alignments, comprising gable and parallel configurations of simple building form. It is proposed in this Written Statement that these areas would develop initially to a low residential density. If demand requires and infrastructure becomes available the intensification of these sites is promoted. This is to promote the sustainable use of serviced sites and the creation of a vibrant and sustainable community.

### **05 Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses**

Rathcairn is identified as a Level 5 retail centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. It has a small range of retail services, primarily a local convenience shop and the village would benefit from having a greater range and variety of such facilities. However, the close proximity of the village to Navan & Athboy will continue to be a deterrent to attracting facilities other than to serve the immediate needs of the village and rural catchment.

The main commercial and industrial activities in the village include Údarás na Gaeltachta industrial estate to the north of the village. This development provides valuable employment in the village and contributes to the local economy. This Development Framework seeks to provide for the intensification of the industrial area for small scale business which complements the existing industrial uses. Employment is generated through work associated with the Irish Language and cultural initiatives, including Irish language learning/summer schools and associated tourism activities such as Irish music, dancing, walks, festivals, etc.

### **06 Community Facilities and Open Spaces**

Community uses in Rathcairn are centrally located and include the community centre and clubhouse (An Bradán Feasa), the library, church and GAA football field. The primary school (Scoil Uí Ghramhnaigh) is located at the entrance to the village from the south / Trim Road, and the secondary school (Coláiste Pobail Rath Cairn) is located between the village centre and the industrial area. At present, there is one public amenity area in the village centre adjoining the church.

As Rathcairn develops, existing community and recreational facilities should be enhanced to meet the needs of the existing and future population. Educational facilities and associated and complementary community uses also have the potential to stimulate local employment.

### **07 Urban Design**

Rathcairn has evolved as a medium sized settlement. The village developed in the 1930's and comprised one-off dispersed Land Commission dwellings. These dwellings are distinctive and characteristic of the Gaeltacht Area.

Rathcairn village has a dispersed built fabric and retains a rural character, with nodes of development at the existing industrial area to the north, the village core and primary school.

Rathcairn comprises three distinct areas as follows:

## 7.1 Character Area 1 Village Centre

This character area comprises the community uses and the village centre.

### Urban Analysis

- Positive building line, formed by community hall creating a sense of place.
- Dangerous junction / road alignment at the community hall.
- Attractive stone boundary treatment to Church and open space.
- Uncoordinated boundary treatment to cul de sac estate to west.
- Varied and attractive boundary treatment to cul de sac to south.
- Distinctive cross road structure.
- Extensive parking area surfaces.
- Poor pedestrian environment in residential area adjacent and providing access to GAA football field.
- Overall poor pedestrian infrastructure.
- Positive sense of place associated with community uses.

