

Plean Forbartha Áitiúla Chomhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin 2035
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Local Development Plan 2035

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir
Mhúrn agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council



22 SEP 2025

NMD-DPS-060



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

Draft Plan Strategy Representation Form

Please complete this representation form online and email to ldp@nmandd.org or alternatively print and post a hardcopy to: -

Local Development Plan Team
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

ALL REPRESENTATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 5PM ON MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

Section A | Your Details

Q1

Are you responding as individual, as an organisation or as an agent acting on behalf of individual, group or organisation? Please only tick one:

- ☐ Individual (Please fill in the remaining questions in this section, then proceed to Section B)
- ☐ Organisation (Please fill in the remaining questions in this section, then proceed to Section C)
- ☒ Agent (Please fill in the remaining questions in this section, then proceed to Section D)

Q2

What is your name?

Title

First Name

Gerry

Last Name

Tumelty

Address

11 Ballyalton Park

Ardmeen

Downpatrick

Email

Q3

Did you respond to the previous Preferred Options Paper?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Unsure

Section B | Individuals (if different to Q2 above)

Address

Town

Postcode

Section C | Organisation

If you have selected that you are responding as an organisation, there are a number of details that we are legally required to obtain from you.

If you are responding on behalf of a group or organisation, please complete this section.

Organisation / Group Name		
Your Job Title / Position		
Organisation / Group Address (if different to above)		
Address		
Town		Postcode

Section D | Agents

If you have selected that you are responding on behalf of another individual, organisation or group there are a number of details that we are legally required to obtain from you.

Please provide details of the individual, organisation or group that you are representing.

Client Contact Details

Title		
First Name		Last Name
Address		
Town		Postcode

Q4

Would you like us to contact you, your client or both in relation to this response or future consultations on the LDP? (please select one item only)

☒ Agent ☐ Client ☐ Both

Section E | Soundness

The draft Plan Strategy will be examined at Independent Examination in regard to its soundness. Accordingly, your responses should be based on soundness and directed at specific strategic policies or proposals that you consider to be unsound, along with your reasons. The tests of soundness are set out below in Section I.

Those wishing to make representations seeking to change the draft Plan Strategy should clearly state why they consider the document to be unsound having regard to the soundness tests in Section I. It is important that when you are submitting your representation that your response reflects the most appropriate soundness test(s) which you believe the draft Plan Strategy fails to meet. There will be no further opportunity to submit information once the consultation period has closed unless the Independent Examiner requests it.

Those who make a representation seeking to change the draft Plan Strategy should also state whether they wish to be heard orally at the Independent Examination.

Section F | Type of Procedure

Q5 Please indicate if you would like your representation to be dealt with by (please select one item only):

- **Written** (Choose this procedure to have your representation considered in written form only)
- **Oral Hearing** (Choose this procedure to present your representation orally at the public hearing)

Unless you specially request a hearing, the Independent Examiner will proceed on the basis that you are content to have your representation considered in written form only. Please note that the Independent Examiner will be expected to give the same careful consideration to written representations as to those dealt with by oral hearing.

Section G | Is the draft Plan Strategy Sound?

Your comments should be set out in full. This will assist the Independent Examiner in understanding the issues you raise. You will only be able to submit further additional information if the Independent Examiner invites you to do so.

Sound

Sound

If you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be Sound and wish to support the draft Plan Strategy, please set out your comments below.

No - see supporting submission

Section H | Unsound

In this section we will be asking you to specify which part(s) of the draft Plan Strategy you consider to be unsound.

Q6 If you consider that the draft Plan Strategy is unsound and does not meet one or more of the tests of soundness below, you must indicate which test(s) you consider it does not meet, having regard to Development Plan Practice Note 6 available at:

Development Plan Practice Note 6 Soundness (infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Please note if you do not identify a test(s) your comments may not be considered by the Independent Examiner.

