



Offaly County Council & Tullamore Town Council

Adopted Variation No. 2 (Part B)

of the

Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016



Landscape Buffer Appraisal



This Landscape Buffer Appraisal has informed the provisions of Part B of Variation No. 2 of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 and as such, sits alongside Part B for information purposes only. The Landscape Buffer Appraisal does not form part of Variation No. 2 Part B for incorporation into the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.

Landscape Buffer Appraisal

Gratitude to Rachel McKenna, County Architect for the sketches contained within this document.

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Preamble

Green Infrastructure

The concept of 'Green Infrastructure' is relatively new to Ireland. Having taken into consideration the extensive appreciation, expertise and experience of American practitioners in the field of Green Infrastructure, the EU and the Irish Government are actively promoting Green Infrastructure planning. Comhar (Sustainable Development Council), have undertaken extensive research (which is ongoing) in this area and issued a report in August 2010 entitled 'creating green infrastructure for Ireland: Enhancing natural capital for Human well being'. Comhar recognise that with the extent of development that has occurred in Ireland within the past 20 years there is a strong awareness that spatial planning should take greater consideration of both bio-diversity and climate change adaptation. Comhar have defined Green Infrastructure as:

'Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and managed network featuring areas with high quality biodiversity (uplands, wetlands, peatlands, rivers and coast), farmed and wooded lands and other green spaces that conserve ecosystem values which provide essential services to society.'

While many aspects of current planning practice support the development of the Green Infrastructure approach without the actual term being coined, the underlying tenet is becoming increasingly evident in development plans. As time progresses the term 'Green Infrastructure' will be more widely used and it will be seen as integral to the Development Plan as any other infrastructure (i.e. roads or water). This will provide for the creation of a network of green spaces that connectively function for the maintenance and protection of biodiversity within the urban setting with cognisance of the positive role it would play in the area of climate change adaptation.

With acknowledgement of this incoming approach as future national planning policy provides, it is considered that the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 has set a strong foundation for the identification of Green Infrastructure within the urban area. The Landscape Buffers identified in this document contribute to this and provide a firm basis for the further identification of a defined framework whereby spatial planning clearly provides for the integration of conservation and development.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (including the zoning objectives map of the plan) provides for a range of areas that are designated with an Open Space Landuse Zoning. These areas are indicated by their green colour on the zoning objective map and their use(s) described in Chapter 15 of the Plan. They include areas designed and used as playgrounds, general amenity areas, amenity areas associated with residential areas and sports and recreational centres and activities. However, it has become apparent that while there are particular areas within the plan area that come under the heading 'Open Space', their distinctive purpose is not fully acknowledged or referenced in the plan. Such areas function in more of a protective manner as 'Buffer' areas between landuses. Their function can be termed concisely as

'Landscape Buffers'. This document examines these particular landscape buffer areas in isolation of all other landuses included as part of the open space designation.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to:

- Identify landscape buffer areas located in Tullamore
- Appraise the landscape buffer areas and provide an explanation of the function they perform in their identified locations.
- Present recommendations for landscape buffers in Tullamore.
- Indicate the appropriate mechanism available that would provide for the incorporation of information relating to landscape buffers into the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 and possible future development plan(s) for the area.

The recommendations contained within this report may be implemented in a manner and at a time considered most appropriate by the Planning Authority.



Existing roadside buffer N52



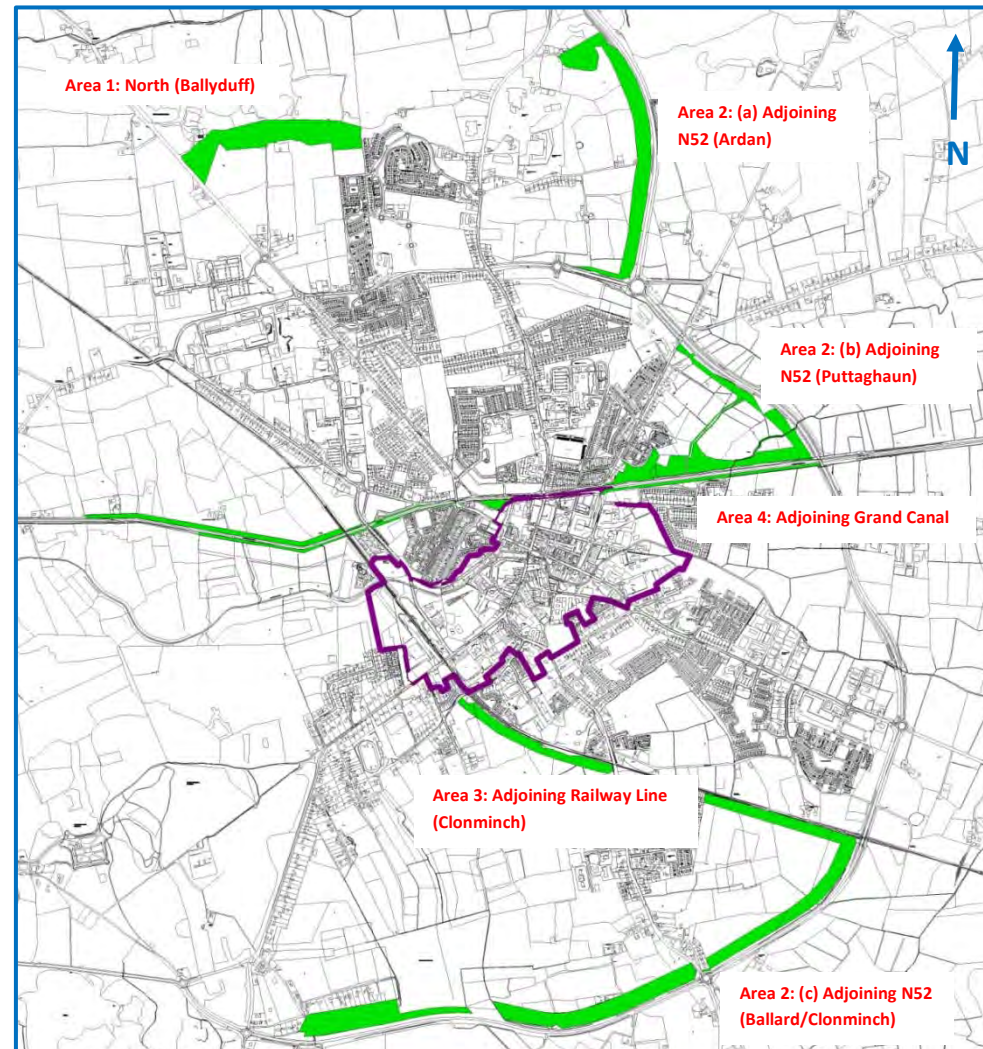
Buffer between Grand Canal Harbour and O'Carroll Street

1.3 Scope (Refer to Map 1)

This document examines areas zoned open space whose predominant function is to act as a buffer between landuses. The location of such landscape buffer areas is identified on Map 1. Their function as landscape buffer areas is obvious in most cases as they immediately adjoin a particular landuse that requires an additional level of protection for one reason or another. There are four primary landscape buffer areas including:

1. **North:** At Ballyduff demarcating Urban and rural landuses.
2. **Adjoining N52:** (a) At Ardan to north east, (b) Puttaghaun to east and (c) Clonminch to south of Tullamore Town Centre. These areas provide a buffer between the National Route (N52) and a variety of landuse zonings.
3. **Adjoining the Railway Line:** At Clonminch to the south of the line adjoining residential landuse zoning.
4. **Adjoining the Grand Canal:** Predominantly narrow edge buffer located between the Grand Canal and a variety of landuse zonings. The buffer widens for a distance to the north of the Canal at Puttaghan (east of Tullamore Town Centre).

