

Summerhill Written Statement

Settlement	Summerhill
Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Village - Local centre for services and local enterprise development
Position in Retail Strategy	Fourth tier retail centre
Population (2011) Census	832
Committed Housing Units (Not built)	14 No. committed units
Household Allocation (Core Strategy)	120 No. Units
Education	National School (located outside village)
Community Facilities	A church, Community centre and Summerhill GAA grounds.
Natura 2000 sites/Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)	No Natura 2000 sites within the village.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	No SFRA required. No lands within Flood zone A or B.

Goal

To make a positive contribution to the development of Summerhill Village by the consolidation and strengthening of the defined and attractive Village Centre, recognising the importance of conserving and enhancing the quality of the Village's built and natural environment, while catering for the needs of all sections of the local community.

01 Village Context

Summerhill is located near the south central part of County Meath some 38km west of Dublin city centre. It lies 10km south of Trim and 12km north of Kilcock. Summerhill, designated as a Village in the County Settlement Hierarchy, essentially provides local services for a generally rural hinterland. The considerable amenity and heritage qualities of Summerhill are largely derived from the quality of the central area of the village. The narrow central green area framed by buildings with diverse styles together with its alignment to the entrance of the former Summerhill Demesne, creates an attractive and imposing environment. The character of Summerhill is also enhanced by the presence of significant stands of deciduous trees.

The statutory land use framework for Summerhill endeavours to maintain and add to a built environment that is both attractive and distinctive, and which creates a unique sense of place for those who both live and work within, as well as those who visit, the village. This will be achieved through the sensitive treatment of infill development and the conservation of important or key buildings particularly those of Georgian origin on the eastern side of the Main Street.

The provision of a compact and vibrant village centre is essential if Summerhill is to cater for its current and future population needs in a sustainable manner. The consolidation of the village will be enhanced through appropriate street finishes, footpaths, green spaces and the public domain generally and the redevelopment of key neglected sites and obsolete areas.

The household allocation contained in the Core Strategy of this Plan provides for an extension befitting the village's position in the county settlement hierarchy. This land use framework provides that new land-use zonings are closely linked to, and integrated with, the existing village, thereby encouraging more sustainable modes of transportation such as walking and cycling. Furthermore, it promotes the future development of the village in a co-ordinated,

planned and sustainable manner in order to conserve and enhance the established natural and historical amenities of the village and its intrinsic character.

02 Water and Wastewater Services

The village is currently served by Summerhill waste water treatment plant located to the northeast of the village outside the development boundary, which is designed to cater for a design capacity of 3,000 population equivalent (PE). There remains 1,500 PE available in the waste water treatment plant, noting the extant permissions.

Water supply for the village is obtained from the Trim water treatment plant which also services the town of Trim and Rathmolyon village as well as a significant rural catchment area. The remaining PE for the entire catchment is 8,000. Future development proposals will be considered in this context.

03 Land Use

The land use pattern evident in Summerhill typifies other villages in the County which have undergone significant residential expansion during the Celtic Tiger years, a relatively compact and limited village core with residential developments located off the radial routes to the village centre. Access to backlands within the village core (identified as B1 "Village Centre" land use zoning objective) should be conserved. There are a number of residential units on either side of the village green which have been predominantly retained in residential use. Whilst it is accepted that most Irish towns and villages are characterised by residential uses fronting onto a main street, a level of commercial activity is also required to make villages viable. In order to ensure that such possibilities can be realised, the level of residential versus commercial use should be monitored where "living over the shop" schemes should be promoted to ensure a non-residential ground floor use. Relaxation of development standards may be considered where appropriate backland development can provide alternative residential accommodation to secure on-street commercial activity.

04 Residential Development

Summerhill has been the subject of a moderate increase in the extent of residential development in recent years, specifically the construction of medium scale residential development projects. The level of increase has been affected by the availability of water services during the Celtic Tiger years. This growth is evidenced by the population increase between 1996 and 2011 from 502 to 832, an increase of some 66% over this 15 year period. The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan seeks to limit the further expansion of the village at a rate reflective of the villages' position in the County Settlement Hierarchy. Further development and growth will also need to take account of the village's ability to grow in a sustainable manner without causing unacceptable impacts upon the surrounding environment. This policy framework endeavours to facilitate the continued growth of well designed, sustainable new residential communities, which are integrated with the existing village's built environment.

