

## PART 8 SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

4 No. 1 Bed Apartments at  
Keshcarrigan, Co Leitrim

### Part 8 Social Housing

### Development Briefing Report



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On behalf of



**Leitrim County Council**  
Comhairle Chontae Liatroma

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VAT No. IE9852532Q

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## 1 Introduction

Wynne Gormley Gilsenan Architects & Surveyors Ltd, 21 Church View, Cavan have been engaged by Leitrim County Council to compile this planning policy report to accompany the Part 8 Social Housing Development planning application for a residential development of 4 no. 1 bed apartments at Keshcarrigan, Co Leitrim. This report forms part of an overall package of information setting out the rationale, need and design intent of the proposed development. This development is part of a national policy of increased housing provision to meet demands. The proposed lands are in Leitrim County Council ownership and offer an excellent opportunity to provide high quality housing in close proximity to the village centre of Keshcarrigan.

### 1.1 Project Overview

The proposed site is located just off Main St in the centre of the village. The site is a green field site situated within the boundaries of the Keshcarrigan Land Use Zoning Objectives Map.

The proposed site measures approximately 0.073 Ha (0.18 Acres) and will if approved, be accessed off the cul de sac along the site frontage. The general topography of the site is relatively flat with a slight fall from public road to the back boundary.

The proposed development consists of 4 no. 1 bed apartments in a semidetached block with 2 apartments at ground floor level and 2 apartments at first floor level. Each apartment will have their own door entry.

There is a small open green space to the south of the site which will adjoin the existing public paved area which will enhance the public space in the village centre.

The design takes account of all national and local policies and meets all the standards set to provide a high quality, sustainable development.

### 1.2 The Design Team

The design team for this project is led by Wynne Gormley Gilsenan Architects & Surveyors Ltd who have a track record of designing high quality residential developments throughout Ireland for both the public and private sector. Engineering expertise on the project is being supplied by Alan Traynor Consulting Engineers (Civil/Structural) and Renaissance Engineering Ltd (Mechanical and Electrical). Quantity Surveyors for the Project are Michael Walshe and Associates. All members of the Design Team have a wealth of experience in delivering a project of this nature and have worked closely with Leitrim County Council through the design stage to arrive at this application.

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### **1.3 Housing Need Response**

This housing scheme is a response to the local need which is set out in the Leitrim County Council's Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 document which highlights the significant demand that currently exists within the county - "The 'waiting list' for those on the housing list for social housing has levelled out at approximately 502 requests."

The Housing Need Assessment undertaken in Q3 2023 for Drumshanbo / Drumcong / Keshcarrigan (known as South 1) indicates a total of 115 households on the Housing waiting list.

This development will meet the need of 4 applicants from the waiting list. In addition, one of the Five Pillars as set out in the Government Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness was to accelerate the supply of social housing.

## **2 Planning Policy Context**

This section of the report examines local, regional and national planning policy documents which are relevant to this proposed development. The proposed scheme adheres closely to all relevant legislation and guidance documentation as set out below.

### **2.1 Ireland 2040**

Project Ireland 2040 is the government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people. This document sets out the vision for the future growth of Ireland over the next 20+ years. This document seeks to balance the future growth of Ireland and counterbalance the draw of people and resources to the Greater Dublin Area. National Policy Objective 1b sets out a target of population growth within the northern and Western regions of between 150-175,000.

The National Planning Framework is the Government's plan to cater for the extra one million people that will be living in Ireland, the additional two thirds of a million people working in Ireland and the half a million extra homes needed in Ireland by 2040. The Framework focuses on:

- Growing our regions, their cities, towns and villages and rural fabric.
- Building more accessible urban centres of scale.
- Better outcomes for communities and the environment, through more effective and coordinated planning, investment and delivery.

Developments such as the proposed, help strengthen the existing towns and build a critical mass of users to support economic growth and infrastructure. Ireland 2040 is targeting a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to be within and close to the existing 'footprint' of built-up areas again which this development is in line with.

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## **2.2 Housing for All**

Housing for All is the Government's plan to increase the supply of housing to an average of 33,000 per year over the next decade. The plan provides for an optimal mix of social, affordable and private housing for sale and rent.