Map 1: Primary Landscape Buffer areas, Tullamore



It should be noted further that specific objectives contained within Chapter 5 (Masterplans) of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 require the design and incorporation of landscape buffer areas at particular locations (peripheral or rural fringes). These locations will only be identified and incorporated at the design stage of any relevant scheme. Such landscape buffer areas are not included within the scope of this document.

1.4 Planning Context

The purpose of this document is to provide the rationale for Part B of variation No. 2 of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016. This document should be viewed as an addendum or supplementary to variation No. 2 Part B.

The identification of landscape buffers, as per this document, does not replace the need for the individual assessment of a proposal based upon the specific characteristics of the site, the locality and the proposal itself. Elements such as scale and design of development, topography, environmental considerations and the nature and sensity of uses within the immediate area may influence the required impact mitigation measures or separation distances that are considered necessary and appropriate in particular circumstances. Other innovative solutions to identified landuse conflict and interface issues are encouraged to be explored by landowners and developers and discussed at an early stage with the Planning Authority.



Illustrative example of the incorporation of landscape buffer between industrial type development and adjoining watercourse

2 Landscape Buffer – explained

2.1 Introduction

A fundamental component of any development plan is the zoning objective map which illustrates the location of defined landuses. Such landuses are generally compatible, mutually supportive and perhaps similar in the nature of activities provided therein to warrant proximity to each other (i.e. industrial developments and commercial developments)

However, in some instances, adjacent landuses present difficulties, be they through traffic considerations, environmental constraints, the operational nature of a particular development or other factors. As a consequence, conflicts may arise. An effective means of minimising conflicts between potentially incompatible landuses is the provision of a 'Landscape Buffer' between the landuses.

2.2 Landscape Buffer – Function

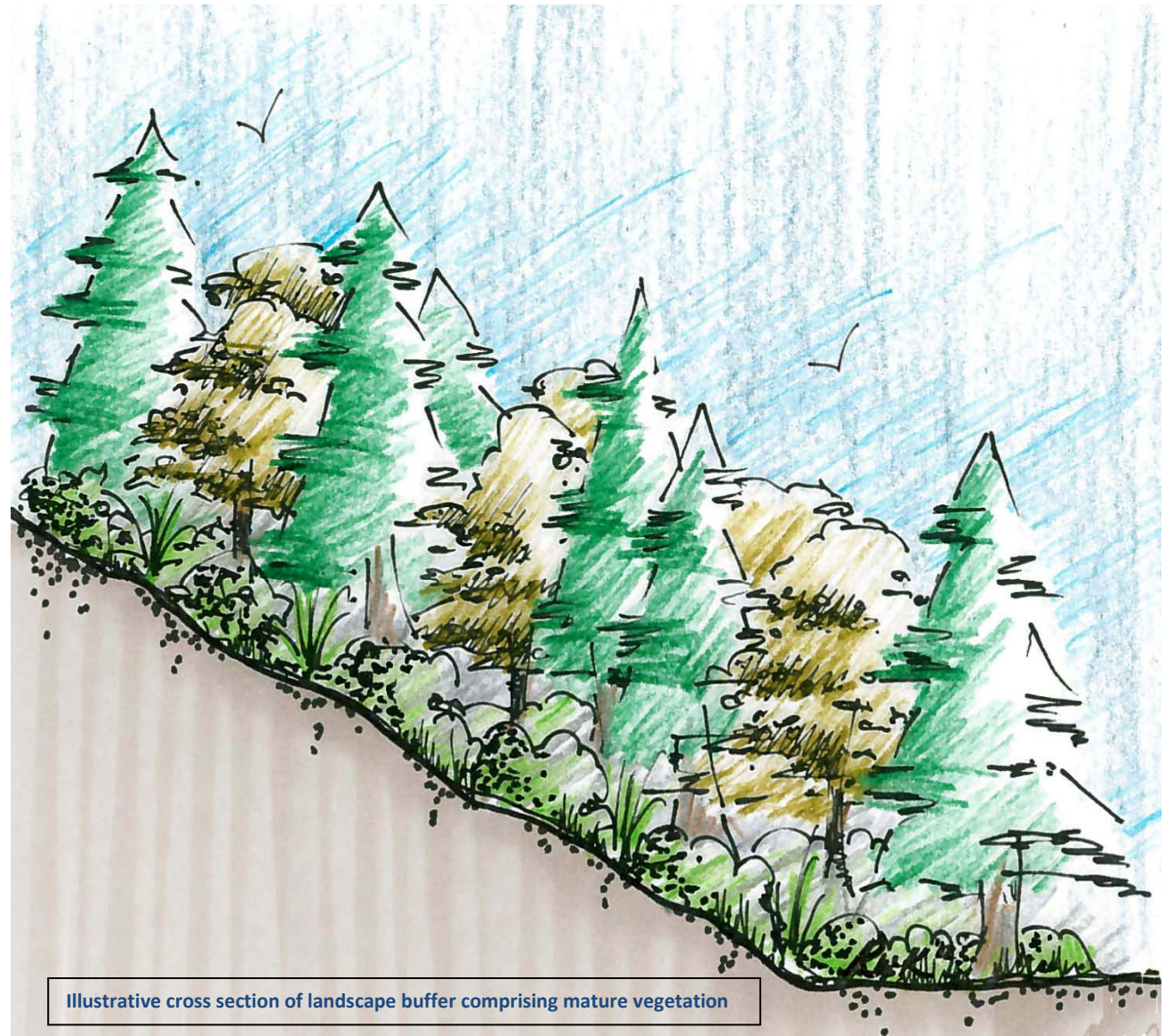
Landscape buffers minimise the potential for conflict, separate conflicting landuses and protect particular landuses and developments from other conflicting landuses or developments.

Conflicts can occur between commercial and residential landuses, road corridors and individual landuses, rural and urban landuses and natural environment and landuses. The purposes of the particular landscape buffer will therefore vary depending on the individual circumstances involved. However it must be noted, the role of landscape buffers can be diminished or undermined if they are reduced by the encroaching landuse.