The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan (Table 2.4 refers) provides a housing allocation of 120 no. units to Summerhill over the 2013-2019 period. There are 14 no. committed units that relate to two planning applications which are not due to expire until 2014.¹ The Planning Authority notes the extant planning permission for 14 no. units, 13 of which are located centrally within the village and this is favourable in consolidating the form of the village.

The average density set down for Summerhill in the County Development Plan is 20 units per hectare. In this context, there is a requirement for 6 hectares of residential land to satisfy this

¹ It is noted that the corresponding figure in Table 2.4 of Volume I of the County Development Plan is 82. However in the intervening period, planning permission for 68 of these units has since expired (TA50246 - 65 houses & TA70065 -3 houses refer)

allocation. The Planning Authority is satisfied that sufficient lands have been identified within Phase 1 of the order of priority to accommodate the household allocation of 120 units.

The areas identified to accommodate the 120 no. residential units provided under Table 2.4 of the Core Strategy comprise of 3.5 hectares along the Kilcock Road adjoining the entrance to the Industrial Estate noting that these were the sites whose planning permission has recently expired, the remainder of the Local Authority landbank within Cherry Court (0.75 hectares) and the roadside frontage of the available site off the Agher Road opposite Castlelawns. The total amount of lands identified for residential development extend to 6.0 hectares and is adequate to accommodate the 120 no. units allocated at a density of 20 residential units per hectare. It was considered that the other sites which were previously identified for residential development in the 2009 Local Area Plan were considered less favourable on the basis of applying the sequential approach from the village centre outwards. All other remaining lands are identified as Residential Phase II (Post 2019) and are not intended for release within the life of this County Development Plan.

All designers of multiple residential developments within the Plan boundary are requested to submit a Design Statement to the Planning Authority with their planning applications in accordance with the requirements of Section 11.2 Residential Development of Volume I. A Design Statement is an appraisal of the distinctive character of the area adjoining the proposed development site and must consider how the design and layout of the proposed development responds to, and preferably enriches that character.

05 Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

Summerhill is identified as a fourth tier retail centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. It has a small range of retail services, primarily a local convenience shop, a pharmacy, a petrol station, hair dresser, post office, café and two public houses. The village would benefit from having a greater range and variety of such facilities. The existing land identified for B1 "Village Centre" land use zoning objective within the town centre will provide opportunities for small to medium sized enterprises.

The 2011 Census of Population recorded that 53% of the population aged 15 years and over resident in Summerhill are at work. The best prospect for the creation of employment locally lies with the provision of suitably located and serviced employment lands. Summerhill Enterprise Centre is located to the east of the village. The existing Enterprise Centre comprises approximately 15 units, 4 of which appear to be currently vacant. An additional 8.19 hectares of employment land was zoned under the 2009 Summerhill Local Area Plan to the rear of the existing employment lands to accommodate an extension of the existing enterprise centre and the provision of a bypass of the village linking the Trim – Kilcock Regional Road, R156. As the continued development of the employment lands is crucial for the delivery of this by-pass and having regard to the growing population of the village and household allocation set down in the County Development Plan 2013-2019, it is considered appropriate to retain the employment lands zoning objective. There is approximately 8.2 ha of employment land identified in Summerhill. This Development Framework has ensured that sufficient and appropriately located land for town centre uses and employment generating uses has been identified for the life of the County Development Plan and beyond.

06 Community Facilities and Open Spaces

There are no schools within the development boundary of the village of Summerhill. Dangan National School is located on the Trim road approximately 620 metres from the development boundary. Scoil Naisiunta Mhuire is located in Moynalvy which is approximately 3km from Summerhill. The R.C. Church and Parochial House are also located on the Trim road approximately 1.3km from the village. Summerhill Astroturf pitches are located adjacent to the R.C. Church off the Trim road. The nearest secondary schools are in Longwood and Trim.

Summerhill GAA ground is located within the development boundary to the west of the village and is accessed through a narrow entrance off the R156 Rathmolyon road. The medical

centre and Third Age centre are located off the access road into the G.A.A grounds. Third Age is a voluntary, community organisation which aims to empower local communities throughout Ireland by promoting to best effect the resource its older people represent. It is noted that a recently granted permission for a medical centre includes provision for Third Age Foundation facilities. This permission has recently commenced.

