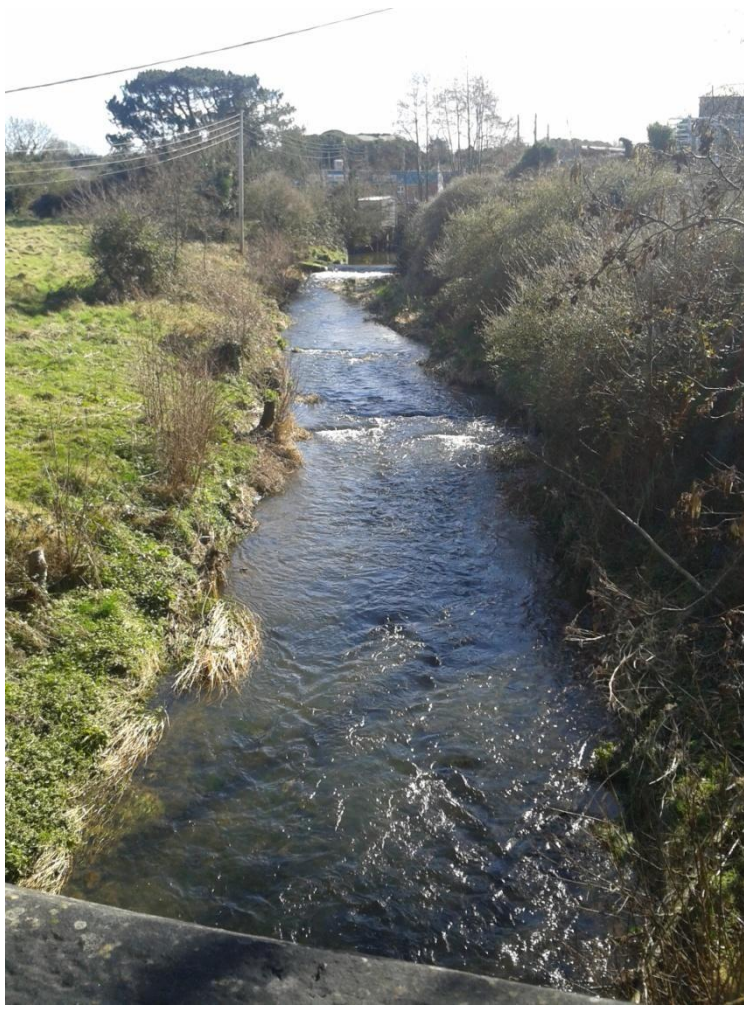


Appendix 6

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Dunleer Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023



Introduction

Green Infrastructure (GI) describes a network of connected, high quality, multifunctional open spaces, corridors, and the links in between that provide environmental services and multiple benefits for both people and wildlife. It is also used to describe a broad range of design measures, techniques and materials that have a sustainable character and have a beneficial environmental impact including climate change. The GI Strategy incorporates green spaces and blue spaces (water based) to support a resilient society.

The **Green Infrastructure** concept is primarily a planning tool which can be used for identifying the location and characteristics of green infrastructure that is essential if the ecosystem services they provide are to be managed in a sustainable fashion, and can be taken into account when preparing development plans. Under Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, planning and development policies must endeavour to conserve and manage sustainably, corridors and stepping stone habitat features. In recognition of this the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 incorporates policies to protect green infrastructure and biodiversity in the county, including provision for its management at local area plan level (see Chapter 5, Section 5.15.5).

The document entitled 'Biodiversity Enhancement Plan' for Dunleer (2016), prepared by Louth County Council in conjunction with Louth Tidy Towns Together, identified and mapped the various habitats and green infrastructure areas in the town, and that study forms the basis of this Green Infrastructure Strategy. Dunleer's Green Infrastructure Network is illustrated on Map 6.1.