A landscape buffer has two fundamental objectives and these are:

1. To prevent the damaging effects of one kind of landuse on another and,
2. To visually screen or shut off the view between one use and another thereby reducing or cancelling out whatever disadvantages might come from seeing a particular use thereby facilitating the creation of an attractive landscape.

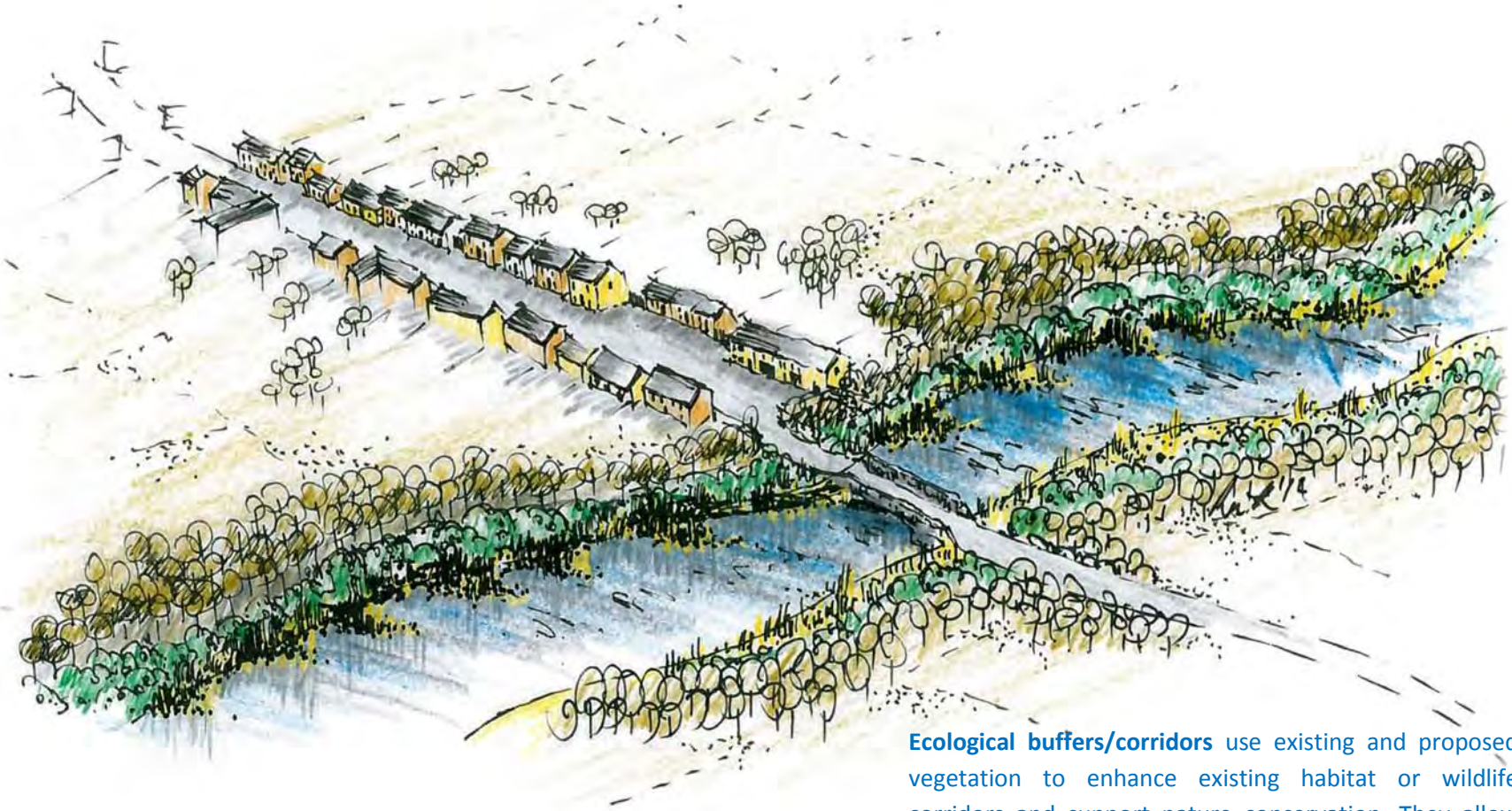
The role of landscape buffers is not necessarily a physical one whereby they provide a barrier type interface such as a berm, they also improve the aesthetic quality within a defined transitional area between two landuses. This can be achieved by using distance or landscaping and planting to provide an alternative visual perspective generally in front of what is being perceived as a negative image or aspect of a development. There are various types of landscape buffers used to mitigate against known conflicts between landuses and these include:



Separation buffers provide physical spatial separation between landuses. These can be used for areas around sewage treatment works, airports, cultural heritage sites and other similar specific landuses.



Separation Buffer- The designation around the main cultural heritage site (circular enclosure) and others in its vicinity as indicated in red provide for the protection of the feature of interest and protect against encroachment from development that may compromise their protection.



Ecological buffers/corridors use existing and proposed vegetation to enhance existing habitat or wildlife corridors and support nature conservation. They allow for the movement of species and their habitats particularly if located within an urban environment. Such buffers are used to allow and provide for co-existence within the urban area.

Landscape buffers comprise existing and proposed vegetation and landscaping to aid in reducing the impact from particular developments. These can be used to protect one landuse over another and often times these double up as ecological buffers also. The designated open space zoned areas in the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, subject to assessment in this appraisal, are all considered to fall under the category of Landscape.



Landscape buffer comprising mature planting north of Tullamore Town Centre at Arden

3 Appraisal

3.1 Introduction

This section examines the 4 landscape buffer areas identified in Section 1.3 (Scope), their wider locational context and associated spatial considerations. These considerations give rise to these areas taking on the function of landscape buffers.

3.2 Location, Description and Appraisal

As per section 1.3 (Scope) there are four primary Landscape Buffer areas which have been identified on Map 1. These landscape buffer areas will be examined in closer detail in this section on matters relating to their location and the particular function they each serve at these locations. The four landscape buffer areas are identified and described briefly and thereafter described in more detail

Area 1: North of Tullamore Town Centre:

At Ballyduff demarcating Urban and rural landuses. This area provides a buffer between residentially zoned lands to the south and White Lands (within the meaning assigned to it under section 15.5 of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016) to the north.

Area 2: Adjoining N52:

At: (a) Ardan to north east,

(b) Puttaghaun to east and,

(c) Clonminch to south of Tullamore Town Centre.

These areas provide a buffer between the National Route (N52) and a variety of landuse zonings. – to mitigate against the conflicting landuses of a heavily trafficked route and future proposed landuses in a physical and visual manner.

Area 3: Adjoining the Railway Line:

At Clonminch to the south of the line adjoining residential landuse zoning. to mitigate against the conflicting landuses of the railway line and future proposed residential development with particular emphasis on the protection of residential amenities.

Area 4: Adjoining the Grand Canal:

This is predominantly a narrow edge buffer located between the Grand Canal and a variety of landuse zonings both north and south. The buffer widens for a distance to the north of the Canal at Puttaghan (east of Tullamore Town Centre), to protect the Grand Canal from conflicting landuses and urban encroachment whilst being of a significant ecological and amenity value.