The plan is based on four pathways, leading to a more sustainable housing system:

- support home ownership and increase affordability.
- eradicate homelessness, increase social housing delivery and support social inclusion.
- increase new housing supply.
- address vacancy and make efficient use of existing stock.

The proposal will help increase the new housing supply thus contributing to the Housing for All plan.

## **2.3 Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007**

In February 2007, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a statement on housing policy, *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities*<sup>1</sup>, which set out the fundamentals of the Government's vision for housing in the coming years. The aim of these Guidelines is to identify principles and criteria that are important in the design of housing and to highlight specific design features, requirements and standards that have been found, from experience, to be particularly relevant.

Table 5.1 of this document sets out minimum standards for all housing units. Section 8 of this report provides detailed breakdowns of each unit and its comparison to the standards set out in this policy document.

## **2.4 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032**

This RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region that supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government. It provides a 12-year strategy to deliver the transformational change that is necessary to achieve the objectives and vision of the Assembly. The strategy is about delivering effective regional development for the Northern and Western Region, encompassing Connacht and the Ulster Counties of Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan.

*REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES RPO 3.4 To support the regeneration and renewal of small towns and villages in rural areas.*

The proposed development of the subject site is in line with the RSES RPO 3.4 as it provides for regeneration of villages in rural areas.

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## **2.5 Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029**

Leitrim County Council through the Housing Strategy as set out and contained in the County Development Plan 2023-2029 states that the core objective in relation to the provision of housing is to ensure that every household has accommodation suitable to their needs, located in a suitable environment, at a price or rent it can afford. The Council's role with regard to housing is to formulate a planning policy in the County Development Plan, to consider planning applications for private housing against this policy framework, to ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to meet the projected housing demand and to provide houses or facilitate the provision of social housing for those requiring assistance to provide homes for themselves. The achievement of the strategic aim and the stated principles are supported by a series of policies and objectives which the Local Authority are obliged to realise. These include:

**HOUS OBJ 2** aims to secure the delivery of social housing in our county in accordance with the Council's Social Housing Delivery Programme and Government Policy as set out in Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness

**HOUS OBJ 3** seeks to ensure that sufficient lands are identified through land use zoning objectives at appropriate locations and made available to realise the housing projections and residential development needs identified in the Core Strategy, as informed by the Housing Needs Demand Assessment.

**HOUS OBJ 7** seeks to increase the stock of social housing within the county in order to meet the social housing needs identified in this Housing Strategy as well as the long-term housing needs of existing households on the Local Authority housing waiting list.

**HOUS OBJ 9** wishes to deliver high quality housing of an appropriate scale, mix, tenure, location and density, aligned with adequate physical and social infrastructure and the household allocations contained in the Core Strategy.

The proposed development also complies with:

**HOUS POL 5** by promoting the principles of Universal Design for housing development to provide age friendly standards.

**HOUS POL 11** by promoting residential densities appropriate to the development's location and surrounding context, having due regard to Government policy relating to sustainable development, which aims to reduce the demand for travel within existing settlements, and the need to respect and reflect the established character of rural areas.

**HOUS POL 12** is achieved by ensuring high standards of energy efficiency in existing and new residential developments in line with good architectural practice and promotion of energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of new residential units, encouraging improved environmental performance of building stock (measures to reduce carbon emissions, improve resource use efficiency and minimise pollution and waste).

**HOUS POL 13** which requires residential development proposals to be of high quality and make a positive contribute to the built environment and local streetscape facilitating and encouraging innovation.

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**HOUS POL 14** by ensuring that proposals for apartment developments adhere to the requirements contained within 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments' (DoHLGH, 2020) or as updated during the life of this Plan. All applications for apartments are required to demonstrate at a minimum compliance with these Guidelines and the Specific Planning Policy Requirements contained therein.

The proposed development is fully compliant with all aspects of the policy framework contained in the County Development Plan 2023-2029 including the Development Management standards contained in Chapter 13 of same.

