

CHAPTER 13

# Heritage and Conservation



## 13.1 Introduction

Heritage is defined in the Heritage Act, 1995 as including monuments, archaeology, heritage objects, architecture, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways. Heritage is therefore all around us, it is reflected in the landscape in which we live and it is reflected in how we perceive that very landscape. Aspects of our heritage help to define us and they contribute to the development of a strong sense of identity and pride making it a unique resource. In addition, heritage is essential to our economy being one of our greatest selling points in the domestic and international tourism markets. We must ensure that this precious inheritance is not threatened and is preserved to be experienced and enjoyed by all including future generations.

The Plan identifies objectives to ensure the protection of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the county and provides the spatial framework and objectives for its protection either directly by the Council, or by supporting its protection through other responsible agencies. The Plan seeks to protect a diverse range of the county's heritage, both designated and undesignated sites, including Natura 2000 sites, geological sites, nature reserves, archaeological sites, protected structures, architectural conservation areas and the county's biodiversity such as hedgerows.

The Council also recognises the need to integrate our built, cultural and natural heritage, which all have intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.

This chapter contains the Council's policies on natural heritage and built heritage. Landscape and green infrastructure are dealt with in Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment.

### 13.1.1 Climate Action and Heritage

With regard to heritage, climate action in the Plan focuses on the following:

- Promoting features which act as carbon sinks such as, retention and extension of forests and wetlands and protection and enhancement of green infrastructure, biodiversity, ecosystems and habitats.

- Encouraging the retention and reuse of existing structures. Making use of existing buildings before building new structures reduces demolition waste which accounts for a large percentage of landfill and which is an environmental burden, while the production and/or importation of new building materials accounts for a significant amount of energy use.
- Supporting thermal upgrading of historic buildings (in line with recommended guidance<sup>1</sup> and European Performance of Buildings Directive 2010 (as amended)) to enhance performance and reduce energy consumption.

### 13.1.2 Policy Context

The preparation of this chapter has had regard to relevant national legislation and guidelines, regional and local plans and policies, and in particular, the need to ensure that the Plan is compliant with the Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive and all other relevant EU and national legislation and regulations in relation to the protection of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the county.

A new National Heritage Plan “Heritage Ireland 2030 “is currently being drafted by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It will be a coherent, comprehensive and inspiring framework of values, principles, strategic priorities and actions to guide and inform the heritage sector over the next decade.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) through NSO 7 and NPO 60 highlights the rich qualities of our natural and cultural heritage and promotes their conservation and enhancement in a manner appropriate to their significance. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) recognises the value of our combined heritage and the contribution it makes to our settlements and rural areas which are made up of a diverse range of key assets that require careful protection. Biodiversity is a primary indicator of the health of our surroundings. RPO 126, RPO 202, RPO 205 and RPO 206 set out recommendations to ensure and support this and the diverse range of key assets that make up our heritage.

Ireland is a signatory to the worldwide Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Government is committed through this process to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity. At national level biodiversity policy is set out in the National Biodiversity

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<sup>1</sup> Energy Efficiency in Historic Houses (Proceedings produced from ten regional seminars held during 2009 & 2010, in partnership with Irish local authorities' Architectural Conservation Officers & Heritage Officers, and with the support of ESB, SEAI & Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.); and The Advice Series on Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings produced by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2010

Plan (NBP) which identifies habitat degradation and loss as the main factor eroding biodiversity in Ireland today.

The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (The Granada Convention), drawn up by the Council of Europe and signed at Granada in 1985, was ratified by Ireland in 1997. As a result, comprehensive and systematic legislative provisions for the protection of the architectural heritage were introduced by the Government as part of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). There are a significant number of Section 28 and other government Guidelines which relate directly to our natural and built heritage. The Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011), published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht is the main planning policy guidance document in respect of our built heritage. The Department has also issued a range of publications under its Advice Series to provide more detailed guidance and advice on historic building materials and issues e.g. maintenance, access, windows, iron, and brickwork.

Other relevant guidance includes the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (DAHGI, 1999) and Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009).

The aim of the County Wexford Biodiversity Action Plan 2013 is to create and promote an increased knowledge, awareness and appreciation of the natural heritage and biodiversity of County Wexford and to conserve it for future generations to enjoy. The preparation of the plan included a substantial audit of biodiversity in the county both within and outside of designated sites, and this information will be used in the development management process. It is the intention of the Council to update the County Wexford Biodiversity Action Plan during the life of this Plan.

### 13.1.3 Goal

The overall goal is to protect, conserve and where appropriate enhance the natural, built and cultural heritage of the county and to encourage all to appreciate, enjoy, understand and care for our heritage to help enhance and secure it for future generations.

### 13.1.4 Strategy

- To sustainably manage the natural and built heritage in the county;
- To conserve and protect sites and species, both designated and undesignated for their biodiversity, ecological or environmental sensitivity;
- To protect upland peat and bog areas and to ensure their protection from extractive uses and inappropriate recreational use (such as quad bikes);
- To ensure the sustainable management and conservation of areas of natural and geological heritage within the county;
- To protect and enhance the character of the built environment;
- To protect the archaeology of the county;
- To promote the cultural heritage of the county ;
- To increase investment in heritage from economic returns it generates from society; and
- To improve heritage information, guidance and advice for the general public whilst making it accessible to all.

### Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective HT01

On adoption of the National Heritage Plan “Heritage 2030” to commence the preparation of a County Heritage Plan to assist the management and promotion of our valuable heritage in a sustainable manner.

#### Objective HT02

To ensure that the use of our heritage assets are managed, preserved and presented in a manner that does not adversely impact on the intrinsic value of these assets whilst supporting economic renewal and sustainable development.

### Objective HT03

To promote initiatives that provide better public access for all visitors to our historic built and natural environment whilst ensuring the full protection of these sites. Wexford County Council will ensure that decision making on projects/developments to improve access and facilities are informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

## 13.2 Natural Heritage

Natural heritage, often referred to as biodiversity, is the variety of life, its physical or geological foundation and the landscapes which form our surroundings. Biodiversity includes everything from trees to weeds, from mammals to birds, from coast to countryside. Biodiversity is important for many things including food, fertile soils and clean air and water. It is therefore important that the development objectives in the Plan are balanced with objectives which ensure that the county's natural heritage is protected, conserved, enhanced and restored where possible.

This plan provides objectives to protect designated ecological sites (as detailed in Section 13.2.1 to 13.2.11 below) and protected species<sup>2</sup>, and ecological connectivity (including stepping stones and corridors; such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species)<sup>3</sup> and non-designated habitats. It also includes objectives to protect Salmonid Waters<sup>4</sup>, Shellfish Waters, Flora Protection Order sites, watercourses, wetlands and peatlands and other sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance, e.g. BirdWatch Ireland's 'Important Bird Areas' (Crowe et al., 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> Protected species including: Annex IV (Habitats Directive) species of flora and fauna, and their key habitats (i.e. breeding sites and resting places), which are strictly protected wherever they occur, whether inside or outside the above sites, e.g. Otter and bats; Other species of flora and fauna and their key habitats which are protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000, wherever they occur; 'Protected species and natural habitats' as defined in the European Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) and European Communities; (Environmental Liability) Regulations, 2008, including: Birds Directive – Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats (wherever they occur) and Habitats Directive – Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats, and Annex IV species and their breeding sites and resting places (wherever they occur).

<sup>3</sup> Member States shall endeavour to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network under Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive in 1992 (92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Salmonid waters are designated and protected under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1988 (SI No. 293 of 1988).

### 13.2.1 Biodiversity Restoration

Recent studies have highlighted the poor status of habitats and species in Ireland and have called for biodiversity restoration as a priority. The EU Biodiversity Strategy aims to restore degraded ecosystems by 2030 and manage them sustainably, addressing the key drivers of biodiversity loss including changes in land and sea use, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species. As part of this plan, the Commission will propose binding nature restoration targets by the end of 2021 and will introduce measures to tackle the global biodiversity challenge.