3.2.1 Area 1: North of Tullamore Town Centre

This area identified for use as a landscape buffer is located on the northern extremity of Tullamore Town at Ballyduff. This area zoned open space in the plan lies between the Clara Road (N80) to the west and the residential area of Esker Meadows/Norbury Woods to the east. The western part of this area lies immediately south of a residential dwelling and commercial development which itself sits beneath Ballyduff Wood which is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)¹. In addition, Ballyduff Wood and adjoining area is also identified as an Area of High Amenity in the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 on account of being part of the Eiscir Riada (Esker) system. This is an elevated area comprising a mix of deciduous and coniferous planting (in parts) and provides a significant backdrop to this designated open space area. There are a number of individual residential properties located centrally within this area on their own extensive sites. Vehicular access to this area is from the south off the Clara Road (N80).

¹ Ballyduff Wood is a pNHA on account of its natural woodland characteristics.



This designated open space zoned area has been identified as a Landscape Buffer on account of the following:

- It provides demarcation between two landuses namely residential and rural landuses.
- It provides a sufficient distance and interface between the pNHA of Ballyduff Wood which is located north of the Buffer area and proposed future residential development.

- It offers a visual awareness from the N80 Road that one is arriving or leaving the built up area of Tullamore.

The primary objective for this area as Landscape Buffer is to prevent encroachment of urban landuses onto rural landuses further north and in particular to provide a suitable buffer between the development lands and Ballyduff Wood to the north which is a designated pNHA. Existing residential properties located in the area will not be compromised by its role as Landscape Buffer.

It is noted that this area has in the past been subject to quarrying activities and infilling at certain locations. The nature of such activities could pose a threat and perhaps diminish or undermine the role of this landscape buffer. Extraction activities and infilling along with any other development proposals will require proper assessment to ensure that the integrity of the buffer is maintained in order to fulfil its primary objective. Given the adjacent residential landuse, an opportunity exists to develop this buffer area for amenity uses relating to and for incorporation into the residential landuse* where feasible.

Ballyduff Wood



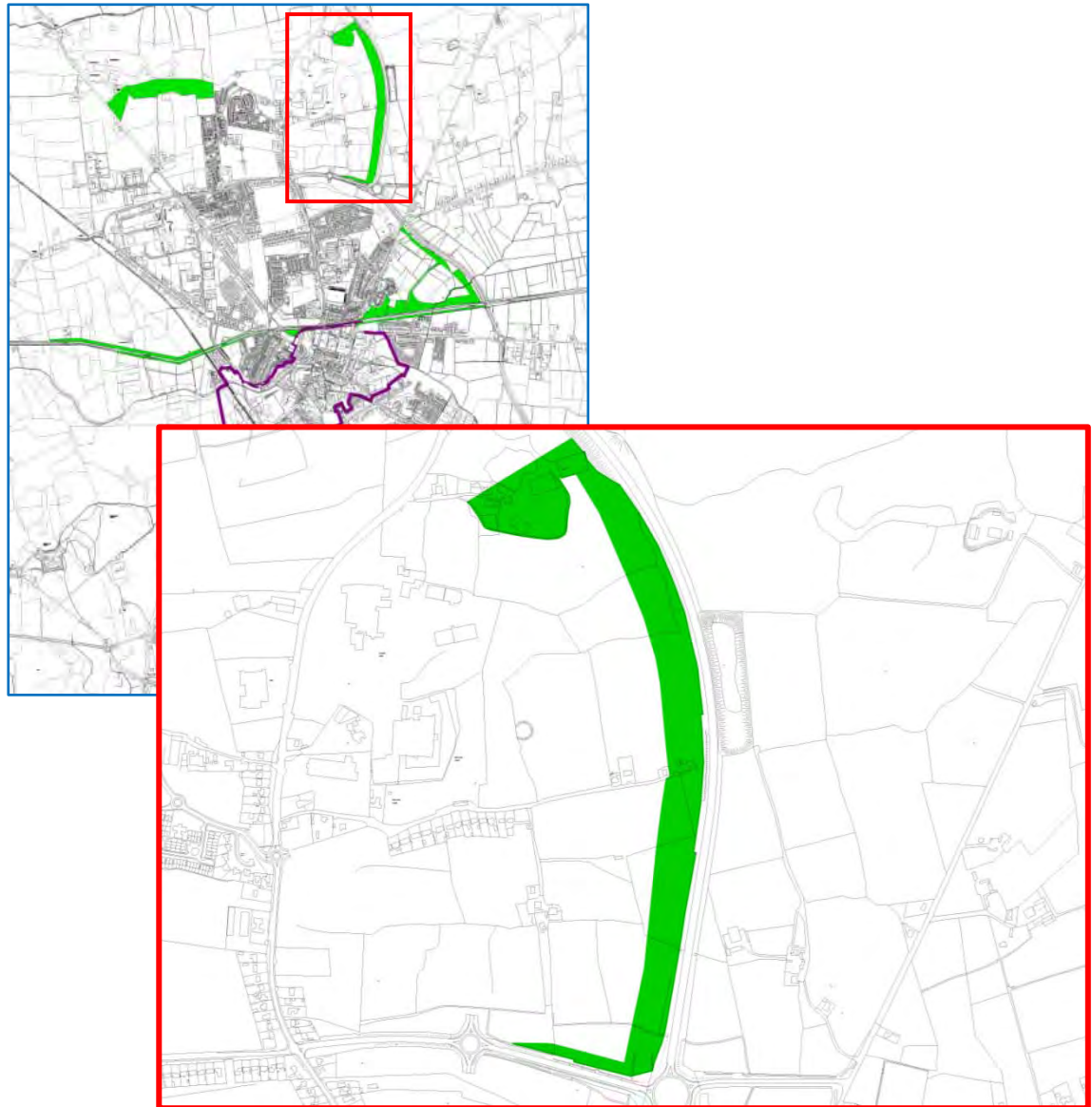
*This does not imply in any way that the Landscape Buffer area can be used to fulfil any requirements for the provision of private and public open space as part of any development scheme proposed to be developed in its vicinity

3.2.2 Area 2: Adjoining the N52

The landscape buffer located immediately adjoining the N52 is located in three separate locations along its route at:

- (a) Ardan to the north,
- (b) Puttaghan to the east, and,
- (c) Clonminch and Ballard to the South.

(a) Ardan: This area is located immediately west and adjacent to the Tullamore Bypass (N52). It is a strip approximately 1.4 km in length of designated open space zoned land. It falls in a southerly direction in conjunction with the levels of the N52. While generally undulating in nature along its length, this strip falls to just below the level of the road at its most southerly part.



