



VOL **1**

Written Statement

Wexford County

# Development Plan

2022 - 2028

The Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028  
was made by the Members of Wexford County Council  
on Monday, 13th June 2022.

# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>17</b>
1.1	Introduction	18
1.2	What is the County Development Plan?	18
1.3	Legislative Context	18
1.4	Format of the Plan	25
1.5	Monitoring and Implementation	27
1.6	Underlying Themes	28
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Climate Action</b>	<b>31</b>
2.1	Introduction	32
2.2	Policy Context	33
2.3	Climate Change in County Wexford	40
2.4	Climate Action Spatial Planning Strategy	43
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Core Strategy</b>	<b>51</b>
3.1	Core Strategy Vision - County Wexford 2028	52
3.2	Compliance with the Planning and Development Act 2000	52
3.3	Compliance with the NPF and the RSES	53
3.4	Core Strategy Guiding Principles	57
3.5	Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy	62
3.6	Core Strategy Development Approach	65
3.7	Allocation of Population to the Settlement Hierarchy	87
3.8	Housing Requirements	92
3.9	Housing in Level 7 Open Countryside	95
3.10	Retail	96
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Sustainable Housing</b>	<b>113</b>
4.1	Introduction	114
4.2	Climate Action and Housing	114

4.3	Policy Context	115
4.4	Sustainable Housing Strategy	118
4.5	Housing Requirements	121
4.6	Locations for Future Housing	124
4.7	Future Housing Delivery	126
4.8	Specific Housing Needs	145
4.9	Housing in the Open Countryside	150

## **Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages**

**171**

5.1	Introduction	172
5.2	Climate Change in our Towns and Villages	173
5.3	Policy Context	173
5.4	Goal	175
5.5	Strategy	175
5.6	The Design Process	178
5.7	Design Quality	179
5.8	Place Based Design - Context	183
5.9	Connected Places and Design of Streets	185
5.10	Compact Growth and Regeneration	195
5.11	Vibrant, Inclusive, Resilient and Adaptable	213

## **Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy**

**215**

6.1	Introduction	216
6.2	The Role of the Council in Economic Development	216
6.3	Climate Action and Economic Development	217
6.4	Policy Context	218
6.5	Economic Profile of County Wexford	223
6.6	Economic Development Strategy	229
6.7	Specific Locations for Economic Development	246

## **Chapter 7 Tourism Development**

**279**

7.1	Introduction	280
-----	--------------	-----

7.2	Climate Action and Tourism	280
7.3	Policy Context	281
7.4	Tourism Product	285
7.5	Tourism Development Spatial Strategy	287
7.6	Locations for Tourism	292
7.7	Specific Tourism Developments	299

## Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy

319

8.1	Introduction	320
8.2	Climate Change and Transportation	321
8.3	Policy Context	322
8.4	Sustainable Transport Strategy	324
8.5	Walking and Cycling	337
8.6	Public Transport	341
8.7	Roads	347
8.8	Sightlines which Require Works	367
8.9	Travel Plans	368
8.10	Traffic and Transport Assessments, Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Impact Assessments	369
8.11	Ports	371
8.12	Air Travel	373

## Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy

375

9.1	Introduction	376
9.2	Climate Action and Infrastructure Planning	376
9.3	Policy Context	377
9.4	Infrastructure Strategy	378
9.5	Water Supply	380
9.6	Wastewater	389
9.7	Waste Management Infrastructure	400
9.8	Historic Landfills	411
9.9	Graveyards and Crematoria	411

9.10	Telecommunications and Information and Communications Technology Strategy	413
9.11	Flood Risk and Surface Water Management	419
9.12	Power Transmission	434
9.13	Gas Network	435

## **Chapter 10 Environmental Management**

**437**

10.1	Introduction	438
10.2	Climate Action and the Environment	438
10.3	Policy Context	439
10.4	Environmental Management Strategy	440
10.5	Water Quality	443
10.6	Air Quality	454
10.7	Noise	456
10.8	External Lighting	461
10.9	Major Accidents Directive	463

## **Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure**

**467**

11.1	Introduction	468
11.2	Climate Change and Landscape	468
11.3	Policy Context	469
11.4	Goal	470
11.5	Strategy	470
11.6	Landscape Character Assessment	470
11.7	Other Landscape Features	473
11.8	Landscape Sensitivity	474
11.9	Scenic Routes and Protected Views	475
11.10	Assessing Visual Impacts	476
11.12	Green Infrastructure	481

## **Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management & Marine Spatial Planning**

**489**

12.1	Introduction	490
------	--------------	-----

12.2	Climate Action in Coastal Areas	491
12.3	Marine Spatial Planning	492
12.4	Coastal Zone Management Spatial Strategy	496
12.5	Managing the Coastal Zone and Maritime Area	503
12.6	Specific Land Use/Land Side Developments in the Coastal Zone	517
12.7	Development within Settlements in the Coastal Zone	531
12.8	Development outside of Existing Settlements in the Coastal Zone	532

## **Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation**

**535**

13.1	Introduction	536
13.2	Natural Heritage	540
13.3	Archaeological Heritage	558
13.4	Built Heritage	568

## **Chapter 14 Recreation and Open Space Strategy**

**585**

14.1	Introduction	586
14.2	Climate Action and Recreation	586
14.3	Policy Context	587
14.4	Recreation and Open Space Strategy	590
14.5	Open Space	592
14.6	Play Facilities	604
14.7	Sports and Leisure Facilities	607
14.8	Walking and Cycling Routes	610
14.9	Public Rights of Way	615
14.10	Natural Amenities	617

## **Chapter 15 Sustainable Communities & Social Infrastructure Strategy**

**619**

15.1	Introduction	620
15.2	Climate Action and Sustainable Communities	620
15.3	Policy Context	621
15.4	Tacking deprivation in County Wexford	623
15.5	Strategy	624
15.6	Social Inclusion	626
15.7	Community Developments	632

## List of Maps

Map 1	Rural Area Types
Map 2a	Heritage Areas
Map 2b	County Geological Sites
Map 2c	Battlefield Sites
Map 3	Coastal Zone

## List of Figures

Figure 1-1	UN Sustainable Development Goals
Figure 3-1	Core Strategy Map
Figure 3-2	Settlements
Figure 5-1	Components of Successful Places
Figure 5-2	Criteria for Successful Place-making
Figure 5-3	Example of a Proposed Route Structure
Figure 5-4	Characteristics of place-based street design
Figure 5-5	Privacy Strip
Figure 5-6	Three Activity Zones of the Footpath
Figure 5-7	Measures that indicate active and animated street interfaces
Figure 5-8	Block Types
Figure 5-9	Block Types
Figure 6-1	Regional Economic Principles
Figure 6-2	Regional Economic Drivers
Figure 6-3	Industry of Employment
Figure 6-4	Occupations
Figure 6-5	Value of Agriculture to the County
Figure 6-6	Large Employers in County Wexford



Figure 6-7	Economic Development Strategy
Figure 6-8	Pillars for Growth
Figure 8-1	Strategic Transportation Network
Figure 8-2	N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road Scheme Option
Figure 8-3	N30 Clonroche By-pass Route Corridor National Road Improvements
Figure 8-4	Slaney Meats
Figure 9-1	Sources of Water Supply in County Wexford, 2016
Figure 9-2	Types of Wastewater Disposal in County Wexford, 2016
Figure 9-3	Source Pathway Receptor Model
Figure 10-1	WFD Water Quality Status of the River and Transitional Waterbodies in County Wexford
Figure 10-2	Waterbodies identified under the Blue Dot Catchment Programme
Figure 11-1	Indicative Layout of a Riparian Zone

## List of Tables

Table 1-1	Spatial Planning Framework for Settlements >1,500 persons
Table 2-1	Key Climate Action Regional Planning Objectives
Table 2-2	Thematic Areas in the Wexford County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy
Table 3-1	Integration of the NPF and RSES into the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028
Table 3-2	County Wexford Settlement Hierarchy
Table 3-3	Allocation of Population to the Settlement Hierarchy
Table 3-4	Core Strategy Population Allocations, Housing Units and Housing Land 2021-2027
Table 3-5	County Wexford Retail Settlement Hierarchy
Table 4-1	Summary of Social (and Affordable) Housing Requirements 2021-2027
Table 4-2	Overview of Mortgage Qualification and Private Rental Affordability for Additional Anticipated Households in County Wexford

Table 4-3	Forecasts for Household Size of the Additional Anticipated Households in County Wexford 2021-2027
Table 4-4	Forecasts for Dwelling Type of Additional Anticipated Households in County Wexford 2021-2027
Table 4-5	Indicative Density and Scale
Table 4-6	Criteria for One-Off Rural Housing
Table 4-7	Refurbishment and Replacement of Dwelling Houses
Table 4-8	Refurbishment and Conservation of Non-Residential Structures to Residential Use
Table 5-1	Priority Locations for Active Land Management and Regeneration
Table 5-2	Timeline for Key Active Land Management Proposals
Table 5-3	Land Use Zonings for the purpose of the Vacant Site Levy
Table 6-1	Labour Force in County Wexford
Table 8-1	Travel to Work – County Aggregate (%)
Table 8-2	Travel to Work – Wexford Town (%)
Table 8-3	Travel to Work – Gorey Town (%)
Table 8-4	Travel to Work – Enniscorthy Town (%)
Table 8-5	Travel to Work – New Ross Town (%)
Table 8-6	Travel to School – County Aggregate (%)
Table 8-7	Travel to School – Wexford Town (%)
Table 8-8	Travel to School – Gorey Town (%)
Table 8-9	Travel to School – Enniscorthy Town (%)
Table 8-10	Travel to School – New Ross Town (%)
Table 8-11	Regional Roads
Table 9-1	Irish Water Public Water Supplies and Capacities
Table 9-2	Proposed Irish Water Public Water Projects 2020-2024
Table 9-3	Overview of Public Wastewater Infrastructure in Level 1- Level 4 Settlements
Table 9-4	EPA Urban Wastewater Areas of Concern

Table 9-5	Irish Water Investment Plan Public Wastewater Projects 2020-2024
Table 9-6	Candidate Settlements for the New Home in Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme
Table 9-7	Types of Waste Management Facilities
Table 10-1	Priority Areas for Action in County Wexford
Table 10-2	Potential Quiet Areas in County Wexford
Table 10-3	SEVESO Sites in County Wexford
Table 11-1	Sensitivity Rating
Table 12-1	Draft National Marine Planning Framework into the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028
Table 12-2	Designated Bathing Areas, Blue Flag and Green Coast Beaches 2020
Table 13-1	Natura 2000 sites in County Wexford and within 15km of the Plan Boundary
Table 13-2	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
Table 13-3	Wexford County Geological Sites and recommended Geological Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)
Table 13-4	National Monuments which are the subject of Preservation Orders
Table 13-5	National Monuments in State Ownership or Guardianship
Table 13-6	Battlefield Sites
Table 14-1	Hierarchy of Public Open Spaces
Table 14-2	Minimum Floor Areas for Communal Amenity Space
Table 14-3	Wexford County Council Hierarchy of Playgrounds

## Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ABP	An Bord Pleanála
ABTA	Area Based Transport Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
AFA	Area for Further Assessment

AHB	Approved Housing Body
BAT	Best Available Technology
BER	Building Energy Rating
BFF	Blackstairs Farming Future
BTR	Build to Rent
CARO	Climate Action Regional Office
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
C&D	Construction and Demolition Waste
CEN	European Committee for Standardisation
CFRAMS	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study
CGS	County Geological Site
CIP	Capital Investment Programme
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CSO	Central Statistics Office
cSAC	Candidate Special Area of Conservation
DAC	Disability Access Certificate
DAHG	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DAHGI	Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands
DBEI	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
DEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
DMURS	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets
DTTS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
DZ	Decarbonisation Zone
EDU	Economic Development Unit
EEC	Eastern Economic Corridor
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report

EIP	European Innovation Programme
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
ETB	Education Training Board
EV	Electric Vehicle
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GLAS	Green Low-Carbon Agri-environment Scheme
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HLG	High Level Goal
HNDA	Housing Need Demand Assessment
HSA	Health and Safety Authority
HST	Housing Supply Targets Guidelines
IAE	Ireland's Ancient East
ICA	The Irish Countrywomen's Association
IT	Information Technology
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
ICPSS	Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
IFI	Inland Fisheries Ireland
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
LAP	Local Area Plan
LAWPRO	Local Authority Waters Programme
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment

LCDC	Local Community and Development Committee
LCU	Landscape Character Unit
LDA	Land Development Agency
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Economic Office
LFP	Labour Force Participation
LIHAF	Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund
LoLo	Lift-on, Lift off
LTP	Local Transport Plan
LVIA	Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
MASP	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
MD	Municipal District
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MRF	Materials Recovery Facility
MUGA	Multi-User Games Area
MW	Megawatt
NAF	National Adaptation Framework
NBP	National Broadband Plan
NBP	National Biodiversity Plan
NBS	Nature-based Solutions
NDP	National Development Plan
NEEAP	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NHWMP	National Hazardous Waste Management Plan
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NMP	National Mitigation Plan
NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
NPAP	National Physical Action Plan
NPF	National Planning Framework

NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NRA	National Roads Authority
NPO	National Policy Objective
NSO	National Strategic Outcome
NTA	National Transport Authority
NWSMP	National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan
NZEB	Nearly Zero Energy Buildings
NZEBRA	Nearly Zero Energy Buildings Resource Agency
OPW	Office of Public Works
pNHA	Proposed Natural Heritage Area
PPN	Public Participation Network
RAS	Rental Accommodation Scheme
REP	Regional Enterprise Plan
RBD	River Basin Districts
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RoRo	Roll-on, Roll-off
RHM	Register of Historic Monuments
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RPO	Regional Policy Objective
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
RPZ	Rent Pressure Zone
RRDF	Rural Regeneration Development Fund
RSA	Road Safety Authority
RSA	Road Safety Audits
RSIA	Road Safety Impact Assessment
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SETU	South East Technological University
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHD	Strategic Housing Development
SIA	Social Infrastructure Assessment
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
SPO	Special Projects Office
SPPR	Specific Planning Policy Requirement
SRWMP	Southern Regional Waste Management Plan
SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
Ten-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
TTA	Traffic and Transport Assessment
URDF	Urban Regeneration Development Fund
UN	United Nations
WCC	Wexford County Council
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WRZ	Water Resource Zone
WSSP	Water Service Strategic Plan
WTP	Water Treatment Plant
WWETB	Waterford and Wexford Education Training Board
WWT	Wexford Walking Trails
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant
ZTV	Zones of Theoretical Visibility
3CEA	3 Counties Energy Agency



CHAPTER 1

# Introduction



## 1.1 Introduction

The Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Wexford for the plan period and beyond. The Plan relates to the whole functional area of Wexford County Council including the areas previously under the jurisdiction of Wexford Borough Council, New Ross Town and Enniscorthy Town<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.2 What is the County Development Plan?

The County Development Plan, hereafter referred to as the Plan, sets out the strategic spatial planning framework to guide the development of the county for the six year period of the plan and beyond. The Plan provides for the physical, economic and social development of the county and sets out the guiding strategies, objectives and standards for this development.

The Plan builds on the strategies and objectives of the previous County Development Plan 2013-2019 and reflects the current challenges and the opportunities facing the county. The Plan seeks to reconcile the need to protect the environment with the development required to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of County Wexford.

The review process and preparation of the Plan has had regard to key recent development trends and national, regional and local policy developments, in particular, the National Planning Framework, Rebuilding Ireland, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, in particular, the Council's enhanced role in the promotion of economic and community development.

## 1.3 Legislative Context

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant EU Directives, national legislation and guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 provided for the abolition of Wexford Borough Council, Enniscorthy Town Council and New Ross Town Council, all of which would have previously had their own development plans.

### 1.3.1 Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) which sets out the statutory requirements and content of a development plan. In accordance with the Act, the Plan is strategic in nature for the purposes of developing objectives to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county and has taken account of the statutory obligations of the Council and the relevant policies or objectives of the Government or Ministers of the Government.

The Plan includes a written statement and plans indicating the development objectives for the plan area. It includes a Core Strategy which shows that the objectives in the Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES).

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the associated SEA Statement in Volume 12 demonstrates that the objectives of the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with the conservation of the environment as required by Section 10(1D) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Act also requires the Planning Authority to append a statement to the Plan which demonstrates how the policies and objectives of Section 28 Guidelines have been implemented, or not as the case may be, in preparing the Plan. This statement is contained in Volume 4.

Section 10(2) of the Act lists the mandatory objectives which have, where relevant, been incorporated in the Plan. These include:

- Zoning of land for particular purposes;
- Provision, or facilitation of the provision, of infrastructure including transport, energy and communication facilities, water supplies, wastewater services, waste recovery and disposal facilities and any ancillary facilities or services;
- Conservation and protection of the environment including in particular the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites;

- Management of features of the landscape such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network;
- Promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for bodies of surface waters and groundwater;
- Integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population;
- Preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest
- Protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest,
- Preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas;
- Development and renewal of areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration in order to prevent adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land, urban blight or decay, anti-social behaviour or a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential use or other uses;
- Provision of accommodation for travellers and the use of particular areas for that purpose;
- Preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
- Control of establishments under the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive;
- Provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community, including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities;
- Protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht where there is a Gaeltacht in the area of the Plan;
- Promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to reduce energy demand, reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change in particular having regard to the location, layout and design of new development;

- Preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility; and
- Provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes.

The First Schedule of the Act also sets out a list of discretionary objectives which have, where appropriate, been incorporated into the Plan.

Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires either the preparation of a local area plan or the indication of objectives in a development plan for towns with a population greater than 1,500 persons. Based on Census 2016, there are nine such settlements in the county. Table 1 -1 sets out the Planning Authority's spatial planning framework for each settlement:

**Table 1-1 Spatial Planning Framework for Settlements >1,500 persons**

Settlement	Population Census 2016	Local Area Plan (LAP) or Specific Objectives in the Plan
Wexford Town	20,188	LAP to be prepared
Enniscorthy Town	11,381	LAP to be prepared
Gorey Town	9,822	LAP 2017-2023
New Ross Town	8,040	LAP to be prepared
Bunclody Town <sup>2</sup>	1,984	Specific objectives and land use zoning are contained in Volume 3 of the Plan.
Courtown and Riverchapel	3,591	LAP 2015-2021 (as extended)
Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane <sup>3</sup>	1,847	Specific objectives and land use zoning are contained in Volume 3 of the Plan.
Castlebridge	1,840	Specific objectives contained in Volume 3 of the Plan.
Rosslare Strand	1,620	Specific objectives contained in Volume 3 of the Plan.

<sup>2</sup> This includes Carrickduff which is in the jurisdiction of Carlow County Council.

<sup>3</sup> The population of Ballygeary (Rosslare Harbour) was 1,200 and the population of Kilrane was 647 giving a combined total of 1,847.

### 1.3.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The purpose of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable developments.

The SEA of the Plan has been carried out in accordance with the SEA Directive and transposing national regulations. An SEA Environmental Report was prepared in conjunction with the Plan and is contained in Volume 12. The report describes the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan and outlines the measures to maximise positive effects and reduce or offset potential adverse effects. The report also identifies the methods for monitoring environmental effects over the lifetime of the Plan.

### 1.3.3 Appropriate Assessment

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) place an obligation on competent authorities to consider the effects of every plan and project on European sites (Natura 2000 network of sites) through a process known as Appropriate Assessment (AA). A Natura Impact Report was prepared and it was determined that the Plan, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.

The Council will ensure, during the period of the Plan, that all plans and projects in the plan area which are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of their implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

## Environmental Strategic Objectives

### Objective EM01

To ensure that proposed projects/developments comply with the requirements of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, and as transposed into Irish law under national legislation, including in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). In accordance with Article 3 of Directive 2014/52/EU, where EIA is required the environmental impact assessments presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, the direct, indirect and cumulative significant effects of a project on the following factors: population and human health; biodiversity (with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC); land, soil, water, air and climate, material assets, cultural heritage, and the landscape, and the interaction between the foregoing factors.

### Objective EM02

To ensure that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site, or where such a development proposal is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), the planning authority will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will the planning authority agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions. A development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.

### Objective EM03

To ensure that proposed plans and programmes comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, as transposed into Irish law under national legislation.

### Objective EM04

To ensure that plans, including land use plans, will only be adopted, if they either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site, or where such a plan is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination). Wexford County Council will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will Wexford County Council adopt the plan, incorporating any necessary mitigation measures. A plan which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be adopted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.

## 1.3.4 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

The Section 28 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' - Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) and Office of Public Works (OPW), 2009 requires land use plans to be subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to identify potential flood risk in the plan area. An SFRA was carried out as part of the process of preparing the Plan and it is contained in Volume 11.



## 1.4 Format of the Plan

The Plan contains a Written Statement and accompanying volumes as follows:

### Volume 1 Written Statement

This constitutes the main body of the document outlining the vision, Core Strategy and objectives of the Plan. The Written Statement is accompanied by a set of maps which give visual representation to the strategies and objectives in the Plan.

### Volume 2 Development Management Manual

The Development Management Manual sets out the standards for different types of development and land uses that will be applied in the assessment of planning applications.

### Volume 3 Settlement Plans and Specific Objectives

This volume includes land use zoning maps and specific objectives for Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane and Bunclody Town. It also includes specific objectives for Rosslare Strand and Castlebridge.

### Volume 4 Section 28 Statement of Compliance

This volume has been prepared in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and outlines how the relevant guidelines have been implemented in the Plan.

### Volume 5 Record of Protected Structures

The Record contains the list of Protected Structures. These structures are considered worthy of protection due to their special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and or technical perspective. The Record also now includes the structures previously protected under the Wexford, Enniscorthy and New Ross town development plans.

### Volume 6 Architectural Conservation Areas

This volume provides a list and maps of all Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

in the county. It also provides guidance and common objectives on conservation and enhancement of ACAs and for the management of change in these areas.

### **Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment**

The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the landscape character units in the county. It also assigns a sensitivity rating to the landscape character units and contains objectives to manage change in our landscapes.

### **Volume 8 Retail Strategy**

The Retail Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012).

### **Volume 9 Housing Strategy**

The Housing Strategy has been prepared in accordance with Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). It also incorporates elements of the Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA).

### **Volume 10 Energy Strategy**

This Strategy relates to all types of energy developments and includes the objectives and development management standards relating to future energy developments in the county. The Strategy sets out renewable energy resource targets for County Wexford by 2027 which will contribute to both national renewable energy targets and the transition to a low carbon economy. The Strategy recognises the importance of not only generating and supplying energy by renewable means but balancing this with more energy efficient practices.

### **Volume 11 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

The SFRA identifies the nature of flood risk in the county and the settlements listed in Levels 1 to 5 of the Settlement Hierarchy, includes detailed flood risk assessments for Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane and Bunclody Town and development management advice and flood risk management objectives.

## **Volume 12 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The SEA Environmental Report identifies, evaluates and describes the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan and identifies appropriate mitigation and monitoring measures.

## **Volume 13 Natura Impact Report**

The Natura Impact Report forms part of the Appropriate Assessment of the Plan and includes the associated determination.

# **1.5 Monitoring and Implementation**

It is important for a Plan to be monitored to assess its effectiveness and to ensure the implementation of its objectives. A development plan must also be able to respond to changing circumstances during its lifetime.

Monitoring will identify issues with objectives and allow suitable corrective action to be taken. It will also identify whether the Plan remains consistent with national and regional policy, and where changes occur at national and/or regional level, advise whether the Plan should be varied as necessary to ensure consistency with these higher-level plans.

In accordance with Section 15 of the Act, within two years of making the Plan, the Chief Executive must give a report to Members of the Planning Authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives in the Plan. The Planning Authority can take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Plan.

The Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2007) recommend that an annual monitoring and evaluation report is prepared. This report will facilitate the identification of any issues concerning the implementation of the Plan. It will inform the two-year review required by Section 15 of the Act. It will also inform the mandatory review of the existing Plan and preparation of a new Plan required by Section 11 of the Act, which must be commenced not later than four years after the making of the Plan.

## 1.6 Underlying Themes

The Plan addresses a wide range of interrelated economic, social and environmental issues set within an overall framework of achieving sustainable development, social inclusion, adapting to climate change and a healthy county where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential.

### 1.6.1 Sustainable Development

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires a development plan to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. The Council, for the purposes of the Plan, defines proper planning and sustainable development as ensuring that a balance is achieved between economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations in the interests of the common good of present and future generations of the county.

The United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions-economic, social and environmental (see Figure 1-1). Many of these SDGs are relevant to this Plan including climate action, sustainable cities and communities, industry, innovation and infrastructure, economic growth, clean energy, clean water, quality education and good health and well-being. These SDGs inform and underpin the Plan which is focused on the integration of employment, transport, schools, community facilities, amenities and sustainable urban and rural settlements as key mechanisms for achieving sustainability.

There is significant alignment between the UN SDGs and this Plan, particularly, good health and well-being, education, environmental quality, clean energy, economic growth, sustainable communities and climate action.

Figure 1-1 UN Sustainable Development Goals



### 1.6.2 Climate Action

Climate change brings both challenges and opportunities for County Wexford. The Council is committed to addressing climate change in a proactive manner through the careful consideration of growth and development. The Plan seeks to protect, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Climate action is integrated into every chapter and strategy in the plan. Each chapter includes a sub-section outlining how the spatial strategy and objectives of that chapter have been climate proofed and/or will contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

### 1.6.3 Biodiversity and Ecosystems

In light of the climate change and biodiversity emergency there is a pressing need to mainstream biodiversity into decision making across all sectors and to raise awareness and appreciation of its value and the benefits it delivers. The protection,

conservation, restoration and management of biodiversity and ecosystems forms an underlying theme of the Plan and is reflected in relevant chapters, strategies and objectives.

#### 1.6.4 Healthy Wexford

The chapters and strategies in the plan are aligned with UN SDG No. 3 Good Health and Wellbeing and achieving a healthy county. As set out in Healthy Wexford County Plan 2020-2022, the vision for Wexford is a county where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

Healthy Wexford is an underlying theme of the Plan, emphasising the important role that spatial planning has to play in creating built environments that promote good health and wellbeing including mental health and in reducing deprivation and inequalities. The Plan will, amongst other things, facilitate increased physical activity through active travel, well-located and designed green and open spaces, require high quality housing and living environments, promote community participation and social inclusion by requiring well-planned community developments and facilities such as health facilities and improve energy efficiencies in developments and reduce pollutions and emissions.

#### 1.6.5 Social Inclusion, Accessibility and Age Friendly

Social inclusion is a process which assists people to participate fully in life from an economic, social and cultural perspective. People can be excluded from society if they do not have equal access to services, facilities, resources and opportunities. The Council is committed to developing a socially inclusive society in County Wexford and the Plan focuses on promoting and facilitating social inclusion for everyone in the county. The Plan has identified target groups which include children and young people, carers, older people, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, including the Traveller community and immigrant communities.

CHAPTER 2

# Climate Action



## 2.1 Introduction

As the impacts of climate change are experienced first-hand at the local level, the Council is best placed to plan and respond to local climate change and to use its services and resources to help local communities and businesses build resilience to the impacts. Many of the Council's services, including the management of roads, coastal areas and water services, are already feeling the effects of climate change, responding on the ground to extreme weather events which are having impacts on people, property and infrastructure across the county. The Climate Action Charter, which was signed by all local authorities on the 31st October 2019, requires every local authority to embed decarbonisation, sustainable development and climate resilience into every aspect of the work they do.

The Council is at the forefront of climate action and the transition to a low carbon economy. In November 2017, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the United Nations, the Irish Government, Wexford County Council and NZEBRA, committing to the establishment of a UN Centre of Excellence on Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) in Enniscorthy Town, alongside similar centres in Vancouver and New York. This centre will, in collaboration with Waterford Wexford Education Training Board (WWETB), provide education in High Performance Buildings to students from all over the world and help develop standards that will improve energy efficiency in buildings and reduce emissions. The centre is also recognised in the RSES as a 'Key Change Location' for driving innovation and the transition to a low carbon economy. The Council also joined the European Climate Alliance in September 2020. This is the world's largest network of cities dedicated to climate action and which pairs local action with global responsibilities. Amongst other things, it commits the Council to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 10% every five years, equivalent to the halving of per capita emissions by 2030 (from a 1990 baseline).