The Council will support initiatives which aim to protect and restore ecosystems and achieve the objectives of the Habitats and Birds Directives. The Council will also prepare a new County Biodiversity Action Plan which will incorporate EU and national restoration targets and will include measures to address biodiversity enhancement and restoration locally.

### 13.2.2 Natura 2000 Sites

Natura 2000 sites are a network of sites of the highest biodiversity importance in Europe designated under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). They are comprised of Special Protection Areas (SPA) which provide for the protection and conservation of particular bird species and bird habitats and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which provide protection and conservation of habitats and species (other than birds).

Wexford has a particularly rich natural heritage and this is reflected in the number and importance of the Natura 2000 sites in the county. These are listed in Table 13.1 and are shown on Map No. 2a, and include Natura 2000 sites within a 15 kilometre distance from the Plan boundary. There are currently 12 SACs, three candidate SACs and nine SPAs within the plan boundary. There are a further three SACs, two candidate SACs and two SPAs within 15 kilometres of the plan boundary. The habitats and species in each of these sites are discussed in further detail in the Natura Impact Report in Volume 13.

In accordance with Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, the Council will ensure that all plans and projects are screened to assess, in the view of best scientific

knowledge, if the plan or project, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s). Such a plan or project may be located within the designated site, in proximity to it or linked to it hydrologically or otherwise have an interdependence (such as feeding, roosting or nesting grounds). In assessing such applications, regard shall be had to the detailed conservation management plans and data reports prepared by NPWS, where available, to the identified features of interest of the site, the identified conservation objectives to ensure the maintenance or restoration of the features of interests to favourable conservation status, the NPWS Article 17 current conservation status reports, the underlying site specific conditions, and the known threats to achieving the conservation objectives of the site.

In the event that the screening indicates that the plan or project will, either directly or indirectly, on its own or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), the plan or project must be the subject of a full Appropriate Assessment.

Having considered the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment, the Planning Authority shall agree to the plan or project only if satisfied that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned or, where in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan or project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest pursuant to Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

**Table 13.1 Natura 2000 Sites in County Wexford and within 15km of the Plan Boundary**

| Site Name                | SAC Site No.       | SPA Site No. |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Ballyteige Burrow        | 000696 (candidate) | 004020       |
| Bannow Bay               | 000697             | 004033       |
| Cahore Polders and Dunes | 000700             |              |
| Lady's Island Lake       | 000704             | 004009       |
| Saltee Islands           | 000707             | 004002       |



| Site Name                                     | SAC Site No.       | SPA Site No. |
|---|--------------------|--------------|
| Screen Hills                                  | 000708             |              |
| Tacumshin Lake                                | 000709             | 004092       |
| Raven Point Nature Reserve                    | 000710             | 004019       |
| Hook Head                                     | 000764             |              |
| Blackstairs Mountains                         | 000770             |              |
| Slaney River Valley                           | 000781(candidate)  |              |
| Kilmuckridge-Tinnabearna Sandhills            | 001741             |              |
| Kilpatrick Sandhills                          | 001742             |              |
| River Barrow and River Nore                   | 002162 (candidate) |              |
| Wexford Harbour and Slobs                     |                    | 004076       |
| Keeragh Islands                               |                    | 004118       |
| Cahore Marshes                                |                    | 004143       |
| Carnsore Point                                | 002269             |              |
| <b>Sites within 15km of the Plan Boundary</b> |                    |              |
| Tramore Dunes and Backstrand                  | 000671             |              |
| Buckronev-Brittass Dunes and Fen              | 000729 (candidate) |              |
| Lower River Suir                              | 002137 (candidate) |              |
| Tramore Back Strand                           |                    | 004027       |
| River Nore                                    |                    | 004233       |
| Long Bank                                     | 002161             |              |
| Blackwater Bank                               | 002953             |              |

### 13.2.3 Natural Heritage Areas and County Geological Sites

The Wildlife Acts (1976-2012) provide for the statutory protection of species and habitats of national importance and sites of geological interest and the control of activities which may impact adversely on the conservation of wildlife. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance and sites of geological interest. The designation of these sites is the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The basic designation for wildlife is the NHA. This is an area considered important for the habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. There are 31 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) as listed in Table 13.2 and shown on Map 2a. None of the sites listed below have been formally designated by Statutory Instrument. These areas can overlap with Natura 2000 sites, but they are designated under separate legislation (Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000) and are designated for different interests.

**Table 13.2 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas**

| Site No. | Site Name                |
|----------|--------------------------|
| 000699   | Boley Fen                |
| 000702   | Leskinfere Church, Clogh |
| 000703   | Keeragh Islands          |
| 000711   | Tintern Abbey            |
| 000741   | Ballyconnigar Sand Pits  |
| 000742   | Ballyconnigar Upper      |
| 000744   | Ballykelly Marsh         |
| 000745   | Ballymoney Strand        |
| 000747   | Ballyroe Fen And Lake    |
| 000750   | Bunclody Slate Quarries  |

| Site No. | Site Name                    |
|----------|------------------------------|
| 000757   | Courtown Dunes And Glen      |
| 000761   | Forth Mountain               |
| 000765   | Killoughrum Forest           |
| 000774   | Oaklands Wood                |
| 000782   | St. Helen's Burrow           |
| 001733   | Ardamine Wood                |
| 001736   | Cahore Point North Sandhills |
| 001737   | Donaghmore Sandhills         |
| 001834   | Kilgorman River Marsh        |
| 001930   | Ballyteige Marsh             |

### County Geological Sites and Recommended Geological Natural Heritage Areas

County Wexford is perhaps more widely known than many counties for its geological heritage, and clearly many of the rich heritage and tourist sites have an underlying geological heritage that is the foundation for either cultural heritage interest or for the rich biodiversity of the county (See Map 2b).

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI), with the support of Wexford County Council and the Heritage Council, carried out an audit of the County Geological Sites (CGS) in County Wexford, as part of the programme of work for the County Wexford Biodiversity Action Plan 2013 – 2018 and the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. With this audit complete Wexford County Council have been recognised by the GSI as being at the forefront of geological heritage in Ireland fully embracing geological heritage within its Development Plan processes.

Following the detailed audit, which included field and documentary research, the GSI have recommended that 42 sites are worthy to receive protection as CGS within the Plan. These are all listed in Table 13.3 below. They consider 16 of these sites to be of national importance as best representative examples of particular

geological formations or features and should receive protection as NHAs. They have been provisionally notified to the NPWS. A further five of these sites have also been identified that may be recommended for geological NHA status after further investigation. The detail provided in the audit will assist in the development management process, in raising awareness, education and as an addition to our natural heritage tourism product.

The management requirements for geological sites differ to those protected for ecological measures. Geological features are typically quite robust and generally few restrictions are required in order to protect the scientific interest. In some cases the geological interest may even be served better by a development exposing more rock. The important thing is that people are aware of the sites and, more generally, that consultation takes place with GSI where development is proposed for a site. This affords the opportunity to learn more about our geology or area by recording and sampling of temporary exposures, and to influence the design so that access to exposures of rock can be maintained for the future. It will result in inappropriate development being prevented where it would irreversibly damage a feature of significant interest.

Many of the sites fall within existing pNHAs, SACs and SPAs where the ecological interest is actually founded upon the underlying geodiversity and their related controls and constraints must be acknowledged.