Given the characteristics of the topography of this area, (described as generally undulating with a continual fall in levels southwards) and the adjoining landuses (industry, residential and commercial), there is a need for a landscape buffer at this location. Industrial and commercial type development may, by their very nature, comprise buildings of a

substantial height and often times the design, particularly of industrial development, is on the functional side rather than the aesthetic. Cognisance must be taken at all times that the best use is made of the buffer area/space to offset negative impacts of such matters. Particular attention in this location must be paid to the topography of the land and the

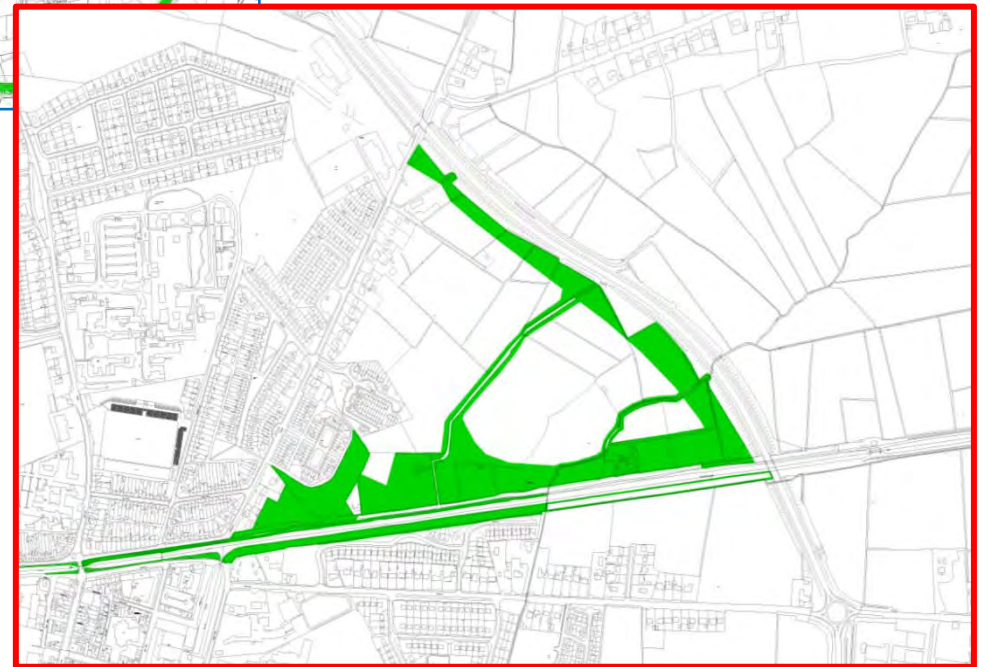
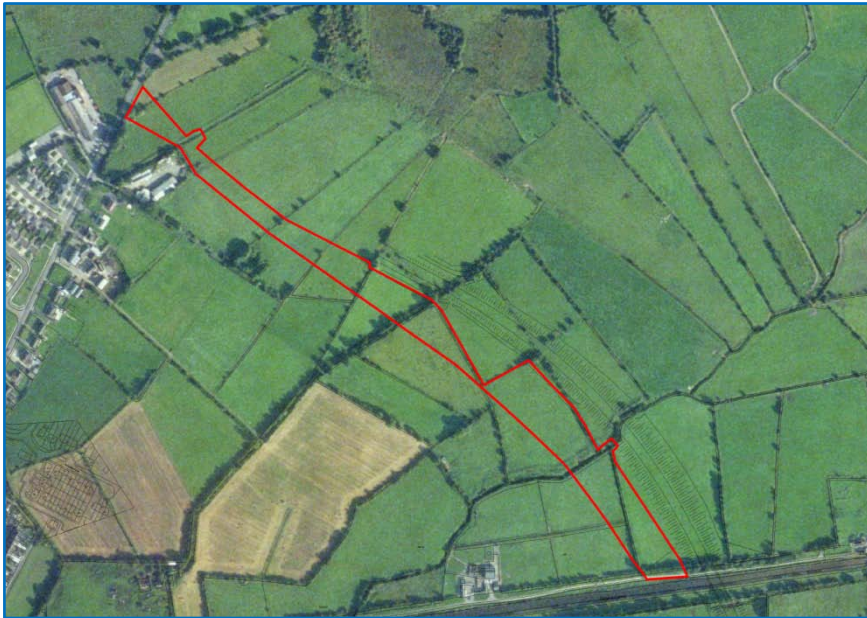
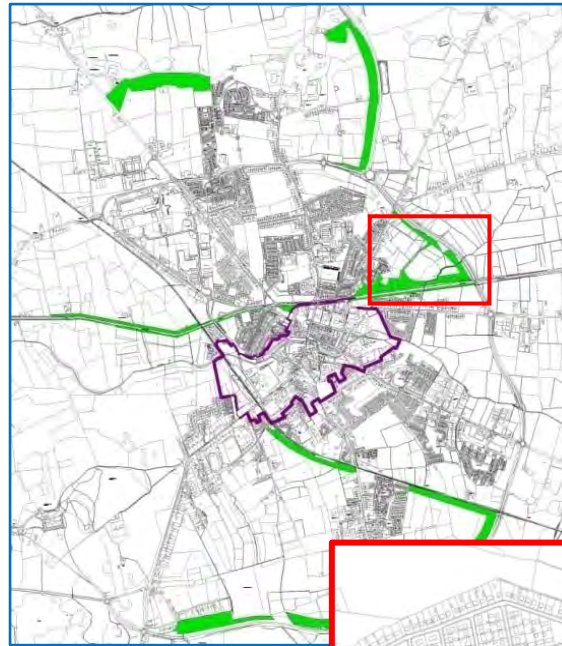
rising /falling levels to ensure that the buffer area can minimise or mitigate against impacts from a distance also. Distraction, be it through signage, lighting or design should be minimised.



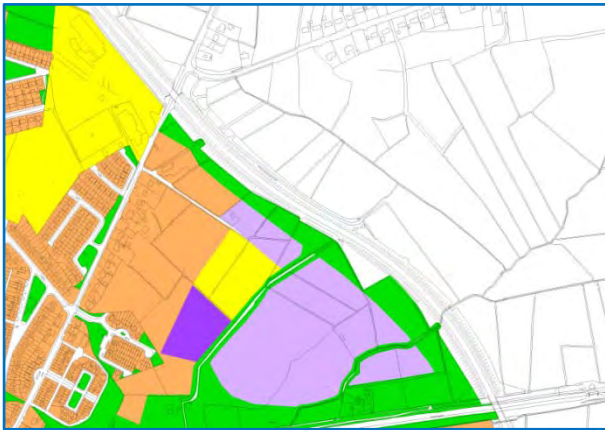
Photos showing landscape buffer area at Ardan and in particular the typical topography of the area and the existing aspect onto the N52.



(b) Puttaghan: This area adjoins the N52 and runs from the Grand Canal in a north westerly direction where it meets the local Road L-1024-4. This designated open space zoned land runs for a distance of just under 1 km and lies under the level of the N52 which is elevated significantly in places from the adjoining lands. This area takes an irregular form and is located inside the defined maintenance corridor of the bypass.



