

28. Coolaney-Rockfield Mini-Plan



Village Profile

Coolaney is located approximately 23 km to the southwest of Sligo City, in a designated *Rural Area under Urban Influence*, on lands classified as *normal rural landscape*. Rockfield is a hamlet located approximately 1 km west of Coolaney.

Given the extent of residential development experienced in recent years, the Coolaney-Rockfield area has been identified as a *Secondary Gateway Satellite* in the Settlement Structure (see Section 3.3 of the CDP).

The settlement is bounded by the disused Sligo-Limerick Railway line (which forms part of the Western Rail Corridor) to the southeast and by the Owenbeg River to the north-west. The river is included within the Unshin River Special Area of Conservation.

The historic village core consists of a variety of terraced two-storey buildings along Coolaney's Main Street. In recent years, extensive house-building activity has seen the settlement expand in south-westerly and north-easterly directions.

Population and housing

There is no specific census data available for the population of the combined Coolaney-Rockfield area. According to census information, Coolaney Electoral Division had a population of 550 persons in 2006 (20% higher than the 2002 population of 457). This increase took place mostly in Coolaney village, which also continued to experience significant residential growth after 2006.

A survey carried out by Council planners in mid-2009 estimated the population of Coolaney-Rockfield at 862 persons. This significant growth can be largely attributed to the Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme, along with the settlement's proximity to Sligo City and the availability of good transport links nearby (Collooney is only 7 km away).

Residential development has been mostly in the form of suburban-type estates. The 2009 survey found a vacancy rate of 13% (57 units). There were also 45 units under construction and planning permission had been granted for a further 80 units.

It is therefore considered that there is no need for additional residential development or for zoning large areas of land for residential uses.

Community facilities

Community facilities in Coolaney-Rockfield consist of a primary school, crèche, community centre, sports field and playground, church, burial ground and health centre.

Recent population growth will eventually result in demands for more or enhanced community facilities. Therefore, while some lands have been specifically zoned to accommodate additional community facilities, a flexible approach should be taken towards proposals for community developments on other suitable sites.

Commercial and enterprise development

Retail and commercial activities are restricted to a number of sole trader outlets, mostly in the vicinity of Coolaney's Main Street. It is of concern that none of the retail units in a recently-completed mixed-use development have become occupied, indicating weak demand in this sector.

There is no tradition of local industry or enterprise providing employment. Efforts to address these deficiencies should be encouraged and accommodated, where appropriate.

Infrastructure

Coolaney is served by the local road network, which provides links to the N59 (Sligo-Ballina road) to the north-east, and to the N4 (Sligo-Dublin) and N17 (Sligo-Galway) roads at Collooney. The main Dublin-Sligo railway line can also be accessed from Collooney. The Western Rail Corridor has the potential to improve transport links. Its protection and development are important for the future development of Coolaney-Rockfield.

The water supply is sourced from Lough Talt. Currently there are no capacity issues.

New wastewater treatment plants serving both Coolaney (design capacity of 2,500 PE) and Rockfield (250 PE) have been completed in recent years, with sufficient capacity to cater for future development in the foreseeable future.

Objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

28.1 Natural heritage and open space

- A.** Preserve the views of the Ox Mountains from the designated Scenic Routes L-2801 (Mountain Road), L-6804 (Cloonacool Road) and L-2101 (Collooney Road).
- B.** Protect and enhance the river walk along the Owenbeg River and preserve the river banks as a wildlife corridor / river buffer zone.
- C.** Retain the existing river walkway as a public amenity and provide improved/extended access to the river, pedestrian walkways along its course (e.g. from Coolaney to Rockfield) and pedestrian connections to the village's Main Street. The provision of such facilities will be required in conjunction with the development of adjoining lands.
- D.** Support the provision of a picnic and fishing area along the river, at the north-eastern edge of the village.
- E.** Develop a landscaped public park within the area zoned for open space in Rockfield.
- F.** Facilitate the protection and enhancement of the conservation value of the Unshin River SAC (of which the Owenbeg River forms part).

