

Thomastown DRAFT LAP Submission 2018

COMMENTS ON FLOODS, DROUGHTS and URBAN DESIGN

I would like to thank the Council for its well-considered draft LAP which addresses all the aspects of the town. Please find below my contribution.

FLOODS

References :

Thomastown Draft LAP 2019

Flood Risk Assessment /Thomastown Draft LAP

OPW CFRAM : G.8 Thomastown AFA pg 223-228 (pg 35-38 FRMP)

In the Draft LAP and the Flood Risk Management draft there is continuous reference to the resolution of the OPW CFRAM proposals.

Quote : in the Draft LAP FRM, pg 47 :

'In the case of Thomastown, the proposed measure detailed in the FRMP 8 consists of building hard defences, at risk properties would be protected by embankments and walls, sheet piled where necessary and set back where possible from the river channel. These hard defences would protect properties from the 1% AEP fluvial event and with an estimated average height of 1.9m and a total length of 2.7km. **However, it is important to note that the programme for the scheme is yet to be finalised.'**

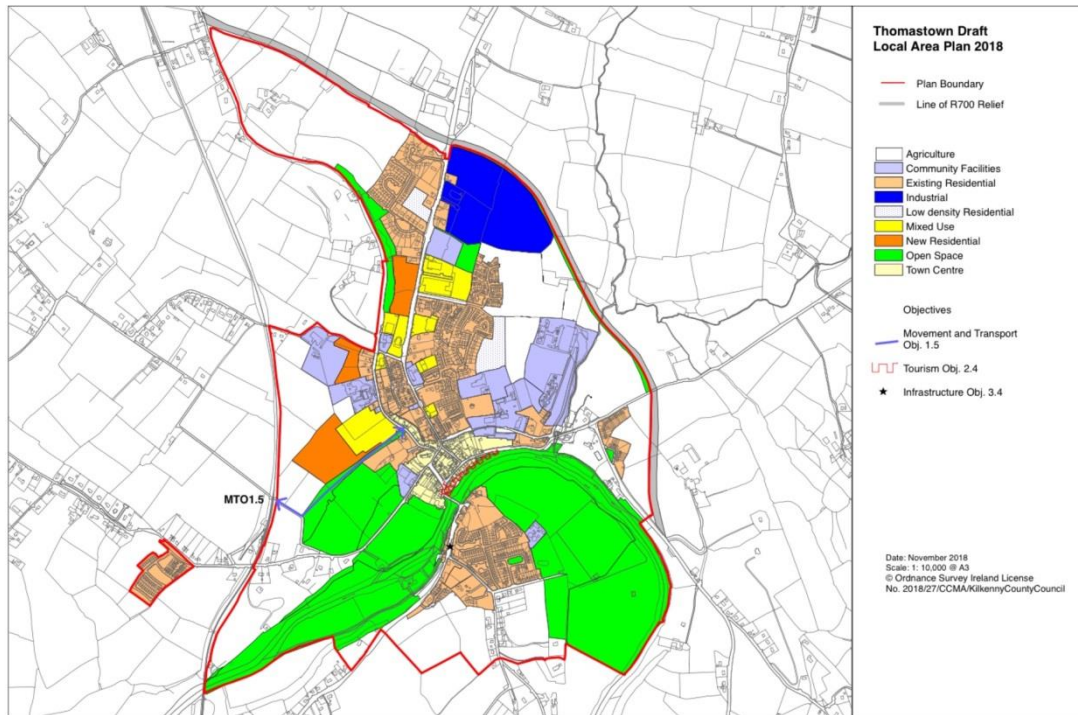
The FRMP 8 reference : https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/docs.floodinfo.opw/floodinfo_docs/Final_FRMPs_For_Publication/FRMP_Final2018_RiverBasin_15.pdf

The document shows the original proposal unchanged with a note pg 223-228 (Pg 35-38 of the FRMP) : **'The works presented herein are not the final and definitive works. Potential flood relief works set out herein will need to be further developed at a local, project level before Exhibition or submission for planning approval (see Sections 6.1 and 8.1).'**