Wexford has also been at the forefront of renewable energy development having a Wind Energy Strategy in place since 2007 and has made a significant contribution to the State's installed renewable energy (182 MW). Climate change has been an underlying theme in the County Development Plan and local area plans since the Draft CDP in 2011. The Council is also a leading authority in building NZEB social housing and retrofitting social houses, resulting in important reductions in fuel poverty for occupants.



As a Planning Authority the Council can ensure that spatial planning, through strategies and objectives in development plans and local area plans, address mitigation and adaptation to climate change which are the two terms usually used to explain climate change.

Climate mitigation refers to efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases. Mitigation can mean using new technologies and renewable energies, making older equipment more energy efficient, or changing practices and behaviours e.g. encouraging more walking and cycling by providing footpaths and cycle paths.

Climate adaptation is focused on anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage or taking advantage of opportunities that may arise. Examples include water conservation, ensuring buildings are designed for future climate conditions and weather events, building flood defences, planting crops and trees suitable to new climate, and avoiding unnecessary development in coastal areas at risk of coastal erosion and flooding.

The Plan addresses climate change in so far as it relates to and can be influenced by spatial planning. It is an underlying theme and it expressly influenced the formulation of a number of strategies in the plan including settlement, movement, economic development, renewable energy, flood risk management and coastal zone management. The SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report also considered climate change. Such is the importance ascribed to climate change, each chapter has been prefaced with a section detailing how the topic interacts with climate change.

To avoid duplication with other strategies and policy documents, including the Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy, the Plan addresses climate change only in so far as it relates to spatial planning.

## 2.2 Policy Context

Climate policy in Ireland has evolved rapidly in recent years with the Government fully committed to a long term climate policy based on the adoption of a series of national plans over the period to 2050, informed by both UN and EU policy. Given

the extensive array of climate change policy documents, a brief summary of the main policy documents and key issues as they relate to climate change and spatial planning is provided.

### **2.2.1 National Policy Position 2014**

This establishes the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. It sets out the context for the objective; clarifies the level of greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation ambition envisaged; and establishes the process to pursue and achieve the overall objective. Specifically, it envisages that policy development will be guided by a long-term vision based on: an aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors, in parallel with an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land-use sectors, including forestry, which does not compromise capacity for sustainable food production.

### **2.2.2 The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015**

This Act placed climate change at the heart of Government policy and decision making. Amongst other things the Act made provision for two national plans; the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework. The Act requires local authorities to have regard to both in the performance of their functions and also requires local authorities to prepare Climate Change Adaptation Strategies setting out local level adaptation measures.

### **2.2.3 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021**

This Act commits Ireland in law to move to a climate resilient and climate neutral economy by 2050. The current programme for Government (2020) commits to a 7% average yearly reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021-2030, and to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. The Act includes the following key elements:

- Establishes a 2050 emissions target;
- Introduces a system of successive five-year, economy wide carbon budgets starting in 2021;
- Strengthens the role of the Climate Change Advisory Council in proposing carbon budgets;
- Introduces a requirement to annually revise the National Climate Action Plan and prepare a National Long-Term Climate Action Strategy at least every decade;
- Introduces a requirement for all Local Authorities to prepare individual Climate Action Plans which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures; and
- Gives a stronger oversight role for the Oireachtas through an Oireachtas Committee.

The Local Authority Climate Action Plan, which must be reviewed every five years, will specify the mitigation and adaptation measures that the Local Authority intends to adopt and to link the plan to other relevant statutory functions that they perform. Adjoining local authorities will be required to consult and co-operate with each other and to co-ordinate measures, where appropriate. The Local Authority will also be required to have regard to the Climate Action Plan when preparing its development plan and local area plans.

#### 2.2.4 The National Adaptation Framework

Published in 2018, the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas. It emphasises that climate change considerations need to be taken into account as a matter of course in planning-related decision making processes and that progression of adaptation considerations in the planning and building standards processes is considered the most appropriate way of increasing the resilience of the built environment.

It also emphasises that effective planning reduces vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change by integrating climate considerations into decision making in order to avoid inappropriate forms of development in vulnerable areas and promoting compact development in less vulnerable areas.

### 2.2.5 Climate Action Plan 2019

The Climate Action Plan 2019 to Tackle Climate Breakdown contains 183 actions which will be implemented by 13 Government Departments and 40 agencies under the remit of those Departments. Actions relating to local authorities include signing up to the Climate Action Charter, the development of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network, the preparation of local adaptation strategies and the implementation of objectives for compact growth, in particular NPF National Policy Objective (NPO) 3a, 3b and 3c with regard to targets for development within the existing built-up footprint of settlements.

Action 165 of the Plan outlines that each local authority will identify and develop plans for one Decarbonising Zone (DZ) in their functional area. Circular Letter LGSM01-2021 from the Department Housing, Local Government and Heritage defines a DZ as “a spatial area identified by the local authority, in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets”. The DZ should either cover (i) urban areas and agglomerations with a population not less than 5000 persons, or (ii) rural areas with an area of not less than 4km<sup>2</sup>.

The range of projects proposed for the Decarbonising Zone should be specific to the energy and climate characteristics of the spatial area covered by the DZ and identify appropriate project sponsors and embrace a range of technologies. Plans for the identified DZ should also consider the economic and social benefits of decarbonizing including just transition and health. A DZ should also address the wider co-benefits of air quality, improved health, biodiversity, embodied carbon, agricultural practices and sustainable land.

### 2.2.6 National Planning Framework 2040

The implementation of the NPF will ensure that the planning system responds successfully to the challenges of climate change and specifically those associated with how Ireland transitions successfully to a climate resilient economy by 2050. Amongst a number of strategic goals, the NPF aims to ensure better integration of land use and transport planning policy in order to reduce commuter travel demand

and support more efficient patterns of development and travel. Investment in social, educational, health and employment spheres will all impact on the development of an integrated, efficient and sustainable transport system.

National Strategic Outcome (NSO) 1 Compact Growth, NSO 5 Sustainable Mobility, NSO 8 Transition to a local carbon and climate resilient society and NSO 9 Sustainable management of water, waste and other environmental resources all embed climate change at the heart of the NPF and planning at national, regional and local level.

### 2.2.7 National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (NDP) includes objectives in relation to the aim of transitioning to a low carbon and a climate resilient society, including €940 million for flood risk management projects.

The NDP also established a Climate Action Fund with an allocation of at least €500 million to 2027. The fund will support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets in a cost effective manner. It offers the potential for innovative interventions which, in the absence of support from the Fund, would not otherwise be developed.

The Fund will also seek to facilitate projects that contribute to other Government policy priorities including:

- Supporting innovation and capacity building towards the development of climate change solutions capable of being scaled and delivering benefits beyond a once-off impact
- Generating wider socio-economic benefits such as job creation, air quality improvements, reduction in fuel poverty, biodiversity and community resilience and development.

### 2.2.8 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The RSES aims to build a strong, resilient, sustainable region by implementing 11 strategy statements, of which climate action is embedded in seven of those statements. It supports the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2019, and

has identified three priority areas for action to address climate change and to bring about a transition to a low carbon economy and society – decarbonisation, climate resilience and resource efficiency. The RSES prioritises action on climate change across all strategic areas and in all economic sectors, and outlines that combined effort is required to implement objectives for compact growth, sustainable travel and place-making to reduce travel demand between residential areas and centres of employment and education. The key Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) listed below are incorporated into the relevant chapters/strategies in the Plan:

**Table 2-1 Key Climate Action Regional Planning Objectives**

RPO No.	Focus
RPO 87	Low carbon energy future
RPO 88	National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework
RPO 89	Building resilience to climate change
RPO 90	Regional decarbonisation
RPO 91-93	Decarbonisation in the transport Sector, EV and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Infrastructure
RPO 94	Decarbonisation in the agricultural sector
RPOs 95-103	Sustainable renewable energy generation and supporting infrastructure

### 2.2.9 County Wexford Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

The county's first climate adaptation strategy was adopted in September 2019. Its purpose is to ensure a proper comprehension of the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change, to bring forward the implementation of climate resilient actions in a planned and proactive manner and to ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all plans and policies and integrated into all operations and functions of the Council.

According to the baseline information, agriculture (43%), transport (22%) and residential (18%) accounted for 83% of the county's CO2 emissions in 2006<sup>1</sup>. The remaining 17% was attributed to commercial (8%), industry (7%), and the public sector (2%).

The strategy is developed around six key themes, most of which have relevance for the Council's planning functions. Each of these themes is underpinned by a set of objectives and actions which have been incorporated, where relevant, into the Plan's strategies and objectives.

**Table 2-2 Thematic Areas in the Wexford County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy**

No.	Theme
1	Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations
2	Infrastructure and the Built Environment
3	Land Use and Development
4	Drainage and Flood Management
5	Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure
6	Community Health and Wellbeing

### 2.2.10 3 Counties Energy Agency – Energy Transition Strategy 2020-2030

The 3 Counties Energy Agency (3cea) was established to provide independent sustainable energy information, support, and services to the people of Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford, to local businesses and community groups and to their local authorities. In January 2020, 3cea launched the 3 Counties Energy Transition Strategy to 2030. The vision is to be a leader in efficient use of locally produced energy, delivering low carbon homes, jobs and enterprise.

<sup>1</sup> The most accurate information for total emissions in Wexford County is based on Census 2006 data. Using this data, Wexford County Council (WCC) was able to calculate that the total emissions for County Wexford amounted to 1,882,699 tonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2006.

By 2030 the region will:

- Be energy efficient,
- Use clean energy and produce surplus local clean energy supply,
- Empower citizens to act and participate in the energy transition with rewards for their investment, and
- Be sustainable – an attractive place to live, work, play and invest.

The Strategy also sets energy consumption targets and CO2 emissions by sector for 2030.

### 2.2.11 Climate Action Regional Office

In January 2018, the Government established four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) in recognition of the commitment by local government to develop and implement its own climate action measures, as well as the need to build capacity within the sector to respond and adapt to climate change. Each CARO focuses on the predominant risks in each geographical area. Through these offices local authorities can play a crucial role in driving practical policy and behavioural changes within their communities to encourage both businesses and citizens to embrace the need for climate action. The offices also played a key role in coordinating the development of the local authority adaptation strategies and ensuring their alignment with sectoral adaptation plans.

County Wexford, along with 16 other local authorities, form the Eastern and Midlands CARO. The office is operated by Kildare County Council and Kilkenny County Council. The predominate risks for this CARO include fluvial flooding, rural pluvial flooding and groundwater flooding.

## 2.3 Climate Change in County Wexford

Research at national level has shown that changes in Ireland's climate are in line with global trends. For Ireland, climate change impacts are expected to increase over the coming decades and could include the following:



- sea level rise
- more intense storms and rainfall events
- increased likelihood and magnitude of river and coastal flooding
- water shortages in summer in the east
- adverse impacts on water quality
- changes in distribution of plant and animal species
- effects on fisheries sensitive to changes in temperature

There are particular areas and land uses that will be vulnerable to these predicted changes in our climate.

### 2.3.1 Critical Infrastructure

This infrastructure is essential for the functioning of the county and includes transport, energy, communications, water services and health services and depending on its location it may be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in extreme weather events, flooding and coastal erosion. New infrastructure must be climate resilient so as to minimise the impacts on people, property and businesses.

### 2.3.2 Rivers and Water

Many of the county's main settlements developed around rivers and some of these settlements are already vulnerable to flooding e.g. Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town. Increased rainfall will result in flooding events and pressures on flood defences.

Flooding can also have adverse impacts on water quality. The availability of water sources and the capacity of water bodies to assimilate wastewater discharges when water levels are low in rivers during longer and drier periods will also need to be considered in water resource planning.

### 2.3.3 Coastal Areas and the Marine Sector

Many of the county's settlements have developed along the coastline and the marine and fisheries sector is also very important for the county's economy. The increased

coastal flood risk from sea level rise and increased intensity of storms poses a threat to coastal communities and sectors operating in the coastal zone. Increased storm intensity will exacerbate coastal erosion particularly the soft shorelines, and this will pose a threat to property and infrastructure. It will therefore be necessary to strictly control the nature and type of future development in these areas, carefully manage the location and siting of development and ensure that new infrastructure is climate resilient so as to minimise the impacts on people, property and infrastructure.

### 2.3.4 Built Heritage

Managing and adapting to the effects of climate change on the historic built environment, in particular the county's archaeological and architectural heritage, will be very important. Historic buildings have already experienced and survived the effects of climate change, in many cases over several centuries, leaving a building stock of proven resilience. However, the increasing occurrence of extreme weather events mean that all structures, including historic ones, need to be kept in a good state of repair to resist damage from a variety of threats<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.3.5 Tourism

Climate change will impact on tourism in the county in a number of ways. The potential warmer climate offers opportunities to extend the tourist season and as a result significantly enhance its economic potential. The county's coastal areas including beaches are also valuable for tourism as are the many historical and cultural heritage sites in these areas. As coastal areas are at risk of coastal erosion and flooding, there is a need to consider the vulnerability of our beaches and the cultural heritage sites and consider their future protection.

### 2.3.6 Agriculture and Forestry

Agriculture and forestry are important sectors in our local economy. The changing climate, in particular temperature, rainfall, soil quality and extreme weather events will affect crop, food and tree production. Sustainable forestry will play an important role in mitigation as trees act as carbon sinks helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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<sup>2</sup> National Adaptation Framework (Department of the Environment, Climate Action and the Environment, 2018), page 68.

### 2.3.7 Biodiversity

Climate change is likely to be a significant driver of biodiversity loss. Increases in temperature will change the timing of life cycle events and the distribution of species. The physical impact of more intense storms and increased winter/spring rainfall will accelerate the degradation of habitats that are already compromised by unsustainable practices. There is therefore a need to protect biodiversity from the impacts of climate change and to conserve, restore and manage ecosystems to deliver services that increase the adaptive capacity of people and biodiversity. This, together with the expansion of the county's green infrastructure and recognition by all sectors of the importance of biodiversity, are key components of any climate action strategy.

## 2.4 Climate Action Spatial Planning Strategy

### 2.4.1 Goal

To protect the people, buildings, infrastructure, businesses and ecosystems in County Wexford against the negative impacts of climate change, build resilience to climate change, change our behaviours and patterns of development to lessen the extent of climate change and take advantage of any opportunities that climate change may bring. This will require the Council, key stakeholders, businesses and communities to work together.

### 2.4.2 Mitigation and Spatial Planning

This is focused on reducing ghg emissions, using sustainable renewable energy sources and moving to a low carbon economy. In this regard, the Plan includes objectives to:

- Facilitate a modal shift towards sustainable transport options as set out in Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, encourage and facilitate a significant increase in the active travel modes of walking and cycling and associated infrastructure, work with transport providers to develop public transport options across the county, including rail and bus, both in urban and rural areas, and encourage the use of electric vehicles by ensuring EV infrastructure is in place.

- Delivering compact growth, through increasing densities, developing brownfield sites and infilling the redundant areas of our towns and villages and facilitating the development of mixed residential and commercial areas which will reduce the distance people need to travel to their homes, workplaces and other amenities and services.
- Increase employment opportunities within the county and promote the development of remote working hubs in towns and villages in order to reduce the amount of unsustainable commuting out of the county for work, much of which is car-based commuting.
- Facilitate sustainable and regenerative agriculture such as sustainable agroforestry which not only acts as a carbon sink but is a source of renewable fuel and biomass.
- Facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy which is focused on clean, low carbon technologies and promote the development of sustainable renewable energy sources such as wind, tidal and solar energy as a means of reducing dependencies on fossil fuels, in particular, community owned and locally produced energy generation projects.
- In line with the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Recast ensure that all new buildings be NZEB by 31st December 2020.
- Maximise the opportunities offered by the presence of the UN European Centre of Excellence in High Performance Buildings in Enniscorthy Town and help develop standards that will improve energy efficiency in buildings and significantly reduce emissions.
- To use the Decarbonising Zone identified for the county to implement a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets, and to use this learning experience to inform the roll out of further zones in the county.

### 2.4.3 Adaptation and Spatial Planning

The aim of adaptation is to reduce the vulnerability of our county, people, economy and environment to climate change, to ensure a 'Just Transition' so that nobody is left behind and increase resilience to ensure good health and wellbeing. Adaptation

brings many opportunities through green growth, innovation, jobs and ecosystem enhancement as well as improvements in areas such as water and air quality. In this regard, the Plan includes objectives to:

- Ensure new critical infrastructure such as transport, communications, waste and water facilities and energy supply is managed and controlled to avoid areas at risk of coastal or river flooding and/or coastal erosion.
- Ensure that vulnerable developments are directed away from areas at risk in particular coastal areas at risk of erosion and flooding and areas at risk of flooding from rivers.
- Protect, conserve and take actions to restore biodiversity, expand the county's green infrastructure network and encourage nature-based approaches and green infrastructure solutions. These measures will provide many benefits including the regulation of temperature, reduction in storm flows and provides clean water and air.
- Consider the conversion or maintenance of land at risk of flooding to less vulnerable uses e.g. parks, gardens and open spaces for natural habitats where such land does not form part of the riparian zone or riparian buffer and where it would not interfere with the flood regulation functions of the floodplain.
- Continue to work with the OPW in the development of flood relief schemes and the maintenance of existing flood defences.
- Require new developments to demonstrate that energy planning and energy efficiency has been considered in the design of the building and the site layout and ensure that the location, layout and design of new development accommodates predicted future climate change impacts. This approach will require innovative building design, new materials and standards (to accommodate hotter summers while withstanding changes in precipitation patterns and more intense storms for example). When assessing applications, the planning authority will be cognisant of the requirements of adaptation.

## Climate Action Strategic Objectives<sup>3</sup>

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CA01

To ensure that the spatial planning of County Wexford provides for a county that is resilient to climate change, encourages development along existing transport corridors, enables the decarbonisation of the county's economy and reduces the county's carbon footprint in support of national targets for climate mitigation and adaptation objectives as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

### Objective CA02

To implement the National Adaptation Framework through the strategies and objectives of the County Development Plan and in future local area plans.

### Objective CA03

To implement the County Wexford Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and any Wexford County Council Local Climate Action Plan in future local area plans and the assessment of planning applications.

### Objective CA04

To implement the Energy Strategy contained in Volume 10 of the Wexford County Development Plan to facilitate the transition to a low carbon county.

### Objective CA05

To continue to work with the Eastern and Midland Climate Action Regional Office and the 3 Counties Energy Agency to achieve the implementation of national climate policies and targets at the local level.

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<sup>3</sup> Mitigation and adaptation to climate change is reflected/embedded in many objectives throughout the Plan.

**Objective CA06**

To continue to reduce energy related CO2 emissions of Wexford County Council, to improve energy efficiencies and to achieve the commitment under the European Climate Alliance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 10% every five years.

**Objective CA07**

To review the County Development Plan following the publication of the new Section 28 Development Plan - Guidelines for Planning Authorities to ensure that the approach to climate action is consistent with the guidelines and to vary the Plan, if necessary.

**Objective CA08**

To support and maximise the opportunities offered by the presence of the United Nations Centre of Excellence on Nearly Zero Energy Buildings in Enniscorthy Town and to support the designation of this centre as the National Centre for Ireland.

**Objective CA09**

To utilise the Climate Action Fund established under the National Development Plan to facilitate public and private climate mitigation and adaptation projects in line with criteria set out by the Fund at that time.

**Objective CA10**

To implement, through the County Development Plan and future local areas plans, sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including measures to reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources, reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change in particular, having regard to the location, layout and design of new development.

**Objective CA11**

To support measures to build resilience to climate change including adaptive capacity, awareness and providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning and to raise awareness of the role of spatial planning in climate change mitigation and adaptation through the forward planning and development management functions of the Planning Authority.

**Objective CA12**

To ensure future local area plans adopt sustainable spatial planning frameworks which successfully integrate land use and transportation and facilitate mixed use developments as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonising the county.

**Objective CA13**

To require new developments to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change by ensuring they are appropriately located, sited and designed to accommodate predicted future climate change impacts.

**Objective CA14**

To carry out climate adaptation measures such as developing NZEB social housing and retrofitting local authority housing, ensuring new public buildings are NZEB and retrofitting existing public buildings, promoting jobs and innovation in the green economy through the Local Enterprise Office and Economic Development Section, transitioning the Council's own fleet to electric vehicles, facilitating electric vehicle infrastructure in public car parks, ensuring flood risk management in conjunction with the Office of Public Works, promoting water conservation in conjunction with Irish Water, incorporating biodiversity and green infrastructure planning into local authority own developments including residential schemes, public parks, open spaces, walking trails and greenways and seeking opportunities to implement nature friendly carbon sequestration options on Council owned or controlled public lands e.g. community orchards and rewilding schemes.



### Objective CA15

To support the decarbonisation of the energy sector by supporting the implementation of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan and investment in initiatives to improve energy efficiency and future proof the county's residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and public building stock, including retrofitting in urban and rural areas and reduction in fuel poverty. The Council will encourage developments to achieve certification under systems such as the Home Performance Index and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

### Objective CA16

To support change across business, public and residential sectors to achieve reduced greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with current and future national targets, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources across the key sectors of electricity supply, heating, transport and agriculture.

### Objective CA17

To support decarbonisation in the transport sector by facilitating initiatives that promote the use of clean generated electricity biogas, hydrogen and other non-fossil fuels for private and public transportation and provide clean energy and lower carbon fuelling and electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure at appropriate locations including consideration of electric, hydrogen, compressed natural gas (CNG)/biogas.

### Objective CA18

To require the provision of Electric Vehicle charging point infrastructure and solar panels (the latter where possible and practicable) within residential, commercial and mixed use developments, and to support investment in the sustainable development of Electric Vehicle charging facilities aligned with the transportation networks in the county and the region and CNG refuelling stations aligned with the TEN-T corridors as a renewable technology for servicing public service vehicles and commercial fleets.

**Objective CA19**

To support the decarbonisation of the agricultural sector by facilitating initiatives that advance an approach to achieve carbon neutrality for agriculture and land use that does not compromise sustainable food production through programmes such as the Green Low-Carbon Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) and other relevant mitigation and adaptation programmes and initiatives of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.

**Objective CA20**

To prepare a Climate Proofing Matrix to be submitted with planning applications to allow the proposed development to demonstrate how it incorporates climate mitigation and adaptation, where relevant.

**Objective CA21**

To ensure that spatial planning is fully embedded in and contributes to achieving the targets set for the Decarbonising Zone in the county by facilitating sustainable transport, energy efficient buildings, appropriate renewable energy developments, waste management developments that promote the circular economy, measures to improve air quality, and restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure in the Decarbonising Zone.

CHAPTER 3

# Core Strategy



### 3.1 Core Strategy Vision - County Wexford 2028

This Plan builds on the vision for the county which formed part of the 2013-2019 County Development Plan and which is also used in the Wexford Local Economic Community Plan 2016-2021 (LECP). The vision also places climate action at the heart of the future planning of the county.

By 2028 County Wexford will:

- Be a self-sustaining, low carbon, climate resilient and healthy county where people want to live, work and play.
- Offer high quality sustainable employment opportunities and high-quality residential developments.
- Have sustainable urban and rural environments supported by excellent physical and social infrastructure.
- Continue to value its unique natural environment, built and cultural heritage, be a county where biodiversity is restored and flourishes and which offers a range of high- quality experiences to both residents and visitors.

### 3.2 Compliance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) introduced a requirement to include a Core Strategy in a development plan. It acts as the fundamental link between national, regional, county and local planning by demonstrating that the local planning policy is consistent with higher level national and regional policy and objectives, and it informs local plans such as Local Area Plans and the LECP.

The Core Strategy is required to set out a medium to long term strategy which is evidenced based and it specifies the location and quantum of residential zoned land in the county. The Strategy also provides the context for planning and prioritising investments in infrastructure including water services, public transport, education and healthcare.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, the Core Strategy demonstrates compliance with the objectives of the NPF and the RSES in Section 3.3. The Settlement Hierarchy and population targets of the NPF and its associated Roadmap and the RSES have been used to inform the settlement hierarchy and Core Strategy population allocations (Section 3.7) in this Plan. Table 3-4 contains the required information on area of land etc.

The Core Strategy has been formulated having regard to the 10 NSOs in the NPF, the 11 key strategy elements of the RSES and the Section 28 Guidelines and other policies of the Ministers of the Government as required. Having regard to the rural nature and rural population of County Wexford, the Core Strategy and the guiding principles for the Development Strategy have also been informed by 'Realising our Rural Potential: Action Plan for Rural Development 2017' (Department of Rural and Community Development).

The Settlement Hierarchy (Section 3.5) details the key locations or types of locations where development will take place. Details of compliance with the Rural Housing Guidelines is provided in Section 3.9 of this chapter and in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing. The Plan must also comply with Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR) set out in relevant Section 28 guidelines. These SPPR currently relate to apartment developments and building heights and are addressed in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages, and Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

The Core Strategy is aligned with and supported by the Housing Strategy (Chapter 4 and Volume 9), the Economic Development Strategy (Chapter 6), the Transportation Strategy (Chapter 8) and the Retail Strategy (Volume 8). The Core Strategy is also illustrated on a diagrammatic map (Figure 3-1) which identifies the main settlements, existing road and rail routes and designated rural areas in the county.

## **3.3 Compliance with the NPF and the RSES**

### **3.3.1 National Planning Framework**

The NPF places a strong emphasis on strengthening Ireland's urban structure by targeting both population and employment growth in these areas, promoting urban

infill and brownfield development and ensuring that urban areas are attractive, liveable, well-designed, high-quality places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high-quality of life and well-being.

The NPF acknowledges the importance of rural towns and villages in terms of their economic, administrative and social functions. It seeks to activate the potential for renewal and strengthen and diversify rural towns as a focus for local housing and employment growth and regeneration. In the NPF 'rural' is considered to include towns and villages up to a population of 10,000 people. Accordingly, 72% of the population of Wexford is considered rural.

With regard to housing in the open countryside, the NPF recognises that there is a continuing need for housing provision for people who live and work in rural areas. However, it outlines that there is a need to carefully manage this demand, particularly in the most accessible countryside around cities and towns. In this regard, the NPF confirms that in rural areas under urban influence the core consideration must be a demonstrable economic or social need to live in that rural area.

Table 3-1 shows how the 10 NSOs have been integrated into the Plan. A number of NPOs have also informed the Core Strategy, the Development Strategy and population allocations including NPO 2c, NPO 3c, NPO 4, NPO 5 NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 9, NPO 10b and NPO11.

### 3.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

Table 3-1 also shows how the 11 key strategy elements of the RSES have been incorporated into the Plan. The formulation of the settlement typologies and the Settlement Hierarchy in this chapter had regard to the tailored approach and the guiding principles contained in Section 3.3 of the RSES. The hierarchy follows a similar hierarchy to the RSES (Section 3.5 Key Towns, Section 3.6 Towns and Villages and Section 3.7 Rural Areas). There is also focus on connecting settlements and exploring potential networks (Section 3.8 Networks). RPO 30 Eastern Economic Corridor is recognised as a priority for the county and region and is embedded in the settlement development strategy.