The buffer area at this location is located between the embankment of the N52 to the east and a mix of business/employment and residential landuse zonings to the west and south west.



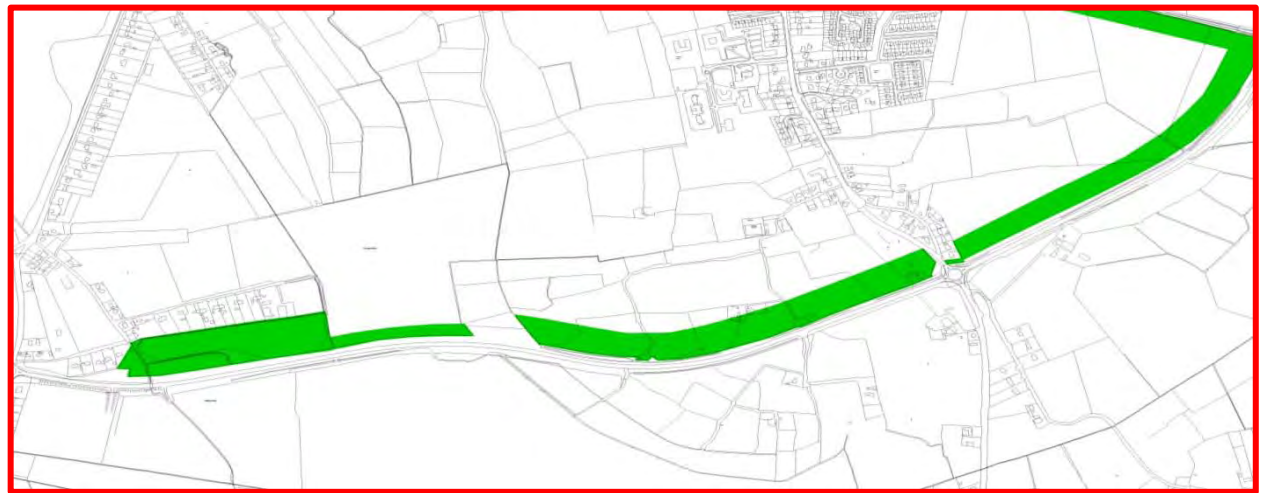
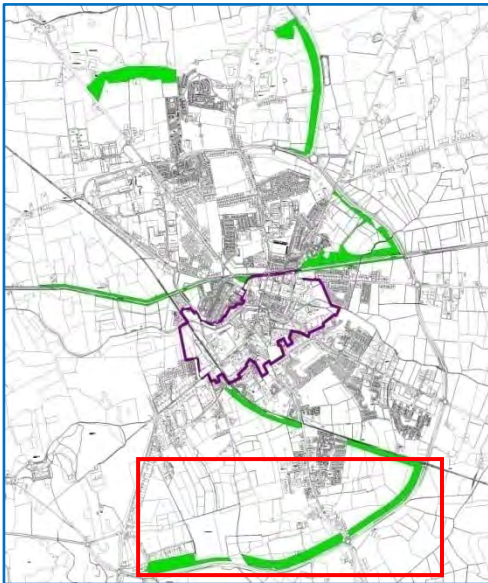
The buffer area takes an irregular form dictated by the maintenance area associated with the N52 and is significantly lower than the level of the N52. The purpose of the landscape buffer at this location is to mitigate against the potential conflicts from the N52 on the adjoining landuses. Further it may facilitate the visual enhancement of the embankment of the N52 when viewed from the adjoining development lands to the west and south west in particular.



Ariel view of the landscape buffer at Puttaghaun adjoining the N52. The N52 is located higher than the level of the subject lands. The area between the landscape buffer and the N52 is the embankment shown more clearly in the photo below.



(c) **Clonminch/Ballard:** This designated open space zoned land is located to the south of Tullamore and runs from the rear of an established residential area of Ballard eastwards for a distance of 3.4 km to the N80 Tullamore to Portlaoise Road continuing on eastwards to the railway line.



The area of open space zoned land to the west of the Clonminch Road adjoins business/employment zoned land to the north totals 9.5 hectares and maintains a width of between 35 metres to approximately 100 metres.

The buffer area at this particular location is located between the business/employment landuse and the N52 serving to mitigate against potential conflicts from either landuse. In addition to this, its role is to protect against perceived negative visual impacts from the southern approach (N80) to Tullamore which links directly to the N52 at a roundabout junction. In principle, the function of the landscape buffer at this location is considered reasonable and represents consistency in the approach undertaken along other sections of the N52.

However it must be noted that the business/employment zoning objective as per the provisions of section 15.3.1 of the plan (as amended by additional provisions of variation No. 1) provides for the development of higher end commercial, general industrial and technological uses to a design and layout that

is of particular high quality. Exacting criteria calling for significant investment in quality of design, treatment of public realm areas and landscaping in the demonstration of quality proposals are set out in the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 for business/employment zoned lands to endorse the exceptional quality that is required by this zoning objective.

This emphasis is largely due to two considerations. Firstly, it is a clear statement of the intended nature of developments considered permissible i.e. high end business/employment uses of high quality design and layout and secondly to capitalise upon its strategic location adjoining the N52 thus allowing for quality designed developments to address the N52, providing a degree of legibility and to create an opportunity to develop a visual 'gateway' to the urban area of Tullamore from the rural hinterland to the south.

This is an important consideration in appraising the necessity for the landscape buffer and in particular the extent of the

landscape buffer adjoining the business /employment zoned lands.

In recognition of the specific policies promoting quality design and public realm treatment on the adjoining business/employment landuse, it is considered that the landscape buffer at this location to the south of Tullamore Town at Clonminch/Ballard at its greatest extent of up to 100 metres in width is not entirely necessary. The landscape buffer area could be reduced by 50%. This would ensure a degree of landscape buffer to aid in the enhancement of the general area but that would also be required to satisfy another specific policy of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 which seeks to develop the landscape buffer area as an amenity route and wildlife corridor (Specific policy ET4) without entirely diminishing the benefits of its strategic location on the N52

The landscape buffer extends further eastwards from the N80 towards the Railway Line. This buffer serves to mitigate against conflicts of the adjoining future residential development lands and the N52. Located within the buffer area at present are a number of pylons supporting overhead electrical cables. This is a consideration for the development of the buffer area which could be designed as an amenity area/use ancillary to the adjoining residential use*.

*This does not imply that the landscape buffer area can be used to fulfil any requirements for the provision of private and public open space as part of any residential or other development scheme in the vicinity.



These three designated open space zoned areas, culminating in a total of 5.8km along the length of the N52, have been identified as landscape buffer areas primarily because they provide an appropriate separation or interface between incompatible landuses i.e. Industrial, residential, commercial and business /employment located adjoining the N52 and the heavily trafficked Tullamore Bypass (N52).

The tract of landscape buffer located along the N52 serves to transect the outer undeveloped areas of Tullamore from the wider rural hinterland which sit outside the Tullamore environs boundary. The landscape buffer areas provide an interface to distinguish between the environs area of Tullamore Town and the rural hinterland.