The Setting and Physical Geography of Dunleer

Dunleer is a relatively small, but busy town, the fourth largest in County Louth, which straddles both sides of the White River. The Main Street and the majority of the built-up area of the town lie to the west of the White River and its associated floodplain. The White River flows into the Dee-Glyde system, which enters Dundalk Bay at Annagassan. The whole of the town centre lies in a shallow, formerly wooded valley, with the land rising to both sides, and particularly steeply to the east.

The railway line runs in a south-east to north-west direction and cuts into the slope on the north-eastern side of the town and along with the river creates a very strong barrier to development, while acting as a corridor for a variety of wildlife.

The Louth Landscape Character Assessment (2002) identified that Dunleer is located on the Muirhevna Plain, which is of local importance (see Chapter 5 of the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021).

Green Infrastructure Linkages in Dunleer

The two primary ecological linkages from Dunleer to the surrounding countryside are along the paths of the White River and the Railway Embankments, in addition to field boundaries and rough grassland vegetation. These green corridors through Dunleer allow wildlife to pass into and through the town. The trees and bushes along the railway embankments provide a viable corridor and refuge for small

mammals and some raptors.

Trees and hedgerows in general are an important element of the Irish landscape and provide an important wildlife habitat. They host a wide range of animal, plant and shrub species including insects, birds and mammals which combine to support green infrastructure. The retention of existing trees and hedgerows and the promotion of native planting for replacement and enhancement of same help support habitats for animals and plants. The retention of existing trees and hedgerows should be promoted and encouraged during the development management process. Where this is not possible any required replacement should be in the form of a variety of native species, such as hawthorn and blackthorn, with supporting species such as holly, hazel and wild cherry. The Council will encourage landowners on the approach roads to Dunleer to strengthen trees and hedgerows by way of additional native species planting, which will reinforce the value of these green corridors.

Table 6.1: Assessment of Green Infrastructure in Dunleer

| Location | Features of Interest | Potential for GI Enhancement |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| The White River | <p>River acts as a wildlife corridor supporting the movement of species through the town and to the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Wide variety of trees (Ash, Oak, Sycamore, Holly, Horse Chestnut) and hedgerows (Hawthorn, whitethorn, blackthorn).</p> <p>Variety of wildlife and habitats.</p> <p>Natural stone bridges and walls.</p> <p>Wetland area around the 18th century watermill just south of the Barn Road.</p> <p>Motte to east of Dublin Road.</p> | <p>Maintain, protect and enhance green linkages and riparian corridor and support and promote biodiversity connectivity.</p> <p>Plant native species trees and pollinator-friendly plants at certain locations. Allow hedges to grow and thicken.</p> |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>A: Promote the creation of a linear riverside park and an amenity park, opening up the river to the public as a recreational amenity.</p> <p>Erect signage and wildlife information panels at specific locations.</p> |
| The Railway Embankments | <p>Embankments act as a wildlife corridor supporting the movement of species through the town and to the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Wide variety of trees (Ash, beech) and hedgerows (Hawthorn, damson,</p> | <p>Maintain and enhance wildlife corridors and green linkages.</p> |

Dunleer Local Area Plan 2017-2023

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| | whitethorn, blackthorn). | |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>Protect and enhance the railway embankments as wildlife corridors with additional planting where necessary.</p> |
| Laneway to the Waste Water Treatment Plant (off the Dublin Road R132) | <p>Acts as a wildlife corridor connecting the town to the countryside.</p> <p>Lined with native trees and hedges on both sides of laneway (Hazel).</p> | Maintain and enhance these green linkages. |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>Incorporate into any potential future linear riverside park, opening up the river to the public as a recreational amenity.</p> |
| Former Parochial Hall site (now a car park) | Potentially attractive views of the White River from the car park. | Potential to open up the river to the public in terms of access and views. |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>Enhancement and maintenance along the adjacent river, and potentially allow access as part of a linear riverside park.</p> |
| Proposed new road through residential lands (North of the Ardee Road R170) | <p>Good hedges and open space area adjacent to the countryside.</p> <p>Potentially attractive green linkage to the countryside as part of any new development.</p> | Significant potential to allow greatly enhanced green linkages to the countryside through any new development. |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>B: Planting of native tree species and hedgerows would create a significant wildlife corridor leading through any new development, linking with the Ardee Road to both the west and the south, creating a green corridor from the town to the countryside.</p> |
| The Ardee Road (R170) connecting residential lands north of the Ardee Road R170 to the R170/R132 junction in the town centre | <p>Attractive planters and monkey puzzle trees along footpath.</p> <p>Wide footpath with potential for 'greening'.</p> | Potential to allow, via the Ardee Road R170, new green linkages to the town centre, including the R170/R132 junction and onwards to the White River, via the grounds of the Church of Ireland (Protected Structure). |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>B: Where feasible along the Ardee Road R170, the planting of additional native tree species, flowers and hedging, would create a new wildlife corridor from the town centre to any new development to the north of the Ardee Road, and beyond into the open</p> |