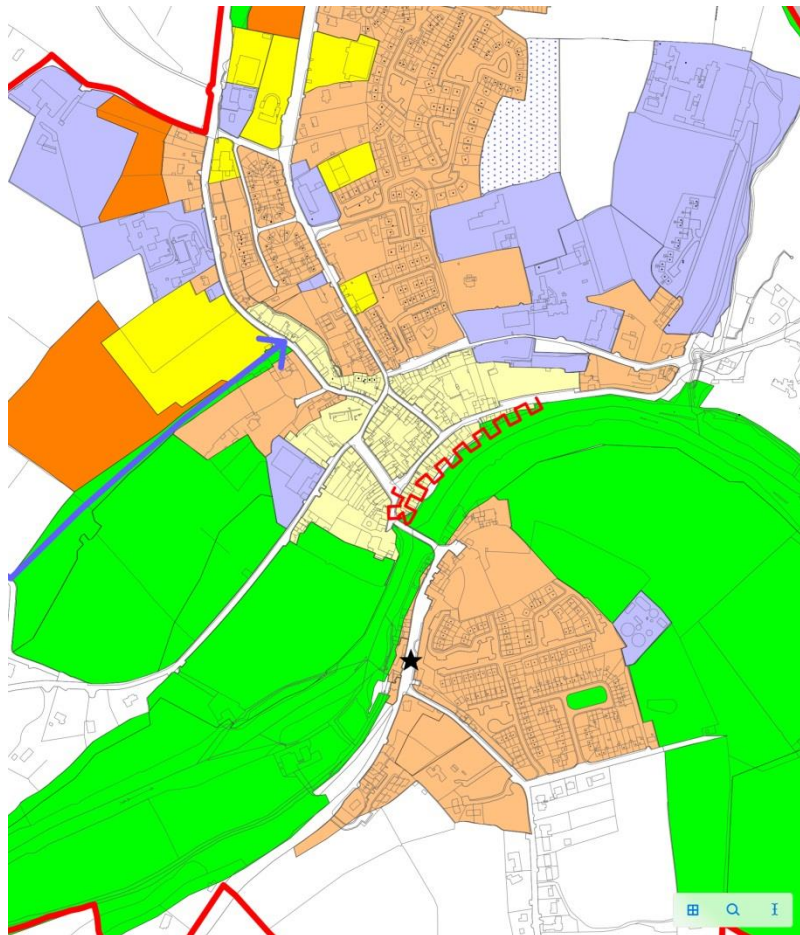
There has been no response from the OPW to the many submissions which were made by the town regarding the only proposal put forward.

On cross referencing this document with the Draft LAP Zone Map and the LAP SPA and SAC Map, there appear to be contradictions in the placement of hard defenses and the objectives of the LAP.

Reference : Draft LAP 5.9 Tourism, 8.4 Green Infrastructure & Recreation, SAC & SPA, FRA 4.10 'Green Corridor'



DETAIL of LAP Zone Map – (showing Tourism Objective in red)



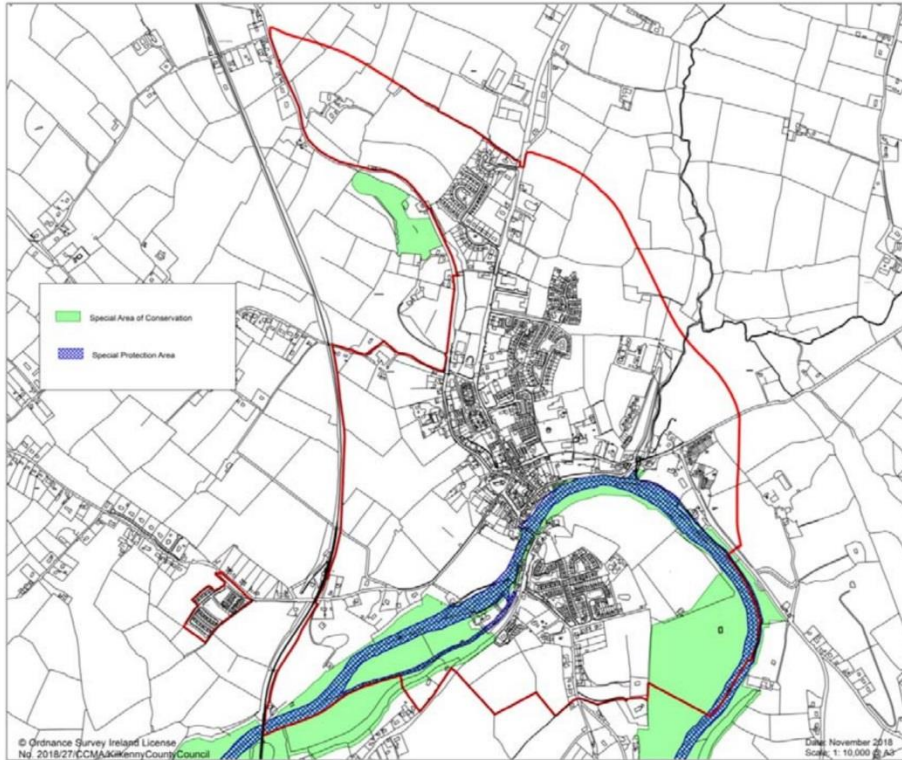
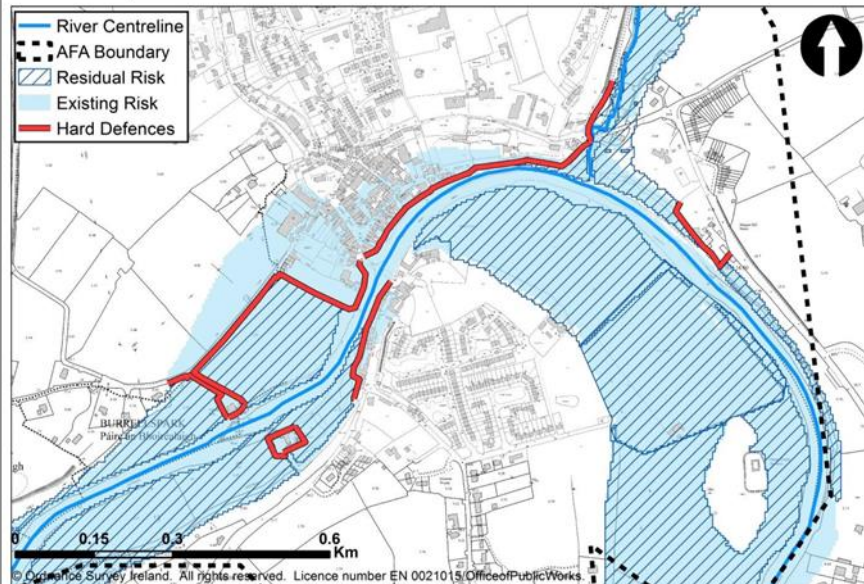