## **2.6 Leitrim County Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026**

The Council has prepared the Leitrim County Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026, in accordance with its obligations under Part V of the Planning Act. This document aims to set out a strategy for housing within the County over the lifetime of the County Development Plan 2023- 2029 and it is prepared in the context of the new 'Core Settlement Strategy' required as part of the Development Plan.

The Plans will set out details of both social and affordable housing delivery as appropriate over the period 2022-2026, in line with targets set under Housing for All.

The Housing Delivery Action Plan will also

- Demonstrate alignment of the Housing Delivery Action Plan with the National Planning Framework;
- Provide an outline of locations where housing will be delivered (e.g. towns, villages, urban areas, rural areas, etc.) and the planned numbers of homes to be delivered in each area and by year;
- Include details of existing land holdings and land acquisition required to deliver the targets in the Plan;
- Indicate the planned delivery streams to be used to meet the targets, including the role of the Approved Housing Bodies /LDA or other partners with a focus on delivery through new build;
- Include an assessment of housing types and sizes, in accordance with local need, including the adequate proportion of 1-, 2-,3- and 4- bedroom homes aligned with those needs.
- Provide for housing for people with a disability and the provision of Age Friendly Housing;
- Show targets for the use of vacant properties as social housing through Buy and Renew Construction and Repair and Leasing scheme;

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### 3 The Site

#### 3.1 Site Description

The proposed site is located just off Main St in the centre of the village. The site is a green field site situated within the boundaries of the Keshcarrigan Land Use Zoning Objectives Map.

The proposed site measures approximately 0.073 Ha (0.18 Acres) and will if approved, be accessed off the cul de sac along the site frontage. The general topography of the site is relatively flat with a slight fall from public road to the back boundary.

Currently the site is unoccupied and has become overgrown and unsightly in the village centre.



Fig 1 – Extract from Satellite Pro

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### **3.2 Site Zoning**

As noted in the Leitrim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029 Section 6.10.3 Land Use Zoning Objectives, the proposed site is zoned 'General'.

<b>General</b>	To protect and promote the character of the Rural Village and promote a vibrant community appropriate to available physical and community infrastructure.
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**Table 6.1 of the Leitrim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029**

The proposed development is in line with the zoning objectives of the Leitrim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029.