Summerhill Community Centre which was officially opened in September 1980 is located south of the village centre off the Agher road. Summerhill Community Childcare is also located to the rear of the Community Centre building and tennis courts have been constructed within the community centre grounds. A playground has been developed to the west of the Community Centre.

The existing level of civic and community facilities should continue to be monitored to cater for the village's needs having regard to the population now resident. In this regard, it is considered that there is a need to provide additional land for community use within the village. The 2009 LAP designated a site of 0.34 hectares adjacent to the village centre for community use. Having regard to the existing population, the potential increase in population associated with the quantum of residential zoned land over the lifetime of the Plan and the need to provide community facilities in tandem with new residential development, the existing site identified for community use has been extended by 0.4 hectares in extent. It is essential that sufficient community facilities are established, catering for all age groups. Sufficient lands have been reserved for such infrastructure to accommodate both existing and proposed future populations.

The village of Summerhill is based on a 'planned' layout associated with the development of the former Summerhill House and Demesne. The distinctive village form comprises a long wide Main Street with a narrow tree lined green running down the centre. The village green, laid out c. 1930, is bounded by rubble limestone walls to centre and concrete bollards with iron chain to north and south ends. It includes a cast-iron water pump to north-west, Celtic Revival high cross to north end and a medieval cross. Besides the village green, a number of open spaces within existing housing developments are visible. It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the improvement and maintenance of these spaces to a very high standard. It is an objective of the Council to improve and landscape the village green.

6.1 Renaissance Community Plan

The Economic Development Strategy contained in Volume I of the County Development Plan acknowledges that the proposed Village Renaissance Programme being developed by Meath Partnership under the Rural Development Programme will further enhance the physical appearance of a number of towns and villages across the County and is generally welcomed. The Council will include a policy to work closely with local communities in implementing village design plans that have been prepared in a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans and development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.

ED POL 41 seeks to facilitate and support the implementation of Village Design Plans and other community led projects to enhance village environments that have been prepared through a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans for such centres and town/village development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.

A Community Plan for Summerhill has been prepared by Meath Partnership in January 2013. The Development Framework for Summerhill is supportive of the proposals contained in the Village Plan as they relate to the development boundary of same. The projects which have been identified as "highest priority projects" in the Community Plan are complementary to the land use strategy put forward in this Development Framework.

07 Urban Design

The village of Summerhill is based on a classical layout associated with the development of the former Summerhill House and Demesne to the south of the village. Built in the 1730's by Hercules Langford Rowley, the house was twice burnt in the 19th and 20th century and was finally demolished in 1970. The entrance and tree-lined avenue are reminders of the demesne and act as a focal point within the village of Summerhill. The axis of mature trees within the demesne is continued by the buildings to either side of the village green.

The green is framed by townhouses of varying architectural styles and together with the alignment of the main axis of the village to Summerhill Demesne; this has created a village character of a very high quality. The stands of deciduous trees also contribute to the special character of the village. The existing three-storey Georgian houses and single-storey estate cottages date to the late 18th and 19th century and add significantly to the character of the village. Buildings are for the most part plastered and painted, with slate roofs. Those houses on the east side are grander Georgian houses and those on the west are smaller scale Victorian or later workers houses with narrow gardens to the rear. Both terraces open directly to the footpath with no front gardens or set-backs. A housing estate, Beechcroft, is connected to the east of the village centre however is relatively isolated in its relationship to the main space of the village green and is suburban in character.

A substantial amount of the village centre is located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and this recognises the special significance of the built heritage which characterises Summerhill. The ACA includes the estate village and its central green, the entrance to Summerhill House to the south of the green and the narrowing into the Trim Road to the north of the village. Care must be taken with regard to any future proposals in this area. The prevailing building materials within the ACA are limestone, in exposed random rubble and rock-cut form and painted plaster applied to facades and chimneys. Timber was originally used for windows and doors and as such forms standard elements of the archetypal shop-fronts. Some buildings within the ACA retain their natural slate roofs which add to the visual richness of the area.

Information on ACAs is set down in section 9.6.12 of this County Development Plan. Further information on Summerhill ACA is detailed in the Character Statement which is available on the Council's website (www.meathcoco.ie). The best method of conserving historic buildings is to keep them in active use. While a degree of compromise will be required in adapting a protected structure to meet the requirements of modern living, it is important that its special interest is not damaged.