Note:

If you wish to inform us that more than one part of the draft Plan Strategy is unsound each part should be listed separately. Complete this page in relation to one part of the draft Plan Strategy only.

Section I | Tests of Soundness

Procedural tests

- P1** Has the plan been prepared in accordance with the Council's Timetable and the Statement of Community Involvement?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- P2** Has the Council prepared its Preferred Options Paper and taken into account any representations made?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- P3** Has the plan been subject to Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- P4** Did the Council comply with the regulations on the form and content of its plan and on the procedure for preparing the plan?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Consistency test

- C1** Did the Council take account of the Regional Development Strategy?
☐ Yes ☒ No
- C2** Did the Council take account of its Community Plan?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- C3** Did the Council take account of policy and guidance issued by the Department?
☐ Yes ☒ No
- C4** Has the Plan had regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the Council's district or to any adjoining council's district?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Coherence and Effectiveness tests

- CE1** The plan sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations logically flow and where cross boundary issues are relevant is it in conflict with the plans of neighbouring Councils.
☐ Yes ☒ No
- CE2** The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base.
☐ Yes ☒ No
- CE3** There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.
☐ Yes ☐ No
- CE4** The plan is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances.
☐ Yes ☐ No

Section J | Which part(s) of the draft Plan Strategy are you commenting on?

Your response should clearly relate to the relevant section, paragraph or policy of the draft Plan Strategy. If you consider more than one part of the draft Plan Strategy is unsound, please number your issues clearly and provide this information in the same running order following your original comment (i.e. relevant Policy, Section or Proposals Map).

Relevant Policy number(s)	SETT1 & Strategic Policy HS1
(and/or)	
Relevant Section/Page Number	
(and/or)	
Proposals Map	

Section J | Which part(s) of the draft Plan Strategy are you commenting on?

Please give full details of why you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be unsound having regard to the test(s) you have identified above. Please be as clear and concise as possible.

See attached submission

If you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be unsound, please provide details of what change(s) you consider necessary to make the draft Plan Strategy sound.

See attached submission

Section K | Monitoring

Do you consider there are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of the draft Plan Strategy?

☒ Yes☐ No

Do you have any comments?

Section L | Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Do you have any comments on the SA?

Section M | Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Do you have any comments on the HRA?

☐ Yes☐ No

If you have indicated Yes, please set out your comments on the HRA below:

Section N | Equality Impact Screening Report (EQIA)

Do you have any comments on the EQIA?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If you have indicated Yes, please set out your comments on the EQIA below:

Section O | Rural Needs Impact Assessments (RNIA)

Do you have any comments on the RNIA?

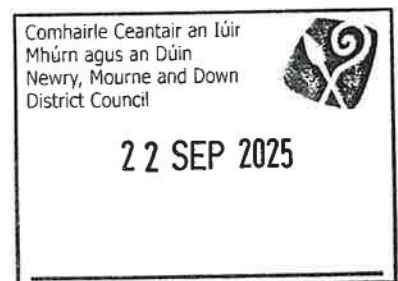
☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have indicated Yes, please set out your comments on the RNAI below:

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2035

Draft Plan Strategy

Lands Seaforde, Co. Down



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Appendix 1: Subject Lands

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation has been prepared by Tumelty Planning Services on behalf of our client, in response to the consultation in respect of the Newry Mourne & Down District Council (*'the Council'*) Local Development Plan 2035 Draft Plan Strategy (*'DPS'*) issued on 27th June 2025.
- 1.2 This representation relates to the growth strategy, the proposed settlement hierarchy, and the distribution of housing land within that hierarchy.
- 1.3 It relates to land that is not currently zoned under the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and responds to the relevant strategy and policy considerations set out in the DPS with particular regard to our clients' site-specific interests which we say are aligned with the overall DPS strategic objectives.
- 1.4 In drafting this response we have taken account of relevant LDP background documents that, in our view, are material to the consideration of this matter.