Figure 8.2; European Sites (SAC & SPA) within LAP area.

Description Progress the project-level development and assessment of a Flood Relief Scheme for Thomastown, including environmental assessment as necessary and further public consultation, for refinement and preparation for planning / Exhibition and, if and as appropriate, implementation.



The works presented herein are not the final and definitive works. Potential flood relief works set out herein will need to be further developed at a local, project level before Exhibition or submission for planning approval (see Sections 6.1 and 8.1).

It is in the interests of all sectors of the town from businesses, property owners, from the built & natural heritage, to be protected from the 1% AEP fluvial event as proposed by the OPW but **it appears that the placement and type of structures presented in the OPW plan contradicts the many objectives of the draft LAP** and the views many of the residents and specialist consultants in the town.

Proposal : It is proposed that consideration be given to the combination of defence mechanisms, such as hard defences - walls, embankments with natural defences, with the use of lakes/water reservoirs and natural barriers **being placed upstream from the town itself**.

Should these proposals be effective then it is hoped that similar solutions could be applied to other towns where protective flood measures are moved upstream and removed from occurring directly in the towns.

Objective:

- to allow the integrity of the medieval town and its special relationship to the river to be maintained while achieving the required protection from flooding.
- to facilitate the Council to go ahead with decisions and achieve its well-considered objectives for the town demonstrated in the LAP.

I believe there is the **opportunity for collaboration** between the council, the residents and OPW to achieve the common goal of protecting all the aspects of the town from flooding with the best possible researched solution. Until then, any future planning and decision making is made difficult for all.

DROUGHTS & FLOODS : URBAN DESIGN

In response to the many objectives of the draft LAP, the floods and recent drought, I have put together a sketch proposal for area zoned 'Open Space/biodiversity Conservation' along the river.

Lakes : Since the OPW plans were made, the country has experienced a severe drought. Recent droughts have focussed the necessity of lakes/ponds etc as water reservoirs for the country. These controlled storage areas could be utilized during droughts and as overflow storage areas during floods. Reinforced protective walls/embankments could be created around the lakes with the dugout earth. These areas present themselves as opportunities as planted biodiversity walkways around and through the lakes/wetland areas.

The sketch proposal shows the possibility of one such lake positioned and integrated into the town Urban Planning. A secondary, overflow lake has been positioned to North of Station Road. The paths could provide a link from the station to the town and provide areas necessary for the Thomastown Paddlers to carry out their functions. It also shows the square of Sweetman Castle as a possible town square with a pedestrian link back to the library parking and the Community Hall . (This was shown as part of the previous LAP but was never developed)



Sketch Proposal : Jennie Castle

Objective :

- to assist with control of water in both drought & flood scenarios and to help to fulfil the objectives of the draft LAP Tourism 5.9, Green Infrastructure & Recreation 8.4, Open Space 7.2 and Urban Design 11.

References :

Draft LAP 8.4 (pg 32) :

‘Thomastown benefits from a significant level of green infrastructure. It will be important, as part of this LAP, to establish a coherent, integrated and evolving network that extends from the River Nore and its extended network. The green infrastructure belt in Thomastown runs primarily along the east west axis, along the river. Walking/cycling is encouraged and objectives to promote and encourage walking/cycling routes have been included in the plan which encourages better connections across the river.’

Open Space 7.2

FRA 4.10 'Green Corridor'

‘It is recommended that, where possible, and particularly where there is greenfield land

- adjacent to the river, a 'green corridor', is retained on all rivers and streams. This will have a number of benefits, including:

- Retention of all, or some, of the natural floodplain;
- Potential opportunities for amenity, including riverside walks and public open spaces;
- Maintenance of the connectivity between the river and its floodplain, encouraging the development of a full range of habitats;
- Natural attenuation of flows will help ensure no increase in flood risk downstream;
- Allows access to the river for maintenance works;

Retention of clearly demarcated areas where development is not appropriate on flood risk grounds, and in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management. The width of this corridor should be determined by the available land and topographically constraints, such as raised land and flood defences, but would ideally span the full width of the floodplain (i.e. all of Flood Zone A). This function is provided by the Open Space zoning with the Draft LAP.'

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