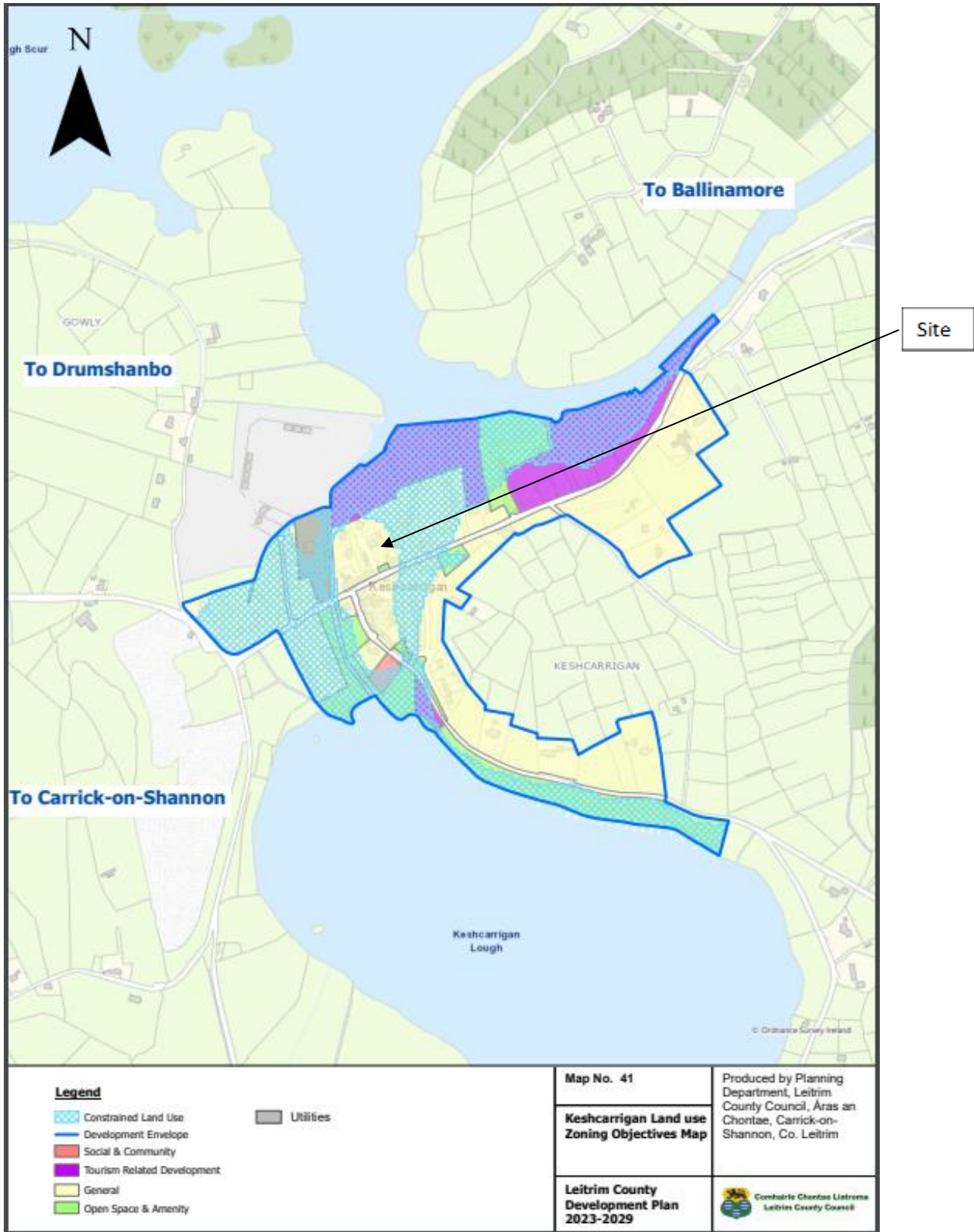


Fig 2 – Leirim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029

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### **3.3 Site History**

The site is a greenfield site which had the benefit of a previous planning permission under PI Ref 041067 which consisted of *'erect 3 no. town houses consisting of 1 no. detached and 1 no. semi-detached block, connection to existing services, access onto the public road and all associated site development works in lieu of 4 no. town houses consisting of 2 no. detached'*.

This application lapsed and was never acted upon.

### **3.4 Site Levels**

The subject site at present relatively flat and has a slight fall from the public road to the rear of the site.

Proposed site levels will gradually slope and work with the existing site levels. Access to each unit will be in compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

## 4 The Proposed Development

### 4.1 Design Statement

The design concept of the proposed residential development was prepared after preliminary discussions between Leitrim County Council, WGG Architects and other design team members and forms the basis of the design of the site layout and housing types.

In accordance with Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 the following issues considered in the preparation of the Concept Design:

- Site Design Approach – The overriding design intention is to create an inclusive and coherent new community, based on best practice urban planning principles, giving residents a sense of place, ownership and identity. The design concept responds to the sites character:
  - Create a central public open space to provide a strong neighbourhood identity;
  - Form linear green buffer along public footpath with front green areas and parking;
  - New housing to overlook open spaces to ensure passive surveillance of amenity areas;
  - Provide secure perimeter boundary to each housing unit.

The layout of the proposed development went through a number of variations and proposals dealing with design constraints such as overlooking / gradients / boundary details etc. The final proposal deals with all issues and provides a development which is in harmony with its surroundings and provides an attractive addition to the village centre.