2.0 SEAFORDE AS A SMALL SETTLEMENT

- 2.1 The DPS Strategic Designation SETT1 – Settlement Hierarchy confirms that Seaforde is to be designated as a small settlement in the revised settlement hierarchy which is designated as part of the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy (Table 5 of the DPS). That position aligns with the previous development plan – the Ards & Down Area Plan 2015.
- 2.2 The DPS confirms that small settlements act as a focal point for the rural community and take the form of a rural cluster or crossroads development where consolidation of the built form can provide opportunity for individual dwellings and/ or small groups of houses and small rural businesses.
- 2.3 Seaforde had a population of 374 at the last census (2021) when the settlement also comprised 158 registered households. However that position may have changed given that, at the time of the census, a new residential development, comprising 41 new dwellings, was under construction.
- 2.4 The Settlement Appraisal carried out as part of the LDP preparation concludes that Seaforde is classified as a 'small settlement' within the ADAP 2015 and that, under the NISRA 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements' (March 2015) the settlement falls within Band H – Populations of less than 1,000.
- 2.5 The DPS confirms that to merit designation as a 'small settlement' a needs to:
 - display a sense of cohesion and place
 - offer one or more community facilities
 - contain at least 3 of the following criteria:
 - A significant number of dwellings.
 - Social facilities and services.
 - Commercial facilities.
 - The focus of an active community.
- 2.6 The appraisal finds that, while Seaforde contains very few services from the RDS Infrastructure Wheel, the presence of social services (playgroup and Young Farmers Hall) and a commercial facility (café/restaurant and fish & chips) provide justification for its designation as a small settlement. Further, it is recognised that Seaforde is an important settlement in respect of built heritage. A large proportion of the Seaforde is designated as an Area of Townscape Character (ATC) and there are 22 listed buildings in the settlement which is significant. In addition the Seaforde Demesne to the north is designated as an LLPA and Historic Park, Garden, and Demesne. In that context the Council has concluded that the designation as a small settlement provides a robust basis to protect the built heritage and will assist in preventing inappropriate development.
- 2.7 The DPS states that: "small settlements will allow for small scale development which is appropriate to the scale and capacity of the settlement while acting as a local focal point serving a small community."
- 2.8 In respect of the settlement limits, the DPS confirms that the proposal is the current Settlement Development Limits within the BNMAP 2015 and ADAP 2015 will remain in place until such time as they are reviewed and adopted in the Local Policies Plan. This review will involve a detailed analysis of the settlement roles and functions,

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- environmental issues, availability of services, community facilities, infrastructure and spare capacity, taking account of current development pressures and constraints.
- 2.9 With regard to Seaforde, in particular, the DPS proposes that any expansion should further consolidate the existing form of development and protect the built and rural character.
- 2.10 The Settlement Appraisal also recommends that further consideration should be given to Seaforde ATC being designated as a Conservation Area.
- 2.11 The DPS Housing Strategy seeks to allocate housing in accordance with the framework provided by the Regional Development Strategy 2015 (RDS), following the approach directed in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). The outworking of that is that the proposed LDP strategic housing objectives are:
- To provide for approximately 11,000 new homes by 2035 across a mix of housing type, size and tenure in accessible locations
 - To support the regeneration of disadvantaged and deprived areas
 - To recognise the need of growing families, elderly and disabled by accommodating development which allows people to remain within their communities
 - To promote integration between transportation and new development to reduce the need to travel and reduce dependency upon travel by car
 - Promote opportunities for sustainable travel including walking, cycling and public transport and reduce the need to travel by private car
 - To reduce vulnerability to climate change and prevent inappropriate new development in areas known to be at risk of flooding, coastal erosion or land instability.
- 2.12 Those objectives are supported by Strategic Policy HS1 Housing Land Allocation; Strategic Policy HS2 Protection of Zoned Housing Land; Strategic Policy HS3 Management of Housing Supply and the operational policies set out in Part 2 of the Plan Strategy.
- 2.13 Under Strategic Policy HS1 – Housing Land Allocation, the DPS proposes that 6% (725) of the overall allocation should go to small settlements, as compared to 1,686 (13% allowed for developments in the open countryside.
- 2.14 It is our considered view that, in the context of the SPPS objectives in respect of development in the countryside, a higher allocation should be afforded to development in small settlements in comparison to development in the open countryside in that the SPPS regional strategic objectives for development in the seek to:
- manage growth to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development which supports a vibrant rural community;
 - conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution;
 - facilitate development which contributes to a sustainable rural economy; and
 - promote high standards in the design, siting and landscaping of development.