Infill and new proposals must offer high quality designs. The rooflines and elevations of new buildings should be sympathetic to traditional proportions and established patterns of roof pitch within the streetscape. Materials should also be traditional to the local area where appropriate and high quality finishes shall be insisted upon. The reversal of previous inappropriate alterations will also be encouraged. Contemporary design will be considered on a case by case basis and shall be analysed in the context of a particular site. Re-development of backland areas must be appropriate in character and scale with the village. Plot widths should respect established properties and a co-ordinated approach, should be employed to maximise the benefit of a single access. Section 11.1.7 and the Meath Rural Design Guide set down in this County Development Plan deals with Urban Design and Architectural Features. It would be desirable to prepare an urban design framework for the village.

08 Heritage

The village green is framed by townhouses of varying architectural styles and together with the alignment of the main axis of the village to Summerhill Demesne; this has created a village character of a very high quality. Trees on the village green and the avenue and environs of Summerhill Demesne contribute to this special character. The 'Old Post Office' building located on Elm Grove, opposite the demesne wall and close to the village green has been unoccupied since 2008 and has fallen into disrepair however it has recently been sold which would indicate it may be renovated in the near future. This building is a Protected Structure. There are a number of other buildings and structures of historical significance within Summerhill. The village has eight structures included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). The continued protection of the built heritage of Summerhill is intrinsic to the sustained success and viability of the village itself.

Summerhill has two items on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) which are identified on the land use zoning objectives map as an 'Area of Archaeological Interest'. The Recorded Monuments are an Armorial plaque, reference ME043-02002 and a Cross, reference ME043-020001 which are both located in the village green. Although the village and the surrounding environs hold environmental assets, none are designated at international level; the village does not contain nor is it adjacent to any Natura 2000 sites. A tree survey carried out in May 2008 in the village, has identified trees and hedgerows, which are of biodiversity value. It is an objective of the Council to seek the implementation of the actions recommended in the tree survey. Furthermore, a number of trees and hedgerows have been identified on the land use zoning objectives map for protection. The protection of the natural environment of Summerhill is fundamental to the success of this Development Framework, as it provides the village with its own unique identity and amenity background. Therefore it is vital to achieve the correct balance between protection of the natural environment and the future development of the village.

09 Movement & Access

The underlying movement strategy for the village aims to ensure that:

- The development of the area creates movement along looped routes so that internal village movement can take place independently of the Main Street, which carries most of the through traffic.
- Public transport accessibility is maximised.
- Pedestrian and cycle movement is encouraged to keep vehicular traffic to a minimum.
- Streets are designed to encourage pedestrian activity to make going outside a safe and pleasant experience.
- All vehicular roads are designed in a manner that incorporates passive calming of traffic.

The dominance of traffic and lack of pedestrian facilities undermine the character of the village centre. The main conflict arises at the Main Street and at the intersection of the R156 (Rathmolyon road) and the R158 (Trim road). This is added to by casual parking on the Main Street itself. It is important, therefore, to manage vehicular traffic passing through the village and to provide safe crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The R156 has been improved both north and south of Summerhill. It is an objective of this plan to facilitate a bypass connecting the R156 which is to be delivered in conjunction with the employment lands and longer term the Phase 2 residential lands located north of the village.

The development of public transport bus links is critical to ensure a better modal split in favour of public transport away from the private motor vehicle. A rail service is available from Kilcock and Enfield. It would be beneficial to have a scheduled bus service to the railway station in Kilcock which is approximately 11km from the village. Furthermore, it is essential that a village the size of Summerhill maintains good transportation links to surrounding urban areas, such as Trim, in order to attract future population and potential business opportunities.

Strategic Policies

SP 1	To promote the future development of the village as a compact settlement with a pedestrian friendly environment, a legible and coherent physical form, and a variety of land uses and amenities.
SP 2	To protect the unique character of the village through the provision of appropriate infill development which has regard to the scale, character, topography and amenities of the town.
SP 3	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"> i) The lands identified with an A2 "New Residential" land use zoning objective corresponds with the requirements of Table 2.4 Housing Allocation & Zoned Land Requirements in Volume I of this County Development Plan and are available for residential development within the life of this Development Plan. 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
SP 4	To operate an Order of Priority for release of lands identified for E2 "General Enterprise & Employment" in compliance with the requirements of ED OBJ 2 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The lands identified with an E2 "General Enterprise & Employment" land use zoning objective are available for development within the life of this Development Plan. ii) The lands identified with an E2 "General Enterprise & Employment" land use zoning objective but qualified as "Phase II" will only be available for development when all of the Phase I lands have been developed or being developed (i.e. permission granted and development substantially completed) and may be available within the life of this Development Plan. iii) The only exception is where a significant development is proposed which could not be accommodated within the lands identified as Phase I, for reasons of scale, lack of availability of unsuitability of the relevant Phase I lands, lands within Phase II may be considered in this regard.