28.2 Built heritage and streetscape

- A.** Preserve the distinctive character of the Main Street in Coolaney.
- B.** The old mill building along the river walk (to the rear of the main street) should be sensitively restored for new use, preferably mixed uses which might include a tourist/heritage facility. Special attention should be afforded to the protection and careful management of the natural setting of the building.
- C.** The Objectives Map identifies key sites or structures that have potential or already contribute to the village character by closing a view or containing a space. These sites and buildings should be developed, redeveloped or renovated with particular care having regard to their location, so that they enhance the streetscape and act as focal points or landmarks.
- D.** Seek the protection and conservation of the following Protected Structures and Proposed Protected Structure:

Protected Structures

- RPS-93** Leyny Station, Coolaney
- RPS-94** Coolaney Bridge, Coolaney/Rathosey
- RPS-225** Rockfield Church (Roman-Catholic)

Proposed Protected Structure

- P-150** Former Courthouse, Coolaney

28.3 Transport, circulation and parking

- A.** Construct the following new roads/streets:
 - i.** link/loop between the Main Street and the area zoned for park-and-ride facilities, adjoining the grounds of the old train station.
 - ii.** from the Rockfield Road into the lands zoned for mixed uses and business/enterprise, and a loop around the new town park.

Note: The route of the new roads/streets and pedestrian connection, as shown on the Objectives Map, is indicative. The roads/streets/pedestrian connections shall be constructed as an integral part of new development in the area concerned. The exact route of these links shall be agreed with applicants/developers at planning application stage.
- B.** Reserve sufficient land for a new train station, with adequate vehicular access and park-and-ride facilities, to serve Coolaney and commuters from the surrounding area. Possible future additional parking to serve the train station may be located on the south-eastern side of the railway line.
- C.** Realign junctions J1, J2 and J3 as indicated on the Objectives Map, in tandem with the redevelopment of the adjacent sites.
- D.** Ensure the provision of off-street car parking in conjunction with the new town park.
- E.** Support the provision of appropriate traffic-calming measures, including pedestrian crossings along the Main Street and at other appropriate locations within the village.

28.4 Village-centre mixed-use zones

- A.** Facilitate a blend of mainly residential and commercial/retail activities in the areas zoned for mixed uses, i.e. in the village core south of the Owenbeg River.
- B.** Promote the creation of a distinctive streetscape and ensure that new development is consistent in form and character with the existing traditional buildings along the Main Street. Terraced buildings are preferable along the Main Street.
- C.** Make provision for a secondary commercial nucleus within the mixed-use zone located on the southern side of the Rockfield Road, adjoining the new residential area, the business/enterprise park and the town park.
- D.** Require that lands within the secondary mixed-use zone be assembled and developed on the basis of an integrated design proposal/masterplan. Terraced buildings are recommended along the main street and the new roads/streets.
- E.** Give special attention to the siting, layout and design of new or redeveloped buildings around junctions. Particular care should be afforded to the design of structures located at the junction of Local Roads L-6804 (Rockfield Road) and L-2801-43 (Mountain Road).

28.5 Community facilities

- A.** Maintain and enhance existing sports, recreational and playground facilities and provide additional such facilities.
- B.** Support the provision of crèche/childcare facilities.
- C.** Reserve land for the possible future expansion of the primary school.
- D.** Facilitate the relocation of the Community Centre to a more suitable site.
- E.** Encourage the provision of healthcare and elderly care facilities.