**Table 3-1 Integration of the NPF and RSES into the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028**

NPF NSO		RSES Strategy	Incorporation into CDP
1.	Compact Growth	Strengthening and growing our cities and metropolitan areas building on the strong network of Towns throughout the region and supporting our villages and rural areas.	2 - Climate Action 3 - Core Strategy and Settlement 4 - Sustainable Housing 5 - Town and Villages 6 - Economic Development 8 - Transportation Volume 3 Settlements
2.	Enhanced Regional Accessibility	Enhancing regional accessibility through upgraded transport infrastructure and digital connectivity allied to transformed settlement hierarchy.	3 - Core Strategy and Settlement 8 - Transportation 9 - Infrastructure
3.	Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities	Strengthening the role of and improving quality of life in the region’s diverse rural areas and communities and valuing our rural region as dynamic, resilient and outward looking.	3 - Core Strategy and Settlement 4 - Sustainable Housing 5 - Towns and Villages 6 - Economic Development 7 - Tourism 8 - Transportation 9 - Infrastructure 12 - Coastal Zone Management Volume 3 Settlements Volume 9 Housing Strategy
4.	Sustainable mobility	Transforming our transport systems towards well-functioning sustainable integrated public transport, walking and cycling and electric vehicles.	2 - Climate Action 3 - Core Strategy and Settlement 4 - Sustainable Housing 5 - Towns and Villages 8 - Transportation 14 - Recreation and Open Space Strategy
5.	A strong economy, supported by enterprise, innovation and skills	Building a competitive, innovative and productive economy.	6 - Economic Development 7 - Tourism 12 - Coastal Zone Management 15 - Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Volume 8 Retail Strategy

NPF NSO		RSES Strategy	Incorporation into CDP
6.	High-Quality International Connectivity	Optimising our international connectivity through investment and increased capacity in our ports and airports and provision of high-quality digital connectivity throughout the region.	6 - Economic Development 7 - Tourism Development 8 - Transportation Strategy 9 - Infrastructure 12 - Coastal Zone Management 15 - Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Volume 3 – Settlement Plan for Rosslare Harbour
7.	Enhanced culture, amenity and heritage	Strengthening and protecting region's diversity, language and culture, our recreational assets and our natural and built heritage.	5 - Towns and Villages 10 - Environmental Management 13 - Heritage and Conservation 11 – Landscape and Green Infrastructure 14 - Recreation and Open Space Strategy Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment Volume 12 Strategic Environmental Assessment Volume 13 Natura Impact Report
8.	Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society	Safeguarding and enhancing our environment through sustainable development prioritising action on climate change across the region, driving the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.	Addressed in all chapters in the Plan. Volume 12 Strategic Environmental Assessment
9.	Sustainable management of water, waste and other environmental resources	Providing infrastructure and services in a plan-led manner to ensure the sustainable management of water, waste and other environmental resources.	2 - Climate Action 3 - Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy 6 - Economic Development 9 - Infrastructure 10 - Environmental Management Volume 12 Strategic Environmental Assessment Volume 13 Natura Impact Report



NPF NSO		RSES Strategy	Incorporation into CDP
10.	Access to quality childcare, education and health services	Achieving improved education, health and public services and facilities for all citizens and communities.	3 - Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy 15 - Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Strategy
		Building an inclusive outward looking international region on the global stage.	3 - Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy 6 - Economic Development Strategy 15 - Sustainable Communities and Community Infrastructure Strategy

### 3.4 Core Strategy Guiding Principles

The Core Strategy for the county was developed around the following guiding principles:

#### A. Climate Action

The Core Strategy Development Approach is focused on developing and strengthening the role of our towns and villages. There is a focus on increasing residential densities and employment in the main towns, creating ‘live-work towns’, thereby decreasing the distance that people have to travel from their home to work. The strategy is also focused around settlements with good public transport links, and improving public transport links in other settlements, highlighting the importance of integrating land and transportation to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy.

#### B. The development of ‘Centres of Scale’ to drive regional growth

NPO 5 outlines the need to develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity. The strategy focuses on the development of the Key towns of Wexford and Gorey in order to build centres of scale capable of being regional

economic drivers that will also bring opportunities and advantages to our county. The delivery of these centres will require significant population growth, compact growth and creative place making. It will also require the securing of investment in high class infrastructure including transport, digital connectivity and in developing skills and talent to support economic and enterprise growth.

### **C. The development of the Eastern Economic Corridor**

NPO 2c focuses on improving accessibility between cities and larger regionally distributed centres. The development of the Eastern Economic Corridor is supported by RPO 42 in the RSES, and this will be both a transport and an economic corridor. It is recognised in Chapter 4 of the RSES as one of the Key Economic Drivers of the Region. It will make County Wexford a pivotal point, connecting the Southern Region to the Dublin – Belfast corridor and west to the Atlantic Economic Corridor. It will also be important post Brexit. The corridor will facilitate and offer many economic development opportunities to towns along the corridor including Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford while also supporting the economic development of Rosslare Harbour and the Europort. It also offers opportunities to New Ross Town which provides the link from the corridor to the Southern region and the Atlantic Economic Corridor. It will promote the development of all transport modes on this route including public transport connectivity and optimising the potential for rail freight.

### **D. Utilise the proximity to the Waterford MASP**

The proximity to Waterford City offers many opportunities for our county, in particular, the west of the county, New Ross Town and Wexford Town and villages such as Ballyhack, Arthurstown and surrounding villages given the ferry connection to Waterford. The improved transport links, via the recently opened N25 New Ross By-pass and the possible future development of a sustainable transport corridor comprised of the re-opening of the Rosslare – Waterford Rail Line and in tandem development of a greenway, will increase access to job opportunities and access to services including education and health care.

### **E. Compact growth and liveable sustainable settlements**

Compact growth now lies at the heart of national spatial planning and is reflected in NSO 1 in the NPF. This approach, which will deliver a greater proportion of our

residential development within the existing built-up footprints of settlements (at least 30% of new housing) and higher densities, will secure a more sustainable future for our settlements and for our communities. It will help all of our settlements to enhance their attractiveness, viability and vibrancy, in particular our smaller towns, villages and rural areas, while at the same time encouraging economic development and job creation, improving liveability and contributing to a healthy county. The delivery of compact, sustainable growth will require the timely delivery of appropriate infrastructure in a plan led manner. In preparing local area plans the Council will ensure that the Tiered Approach to Zoning required by the NPF is applied and that land is developed in phased manner in accordance with the availability of infrastructure.

## **F. Regeneration**

The Core Strategy Development Approach supports the NPF focus on the regeneration and rejuvenation of towns and villages of all types. Many of the county's towns and villages need and will benefit from targeted regeneration, reversing patterns of stagnation or decline, particularly in our smaller towns and villages. This approach will improve visual amenities, design quality and place making, restore and enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure and provide access to quality open spaces, and will facilitate increased residential population and employment activity, making attractive places to live, work and visit and contributing to a healthy county for all. There are opportunities to leverage funding for regeneration projects under the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds.

## **G. Addressing legacies in places where services have not kept pace with rapid phases of growth and regional disparities in disadvantage**

NPO 7 applies a tailored approach to urban development, with a focus on addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth, by facilitating amenities and services catch up and jobs growth in recently expanded commuter settlements of all sizes. There are settlements that require a focus on employment generation and investment in infrastructure and services to help address similar legacies. Some settlements require investment and development to address disparities in advantage including unemployment and deprivation. The inclusion of these settlements in the hierarchy

allows for a plan-led approach, and an avenue to target investment in areas such as employment, education, services and amenities, and to leverage funding from various sources including under the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

## **H. Connected settlements and networks**

The development approach supports existing and planned investments in transport including the national and regional road network and railway network by focusing new population and employment development in key settlements which successfully contribute to the integration of land uses and high-quality public transport provision and investment in existing and planned transport infrastructure. The framework also focuses on maximising opportunities offered by networks of settlements both internally within the county and inter-county networks.

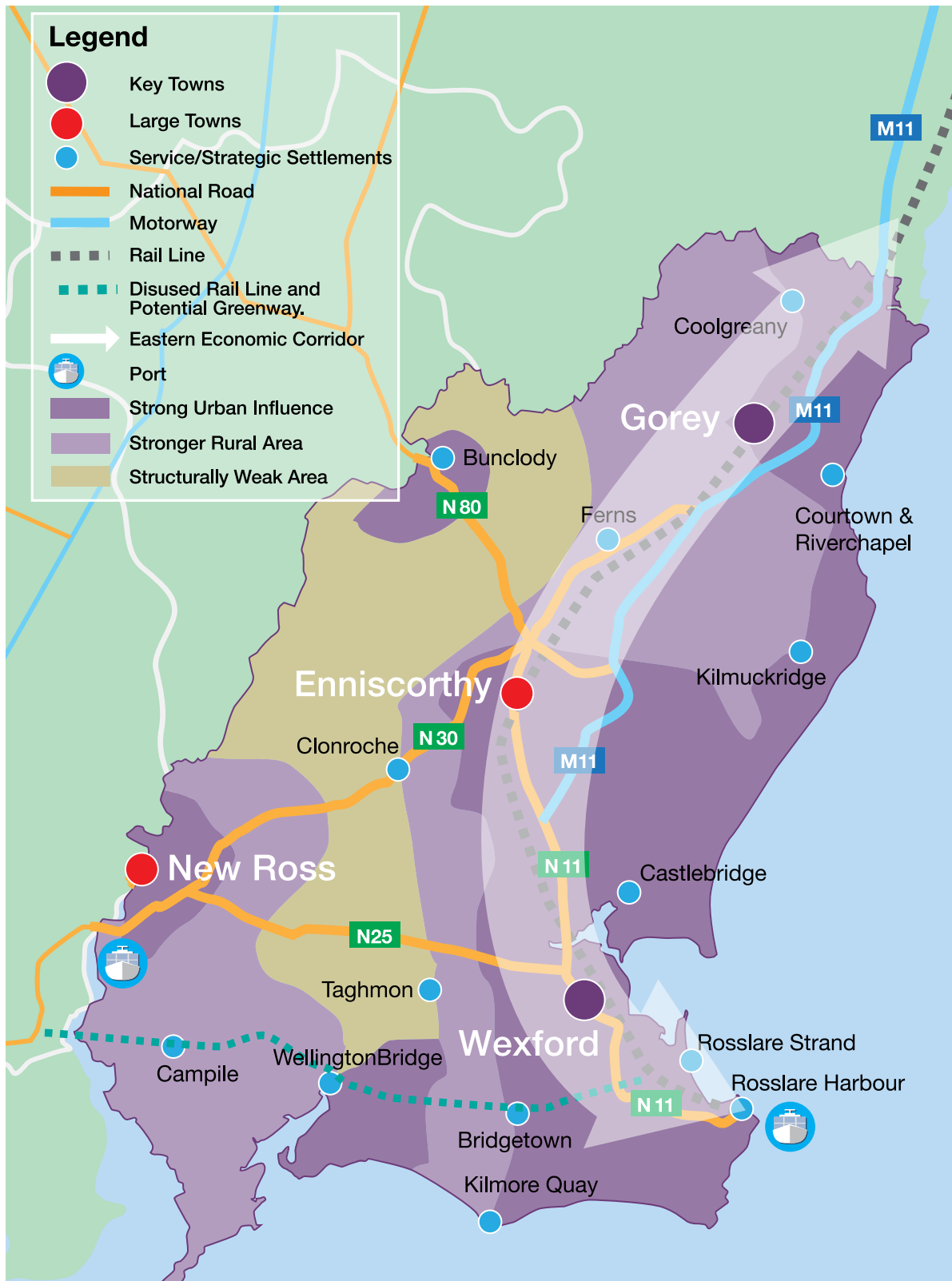
## **I. Smart Growth of Settlements**

The focus on compact growth and regeneration requires smart growth in our urban areas, which will enable enhanced and effective provision of a range of accessible services for our urban and rural communities, including education, health services and childcare. This approach also focuses on the role of digital connectivity in improving access to a range of services including public administration, transport services, education and health and improving the wellbeing and quality of life for our residents including our ageing population and people with disabilities and will contribute to a healthy county for all.

## **J. Vibrant Rural Areas**

In line with the Rural Action Plan, the Core Strategy Development Approach has a strong focus on supporting sustainable and vibrant rural communities, supporting and regenerating villages that are struggling or in decline, in particular villages that have lost services in recent years, supporting enterprise and employment and improving rural infrastructure and connectivity as a means of sustaining rural populations, and improving quality of life and good health and wellbeing in rural areas.

Figure 3-1 Core Strategy Map



### 3.5 Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy

The Settlement Hierarchy is developed around seven levels. While each level serves a different strategic role, together they will achieve a balanced, spatial planning settlement framework which supports our urban and rural areas. All settlements, regardless of their level, have an important role and contribution to make to the environmental, economic and social life of the county.

It is also important to note the placement of a settlement in a higher level does not mean a higher allocation of growth, e.g. while Courtown and Riverchapel is included at Level 3, it has been allocated a moderate level of growth to reflect the rate and pace of population growth in the past and the need for service provision and infrastructure to catch up.

The allocation of settlements to the different levels had regard to a range of factors including:

- The guiding principles outlined in Section 3.4.
- Designation in the RSES, i.e. Key Towns.
- Scale of existing population and its existing performance.
- Rate and pace of past development and the extent to which there are outstanding requirements for infrastructure and amenities.
- Accessibility and potential influence in a regional and sub-regional context.
- Environmental and infrastructural capacities and the need for a plan-led approach for investment in key infrastructure, e.g. water services.
- Scale of employment provision and the economic potential of the settlement, including planned economic projects.
- Extent of local services and amenity provision, in particular, third level education, post primary education, health, retail and leisure.
- Scope of the settlement to leverage investment, in particular employment.
- Character of the local geography and accessibility as a service centre for rural hinterlands.
- The need to sustain rural populations and services.

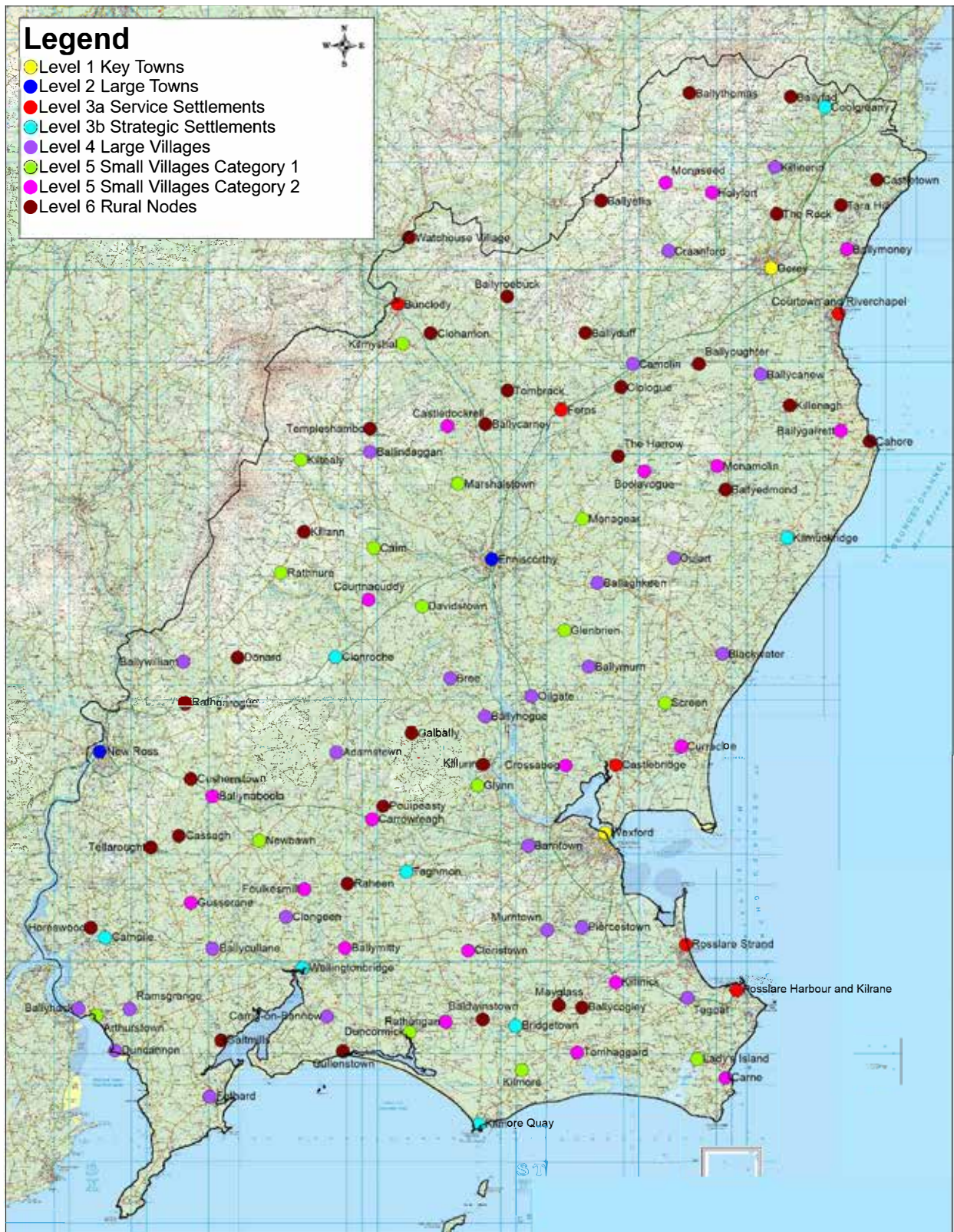
- The need to provide for attractive, alternative options to rural housing within small towns, villages and rural nodes.

**Table 3-2 County Wexford Settlement Hierarchy**

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement <sup>1</sup>
Level 1 Key Towns	Wexford Town and Gorey Town
Level 2 Large Towns	Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town
Level 3a Service Settlements	Bunclody Town, Castlebridge, Courtown and Riverchapel, Ferns, Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane and Rosslare Strand.
Level 3b Strategic Settlements	Bridgetown, Campile, Clonroche, Coolgreany, Kilmuckridge, Kilmore Quay, Taghmon and Wellingtonbridge.
Level 4 Large Villages	Adamstown, Ballaghkeen, Ballycanew, Ballycullane, Ballindaggin, Ballyhack, Ballyhogue, Ballymurn, Ballywilliam, Barntown, Blackwater, Bree, Camolin, Carrig-on-Bannow, Clongeen, Craanford, Duncannon, Fethard, Killinerin, Murntown, Oilgate, Oulart, Piercestown, Ramsgrange, Tagoat.
Level 5 Small Villages Category 1	Arthurstown, Caim, Davidstown, Duncormick, Glenbrien, Glynn, Kilmore, Kilmyshall, Kiltealy, Lady's Island, Marshalstown, Monagear, Newbawn, Rathnure and Screen.
Level 5 Small Villages Category 2	Ballinaboola, Ballygarrett, Ballymitt, Ballymoney, Boolavogue, Carne, Carrowreagh, Castledockrell, Cleriestown, Courtnacuddy, Crossabeg, Curracloe, Foulkesmills, Gusserane, Holyfort, Killinick, Monamolin, Monaseed, Rathangan, Tomhaggard.
Level 6 Rural Nodes	Ballycarney, Ballycogley, Ballyduff, Ballyedmond, Ballyellis, Ballyfad, Ballyoughter, Ballyroebuck, Ballythomas, Baldwinstown, Cahore, Cassagh, Castletown, Clologue, Clohamon, Cullenstown, Cushinstown, Donard, Galbally, Horeswood, Killann, Killenagh, Killurin, Mayglass, Poulpeasty, Raheen, Rathgarogue, Saltmills, Tara Hill, Tellarought, Templeshambo, The Harrow, The Rock, Tombrack, Watchhouse Village.
Level 7 Open Countryside	The open countryside outside of the settlements listed in Levels 1 to 6.

<sup>1</sup> In the event that a settlement has not been allocated a 'level' in the Settlement Hierarchy, the Planning Authority will determine the appropriate level, role, function and growth controls for that settlement and advise accordingly.

Figure 3.2 Settlements





## 3.6 Core Strategy Development Approach

Section 3.6.1 to Section 3.6.7 sets out the development approach for settlements at each level in the Settlement Hierarchy. They are supported by a set of objectives at the end of this chapter. These objectives should also be read in conjunction with all of the other chapters in the Written Statement and other relevant Volumes of the Plan. The development approach set out for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town will be incorporated into, and expanded upon, in the new local area plans for those towns.

### 3.6.1 Level 1 Key Towns

#### Wexford Town

Wexford Town is designated as a Key Town in the RSES. The RSES outlines that, together with five other towns of significant size in the Southern Region, Wexford Town is a self-sustaining regional driver which has a comparable structure to the five centres designated in the NPF.

Wexford Town is the largest town in the county with a population of 20,188 in 2016. The town has been to the forefront of the county's Settlement Strategy since 2002 given its designation as a then 'Hub' in both the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines. There has been significant targeted investment in the town to support this role and to help achieve the critical mass to function and fulfil its designation as a Hub. This investment included developing the town's transport links, water services, educational facilities, in particular third level education, health services, public administration and the development of high-quality business locations and supporting services. Given the extent of existing and planned investment, the town will continue to be the county's primary settlement for residential and economic growth.

Wexford Town is a significant regional centre for education, health, public services and retail. The town is also a major employment centre for the finance, life sciences and technology sectors. The planned Trinity Wharf mixed use development will provide the platform to significantly enhance the town's profile as an attractive environment for international companies seeking to locate in the county, or for existing companies looking to expand. The regeneration of Commercial Quay and

Monck Street will also attract tourists, business visitors, conferences and employees of international companies seeking to locate in Wexford.

The RSES recognises its role in extending the Eastern Economic Corridor to Rosslare Europort and the strategic location of the town in relation to the Europort. It emphasises the need to ensure that the development of the town supports that relationship with the port.

Tourism also offers potential to add to the regional economic driver role. The Council's Tourism Development Strategy proposes to develop Wexford town's profile as a unique and vibrant Maritime town. This will be centred on the town's Viking heritage, its long and rich seafaring history, unique maritime environment, water sports, festival and food offering and, in time, the Trinity Wharf Development which includes a marina, and the redevelopment of the Commercial Quay area in the centre of the town.

There are also public realm projects which will enhance the attractiveness of the town including the Crescent Quay Enhancement work and the public realm elements of the Trinity Wharf scheme which will develop a new urban quarter with a high-quality public realm, civic spaces, a new boardwalk and an urban greenway, and Monck Street and the area surrounding the Commercial Quay area.

The development of the town is dependent on some infrastructural requirements including road, rail and water services. There is also currently a shortfall in primary and post primary educational places which needs to be urgently addressed in order to accommodate the existing population and future populations and to ensure the town is attractive to families who are relocating to the town for work or other reasons.

## Development Approach

In order to fulfil its designation as a Key Town in the RSES and in line with RP0 11 and RPO 16, the Council will:

1. Allocate significant population growth to the town to contribute to the development of a centre of scale.
2. Focus on significantly increasing employment and economic development in the

town to achieve a critical mass of employers. While the Council will facilitate all types of economic development, there will be a targeted focus on expanding the town's profile in the finance, life sciences, technology and tourism sectors and to develop synergies with Wexford Campus of Carlow IT and the future SETU to match skills and talent with the needs of those sectors.

3. Focus on the development of Trinity Wharf as a Strategic Employment Location.
4. Focus on development in the town that supports the function and expansion of Rosslare Europort, including improvements to transport links, industrial development, commercial and residential development.
5. Focus on maximising the economic opportunities offered by the location of the town on the Eastern Economic Corridor.
6. Prioritise the development of brownfield and infill sites in the town centre and close to public transport corridors, and ensure the efficient use of those central sites, achieving compact growth, commercial redevelopment, and higher residential densities, while also ensuring attractive and high-quality living environments.
7. Improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and visit through the development of key urban regeneration projects such as Trinity Wharf and public realm schemes including Crescent Quay, Monck Street and the Commercial Quay area.
8. Require the future growth of the town to be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with Irish Water to ensure that sufficient water and wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth does not contribute to degradation of the water environment and in particular designated sites.
9. Prepare a local transport plan that will inform zoning decisions, include retention and expansion of the town bus network and rail services, improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and rural transport services into the town and secure investment to deliver the plan.
10. Deliver and facilitate the delivery of new infrastructure to support the planned population growth, including education, health services, social, recreation and amenity open spaces and cultural requirements to keep pace with recent and future planned population growth.
11. Support learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration

initiatives and enterprise to address unemployment and deprivation legacies in the town.

12. Support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements which would benefit the key town role including improving road infrastructure to enhance links from Rosslare and Wexford to include the M11/M25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour scheme, the N30 and the N80, improvements to rail infrastructure and services, upgrading and development of water supply and additional investment in wastewater infrastructure to support the economic development and anticipated growth of the town.
13. Protect and enhance amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity in the town.
14. Focus on the redevelopment of the Commercial Quay area as a Strategic Tourism and public realm improvement location.

A set of strategic objectives for the town is set out at the end of this chapter (WT01-WT10). The spatial planning framework for the town will be set out in the new Wexford Town and Environs Local Area Plan.

## Gorey Town

Gorey was designated as a Key Town in the RSES which notes that it is an important and thriving town which is well placed to accommodate additional economic growth and become more self-sustaining.

The third largest town in the county in 2016, Gorey Town performs a variety of functions including housing, employment, education, health care, retail, recreation, tourism and culture. The town continues to thrive and is a much sought after residential location due to its proximity to Wicklow and South Dublin. This strategic location, which offers immediate access to Dublin via the M11 and rail, has contributed to it becoming a commuter town with many of the town's residents dependent on jobs outside of the county. However, equally this strategic location, located on the Eastern Economic Corridor and in proximity to Wexford Town and Rosslare Europort, also offers opportunities to attract and accommodate additional economic growth to allow the town to become more self-sustaining.

The economic and social impact of commuting is a serious concern, and the creation of new employment opportunities, is a priority for the Council in order to reduce the unsustainable levels of commuting. Given its strategic location and the available skills pool, the town is attractive to a variety of sectors including the IT sector, logistics and tourism. The recently developed M11 Business Park, Ballyloughan Business Park and Gorey Business Park all offer property solutions for economic development, along with the quantum of undeveloped lands that are zoned for economic and employment related uses.

The town is performing very well in terms of retail and services. The town centre is vibrant and attractive, with some opportunities for brownfield and infill developments. The redevelopment of the Market House and associated back lands for a cultural development is one such site. There has also been significant investment in the public realm, with the recent redevelopment of the Avenue and the planned works on Esmonde Street.

The town is also well served by wastewater services due to the recent upgrade of the Courtown wastewater treatment plant. In this regard, the town can accommodate the additional population and employment growth envisaged to achieve its role as a regional economic driver.

There is however a shortfall in post primary educational places which needs to be urgently addressed. There are sufficient lands zoned in the Gorey LAP to accommodate additional education facilities, and the Council will continue to advocate for the delivery of additional school places as a priority for the existing population and the future population.

## Development Approach

In order to fulfil its designation as a Key Town in the RSES and in line with RPO 11 and RPO 25, the Council will:

1. Allocate significant population growth to the town to contribute to the development of a self-sustaining critical mass of population.
2. Focus on significantly increasing employment and economic development in the town to allow the town to become a Strategic Employment Location, be more self-sustaining and to counteract unsustainable commuting out of the county for jobs.

While the Council will facilitate all types of economic development, there will be focus a strong focus on the ICT and technology sectors.

3. Focus on maximising the economic opportunities offered by the location of the town on the Eastern Economic Corridor.
4. Prioritise the development of brownfield and infill sites in the town centre and close to public transport corridors, and ensure the efficient use of those central sites, achieving compact growth and higher residential densities, while also ensuring attractive and high-quality living environments.
5. Continue to improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and visit through the development of key projects including Esmonde Street and the Market House.
6. Require the future growth of the town to be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with Irish Water to ensure that sufficient water and wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth does not contribute to degradation of the water environment and in particular designated sites.
7. Deliver and facilitate the delivery of social and community infrastructure to support the future population growth including education, health services, recreation and amenity open spaces, social and cultural requirements to keep pace with recent and future planned population growth.
8. Prepare a local transport plan that will inform zoning decisions, include the development of the town bus network and rail services, improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and rural transport services into the town and secure investment to deliver the plan.
9. Support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements which would benefit the key town role including investment in the Dublin-Gorey-Rosslare Europort rail to protect the line and increase speed and frequency of services, the planned Gorey Regional Water Supply programme, the orbital route and bridges over the rail line as proposed in the Gorey LAP.
10. Protect and enhance amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity in the town.

A set of strategic objectives for the town is set out at the end of this chapter (GT01 to GT07). The spatial planning framework for the town is set out in the Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023.

### 3.6.2 Level 2 Large Towns

The NPF defines large towns as those with a population of >10,000 in 2016 and Enniscorthy Town falls within this 'definition'. While New Ross has a smaller population (8,040 in 2016), it does perform the same important functions for its residents and municipal district as Enniscorthy Town does for its municipal district and it is therefore included at the same level.