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- 2.15 In that context the SPPS directs that, in preparing LDPs councils are to bring forward a strategy for sustainable development in the countryside, together with appropriate policies and proposals that must reflect the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area. The policy approach must be to cluster, consolidate, and group new development with existing established buildings, and promote the re-use of previously used buildings. This sustainable approach facilitates essential new development, which can benefit from the utilisation of existing services such as access and drainage, whilst simultaneously mitigating the potential adverse impacts upon rural amenity and scenic landscapes arising from the cumulative effect of one-off, sporadic development upon rural amenity and landscape character.
- 2.16 It is our considered view that the allocation proposed under Strategic Policy HS1 does not comply with the direction provided in the SPPS.
- 2.17 The RDS confirms that, for the purpose of its spatial framework those places outside the Principal Cities, the Main and Local Hubs are identified as constituting the rural area. It acknowledges that the recent growth in the rural community living in small towns, villages, and small settlements in the countryside, reverses a long-term trend of population decline. At paragraph 3.94 the RDS stresses that: *'we must also strive to keep our rural areas sustainable and ensure that people who live there, either through choice or birth, have access to services and are offered opportunities in terms of accessing education, jobs, healthcare and leisure.'*
- 2.18 One of the 8 stated aims of the RDS is to support our towns and villages and rural communities to maximise their potential:
- "Our rural areas including our towns and villages have a key role in supporting economic growth. They offer opportunities in terms of their potential for growth in new sectors, the provision of rural recreation and tourism, their attractiveness as places to invest, live and work, and their role as a reservoir of natural resources and highly valued landscapes."*
- 2.19 Therefore, in that context, while acknowledging the need to grow the population of hubs and clusters (SFG12), the RDS also emphasises (SFG13) the importance of sustaining rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside as the distinctive settlement pattern of main and small towns, villages and dwellings in the open countryside is unique within these islands.
- "The rural community is the custodian of our exceptional natural and built environment. In rural areas, the aim is to sustain the overall strength of the rural community living in small towns, villages, small rural settlements and the open countryside."*
- 2.20 The RDS also recognises that there are wide variations across Northern Ireland in terms of economic, social and environmental characteristics of rural areas. The DPS must recognise these differences and reflect the RDS identified need to be sensitive to local needs and environmental issues including the ability of settlements and landscapes to absorb development. Key considerations will be the role and function of rural settlements and accessibility to services. While Seaforde currently provides few services when measured against the RDS Infrastructure Wheel, that belies the local context and particular circumstances pertaining to Seaforde, adjoining settlements and the surrounding rural hinterland. The Settlement Appraisal draws attention to the neighbouring settlements of Loughinisland, Drumaness and Drumaroad. In reality the everyday connections are for Seaforde are with the nearby village of Clough and

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another small settlement in Loughinisland for services including schools, churches of various faiths, sporting activities, local supermarkets, petrol filling stations, restaurants, doctors' surgery, pharmacy, schools, additional churches and a public house.