This landscape buffer adjoining the N52 has two primary functions which are to:

- (a) Make provision to mitigate against any identified and perceived impacts that may be experienced from the nature of industrial, residential or commercial developments on the N52 i.e. operational or negative/distracting visual impacts and,

- (b) Protect development sites from nuisances associated with the heavily trafficked route in close proximity .



This photo shows an example of a development area (in this case residential development) adjoining a national road without the benefit of a landscape buffer area designed to mitigate against perceived impacts or nuisances associated with either landuse

Supplementary to their primary functions, the landscape buffer areas located along the N52 have the potential to contribute to the overall visual perception of Tullamore. They may provide for the visibility of well-designed flagship developments on the strategic approaches as well as improving or enhancing views or prospects in certain locations.

The landscape buffer adjoining the N52 presents an opportunity to protect and perhaps enhance views and prospects where required when travelling on the Tullamore Bypass and other approach roads linking to it. The landscape buffer's principle function is to prevent the damaging impacts of individual landuses on the heavily trafficked N52 particularly when lands are developed in accordance with their land use zoning. Such impacts are predominantly of a visual or aesthetical nature stemming from the particular landuse (e.g. heavy industry), building design, orientation or aspect or some element of a distraction to motorists. The landscape buffer serves to protect the investment priorities of such road infrastructure also. Equally, the landscape buffer(s) dual purpose provides that they will protect individual landuses from negative impacts from the heavily trafficked route such as noise, emissions, glare etc.

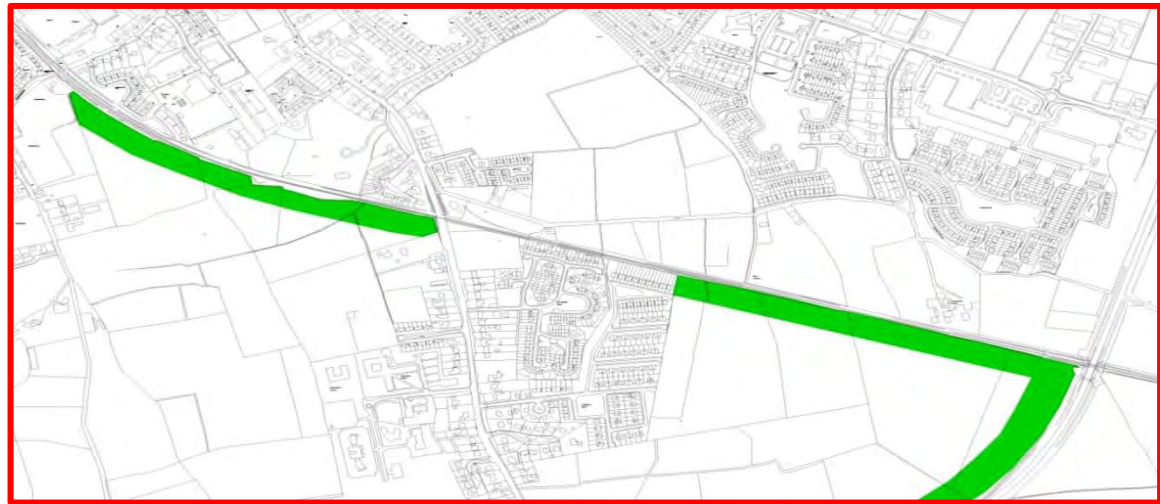
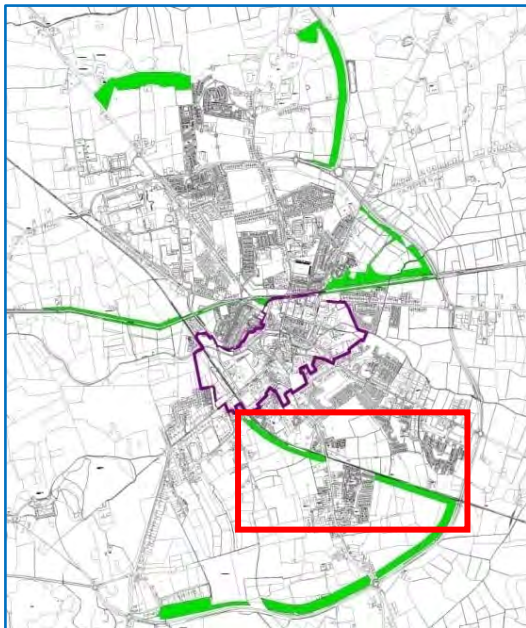
In general, lands immediately adjoining the N52 have remained largely undeveloped and so the opportunity to plan for and to incorporate these landscape buffers can be capitalised upon more readily.



This photo shows an example of an industrial type area development area adjoining a national road without the benefit of a landscape buffer area designed to mitigate against perceived impacts or nuisances associated with either landuse

3.2.3 Area 3: Adjoining the Railway Line

The railway line runs in a south/north west direction through Tullamore Town. Adjoining the railway line in the south east at Clonminch are two areas designated open space zoned land which have been identified for use as a Landscape Buffer. These areas adjoin the Railway Line in two sections to the south west. The first section runs from the rear of the Rugby Club grounds in Spollenstown in a south easterly direction to the N80 Road. The second section runs from the residential area of Clonminch Woods south easterly towards the N52. In total, the stretch of designated open space zoning located along the railway line is approximately 1.5 km in length.



Similar to the Landscape Buffer located adjoining the N52, this Landscape Buffer is located between the Railway Line and predominantly undeveloped residentially zoned land. The principle function of this buffer is to provide appropriate separation between what are considered to be the conflicting landuses of the transport corridor (Railway Line) and future residential developments. A dual purpose of this buffer provides an opportunity to address landuse from the perspective of the transport corridor and to provide for a positive outlook on approach or departure from Tullamore Town.

In addition to its role to reduce conflicts between the adjoining landuses, this area could be promoted positively for uses ancillary to residential use with cognisance of the approach to the Town on the rail transport corridor.

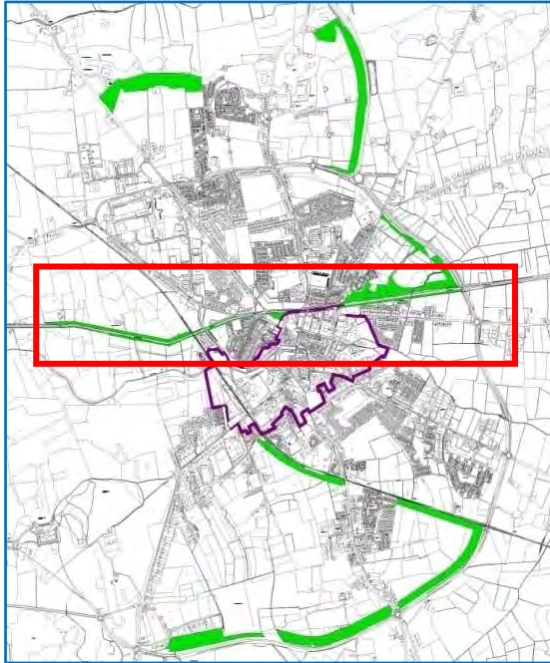
These photos show examples how landscape buffer areas particularly adjoining residential areas could be incorporated and promoted positively for uses ancillary to residential use i.e. amenity or recreational use.