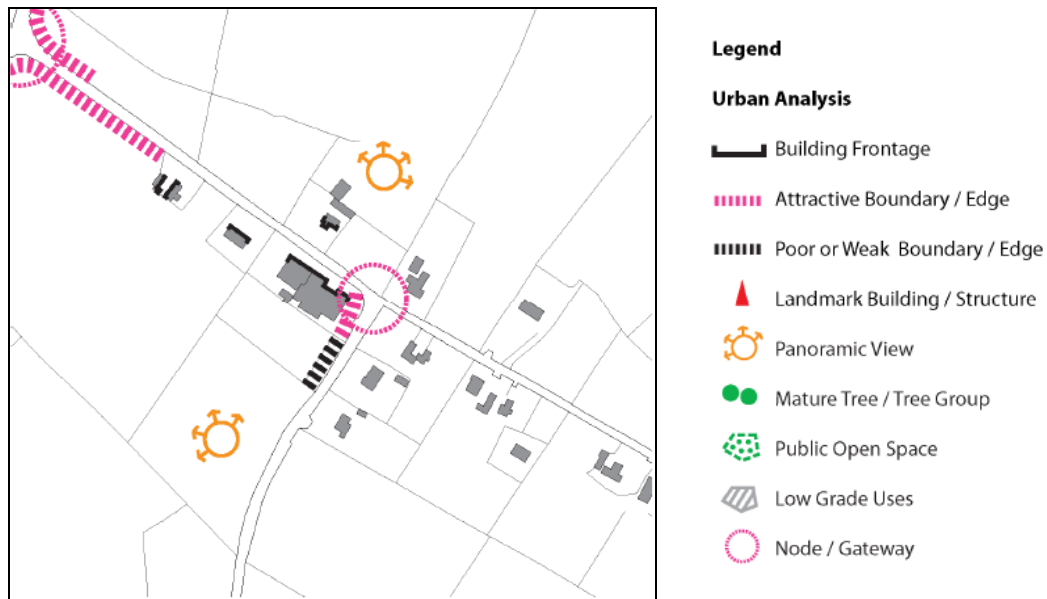


## 7.2 Character Area 2 Primary School and Residential Cluster

This character area is located at the entrance to the village from the south at the junction with the Trim Road. It is characterised by the primary school and a residential cluster and distant views to the village centre to the west and the industrial area to the north.

### Urban Analysis

- Positive boundary treatment at school and adjoining residential development, including wall and hedges.
- Good pedestrian connections to village centre on north and south of local road.
- Poor boundary treatments to south of local road connecting to the village centre.
- Attractive views westwards to residential clusters adjoining village centre.
- Poor landscape quality / integration of urban to rural development northwards towards industrial area.

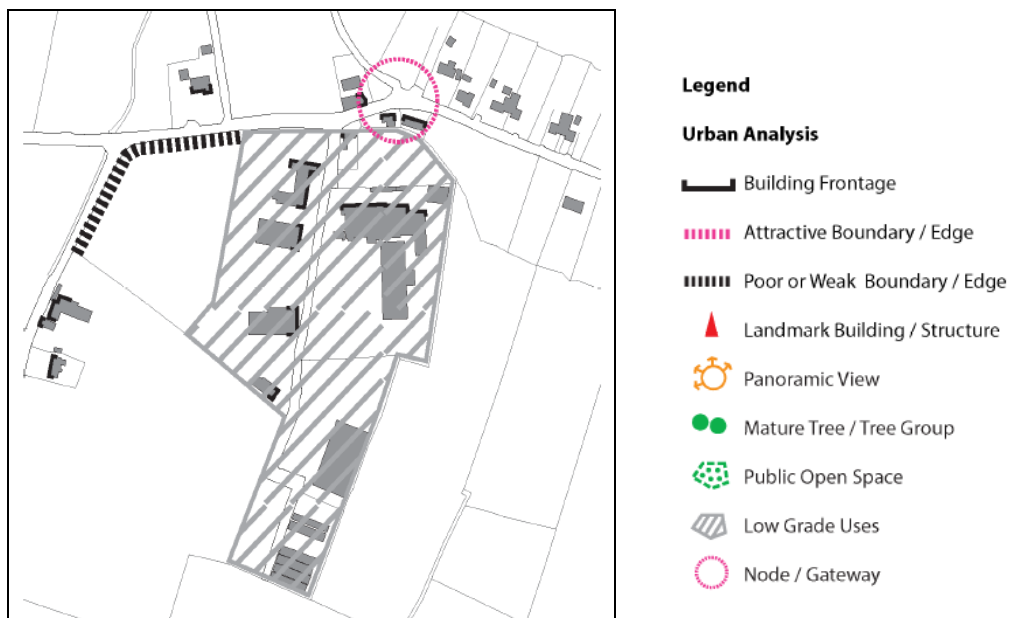


### 7.3 Character Area 3 Industrial Area

This character area is located to the north of the village. This area marks the entrance to the village from the north, along the Dunderry / Athboy Road.

This area presents a poor image of the village.

- Industrial development dominates visual amenity and presents a negative visual appearance.
- Poor / deteriorating boundary treatments to north and south of local road. Poorly defined boundary to industrial area.
- Poor pedestrian amenity.



### 7.4 Building Typologies

New buildings in the village centre and the proposed residential areas should be of a form and scale that reflects the vernacular of Rathcairn.