**Table 13.3 Wexford County Geological Sites and recommended geological Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)**

| Site Code <sup>5</sup> | Site Name            | Designation                                |
|------------------------|----------------------|--|
| WX001                  | Baginbun Head        | CGS  |
| WX002                  | Ballymoney Strand    | CGS, may be recommended for Geological NHA |
| WX003                  | Ballyteige Bay       | CGS  |
| WX004                  | Bannow Bay           | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX005                  | Barrystown Mine      | CGS  |
| WX006                  | Blackstairs Mountain | CGS  |

<sup>5</sup> Site Code numbering system has been allocated by Wexford County Council

| Site Code | Site Name                            | Designation                                |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|--|
| WX007     | Booley Bay                           | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX008     | Cahore Point                         | CGS, may be recommended for Geological NHA |
| WX009     | Cahore Polders and Dunes             | CGS  |
| WX010     | Caim Mine                            | CGS  |
| WX011     | Camaross Pingos                      | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX012     | Carnsore Point                       | CGS  |
| WX013     | Carrigadaggan                        | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX014     | Coolishall Quarry                    | CGS  |
| WX015     | Cullenstown                          | CGS  |
| WX016     | Curraclloe Beach and The Raven Point | CGS  |
| WX017     | Fethard                              | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX018     | Forth Mountain                       | CGS  |
| WX019     | Graigue Great                        | CGS, may be recommended for Geological NHA |
| WX020     | Greenore Point                       | CGS  |
| WX021     | Greenville Farmyard                  | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX022     | Harrylock Bay                        | CGS, may be recommended for Geological NHA |
| WX023     | Hook Head                            | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX024     | Kilmore Quay                         | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX025     | Kilpatrick Sandhills                 | CGS  |
| WX026     | Kiltrea                              | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX027     | Lady's Island Lake                   | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX028     | Loftusacre                           | CGS  |
| WX029     | Mulmontry Gorge                      | CGS  |

| Site Code | Site Name                    | Designation                                |
|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| WX030     | Oldtown to Harrylock Bay     | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX031     | Petit's Bay                  | CGS  |
| WX032     | Pollshone Head – Roney Point | CGS, may be recommended for Geological NHA |
| WX033     | Saltee Islands               | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX034     | Sandeel Bay                  | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX035     | Screen Hills                 | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX036     | Shelmaliere Commons Quarry   | CGS  |
| WX037     | St. Helen's Glaciomarine Mud | CGS  |
| WX038     | St. Helen's Harbour          | CGS  |
| WX039     | St. Patrick's Bridge         | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |
| WX040     | Tacumshin Lake               | CGS  |
| WX041     | Tincone                      | CGS  |
| WX042     | Wexford Harbour              | CGS, recommended for Geological NHA        |

### 13.2.4 Ramsar Sites

Ramsar sites are designated for the conservation of wetlands, particularly those of importance to waterfowl. These sites were designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance on 15 March 1985. Three are located in County Wexford; The Raven, Bannow Bay and Wexford Wildfowl Reserve.

- Ramsar Site no. 291: The Wexford Wildfowl Reserve. The site forms part of the world's most important wintering sites for the vulnerable Greenland White fronted Goose.
- Ramsar Site no. 840: Bannow Bay. The site supports an important range of wintering waterbird species.
- Ramsar Site no. 333: The Raven. The site provides important roosting sites for

passage terns and internationally important numbers of the globally vulnerable goose Greenland White-fronted Goose winter at the site.

### 13.2.5 Nature Reserves

A nature reserve is an area of importance to wildlife, which is protected under Ministerial Order. There are three nature reserves in the county; The Raven, Wexford Wildfowl Reserve and Ballyteige Burrow.

- The flora of Ballyteige Burrow is especially rich in dune plants and those which prosper in coastal habitats.
- The Raven is one of the best developed sand dune systems on the east coast.
- The Wexford Wildfowl Reserve forms a wintering ground of international importance for a number of migratory water fowl species.

### 13.2.6 Refuges for Fauna

The Minister may designate Refuges for wild birds or wild animals or flora (under the Wildlife Acts (1976-2012) and impose protective measures to conserve both the species and their habitats. One Refuge for Fauna is located in County Wexford: (Lady's Island) Designation Order, 1988 – designated for Artic tern, common tern, roseate tern, sandwich tern and little tern.

### 13.2.7 Shellfish Area

The EU Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth. It is designed to protect the aquatic habitat of bivalve and gastropod molluscs, which includes mussels, scallops, clams, oysters and cockles. The European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006 (as amended) (S.I No 268 of 2006) gives effect to the Directive in Ireland.

The Directive requires Member States to designate waters that need protection in order to support shellfish life and growth, and then establish pollution reduction programmes for the designated waters. There are four designated waters relevant

to Wexford: Bannow Bay, Wexford Harbour Outer, Wexford Harbour Inner and Waterford Harbour. Pollution Reduction Programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems, agriculture and port activities.

Under Article 4 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Council is required to ensure that the performance of its functions promotes compliance with the objectives of these pollution reduction programmes and with the objectives of the Shellfish Waters Directive. Such functions include waste water treatment, waste management, effluent discharge licences, planning and development and building control.

### 13.2.8 Freshwater Pearl Mussel

The freshwater pearl mussel is protected under the Wildlife Acts (1976-2012) and the Habitats Directive. It is included on the red data list for Ireland as being critically endangered. It requires water to be of a high ecological status. All 27 designated populations in Ireland are demonstrating unfavourable conservation status as highlighted in The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021. They have been prioritised for action. The DCHG produced a national conservation strategy for the species in 2011, which prioritised implementation of measures at a catchment scale for eight Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations that collectively make up 80% of the total national population. Hydro morphological impacts, sedimentation and enrichment are the main pressures causing Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations to be in a conservation condition classified as unfavourable.

The second cycle River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 includes objectives to improve water to a high ecological status for designated pearl mussel rivers.

### 13.2.9 Marine Protected Areas

A Marine Protected Area (MPA) may be defined as “a geographically defined area of marine character or influence which is protected through legal means for the purpose of conservation of specified species, habitats or ecosystems and their associated ecosystem services and cultural values, and managed with the intention of achieving stated objectives over the long term.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> EXPANDING IRELAND'S MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK, A report by the Marine Protected Area Advisory Group for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage October 2020.



Although much of Ireland's marine environment is in generally good condition, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation are of wide concern due to increasing pressures such as overexploitation, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

MPAs will provide a long term, area-based management approach to maintain, conserve and restore marine ecosystems, with the primary objective of conserving habitats and/or species and other natural features. A degree of area-based protection is already in place through the Natura 2000 network of sites established under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. However, a more coherent network is needed. Ireland has a target to designate 30% of its marine area by 2030 and it is expected that there will be further designation of MPAs under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive in the coming years. The Council will support the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of marine ecosystems in existing and future designated MPAs through compliance with relevant Directives including the Habitats and Water Framework Directive.

### 13.2.10 Coastal Lagoons

It is recognised that measures are required to improve and restore the conservation status of Coastal lagoons, an Annex 1 priority habitat under the Habitats Directive. The conservation status of coastal lagoons has been assessed as bad, with the main pressures affecting structure and functions being water quality and hydrological issues. Measures to improve water quality will continue to be delivered through the river basin planning cycles but specific targeted programmes will be required, particularly for the large sedimentary lagoons of the south-east coast.<sup>7</sup> The Council will support any future programmes for the restoration of these sites.

### 13.2.11 Ecological Stepping Stones, Networks and Wildlife Corridors

Areas of biodiversity value are not confined to designated sites and there is a need to protect such areas of conservation value, including their associated species, against the cumulative impact of development on the wide network of natural systems which make up the environment.

Wildlife corridors or ecological networks describe a network of core habitats linked by

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<sup>7</sup> Draft Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for Natura 2000 in Ireland (NPWS, 2020).

linear and continuous structures such as rivers, hedgerows or stepping stones such as ponds or small woods. These corridors provide a vital habitat for many species and also function as a corridor for animals, birds, bats, insects and other species to prevent extinction or demise due to habitat fragmentation. Such wildlife corridors are vital for access to species dispersal, food sources, nesting and breeding.

In accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the Planning Authority is obliged to include objectives in its Development Plan for the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020) provides an excellent guide for the protection and enhancement of rivers in urban areas, which promotes planning requirements to be incorporated into development plans to ensure that developments do not degrade watercourses nor reduce their value for the public good. The riparian zone and green infrastructure in general is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure.