- 2.21 The DPS does recognise that there are widely varying characteristics of among the 51 small settlements proposed for designation in that category in the settlement hierarchy. These range Within this small settlement grouping, 14 are identified as multi-nodal with services and populations separated across of number of clusters of development, while nine of the existing small settlements have populations of less than 50. Only 6 settlements out of the 51 proposed as small settlements have a population higher than Seaforde. In that context, it is our considered view that Seaforde merits a greater share of the allocation to this band in the settlement hierarchy following the RDS and SPPS direction that LDPs should take proper account of the local circumstances in allocating new housing and in defining new settlement limits.
- 2.22 The RDS stresses that facilitating development in appropriate locations is considered necessary to ensure proposals are integrated appropriately within rural settlements or in the case of countryside locations, within the rural landscape. The aim of the SPPS (paragraph 6.65) with regard to the countryside is to manage development in a manner which strikes a balance between protection of the environment from inappropriate development, while supporting and sustaining rural communities consistent with the RDS.
- 2.23 The DPS Countryside Strategy reflects those strategic objectives and largely mirrors the SPPS strategic policy in respect of development in the countryside. However, the DPS strategy needs ensure it is aligned with the wider settlement strategy as directed by SFG13 of the RDS in seeking to sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the countryside.
- 2.24 That objective and strategic alignment can be achieved by making provision for more housing in the smaller settlements, particularly those at the upper end of the scale of small settlements such as Seaforde where infrastructure is well developed and the settlement can accommodate further development without detriment to the rural character or other interests of acknowledged importance.
- 2.25 The settlement limit for Seaforde as defined in the Ards & Down Area Plan 2015 was drawn to protect the landscape setting provided by the demesne lands and important trees to the north and the church and surrounding slopes to the north east, prevent further linear expansion along public roads and allow for additional housing opportunities in conjunction with existing development. The LLPA designations that seek to protect the setting in respect of the historic Seaforde Desmne, Seaforde Parish Church and Naghan Lodge and its grounds as well as the boundary of the Area of Townscape Character act as constraints on the location for future development in the settlement. I
- 2.26 It is assumed that the ATC will form the basis of any future consideration for Conservation Area status and under prevailing policy and proposed Policy HE11, new development will only be permitted there in exceptional circumstances. That significantly reduces the opportunity for development within the existing urban footprint. Related to that is the preponderance of Listed Buildings within the urban footprint as illustrated in Figure 1, below.

