

17. Coolaney-Rockfield Mini-Plan

Village profile

Coolaney is located approximately 23 km to the south-west of Sligo City, in a designated *Rural Area under Urban Influence*, on lands classified as *normal rural landscape*. Rockfield is a small settlement 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 *Gateway Satellite* in the County settlement hierarchy (see Section 3.2 of this Plan).

The settlement is bounded by the disused Sligo-Limerick railway line (which forms part of the Western Rail Corridor) to the south-east 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. The population of Coolaney increased from 208 in 2006 to 866 in 2011 (an increase of 316 %). According to census information, Coolaney Electoral Division had a population of 550 persons in 2006 (20% higher than the 2002 population of 457) and this increased again to 1,200 in 2011 (an increase of 118%). Surveys undertaken by Council planners in 2015 suggest a village population of circa 1,230 persons, based on 473 occupied units within the development limit.

Census 2016 recorded a population of 990 persons in Coolaney (without Rockfield) and 1,331 persons in the Coolaney ED.

The significant growth experienced post-2000 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, only 7 km away, provides access to the N-4 and the N1-17 national roads).

Newer residential development is in the form of suburban-type estates. The 2015 survey found a vacancy rate of 6% (31 units) compared to the 2009 rate of 13% (57 units). There were also 13 units under construction and planning permission had been granted for a further 40 units approximately.

It is considered that there is only limited need for additional residential development during the plan period.

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 will be taken towards proposals for community developments on other suitable sites.

Commercial and enterprise development

Retail and commercial activities are limited to several sole trader outlets, mostly on Coolaney's Main Street. Only one of the retail units in the recently-completed mixed-use complex is currently occupied by a pharmacy, and this is a concern for the Planning Authority. A flexible approach will be adopted with regard to the potential alternative uses of the vacant retail units.

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

Infrastructure

Coolaney's local road network provides links to the N-59 (Sligo-Ballina road) to the north-east, and to the N-4 (Sligo-Dublin) and N-17 (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. Coolaney's wastewater treatment plant, built in 2008, has a design capacity of 2,500 PE. Rockfield is served by a smaller installation (250 PE). Both plants have sufficient capacity for foreseeable future.

Objectives

Note: These objectives must be considered in conjunction with the policies and objectives contained in Volume 1 and the general policies for mini-plans contained in Chapter 1 of Volume 2 of this Plan.

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

17.1 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 and 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, subject to Habitats Directive Assessment.
- D. Support the provision of a picnic and fishing area along the river, at the north-eastern edge of the village, subject to Habitats Directive Assessment.
- 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).

17.2 Built heritage and streetscape

- A. Ensure that new development within the village centre reflects and enhances the distinctive streetscape character in accordance with the policies set out in **Chapter 12 (Town and village design)** and the requirements of Section **13.2.4 Development in historic streetscapes** (development management standards) in Volume 1 of this Plan.
- 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:
 - RPS-153** Leyny Station, Coolaney
 - RPS-154** Coolaney Bridge, Coolaney/Rathosey
 - RPS-354** Rockfield Church (RC), Shancough, Coolaney
 - RPS 415** Two-storey house with shop, Main Street, Coolaney
- E. Require any development proposal involving a *Building of Note* (as indicated on the Objectives Map) to restore or renovate the building in a sensitive manner that will contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the character of the building and its setting.

17.3 Transport, circulation and parking

- A. Construct the following new streets in accordance with the provisions of *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DMURS – 2013):
 - 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 business/enterprise, and a loop around the new town park.

Note: The route of the new streets and pedestrian connection, as shown on the Objectives Map, is indicative. The streets and 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 or 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.** Ensure the provision of off-street car parking in conjunction with the provision of the new town park.

17.4 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.** 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-6804-0 (Rockfield Road) and L-2801-43 (Mountain Road).

17.5 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.** Support the provision of healthcare and elderly care facilities.

17.6 Future expansion

- A.** Ensure that future expansion takes place to the north-west of the village, as opposed to a south-easterly direction.

17.7 Wastewater treatment

- A.** Seek the protection of trees and enhancement of existing vegetation surrounding the wastewater treatment plants in Coolaney and Rockfield.
- B.** A buffer zone shall apply around the existing WWTP sites. Development within these zones may be restricted or prohibited in the interest of public health and the protection of residential amenities. The extent of development restrictions in each case will be assessed at planning application stage.

Buildings of Note

BoN No. 1 – Four-bay, two-storey house



Architecturally valuable features

- roof pitch; chimneys on ridge of roof;
- vertical-emphasis windows;

This building retains its vernacular character and occupies an important position at the entrance to Coolaney.

Recommendation: The reinstating of timber sliding sash windows would greatly enhance the character of this building.