### 13.2.12 Invasive Species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species can represent a major threat to local biodiversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. While the Council is committed to controlling invasive species, vigilance is required by all landowners as invasive species can spread quickly across boundaries. Preventative measures include ensuring that good site hygiene practices are employed for movement of materials into, out of and around the site and ensuring that imported soil is free of seeds and rhizomes of key invasive plant species.

#### Natural Heritage Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective NH01

To ensure the protection of all designated ecological sites (as detailed in Section 13.2.1 to 13.2.11) in relevant Local Area Plans and in the assessment of planning applications and promote the restoration of sites where required.

### Objective NH02

To protect and enhance the rich qualities of our natural heritage in a manner that is appropriate to its significance.

### Objective NH03

To promote biodiversity protection, restoration, and habitat connectivity both within protected areas and in the landscape through promoting the integration of green infrastructure and ecosystem services, including landscape, heritage and biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species in the plan making and development management processes.

### Objective NH04

To protect the integrity of sites designated for their habitat and species importance and prohibit development which would damage or threaten the integrity of these sites. Such sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and candidate SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs, Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and RAMSAR sites. To protect protected species wherever they occur<sup>8</sup>.

### Objective NH05

In assessing planning applications located in and/or in proximity to Natura 2000 sites, whether hydraulically linked or otherwise linked or dependent (such as feeding, roosting or nesting grounds) to a designated site, regard shall be had to the detailed conservation management plans and data reports prepared by NPWS, where available, to the identified features of interest of the site, the identified conservation

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<sup>8</sup> Protected species including: Annex IV (Habitats Directive) species of flora and fauna, and their key habitats (i.e. breeding sites and resting places), which are strictly protected wherever they occur, whether inside or outside the above sites, e.g. Otter and bats; Other species of flora and fauna and their key habitats which are protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000, wherever they occur; 'Protected species and natural habitats' as defined in the European Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) and European Communities; (Environmental Liability) Regulations, 2008, including: Birds Directive – Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats (wherever they occur) and Habitats Directive – Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats, and Annex IV species and their breeding sites and resting places (wherever they occur).

objectives to ensure the maintenance or restoration of the features of interests to favourable conservation status, the NPWS Article 17 current conservation status reports, the underlying site specific conditions, and the known threats to achieving the conservation objectives of the site.

#### **Objective NH06**

To recognise the importance of recommended Geological Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas and County Geological Sites and protect the character and integrity of these sites where appropriate. The Council will consult Geological Survey Ireland where a development is proposed that may impact on geological sites.

#### **Objective NH07**

To have regard to any particular management or sensitivity, contained within the individual site reports within The Geological Heritage of County Wexford: An audit of County Geological Sites in County Wexford 2018, in the assessment of planning applications located within Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas and County Geological Sites.

#### **Objective NH08**

To ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed by the competent authority imperative for reasons of overriding public interest.

### Objective NH09

To ensure the protection of areas, sites and species and ecological networks/corridors of local biodiversity value outside the designated sites throughout the county and to require an ecological assessment to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species.

### Objective NH10

To ensure that traditional field boundaries, ponds or small woods which provide important ecological corridors, stepping stones or networks are protected. Where such features exist on land which is to be developed the applicant should demonstrate that the design of the development has resulted in the retention of these features insofar as is possible and that the existing biodiversity value of the site has been protected and enhanced.

### Objective NH11

To protect trees or groups of trees and woodlands of particular amenity and nature conservation value and make tree preservation orders where appropriate.

### Objective NH12

To protect individual trees, groups of trees, woodlands and hedgerows of amenity and biodiversity value, from damage and/or degradation and work to prevent the disruption of the connectivity of the woodlands and hedgerows of the county. Commercial forestry will generally be exempt, except at peripheries and/or where they have not been maintained for commercial purposes.

### Objective NH13

To ensure applications for development include proposals for native planting and leave a suitable ecological buffer zone between the development works and any areas or features of ecological importance. To minimise the removal of hedgerow and natural boundaries, and where hedgerows are required to be removed the applicant/

developer will be required to reinstate the hedgerows with a suitable replacement of native species.

#### **Objective NH14**

To work with local communities, groups, landowners, National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant parties to identify, protect, manage and, where appropriate, enhance and promote sites of local biodiversity value.

#### **Objective NH15**

To prepare a new Biodiversity Action Plan for the County and to implement the actions identified in the County Wexford Biodiversity Action Plan 2013, or the subsequent plan, in partnership with all relevant parties and stakeholders.

#### **Objective NH16**

To support the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of marine ecosystems in any existing or future Marine Protected Area which may be designated during the lifetime of the Plan.

#### **Objective NH17**

To support any targeted programmes or projects which will be required to improve and restore the status of the large sedimentary lagoons of Wexford.

#### **Objective NH18**

To provide support for communities in the application of EU funded programmes such as the Roseate Tern Recovery Project, the Blackstairs Farming Futures (BFF) Sustainable farming project and other LIFE and European Innovation Partnership programmes which aim to achieve the objectives of the Habitats and Birds Directives.

#### **Objective NH19**

To implement the requirements of EU Regulations 1143/2014 on the Prevention and

Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species and Regulation 49 and 50 of the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011(S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended.

### **Objective NH20**

To ensure the protection of natural heritage is integral to the Council's own developments, actions and methods of operation.

### **Objective NH21**

To ensure that natural heritage and biodiversity consideration are integral to the preparation of Local Area Plans and to identify, protect and manage biodiversity through these Plans.

### **Objective NH22**

To promote best practice in the control of invasive species and support measures for the prevention and/or eradication of invasive species as appropriate and as opportunities and resources allow.

### **Objective NH23**

To undertake an audit of invasive species across the county and encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they can spread.

### **Objective NH24**

To raise awareness in relation to invasive species, including making landowners and developers aware of best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species and leave them to adhere to same and, to ensure, in so far as possible, that proposals for development do not lead to the spread of invasive species. The Council will inform landowners of any invasive species found or reported on their property and request the landowners to take appropriate action in accordance with best practice guidance.

### Objective NH25

To ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are or were previously present, the applicants will be required to submit a control and management program for the particular invasive species carried out by a competent and appropriately qualified expert as part of the planning process.

### Objective NH26

To require best practice and facilitate the development of appropriate facilities to minimise the spread of invasive species along blueways and greenways.

### Objective NH27

To carefully consider and implement the management of invasive species where there is a corridor, such as hydrological connections to European Sites in order to prevent the spread of invasive species to sensitive sites.

### Objective NH28

To incorporate the actions of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 (and any subsequent Plan) when managing our parks, open spaces, roadside verges and all vegetation in a way that provides more opportunities for biodiversity while being cognisant of the threat of the spread of invasive species.

## 13.3 Archaeological Heritage

### 13.3.1 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological heritage is a non-renewable resource which helps us to understand how cultures and past societies developed. It consists of material remains in the form of sites and monuments, as well as artefacts or moveable objects. 'Monuments' refer to manmade structures or natural features altered by man while 'sites' are normally



situated below ground and may have no visible surface features at all. Archaeological sites and monuments vary greatly in date and form. Examples include earthworks, megalithic tombs, medieval buildings, urban archaeological deposits and underwater features such as wrecks. Sites and monuments which survive not only enrich our landscapes and townscapes but are essential to understanding our past.

Archaeological sites and monuments are protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. At present, a site or monument is protected in one of four ways: –

- It is recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
- It is registered in the Register of Historic Monuments (RHM).
- It is a national monument subject to a preservation order (or temporary preservation order).
- It is a national monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a Local Authority.

The RMP, which was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, provides a statutory list of all known archaeological monuments and such places in Ireland. It includes a set of maps and a list of monuments and places for each County. These are known as Recorded Monuments. Zones of archaeological potential are also included. These are zones in historic towns, within which archaeological deposits and upstanding pre-1700 AD archaeological remains exist. There are more than 120,000 monuments on the RMP in Ireland. Approximately 1,700 of these are located in County Wexford. The RMP is not an exhaustive list of all known archaeology in existence. Other sites are added on an on-going basis and may be listed on [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie).