Policies

Water and Wastewater Services

WWS POL 1	To endeavour to maintain and provide adequate potable water and wastewater treatment infrastructure that is sufficient to meet the development needs of the village within this Plan period. However, the Council acknowledges that there are significant constraints on the capacity of the existing infrastructure and may consider restricting development in circumstances where such infrastructure is inadequate.
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WWS POL 2	To reserve capacity in water services infrastructure to facilitate employment creation and community development in Summerhill.
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Flood Risk

FR POL	To manage flood risk and development in Summerhill in line with policies WS 29 – WS 36 inclusive in Volume I of this County Development Plan.
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Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

CER POL 1 To support the development of the lands identified for E2 land use zoning objective for employment creation purposes.

CER POL 2 To consolidate the central area of the village for commercial uses.

CER POL 3 To maintain and improve the vitality and viability of Summerhill's Village Centre area as the focus of all commercial and retail activity, in order to ensure both a mixture and variety of local shopping to serve the shopping needs of the local community.

Community Facilities and Open Spaces

CF POL 1 To support the provision and even distribution of a range of social infrastructure facilities to meet the needs of Summerhill in liaison with other statutory, voluntary, and community groups.

CF POL 2 To protect the sites of existing facilities and support their further development and expansion.

CF POL 3 To facilitate the provision of a new 3rd Age Centre.

Renaissance Community Plan

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

Urban Design

UD POL 1 To preserve the character of the village by requiring that the height, scale, and design of any proposed development within the village should complement the character of the village and its open space, and not diminish its distinctiveness of place.

UD POL 2 To facilitate the creation of an urban environment of quality in a visual sense with good urban design with appropriate attention to orientation and landscaping.

UD POL 3 To enhance landmark/focal points in Summerhill by redeveloping neglected sites and obsolete areas.

UD POL 4 To improve street finishes, footpaths and public domain.

Heritage

HER POL 1 To protect wildlife corridors including rivers, watercourses, trees and hedgerows within the development envelop.

HER POL 2 To have regard to the bio-diversity value of existing trees and hedgerows in areas that are likely to be developed.

Movement and Access

MA POL 1 To require the provision of short-term on-street vehicle parking where appropriate.

MA POL 2 To require screened parking in the village centre.

MA POL 3 To require the provision of good public lighting standards on all routes and extension of footpaths and public lighting to the development boundaries on public roads in association with further development.

Objectives

Land Use

LU OBJ To require that the lands identified for employment generating purposes adjoining the existing Summerhill Enterprise Centre shall only be developed in tandem with the development of the Summerhill Bypass from the Kilcock road to the Trim road as identified on the land use zoning objectives map.. An alignment for this roadway shall be agreed with the Roads Authority in writing and the roadway shall be delivered by the developers of the adjoining employment lands.

Heritage

HER OBJ 1 To protect the following trees and hedgerow within the village as identified because of their amenity value:

1. Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) tree.
2. Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) tree.
3. Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees.
4. Two Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and two Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees.
5. Twelve Lime (*Tilia* spp.) trees.
6. A mixture of Sycamore, Beech and Lime trees.
7. Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) tree.
8. Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) tree.
9. Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees.
10. Row of lime (*Tilia* spp.) trees.
11. Five Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees.
12. Ash Hedgerow.
13. Trees within the village green as follows: Birch (*Betula pendula*), Thorn (*Crataegus* spp.), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

HER OBJ 2 To seek to implement the actions recommended in the Tree Survey prepared for Summerhill.

Transportation

MA OBJ 1 Prepare a traffic management scheme for the village.

MA OBJ 2 To reserve and protect free from development the alignment identified on the land use zoning objectives map to provide a by-pass from the Kilcock road to the Trim road and onto the Rathmolyon road.

MA OBJ 3 To identify additional car parking spaces in the centre of the village.

MA OBJ 4 To extend the footpath and cycleway from the centre of Summerhill to the primary school at Dangan.

MA OBJ 5 To implement appropriate traffic management and environmental improvement measures throughout the town.