#### Enniscorthy Town

The second largest town in the county, Enniscorthy Town, provides a range of functions including housing, employment, education, health care, retail, recreation, tourism and culture. The town's development has been curtailed in recent years due to wastewater infrastructural constraints. This issue has been addressed, and along with the opening of the M11 Enniscorthy Bypass in July 2019 and the town's location on the Eastern Economic Corridor, new opportunities present for the town and it will be in a position to accommodate additional growth, both population and employment.

The development of employment opportunities in the town is a priority for the Council, to help address the legacy of unemployment and deprivation that is associated with some parts of the town. The town is carving out a new and exciting name for itself in the area of high-performance buildings (NZEB). In 2017, the town was chosen as the location of one of three global UN 'Centres of Excellence' for curbing carbon emissions with a particular emphasis on high performance buildings. The centre, which is anticipated will become the National centre, provides significant opportunities to attract investment in research and development, technology transfer between third level education institutions, enterprise, up-skilling and re-skilling.

The new Enniscorthy Business and Technology Park is located at Killagoley on approximately 14.45 hectares. The development will facilitate small and medium enterprises. The objective is to deliver a modern industrial facility with a view to attracting businesses from the science and technology sectors and the creation of jobs and the betterment of the local economy.

The RSES introduces the concept of Smart Cities and Towns which deploy digital technologies. It recognises that Enniscorthy Town has taken the initial steps towards

the achievement of Smart Town Status with the establishment of the FAB LAB in 2017, the development of a Technology Park for smart business and the establishment of the NZEB training centre.

The Council is committed to developing the town as a tourist destination and is currently developing a Master Plan to develop the town as new iconic visitor attraction and public realm space whilst protecting its strong heritage, cultural and environmental sites. It will be aligned to Ireland's Ancient East, taking advantage of Vinegar Hill and Enniscorthy Castle which fit within the 'Conquer and Conquest' theme. The town can also benefit from clustering with other nearby tourist locations including the National Heritage Park in Wexford Town and Ferns Castle.

There are also plans to develop a blueway from Bunclody through Enniscorthy Town to Wexford Town.

There are areas in the town in need of regeneration. The Council is currently advancing proposals for an ambitious regeneration of the Templeshannon area. It includes a number of key infrastructural projects including the improvement of the public realm and streetscape, improving accessibility and linkages from the area to the rest of the town including a new pedestrian bridge<sup>2</sup>, transformation of the Waterfront Leisure Centre private car park to a create a new civic space and a public car park and improvements of the Enniscorthy Railway Station arrival area and connection to the rest of the town.

Recent investment in wastewater services infrastructure places the town in a good position to accommodate additional growth, both population and employment. A long awaited flood relief scheme is also due to commence soon. The town would benefit from investment in infrastructure including the rail line and improved road links in particular the N30 and N80.

## Enniscorthy as a Smart Town

- a.) Enniscorthy is designated a Smart Town by the RSES. The Council will develop a detailed development strategy based on this designation with a particular focus on developing Enniscorthy as a national leader in digital technology, innovation and transformation with a view to making Enniscorthy well connected, sustainable, resilient and technologically literate.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the Plan the term 'pedestrian' is intended to refer to footpath users and to distinguish from users who do not use footpaths such as cyclists and motorised modes. 'Pedestrian' incorporates all potential users, persons with a disability, including mobility aid and wheelchair users.



- b.)** The Council will leverage information and communication technologies, the internet of things, geospatial technology (such as geographic information systems, remote sensor technology and geofencing), artificial intelligence, blockchain applications, cloud-based applications and wireless technologies, among others, to develop and future proof Enniscorthy. The Council will prioritise Enniscorthy as an early adopter of smart technology. Wexford County Council will leverage technological solutions for Enniscorthy to improve public services, infrastructure, social, economic, tourist, employment and living experiences of Enniscorthy's residents.
- c.)** In developing Enniscorthy as a Smart Town, the Council will seek private, public and governmental (International, European (including Interreg funding), national and local) investment. It will furthermore seek to develop strategic research and innovation partnerships with suitable European partner towns and cities.
- d.)** As a subset of Enniscorthy as a Smart Town Strategy and acknowledging Enniscorthy town's strategic importance as a UN centre of excellence in energy efficiency in High Performance Buildings, the Council will specifically pursue a focused Smart Town/Smart Environment Strategy which marries the Smart Town Strategy with environmental sustainability aims. The Council will look to Reykjavik and Amsterdam, among others, for precedent and inspiration.
- e.)** The Council will develop Bunclody and Ferns as smart hubs under the umbrella of the Enniscorthy Smart Town Strategy.

## Development Approach

In order to fulfil its designation as a Large Town, the Council will:

- 1.** Allocate moderate population growth to the town.
- 2.** Focus on increasing employment and economic development in the town, and maximise the opportunities offered by Enniscorthy Business and Technology Park and the UN Centre of Excellence in High Performance Buildings.
- 3.** Focus on maximising the economic opportunities offered by the town's location on the Eastern Economic Corridor.
- 4.** Focus on regeneration of the town centre including the Templeshannon area.

5. Further develop the town's tourism potential and maximise the direct and indirect spin off for the town and its residents.
6. Support learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration initiatives and enterprise to address unemployment and deprivation legacies in the town.
7. Prioritise the development of brownfield and infill sites in the town centre and close to public transport nodes, and ensure the efficient use of those central sites, achieving compact growth and higher residential densities, while also ensuring attractive and high-quality living environments.
8. Continue to improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and visit through the development of key projects including the regeneration of the Templeshannon Area and the Quays and public realm improvements to the town centre.
9. Require the future growth of the town to be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with Irish Water to ensure that sufficient water and wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth does not contribute to degradation of the water environment and in particular designated sites.
10. Support the delivery of social and community infrastructure to support the additional population including education, health services, recreation and amenity open spaces, social and cultural requirements to keep pace with recent and future planned population growth.
11. Prepare a local transport plan that will inform zoning decisions, include the development of the town bus network and rail services, improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and rural transport services into the town and secure investment to deliver the plan.
12. Support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements which would benefit the town including; investment in the Dublin-Gorey-Rosslare Europort rail line to protect the line and increase speed and frequency of services, road links and infrastructure including the N30 and the N80, the Flood Relief Scheme and investments in digital connectivity and technologies.
13. Protect and enhance amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity in all new development.

14. With the opening of the Enniscorthy bypass, Enniscorthy is at risk of suffering the same economic and social impact of commuting that towns of a similar distance from Dublin have suffered. The creation of new employment opportunities in Enniscorthy is a priority for the council in order to reduce and prevent the development of unsustainable levels of commuting and to tackle existing levels of social deprivation. To this end the Council will focus on increasing employment and economic development in the town. While the council will facilitate all types of economic development there will be a strong focus on life sciences, funds and other similar financial services sectors and environmental research and development sectors.
15. The Council recognises Enniscorthy's role as a historical market town with a large natural catchment area. In particular, the Council recognises the close historical and economic connections of the Level 3a Service Settlements of Bunclody and Ferns with Enniscorthy town. The Council will strengthen the economic, tourism and transport connectedness between these urban centres, including the development of strategic cycle routes and improvements to walking infrastructure and rural transport links.
16. The Council acknowledges the environmental, tourism and economic importance of the River Slaney and will seek to develop these. The Council will also focus on developing a Blueway between Bunclody and Enniscorthy to include adjacent cycleway and walking trail subject to feasibility assessment and environmental assessments. The Council will make a significant effort to abate and reverse the degradation of the River Slaney at Clohamon bridge and its environs. Any such proposals will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of the Slaney River Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
17. The Council recognises the need for increased water capacity for Enniscorthy town and will prioritise working with Irish Water to deliver this necessary increased capacity.
18. The Council recognises the importance and potential to County Wexford of the industrial and manufacturing area of the old Dublin Road and will develop the area into a modern industrial centre. The Council will develop the amenities, services, visuals and access to the centre. The Council will particularly target FDI manufacturing companies to the area.

A set of strategic objectives for the town is set out at the end of this chapter (ET01 to ET08). The spatial planning strategy for the town will be set out in a new Enniscorthy Town and Environs Local Area Plan.

## New Ross Town

The fourth largest town in the county, New Ross performs a variety of important functions including housing, employment, education, health care, retail, recreation, tourism and culture. The town has benefited from investment in recent years with the focus on securing the delivery of the N25 New Ross Bypass, developing the town's tourism potential and improvements to the public realm such as the Board walk, and developing social and community facilities including The Library Park.

Tourism is very much coming to the forefront as the town's principle economic role. The development of the New Ross to Waterford Greenway is under way. The Council was recently granted €5.56 million in funding under the Rural Development and Regeneration Fund to develop a New Ross Tourism Transformation Project. The project will see the development of three visitor attractions in an ambitious plan that combines the renewal of prominent town centre sites with compelling tourism experiences focused around the town's Norman history and the Dunbrody Famine Ship, with the development of a new immersive visitor centre based on the town's former role as an emigration port. The works also include a major €1.2m public realm park redevelopment at High Hill.

The town is strategically located between Wexford Town and Waterford City and is designated in the RSES as a Hinterland Town of the Waterford MASP. The town has significant potential to benefit from a reciprocal relationship with the MASP, creating synergies and developing supporting specialisms. The town would also benefit from sustainable transport links with the MASP. The town has the advantage of having an inland port which provides the opportunity for further development in both port-related activities and in spin-off industries.

The town has a strategic location on the route from the Eastern Economic Corridor to the Southern Region and the Atlantic Economic Corridor. The completion of the M25 Bypass, its water services capacities and its significant tourism potential means that it is well positioned to accommodate additional growth.

## Development Approach

In order to fulfil its role, the Council will apply the following development approach for New Ross Town:

- Apply a moderate population growth rate with the aim of incrementally growing the population of New Ross to 10,000 persons over a few plan periods.
- Focus on developing New Ross Town as a 'Gateway' given its location in the centre of the South-East and maximise the economic and social opportunities offered by the newly opened N25 New Ross By-Pass, the proximity to the Waterford MASP and the town's links to the Eastern Economic Corridor, the South-East Greenway, Waterford Institute of Technology and Waterford Airport.
- To prepare, as part of the local area plan for the town, an Economic and Spatial Strategy which will identify and develop opportunities for synergies and specialisms to compliment the role of Waterford MASP. This strategy will be informed by a report commissioned by the Council which will consider the strengths, opportunities, impacts and consequences of the Waterford MASP on South Wexford and New Ross.
- Focus on developing and maximising the tourism potential of the town, prioritising the development of the New Ross Tourism Transformational Project and securing the Fáilte Ireland Destination Town status for the town.
- Focus on the regeneration of the town centre, utilising key brownfield and infill sites to deliver new housing, economic, commercial and tourism development.
- Support learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration initiatives and enterprise to address unemployment and deprivation legacies in the town.
- Maximise the economic potential offered by New Ross Port and Belview Port, port-related development, manufacturing and transport and logistics sectors.
- Prepare a local transport plan that will inform zoning decisions and identify opportunities to facilitate and implement sustainable transport connections to the Waterford MASP, Wexford Town and the towns of the region. The plan will also provide for the development of the town bus network, improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and rural transport services into the town and secure investment to deliver the plan.

- Support the delivery of social and community infrastructure to support the additional population including education, health services, recreation and amenity open spaces, social and cultural requirements to keep pace with future planned population growth.
- Protect and enhance amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity in all new development.

A set of strategic objectives for New Ross Town is set out at the end of this chapter (NT01 to NT11). The spatial planning framework, which will incorporate this development approach, will be set out in a newly prepared New Ross Town and Environs Local Area Plan.

### 3.6.3 Level 3a Service Settlements

There are six settlements included at this level: Bunclody Town, Castlebridge, Courtown and Riverchapel, Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane, Rosslare Strand and Ferns.

#### Role and Function

While the size of these settlements varies, the settlements all share a common characteristic of being important service settlements for their local communities and their wider rural hinterlands. Some of the settlements are important contributors to economic activity in the county including Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane (marine and port), Rosslare Strand (tourism) and Courtown and Riverchapel (tourism, marine and fisheries). Others including Bunclody Town and Ferns have potential for tourism related development in particular.

All of these settlements perform important functions including retail, commercial, education, residential, service and amenity functions. The location of these settlements, together with targeted growth and investment in services, will contribute to the balanced spatial development of the county.

#### Development Approach

The development approach for the Service settlements is to:

- Tailor population growth for each settlement having regard to their existing baseline populations, existing and possible potential for economic development

and infrastructural capacities. In allocating population regard was also had to the rate and pace of past development and the need to deliver social and community facilities to keep pace with recent development e.g. Courtown Harbour and Riverchapel.

- Apply the sequential approach to the development of land, requiring residential development to take place within the existing footprint of the settlement. The leap frogging of infill/brownfield lands to undeveloped or greenfield lands will not be considered.
- Promote economic and enterprise development appropriate in scale to the settlements, such as expanding the potential of the marine economy and tourism in Courtown and Riverchapel, the port and port-related development in Rosslare Harbour and developing the tourism potential of Rosslare Strand, Bunclody Town and Ferns,
- Support learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration initiatives and enterprise to address unemployment and deprivation legacies which are evident in some of these settlements, e.g. Bunclody, Courtown and Riverchapel.
- Focus on maximising opportunities presented to settlements located on, or in close proximity to planned greenway routes, rail lines and at coastal locations.
- Focus on the regeneration and renewal of these settlements.
- Ensure that new development contributes to the creation of attractive, liveable, well-designed, high-quality settlements and the local communities enjoy a high-quality of life and well-being.
- Support community organisations who are working to develop community facilities and promote and facilitate initiatives in the public realm.
- Protect and enhance amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity in these settlements.

Bunclody Town and Rosslare Harbour have population >1,500. Settlement Plans including specific objectives and land use zoning for these settlements are included in Volume 3.

Castlebridge and Rosslare Strand also have population >1,500. Settlement Plans including specific objectives for both settlements are included in Volume 3.

The Council intends to vary the Plan to include land use zoning maps for Castlebridge and Rosslare Strand and a Settlement Plan for Ferns within three years of the adoption of the County Development Plan or within one year of the adoption of the LAPs for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town, whichever is the sooner.

The lifetime of the Courtown and Riverchapel Local Area Plan has been extended by five years to 2026 and provides the spatial planning framework for this settlement.

### 3.6.4 Level 3b Strategic Settlements

There are eight settlements included at this level: Bridgetown, Campile, Clonroche, Coolgreany, Kilmore Quay, Kilmuckridge, Taghmon and Wellingtonbridge.

#### Role and Function

There is a strategic imperative to prioritise the development of these villages. Some of the settlements are important contributors to economic activity at sub-county level with existing large employers such as Kilmore Quay (marine, fisheries and tourism), Clonroche (agri foods) and Taghmon (food production and logistics). Some of the settlements, such as Wellingtonbridge, Kilmuckridge and Kilmore Quay, have potential to be regenerated through tourism related development. All of these settlements perform important functions including retail, commercial, education, residential, service and amenity functions for wide sub-county hinterlands. In general, these functions are far in excess of that required to support their own population.

A number of these settlements have not been targeted for significant population growth over the lifetime of the plan but have been included on this level of the hierarchy in order to prioritise the growth of infrastructure, employment and community and amenity services and improve socio-economic outcomes.

While some of the settlements have sufficient wastewater capacity, investment is required in Campile, Kilmore Quay and Wellingtonbridge to allow these settlements to further develop.



## Development Approach

The development approach for these Strategic Settlements is to:

- Tailor population growth for each settlement having regard to their existing baseline populations, potential for economic development and infrastructural capacities. When allocating population, regard was also had to the rate and pace of past development and the need to deliver social and community facilities to keep pace with recent development e.g., Bridgetown.
- Apply the sequential approach to the development of land, requiring residential development to take place within the existing footprint of the settlement. The leap frogging of infill/brownfield lands to undeveloped or greenfield lands will not be considered.
- Promote economic and enterprise development appropriate in scale to the settlements, such as expanding the potential of the marine economy and tourism in Kilmore Quay and developing the tourism potential of Kilmuckridge and Wellingtonbridge.
- Support learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration initiatives and enterprise to address unemployment and deprivation legacies which are evident in some of these settlements, e.g., Clonroche, Taghmon, and Bridgetown.
- Focus on maximising opportunities presented to settlements located on, or in close proximity to planned greenway routes, rail lines and the coast.
- Focus on the regeneration and renewal of these settlements.
- Ensure that new development contributes to the creation of attractive, liveable, well-designed, high-quality settlements and the local communities enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
- Support community organisations who are working to develop community facilities and promote and facilitate initiatives in the public realm.
- Protect and enhance amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity in these settlements.

The Council will vary the Plan to include settlement boundaries and specific objectives (and identify infill and regeneration sites) for these settlements within three years of

the adoption of the County Development Plan or within one year of the adoption of the LAPs for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town, whichever is the sooner.

### 3.6.5 Level 4 Large Villages

There are 25 settlements included at this level: Adamstown, Ballaghkeen, Ballycanew, Ballycullane, Ballindaggin, Ballyhack, Ballyhogue, Ballymurn, Ballywilliam, Barntown, Blackwater, Bree, Camolin, Carrig-on-Bannow, Clongeen, Craanford, Duncannon, Fethard, Killinerin, Murntown, Oilgate, Oulart, Piercestown, Ramsgrange and Tagoat.

#### Role and Function

While these settlements vary in size and scale to each other, they share the common characteristics of providing important local level services. These villages have identifiable settlement structures and established populations and have the potential to support additional growth. The wastewater services in most of these villages require investment and it is considered that their inclusion at this level in the hierarchy will provide a plan-led approach to securing this investment.

#### Development Approach

These are large villages that have a moderate level of existing infrastructural services, both physical and social, and are capable of accommodating additional population growth.

The spatial planning approach for these villages is to concentrate new residential growth within the existing footprint of the village. The Council will apply the sequential approach to the development of land, focusing on the development of lands within and closest to the village centre first. 'Leap-frogging' of undeveloped lands and greenfield lands will not be considered. The Council will vary the Plan to include settlement boundary maps for these settlements within three years of the adoption of the County Development Plan or within one year of the adoption of the LAPs for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town, whichever is sooner.

The density of developments in these settlements will be considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to the character of the settlement and its ability to absorb

new development. This is discussed further in Section 4.7.2.1 Density in Residential Developments in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

In order to safeguard their continued existence into the future, it is important that growth is encouraged and facilitated in a sustainable manner. These settlements should aim to target local investment in generally small scale non-intensive industry that is based on local rural resources.

Retail outlets should provide for the convenience needs of the local population. Social / recreational facilities should provide for the day to day needs of the local population.

In these settlements it is essential that growth is supported while also strictly controlled so that development is undertaken in a manner that is respectful to the character of these villages and the environmental sensitivities of these rural areas and the sensitivities of coastal settlements.

New developments should contribute to the protection and enhancement of amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity and recreation and open spaces.

### 3.6.6 Level 5 Small Villages

The county's small villages play an important role in providing local retailing, services, social and recreational facilities to their respective communities and to the wider rural hinterlands. These villages also offer opportunities to attract new people seeking to live in a rural environment and provide an alternative to urban generated rural housing. This, in turn, will lead to opportunities for the provision of additional services.

The smaller village level is divided into two categories: Category 1 and Category 2. The purpose of this sub-division is to ensure the development approach is appropriate to the character and scale of each type of village.

#### Level 5 Small Village Category 1

There are 15 settlements in this category: Arthurstown, Caim, Davidstown,

Duncormick, Glenbrien, Glynn, Kilmore, Kilmyshall, Killealy, Lady's Island, Marshalstown, Monagear, Newbawn, Rathnure and Screen.

### Role and Function

These villages have identifiable settlement structures, established populations and have potential to support a small quantum of additional growth, while protecting the character of the settlement. The wastewater services in most of these villages require investment and it is considered that their inclusion at this level in the hierarchy will provide a plan-led approach to securing this investment.

### Development Approach

The development approach for these villages is to facilitate incremental growth in a sustainable manner. These villages will be consolidated by concentrating new growth in the village centre. The planning authority will apply the sequential approach to the development of land, focusing on the development of lands within the existing footprint and closest to the village centre first. 'Leap-frogging' of undeveloped lands will not be considered. The Council will vary the Plan to include settlement boundary maps for these settlements within three years of the adoption of the County Development Plan or within one year of the adoption of the LAPs for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town, whichever is the sooner.

The scale and density of future residential development in these settlements will be strictly controlled. New residential development will only be considered where it is appropriate in scale to the size and character of the village. Future development in these villages should ideally be based on the development of a number of well-integrated sites within and around the village centre. This is discussed further in Section 4.7.2.1 Density of Residential Developments in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

New developments should contribute to the protection and enhancement of amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity and recreation and open spaces.

### Level 5 Small Villages Category 2

There are 20 settlements in this category: Ballinaboola, Ballygarrett, Ballymitty,

Ballymoney, Boolavogue, Carne, Carrowreagh, Castledockrell, Cleriestown, Courtnacuddy, Crossabeg, Curracloe, Foulkesmills, Gusserane, Holyfort, Killinick, Monamolin, Monaseed, Rathangan and Tomhaggard.

## Role and Function

These villages are similar in character to Category 1 villages, with the exception that they are generally smaller in scale, with more limited infrastructure and as such can accommodate lesser levels of growth than Category 1 villages. In all other respects they perform a similar role and function as Category 1 villages acting as a place where the local rural community gathers and support the identity of the local community. Having regard to their status on a lower tier of the settlement hierarchy, it is particularly important to safeguard their continued existence into the future, and to ensure that growth is encouraged and facilitated in a sustainable manner.

## Development Approach

The development approach for Category 2 villages is to ensure they maintain their existing population levels and services. Future growth will be incremental, small in scale and appropriate to the size, scale and character of the village. This is discussed further in Section 4.7.2.1 Density in Residential Developments in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

These villages will be consolidated by concentrating new growth within the existing footprint of the village. The Council will vary the Plan to include settlement boundary maps for these settlements within three years of the adoption of the County Development Plan or within one year of the adoption of the LAPs for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town, whichever is the sooner. The Planning Authority will apply the sequential approach to the development of land, focusing on the development of lands within the existing footprint and closest to the village centre first. 'Leap-frogging' of undeveloped lands will not be considered. New developments should contribute to the protection and enhancement of amenities, heritage, green infrastructure and biodiversity and recreation and open spaces.

### 3.6.7 Rural Nodes

There are 35 rural nodes: Ballycarney, Ballycogley, Ballyduff, Ballyedmond, Ballyellis, Ballyfad, Ballyoughter, Ballyroebuck, Ballythomas, Baldwinstown, Cahore, Cassagh, Castletown, Clologue, Clohamon, Cullenstown, Cushinstown, Donard, Galbally, Horeswood, Killann, Killenagh, Killurin, Mayglass, Poulpeasty, Raheen, Rathgarogue, Saltmills, Tara Hill, Tellarought, Templeshambo, The Harrow, The Rock, Tombrack and Watchhouse Village.

#### Role and Function

These are 'unstructured' settlements best described as rural areas where a collection of one-off rural dwellings and/or local community or social services, such as a church, school, public house or a shop are clustered around a focal point, such as a crossroads. These settlements will be considered suitable for very limited new rural development, with the main purpose of the designation being to direct rural generated housing into these rural settlements rather than the open countryside.

#### Development Approach

The level of development in these rural settlements will be strictly controlled to ensure that the development is in keeping with the character of the settlement and the settlement has the infrastructural capacity to accommodate the additional development.

Individual houses will be considered at these locations provided that the layout respects the form and structure of the village and subject to complying with all planning, traffic safety and environmental criteria. A permanent residence condition shall be attached to any permission.

In general, the guiding principle is that development must be commensurate to the scale of the node and no more than 5 houses will be permitted in a smaller rural node and no more than 5-8 houses will be permitted in a larger node during the period of this Plan. An exception to this may be considered where it is demonstrated that an additional dwelling(s) can be accommodated without detracting from the rural character of the node.

### 3.6.8 Open Countryside

The open countryside is at the lowest level of the Settlement Hierarchy and comprises those parts of the county outside of settlements in Level 1 to 6. One off rural housing in the open countryside will be considered where a social or functional economic need is demonstrated in accordance with Section 4.9 Housing in the Open Countryside in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

## 3.7 Allocation of Population to the Settlement Hierarchy

The Core Strategy must be compliant with any relevant national and regional population targets.

### 3.7.1 NPF and RSES Population Targets

The NPF Implementation Roadmap published in July 2018 outlines that given the differences between what many city and county development plans are currently making provision for and likely outcomes on the ground, there is a requirement for a transitional set of population projections to inform these plans for the periods to 2026 and 2031 in particular. These projections provide for a transitional approach to delivering better alignment between the plans at the different levels<sup>3</sup>. The transitional population projections for the Southern Region allocate the following population to County Wexford:

- By 2026: a population of between 163,000 and 166,000
- By 2031: a population of between 169,000 to 172,500.

### 3.7.2 Achieving NPF Brownfield/Infill Targets

The introduction of significant infill/brownfield targets for residential development within existing settlement 'footprints' in the NPF must be factored in to reflect the move away from an excessive reliance on greenfield development to meet our development needs and encourage more city, town and village centre renewal. This means that the extent of zonings on peripheral greenfield development sites will

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<sup>3</sup> The transitional population projections plot a growth trajectory set approximately mid-way between what is currently being planned for in statutory Development Plans if projected forward to 2031, and the more likely evidence based and nationally coherent projected scenario to 2031 and 2040. These 'adjusted' transitional figures will apply to 2026 and will also inform the period to 2031. Transitional population projections, rounded to the nearest 500 persons, and expressed as a range with 20% variation, are included for each Region and County in Appendix 2 of the Roadmap.

need to be critically evaluated with regard to their compatibility with the renewal and regeneration targets set out in the NPF. This requires projected population growth to be planned in accordance with NPF national policy.

Objectives NPO 3a, b and c, target infill and brownfield development within the existing built-up footprint of urban settlements. The NPF defines 'footprint' as the existing built-up footprint of all sizes of urban settlement, as defined by the CSO in line with the UN criteria i.e. having a minimum of 50 occupied dwellings, with a maximum distance between any dwelling and the building closest to it of 100 meters, and where there is evidence of an urban centre (shop, school etc.). Individual or scheme homes delivered outside of the CSO defined urban settlement boundary are classed as Greenfield.

The Core Strategy has to balance the requirement for different types of housing provision by location, to include the zoning of land where applicable, from:

- i. Cities and their suburbs
- ii. Large towns
- iii. Small towns
- iv. Settlements of 1,500 people or fewer
- v. The countryside generally.

The NPF states that where a local authority includes all of these five categories of housing location, at least three of these settlement types (i.e. i, ii and iii) must also include specific consideration of infill/ brownfield and greenfield capacity. NPO 3c requires that at least 30% of all new homes targeted in settlements other than the five cities and their suburbs, to be delivered within the built-up footprints.

As this Plan does not include zoning for the towns (other than Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane and Bunclody) it is not possible to identify at this stage which sites will be classified as infill and which will be classified as greenfield. The appropriate sites will be identified when Settlement Plans and Local Area Plans are being prepared. It is likely that a significant portion of the allocated population will be capable of being accommodated on lands which would fall within definitions of infill or brownfield. The delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of settlements will be crucial to achieving compact growth and sustainable settlements where opportunities



to use sustainable modes are maximised. Section 5.10.1 in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages provides details of the types of land which are considered infill or brownfield and where it is anticipated such housing will be delivered.

Similarly, as the land use zoning plans for the towns are not included in this Plan it is not possible to tailor densities to particular sites (such as central sites or those on public transport corridors). Thus while the allocated population is set by the County Development Plan, the quantum of zoned land cannot be set until each of the specific towns are examined in their LAPs or Settlement Plans to determine their ability to achieve infill or brownfield development, compact growth and higher densities. As such for the purposes of the Core Strategy an assumed density of 35 units/hectare has been given to Wexford Town, Gorey Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town and 25 units/hectare to the Level 3a Settlements. The density in the remaining settlements will be determined by reference to the settlement size and the guiding densities set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Guidelines in Urban Areas (DELG, 2009). See Section 4.7.2.1 Density of Residential Developments in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing for further details.