Residential development should comprise detached dwellings in principal. Infill sites should comprise detached dwellings, retaining access and views through to protect visual connections to the rural hinterland.

## **08 Heritage**

### **8.1 Cultural Heritage**

Rathcairn was designated a Gaeltacht in the 1930s when migrants from Galway settled in the area. The migration to the Rathcairn Gaeltacht took place as a result of the Irish Land Commission's work in relieving congestion along the Atlantic Coast. Sufficient land was not available & convenient to these congested areas and suitable estates were more readily available in the east of Ireland. In 1935, forty families from Galway were relocated to what is now Rathcairn village. The identity of the Gaeltacht has largely been preserved, benefiting from its rural location, the size of the community and the development of employment and community initiatives that protect and enhance the Irish language and culture of the area.

### **8.2 Natural Heritage**

The Athboy River is located approximately 2km to the southwest of the village. This river forms part of the River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC and SPA Natura 2000 network which spans the county.

Rathcairn is located in the West Navan Lowlands as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019. This landscape is flat surrounding the village, and rises to the south. There are generally poorly defined approaches to the village, and poorly defined building lines and hedgerows in the village. The landscape surrounding Rathcairn comprises mixed woodland and coniferous plantations and rougher mixed pasture and areas of scrappy woodland.

Key recommendations identified in the Landscape Character Assessment and applicable to Rathcairn include the promotion of the Gaeltacht around Rathcairn as a cultural resource and to promote links with other Gaeltacht areas including Gibbstown.

The strategy seeks to ensure that a green edge is established surrounding the built up areas of Rathcairn and that the visual impact of new development is overlooked by landscaping proposals.

### **8.3 Built Heritage**

The County Development Plan 2013-2019 does not identify any protected structures in Rathcairn village. The village has developed in three distinct areas. These include an industrial area to the north of the village, the village centre and associated cul de sac developments and the primary school and residential cluster at the Trim Road junction.

The village centre is compact in form, giving a sense of place. The remainder of the village is dispersed and lacks overall coherence and structure, but retains an overall rural character.

A contemporary interpretation of the local building style using modern material and technology is encouraged. This will assist in creating a particular identity for Rathcairn that is derived from local traditions.

## **09 Movement & Access**

The village of Rathcairn is located close to the national and regional road systems (N51 and R154). The village is however defined by the local road network and cul-de-sacs.