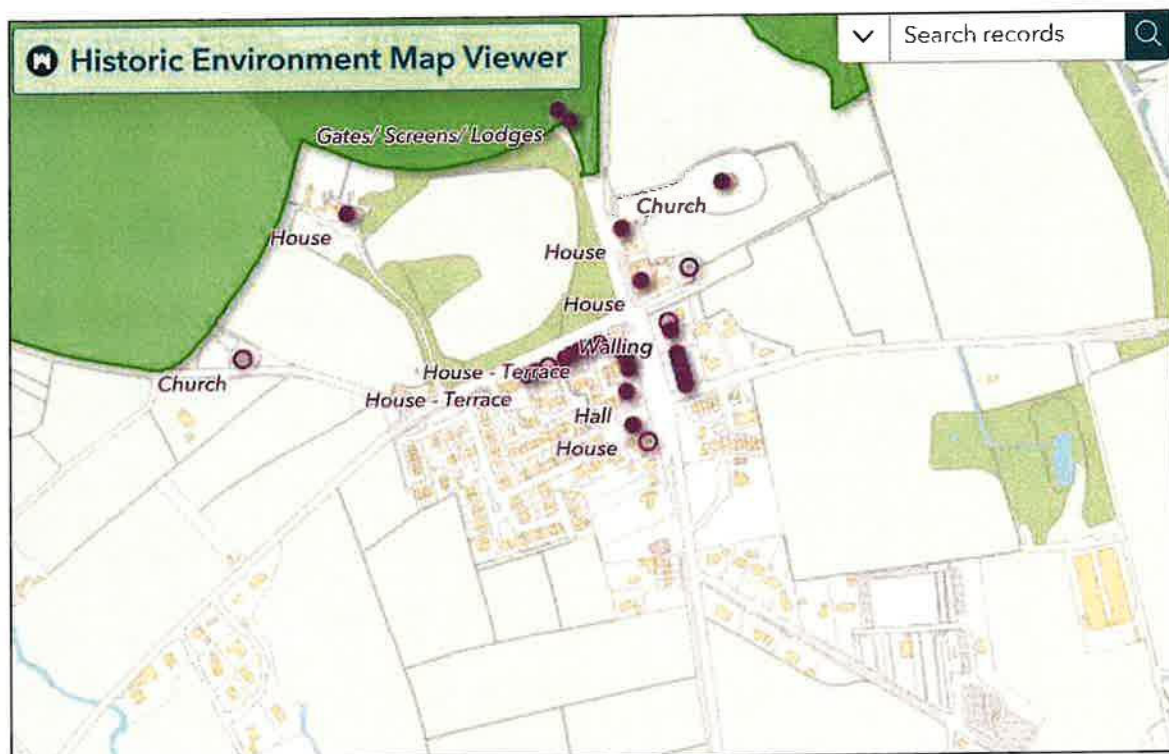


Figure 1: Listed Buildings (source [Historic Environment map viewer](#) | Department for Communities)

- 2.27 Our clients' lands (Appendix 1) are in a prime location to serve the need for growth in Seaforde. They lie directly to the south of the existing settlement limit adjacent to lands previously brought into the settlement limit by the Ards & Down Area Plan 2015. Indeed, it is notable that these lands were approved for development comprising 41 units in February 2017 (LA07/2015/0062/F) and all units have been completed and occupied. Likewise, a smaller development for 10 units west of Forde Close approved under planning reference LA07/2016/0691/F has also been completed and is fully occupied which is indicative of a strong housing need in Seaforde.
- 2.28 Further to that, the NIHE Housing Investment Plan (HIP) as updated in 2024 confirms a social housing need for 2,234 units in the district. There is a high need identified between Dundrum Clough & Seaforde with 32 units required for the period 2023-2028. This higher, pressing need should be factored into the housing allocation for the settlement.
- 2.29 The subject lands are very similar to those brought into the settlement under the Ards & Down Area Plan 2015 in that:
- they avoid the demesne lands and important trees to the north
 - they are located well away from the landmark church and surrounding slopes to the northeast
 - they offer the opportunity of growth without further linear expansion along the local roads
 - they avoid all Listed Buildings and their settings
 - they avoid the ATC and potential Conservation Area
 - they have ready access through the recently completed development and Forde Way

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- these lands will consolidate the form and character of the existing historic settlement without compromising either the inherent heritage value or the rural setting.

2.30 Should the LDP fail to properly consider the option of additional development lands at Seaforde to deal issues raised above, the LDP would be unsound in that it would fail the soundness tests in respect of:

- Consistency Test C1 – failure to take account of the Regional Development Strategy
- Consistency Test C3 - failure to take account of policy and guidance issued by the Department
- Coherence & Effectiveness Test CE1 – failure to set out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations logically flow
- Coherence & Effectiveness Test CE2 - failure to develop strategies, policies and allocations that are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and in particular are not founded on a robust evidence base.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The DPS needs to comply with the strategic direction provided by the RDS and the SPPS. Making provision for growth within small settlements will assist in reducing pressure for one-off houses in the open countryside, allowing rural dwellers to remain in their local area and at the same time minimise impacts on the character of the rural area.
- 3.2 Our client lands on the south side of the settlement are well suited to development in that development tin that location would consolidate the development footprint of Seaforde and avoid any negative impact on the character of the heritage settlement.
- 3.3 It is well screened from view from public roads and will assist in protecting the rural character and setting of Seaforde providing for a clearer distinction between the settlement and its rural hinterland.
- 3.4 We respectfully request that the Council to carefully consider the matter raised in this submission. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further.
- 3.5 Our clients request that they are represented in any inquiry process to discuss these matters further.