### 3.7.3 Core Strategy Population Allocations

The allocation of population to the Settlement Hierarchy is shown in Table 3.3. These allocations are framed by the objectives of the NPF, the RSES and the vision for the county and informed by an analysis of the county which included:

- Demographic profile of settlements and population projections. The projections were prepared to ensure that the population being allocated to any settlement was reasonable having regard to its existing demographic structure;
- The location of the settlement and its ability to assist in achieving the aims of the Core Strategy;
- The existing and potential for economic and enterprise development;
- Existing social infrastructure such as primary school or post primary school and existing services such as supermarket, pharmacy, post office, hardware store, agricultural merchants, public house, hairdressers, and

- Infrastructural and environmental capacities.

The population projections commissioned by the Council indicated that the county would have significantly higher growth than that contained in the NPF Roadmap. For this reason the upper number in the range provided were utilised to allocate the population.

NPO 9 outlines that settlements not identified in NPO 2a or 2b may be identified for significant rates of population growth (that is 30% or more above 2016 population levels) at regional or local planning stages subject to:

- agreement with the regional assembly/local authority as appropriate;
- balance with strategies for other urban and rural areas which means that the totality of planned population growth has to be in line with the overall growth target, and
- a co-ordinated strategy that ensures alignment with investment in infrastructure and the provision of employment, together with the supporting amenities and services.

In this regard and in order to achieve Centres of Scale, the Core Strategy allocates 45% and 40% growth to 2040 to Wexford Town and Gorey Town respectively. In order to achieve a shift in population from rural areas to urban areas growth in settlements has been front loaded where appropriate following the application of a capacity test for these settlements.

**Table 3-3 Allocation of Population to the Settlement Hierarchy**

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	2016	2021	2027	2031	2040
Level 1 Key Towns	Wexford Town	20,188	22,849	26,043	27,036	29,273
	Gorey	9,822	11,027	12,474	12,867	13,751
Level 2 Large Towns	Enniscorthy Town	11,381	12,467	13,771	14,086	14,795
	New Ross Town <sup>4</sup>	7,780	8,134	8,558	9,037	10,114
Level 3a Service Settlements	Bunclody Town <sup>5</sup>	1,430	1,593	1,788	1,810	1,859
	Castlebridge	1,840	1,965	2,116	2,201	2,392

<sup>4</sup> Wexford portion only.

<sup>5</sup> Wexford portion estimated.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	2016	2021	2027	2031	2040
	Courtown and Riverchapel	3,591	3,673	3,771	3,881	4,130
	Ferns	1,415	1,511	1,627	1,693	1,840
	Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane	1,847	2,057	2,309	2,394	2,586
	Rosslare Strand	1,620	1,730	1,863	1,938	2,106
Level 3b Strategic Settlements	Bridgetown (462) <sup>6</sup> , Campile (448), Clonroche (326), Coolgreany (376), Kilmore Quay (372), Kilmuckridge (722), Taghmon (585), Wellingtonbridge (137) <sup>7</sup> .	3,428	3,628	3,869	4,019	4,356
Level 4 Large Villages <sup>8</sup>	Adamstown (293), Ballaghkeen (515), Ballycanew (516), Ballycullane (318), Ballindaggin, Ballyhack, Ballyhogue (269), Ballymurn (524), Ballywilliam, Barntown (459), Blackwater (339), Bree(193), Camolin (415), Carrig on Bannow (258), Craanford, Clongeen (234), Duncannon (305), Fethard (311), Killinerin (244), Murntown (365), Oilgate (358), Oulart (274), Piercestown (535), Ramsgrange (126), Tagoat (439).	7,849	8,346	8,942	9,330	10,204
Level 1-4 <sup>8</sup>		72,191	78,981	87,130	90,291	97,405
Level 5, 6 and Open Countryside <sup>8</sup>		77,531	78,880	80,170	82,209	86,795
NPF Roadmap County Total		149,722	157,861	167,300	172,500	184,200

<sup>6</sup> Figures in brackets are CSO 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Estimate- CSO figure not available.

<sup>8</sup> There is no CSO 2016 population figure available for Ballindaggin, Ballywilliam and Craanford and as such it was not possible to calculate a projection/allocation for these settlements. Therefore, the population for these settlements is excluded from the aggregate allocation totals for Level 4 and are included under the aggregate population for Level 5, 6 and the Rural Remainder.

## 3.8 Housing Requirements

### 3.8.1 Existing Demand

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires a development plan to include a Housing Strategy. The purpose of a Housing Strategy is to ensure that the proper planning and sustainable development of the area provides for the housing of the existing and future populations of the county. The Housing Strategy is contained in Volume 9, is consistent with the NPF and the RSES and incorporates the national and regional transitional population targets.

It set outs existing housing demand and estimates the likely future housing demand, the location of this demand and the type and tenure of required house types. This has been factored into the Core Strategy in terms of the population allocations, housing land and stock requirements and the Settlement Strategy.

### 3.8.2 Existing Housing Stock

According to Census 2016 there were 68,206 housing units in the county. 9.7% (6,616) of these were used as holiday homes, 8.7% (5,933) were vacant and 2.1% (1,432) were temporarily absent. While potentially some of the vacant houses could meet both existing and future demand for housing, it is hard to quantify the amount of the housing requirements for the purposes of the Core Strategy.

### 3.8.3 Future Housing Stock Requirements

Accordingly, it is assumed that 100% will be required. It is considered appropriate to assume this, particularly given the current demand for housing in the county (as detailed in the Housing Strategy).

The county population target is 167,300 by 2027 which will require the delivery of additional housing units across the settlements in the hierarchy.

### 3.8.4 Residential Zoned Land Housing Land Requirements

Table 3-4 sets out the amount of residential zoned land and the number of household units required for the target population in specified settlements. The future land and residential unit requirements were assessed against the existing position and the shortfall or excess in the residential zoned land was identified accordingly.

As outlined above the zoned land requirement for each level in the settlement hierarchy was determined based on an allocated average density for that settlement, e.g. Level 1 Key Towns 35 units/ha, Level 2 Large Towns 35 units/ha and 25 units/ha to the Level 3a settlements. There will be no zoning in Levels 3b, 4, 5 and 6 on the Settlement Hierarchy.

The existing residential zoned land bank will be reviewed during the preparation of new local area plans and aligned as necessary with the population allocations and housing land requirements set out in the County Core Strategy. Furthermore, while these hectare calculations have been included in the Plan, it is considered that they should be reviewed for each local area plan with a view to achieving a correct balance of densities within each town or village.

The tiered approach to zoning as set out in the NPF will also be applied to the zoning in the new local area plans.

**Table 3-4 Core Strategy Population Allocations, Housing Units and Housing Land 2021-2027**

Settlement Level	Settlement	Core Strategy Population Allocation	Housing Units	Units to be delivered within built up area	Average Density Unit/HA <sup>9</sup>	Zoned Land Required (Ha) <sup>10</sup>	Existing Zoning (Ha)	Shortfall/ Excess (Ha)
Key Town	Wexford	3,194	2,174	652	35	62.11	406	+343.66
	Gorey	1,447	985	296	35	28.14	99	+70.86
Large Town	Enniscorthy	1,304	888	266	35	25.37	321	+295.63
	New Ross <sup>11</sup>	424	289	87	35	8.25	39	+30.75
3a Service Settlements	Bunclody Town	195	133	40	25	5.32	0	-5.32
	Castlebridge	151	103	31	25	4.12	0	-4.12
	Courtown and Riverchapel <sup>12</sup>	98	67	20	25	2.68	1.8	-0.88
	Ferns	116	79	24	25	3.16	0	-3.16
	Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane	252	172	52	25	6.88	0	-6.88
	Rosslare Strand	133	90	27	25	3.6	0	-3.6
Level 3b		241	164	49	-	-	-	-
Level 4		596	406	122	-	-	-	-
Level 5, 6 and open countryside		1,291	879	n/a	-	-	-	-

<sup>9</sup> Final density (and thus zoned land) will be decided on a site-by-site basis in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities when local area plans are being prepared. Population allocation and housing units will be adjusted to the respective plan period.

<sup>10</sup> Infill and greenfield.

<sup>11</sup> Wexford portion.

<sup>12</sup> The Core Strategy for the Courtown and Riverchapel Local Area Plan allocated a population of 227 for the period of the plan. When calculating the required land, it was reduced to reflect the level of vacancy in the settlement and extant permissions. The plan was examined in 2019 and a decision taken to defer the sending of notices under Section 19 of the Act. It is considered that, having regard to the level of vacancy in Courtown and Riverchapel, the quantum of land currently zoned is adequate to cater for this demand.

### 3.9 Housing in Level 7 Open Countryside

As County Wexford is traditionally a rural county, rural housing forms an important component of our settlement pattern. The NPF acknowledges that there is a continuing need for housing provision for people to live and work in the countryside. However, careful planning is required to manage demand in our most accessible countryside around cities and towns, focusing on the elements required to support the sustainable growth of rural economies and rural communities.

Many parts of the county have and continue to experience significant pressure for rural housing. The reasons for this pressure include proximity to Dublin, affordability, attractiveness of the countryside, quality of life and pressure for second homes in the county's scenic coastal areas. This pressure must be controlled in the interests of the proper planning of the county and in the interests of sustainable development.

The Sustainable Rural Housing-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2005) provide the spatial planning policy framework to manage one-off rural housing. The policy approach is focused on facilitating people who have a definable social or economic need to reside in a particular rural area and a presumption against urban generated rural housing. The Guidelines identify three rural area types and planning authorities are required to examine, analyse and categorise rural area types at the local level.

Rural area types in the county were examined during the preparation of the Plan. This review included an analysis of the density of one-off housing in all rural areas, planning permissions granted during the last plan period and population change during the last Census period. The analysis concluded:

- There is continuing pressure for rural housing across most parts of the county.
- The pressure is most significant within commuting distance of the mains towns in the county, along and in proximity to the main transport routes, in the north of the county and all along the east coast and south coast.
- There is no area in the county experiencing 'substantial and persistent population decline'. However, there are rural areas in the west/northwest of the county where the population density is lower and there is less pressure in terms of planning applications.

- There are areas within the county which require a high level of protection due to special amenity or natural heritage reasons.
- There is a need to restrict development on national roads and regional roads in the interests of traffic safety and protecting the carrying capacity and operation of these important transport routes.

Having considered the analysis, recent development patterns, improvements in terms of accessibility and the attractiveness of living in the countryside and the knowledge that pressures for rural housing will continue during this plan period, the rural housing strategy and objectives have been framed to ensure that this pressure is managed in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, the NPF and the RSES (see Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing for further details).

### 3.10 Retail

The Plan includes a Retail Strategy prepared in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012). The Guidelines require retail development to follow the Settlement Hierarchy set by the NPF/RSES and ensure that retail development is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement in the Core Strategy.

The Retail Strategy is aligned to the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy. It focuses on maintaining and further developing the Key Towns and Large Towns as the main retail centres in the county. The development of retail services in the Service Settlements, Strategic Settlements, Large Villages, Small Villages and Rural Nodes will be focused on providing support services for their respective populations and rural hinterlands.



**Table 3.5 County Wexford Retail Settlement Hierarchy**

Retail Planning Guidelines Settlement Type	Wexford Core Strategy Hierarchy	Retail Settlements	Appropriate Scale and Type of Retail
Level 1: Regional Town	Key Town	Wexford Town	Major convenience and comparison
Level 2: Large Sub-Regional Towns	Key Town	Gorey Town	Large to Medium scale convenience and medium scale comparison
Level 2: Large Sub-Regional Towns	Large Town	Enniscorthy Town / New Ross Town	Large to Medium scale convenience and medium scale comparison
Level 3: Small Service Towns	Service Settlements	Bunclody, Castlebridge, Courtown and Riverchapel, Ferns, Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane, Rosslare Strand	Medium scale convenience along with small to medium scale comparison including tourism related comparison
	Strategic Settlements	Bridgetown, Campile, Clonroche, Coolgreany, Kilmuckridge, Kilmore Quay, Taghmon and Wellingtonbridge	Medium scale convenience along with small to medium scale comparison including tourism related comparison
Level 4: Local Shopping or Neighbourhood Centres	Various Villages and Rural Settlements		Predominantly lower order convenience, but not excluding tourism related comparison

## Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CS01

To implement the Core Strategy Guiding Principles and Development Approach and to ensure that required infrastructure and services are provided by infrastructure providers, either in advance or in tandem with development, to achieve this implementation.

**Objective CS02**

To ensure that new residential development in all settlements complies with the population and housing allocation targets and the principles set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Development Strategy, in so far as practicable.

**Objective CS03**

To ensure that sufficient zoned lands are available to satisfy the planned population and housing growth in those settlements over the lifetime of the Plan.

**Objective CS04**

To achieve more compact growth by promoting the development of infill and brownfield/ regeneration sites and the redevelopment of underutilised land within the existing built up footprint of existing settlements in preference to greenfield lands and to identify infill, brownfield and regeneration sites when preparing Local Area Plans, Settlement Plans and settlement boundaries.

**Objective CS05**

To ensure that at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements are delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement.

**Objective CS06**

To promote and facilitate the economic development of the Eastern Economic Corridor as an inter-urban regional economic driver, in particular, in Gorey Town, Enniscorthy Town, Wexford Town and Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane and the Europort.

**Objective CS07**

To support 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure in the county and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services including increased line

speeds to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times.

### Objective CS08

To prepare Local Transport Plans for the Key Towns and Large Towns which focus on the development of town bus networks, rail services, the development of inter-model transport hubs, improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and rural transport services into towns and seek investment for the sustainable transport measures set out in these plans.

### Objective CS09

To give consideration, where appropriate and relevant, to factors such as economic development, employment and access to community facilities and their related objectives in the County Development Plan and local area plan/or settlement plan when considering planning applications to ensure that future developments contribute, where possible, to the physical, social and economic regeneration and revitalisation of towns, villages and rural areas.

### Objective CS10

To adopt a presumption in favour of development that can generate more jobs and activities within existing towns and villages in order to reduce the distances that people have to commute from home to work such as remote working hubs and subject to development complying with appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.

### Objective CS11

To leverage funding from all available sources including the Urban and Rural Development and Regeneration Funds to help secure the delivery of key projects that will contribute to securing the objectives of the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.

**Objective CS12**

To support the concept of rural settlement networks and support the sustainable development of infrastructure to assist collaborative projects and sharing of assets and strengths to drive sustainable population and enterprise growth in sub-regional areas.

**Objective CS13**

To recognise the shared critical mass of population, strategic assets and economic potential of inter-urban networks working in collaborative partnerships as regionally significant drivers of growth and support investment in infrastructure and initiatives to sustainably deliver improved multi-modal transport connectivity and high speed, high quality digital connectivity between them.

**Objective CS14**

To strengthen the social and economic structure of rural towns and villages by supporting the reuse of existing buildings and the regeneration of underutilised buildings and lands.

**Objective CS15**

To prepare new local area plans for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town and to ensure all future local area plans are prepared in accordance with the relevant aspects of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007), the Local Area Plan Guidelines for the Planning Authorities (2012) and all other relevant Section 28 Guidelines or any updated version of these guidelines.

**Objective CS16**

To strengthen the viability of our rural towns and villages and to support the retention of essential rural services such as post offices, shops and medical facilities.

**Objective CS17**

To seek investment and initiatives that deliver smart technologies, revitalisation of mixed-use town and village centre streets and pilot initiatives for good practice in renewal and re-use of buildings.

**Objective CS18**

To protect and promote the quality, character and distinctiveness of the county's rural towns, villages and open countryside while supporting the proportionate growth and appropriately designed development that contributes to their revitalisation and renewal and the development of sustainable communities.

**Objective CS19**

To ensure the Key Towns of Wexford Town and Gorey Town continue to be drivers of economic growth and prosperity for the region, the county and their Municipal Districts by maximising their strategic location advantages to attract employment and population growth, developing their services and functions and protecting and enhancing their town centres, public realm and heritage and environmental quality making the towns high quality sustainable places to work, live and visit.

**Objective CS20**

To ensure the Large Towns of Enniscorthy and New Ross are drivers of growth and prosperity for the county and their respective Municipal Districts by maximising their potential for attracting economic development, employment and population growth, developing their service and retail functions while protecting and enhancing their distinctive town centres whilst protecting their local heritage and environmental quality and making the towns high quality sustainable places to live, work and visit.

**Objective CS21**

To ensure growth and development in the Service Settlements, Strategic Settlements, Large Villages and Small villages across the county is proportionate to the scale, size and character of the settlement and well designed so as to contribute to the regeneration of these settlements. To implement, as resources allow, interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services and ensure good quality of life and well-being for the local communities.

**Objective CS22**

To vary the County Development Plan to include Settlement Plans for Level 3a settlements and prepare boundaries and objectives for Level 3b settlements and prepare settlement boundaries for Level 4 and 5 settlements. Potential sites for infill, regeneration and appropriate locations for housing will be identified for all Level 3a, 3b, 4 and 5 settlements.

**Objective CS23**

To work with public infrastructure providers such as Irish Water and local communities to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in the designated Large Villages and Small Villages in the county subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

**Objective CS24**

To ensure that Rural Nodes throughout the county maintain their existing character and provide only very small scale growth appropriate to their character.

**Objective CS25**

To ensure that the open countryside continues to be a living and lived in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities while at

the same protecting the open countryside from inappropriate development, urban generated housing and protecting its landscape and environmental quality.

### Objective CS26

To promote the protection, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure in all settlements and in the open countryside.

## Wexford Town Strategic Objectives

### Objective WT01

To strengthen the role of Wexford Town as a self-sustaining regional economic driver located on the Eastern Economic Corridor by leveraging this strategic location and accessibility to Rosslare Europort and building upon its inherent strengths including digital connectivity, skills, innovation and enterprise, tourism, culture and retail services.

### Objective WT02

To support the development of the Wexford Campus as part of the multi-campus South East Technological University, and facilitate all associated services including student accommodation and recreational facilities.

### Objective WT03

To ensure that the local transport plan prepared provides the framework to integrate land use, accessibility requirements and transportation, prioritise sustainable transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport and identifies the necessary infrastructure required to facilitate implementation.

**Objective WT04**

To promote and support the development of the Trinity Wharf lands as a Strategic Employment Location and the redevelopment of the Commercial Quay redevelopment area as a Strategic Tourism Employment Location.

**Objective WT05**

To develop industrial, commercial, infrastructure and residential development in Wexford Town to support the port function at Rosslare Europort.

**Objective WT06**

To support the development of additional capacity at Rosslare Europort and the provision of rail freight services and facilities to support sustainable increases in port operations.

**Objective WT07**

To support the development of tourism projects in the town including those associated with the town's new Maritime brand such as the planned marina at Trinity Wharf, the Commercial Quay Redevelopment Area and the potential Wexford to Rosslare Greenway, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

**Objective WT08**

To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements which would benefit the key town role including improved road infrastructure such the M11/M25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme and upgrading of the N30 and N80, enhanced rail infrastructure and services, improved digital connectivity, upgrading and development of water supply and additional investment in wastewater infrastructure to support the economic development and anticipated growth of the town.



### Objective WT09

To support the delivery of infrastructural requirements to allow Wexford Town keep pace with the planned population and economic growth. These requirements include education and the prioritisation of additional primary and post primary school places in order to address existing and future demand and the provision of additional social, cultural and amenity facilities including the new Min Ryan Park and the redevelopment of Wexford Arts Centre.

### Objective WT10

To improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town through the regeneration and revitalisation of key locations such as the Trinity Wharf lands, the Crescent Quay Public Realm Enhancement project and public realm works on Monck Street and the Commercial Quay Redevelopment Area.

## Gorey Town Strategic Objectives

### Objective GT01

To strengthen the role of Gorey Town as an economic driver leveraging its strategic location and accessibility to Rosslare Europort and the Eastern Economic Corridor (port, rail and road), build upon its inherent strengths including digital connectivity, skills, innovation and enterprise, tourism, culture and retail services.

### Objective GT02

To facilitate strategic employment development in the town to allow it become more self-sufficient in terms of employment including development of opportunity sites and property solutions.

**Objective GT03**

To seek an economic funding package for the further development, in partnership with private investors, of the M11 Business Park as a Strategic Employment Location for the town.

**Objective GT04**

To ensure the Local Transport Plan for the town provides the framework to seek investment to develop a public transport inter modal hub in the town, develop an orbital route and new road bridges at Ballytegan and Ramstown/Knockmullen and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

**Objective GT05**

To improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and visit. This will include key urban regeneration projects/environmental improvement schemes such as the redevelopment of the Market House for cultural uses and the planned public realm improvements to Esmonde Street.

**Objective GT06**

To support the delivery of infrastructural requirements to allow Gorey keep pace with the planned population growth. These requirements include education and the prioritisation of additional post primary school places in order to address existing and future demand and the provision of additional social, cultural and amenity facilities including the redevelopment of Gorey Town and District Park.

**Objective GT07**

To support key infrastructure projects for the town including the delivery of natural gas and improvements to the N11 Gorey to Enniscorthy such as the improvements to the N30 and the N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare scheme.

## Enniscorthy Town Strategic Objectives

### Objective ET01

To strengthen the role of Enniscorthy Town as a Large Town with a large economic hinterland and leverage its strategic location and accessibility to Rosslare Europort and the Eastern Economic Corridor (port, rail and road) and build on its inherent strengths including digital connectivity, innovation and enterprise, tourism and culture, to facilitate economic and employment growth in the town, and, in particular, promote Enniscorthy Business and Technology Park, the UN Centre of Excellence and the NZEB Training Centre as key economic drivers for the town and to support the development and improvement of the business/industrial centre located on the R772 and the Old Dublin Road into a modern Business Park capable of attracting international companies as a key economic driver for the County.

### Objective ET02

To develop and facilitate new tourism related developments, both direct and indirect, that will expand the tourism offering and potential of the town and its surrounding area, and to work with key stakeholders to develop Enniscorthy as a vibrant visitor hub and tourism destination town in the county.

### Objective ET03

To pursue Smart Town status for the town, to facilitate enhanced broadband capabilities and digital connectivity in all areas of the town as a key enabler, and to maximise the opportunities offered by that status for all aspects of life in the town.

### Objective ET04

To support the development of learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration and enterprise initiatives to address legacies of unemployment and deprivation in the town.

**Objective ET05**

To promote the development of a Blueway along the River Slaney in the town subject to feasibility assessments, compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ET06**

To improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and visit through key urban regeneration projects/environmental improvement schemes such as the proposed Templeshannon Regeneration project, brownfield sites along the Quays and other town centre enhancement works.

**Objective ET07**

To support the delivery of infrastructure requirements to allow Enniscorthy keep pace with the planned population growth including the delivery of natural gas, improvements to road links such as the N30 and the N80 and the proposed N11/ N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Scheme and improvements to digital connectivity to support the achievement of Smart Town status, upgrading and development of water supply and amenity facilities including the development of a public space with playground facilities in St Senan's parish. Any such proposals will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirement of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SACs and SPAs.

**Objective ET08**

To support the delivery of infrastructural requirements to allow Enniscorthy to keep pace with planned population growth to include the provision of at least one additional post-primary school and additional educational facilities to address existing and future demand and additional social, cultural and amenity facilities.

## New Ross Town Strategic Objectives

### Objective NT01

To maximise the economic development potential of the town, optimising the potential offered by the N25 New Ross By-pass, the presence of New Ross Port and its proximity to the Waterford MASP and Wexford Town.

### Objective NT02

To focus on tourism development as a key economic driver for the town and the county, prioritising the implementation of the New Ross Tourism Transformation Project, securing Fáilte Ireland designation as a Tourism Destination Town and the development of the New Ross to Waterford Greenway.

### Objective NT03

To examine, as part of the two-year review of the County Development Plan, the progress in achieving the Core Strategy growth allocation and strategic objectives for New Ross Town. This examination will consider the most up to date population and macro-economic figures available at that time and the appropriateness/necessity to adjust to bring New Ross in line with the growth projections of the other MDs/Towns by 2030.

### Objective NT04

To prepare, as part of the local area plan for the town, an Economic and Spatial Strategy which will identify and develop opportunities for economic synergies and specialisms to compliment the role of Waterford MASP. This strategy will be informed by a report commissioned by the Council which will consider the strengths, opportunities, impacts and consequences of the Waterford MASP on South Wexford and New Ross.

**Objective NT05**

To prepare a local transport plan that will inform zoning decisions and identify opportunities to facilitate and implement sustainable transport connections to the Waterford MASP, Wexford Town and the towns of the region. The plan will also provide for the development of the town bus network, improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and rural transport services into the town.

**Objective NT06**

To facilitate the development of the proposed Business Hub on John Street.

**Objective NT07**

To focus on the development of brownfield and infill sites along the Quays and streets in the town centre for population, economic, enterprise, commercial and retail developments.

**Objective NT08**

To improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and visit through key urban regeneration projects/environmental improvement schemes such as the High Hill Street Park and the removal of the old oil tanks and the construction of a new public space in their place on the Quays.

**Objective NT09**

To support the development of learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration and enterprise initiatives to address legacies of unemployment and deprivation in the town.

**Objective NT10**

To work with Kilkenny County Council towards the preparation a joint Local Area Plan for the New Ross Town and Rosbercon areas.

**Objective NT11**

To support key infrastructure projects for the town including the delivery of natural gas.





## CHAPTER 4

# Sustainable Housing



## 4.1 Introduction

There are many housing challenges in the country at present. These challenges include a housing supply shortage, in particular social housing, pressure on the rental sector and challenges presented by affordability and availability of finance for those who wish to purchase their own homes. The Council, as a housing authority and a planning authority, has multiple roles to play in the management and delivery of housing in the county.

As a housing authority, the Council's role includes the provision and management of rented local authority housing, the promotion of home ownership through tailored schemes and facilitating approved voluntary or non-profit housing organisations in the provision of rented accommodation and facilities.

As a planning authority, the Council's role is to guide the location, nature and quality of new housing development within its administrative area and to comply with its statutory obligations to ensure housing developments conform to relevant Government guidelines. Through its statutory land use plans and development management functions, the Council ensures that sufficient and appropriate land is zoned for residential development, secures the delivery of social housing through the implementation of Part V, and manages the development of housing in all areas of the county. This chapter provides the spatial planning framework and objectives to deliver sustainable housing in the county.

## 4.2 Climate Action and Housing

The Council will focus on inter alia:

- Applying the new NZEB building standards for all new residential dwellings (houses and apartments). NZEB homes are 70% more energy efficient and emit 70% less carbon dioxide than those built under previous building regulations.
- Directing new housing development away from areas at risk of flooding and/or coastal erosion.
- Requiring planning applications for housing to demonstrate that climate change adaptation has been considered in the siting, layout and design of the proposal.

## 4.3 Policy Context

The focus of current national housing policy is primarily on securing solutions to the housing supply issues that are prevalent across the country and the shortfall in all types of housing and tenure, both social and private. These national policy responses transcend both of the Council's roles.

### Rebuilding Ireland – An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness

The most significant policy document 'Rebuilding Ireland' was designed to accelerate housing supply in the country and to tackle the country's housing shortage. It is an action-driven plan which is focused on five inter-related pillars:

- Pillar 1 – Address Homelessness
- Pillar 2 – Accelerate Social Housing
- Pillar 3 – Build More Homes
- Pillar 4 – Improve the Rental Sector
- Pillar 5 – Utilise Existing Housing

The plan sets out a series of measures and targets by the Government that aim to increase and accelerate the delivery of housing across the country. There is a target to double the annual level of construction to 25,000 units by 2020 and to deliver 47,000 units of social housing up to 2021.

The plan seeks to improve the rental sector by striving to make rent more affordable and creating an attractive, viable, and sustainable private rented sector. As part of this strategy 'Build to Rent' and 'Shared Accommodation' emerged. The latter has been the subject of a recent review by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (See the Section 28 Apartment Guidelines 2020 for further details).

