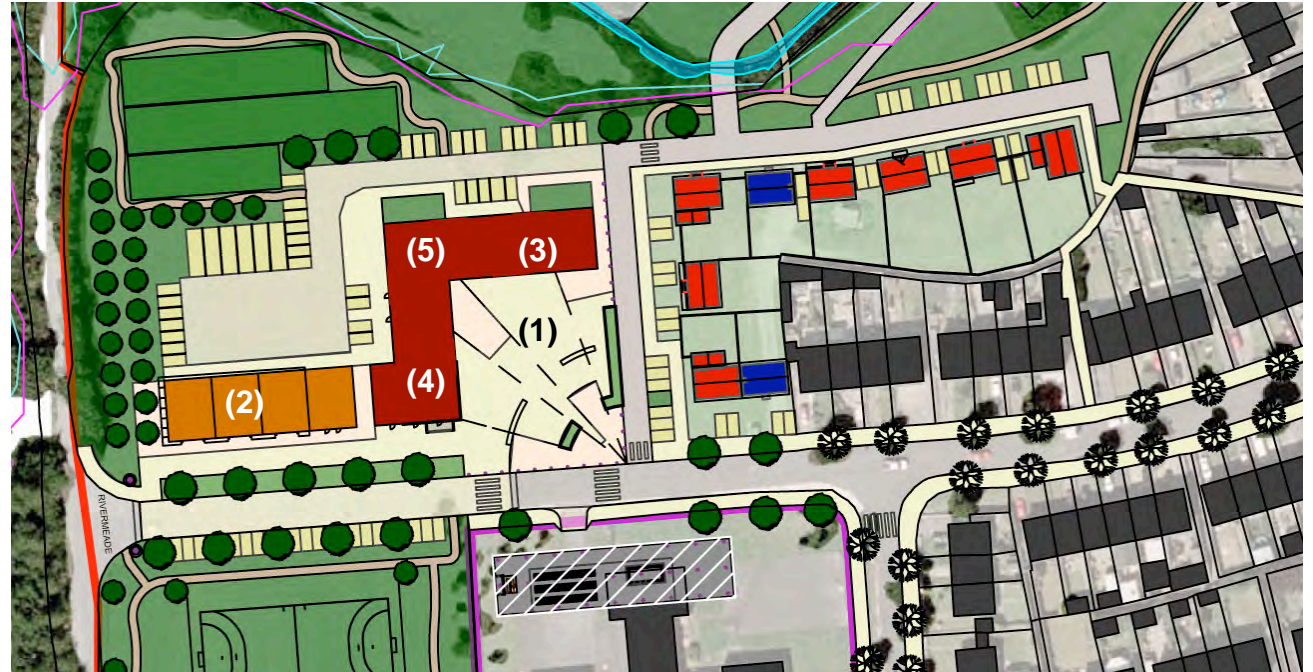



## 2.21 Generating a Village Centre

There could be a long wish list for the desirable services within a village centre, especially if it serves a large hinterland. Planning for a reasonable balance of services in the long term makes sense. It may need an incremental approach to its development. Given the location close to Swords, a village may be able to offer specialised services to a large local market.

- A village centre is also an opportunity to create a **public space (1)** which will act as a focal point and draw people to it or through it. The public space provided as an integral element of the centre is as important as the uses which may surround it, and should include good lighting, attractive surfaces, durable planting, passive surveillance, seating, shelter against rain. A public space may be adapted for use as a farmers' market, and/or an open air festival for special occasions.
- **Workspaces (2)** in a centre may accommodate existing or encourage new business setups in the village. Providing small, flexible units could suit a range of activities, such as repair shop, storage, distribution base, studio, incubator for small business, etc.
- **Shopfront spaces (3)** may include local food shopping, health centre - doctor, physiotherapist, fitness centre; beautician; hairdresser; alternative therapies.
- **Food - Cafe / restaurant (4)** could draw from a wide catchment area. It may be an attractive proposition for food producer Keelings to operate a display shop as a promotional activity which could help Keelings to identify Rivermeade as part of its locality.
- **Social centre: (5)** a community centre may provide a wide range of services to local people, such as day care centre and meals for older people, sporting activities, reading clubs, special interest groups, educational programmes, and many more activities depending on the specific interests and needs for the area and social services provision.





### 2.3 The Distinctive quality of the village is integrated with its attractive landscape setting

The special local landscape and the generous green space around Rivermeade make it special, along with the impact of the growth of vegetation over the thirty year life of the estate, and the care with which many residents have looked after their gardens. There is an opportunity now to draw on the character and quality of the surrounding landscape as an integral, recreational part of the village, more than just a setting. The gentle shaping of the landscape and proposed areas for development allow for imaginative uses:

- There is already a loop walk within the recreation area surrounding the school. There is an opportunity to provide a network of paths for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the village.
- The reservoir clearly has amenity value as well as being an area where nature predominates. Use for water sports/ fishing/ boating might be uses compatible with retention as a nature environment.
- The traditional farm and its immediate fields is an opportunity to conserve a part of country life in a real setting, for example a model open farm retaining active use with horses and/or other animals, incorporating a community garden for the

growing of vegetables and flowers and using the buildings as a small museum of artefacts. This would be of benefit to existing and future residents and could be an ‘attractor’, drawing in visitors, especially school children to the facility. Combining the visit with a nature walk and possible water-based adventure pursuits on and around the reservoir, canoeing for example, could generate regular active visits. Should Keelings be interested in sponsoring such a venture they might wish to install a promotional fruit and vegetable shop outlet. Possibly, it could effect a ‘green box’ weekly delivery to the village houses of its locally produced fruit and vegetables according to season.