- Design Evaluation – The design strategy was tested with a number of design options which were presented and discussed with the Planning Dept. and Housing Dept. of Leitrim County Council. Suggested comments contributed to an updated design.
- Proposed site layout/design approach – The following key design aspirations have reinforced the design process of the layout to date:
  - Creation of a high quality living environment for residents and enhancement of the social, environmental and visual quality of the area as a whole;
  - Design of the layout to discourage antisocial behaviour, particularly by ensuring that all access ways and public areas are overlooked by dwellings;
  - Maximise amenity and energy efficiency through climate sensitive design that takes account of orientation and typography;
    - Elimination of barriers to accessibility for all users;

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- And promoting the concepts of enclosure, clear separation of public/private realm and good permeability as the means to achieve a high-quality living environment.
- Public Open Space – There will be one central public open spaces. More detail is given in section 4.4 of this report.
- Streets, roads and footpath – The design team have taken full cognizance of the requirements of DMURS and other relevant guidance/ legislation. All parking for the dwellings has been provided on-street and is located to be overlooked by the residents and in close proximity of each individual resident.
- Boundaries – A variety of boundaries have been considered, appropriate to the circumstances and locations:
  - 1.8m high timber board and concrete post form a visual boundary and security for each dwelling;
  - 1.8m boundary walls where private spaces are next to a public space, this is to ensure the privacy of the private dwelling
  - Dwelling Types – The 4 no. units proposed are 1 bed apartments which are in one block similar in size to a standard semi detached unit which is in keeping with the surrounding dwellings and building in the area.
  - House Design – The units proposed are 1 bed apartments which will help meet the immediate housing need in Keshcarrigan.
- The Arrangement of living/ kitchen/ dining spaces is relative to the rear of the apartments which provide view to the rear private gardens and enjoy the east sun in the morning and early afternoon.

Practical aspects of access and use have been considered in detail, with particular reference to Part M of the Building Regulations. Level access is provided at each main door and the first floor units have a stepped approach which are in compliance with Part K & Part M. The W.C. is suitably sized for a wheelchair user in each house type.

Storage spaces are distributed throughout the circulation areas, living spaces and bedrooms, with kitchen cupboard spaces and worktops being provided to meet (or exceed where possible) the requirements set out in table 5.2 of the 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities' document.

The front curtilage includes a landscaped area directly in front so as to provide a buffer zone between the ground floor windows and the public footpath. Canopies provide shelter at entrance doors when required.

Private open space to each of the dwellings is provided by way of a secure garden to the side and

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rear of the block. Access to rear gardens is secured by a timber gate from the side of the block. The gable windows to the side of unit 1 & 2 are overlooking the public space. This gives some passive surveillance to these areas to help with security and anti-social behaviour.

- **Material and Expression** – The architectural expression of the block is similar to that of a typical semidetached unit to be in keeping with existing dwellings within the vicinity of the site.

Brick and Smooth Render is the prevailing material of the publicly visible facades to the front and sides. The smooth render will allow for 2 coats of high-quality paint finish. All boundary walls will be finished with a fine dash and concrete capping for minimal maintenance.

Windows will be framed with simple opening sections and low maintenance finish to ensure a simple contemporary expression. The roof form of simple dual pitch avoids complicated junctions, which can be costly and weather poorly, and allows for the provision of solar panels on the front or rear roof, depending on the optimum orientation. The finish in concrete tiles ensures long life and good weathering with low maintenance required.



***Computer generated image***

- **Climate and Energy Statement** – The design strategy to ensure sustainable, energy efficient design to ensure low cost of use and consideration of climate change include:

All houses have been designed to have a compact and efficient form, use of semi-detached and terraced houses reduces exposed envelope and reduces heat losses. In addition:

- External wall cavity is highly insulated to reduce heat losses;
- Windows are sized appropriately to balance heat loss and potential solar gain;
- The detailed design will consider the most efficient and appropriate heating system; (Provision for solar panels on each roof has been allowed for)

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- And materials with long life and low embodied energy are preferred, to reduce impact on the environment.

#### **4.2 Density**

The proposed development site measures 0.073 ha and achieves a rate of 54.7 units per hectare.

#### **4.3 Overlooking**

Great care has been taken to ensure that the proposed development does not impact on the existing residential amenity of properties in the area.

#### **4.4 Public/Private Open Space and Landscaping**

The proposed development provides public open space to the south of the site which connects with the existing public open paved area, the combination of the paving and soft landscaping will provide an attractive feature to the village centre.

In terms of private open space, all houses have been designed in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines – Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities which includes the provision of private open space. A detailed breakdown of private open space per house is provided in Section 8.