### National Planning Framework – Project 2040

The NPF sets out the long term vision for Ireland's future housing which is to *"balance the provision of good quality housing that meets the needs of a diverse population, in a way that makes cities, towns, villages and rural areas good places to live now and in the*

*future*<sup>1</sup>. The NPF also sets out core principles to guide the delivery of future housing at every level of Governance and which have been incorporated in this chapter.

Key NPOs include:

- **NPO 33** - prioritises the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to the location.
- **NPO 34** - supports the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.
- **NPO 35** - increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights.
- **NPO 37** - a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) to be undertaken for each local authority area in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements.

The NPF outlines that in addition to the significant investment in social housing, there is also a need to ensure that more affordable homes are built for sale or rent, particularly in cities, towns and villages, enabling people to choose to live within their communities and closer to where they work. This will be facilitated through more proactive land management and provision of enabling infrastructure, particularly on local authority and State owned land. There is also a need to provide flexibility on design and density, particularly in urban cores to enable more cost-efficient construction and a variety of homes aimed at first time buyers.

## Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The RSES reinforces the importance of focusing on the five pillars of Rebuilding Ireland, with RPO 32 implementing these provisions. The RSES also outlines the need to diversify the housing mix and typologies and to use the HNDA to provide a robust evidence base to assist with developing long-term strategic views of housing needs across all tenures and typologies. The RSES supports the role of the Land Development Agency in co-ordinating land for housing delivery and the use by local authorities of active land management functions such as CPO to make land available for new housing.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Framework, page 91

## Section 28 Guidelines

Recent Section 28 Guidelines have also been provided to assist with increasing housing output. The 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' published in 2018 build on the strategic policy framework set out in the NPF which supports higher densities and more compact urban growth. The 'Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities' were updated in 2018 and December 2020. The Guidelines aim to enable a mix of apartment types, make better provision for building refurbishment and infill schemes, and address the Build to Rent and the suitability of the 'Shared Accommodation/Co-Living' sectors.

The Housing Supply Targets Methodology for Development Planning Guidelines were published in December 2020. The purpose of the Guidelines (hereon referred to as the HST Guidelines) is to ensure a consistent and coherent approach is taken by planning authorities in incorporating national and regional population and housing projections into their statutory functions such as the county development plan, the preparation of the Housing Strategy, informed by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) process.

## The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015

The purpose of this Act was to bring forward land in areas in which housing is required and in areas which are in need of renewal to prevent it lying idle or remaining vacant. The Act provides for the Vacant Site Levy and a register of vacant sites in areas in which housing is required and in areas in need of renewal.

The Act resulted in significant changes to the delivery of social housing under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The social housing obligation was lowered from 20% to 10%. As set out in Circular 36, 2015 there are six options now available to developers (See Section 4.7.1 Implementation of the County Housing Strategy).

## The Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016

The Act introduced measures to streamline the planning process to speed up the delivery of housing by introducing arrangements for fast-track planning applications for Strategic Housing Development (SHDs). These are developments of 100 or more housing units, student accommodation of 200 or more bed spaces, or shared accommodation developments of 200 or more bed spaces and the planning applications are made directly to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

This Act also introduced Rent Pressure Zones (RPZ) and brought in a Rent Predictability Measure to cap rent increases at 4% per year in RPZs. To date, Gorey Electoral Area is the only designated RPZ in the county and the designation remains in place until the 31st December 2021 (unless extended). Within areas designated as RPZs legislation has been introduced requiring planning permission where a person intends to let their property for short-term letting purposes.

This chapter has been framed around the NPF, the RSES and the five pillars of Rebuilding Ireland and it has been informed by the aforementioned recent legislative and policy measures.

## 4.4 Sustainable Housing Strategy

### 4.4.1 Goal

Housing that is appropriate to the needs of the occupant, in a location that has convenient access to essential services and which supports engagement in social and recreational activities is a key component in the delivery of sustainable communities. In this regard, the overall housing goal of the Council is *to ensure that every household in County Wexford will have access to secure, good quality housing suited to their needs at an affordable price in a sustainable community.*

Land use planning can be effectively used to ensure that future housing is delivered at the right locations, land is efficiently used and developed at an appropriate scale and density and the resulting new housing and its residents can integrate easily and successfully into the local community and settlement.

Using the key principles from the NPF and RSES this goal will be achieved as follows:

- Ensuring a high standard of housing and quality of life for future residents as well as environmentally and socially sustainable housing and place making through integrated planning and consistently excellent design.
- Preparing Urban Design Frameworks as part of local area plans which implement the 10 Minute Town Concept and ensure the integration of key land uses such as housing, community, education, amenity and employment.
- The location of new housing, including housing for older people and people with disabilities, is to be prioritised in existing settlements to allow people better access to services, ensuring a more efficient use of land and allowing for greater integration with existing infrastructure.
- The scale and nature of future housing provision is to be tailored to the size and type of settlement where it is planned to be located.
- Providing for choice in housing type, tenure and accommodation, responding to need and continuing to require the development of lifetime homes as part of residential schemes.
- Utilising existing housing stock to meet future demand.

## Strategic Housing Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SH01

To ensure that new residential developments contribute to and represent sustainable neighbourhoods which are inclusive and responsive to the physical or cultural needs of those who use them, are well-located relative to the social, community, commercial and administrative services and are integrated with the community within which they will be located.

**Objective SH02**

To ensure that all new residential developments provide a high quality living environment with attractive and efficient buildings which are located in a high quality public realm, are serviced and linked with pedestrian and cycle lanes to well-designed and located open spaces and nature and to the town or village centre and existing and planned services.

**Objective SH03**

To seek to facilitate all households to access good quality housing appropriate to the household circumstances and in their particular community of choice. The Council's priority will be on meeting the most acute needs- those unable to provide for their accommodation from their own resources or are otherwise in need of housing or housing supports.

**Objective SH04**

To ensure that new residential development minimises the use of natural resources and impacts on natural assets. The locations selected for residential developments should maximise the potential to use sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The design of residential units and associated services should maximise the use of renewable energy and minimise the use of water.

**Objective SH05**

To prepare Urban Design Frameworks as part of local area plans which implement the 10 Minute Town Concept and ensure the integration of key land uses such as housing, community, education, amenity and employment.

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## 4.5 Housing Requirements

### 4.5.1 Housing for All

The aim for all new housing and, where possible, housing conversions and refurbishments will be to deliver homes that are universally designed and easily adapted to meet the changing needs of a household over time. This will provide greater choice in terms of where people live, and will enable them to remain in their own homes as their needs change. By incorporating features into dwellings that enable adaptation, and with careful consideration as to the layout and provision of adequate space for people to manoeuvre, dwellings will be suitable for as broad a range of households and visitors as possible.

The Council has been very proactive in the area of universal access and lifetime homes, requiring 20% of residential schemes of five units or more to be lifetime homes. In support of NPO 34, the Council will continue to apply this policy standard and will require access statements<sup>2</sup> to be submitted with planning applications for residential schemes of five units or more (Refer to Section 3 Residential Developments in Volume 2 Development Management Manual).

### 4.5.2 Housing Needs

The purpose of the County Wexford Housing Strategy (Volume 9) is to ensure that the Plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area in the manner set out in the strategy. This includes identifying existing and likely future housing needs.

The Housing Supply Target Guidelines (HST) have been incorporated into the Core Strategy and the Housing Strategy. Table 22 in Appendix 1 sets out the housing demand figure for County Wexford between 2020 and 2031. It is 6,931 additional households/578 households per annum. This figure was adjusted to reflect the plan period (Q3 2021 to Q3, 2027). The figure was further adjusted, in line with the parameters set out in the HST guidelines to ensure that the households and population targets for the county follow a course to converge with the NPF and the NPF Implementation Roadmap by the end of 2026. The adjusted housing supply target for the plan period is 6,427 units/1,071 units per annum.

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<sup>2</sup> An access statement is a development management mechanism, used to explain and justify the approach to access within the scheme that is being applied for and how the design of the scheme responds to the needs of all potential users.

In support of NPO 37, the preparation of the Housing Strategy was informed by a broad based<sup>3</sup> Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA). The HNDA and the Housing Strategy identified the following housing need during the lifetime of the Plan:

Based on the traditional Department of Environment and Local Government Model Housing Strategy<sup>4</sup> annuity formula, the Housing Strategy identified that 376 of the 6,427 additional households during the plan period will not meet the affordability criteria for home ownership throughout the plan period which is equivalent to 5.8% of the total of additional households in County Wexford.

**Table 4-1 Summary of Social (and Affordable) Housing Requirements 2021-2027**

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Additional Anticipated Households	268	1,071	1,071	1,071	1,071	1,071	803	6,427
Social (and Affordable) Housing Requirements	4	26	37	61	76	91	81	376
% (as a Total of Additional Anticipated Households)	1.4%	2.4%	3.5%	5.7%	7.1%	8.5%	10.0%	5.8%

Further analysis was undertaken to reflect the HNDA requirements as set out in the NPF and are described in detail in Section 4.4 of the Housing Strategy. This analysis focused on the additional anticipated households in order to examine aspects such as the Central Bank Rules for qualifying for a mortgage, private rental as well as indications on household composition, tenure and dwelling type.

This analysis determined that 2,403 of the 6,427 additional anticipated households will not qualify for a mortgage during the plan period owing to the Central Bank Rules (refer to see Section 4.4.1 Central Bank Rules in Volume 9 Housing Strategy for further detail). It was also determined that 2,149 of the 6,427 additional households will not meet the affordability criteria for private rental during the plan period.

<sup>3</sup> This approach was taken in the absence of a detailed guidance and methodology to support local authorities in the preparation of HNDAs.

<sup>4</sup> Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, Housing Supply: A Model Housing Strategy and Step-by-Step Guide from 2000.

**Table 4-2 Overview of Mortgage Qualification and Private Rental Affordability for Additional Anticipated Households in County Wexford<sup>5</sup>**

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Anticipated Households that Do Not Qualify for a Mortgage to Purchase the Cheapest Property	83	331	331	442	442	442	332	2,403
Anticipated Households Not Able to Afford Private Rental (based on RTB Demand allocation by Unit Type)	70	337	337	337	382	382	306	2,149

Having regard to the difference in numbers between the traditional model and the new HNDA calculations, it is considered that the application of at least 10% Part V contribution is justified. The Council will work to influence Government policy to increase the amount allowed to be charged to reflect that identified in the HNDA (circa. 37.4%).

The HNDA also provides important information with regard to the household sizes which is set out in Table 4-3.

**Table 4-3 Forecasts for Household Size of the Additional Anticipated Households in County Wexford 2021-2027<sup>6</sup>**

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
1 person household	25	102	103	105	106	108	82	630
2 person household	60	242	244	246	249	251	170	1,481
3 person household	52	208	209	210	211	212	159	1,260
4 person household	67	271	272	274	275	276	208	1,643
5+ person household	64	249	243	237	231	225	164	1,143

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that mortgage qualification and private rental have been considered in isolation and should therefore not be aggregated.

<sup>6</sup> Totals may not sum due to rounding

The HNDA also provides forecasts for dwelling type during the plan period. This is set out in Table 4-4. Section 4.7.5 provides further details of the breakdown of house types that will be pursued in new residential developments in the county.

**Table 4-4 Forecasts for Dwelling Type of Additional Anticipated Households in County Wexford 2021-2027<sup>7</sup>**

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
1 Bed	24	97	97	97	97	97	73	583
2 Bed	97	387	387	387	387	387	291	2,325
3 Bed	108	433	433	433	433	433	324	2,596
4+ Bed	38	154	154	154	154	154	115	924
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>6,427</b>

## 4.6 Locations for Future Housing

In line with the NPF the Planning Authority will direct new residential development to the county's towns, villages and rural settlements in accordance with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Strategy in Chapter 3 Core Strategy.

The NPF also includes an objective that at least 30% of all new homes should be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of settlements and RPO 176 of the RSES introduces the 10 Minute Town Concept. As set out in Objective CS05, this will be complied with when local area plans and settlement plans are being prepared for the towns and villages of the County.

The Council supports and recognises the important role that serviced sites in the county's villages would provide. These sites would provide an attractive alternative to single rural housing and contribute to the vitality of these villages. In line with NPO 18b the Council will work with Irish Water and other infrastructure bodies and

<sup>7</sup> Totals may not sum due to rounding

explore other possible options to deliver the new homes in small towns and villages programme (See Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy for further details).

With regard to apartments, this type of development will generally be acceptable in town centres, at appropriate scales. Small apartment schemes may be considered in village centres and the scale will depend on the characteristics and size of the village. Locations for apartments will be assessed in accordance with The Sustainable Urban Housing - Apartment Guidelines (2020) and Chapter 6 of the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines in Villages and Towns with a population of 400 to 5000. However, in the Small Villages (Level 5 Settlement Hierarchy), the provision of apartments will be restricted to the conversion of an existing building e.g. the use of the first floor over a shop or hairdressers for an apartment.

Single housing in the open countryside will be considered where it is for those with a demonstrable economic or social functional need<sup>8</sup> to live there as set out in Section 4.9 Housing in the Open Countryside and Table 4-6.

## Locations for Future Housing Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SH06

To prioritise the provision of new housing in existing settlements and at an appropriate scale and density relative to the location in accordance with the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the Core Strategy and the Settlement Strategy in the Plan.

### Objective SH07

To consider the provision of services sites for residential development in the county's villages subject to sustainable and appropriate water services solutions being put in place in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and subject to compliance with all other relevant planning and environmental criteria.

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<sup>8</sup> Demonstrable economic or social functional need is not a requirement in Structurally Weak Areas.

### Objective SH08

To ensure that at least 30% of all new homes targeted to settlements are delivered within the existing built-up footprint of those settlements.

## 4.7 Future Housing Delivery

The Council will utilise the following spatial planning mechanisms to assist with the delivery of the required housing units

### 4.7.1 Implementation of the County Housing Strategy

The implementation of the County Housing Strategy (Volume 9), and in particular, agreements under Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) will play a significant role in providing new social housing units on residential zoned land in the county, thereby contributing to the acceleration of social housing supply.

The Housing Strategy outlines that the identified social housing units will be delivered via a number of mechanisms including:

- Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- Direct construction by the local authority and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs).
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Social Housing Lease Initiatives and Housing Assistance Payments (HAPs).
- Purchase of new or second-hand residential units.

Under Section 96 (3) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) there are now six options available to developers:

1. Transfer of lands;
2. Build and transfer of up to 10% of the proposed housing units;
3. Transfer of housing units on any other land in the functional area of the planning authority;

4. Lease of housing units either on the site subject to the application or in any other area within the functional area of the planning authority;
5. Combination of a transfer of land and one or more of the other options; and
6. Combination of options not involving a transfer of the ownership of land.

The Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 – Section 28 Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2017) provides guidance to local authorities regarding the fulfilment of Part V agreements as part of the development management process, highlighting the importance of engagement at the early preplanning stage. The guidelines indicate that the priority option which should be pursued by local authorities is the acquisition of social housing on the development site, by means of transfer of ownership to the local authority or to an AHB in order to advance the aim of achieving a social mix in new developments. The Council will continue to work closely with developers to secure the delivery of Part V and the implementation of the Housing Strategy.

## 4.7.2 Housing Land Management

### 4.7.2.1 Density of Residential Developments

High-quality design is fundamental in creating sustainable residential neighbourhoods. Density is one of a number of key measures which helps to achieve this objective and it is also a measure to promote compact growth in towns and large villages. In order to maximise the use of public infrastructure, reduce travel, reduce energy consumption minimum density standards are recommended in the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009). Table 4.5 outlines the density requirements for settlements with populations above 5,000 persons and villages and towns which have populations between 400 and 5,000 persons.

**Table 4-5 Indicative Density and Scale****Density in Level 1 Key Towns and Level 2 Large Towns (Settlements above 5,000 population)****Cities and Town Centres**

In order to maximise inner city and town centre population growth, there should, in principle, be no upper limit on the number of dwellings that may be provided within any town or city centre site, subject to the following safeguards:

- compliance with the policies and standards of public and private open space adopted by development plans or local area plans,
- avoidance of undue adverse impact on the amenities of existing or future adjoining neighbours,
- good internal space standards of development,
- conformity with any vision of the urban form of the town or city as expressed in development plans, particularly in relation to height or massing,
- recognition of the desirability of preserving protected buildings and their settings and of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of an Architectural Conservation Area; and
- compliance with plot ratio and site coverage standards adopted in development plans or local area plans.

**Brownfield Sites**

Where such significant sites exist and, in particular, are close to existing or future public transport corridors, the opportunity for their re-development to higher densities, subject to the safeguards expressed above or in accordance with local area plans, should be promoted, as should the potential for car-free developments at these locations.

**Public Transport Corridors**

Walking distances from public transport nodes (e.g. stations / halts / bus stops) should be used in defining such corridors. It is recommended that increased densities should be promoted within 500 metres walking distance of a bus stop, or within 1km of a light rail stop or a rail station. The capacity of public transport (e.g. the number of train services during peak hours) should also be taken into consideration in considering appropriate densities. In general, **minimum net densities of 50 dwellings per hectare**, subject to appropriate design and amenity standards, should be applied within public transport corridors, with the highest densities being located at rail stations/bus stops, and decreasing with distance away from such nodes.



### **Inner suburban/Infill**

Potential sites may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, up to larger residual sites or sites assembled from a multiplicity of ownerships. In residential areas whose character is established by their density or architectural form, a balance has to be struck between the reasonable protection of the amenities and privacy of adjoining dwellings, the protection of established character and the need to provide residential infill. The local area plan should set out the planning authority's views with regard to the range of densities acceptable within the area.

### **Sub-division of dwellings**

Many inner suburbs contain large houses on relatively extensive sites whose conversion to multiple dwellings without a dramatic alteration in the public character of the area is achievable. In such areas, particularly those of falling population but which are well served by public transport, their conversion to multiple occupancy should be promoted subject to safeguards regarding internal space standards, private open space and maintenance of the character of the area.

### **Institutional Lands**

A considerable amount of developable land in suburban locations is in institutional use and/or ownership. Such lands are often characterised by large buildings set in substantial open lands which in some cases may offer a necessary recreational or amenity open space opportunity required by the wider community. In the event that planning authorities permit the development of such lands for residential purposes, it should then be an objective to retain some of the open character of the lands, but this should be assessed in the context of the quality and provision of existing or proposed open space in the area generally. In the development of such lands, average net densities at least in the range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare should prevail and the objective of retaining the open character of the lands achieved by concentrating increased densities in selected parts (say up to 70 dph).

### **Outer Suburban/Greenfield sites**

These may be defined as open lands on the periphery of cities or larger towns whose development will require the provision of new infrastructure, roads, sewers and ancillary social and commercial facilities, schools, shops, employment and community facilities. Studies have indicated that whilst the land take of the ancillary facilities remains relatively constant, the greatest efficiency in land usage on such lands will be achieved by providing net residential densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare and such densities (involving a variety of housing types where possible) should be encouraged generally. **Development at net densities less than 30 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged** in the interests of land efficiency, particularly on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares.

### **Provision for Lower Densities in limited cases**

To facilitate a choice of housing types within areas, limited provision may be made for lower density schemes of a minimum of 20 units per hectare provided that, within a neighbourhood or district as a whole, average densities achieve any minimum standards recommended above.

## **Density in Small Towns and Villages – Settlements between 400 and 5,000 in population**

### **Centrally Located Sites**

Within a given smaller town or village, there can be marked variations in development context which affect the density of development and external space standards needed to take account of those contexts. Because of the variety of contexts and the probability of mixed use developments, it is difficult to be prescriptive about the level of density recommended. However, within centrally located sites small infill sites, densities of **30-40+ dwellings per hectare for mainly residential schemes may be appropriate or for more mixed-use schemes.**

Development of larger greenfield sites, which are not zoned under a local area plan or settlement plan, will be subject to overall densities of 20-35 dwelling per hectare but will be required to provide a minimum of 30% for community or open space uses. Applications for residential developments of a maximum of 15 dwellings on a defined site will be required and further development will be considered once the first scheme has been satisfactorily completed.

### **Edge of Centre Sites**

The emphasis will be on achieving successful transition from central areas to areas at the edge of the smaller town or village concerned. Development of such sites tend to be predominantly residential in character and given the transitional nature of such sites, densities to a range of **20-35 dwellings per hectare** will be appropriate including a wide variety of housing types from detached dwellings to terraced and apartment style accommodation. On un-zoned lands applications for residential developments of a maximum of 15 dwellings on a defined site will be required and further development will be considered once the first scheme has been satisfactorily completed.

### **Edge of Small Town/Village**

In order to offer an effective alternative to the provision of single houses in surrounding unserviced rural areas, it is appropriate in controlled circumstances to consider proposals for developments with densities of less than **15 - 20 dwellings per hectare** along or inside the edge of smaller towns and villages, as long as such lower density development does not represent

more than about 20% of the total new planned housing stock of the small town or village in question. This is to ensure that planned new development in small towns and villages offer a range of housing types, avoiding the trend towards predominantly low density commuter-driven developments around many small towns and villages within the commuter belts of the principal cities and other similar locations. Such lower density development also needs to ensure the definition of a strong urban edge that defines a clear distinction between urban and the open countryside. On un-zoned lands applications for residential developments of a maximum of 15 dwellings on a defined site will be required and further development will be considered once the first scheme has been satisfactorily completed.

### **Scale of Residential Development in Level 1 and Level 2 Settlements**

The scale of residential development in these settlements will be set out in the respective Local Area Plan.

### **Scale of Residential Development in Level 3(a) and 3(b) Settlements**

The scale of residential development in Level 3 (a) Settlements will be set out in the respective Settlement Plan/Local Area Plan.

Regarding Level 3 (b) settlements, the appropriate scale/number of units in each residential scheme will be determined based on the scale and characteristics of the individual settlement.

In line with the Core Strategy and with the exception of Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane, the population of the other Level 3(a) and 3(b) settlements is not to grow by more than 30% by 2040. Accordingly, the combined permitted residential development should not increase the population of a settlement by more than 20% of its 2016 population during the lifetime of this Plan.

### **Scale of Residential Development in Level 4 Large Villages**

In general, in villages with a population of <400 people, the scheme size should be no more than 10-12 units, and in villages with a population of >400 people, the scheme size should be between 10 – 15 units.

In line with the Core Strategy, the population of each Level 4 settlement is not to grow by more than 30% by 2040. Accordingly, the combined permitted residential development should not increase the population of a settlement by more than 20% of its 2016 population over the period of this Plan.

## Levels 5-6 Settlements

The appropriate scale of residential development in these settlements will be considered in accordance with the guiding principles below and on a case-by-case basis having regard to the character, function and size of that settlement.

### Level 5 Settlements

Category 1 Villages: In general, the guiding principle is the combined permitted residential development should not increase the settlement's population in 2016 by more than 20% over the period of this Plan. Each residential scheme should be no more than 10-12 units.

Category 2 Villages: In general, the guiding principle is the combined permitted residential development should not increase the population of a settlement by more than 25 people/10 houses during the lifetime of this Plan in order to protect the character of the settlements. The size of each residential scheme will be considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to the scale and characteristics of the settlement.

In deciding on the appropriate scale and density of development in the Level 5 settlements, the development will be considered having regard to the Sustainable Residential Guidelines and will depend on number of factors including the:

- The population of the settlement and the scale of the proposal relevant to the existing population.
- Contribution to the enhancement of the village form by reinforcing the street pattern or assisting in the redevelopment of back land sites.
- Contribution to the protection of the architectural and environmental qualities of the village.
- The availability of infrastructure including appropriate waste water treatment facilities, water supply and education facilities.

### Level 6 Rural Nodes

In general, the guiding principle is that development must be commensurate to the scale of the node and no more than 5 houses will be permitted in a smaller rural node and no more than 5-8 houses will be permitted in a larger rural node during

the period of this Plan. The houses should preferably be located on individual sites and respect the form and structure of the village with care taken to avoid any ribbon development. An exception to this may be considered where it is demonstrated that an additional dwelling(s) can be accommodated without detracting from the rural character of the node. A permanent residence condition shall be attached to planning permissions.

#### 4.7.2.2 Ready-to-go land

The availability of a good supply of ready-to-go development land is an important component in the housing supply chain as it helps to deliver housing units. The purpose of zoning land for residential development is to secure the production of that housing, and the quantum of required residential zoned land in the county is set by the Core Strategy. With the **building of more houses** a key pillar of 'Rebuilding Ireland', it is important that all residential zoned land can be developed, rather than some of the Core Strategy quantum being 'tied to' lands that will not be developed for reasons including land ownership or infrastructural constraints. The Council will apply the following NPF approaches to ensure that (a) sufficient land is zoned for residential development, (b) this land is available, serviced and ready-to-go, and (c) **the building of more houses is secured**.

### Tiered Approach to Zoning Land

The NPF outlines that effective implementation will require substantially better linkages between the zoning of land and the availability of infrastructure. NPO 72a requires planning authorities to apply a standardised, tiered approach to differentiate between (i) zoned land that is serviced and (ii) zoned land that is serviceable within the lifetime of the plan:

Appendix 3 of the NPF sets out the methodology for this tiered approach to land zoning:

- Tier I: Serviced Zoned Land

This zoning comprises lands that are able to connect to existing development services, for which there is service capacity available and can therefore accommodate new development. These lands will generally be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement or contiguous to existing developed

lands. Inclusion in Tier 1 will require the lands to be within the footprint of or spatially sequential within the settlement.

- Tier 2: Serviceable Zoned Land

This zoning comprises lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have the potential to become fully serviced within the lifetime of the plan. These lands may be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a settlement, or contiguous to existing developed lands or to Tier 1 lands, where required to fulfil the spatially sequential approach to the location of new development within the settlement.

NPO 72c also outlines that when considering the zoning of land for development purposes that cannot be serviced within the lifetime of the plan, such lands should not be zoned for development.

## Prioritising Development Lands

As outlined in the NPF there are many other planning considerations relevant to land use zoning beyond the provision of basic enabling infrastructure including the overall planned levels of growth, location, suitability for the type of development envisaged, availability of and proximity to amenities, schools, shops or employment, accessibility to transport services etc. The Planning Authority will weigh up all of the relevant factors, together with the availability of infrastructure, to determine the order of priority to deliver planned growth and development in a settlement.

### 4.7.2.3 Active Land Management

The Council will use its available powers to manage the supply of land for housing. This includes the Vacant Sites Levy and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers and is further discussed in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages.

### 4.7.2.4 Land Development Agency

The Land Development Agency (LDA) is a commercial, State-sponsored body that has been created to co-ordinate land within State control for more optimal uses where appropriate, with a focus on the provision of housing. The LDA will work with State

bodies and local authorities to make more effective use of State lands, providing a stable, sustainable supply of land for housing.

The new Land Development Agency Bill, 2021, when enacted, will put the LDA on a statutory footing and set out its core objectives and powers. Amongst other things;

- The LDA will be deemed a designated development agency under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended).
- A "Register of Relevant Public Land" will be established by the LDA to identify lands owned by relevant public bodies in areas with a population greater than 10,000 that can be made available for housing. It is intended that the LDA will have the power to acquire relevant public land at market value, by means of being offered first refusal on a proposed sale by the land-owning public body.
- The Agency will have CPO powers where it is required to provide access to or infrastructure for relevant public land or land owned by the LDA and where it is has failed to acquire the land via agreement.
- There will be a requirement that a proportion of any housing provided on relevant public land be made available for affordable housing by the LDA or any other party which acquires such land.

#### 4.7.2.5 Compact Growth

The development of land at higher densities to achieve compact growth will contribute to a greater yield in housing units. The density provisions allocated to each level in the Settlement Hierarchy is set out in Chapter 3 Core Strategy. Compact growth is further discussed in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages.

### 4.7.3 Utilise Existing Stock

The Council will continue to encourage the **utilisation of existing housing stock** and its refurbishment. The Council's Vacant Homes Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2021 indicated that there were 5,918 vacant houses (based on Census 2016) and 110 vacant social houses in the county. It outlined the methodology to be undertaken

to confirm the level of vacancy, and measures to be pursued to bring vacant home backs into use.

The change of use of vacant commercial properties to residential use will also be considered at appropriate locations and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. 'Bringing Back Homes – Manual for Reuse of Existing Buildings' (DHPLG 2018) was developed to support and facilitate the reuse of older/vacant buildings in our towns and villages for residential use. The Manual recognises that revitalising main streets through well-planned and designed residential units, particularly above shops, could help to rejuvenate smaller town and village centres (see Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages for further details).