The RHM was established under Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987. The Register may include both historic monuments and archaeological areas. A 'Historic Monument' includes a prehistoric monument and any monument associated with the commercial, cultural, economic, industrial, military, religious or social history of the place where it is situated or of the country. It also includes all monuments in existence before 1700 AD or such later date as the Minister may appoint by regulations. There are 57 historic monuments registered for County Wexford. The majority of these are also included on the Record of Monuments and Places.

There are currently 17 monuments in Wexford listed in the ownership/guardianship of the Minister and there are seven monuments/sites in Wexford listed on the Preservation Order list. Proposed work on these sites requires the prior written consent from the Minister before commencing that work.

**Table 13.4 National Monuments which are the subject of Preservations Orders**

| PO No.  | Monument       | Townland                       | Effective Date of Order | SMR No.       |
|---------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 7/1956  | Rectilinear    | Courtballyedmond               | 22/02/1956              | WX016-022001- |
| 3/1958  | Barrow         | Loftushall                     | 15/10/1958              | WX049-015---  |
| 1/1979  | Ringfort       | Muchrath                       | 11/01/1979              | WX048-019---  |
| 192     | Baginbun       | Ramstown                       | 18/07/1952              | WX050-015001- |
|         | Earthworks     |                                |                         | WX050-015002- |
| 2/1974  | Old Ross Motte | Springpark                     | 11/10/1974              | WX030-052001- |
| 79/1939 | Vinegar Hill   | Templeshannon                  | 17/01/1939              | WX020-032---  |
| 3/1968  | Fern's Castle  | Castleland<br>(Scarawalsh By.) | 28/11/1968              | WX0-003001-   |

**Table 13.5 National Monuments in State Ownership or Guardianship**

| No. | Monument               | Townland       | Status       | SMR No.       |
|-----|------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 516 | Ballyhack Castle       | Ballyhack      | Ownership    | WX044-009001- |
| 375 | Motte                  | Ballymoty More | Ownership    | WX020-041---  |
| 521 | Ferns Castle           | Castleland     | Guardianship | WX015-003001- |
| 665 | Clone Church           | Clone          | Ownership    | WX015-023001  |
| 644 | Coolhull Castle        | Coolhull       | Ownership    | WX046-028---  |
| 192 | Dunbrody Abbey (Cist.) | Dunbrody       | Guardianship | WX039-003001- |

| No. | Monument                                     | Townland         | Status       | SMR No.  |
|-----|--|------------------|--------------|--|
| 668 | Duncannon Fort                               | Duncannon        | Guardianship | WX044-015001-  |
| 457 | Tacumshane Windmill                          | Fence            | Guardianship | WX053-006---   |
| 133 | Ferns Abbey                                  | Ferns Demesne    | Ownership    | WX015-003004-<br>WX015-003017-<br>WX015-003018-<br>WX015-003028-   |
| 133 | Ferns (St. Peters Church)                    | Ferns Upper      | Ownership    | WX015-003005-  |
| 133 | Ferns Cathedral & Crosses                    | Ferns Upper      | Ownership    | WX015-003002-<br>WX015-003003-<br>WX015-003009-<br>WX015-003010-<br>WX015-003011-<br>WX015-003012-<br>WX015-003013-<br>WX015-003014- |
| 443 | St. Mary's Church                            | New Ross         | Guardianship | WX029-013002-  |
| 434 | Rathmackee Castle                            | Rathmackee Great | Guardianship | WX042-029001-  |
| 229 | Rathumney Castle                             | Rathumney        | Ownership    | WX040-028001-  |
| 429 | Slade Castle                                 | Slade            | Guardianship | WX054-008001-  |
| 392 | Windmill on Vinegar Hill                     | Templeshannon    | Guardianship | WX020-032---   |
| 506 | Tintern Abbey (Cist. Abbey, Church & bridge) | Tintern          | Ownership    | WX045-027001-<br>WX045-028002-<br>WX045-029001-  |
| 445 | St. Selsker's Priory Church (Aug.)           | Wexford Town     | Guardianship | WX037-032009-  |

In accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) notice of planning applications which may affect the archaeological heritage will be sent to the Minister. Any application for development which may affect a monument due to its location, size or nature should be accompanied by an archaeological assessment. The assessment must be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist and may include appropriate documentary research and archaeological excavation or examination of upstanding remains. In certain circumstances it may be considered appropriate to carry out archaeological monitoring. The cost of archaeological excavation and recording are part of the development costs and are borne by the developer.

New development should be designed to avoid damage to the archaeological heritage where possible. If a proposed development cannot be re-located or re-designed to avoid removal of a site or monument (or part thereof), the approach to be followed must be preservation in-situ or preservation by record through archaeological excavation.

### 13.3.2 Maritime and Underwater Archaeology

Maritime archaeology explores the way that people lived and worked by the coast, how they made use of its maritime resources and how they used the sea as a means of travel and movement. Ireland's maritime landscapes include ancient settlements along the coast and islands, piers, harbours, fish traps, middens on the intertidal zone and shipwrecks and submerged landscapes on the seabed. Threats to maritime archaeology include climate and sea-level changes, coastal erosion, fishing and shellfish farming, coastal and offshore development. Such activities can lead to the damage or destruction of underwater archaeological sites.

CHERISH is an EU funded project through the Ireland-Wales programme 2020 that investigates the impacts of climate change on coastally located and submerged cultural heritage sites. The Discovery Programme, in collaboration with GSI, through the CHERISH project, is producing measured datasets and creating archaeological records and monitoring strategies for coastally located and submerged cultural heritage sites being impacted by climate change within County Wexford.

A database of shipwrecks has been produced under the INFOMAR programme, which

is jointly managed by GSI's Marine and Coastal Unit in partnership with the Marine Institute. The National Monuments Service also maintains a Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database and Viewer which is available on their website. All shipwrecks over one hundred years old and underwater archaeological objects are protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.

An Underwater Heritage Order may be made by the Minister in respect of an area on, in or under the sea bed, or on land covered by water where there is thought to be a wreck or archaeological object and which, because of its historical, archaeological or artistic importance, ought to be protected.

### 13.3.3 Battlefields

The Council recognises the importance and value of the wider historic landscape and environment, including battlefields (See Table 13.6 and Map 2c). The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is currently undertaking an Irish Battlefields Project. The aim of the project is to assist in identifying the appropriate statutory protection that should be extended to battlefield sites. The Council will have regard to the Irish Battlefields Project as it becomes available.

**Table 13.6 Battlefield Sites**

| Record No.    | Townland                               | ITM Co-ordinates | Class       | Listed on RMP |
|---------------|--|------------------|-------------|---------------|
| WX005-021---- | MOTABOWER Park<br>(Scarawalsh By.)     | 704250,663590    | Battlefield | No            |
|               | BALLYELLIS (Scarawalsh By.)            |                  |             |               |
| WX006-086---- | BALLYGULLEN (Gorey By.<br>Kilnahue ED) | 710475,661575    | Battlefield | No            |
| WX009-017---- | BALLYPRECAS                            | 690980,656290    | Battlefield | No            |
|               | NEWTOWNBARRY                           |                  |             |               |
| WX010-033---- | CLONEE LOWER                           | 701730,653370    | Battlefield | No            |