APPENDIX 1: Subject Lands

ACEmap® Single

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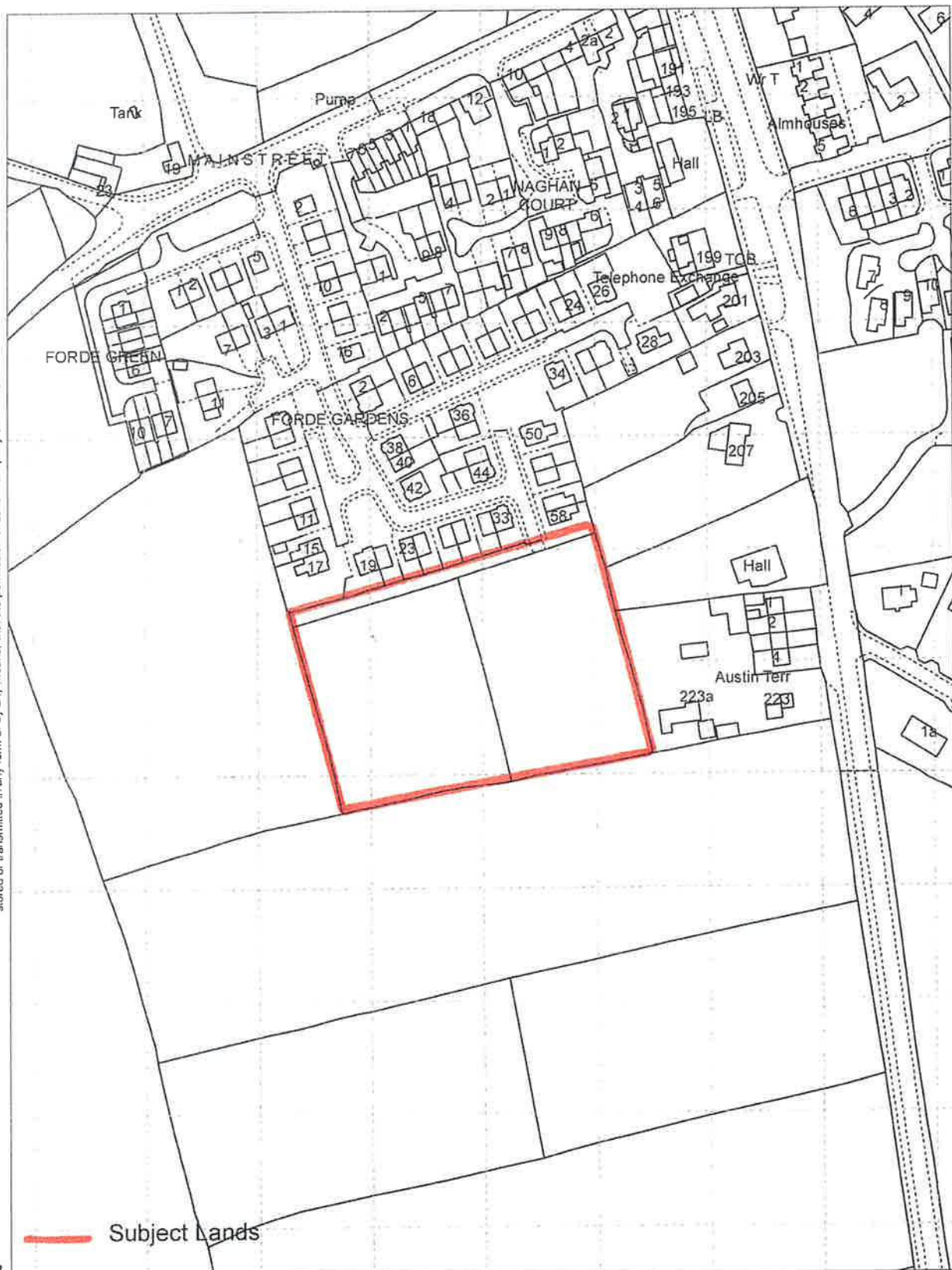
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