The Planning and Development (Amendment) (No 2) 2018 (S.I. No. 30 of 2018) provides an exemption, for a period of time, for the change of use, and related works, of vacant commercial premises for residential purposes. This exemption allows the change of use of vacant commercial units in urban areas, including vacant or under-utilised areas over ground floor premises, into residential units without having to go through the planning process. This will facilitate the provision of increased and much needed housing supply, maximise the use of vacant under-utilised spaces and assist in the rejuvenation of the core of urban areas. The exemption can be availed for until the 31st December 2021 and is subject to a list of conditions and limitations.

#### 4.7.4 Housing Tenure

Housing tenure is described as owner occupied accommodation and rented accommodation and is either provided privately or by public housing bodies.

Census 2016 confirmed that home ownership rates in the county remain high, with 71.5% of the households in the county owner occupied. This was considerably higher than the State average of 67.7%. The Census indicated that the private rental sector is expanding in the county. The rate of private rented properties was 14.6%, and while this figure is lower than the State average 18.2%, the rate of growth in the county (3.7%) was more than twice the State average (1.4%). There was a clear spatial distribution to the private rented sector with highest rates and numbers all located in the main settlements.



It is also apparent that the private rental housing market is heavily subsidised by state funding in the form of Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and Rent Supplement.

There is a need to focus on both tenures in future housing provision. The shift towards the rented tenure highlights the need **to improve the rental sector** by increasing the supply of units at affordable rents across all types of housing types, i.e. houses and apartments.

Apartments play a role in increasing housing supply and meeting demand, particularly the rental sector. Apartments may be made available for sale, where for owner occupation or for rent, or more recent housing models that are built specifically for rental purposes (e.g. 'Build to Rent' or 'Shared Accommodation').

Housing for students is a specific component of the rented housing sector with distinct characteristics and requirements. The location of purpose built student accommodation needs to be as close as possible to the centre of education, as well as being connected to accessible infrastructure such as walking, cycling and public transport. The Council will encourage the provision of student accommodation alongside any future development of third-level education campuses in the county.

#### 4.7.5 House Types

The HNDA, which informed the Housing Strategy, identifies the need for a mix of house types to reflect the diverse housing needs of the existing and future population. A need for one and two bedroom properties is particularly evident.

##### Houses

Houses will continue to be the preferred house type for many households in the county. The HNDA indicates that there is a need to provide a mix of unit sizes to accommodate the future composition of households in the county. In this regard, where a residential scheme is proposed with houses, the development should provide for the following house type mix, **except in cases where SPPR 2 of the Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities applies**

- 25% two-bedroom houses

- 30% three-bedroom houses
- 30% four-bedroom/five-bedroom houses
- 15% to be allocated to any of the above based on evidence of demand.

This standard will be applied to schemes of 25 or more units. The Planning Authority will consider a deviation from the above housing type mix where local requirements and/or market evidence suggest that a different housing mix is required.

## Apartments

All apartment developments in the county, whether private or public, must comply with the new Apartments Guidelines. The Guidelines include nine SPPRs which must be complied with, and these have been incorporated where relevant into the Plan. The Guidelines also introduced two new concepts - 'Build to Rent' apartments and 'Shared Accommodation/Co-Living'.

### 'Built to Rent' Apartments

The emerging 'Build to Rent' (BTR) sector offers new opportunities to increase the scale and pace of delivery of new housing. BTR is defined as *'purpose-built residential accommodation and associated amenities built specifically for long-term rental that is managed and serviced in an institutional manner by an institutional landlord.'* With BTR, once constructed, the overall scheme is available to the rental sector over a much shorter timescale on completion and the investment model is therefore capable of delivering a much higher volume of housing than traditional models.

While large scale BTR development is more likely to occur in cities and large urban areas, the Council will give consideration to this housing model in the Key and Large towns, at an appropriate scale. These schemes must comply with SPPR 7 and 8 in the Apartment Guidelines where relevant.

### Shared Accommodation/'Co Living'

This is a new format of residential accommodation which comprises professionally managed rental accommodation, where individual rooms are rented within an overall development that includes access to shared or communal facilities and amenities. The amended Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in December 2020 introduced SPPR 9 which states the following:

There shall be a presumption against granting planning permission for shared accommodation/co-living development unless the proposed development is either:

- i: Required to meet specific demand identified by a local planning authority further to a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) process; or
- ii: On the date of publication of these updated Guidelines, a valid planning application to a planning authority, appeal to An Bord Pleanála, or strategic housing development (SHD) planning application to An Bord Pleanála, in which case the application or appeal may be determined on its merits.

The HNDA that forms part of the Housing Strategy (Volume 9) did not identify the need for this type of accommodation in the county.

### Unit Mix in Apartment Developments

Having regard to SPPR 1 in the Apartment Guidelines, the following standard shall be complied with in either an apartment only scheme or mixed residential schemes including both houses and apartments:

- Apartment developments may include up to 50% one-bedroom or studio type units (with no more than 20-25% of the total proposed development as studios, and there shall be no minimum required for apartments with three or more bedrooms.

Compliance with SPPR 1 of the Apartment Guidelines takes precedence over compliance with any other house mix standard in this Plan, save for the requirements relating to compliance with SPPR 2 in the Guidelines.

### Building Refurbishment Schemes

In line with SPPR 2 of the Apartment Guidelines, for all building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size, or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, the following standard shall be complied with:

- Where up to nine residential units are proposed, there shall be no restriction on dwelling mix, provided no more than 50% of the development (i.e. up to 4 units) comprises studio-type units;
- Where between 10 to 49 residential units are proposed, the flexible dwelling mix

provision for the first nine units may be carried forward and the parameters set out in SPPR 1, shall apply from the 10th residential unit to the 49th;

- For schemes of 50 or more units, SPPR 1 in the Apartment Guidelines shall apply to the entire development.

Compliance with SPPR 2 of the Apartment Guidelines takes precedence over compliance with any other house mix standard in this Plan, save for the requirements to comply with SPPR 1 of the Guidelines.

#### 4.7.6 Unfinished Housing Developments

The Council have been very active in resolving unfinished housing development in the county, and will continue to resolve outstanding issues.

#### 4.7.7 Place-Making and High Quality Schemes

Well-designed and high quality residential developments will make a significant contribution to the creation of attractive towns and villages and communities where people want to live, work and socialise. The quality of design and layout of residential development is very important in ensuring that these schemes add to the communities in which they are located and provide a high quality living environment for those who live in them. New residential development should be located and laid out in a way which ensures that they are easily integrated into the existing fabric and structure of the settlements and that natural assets are protected. Further details of the requirements for residential developments are set out in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages and Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

#### Future Housing Delivery Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SH09

To support Government policy and targets under “Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness” and local authority actions that contribute to progress under the key pillars of addressing homelessness, accelerating social housing, building more homes, improving the rental sector and utilising the existing building stock in the county.

### Objective SH10

To require the application of Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in accordance with best practice and the policies and principles contained in Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012) and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2009).

### Objective SH11

To ensure that the zoning of lands for residential use is in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy and is carried out in accordance with the methodology for a Tiered Approach to Land Zoning as set out in the National Planning Framework and in accordance with relevant criteria in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007) and the Local Area Plan-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) and any updated version of these guidelines during the lifetime of the Plan.

### Objective SH12

To ensure the development of land is carried out on a phased basis and to identify the priority of land for development in the relevant local area plan and in accordance with the methodology for the Prioritisation of Development Lands in the National Planning Framework and in accordance with the relevant criteria in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007) and the Local Area Plan-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) and any updated version of these documents during the lifetime of the Plan.

**Objective SH13**

To work with the Land Development Agency to co-ordinate appropriate State owned land and the strategic assembly of public and private land to facilitate regeneration, housing and other developments.

**Objective SH14**

To undertake Active Land Management (including the use of CPO powers) to manage the supply of land for residential development and ensure suitable zoning is in place to achieve compact, smart, sustainable growth targets within existing urban footprints.

**Objective SH15**

To ensure the density of residential development is appropriate to the location of the proposed development having regard to the benefits of ensuring that land is efficiently used and in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the accompanying Urban Design Manual-A Best Practice Guide (DEHLG, 2009) and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards in Volume 2.

**Objective SH16**

To require new apartment developments to comply with the Specific Planning Policy Requirements and standards set out in out in the Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Environment and Local Government, 2020), where relevant. Proposals for apartment block developments in excess of 50 units will also be assessed having regard to the nature of existing developments in the area, existing and planned social facilities and the need to ensure that apartment developments contribute to the development of sustainable communities into the future. Generally, where the site permits it, each apartment should have its own door access to the external street/external communal access area.

**Objective SH17**

To require new residential schemes to comply with the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government) 2018 and the Specific Planning Policy Requirements set out therein where relevant and the considerations set out in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages.

**Objective SH18**

To implement and monitor the objectives in the County Wexford Housing Strategy 2021-2027 and the Housing Need Demand Assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and any relevant guidelines published.

**Objective SH19**

To apply a 10% (or a greater percentage if provided for in future legislation) social housing requirement pursuant to Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential or other uses, except where the development would be exempted from this requirement. The application of the 10% requirement to particular lands, will be determined both by the provisions of the Act and the requirements of the Housing Strategy.

**Objective SH20**

To promote and support the implementation of plans and projects to bring back to use vacant homes.

**Objective SH21**

To require new build house and apartment schemes and building refurbishment schemes to provide a mix of unit types in accordance with Section 4.7.5 House Types to ensure that there is a range of house types available to suit the needs of the various households in the county.

**Objective SH22**

To ensure that required physical and/or social infrastructure is provided either prior to or in tandem with new residential developments in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Objective SH23**

To ensure that new housing developments contribute to the social or recreation infrastructure of the community in which they will be located, either through the provision of amenities or through financial contribution.

**Objective SH24**

To ensure the selection of lands or housing units to purchase or lease by the Council, including Part V, counteracts undue segregation by persons of different social backgrounds.

**Objective SH25**

To ensure the development of vacant residential and regeneration sites by applying the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Supply Act 2015 (as amended) on lands zoned in development plans, local area plans and settlements plan as set in Table 5-3 of Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages.

**Objective SH26**

To promote best practice and innovation in the on-going management and maintenance of all of the Council's housing stock and the associated public realm.

**Objective SH27**

To support initiatives to refurbish and retrofit both occupied and vacant residential buildings including smart technologies, energy efficiency and micro renewable systems.



### Objective SH28

To apply the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Exempted Development) (No.2) Regulations 2019 and any other future legislation, circulars or guidelines in this regard issued by the relevant Minister when considering planning applications for the change of use of residential properties for short term letting.

### Objective SH29

To have regard to 'Managing and Resolving Unfinished Housing Developments Guidance Manual' (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011) when preparing local area plans and assessing planning applications dealing with unfinished housing developments.

### Objective SH30

To adopt a flexible approach to planning applications which seek to resolve issues relating to unfinished housing developments and where this would result in substantial environmental or community gain. Such flexibility may include reconfiguration of a development in relation to open space, roads and circulation requirements.

## 4.8 Specific Housing Needs

The Council will continue to ensure that housing for persons with specific requirements are met in a manner which suits their physical and social needs.

### 4.8.1 Housing for the Homeless

The Council will continue to work in conjunction with voluntary housing bodies and other agencies to provide emergency accommodation for the homeless and those who find themselves in need of crisis facilities.

## 4.8.2 Housing for Older People

As the number of people in the older age cohorts increases greater consideration must be given to the housing needs of older people and to ensure that housing solutions suit their specific physical and social needs. The Government's Policy Statement on Housing Options for Our Ageing Population (published in 2018) supports the development of housing and services on centrally located sites within urban areas as research shows that good quality, well connected, urban centres with a range and choice of housing tenures and types actively supports ageing in place. Older people can choose housing that is appropriate and responsive to more complex needs which enables them to enjoy more active, healthy and socially connected lives and to age healthily and safely within their community. Simultaneously it is recognised that older people contribute a wealth of skills and experiences that enhance all of our communities bringing significant value across the generations.

Older people must be offered a range of housing solutions. A lot of older people will wish to remain in their current homes and live independently. This arrangement in many cases will require alterations to existing properties, and the Council have a role in facilitating such alterations e.g. housing adaptation grant scheme for older people.

There is an increasing trend of older people moving into sheltered housing/residential care settings/retirement villages as they grow older. The Council recognises the need and importance of these facilities, in particular, the provision of high-quality, small, self-contained living units within a larger complex with shared entertainment, recreation and healthcare facilities. This allows older people to retain their independence and privacy while enjoying daily social interactions and the security of a sheltered living environment.

These facilities should be located in towns and villages and be located in close proximity to local services such as shops, post office and other community facilities required by the residents of the facility and should be served by accessible footpaths and easy to get to by visitors. The development of these facilities outside of an existing settlement will only be considered where the site is located in close proximity to the settlement, would not comprise an isolated development, the design and scale of the facility is suitable for the location and there are existing or planned accessible

pedestrian linkages to the settlement and its services. Planned pedestrian linkages must be delivered either as part of the proposal or prior to the first occupation of the housing facility.

### 4.8.3 Housing for People with Disabilities

There needs to be a range of housing solutions available for people with disabilities. The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 was reaffirmed and extended to 2020 under Rebuilding Ireland. The strategy provides the framework for the delivery of housing for people with disabilities, and aims to ensure the delivery of this housing is afforded the priority it deserves. The strategy is framed around nine strategy aims, which inter alia,

1. Supports people with a disability to live independently in their own homes and communities, where appropriate.
2. For people with intellectual or physical disabilities there is focus on moving away from congregated settings in line with good practice, through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community.
3. For people with a mental health disability, there is a focus on facilitating housing in the community for people with low and medium support needs moving from mental health facilities, in line with good practice.

The Council supports the strategic aims of the strategy and the delivery of independent living solutions for people with disabilities, where possible. The Council oversees the application of the housing adaptation grant which allows many people to remain in their homes and local community. The Council will continue to address particular identified needs through facilitating the provision of purpose-built, adaptable dwellings and standard social housing supports where applicable. The Council will also consider the development of housing in the community such as sheltered housing and will facilitate the provision of such facilities at appropriate locations (similar to housing for older people Section 4.8.2 Housing for Older People).

### 4.8.4 Housing for Members of the Travelling Community

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024, adopted on the 9th July 2019,

identified the requirement to provide or assist in the provision of approximately 100 units across a full range of accommodation types over the period of the programme. Standard local authority accommodation remains the preferred accommodation option for households while four families expressed an interest in Traveller Group Housing in the Wexford Municipal District. The Council will continue to address the provision of accommodation appropriate to the particular needs of Travellers through the implementation of the programme which is subject to the necessary funding being available.

## Specific Housing Needs Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SH31

To ensure that groups with specific housing needs such as older people, people with disabilities, the homeless and members of the Travelling Community are accommodated in a manner that is suitable to their specific needs. The Council will provide access for these groups to an appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated, sustainable manner which promotes equality of opportunities, individual choice and independent living where possible.

### Objective SH32

To prioritise the delivery of accommodation solutions for people who are homeless or who find themselves in need of emergency accommodation.

### Objective SH33

To provide for Traveller accommodation in accordance with the Wexford County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 and any subsequently adopted programme.

**Objective SH34**

To have regard to the National Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 (extended to 2020) and, in so far as possible and having regard to budgetary constraints, implement the strategic aims of this strategy and any future update of the strategy.

**Objective SH35**

To facilitate access for people with disabilities and older people to an appropriate range of housing and related support services delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner that promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

**Objective SH36**

To support independent living for people with disabilities and older people and to facilitate the provision of specific purpose built accommodation and the provision of nursing homes, retirement villages, residential care facilities at appropriate locations in towns and villages in the county. These facilities must be well served by infrastructure and amenities including accessible footpaths, local shops and public transport in order to allow the resident to be socially included and to allow better care in the community, independence and access.

**Objective SH37**

The development of new nursing homes, retirement villages and residential care facilities outside of an existing settlement will be considered where the site is located in close proximity to a settlement, would not comprise an isolated development, the design and scale of the facility is suitable for the location and there are existing or planned accessible pedestrian linkages to the settlements and its services. The Council will consider reasonable extensions to existing authorised facilities outside of existing settlements subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective SH38

To facilitate the development of suitably located and well-designed student accommodation which will enable and encourage students to attend third level institutions in the county. These facilities should be located along public transport routes, where possible, and in close proximity to the third level facility.

## 4.9 Housing in the Open Countryside

### 4.9.1 Single (One-Off) Rural Housing Policy Context

The Council will continue to support sustainable rural settlement in accordance with the National Planning Framework, the RSES and the Sustainable Rural Housing-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2005) and any future updates of those guidelines.

#### NPF and RSES

The NPF and the RSES<sup>9</sup> state that in areas under urban influence, that is, within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment or elsewhere, that the provision of single housing in the countryside be based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans. In rural areas elsewhere, the provision of single housing is to be based on the siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans.

#### Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines

The Guidelines define three rural area types:

##### Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence

The Guidelines outline that these areas exhibit characteristics such as proximity to the immediate environs of or close commuting catchment of large cities and towns. There will be evidence of rapidly rising population and of considerable pressure for

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<sup>9</sup> NPO 19 and RPO 27

housing development due to proximity to the urban areas or to major transport corridors with ready access to the urban area. There may also be evidence of pressures on infrastructures such as the local road network.

### Stronger Rural Areas

According to the Guidelines in these areas population levels are generally stable within a well-developed town and village structure and in the wider rural areas around them. This stability is supported by a traditionally strong agricultural economic base and the level of individual housing development activity in these areas tends to be relatively low and confined to certain areas.

### Structurally Weak Areas

These areas exhibit characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline as well as a weaker economic structure based on indices of income, employment and economic growth.

Having regard to the NPF requirements, and following a review of rural areas in the county and their relationship with the key and large towns and transport corridors in the county, three rural types have been identified and are shown on Map 1:

- Areas Under Strong Urban Influence
- Stronger Rural Areas
- Structurally Weak Areas

In summary;

- Much of the county is designated as either 'Areas under Strong Urban Influence' or 'Stronger Rural Areas'. Some of these areas have experienced more rapid growth and are reaching their carrying capacity in terms of both ability to accommodate further effluent treatment systems, visual amenity and ability to accommodate traffic movement on narrow roads.
- Areas within close proximity to the coast demonstrated significant pressure for one-off rural housing/second home development and are sensitive to development and accordingly these areas are separately designated as the 'Coastal Zone' with stricter local need criteria than the other rural areas.

- While some areas of the county have been designated as 'Structurally Weak', applicants must still comply with the requirements of Table 4-6 Criteria for One-Off Rural Housing.
- There are landscape and heritage areas within the county which need to be afforded a high level of protection. These include the Uplands, River Valleys, Coastal and Distinctive Landscapes and designated ecological areas. There are strict local need requirements in these areas.
- There are also restrictions relating to one-off housing along national and regional roads.

As outlined in Section 3.3 single rural housing will be considered in the open countryside in accordance with Table 4-6 Criteria for One-Off Rural Housing. Notwithstanding the demonstration of compliance with the relevant criteria, the planning application will be determined based on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in accordance with all relevant development plan objectives and development management standards including traffic safety, public health, the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, landscape and siting and design. The demonstration of a local rural housing need will not outweigh the need to comply with all other relevant planning and environmental criteria and standards.

In order to be considered for a single dwelling in the open countryside, an applicant must meet one of the following categories:

**A.** A person who has a demonstrable social functional need to reside in a particular rural area (except for Structurally Weak Rural Areas)

Or

**B.** A person who has a demonstrable economic functional need to reside in a particular rural area (except for Structurally Weak Rural Areas)

The applicant must comply with the criteria for that category and the applicable rural area criteria as set out in Table 4.6 and the accompanying definition and notes.



**Table 4.6 Criteria for One-off Rural Housing**

Rural Area Type Area	Category A	Category B
	<p>Housing for persons who have a demonstrable social functional rural housing need to live in a particular rural area and who are building a permanent home for their own use. While demonstrable social functional need does not apply in Structurally Weak Areas, the person must be building a permanent home for their own use.</p>	<p>Housing for persons who have a demonstrable economic functional rural housing need to live in a particular rural area and who are building a permanent home for their own use. While demonstrable economic functional need does not apply in Structurally Weak Areas, the person must be building a permanent home for their own use.</p>
<p><b>Strong Urban Influence</b></p>	<p>A person who has lived full-time in a principal residence for a minimum of 7 years (not necessarily concurrently and at any time in their life) in that local rural area and the site is within 7km radius of where the applicant has lived or is living and who has never owned a rural house. (See Point 4 in Definitions and Notes regarding owning a rural house). The dwelling must be the person's permanent place of residence. The person can work from home or commute to work daily.</p>	<p>Persons who by the nature of their work have a functional need to reside permanently in the rural area close to their place of work. Functional economic need must be related to a rural resource based activity such as full-time agriculture or horticulture and the nature of the activity or business must require the person to live at on or in close proximity to the business. Similar part-time occupations can also be considered where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation. The applicant must be able to provide documentary evidence that the employment is full-time or predominant employment when part-time. The applicant must be able to demonstrate that the landholding is such to support a viable enterprise.</p>
<p><b>Stronger Rural Area</b></p>	<p>A person who has lived full time in a principal residence for a minimum period of 7 years (not necessarily concurrently and at any time in their life) in that local rural area and the site is within 15km radius of where the applicant has lived or is living and who has never owned a rural house. (See Point 4 in Definitions and Notes regarding owning a rural house). The dwelling must be the person's permanent place of residence. The person can work from home or commute to work daily.</p>	<p>Persons who by the nature of their work have a functional need to reside permanently in the rural area close to their place of work. Functional economic need must be related to a rural resource based activity such as full-time agriculture or horticulture and the nature of the activity or business must require the person to live at on or in close proximity to the business. Similar part-time occupations can also be considered where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation. The applicant must be able to provide documentary evidence that the employment is full-time or predominant employment when part-time. The applicant must be able to demonstrate that the landholding is such to support a viable enterprise.</p>

Rural Area Type Area	Category A	Category B
Structurally Weak Area	A person building a dwelling house as their permanent place of residence and who has never owned a rural house. (See Point 4 in Definitions and Notes regarding owning a rural house). The person can work from home or commute to work daily	
Coastal Zone <sup>10</sup>	A person who has lived full-time in a principal residence within the Coastal Zone for a minimum period of 10 years (not necessarily concurrently and at any time in their life) and the subject site is within 3km radius of where the applicant has lived or is living and who has never owned a rural house. (See Point 4 in Definitions and Notes regarding owning a rural house). The person can work from home or commute to work daily.	Such persons shall be defined as persons who by the nature of their work have an overriding economic functional need to reside permanently in the specific Coastal Zone area and do not have access to appropriate land outside that area. Such circumstances will normally apply to land or business owners involved in full-time farming, horticulture, marine or tourism (not including B&Bs) related activities and where the business requires them to be located on the premises/holding. The applicant must be able to provide documentary evidence that the employment is full-time. The applicant must be able to demonstrate that the landholding is such to support a viable enterprise.
<b>Landscape<sup>11</sup> and Heritage Areas</b> (a) Designated ecological areas <sup>12</sup> including SACs, SPAs and NHAs, (b) Upland, River Valley or Coastal landscape units <sup>13</sup> or a Distinctive Landscapes	<p>A person who has lived full-time in a principal residence within that particular landscape or heritage area for a minimum period of 10 years (not necessarily concurrently and at any time in their life) and the subject site is within 3km radius of where the applicant has lived or is living and who has never owned a rural house.</p> <p>In the Slaney River Valley Landscape Unit, the subject site must be within 5km radius of where the applicant has lived or is living and who has never owned a rural house (See Point 4 in Definitions and Notes regarding owning a rural house).</p>	Such persons shall be defined as persons who by the nature of their work have an overriding economic functional need to reside permanently in the specific Landscape and Heritage Area and do not have access to appropriate land outside that area. Such circumstances will normally apply to land or business owners involved in full-time farming, horticulture, marine or tourism (not including B&Bs) related activities and where the business requires them to be located on the premises/holding. The applicant must be able to provide documentary evidence that the employment is full-time. The applicant must be able to demonstrate that the landholding is such to support a viable enterprise.
	Single rural housing will only be facilitated in these areas where the particular landscape unit, i.e. Upland, River Valley or Coastal landscape or the Distinctive landscape has the capacity to absorb the development. Where the Council considers that there is a risk of individual or cumulative adverse impacts, the Council will only consider proposals for single rural housing where the applicant has demonstrated an overriding need (either social or economic) to reside in the particular location in accordance with this table and Point 5 in Definitions and Notes.	

<sup>10</sup> The Coastal Zone is defined on Map 3.

<sup>11</sup> The Landscape Areas (Upland, River Valley and Coastal Landscape units and the Distinctive Landscapes) are shown on Map 7-1 Landscape Character Units in Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment.

<sup>12</sup> Refer to Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation for further information on designated ecological areas.

<sup>13</sup> In the interests of clarity, the Coastal Zone and the Coastal Landscape Character Unit are two separate areas for the purposes of the application of the rural housing policy. The Coastal Zone area, which is defined on Map 3, is subject to the rural area type Coastal Zone policy in Table 4-6 and the Coastal Landscape Character Unit, which is shown on Map 7-1 in Volume 7, is subject to the rural area type Landscape and Heritage areas set out in Table 4-6

### Table 4-6 Definition and Notes:

1. In the event of two or more rural policy areas overlapping, the more restrictive policy will apply.
2. A person with a social functional rural housing need is defined as a person who is an intrinsic member of a local rural community having lived for the specified period of time in their 'local rural area' and who has never owned a rural house. It includes persons who were reared in the local rural area but that local rural area is now within a settlement boundary/zoned land. It also includes a person who has links by virtue of being a long term rural landowner or the son or daughter or successor of such a person. A long term rural landowner is defined as a landholding owned by that person before the 30th April 2007.
3. The 'local rural area' is defined as an area within the 'specified distance' in Table 4-6 above of where the applicant has lived or was living. Where the 'specified distance' for the Urban Influence and Stronger Rural area extends into the Coastal Zone or a Landscape and Heritage Area the lands within the Coastal Zone or Landscape and Heritage Area is excluded from being considered. However, where the specified distance for a person from the Coastal Zone or Landscape and Heritage Area extends into one of the other rural area types, this land will be considered. The 'local rural area' includes the open countryside, Large Villages, Small Villages and Rural Nodes but excludes the Key Towns, the Large Towns and Level 3a and 3b settlements. In the context of the Coastal Zone the local rural area is defined as open countryside within the coastal zone.
4. Under both Category A and B, the persons must not have previously owned a rural house. However, the Planning Authority, may in exceptional circumstances, give consideration to such persons. These circumstances include:
  - (a) The person is no longer in possession of that home having been disposed of following a legal separation/divorce/repossession/the transfer of a home attached to a farm to a family member and that person can demonstrate that they have a social or economic functional need to live in the local rural area.
  - (b) The person requires a new purpose built specially adapted house due to a verified medical condition. The person must demonstrate that their existing home cannot be structurally adapted to meet their particular needs.

- (c) An immediate family member who needs to reside beside an older person or person who otherwise needs a carer(s) to provide security, support or care, or the older person or person who requires a carer(s) needs to reside beside an immediate family member. In either case, the person (either the older person or the immediate family member) whom it is proposed to reside beside must have lived full-time in that 'local rural area' for a minimum period of 10 years and the subject site must be directly adjacent to their home. Similar consideration will be given to an immediate family member of an older person who has no children. An immediate family member is defined as a mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or guardian. In the case of an older person who has no children, an immediate family member is defined as a sister, brother, niece or nephew.
  - (d) An older person(s), who for verified reasons, wishes to downsize their home but remain within their local rural area and local community. The new property must be single storey only, have a maximum floor area of 125m<sup>2</sup>, two bedrooms (one en suite), a kitchen, living room and bathroom and shall be fully accessible. It will be a condition of the planning permission that the exemption provided by Class 1 of Schedule 2, Part 1, Exempted Development-General of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) which relates to the erection of an extension to a dwelling house, will be removed.
5. In determining whether an applicant has an overriding need to live at the particular location the Council will consider whether the applicant has a demonstrable economic need in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 4-6 for the Coastal Zone and the Landscape and Heritage Areas e.g. full-time farming. In determining whether the applicant has an overriding social need to reside at that particular location, the Council will consider long-term landownership and exceptional health circumstances as outlined in Point 6. In both cases (either overriding social or economic need), the applicant must demonstrate that the need for a dwelling cannot be accommodated elsewhere and the development must comply with Points 7 and 8 relating to access to national and regional roads.
6. The Planning Authority may give special consideration to cases of exceptional health circumstances supported by relevant documentation by a medical practitioner proving that a person needs to live in a particular environment or requires an immediate family member to live in close proximity to that person.