| Record No.    | Townland                 | ITM Co-ordinates | Class       | Listed on RMP |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|
|               | CLONEE UPPER             |                  |             |               |
|               | KILTHOMAS                |                  |             |               |
| WX011-076---- | CAIN                     | 711980,654400    | Battlefield | No            |
|               | TOBERANIERIN LOWER       |                  |             |               |
|               | TOBERANIERAN UPPER       |                  |             |               |
| WX020-118---- | TEMPLESHANNON            | 698360,640170    | Battlefield | No            |
|               | CLONHASTEN               |                  |             |               |
|               | DRUMGOLD                 |                  |             |               |
| WX020-119---- | ENNISCORTHY              | 0,0              | Battlefield | No            |
| WX020-120---- | ENNISCORTHY              | 697155,639900    | Battlefield | No            |
| WX021-044---- | MONAWILLING UPPER        |                  | Battlefield | No            |
|               | OULART (Ballaghkeen By.) |                  |             |               |
|               | KYLE (Ballaghkeen By.)   |                  |             |               |
| WX029-013077  | MARSHMEADOWS             | 672210,627510    | Battlefield | No            |
|               | NEW ROSS                 |                  |             |               |
|               | PONDFIELDS               |                  |             |               |
|               | SOUTHKNOCK               |                  |             |               |
|               | REDHOUSE                 |                  |             |               |
|               | VEROSLAND                |                  |             |               |
| WX029-013077  | CHAMBERSLAND             | 672210,627510    | Battlefield | No            |
|               | BISHOPSLAND              |                  |             |               |
|               | IRISHTOWN                |                  |             |               |
| WX030-103---- | BALLYGALVERT             | 678800,620830    | Battlefield | No            |
|               | BALLINVEGGA              |                  |             |               |
| WX037-091     | BALLINDINAS              | 698630,620830    | Battlefield | No            |

| Record No.    | Townsland                                       | ITM Co-ordinates | Class       | Listed on RMP |
|---------------|---|------------------|-------------|---------------|
|               | COLESTOWN                                       |                  |             |               |
|               | COLLEGE   |                  |             |               |
|               | SHELMALIERE (Shelburne by.)                     |                  |             |               |
| WX037-092---- | TOWNPARKS (St Michael's of Feagh by.)           | 0,0              | Battlefield | No            |
|               | TOWNPARKS (St Peter's Parish) (Part of) WEXFORD |                  |             |               |
| WX041-068---- | HARESMEAD                                       | 68460,618520     | Battlefield | No            |
|               | HORETOWN SOUTH                                  |                  |             |               |
| WX050-015006  | RAMSTOWN  | 679940,603230    | Battlefield | No            |

## Archaeological Heritage Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective AH01

To conserve and protect archaeological sites, monuments (including their settings), underwater archaeology and objects including those listed or scheduled for inclusion on the Record of Monuments and Places and/or the Register of Historic Monuments or newly discovered sub-surface archaeological remains<sup>9</sup>.

### Objective AH02

To recognise the importance of monuments and sites and protect the character and integrity of these monuments and sites where appropriate. The Council will consult the National Monuments Service where a development is proposed that may impact on an archaeological monument and/or site.

<sup>9</sup> A complete list of Recorded Monuments and newly discovered subsurface remains is available to inspect in the Planning Department.

**Objective AH03**

To protect the heritage of groups of important archaeological sites and monuments, inclusive of their contextual setting and interpretation, in the operation of development management.

**Objective AH04**

To fully consider the protection of archaeological heritage when undertaking, approving or authorising development. In considering such protection the Council will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service and the principles set out in Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 1999).

**Objective AH05**

To require an archaeological assessment and/or investigation by qualified persons for development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have a significant effect upon archaeological heritage and to take appropriate measures to safeguard this archaeological heritage. In all such cases the Planning Authority shall consult with the National Monuments Service in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

**Objective AH06**

To promote a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and settings when dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features. Where preservation in-situ is not possible the Council will consider preservation by record in appropriate circumstances.

**Objective AH07**

To protect historic and archaeological landscapes, including battlefields, and promote access to such sites provided that this does not threaten the feature.



**Objective AH08**

To include archaeological landscapes, battlefields and historic landscapes as part of the updated Landscape Character Assessment of the County to be prepared following the publication of a National Landscape Character Assessment.

**Objective AH09**

To protect historic urban defences (both upstanding and buried) and associated features and safeguard them from inappropriate development in accordance with National Policy on Town Defences (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008).

**Objective AH10**

To identify appropriate archaeological sites in the county to which public access could be provided, and work to secure public access and the provision of signage and interpretation panels where appropriate in consultation with the landowner and the National Monument Service, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

**Objective AH11**

To retain existing street layouts, historic building lines and traditional plot widths which derive from medieval or earlier origin.

**Objective AH12**

To protect historical burial grounds within County Wexford and encourage their maintenance in accordance with best practice conservation principles.

**Objective AH13**

To have regard to the Historic Battlefield sites as listed in Table 13.6 (and those which are not listed thereon but that are, or become, known) and when assessing planning

applications in the vicinity of a Historic Battlefield ensure there is no harm to the physical character or setting of these sites. Where development is proposed within the identified battlefields, archaeological assessment and recording may be required.

## 13.4 Built Heritage

It is important to ensure that the architectural and historic character of the county and the quality of its landscape is conserved and protected. Our built heritage enriches our lives and provides a connection with, and a means of understanding our shared past.

There are two primary mechanisms to protect the county's architectural heritage as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and comprising principally of the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas:

- If a structure is considered to be of significant importance, the Council may designate it as a Protected Structure. A Protected Structure is one that is considered to be of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- If a group of buildings is considered special and is of significant importance, the Council may designate it as an Architectural Conservation Area.

In addition, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has compiled a survey of the architectural heritage of County Wexford. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. A key part of the work of the NIAH is to raise awareness of the richness of the architectural heritage and in this regard, the NIAH maintain a website, [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie).

The NIAH has also published a Garden Survey which showcases the historic designed landscapes, demesnes and gardens in the County. As well as being a source of information about history and society, the Council recognises the additional benefits of these landscapes for biodiversity, climate change and, where such places are open to the public, physical and mental well-being.

### 13.4.1 Protected Structures

A Protected Structure is a structure that the Council considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view.

In relation to a Protected Structure or a Proposed Protected Structure, the meaning of the term includes the structure, the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structure lying within the curtilage and its interior and all fixtures, fittings and features which form part of the interior or exterior of the structures.

A Record of Protected Structures (RPS) was prepared and is available in Volume 5 of the Plan. The RPS presently comprises in excess of 1,400 structures. In respect of the process of managing the RPS, during the period from 2013-2019, there were 81 structures added and seven structures deleted on the basis of on-going survey and monitoring.

The curtilage of a Protected Structure is often an essential part of the structure's special interest. In certain circumstances, the curtilage may comprise a clearly defined garden or grounds, which may have been laid out to complement the design or function. However, the curtilage of a structure can also be expansive and can be affected by development at some distance away but can also offer, where appropriate, development opportunity.

### 13.4.2 Carrying out Maintenance and Repair Works

The aim of good conservation is that there should be minimal intervention into the historic fabric of a structure. Conservation works should do as much as necessary, yet as little as possible to the building to ensure its future. A philosophy of 'minimal intervention maximum retention' and 'like for like' repairs or 'honest' repairs should be adopted where possible. Conjectural reconstruction of any part of the building should be avoided and only undertaken where there is good reason and the works can be based on reliable documentary or other evidence.

### 13.4.3 Requirement for Planning Permission for Changes to a Protected Structure

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and associated regulations provide for certain categories of development to be exempt from the requirement to obtain planning permission. The carrying out of such or other works to a protected structure, or a proposed protected structure, shall be exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of

- (a) The structure, or
  - (b) Any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- All other works will require planning permission.

### 13.4.4 Requirement for Supplementary Information

An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment will be required in all cases where it is considered the proposed development entails extensive or complex works with a potential to have an impact on the architectural heritage, and should include an appraisal of the wider context of the site or structure and the visual impact. The design, form, scale, height, proportions, siting and materials of new development should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure (or other buildings which the Council deems worthy of protection of heritage value such as vernacular). The traditional proportionate relationship in scale between buildings, returns, gardens and mews structures should be retained and the retention of landscaping and trees (in good condition) which contribute to the special interest of the structure shall also be required.

### 13.4.5 Change of Use and Extension of Protected Structures

The historic use of the structure is part of its special interest and in general the best use for a building will be that for which it was built. However, the change of use will be the best way to secure the long-term conservation of a structure.