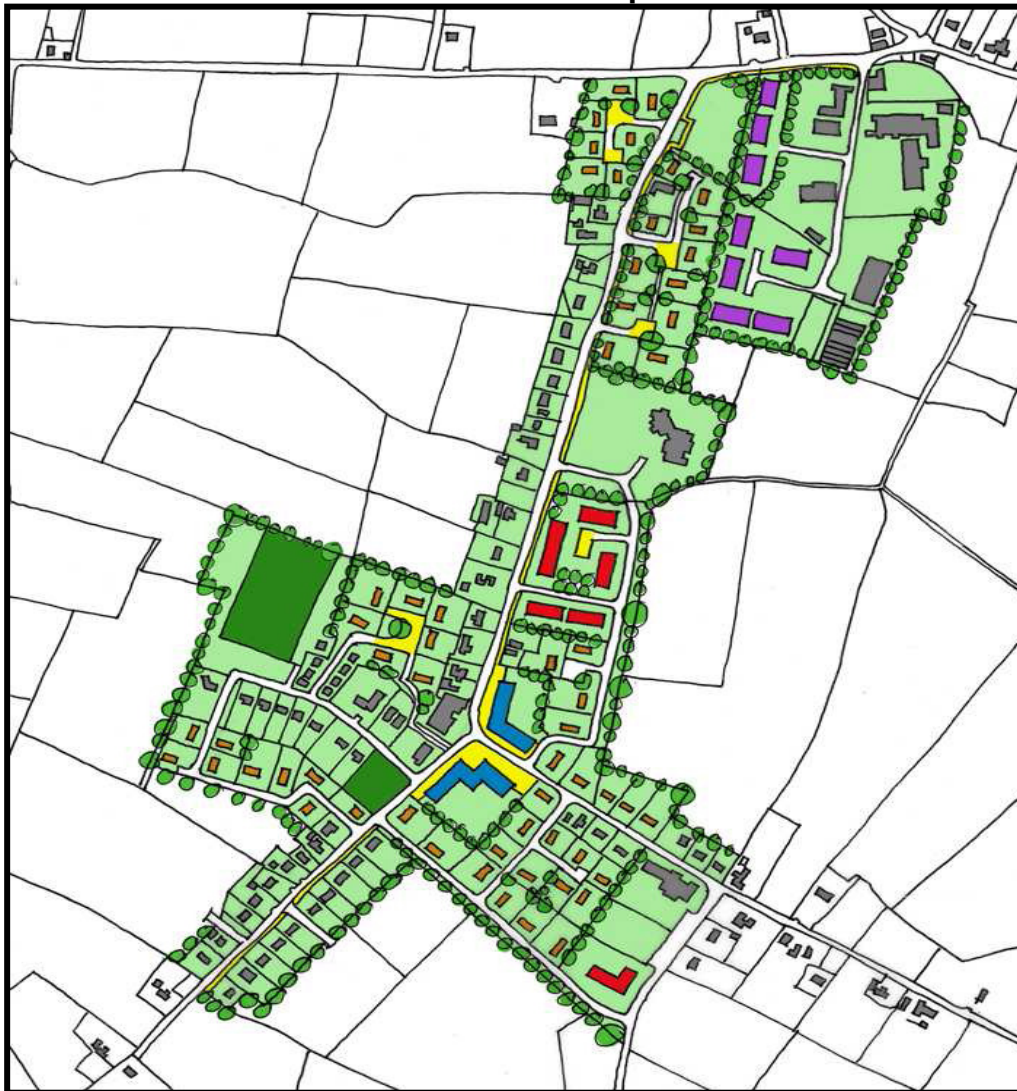
The built up area of Rathcairn is largely contained within a 400 metre walkband from the village centre and includes community, educational and residential uses. The industrial estate

is within an 800m walkband radius. However, permeability between the industrial area and the village centre is poor, thereby increasing the walking distance between the village centre and the industrial areas. Pedestrian facilities are poor in the village. Car parking generally occurs in a haphazard manner along the principal routes, which obstructs vehicular and pedestrian movement in the area.

Rathcairn is poorly served by public transport at present. The nearest public transport connections to the village are located at Athboy and Navan, which are served by public bus services. However there may be potential for the development of private shuttle bus services to Athboy or Navan where access to public transport services is greater.

## 10 Masterplan

### Indicative Masterplan



The Ráth Cairn Master Plan is illustrated on the previous page. The Master Plan shows new streets and spaces, appropriate building forms and landscape proposals. The Master Plan is indicative only and is intended to provide design guidance with respect to the built form and layout of the village. It should be considered in conjunction with the land use zoning objectives map which is the statutory land use framework for the village.



## Strategic Policies

<b>SP 1</b>	To ensure that the growth and development of Rathcairn shall be directed to meet the needs of the local community and be in keeping with the existing character, amenity, heritage and landscape of the village.
<b>SP 2</b>	To operate an Order of Priority for the release of residential lands in compliance with the requirements of CS OBJ 6 of the County Development Plan as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The lands identified with an A2 "New Residential" land use zoning objective corresponds with the requirements of Table 2.4 Housing Allocation &amp; Zoned Land Requirements in Volume I of this County Development Plan and are available for residential development within the life of this Development Plan.</li> <li>ii) The lands identified with an A2 "New Residential" land use zoning objective but qualified as "Residential Phase II (Post 2019)" are not available for residential development within the life of this Development Plan</li> </ul>

## Policies

### Gaeltacht Identity

**GAEL POL 1** To plan an efficient system whereby the aspects of the Gaeltacht environment can be assessed and protected as part of the planning process including the use of language conditions.

**GAEL POL 2** To encourage architectural styles that complement local tradition such as the 'Land Commission house' and the Clachan Dwelling cluster. A contemporary interpretation of indigenous traditions is encouraged.