In line with the Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice (DEHLG, 2009) all areas of open space proposed are designed to be inviting, safe and conveniently located for people's homes. As well as creating a good level of natural surveillance so that users of the open space feel comfortable and safe, creating a strong relationship between the private home and public space will mean that residents will be encouraged to feel a strong sense of ownership over the public realm.

Section 7.4 of the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines, regarding privacy and security acknowledge that privacy is an important element of residential amenity and contributes towards the sense of security felt by people in their homes.

A detailed landscaping plan has been generated for the proposed development, see fig. 3 below. This scheme provides a mix of grass and planted borders that will mature with the development. Trees and hedging have been used to soften the built edge and provide residents with a high-quality home and sense of place.

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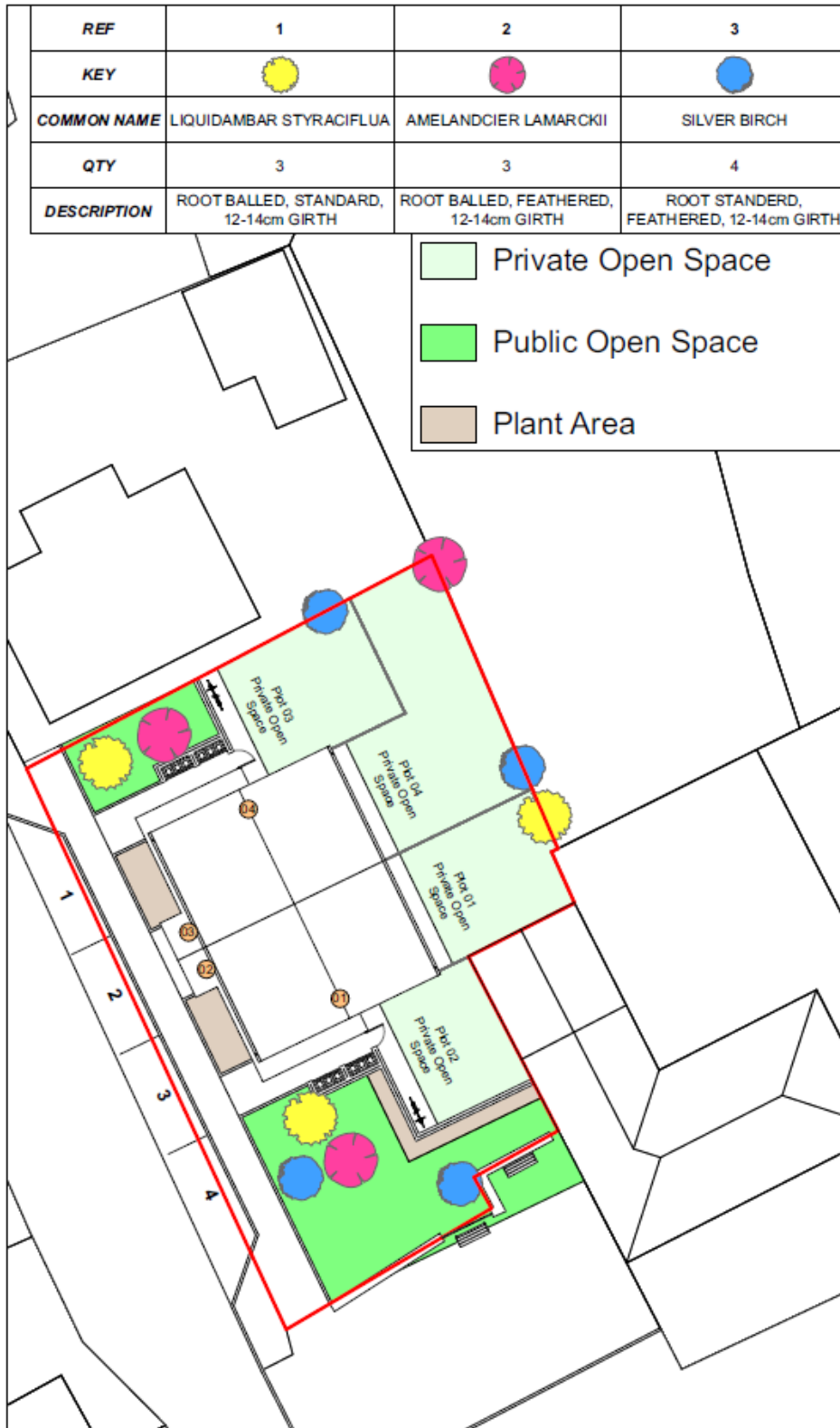