Dunleer Local Area Plan 2017-2023

| | | |
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| | countryside. | |
| Frontage of Lann Leire GAA Club (Shamrock Hill) and along the western-most frontage of Dunleer Enterprise Park (Shamrock Hill) | Gravelled car park to front of Lann Leire. Timber fence, linear grassed area and footpath along front of Dunleer Enterprise Park. | Provide new natural native species planting to act as a green corridor along this entire stretch in order to enhance biodiversity. |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>C: Planting of native tree species and hedgerow along this stretch of road would soften and enhance its visual appearance, and create a new wildlife link corridor connecting the town to the open countryside, promoting enhanced biodiversity.</p> |
| Area around the Old Mill east of the Dublin Road (R132) | Acts as a hugely significant wildlife corridor connecting the town to the countryside, and supporting the movement of species. Abundance of native and non-native trees (Including Ash, Oak, Sycamore, Holly) and hedgerows (Including hawthorn, damson, whitethorn, blackthorn). Natural rubble stone mill buildings, weir, sluice, pond. | Maintain and enhance green linkages and riparian corridor and support and promote connectivity. Protection of natural setting, historic buildings and associated structures. |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>Promote the creation of a linear riverside park opening up the river as a recreational amenity.</p> <p>Erect signage & wildlife information panels at specific locations.</p> |
| Hedge along the northern side of the Collon Road R169 | Acts as a wildlife corridor from the town to the surrounding countryside. Abundance of native and non-native trees (Including Ash, Oak) and hedgerows (Including hawthorn, damson, whitethorn). | Maintain a wildlife link corridor leading along the road from the town to the countryside |
| | | <p>Action</p> <p>In the event of these lands being developed the existing hedgerow and trees should be retained in their entirety where feasible, and supplemented with additional native trees and hedging.</p> |

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Protected Structures & Monuments

Elements of built heritage can make substantial contributions to green infrastructure in a town, and Dunleer has a rich architectural and archaeological history, which is reflected and included in the Green Infrastructure Strategy and associated mapping.

There are 12 Protected Structures within the boundary of the Dunleer Local Area Plan 2017-2023, as well as a number of protected National Monuments, some of which are contained within a 'Zone of Archaeological Potential' (see Map 5.5, Appendix 5). The specific locations of these protected features are indicated on Green Infrastructure Network Map 6.1.

Open Spaces

There is an abundance of designated open space located in various housing developments and public realm areas around the town.

Green Infrastructure policies as contained in the Dunleer Local Area Plan 2017-2023

NB 6: To protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure Network within Dunleer and to strengthen ecological links to the wider surrounding network.

NB 7: To implement the Green Infrastructure Network in any assessment of development proposals to prevent adverse impact on the ecological connectivity of Dunleer.

NB 8: Retain and integrate Green Infrastructure as an essential component in the design of all new development and reduce fragmentation of its network.

NB 9: All applications for development shall be in accordance with the relevant Green Infrastructure policies and objectives of the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021.

Dunleer Local Area Plan 2017-2023

Map 6.1 Green Infrastructure Network