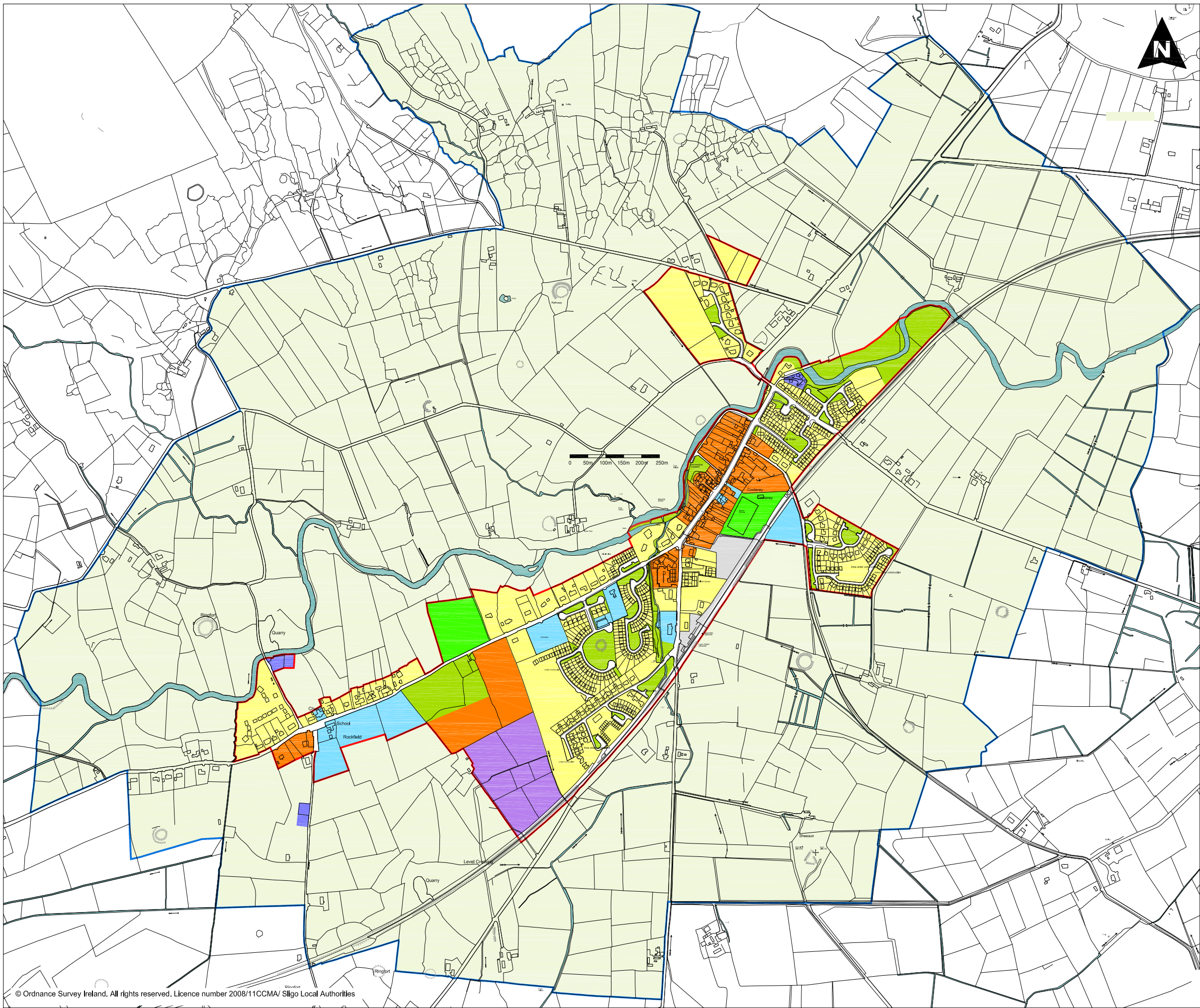
28.6 Buffer zone

- A.** Safeguard land within the Buffer Zone for the next planned expansion of the village. This future expansion shall be to the north-west of the village, as opposed to a south-easterly direction.

28.7 Wastewater treatment

- A.** Seek the protection, retention and enhancement of existing trees and vegetation surrounding the new sewage treatment works in Coolaney.
- B.** Allow for development connecting to the wastewater treatment plants in Coolaney and Rockfield up to a limit of 2,750 PE (2,500 capacity in Coolaney and 250 capacity in Rockfield). However, notwithstanding this available capacity, residential development shall be permitted only at a rate that is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Structure outlined in Chapter 3 of this Plan.
- C.** A buffer zone shall apply around the vicinity of the existing WWTP sites. Development within this zone may be restricted or prohibited in the interests of public health and/or the protection of residential amenities. The extent of development restrictions in each case will be assessed at planning application stage.