BoN No. 2 – Three-bay, two-storey house



Architecturally valuable features

- roof pitch; chimneys on ridge of roof;
- vertical-emphasis windows.

This building occupies an important position at the entrance to Coolaney.

Recommendation: The replacement of the windows with timber sliding sash windows would greatly enhance the character of this building.

BoN No. 3 – Two-bay, single-storey building



Architecturally valuable features

- decorative parapet;
- sash windows.

This building represents an architectural whim amongst the vernacular simplicity of the Coolaney streetscape. It adds interest to the village.

Recommendation: The restoration of the sash windows and the painting of the façade would enhance the appearance of this building.

BoN No. 4 – Terrace of one-bay, two-storey houses with single storey cottage



Architecturally valuable features

- roof pitch; chimneys on ridge of roof; random rubble stone walling;
- vertical-emphasis windows; natural slate roof.

Although much modified, these are a quirky collecting of buildings that add interest and variety to the Coolaney streetscape.

Recommendation: The reinstating of timber sliding sash windows would greatly enhance the character of this building.

BoN No. 5 – Two-bay and three-bay, two-storey house and Garda Station



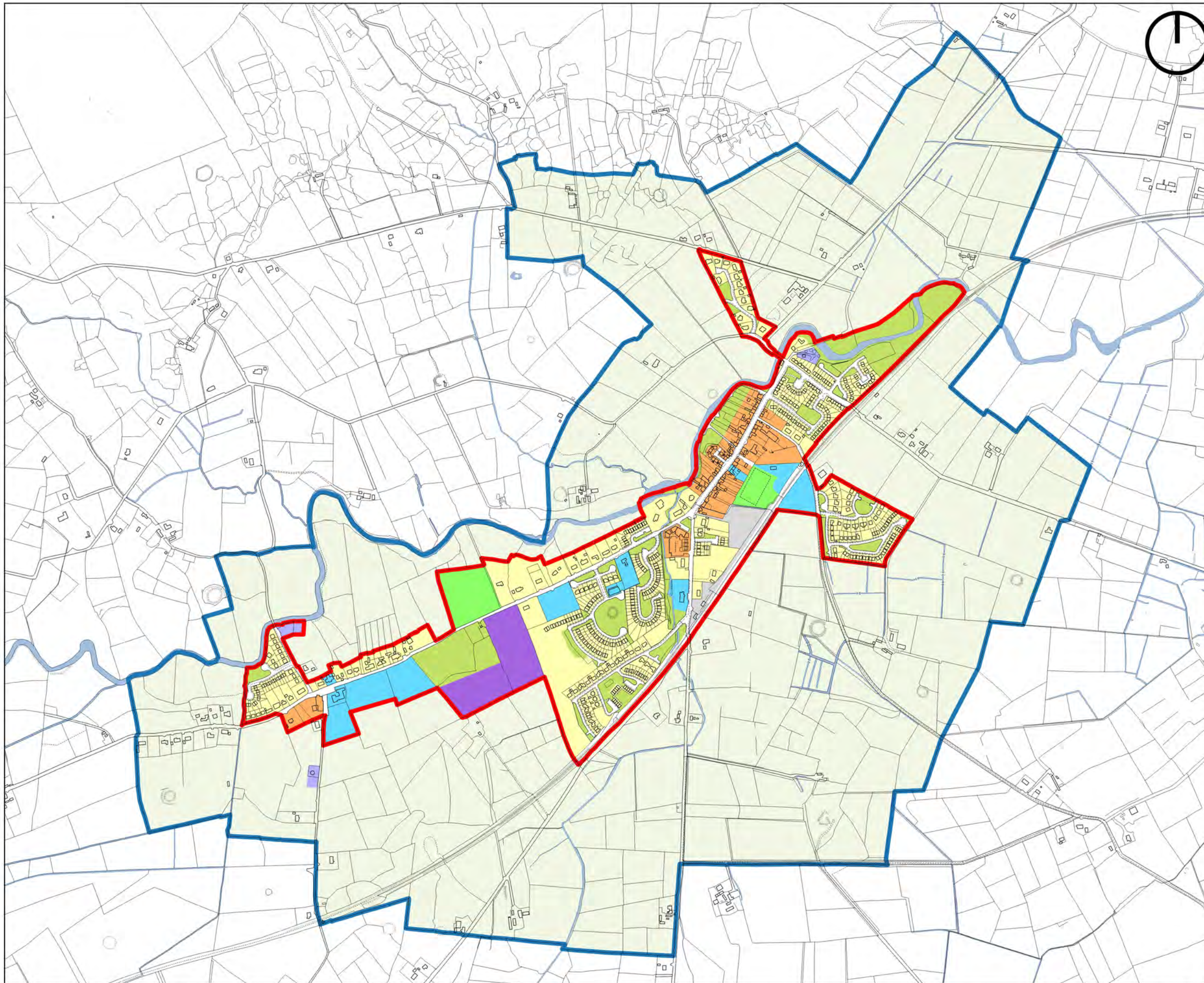
Architecturally valuable features

- roof pitch;
- chimneys on ridge of roof;
- vertical-emphasis windows;

This building represents an important focal point for the village of Coolaney

Recommendation: The replacement of the windows with timber sliding sash windows would greatly enhance the character of this building.