Photos taken in Sragh Industrial Estate, Tullamore.



3.2.4 Area 4: Adjoining the Grand Canal

The Grand Canal is a proposed Natural Heritage Area² (pNHA) and flows in an east west direction through Tullamore dissecting the town north from south. The Grand Canal on entry into Tullamore passes under the Tullamore Bypass (N52) to the East of the Town occupying a location immediately north of Tullamore Town Centre before passing under the Railway Line westwards. At an approximate central point within its journey through the Town, the Grand Canal inlets to the Grand Canal Harbour which is located immediately east of O'Carroll Street.



² On account of the ecological value of the canal corridor for the host of species it supports.

The Landscape Buffer located along the Canal varies greatly in its width for the extent of its path through the Town. Lands at Puttaghan immediately adjoining the Canal to the north zoned open space are the most extensive and have been included as part of the Landscape Buffer.



This area adds a further degree of separation and protection from existing established residential development and undeveloped lands zoned pre-dominantly for business/employment uses in the area.



On arrival into the Town from the East and in particular just inside the bypass, existing mature trees and in places dense vegetation along with extensive Canal bank (inclusive of tow path) on both sides give the Canal user very little comprehension that they have already arrived into the greater Tullamore urban area. At this location, the Landscape Buffer is at its widest taking in lands immediately north of the Canal at Puttaghan providing a further degree of separation and protection from existing established residential development and undeveloped lands zoned pre-dominantly for business/employment uses in the area. The Landscape Buffer area narrows significantly further westwards from this point.



The Grand Canal is an engineered waterway, designed and constructed by people initially as a key transportation route for goods. Its role has evolved from one of transportation to include such roles as amenity and recreation, for the enhancement and protection of natural heritage and environment and an aesthetic quality. Its amenity value and contribution to Tullamore with respect to tourism is widely appreciated however, it is also acknowledged that there are diverse demands placed upon the Canal corridor. These demands can be partly attributed to its proximity and location within the urban area of Tullamore in addition to its extensive accessibility.

Image to left shows mature vegetation located to north of the Canal separating it from development uses in this area.

Image to right shows the Canal with adjoining Tow Path at a point approaching Tullamore Town Centre.

The designated open space zoned land adjoining that Grand Canal has been identified as a Landscape Buffer in order to safeguard, preserve and enhance the intrinsic character of the waterway in recognition of not only its location within an urban setting but the positive contribution it makes to Tullamore Town. In general the landscape buffer area

performs a diverse range of functions including:

- Interface between the conflicting varying land uses.
- Wildlife habitat/biodiversity.
- Recreational and light sporting activities.
- Travel corridor - for boats and the use of tow paths for walking and cycling.

- Amenity area.
- Aesthetic quality.

The buffer areas along the Grand Canal perform important roles. Each role impresses further the significance of the Grand Canal corridor to the Town of Tullamore.



Photos showing the edge buffer area located along the canal. This linear buffer performs a range of functions as identified above.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

The four existing landscape buffer areas have been identified and described in preceding sections of this document. This section outlines recommendations for the landscape buffers identified in the context of their location and the primary purpose they serve to ensure that they continue to operate and perform in a purposeful manner. Having regard to the appraisal and options explored in the previous sections, this section also takes the recommendations and describes the mechanisms available to progress these matters further and particularly for their practicable implementation and inclusion into the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.

4.2 Implementation of Recommendations

Arising from the appraisal in section 3 of this document are a number of recommendations for the landscape buffers identified as well as other general recommendations. These recommendations are listed below in section 4.3 alongside the mechanism for bringing these forward or implementing them. These recommendations and indeed how they are implemented give rise directly to the basis of Variation No. 2 (Part B) which will effect amendments and additions to the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016. Other recommendations will require a further degree of examination and as such will need to be undertaken at time considered most appropriate. For clarity, all recommendations and the suggested mechanism for implementation or delivery are set out below.

4.3 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Make provision for the description of the term 'Landscape Buffer' and further, provide an explanation of the function of landscape buffers in the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.

Implementation: Update section 15.3 (Zoning Objectives) of the plan providing for a description and explanation of landscape buffer under the existing title heading '**Open Space/ Sports/Recreation/Amenity Zoning Objective**'. This can be undertaken by way of variation to the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 within a timeframe suitable to the Planning Authority.

Recommendation 2: Provide guidance in the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 by way of development plan standards to landowners/developers who may be bringing forward development proposals at locations adjoining and/or including landscape buffers or other areas that are in close proximity to landscape buffers. Landowners/developers, in bringing forward any proposal on, in or near a landscape buffer would be required to comply insofar as possible with the standards are prescribed by the Development Plan. The inclusion of such provisions in the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 would have to be undertaken in tandem with the provisions of recommendation No. 1 above which sets about defining what a Landscape Buffer is.

Implementation: Update Chapter 14 (Development Standards) of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 to provide for development standards and guidance for landowners/developers for proposals on, in or in close proximity to Landscape Buffer areas. This can be undertaken by way of variation to the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 within a timeframe suitable to the Planning Authority.

Recommendation 3: The extent of the Landscape Buffer to the south of Tullamore Town at Clonminch/Ballard varies in places. The function and role of the landscape buffer at this location is identified as being one that provides protection between the National Road (52) and adjoining landuses (Business/Employment) in addition to demarcating between the urban and rural hinterland which sits outside the Tullamore Environs Boundary. However, in recognition of specific policies relevant to this area relating to quality design, layout and public realm treatment and the provision of a wildlife corridor, it is considered that the landscape buffer at this location to the south of Tullamore Town at Clonminch/Ballard could be reduced by 50%.

Implementation: Planning Authority to decide on the definitive extent of Landscape Buffer at this location with consideration of all policies. Any revision to the landscape buffer area at this location would require the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 including the landuse zoning map to be varied to accommodate any alteration.

Recommendation 4: Examine other areas of Tullamore Town and Environs to establish whether these areas would benefit from the provision of landscape buffers to mitigate against potential impacts. Such areas include between the N52 and adjoining zoned landuses in locations. Landscape buffer areas may be identified where there are identified impacts.

Implementation: This appraisal would be encouraged to be undertaken in the timeframe of the review of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan to provide in particular for a holistic and coherent approach to landuses in Tullamore.

Recommendation 5: Landscape buffers to be examined in the context of 'Green Infrastructure' in the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan.

Implementation: This appraisal would be encouraged to be undertaken in the timeframe of the review of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan to provide in particular for a holistic and coherent approach to landuses in Tullamore.

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