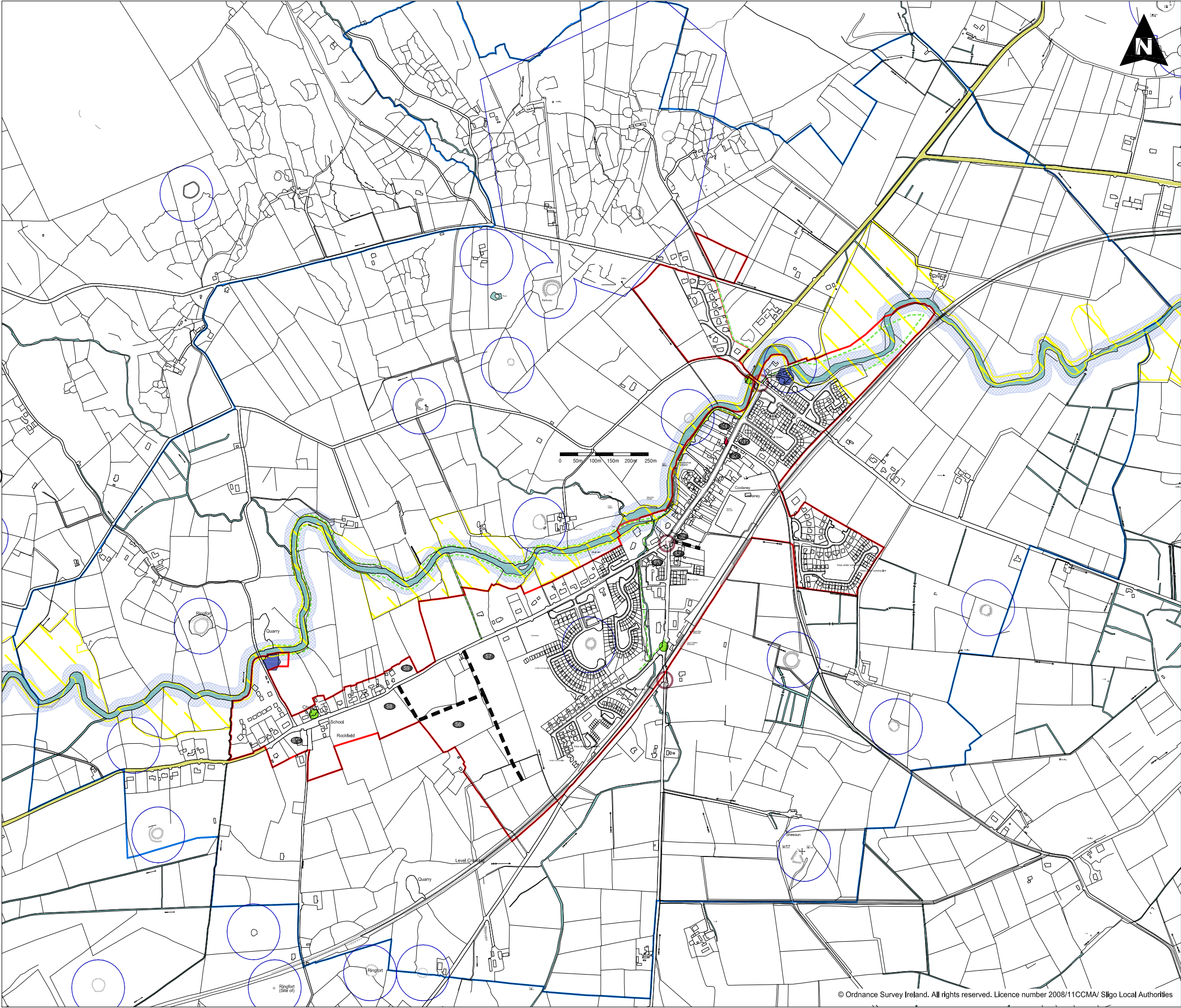
Coolaney - Rockfield Zoning Map



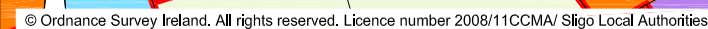
- plan limit
- development limit
- residential uses
- mixed uses
- community facilities
- business & enterprise
- utilities
- open space
- sports and playing fields
- transport node/carparking
- buffer zone

Coolaney - Rockfield Objectives Map

- plan limit
- development limit
- existing RPS structure
- proposed addition to RPS
- river walks, pedestrian and cycle links
- scenic route
- RMP
- SAC
- WWTP Buffer zone (indicative)
- Key sites for streetscape design
- proposed road/street (indicative)
- Junction to be improved
- river buffer zone



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