Sympathetic and suitable reuse and/or development of structures, including

appropriately designed additions to Protected Structures (or other buildings which the Council deems worthy of protection of heritage value such as vernacular), will be supported where they will ensure the long-term survival of the building.

It is often necessary to permit new extensions to a Protected Structure (or other buildings which the Council deems worthy of protection of heritage value such as vernacular) so as to adapt it to modern living or to make it economically viable.

Proposals for new structures or extensions need careful consideration and the new development should seek to avoid adverse effects on the character of the structure.

A high quality sympathetic design approach will be promoted when larger scale extensions are proposed, or for new buildings in the curtilage of Protected Structures (or other buildings which the Council deems worthy of protection of heritage value such as vernacular). Contemporary design approaches may include traditional, vernacular or modern styles.

Historic buildings in town centres present an opportunity to provide accommodation in upper floors, for instance above ground floor shops and offices. Mixed uses also provide variety and vibrancy to an area whilst preventing a building from falling into dereliction.

In finding the optimum viable use for protected structures (or other buildings which the Council deems worthy of protection of heritage value such as vernacular), other land-use policies and site development standards may be relaxed to achieve long-term conservation. In some circumstances, short-term uses may provide a way to help keep a building weather-tight and in use pending long-term solutions.

#### **13.4.6 Protection of Elements of Architectural Heritage Merit**

Many non-structural features, such as historic gardens, stone walls, ditches and street furniture make a positive contribution to our built heritage. Non-structural features can make an important contribution to the character of an area and help to create a distinctive sense of place. Carelessness and a lack of awareness can result in the loss of these elements. Such elements should be maintained and retained when local improvement works are carried out.

### 13.4.7 Retrofitting Sustainability Measures

Owners of properties should consider how environmental performance can be improved in all works which involve change of use, conversion, extensions or other refurbishment, including works to heritage assets in an effort to combat the effects of climate change and contribute towards decarbonisation.

Improving environmental performance should include measures to reduce carbon emissions, improve resource use efficiency, minimise pollution and waste (to include rainwater management), improve digital connectivity and encourage micro energy generation where possible.

For historic structures, simple measures such as draught proofing, energy and water efficient appliances, roof insulation and repair and maintenance works can bring substantial improvements and have minimal other impacts, both visually and on historic fabric and traditional construction. Such minor interventions should be considered first as these are usually non-contentious, may not require planning permission and can provide significant benefits at low cost. Further recommendations and advice can be obtained from Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings Guide from the Advice Series produced by DEHLG.

### 13.4.8 Vernacular Buildings

County Wexford has a wealth of vernacular buildings, including thatched cottages, which are characteristic of our local communities and contribute to their authenticity, and to their cultural, traditional, architectural, archaeological, historical and social interest and diversity. Vernacular buildings, through their siting, orientation and materials, display an intimate connection with their landscape. The Council will facilitate appropriate, high-quality design solutions for adaptations of vernacular buildings that carefully consider their vernacular qualities. Where it is proposed to extend a vernacular house, the design, scale, footprint and materials should be sympathetic to the existing building and its setting.

#### **Built Heritage Objectives**

It is the objective of the Council:

**Objective BH01**

To protect the architectural heritage of County Wexford and to include structures considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the Record of Protected Structures.

**Objective BH02**

To support targeted investment in the built heritage of our region including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund to assist owners to maintain our built heritage assets.

**Objective BH03**

To promote the development of heritage-led regeneration and engage in and promote initiatives to revitalise the historic cores of our towns and villages together with local communities, heritage property owners and other stakeholders.

**Objective BH04**

To consider, in the preparation of future local area plans, a Town first approach to the revitalisation of historic urban centres, which focuses on the repair and upgrade of existing historic buildings and their adaptation to new uses with regard to their architectural character and significance.

**Objective BH05**

To protect our Architectural Heritage in the form of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and identify important groups of buildings/localities suitable for designation as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Wexford County Council will also endeavour to undertake monitoring and review of the RPS and ACAs which may result in recommendations for additions or deletions and enlist measures to prevent dereliction and to support re-use of built heritage.

**Objective BH06**

To protect the curtilage of Protected Structures or proposed Protected Structures from any works which would cause loss of, or damage to, the special character of the structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of heritage value within the curtilage or attendant grounds of the structure.

**Objective BH07**

To ensure development within the curtilage of a Protected Structure is compatible with its character. This does not preclude putting forward innovative contemporary designs that respect the context of the Protected Structure.

**Objective BH08**

To promote the retention of any original or early building fabric including for example timber sash windows, stonework, brickwork, joinery, ironmongery, traditional mortars, render and decorative or weather finishes and slate and vernacular architectural details (whether relating to a Protected Structure or not). Likewise, the Council will encourage the re-instatement of historically correct traditional features and retention of original ridge heights as appropriate.

**Objective BH09**

To protect, maintain and enhance the established character and setting of vernacular buildings which are worthy of protection or have architectural heritage value, farmyards and settlements where they make a positive contribution to the built heritage and encourage the re-use and sensitive refurbishment of vernacular buildings using appropriate design and materials and having regard to best practice conservation guidelines.

**Objective BH10**

To ensure that applications in relation to Protected Structures include an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment report where it is considered the proposed development entails extensive or complex works with a potential to have an impact



on the architectural heritage. This report should assess the implications of the development on the character of the structure and the area in which it is located. This should be prepared by a suitably qualified person competent to make a qualitative assessment of the potential impact of works on the character and special interest of the Protected Structure and in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and any subsequent guidelines.

#### **Objective BH11**

To ensure that all applications for Protected Structures are assessed taking into consideration the advice contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and any subsequent guidelines.

#### **Objective BH12**

To encourage the repair and retention of traditional timber, rendered and/or tiled shop fronts and pub fronts, including those which may not be Protected Structures. There will be a general presumption against the replacement of original shopfronts with emphasis on retention and reinstatement of traditional proportions and details.

#### **Objective BH13**

To facilitate the retention of older buildings, the Planning Authority will give consideration to the relaxation of car parking and other development management requirements in appropriate circumstances.

#### **Objective BH14**

To ensure that elements of the architectural heritage of the county, such as historic gardens and historic designed landscapes, stone or brick walls, ditches and street furniture that make a positive contribution to the built heritage, are retained.

#### **Objective BH15**

To encourage improvements to energy efficiency in traditional buildings while maintaining the architectural character and significance in line with the Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Arts, Heritage and

the Gaeltacht, 2011) and the Advice Series Guide on Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and any future guidelines and advice.

#### Objective BH16

To protect and manage trees in the curtilage of a Protected Structure or in close vicinity that contribute to its special character and setting.

#### Objective BH17

To support economic development of large country houses in their role as tourist attractions and other commercial uses to ensure their continued survival.

#### Objective BH18

In the event of catastrophic accidental fire damage the rebuilding of a Protected Structure will not be required. Support and advice will be provided in assisting the repair of damaged Protected Structures to achieve a balance between new works and the remaining original features.

### 13.4.9 Architectural Conservation Areas

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that, where warranted, development plans include objectives to preserve the character of places, areas, groups of structures or urban areas that are of:

- a) Special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social or technical interest or value
- b) Contribute to the appreciation of Protected Structures.

Section 81(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), describes an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as “a place, area, group of structures or townscape...of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or, contributes to the appreciation of protected structures”.