**GAEL POL 3** To promote the provision of signage in Irish in the Gaeltacht with respect to the following:

- Entry and exit points to the village with explanatory details of the cultural significance of the areas to visitors
- The provision of all commercial signage in Irish
- In association with the relevant professional and vocational groups, that auctioneers and other temporary signs are in Irish.

### Water and Wastewater Services

**WWS POL 1** To facilitate the connection of dwellings currently operating on septic tank systems to any existing or new public sewerage system.

**WWS POL 2** To facilitate the provision of an adequate water supply to Rathcairn.

## Flood Risk

<b>FR POL</b>	To manage flood risk and development in Rathcairn in line with policies WS 29 – WS 36 inclusive in Volume I of this County Development Plan.
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## Residential Development

<b>RD POL 1</b>	To ensure that the resident population is of a sustainable number to protect and promote the linguistic and cultural distinction of the area.
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<b>RD POL 2</b>	To recognise that new residential developments could damage the use, visibility and status of the Irish language and to reduce / prevent their impact.
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## Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

<b>CER POL 1</b>	To encourage employment and enterprise development in the village that is language and culture friendly.
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<b>CER POL 2</b>	To recognise that new commercial developments could damage the use, visibility and status of the Irish language and to reduce / prevent their impact.
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<b>CER POL 3</b>	<p>The Planning Authority will in general, and subject to the provisions of the Development Plan, be favourably disposed to applications for economic developments of the following type:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Language teaching resources.</li> <li>b) Recreational facilities through Irish.</li> <li>c) Community centres that support the use of the Irish language.</li> <li>d) Educational facilities e.g. third level etc.</li> <li>e) Tourism which is language and culturally centred.</li> <li>f) Offices for providing services through Irish for the Gaeltacht community.</li> <li>g) Business which is language centred e.g. translation /communication services.</li> </ol>
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<b>CER POL 4</b>	To co-operate with Údarás na Gaeltachta and other relevant bodies and agencies in developing sustainable and Irish language based economic uses in the Gaeltacht area.
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<b>CER POL 5</b>	To provide for the sustainable consolidation of the existing industrial area.
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<b>CER POL 6</b>	To provide for the sustainable development of industrial and related uses and the creation of employment opportunities in Rathcairn village.
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<b>CER POL 7</b>	To provide for the development of new services and facilities in the village centre including small scale retail, commercial and office uses creating an identifiable village centre / focus.
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## Community Facilities and Open Spaces

<b>CF POL 1</b>	To support community organisations in delivering services which promote and protect the distinctive language and cultural traditions of the area.
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**CF POL 2** To promote the enhancement of the existing community building in the village core.

**CF POL 3** To provide for the expansion of Rathcairn primary school and associated play areas and complimentary community uses.

**CF POL 4** To provide for additional educational uses including potential third level uses associated with and adjoining the secondary school and complementary community uses.

**CF POL 5** To promote the development of a village space at the village core to include environmental improvements.

**CF POL 6** To promote the development of an attractive, overlooked and accessible public park for the purposes of visual and recreational amenity, to the north of the village.

**CF POL 7** To identify appropriate sites in Rathcairn village for the provision of a bring bank recycling facility.

### Urban Design

**UD POL 1** To have regard to the Master Plan for Rath Cairn contained in Section 10 of this Written Statement in the design and assessment of development management proposals brought forward during the life of the County Development Plan on lands identified for land use zoning objectives only.

**UD POL 2** To promote the development of detached family homes which reflect the traditional building form of the Land Commission dwelling comprising one storey and a half on A2 zoned lands.