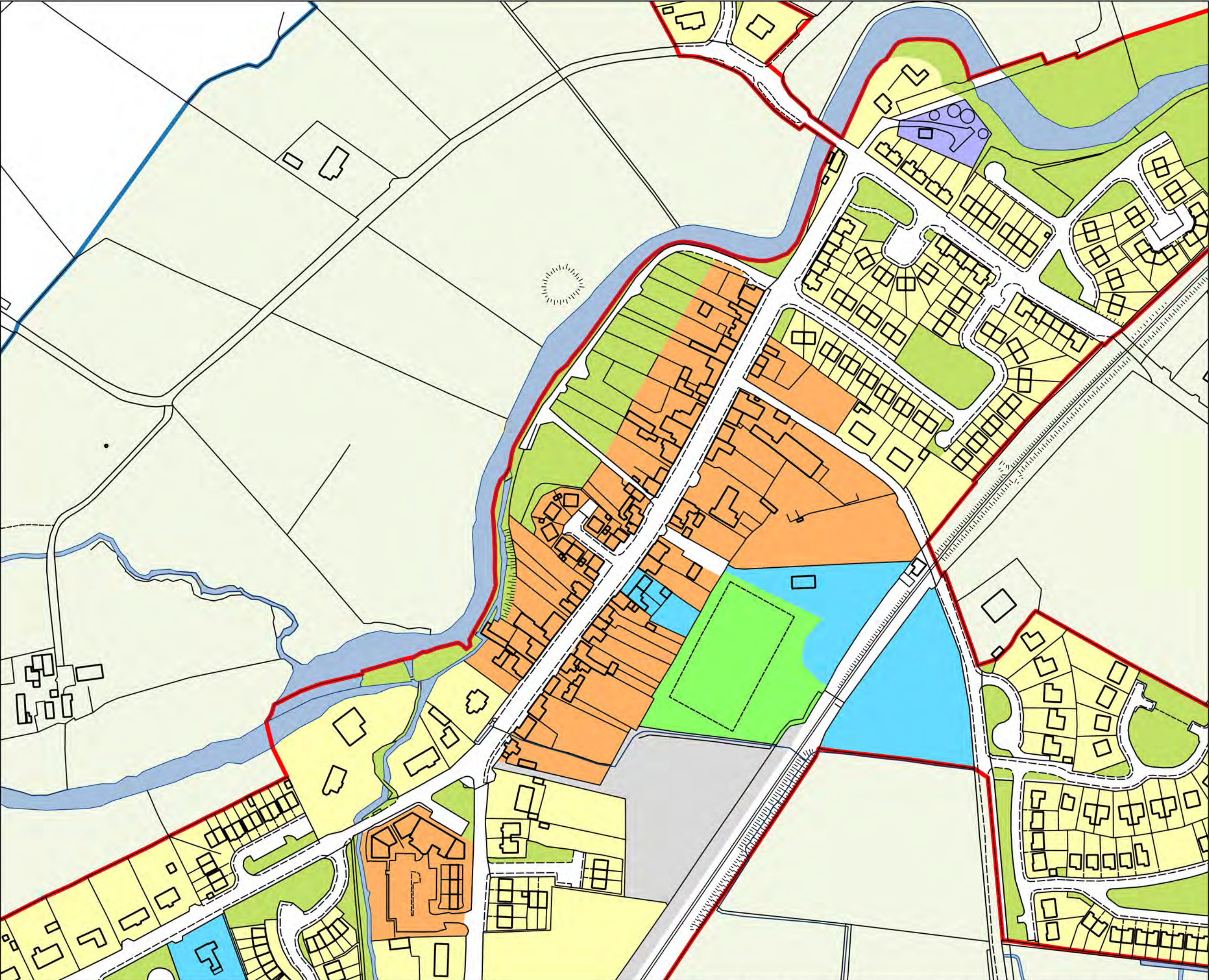
Coolaney Rockfield Zoning Map



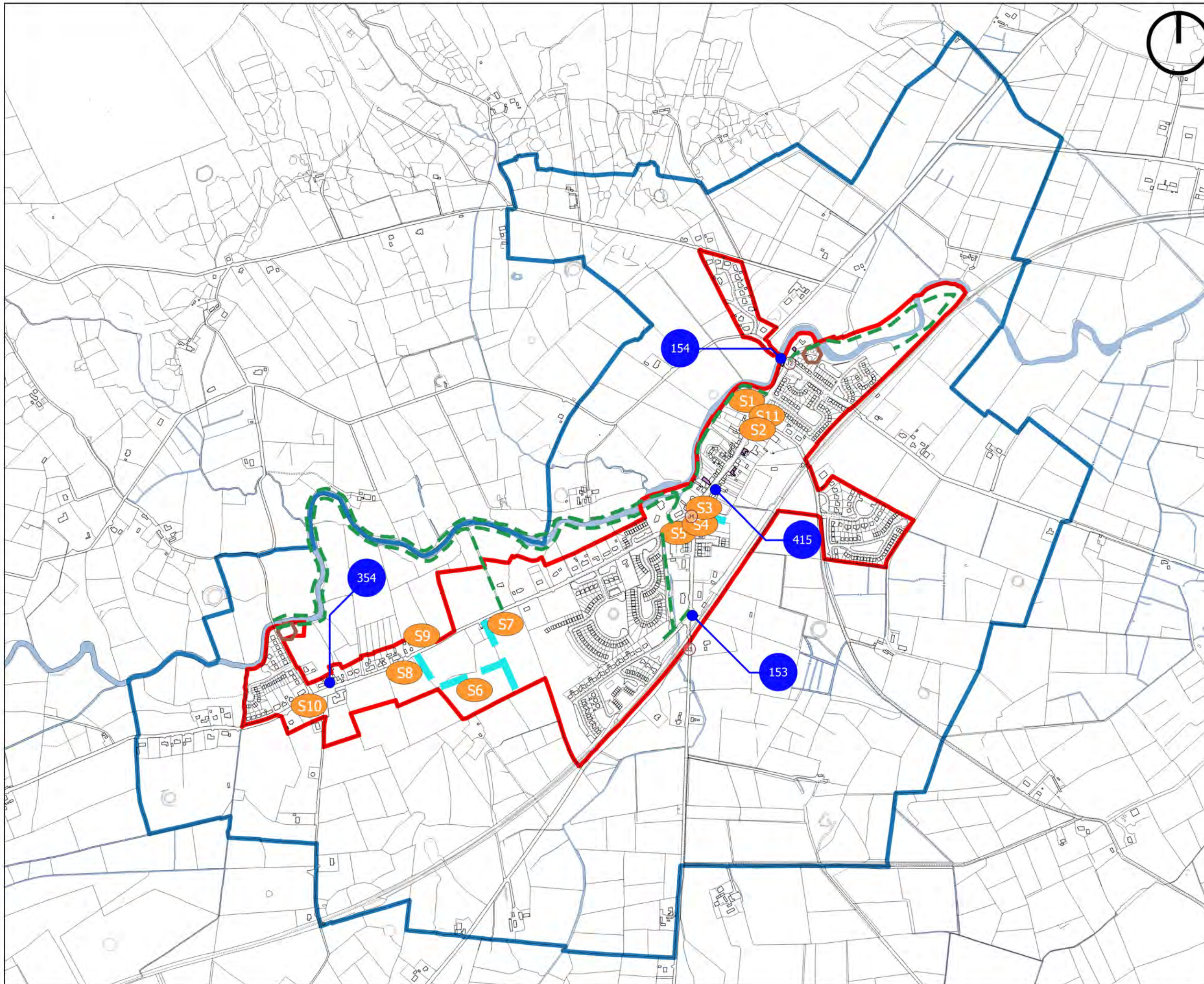
- plan limit
- development limit
- residential uses
- mixed uses
- community facilities
- business & enterprise
- open space
- sports and playing fields
- public utility
- transport and parking node
- green belt

Coolaney Rockfield Zoning detail

- plan limit
- development limit
- residential uses
- mixed uses
- community facilities
- open space
- sports and playing fields
- public utility
- transport and parking node
- green belt



Coolaney Rockfield Objectives Map



- plan limit
- development limit
- protected structure
- buildings of note
- ⊙ junctions to be improved
- - - river walks, pedestrian and cycle links
- S key sites for streetscape design
- proposed roads
- WWTP buffer zone (indicative)

RPS no	Name
153	Leyny Station and associated buildings
154	Coolaney Bridge
354	Rockfield Church (RC)
415	Two-Storey house with shop

Coolaney Rockfield designations

- plan limit
- development limit
- record of monumnets and places
- Special Area of Conservation
- CFRAM flood zone A
- CFRAM flood zone B
- PRFA rainfall flooding 1 in 100 year
- PRFA rainfall flooding 1 in 1000 year
- PRFA river flooding 1 in 100 year
- PRFA river flooding 1 in 1000 year

sources
 Western CFRAM UoM35
 Hydrlic Modelling Report
 OPW 2015
 PFRA indicative extents
 and outcomes map
 (OPW, 2012)