ACA legislation may be used to protect the following:

- Groups of structures of distinctiveness or visual richness or historical importance;
- The setting and exterior appearance of structures that are of special interest, but the interiors of which do not merit protection;
- The setting of a Protected Structure where this is more extensive than its curtilage;
- Designed landscapes where these contain groups of structures as in, for example urban parks, the former demesnes of country houses and groupings of archaeological and industrial remains;
- Groups of structures which form dispersed but unified entities but which are not within the attendant ground of a single dominant protected structure<sup>10</sup>

### 13.4.10 Requirement for Planning Permission in an ACA

Once designated, protection is afforded to ACAs by restricting development that can be undertaken without planning permission and through the planning application process. The protection afforded by the ACA designation includes the exterior of structures – elevations, roof slopes, chimneys and curtilage buildings. In line with the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) the carrying out of any works to the exterior of a structure will be exempted development only if the works would not materially affect the character of the area. This is in addition to the requirement under Section 4 (1) (h) of the Act that for works to be exempted, they must be consistent with the appearance of the structure itself and neighbouring structures. ACA designation does not give protection to the interior of a building. This protection includes the public domain and features therein.

In accordance with Section 82 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), 'the carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure located in an architectural conservation area shall be exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of the area'. Thus some works which would be exempt in an ordinary structure may require planning permission when carried out to a building or site in an ACA. Works of repair carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and with the Advice Series of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht do not require planning permission; however to ensure compliance it is recommended to seek the opinion of the Planning Authority.

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<sup>10</sup> Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG 2011).

Example of works that might alter the character of the ACA and require planning permission include:

- Changing the roof profile
- Re-roofing with any material other than a Welsh slate.
- Changing the finish of external walls
- Removing or altering chimneys
- Erecting an extension
- Changing the boundary treatment
- Erecting or altering shop-fronts and signage
- Changing the design, materials and finish of windows, doors and cills
- Adding satellites, antennae, roof lights or dormers.

This is not a complete list and is included for guidance purpose only. It is recommended that advice is sought in advance on whether or not planning permission is required.

### 13.4.11 Demolition in an ACA

Where it is proposed to demolish a structure that contributes to the character of an ACA or to demolish behind a retained facade, the onus shall be on the applicant to make the case for demolition, whereby consideration of the effect both on the character of the area and on any adjoining protected structure. Where it is proposed to demolish a building in an ACA, the proposed replacement should not be of lesser quality or interest than the existing one and should not adversely affect the character of the area. In assessing applications for demolition within an ACA the Planning Authority will have regard to the criteria in Section 3.10 of the guidelines.<sup>11</sup>

### 13.4.12 List of ACAs in the County

At present there are ACAs in Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey, New Ross and Bunclody. This section contains general objectives relating to the ACAs and further information and advice is contained in Volume 6 Architectural Conservation Areas.

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<sup>11</sup> Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG 2011).

## Wexford Town

- ACA1, No. 1-5
- ACA2, No. 1-4
- ACA3, Avenue de Flandres

## Enniscorthy Town

- ACA1 – Enniscorthy Town Historic Core
- ACA2 – Templeshannon
- ACA3 – Vinegar Hill and Surrounding Environs

## New Ross Town

- ACA1 – North Street/John Street
- ACA2 – South Street
- ACA3 – Lower South Street
- ACA4 – Quay Street/Mary Street

## Gorey Town

- Main Street

## Bunclody Town

- The Mall, Bunclody

## Architectural Conservation Area Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ACA01

To protect and enhance the character of the designated Architectural Conservation Areas in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross, Gorey and Bunclody, including the views and prospects to and from these areas.

**Objective ACA02**

To review current Architectural Conservation Areas during the preparation of subsequent local area plans, in conjunction with owners and occupiers and interest groups, with a view to preparing a Management Scheme and guidance on the treatment of structures and the public realm.

**Objective ACA03**

To ensure that all proposed developments are carried out to the highest architectural and urban design standards within the Architectural Conservation Areas.

**Objective ACA04**

To protect existing buildings, structures, groups of structures, burial grounds, sites, landscapes and features such as trees, street furniture and paving, (including sub-surface areas) which are considered to be intrinsic elements of the special character of the Architectural Conservation Area, from demolition or removal and non-sympathetic alterations.

**Objective ACA05**

To ensure that all new advertising hoardings, signage, awnings, canopies, flagpoles, banners, satellite dishes, masts, pylons, lighting, CCTV cameras and car parking provision within an Architectural Conservation Area are designed, constructed and located in a manner that is complementary to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.

**Objective ACA06**

To preserve historic street patterns and encourage pedestrianisation on key streets.

**Objective ACA07**

To promote public awareness of the character and special interest of the Architectural Conservation Areas and to provide assistance and guidance in preserving these.

### Objective ACA08

To ensure that applications in relation to a proposed development within an Architectural Conservation Area that entail extensive or complex works with a potential to have an impact on the character of the architectural heritage and/or landscape include a Character and Landscape Impact Assessment report and/or Heritage Impact Assessment. This report(s) should assess the implications of the development on the character of the special area in which it is located. This should be prepared by a suitably qualified person competent to make a qualitative assessment of the potential impact of works on the character and special interest of the Architectural Conservation Area and in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection- Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and any subsequent guidelines.

#### 13.4.13 Graveyards

The importance of historic burial grounds and graveyards as a primary physical source for the history of the county is significant. They could, through careful management, provide additional passive amenity spaces as well as contributing to the heritage tourism potential of County Wexford.

All graveyards and burial grounds dating from pre-1700 A.D. are given statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1930-2004. A full list of archaeological sites and monuments including graveyards recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland can be downloaded from the National Monuments Service website at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie).

There is a requirement under the National Monuments Act, that notification be submitted to the National Monuments Service two months prior to commencement of any works on a graveyard listed on the Record of Monuments and Places.

The Council recognises the importance of graveyards to local communities and the significant role played by communities in maintaining burial grounds. The Council will continue to work in partnership with communities in providing training and funding and in seeking additional funding opportunities to safeguard the county's burial grounds.

Further guidance and information in relation to maintenance is included in the booklet *Guidance for the Care, Conservation & Recording of Historic Graveyards* prepared by The Heritage Council (2011).

## Graveyard Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective G01

To preserve and enhance the county's graveyards through improved management, access and community stewardship, and to promote the unique character of each of the burial grounds.

### Objective G02

To provide education and training on the appropriate care and maintenance of our graveyards and burial grounds (including the legislative procedures involved).

### Objective G03

To promote the use of Graveyard Plans as a means of identifying the significance of each graveyard and of co-ordinating maintenance and conservation works and the required permissions, as well as any promotional activities desired.

### Objective G04

To protect the burial grounds identified in the Record of Monuments and Places in co-operation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

## 13.4.14 Cultural Heritage

Wexford has a rich, diverse and distinctive cultural identity with a strong and internationally acclaimed creative and artistic base. The arts and culture of Wexford



are a proud expression of our identity and play an important role in our social and economic well-being. Many people visit the county's towns, monuments, festivals and historical sites each year to enjoy cultural experiences. Wexford's long running internationally acclaimed Opera Festival has added not only to Wexford's reputation but Ireland's reputation for culture and creativity.

The county also contains many important historic landscapes and places such as Vinegar Hill, Carrigbyrne and Coolgreany, which together with prehistoric monuments, are important in defining our cultural identity.

There has been significant investment in our cultural heritage in recent years with substantial investment in libraries, museums and theatre and centres for the arts. The Council has played an important role in providing and facilitating this development and in supporting the arts community.

The Plan supports the sustainable development of our cultural heritage and will encourage the development of cultural land uses and activities in order to support the arts and increase local awareness of our cultural heritage and identity. Further information on cultural heritage is included in Chapter 15 Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Strategy.

## Cultural Heritage Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CH01

To support the sustainable development and promotion of our cultural heritage and the associated infrastructure subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective CH02

To safeguard the cultural heritage of the county and facilitate the expansion and development of appropriate facilities suitably located adjacent to points of interest subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

**Objective CH03**

To help to ensure that our cultural heritage and associated facilities are accessible and inclusive subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

**Objective CH04**

To co-operate with the Heritage Council, Arts Council, Fáilte Ireland and other relevant bodies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service to promote and develop the arts, cultural and heritage attractions throughout the County.

**Objective CH05**

To support the delivery of the Creative Ireland programme that will encourage cultural activity and celebration of our heritage as important factors in the wellbeing of the County's communities and core to the practice of place-making.