**UD POL 3** To comply with the Design Standards provided below in the assessment of all planning applications for planning permission within the development envelop of Rath Cairn:

- To promote infill residential development adjoining existing residential developed areas that respect the scale and massing of adjoining dwellings.
- To provide for the development of detached family homes of 6 units / ha (2.5 units / acre) or as appropriate on infill sites (A2 zoned lands).
- To provide for the future intensification of residential sites in residential cluster areas when infrastructure becomes available.
- Design Statements for residential cluster lands should illustrate long term intensification potential.
- To allow for increased building height, where appropriate, as demonstrated through an urban design statement.
- To encourage dwellings of a scale that reflects the vernacular of traditional 20th century houses of the Land Commission tradition.
- To promote the development of two storey buildings at the village centre to create a sense of enclosure and identity.

- To promote the development of low rise dwellings ranging between one and one and a half storeys on remaining residential zoned lands
- To encourage village centre development which provides for a continuous building line and active street frontage in the village core on lands zoned for village centre use.
- To encourage the development of a continuous front boundary line of indigenous hedge planting / masonry wall / stone walls in infill and clustered housing areas.

### Heritage

**HER POL** To promote the enhancement of boundaries where new developments have occurred and boundaries are eroded and discontinuous.

### Movement and Access

**MA POL 1** To facilitate the development of public / private bus connections to nearby towns. And to develop pick up and drop off points for buses in the village core.

**MA POL 2** Car parking in the industrial area should be provided off street and absorbed in the industrial development site as part of any future development proposals.

**MA POL 3** Car parking on new village centre zoned lands should be provided in structured parallel car parking spaces along the main road and in the site to the rear of proposed buildings.

### Telecommunications

**TEL POL** To actively promote e-inclusion in Rathcairn through the planning process and by supporting strategies to encourage and enable lower income households to avail of modern broadband infrastructure.

## Objectives

### Gaeltacht Identity

**GAEL OBJ 1** To require that a 'Language Impact Study' be carried out before any application for housing (for single and multiple housing developments) is considered in the area. Such a study, by reference to the linguistic background of intended users or occupants, or identification of the relationship with linguistic or cultural development objectives of groups associated or charged with the development of Gaeltacht areas will need to provide that a given proposal will have a positive impact upon the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community.

**GAEL OBJ 2** New developments will be required to set out a design statement to accompany planning applications outlining how the development contributes to the creation of a particular Gaeltacht identity.

### Land Use

- LU OBJ 1** To provide for detached family homes on residential zoned lands to the south of the village and to the south east of the village.
- LU OBJ 2** To develop new streets / access lanes in new development areas to the north east, south east, and south west quadrants of the village core, with connections to existing local roads, and connections to adjoining land uses.
- LU OBJ 3** To provide vehicular access to lands to the west of the north / south local road connecting the village core to the north of the village and to the east of the cul de sac to the south, to allow for potential future development.

### Residential Development

- RD OBJ** To assist in assessing the impact of new residential development upon the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht all planning applications for residential development, both single and multiple house developments, will be referred to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Údarás na Gaeltachta management for comment and these comments shall be taken into account and such account shall be demonstrated in the making of decisions in all such planning applications

### Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

- CER OBJ 1** To require that a 'Language Impact Study' be carried out before any application for commercial development is considered in the area. Such a study, by reference to the linguistic background of intended users or occupants, or identification of its relationship with linguistic or cultural development objectives of groups associated or charged with the development of Gaeltacht areas will need to provide that a given proposal will have a positive impact upon the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community.
- CER OBJ 2** To provide for appropriate language and culturally centred development within the appropriate land use zones in the village.
- CER OBJ 3** To assist in assessing the impact of new commercial uses / developments upon the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht, all planning applications for commercial developments, will be referred to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Údarás na Gaeltachta management for comment and these comments shall be taken into account and such account shall be demonstrated in the making of decisions in all such planning applications

### Community Facilities and Open Spaces

- CF OBJ 1** To provide for the development of community and recreational facilities on lands in the village core and adjoining the primary and secondary schools that are language and culturally centred.
- CF OBJ 2** To promote the development of a village space at the village core to include environmental improvements.

**CF OBJ 3** To develop a continuous footpath from the village centre to the industrial estate to the north, the secondary school, and the residential areas to the south.

### Heritage

**HER OBJ** To have regard to the bio-diversity value of existing trees and hedgerows and seek to retain such features in areas that are likely to be developed.