Fig 3 – Proposed Landscaping Plan (refer to drawing PL23-002-004 for detail)

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#### **4.5 Boundary Treatment**

Boundary treatments throughout the development range from standalone 1.8m high timber and concrete post fence between each rear garden and rendered block boundary wall enclosing the side gardens. Detailed drawings of these proposed treatments are provided in drawings PL23-002-004 Site Layout – Landscape & Site Boundary Layout which has been included as part of this Part 8 Social Housing Development application.

#### **4.6 Bin Storage**

Bin storage is conveniently positioned to each side of the block so as to provide easy access for both the residents and the bin company.

#### **4.7 Access, Traffic Calming and Car parking**

Access to the proposed development site is via the existing public road and parallel parking is provided at a rate of 1 space per apartment.

#### **4.8 Site Services**

The site will be serviced by connections to the public water supply in the locality and existing foul sewer. Surface water will be connected directly to the existing surface water discharge. Full details and plan are provided in the Engineering report forming part of this application.

### **5 Appropriate Assessment**

Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that all plans and projects be screened for potential impacts on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) or Special Protection Areas (SPA's). The aim of the screening process is to establish whether or not a full Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary. A comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development at Keshcarrigan, Co Leitrim on designated European sites was carried out in February 2023 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehall Environmental. The full report forms part of this planning package.

The screening exercise concluded that the proposed development would have no impact upon any designated site. No evidence of the use of the site by any protected mammal species was observed on the day of the site survey.

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## 6 Archaeology & Protected Structures

An initial archaeological screening assessment of the proposed site was undertaken and carried out by Byrne Mullins & Associates and a copy of the full assessment forms part of this planning package. The assessment recommended that no physical archaeological interventions (e.g. pre-development testing or monitoring of site preparation works) are required of any development proposals within the overall site.

## 7 Conclusions

This proposed development by Leitrim County Council seeks to provide much needed social housing for the area in line with government policy and in recognition of the local need in this respect. The proposed scheme is in a central area close to existing amenities within the village development boundary of Keshcarrigan on land which is zoned for general use. The proposals are in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and as illustrated above comply in all respects to local and national policy. This development will consolidate the village core of Keshcarrigan and strengthen the village.

## 8 Appendix A – Summary of Proposed Development

### 8.1 Schedule of Accommodation

Type "A" 1 Bed Apartment (GF): -	1 Bed – 56.6 sqm
Type "A" 1 Bed Apartment (FF): -	1 Bed – 54.6 sqm

### 8.2 Private Open Space

Each dwelling has a private garden to the rear & side, the areas of which are in the table below:

House Number	Area of Rear & side Garden
Apartment 1	52.6 sqm
Apartment 2	43.5 sqm
Apartment 3	56.6 sqm
Apartment 4	91.2 sqm

### 8.3 Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007

This document includes a table 5.1 Spaces Provision and Room Sizes for Typical Dwellings proposed for this development:

Dwelling Type	Floor Area m <sup>2</sup>		Aggregate Living Area m <sup>2</sup>		Living Room Width m		Main Bedroom Area m <sup>2</sup>		Storage m <sup>2</sup>	
	Reqd. Min	Provided	Reqd. Min	Provided	Reqd. Min	Provided	Reqd. Min	Provided	Reqd. Min	Provided
'A' GF - 1 Bed/2P Apartment	45.0	55.6	23	25.6	3.3	4.055	11.0	12.8	3	5.1
'A' FF - 1 Bed/2P Apartment	45.0	54.6	23	25.0	3.3	3.380	11.0	12.3	3	3.8

**Table 5.1**

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