7. In accordance with Objective TS66 in Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy and regardless of compliance with Category A or B, no individual rural housing proposing either (a) a new direct access to the national road network or (b) the generation of increased traffic from an existing access onto the national road network in a zone where the speed limit is greater than 60kph will be permitted-see Section 8.7.1 National Roads (Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy).
8. Planning applications for individual rural housing with access to a regional road within any of the rural area types or landscape and heritage areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the criteria set out in Objective TS73 in Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy.
9. All permissions for individual rural housing will include an occupancy condition and a permanent residence condition (see Objectives SH41 and SH42).

#### 4.9.2 Unfinished single houses in the open countryside

An instance may arise where planning permission is granted for a single house in the open countryside and work commenced on the development. However, the original applicant may no longer be in a position to complete the house. The planning authority will consider a planning application for retention and completion of the house by a different applicant only where the new applicant complies with the rural housing policy pertaining to that particular rural area.

#### 4.9.3 Ribbon Development

Ribbon development (also known as linear development) is defined in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines as development in rural areas “of almost continuous road frontage type development, for example, five or more houses existing on any one side of a given 250m of road frontage”. The Guidelines recommend against the creation of ribbon development for a variety of reasons including road safety, future demands for the provision of public infrastructure as well as visual impacts due to the piecemeal nature of this type of development.

Ribbon development on the approach road to towns and villages creates problems as these settlements grow, in particular, it can impinge on the orderly and efficient development of newly developing areas on the edges of settlements, it can obstruct

the delivery of future infrastructure and can give rise to demand for the inefficient servicing of this development at a high cost given the low density nature of the development. Ribbon development in the open countryside gives rise to suburban type development and contributes to the erosion of the rural character of an area.

Accordingly, the Council will adopt a presumption against ribbon development and will not allow more than five houses on any one side of a given 250m of road frontage regardless of the number of infill sites.

The Council will consider the following exception to this policy. Where there are four or five existing houses in a row and there is an infill site between two of the houses, the Council will consider the development of an infill site for a dwelling house where it is to accommodate a specific housing need such as that of a son or daughter. The infill site must be adjacent to the family home or in very close proximity (250 m of the family home). Only one infill site in that row will be permitted to be developed in order to limit the impact of ribbon development/suburban density in rural areas (regardless of the number of infill sites).

## New Individual Dwellings in the Open Countryside Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SH39

To consider individual rural housing in the open countryside in accordance with the categories and associated criteria set out in Table 4-6 and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the relevant development management standards.

### Objective SH40

To strictly control individual rural housing in the open countryside in areas that are reaching their carrying capacity in terms of effluent treatment capacity, visual amenity and/or roads carrying capacity in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 4.6 and the associated definitions and notes and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the relevant development management standards.

**Objective SH41**

All planning permissions granted for individual rural dwellings in the open countryside will be a subject to a condition which will require the applicant to enter an occupancy agreement for a period of 10 years from the date of first occupation of the dwelling house.

**Objective SH42**

All planning permissions granted for individual rural dwellings in the open countryside will be subject to a condition that the dwelling house be used as a permanent residence only.

**Objective SH43**

To adopt a presumption against ribbon development in the open countryside and on the approach roads to towns and villages in the interests of the proper planning and on sustainable development of the area save for the exceptions outlined in Section 4.9.3 of this chapter.

**Objective SH44**

To consider an application for retention and completion of a single house in the countryside by a different applicant to the original applicant only where the new applicant complies with the rural housing policy pertaining to that particular rural area.

**Objective SH45**

To require the design of new single houses to be of high quality and in keeping with the rural character of the site and the area, protect the visual amenities of the area and that of the landscape character unit in which it is located.

### Objective SH46

To review the rural housing policy contained in the County Development Plan following the publication of the new Section 28 Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Rural Housing, and to vary the Plan if necessary.

#### 4.9.4 Refurbishment and Replacement of Rural Dwellings/Non Residential Rural Structures

The reuse of the county's existing housing stock is a sustainable use of existing resources and its reuse will be encouraged by the Planning Authority. However, the reuse is only sustainable if the amount of work to be done to the property is significantly less than a new dwelling (in terms of embedded energy and waste) or if it preserves our vernacular heritage.

##### Vernacular Houses

The county has a significant number of attractive vernacular houses in its rural areas. The Planning Authority will continue to protect this vernacular building stock and promote its sensitive restoration including those which are derelict, as an alternative to the construction of new single rural houses elsewhere in the countryside. Table 4.7 sets out the guiding principles and criteria relating to vernacular houses.

##### Non-Vernacular

The Planning Authority will apply a more relaxed approach to the refurbishment of non-vernacular housing stock in rural areas.

##### Non-Residential Rural Structures

The Planning Authority will also consider the refurbishment and conversion of a non-residential structure to residential use e.g. a disused church or an old school building subject to complying with the criteria set out in Table 4.8.

##### **The following definitions apply:**

'Substantially intact' for the purposes of this section means the four walls and roof are intact.

'Derelict' for the purposes of this section means a structure which is not substantially intact. This includes where the roof is partially missing/damaged.



**Table 4.7 Refurbishment and Replacement of Dwelling Houses**

Category of Development	Guiding Principles	Criteria
<p>Restoration of a habitable or, 'substantially intact' or derelict vernacular dwelling.</p>	<p>The Planning Authority will protect the vernacular dwelling building stock in the county's rural areas and will encourage the sensitive restoration of a 'habitable', or 'substantially intact' or derelict vernacular dwelling as an alternative to the construction of a single rural house elsewhere in the countryside.</p>	<p>(i) The vernacular dwelling must be capable of being suitably restored to habitable accommodation in keeping with its original character and without the necessity to demolish or significantly alter it.</p> <p>(ii) The remaining character and original historic fabric of the structure must be retained using appropriate traditional construction methods and materials.</p> <p>(iii) The applicant will not be required to comply with the local need criteria relevant to the rural area in which the structure is located and occupancy and permanent residency conditions shall not apply.</p> <p>(iv) Any proposed extension of the structure must be proportionate in scale and be visually subservient while allowing sufficient accommodation to function as a modern dwelling.</p> <p>(v) Normal environment criteria will apply to the treatment of waste water, safe access and water supply.</p> <p>(vi) Minimum site sizes do not apply apart from required distances for wells and waste water treatment systems.</p>
<p>Replacement of 'habitable' and 'substantially intact' dwellings</p>	<p>The Planning Authority will protect the vernacular dwelling building stock in the county's rural areas and as such will not consider the replacement of habitable or substantially intact vernacular dwellings.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Category of Development	Guiding Principles	Criteria
	<p>Consideration will be given to the replacement of habitable or substantially intact non-vernacular dwellings (generally post 1970 buildings of little architectural merit). While such cases will not have to comply with the rural housing policy for new single houses in that rural area, the development must comply with normal planning and environmental criteria.</p>	<p>(i) The applicant will not be required to comply with the local need criteria relating to the rural area that the dwelling is located in and occupancy and permanent residence conditions shall not apply.</p> <p>(ii) The design of the replacement dwelling must be of a high standard and its scale and character appropriate to the site and its rural setting.</p> <p>(iii) The dwelling shall generally be on the same footprint as the existing dwelling or such other footprint as would have lesser associated impacts. The development must comply with all normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>(iv) Normal environmental criteria will apply to treatment of wastewater, safe access and water supply</p> <p>(v) Minimum site sizes will apply.</p>
Replacement of a Derelict Dwelling	<p>The Planning Authority will protect the vernacular dwelling building stock in the county's rural areas and as such will not consider the replacement of a derelict vernacular dwelling.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the replacement of a derelict non-vernacular dwelling. Such cases will be assessed as a greenfield site and the rural housing policy for new single houses in that rural area will be applied as will all other normal planning and environmental criteria.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>(i) The applicant shall comply with the local need criteria relating to the rural area that the dwelling is located in and the applicant will be required to accept the occupancy condition and permanent residence condition.</p> <p>(ii) The design of the replacement dwelling must be of a high standard and its scale and character appropriate to the site and its rural setting.</p>

Category of Development	Guiding Principles	Criteria
		<p>(iii) The dwelling shall generally be on the same footprint as the existing dwelling or such other footprint as would have lesser associated impacts. The development must comply with all normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>(iv) Normal environmental criteria will apply to treatment of wastewater, safe access and water supply.</p> <p>(v) Minimum site sites will apply</p>

**Table 4.8 Refurbishment and conversion of non-residential structures to residential use**

Category	Guiding Principles	Criteria
<p>Refurbishment and conversion of non-residential traditional rural buildings to residential use e.g. a disused church, an old school building and stone built barns.</p>	<p>The Planning Authority will assess this as the sustainable reuse of existing building stock and as an alternative to the construction of a single house elsewhere in the open countryside.</p>	<p>(i) The original structure must be ‘substantially intact’.</p> <p>(ii) The building must be of local, visual, architectural or historical interest.</p> <p>(iii) The building must be capable of undergoing refurbishment and conversion and its original appearance must be retained. In this regard, the planning application must be accompanied by a structural survey carried out by a suitably qualified engineer.</p> <p>(iv) The works must be carried out in a sensitive manner and retain architecturally important features and make use of traditional and complementary materials.</p> <p>(v) The applicant will not be required to comply with the local need criteria relating to the rural area in which the structure is located and the occupancy and permanent residence conditions shall not apply.</p> <p>(vi) Any proposed extension of the structure must be appropriate in scale and remain subservient to the structure.</p>

## Fire Damaged Houses

Rebuilding of rural dwellings that have been accidentally destroyed by fire will be supported subject to the dwelling being of a similar size and footprint to the dwelling that has been destroyed. Any significant variation to the original scale of the dwelling may result in additional assessments being required relating to site size and environmental criteria.

## Replacement and Refurbishment in the Open Countryside

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SH47

To consider the restoration of existing vernacular dwellings in accordance with Table 4.7, normal planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective SH48

To consider the replacement or refurbishment of existing non-vernacular dwellings subject to compliance with the relevant criteria outlined in Table No. 4-7, compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective SH49

To consider the refurbishment and conversion of a non-residential structure to residential use subject to compliance with the relevant criteria set out in Table 4-8, compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### 4.9.5 Self-contained residential units for a family member

The purpose of this unit is to provide semi-independent accommodation for an immediate family member who is dependent on the occupant(s) of the main dwelling or needs to live in close proximity to the occupant(s) of the main dwelling for care and/or security reasons. An immediate family member is defined as a mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or guardian. In the case of an older person who has no children, an immediate family member is defined as a sister, brother, niece or nephew.

These units, which must be attached to the main dwelling house with provision made for an internal link, are not considered to be an independent dwelling unit and as such private open space and car parking standards are not independently assessed. The unit must be integrated back into the main dwelling when use by the immediate family member is no longer required. The Planning Authority will consider applications on a case-by-case basis and subject to compliance with the development management standards set out in Volume 2 and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### Objective SH50

To consider the development of a self-contained residential unit attached to the main dwelling house only where it is satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposed occupant is an immediate family member who is dependent on the existing occupant(s) of the main dwelling house or needs to live in close proximity to the existing occupant(s) of the main dwelling for health or support reasons. The development must comply with the relevant development management standards set out in Volume 2 and comply with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### 4.9.6 Modular Homes and Pre-fabricated Homes

Alternative forms of house construction are evolving, and in many cases, are resulting in more sustainable houses e.g., timber framed homes have a lower carbon footprint than concrete built homes. As these houses may be cheaper to develop,

they also offer a more affordable housing option for many people. While the Council encourages the development of sustainable housing, there are concerns about the suitability of some building forms and associated external finishes, both in rural and urban settings.

In all cases, where permission is sought for these homes in the open countryside, the developments will be assessed as one-off rural housing for occupation as a permanent residence, and accordingly the applicant will be required to demonstrate compliance with the local need criteria for the rural area type that the subject site is located within. A permanent residence condition will also be attached to the planning permission. The dwelling will be deemed to have fulfilled the applicant's rural housing need, and going forward, the applicant will therefore be considered to have previously owned a rural home. Notwithstanding, and in the case of a pre-fabricated timber dwelling only (e.g., log cabin type structure), the Council will consider the replacement of the structure with a house of more permanent construction by the same applicant on the same site subject to compliance with all normal planning and environmental criteria.

As these developments are assessed as independent dwellings in the open countryside, it must have its own site edged red, comply with minimum site size requirements, be served by its own independent wastewater treatment system and water supply, provide a safe vehicular entrance that meets the minimum sightline requirements for the road on which the site is located, and comply with all other normal planning and environmental criteria and the relevant standards set out in Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

## Modular Units

The use of modular units as permanent residences will be given consideration in rural and urban locations on a case-by-case basis. It must be demonstrated that the units will provide a high quality, sustainable construction with a lifetime similar to concrete construction (minimum 60 years). The external finishes of the units must be in keeping with the local vernacular finishes and in this regard the units must therefore have an external plaster finish and normal roof slates. The units must comply with all other standards pertaining to residential developments.

## Pre-fabricated Timber Homes (Log Cabins) in Rural Nodes and the Open Countryside

The Council will consider the development of pre-fabricated timber homes e.g., log cabin type structures on a case-by-case basis on sites in the open countryside, and will have regard to the following as part of that assessment:

- The siting of the unit must complement its rural setting, be sensitively sited to ensure that it blends in with its surroundings and landscape setting, is not visually prominent especially when viewed from approach roads to the four main towns, scenic routes (see Section 5 in Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment) or detract from landscape character units which are assigned medium or high landscape sensitivity (see Section 5 in Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment). The unit should be simple in form and design and not have the characteristics of alpine dwellings. The external materials will be considered on a case-by-case having regard to the characteristics of the site, its visual sensitivity and visibility of the unit. The use of a timber external finish may be appropriate on some rural sites where the site is well-screened and/or not visually prominent. Where a timber external finish is not considered appropriate, the Council will consider an alternative external finish e.g., render or an appropriate cladding.
- The site must be suitably landscaped, and details of the proposed landscaping must be submitted with the planning application. The planting should be specified by a suitably qualified person. Where a timber finish is proposed the tree planting must be at a density that will provide a woodland setting. The landscaping must be carried out before commencement of construction.
- The development must comply with all relevant Building Control Standards.

## Pre-fabricated Timber Homes in Towns and Villages

In general, the Council will not consider the development of these units as an appropriate residential unit in the back garden of an existing dwelling house in a town or village setting. The Council may give consideration where it will be on its own self-contained site with independent vehicular access and private open space. The structure must be simple in form and design, must not detract from visual amenity

and must be in keeping with the existing built form and character of the area. In general, they will not be considered on the main thoroughfares in the town or village or in visually prominent locations. Where a timber external finish is not considered appropriate, the Council will consider an alternative external finish e.g., render or an appropriate cladding. The applicant will submit a planting plan prepared by a suitable qualified person to provide appropriate screening for the unit. The development must all comply with all relevant Building Control Standards.

### Objective SH51

To consider the use of modular units and prefabricated timber homes for use as a permanent residence where it complies with the requirements of Section 4.9.6 of this chapter and normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 4.9.7 Individual Mobile Homes for use as a Permanent Residence

This type of structure is not considered suitable for use as a permanent residence. The Planning Authority may consider limited temporary use of a mobile home as living accommodation while a permitted dwelling house for the same applicant is being constructed on the same site. The mobile home must be served by suitable wastewater and water supply facilities.

### Objective SH52

To not permit the use of individual mobile homes as permanent residences. The Council may, in the following exceptional circumstances, allow the use of a mobile home to:

- (a) Provide temporary emergency accommodation where no other suitable options are available and as confirmed by the Council, or
- (b) A temporary planning permission of no more than 2 years for the placement and occupation of a mobile home on a site where a permitted dwelling house is under construction for occupation by the same applicant.



### 4.9.8 Single Holiday Homes

The land use planning approach is to concentrate future holiday homes, including single holiday homes, in existing settlements in the county. Single holiday homes will only be considered in the open countryside in line with Table 4-7 and 4-8.

However, the development of holiday homes in rent pressure zones and areas of identified housing need for the purposes of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Supply Act 2015 will be strictly controlled to ensure existing houses and zoned land is retained, where needed, for the provision of permanent residential purposes. Holiday home development is discussed in further detail in Chapter 7 Tourism Development and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

#### Objective SH53

To restrict single holiday home development to appropriate sites in Level 1- Level 5 settlements in accordance with the Core Strategy in Chapter 3 and pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, Chapter 7 Tourism Development and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning in the interests of the sustainable development and proper planning of the area.



CHAPTER 5

# Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages



## 5.1 Introduction

Wexford is home to a network of towns and villages which perform a variety of roles and functions for their residents and the wider rural hinterlands. Chapter 3 outlines the Council's overall development approach for each of the main settlements and settlement types in the settlement hierarchy. This chapter outlines the Council's commitment to improving the quality of the county's towns and villages and contains the objectives to ensure that they are attractive and functional places where people want to live, work, access services and raise their families.

The creation of successful places is a shared activity between local authorities, infrastructure providers, designers, businesses and local communities. Successful places share a number of common factors. Figure 5.1<sup>1</sup> illustrates the many components and conditions which are required. While the various components are covered under the respective chapters of the plan (see Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, Chapter 15 Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure, Chapter 8 Transport and Chapter 10 Environment Management) this chapter focuses on ensuring quality and sustainability in the physical form of towns and villages ensuring that they are successful and vital places.

**Figure 5-1 Components of Successful Places**



<sup>1</sup> Figure 1: Place-Making (adapted from Egan's Wheel Sustainable Communities)

## 5.2 Climate Change in our Towns and Villages

Our towns and villages are the focus of much of our residential properties and they also contain a significant proportion of our commercial and community building stock, amenities and infrastructure. Many of our towns and villages were founded on rivers or by the coast for economic and transport reasons and as a result are more vulnerable to climate change. In order to respond to the impacts that climate change will have on our towns and villages the Planning Authority will, inter alia:

- Implement necessary flood management measures such as those proposed under the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS).
- Ensure that floodplains and other natural features which retain and filter floodwaters such as wetlands are retained.
- Ensure that development and infrastructure is designed and located so as to minimise the threat from flooding and coastal erosion.
- Ensure that buildings are energy efficient and that materials and structures are resilient to climate change.
- Ensure that development is located so that the need to travel is minimised and modal shift is optimised.

## 5.3 Policy Context

The NPF acknowledges the importance of rural towns and villages in terms of their economic, administrative and social functions and seeks to activate the potential for renewal and to strengthen and diversify rural towns. It places a strong emphasis on strengthening Ireland's urban structure by targeting both population and employment growth in urban areas, reversing stagnation and decline, promoting urban infill and brownfield development and ensuring that urban areas are attractive, liveable, high quality places. It envisages that they will be home to diverse and integrated communities. It also focuses on addressing the legacy of rapid growth by facilitating catch-up in amenity, services and employment and creating more self-sustaining settlements of all sizes.

Realising our Rural Potential – Action Plan for Rural Development states that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to rural development. Different rural areas have different needs and require different solutions, depending on their local assets, their peripherality, population density, etc. The Council must tailor its policies to fit the character of the respective town or village, some of which have commuter pressures, other have experienced decline and some in more remote coastal are experiencing pressure from tourism related development which is not matched by local growth.

The objectives of the RSES seek to strengthen the region’s urban and rural fabric creating vibrant towns and villages and seeking investment for infrastructure and initiatives to support job creation. This will be enabled through the ‘New Homes in Small Towns and Villages’ initiatives, investment in renewal initiatives and co-ordination between local authorities, Irish Water and other stakeholders. The RSES recommends the implementation of sustainable place frameworks, the ‘10-minute town’ concept and the development of ‘smart towns’.

Further guidance on how we should lay out our towns and villages to be attractive places which are safe places to live and which are efficient, adaptable and resilient is provided in the following government guidance:

- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, 2019).
- Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, Companion to the Sustainable Residential Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2009).
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2007).
- Urban Development and Building Height – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018).
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2020).
- Retail Design Manual, A companion Guide to the Retail Planning Guidelines for

Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2012)

- Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 (2009).
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2004).

## 5.4 Goal

It is the goal of the Council to ensure that the towns and villages in the county are vibrant and inclusive, support their urban and rural communities and provide attractive and enjoyable living and working environments.

## 5.5 Strategy

The Council's strategy is to create attractive, healthy, safe and efficient places through its own interventions and ensuring that all future developments achieve the highest standards in design and layout. Having regard to this, the key aims of the strategy are:

- **Design Quality** - To ensure that our towns and villages are attractive places to live and visit and that the design of development and the public realm is of exceptional quality.
- **Place Based Design**: To ensure that all new development is designed to respect, enhance and respond to its natural, built, cultural and social context.
- **Connected Places** - To ensure that future development has a coherent urban structure, is permeable and places people at the heart of the public realm.
- **Compact and Rejuvenated** - To ensure that development results in the efficient use of land, encourages walking and cycling and rejuvenates the area within which it is located.
- **Vibrant, Inclusive, Resilient and Adaptable** -To ensure our towns and villages are self-sustaining places which are vital and vibrant, with appropriate services, jobs,

amenities and community facilities which are inclusive, accessible to all and are resilient to challenges such as climate change and economic instability.

## Towns and Villages Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TV01

To ensure, through our planning processes and investment decisions, that we create liveable, vital, diverse, inclusive, resilient towns and villages.

### Objective TV02

To promote a healthy County by improving physical and social environments to create vibrant, accessible, healthy and sustainable places to live, work and relax.

### Objective TV03

To carry out, as part of the preparation of future local area plans and settlement plans, a comprehensive health check of the settlement. This health check, which will incorporate the Heritage Council's 'Town Centre Health Check' approach, a community health check and audit of social and community facilities and recreation and open spaces, will inform the development of targeted local authority strategies and the spatial planning framework and objectives in the local area plan/settlement plan.

### Objective TV04

To promote compact urban form, which is appropriate to context, in the interests of the efficient use of resources and optimising the opportunities to walk and cycle and the feasibility of public transport.



**Objective TV05**

To ensure that towns and villages are accessible to all, adaptable and safe.

**Objective TV06**

To require high quality design in the public realm, architecture and in building functionality.

**Objective TV07**

To prepare Urban Design Frameworks which implement the '10 Minute Town' concept, identifies opportunities for infill and regeneration and set out the key components and design principles for new areas in all future Local Area Plans.

**Objective TV08**

To ensure, through the development management process and in local authority own development that new development adds to the sense of place, quality, distinctiveness and character of our towns and villages.

**Objective TV09**

To regenerate and revitalise our towns and villages, diversify and seek new roles and uses to stimulate economic and cultural development and provide necessary physical and social infrastructure.

**Objective TV10**

To prepare Urban Regeneration Framework plans for the four main towns which provide a clear vision, context, rationale and goals for urban renewal and regeneration in each town. These frameworks, which will be informed by consultations with the public, private and community sectors, will address the interrelationships between environmental, physical, economic and social dimensions and will be used

to inform spatial planning policy and future regeneration programmes and projects in those towns, subject to compliance with the Habitats and all other relevant EU Directives.

### Objective TV11

To require that all development complies with the design advice contained in the narrative and the objectives of this chapter and the design principles set out in the guidance documents in Section 5.3 of this chapter.

### Objective TV12

To ensure our towns are healthy places with quality recreational and sporting amenities and which are planned to optimise opportunities for active travel.

## 5.6 The Design Process

The Urban Design Manual, which accompanies the 'Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (May 2009), provides comprehensive guidance on design issues. The Manual sets out a series of 12 design criteria for development sub-divided into three groups: (i) Neighbourhood (ii) Site and (iii) Home. These groups reflect the spatial scales and order of priorities that should help inform and guide the design of any new residential, mixed-use and commercial development.

The criteria and associated indicators are included in the Development Management Manual contained in Volume 2. This chapter provides advice on the application of the more important criteria, such as Quality (Section 5.7), Connections (Section 5.9), Efficiency (Section 5.10 Compact Growth), and Inclusivity and Adaptability (Section 5.11). Together with the other guidance documents referred to above, the criteria shall be used by designers to appraise sites and inform the design of new development.

**Figure 5-2 Criteria for Successful Place-Making**



The Council will require the submission of a Design Statement to accompany all development over 2ha, commercial or mixed use schemes in central areas, residential schemes above 50 houses in towns and on a case by case basis in villages where the sensitivity to change is higher due to considerations of scale. Details of what shall be addressed in a Design Statement are included in Section 2.3 of the Development Management Manual.

Specific development management standards with regard to the design of individual sites and dwellings are also contained in the Development Management Manual.

## 5.7 Design Quality

The quality of design in our towns and villages determines how we use them and how we feel about them. This applies equally to our buildings, streets and public spaces, the places where we work and where we live. Good design is a good investment as

people come to and stay in attractive places. As such quality design is an investment in quality of life and in economic prosperity.

New urban form must create interest and a 'sense of place' and it must have quality and distinctiveness that will make people attached to it and have pride in it as their place. Places should be legible and people should be able to way-find using the buildings and spaces.

Quality must be considered at every level from neighbourhood to individual building design and the spaces between them. It must be evident in the building form and streetscapes, public realm and spaces, landscaping and the materials and finishing on building and spaces.

### 5.7.1 Architectural Quality

*'The architecture we choose to build now is the architectural heritage of the future'*  
(Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015, 2009:8).

Quality architecture addresses beauty, functionality, durability, adaptability, amenity, liveability and a positive sense of place. Good architecture ensures that the building is fit for its intended use or function, answers the profound challenges of environmental sustainability and climate change<sup>2</sup>, is durable in terms of its design and construction and respects and enhances its environment aesthetically. Such architecture gives us enduring social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits<sup>3</sup>.

### 5.7.2 Designing the Public Realm

The public realm describes a variety of spaces, such as squares, neighbourhood centres, parks, quays and streets. As all developments will have at least an interface with the public realm, and in most cases will be at least partially comprised of public areas, the design and quality of the public realm will be crucial to the quality of the scheme.

In general, the quality of the public realm should be as high, if not higher, than the quality of the individual buildings – a neighbourhood with poor quality spaces will rarely be improved by the highest quality architecture buildings. Buildings should not sit in space, rather they should be used to define and shape the public area.

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<sup>2</sup> Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 (2009)

<sup>3</sup> Places for People, National Policy on Architecture – Discussion Document (Government of Ireland, 2019)

Consideration must be given to how the buildings and spaces interact and are to make attractive and welcoming places.

## Designing Quality Places Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TV13

To encourage a culture of creativity and quality in architecture.

### Objective TV14

To require that new buildings are of exceptional architectural quality, and are fit for their intended use or function, are flexible in the face of unknown future demands, durable in terms of design and construction, respectful of setting and the environment and to require that the overall development is of high quality, with a well-considered public realm.

### Objective TV15

To ensure that the appearance of buildings, in terms of details and materials (texture, colour, patterns and durability), is of a high standard with enduring quality and has a positive impact on the visual quality of the area.

### Objective TV16

To require a Design Statement to accompany all development over 2ha, commercial or mixed use schemes in central areas, residential schemes above 50 houses in towns and on a case by case basis in villages where the sensitivity to change is higher due to considerations of scale and context. Details of what shall be addressed in a Design Statement are included in Section 2.3 of the Development Management Manual.

### Objective TV17

To require all significant residential applications of 50 or more dwellings to include a public realm plan and statement. These shall address quality at every level and shall contain a fully detailed and specified plan for the public realm of the scheme. The public realm plan shall include details of the street hierarchy, pavement treatment, permeability, open spaces and meeting places, landscaping and tree planting, boundary treatments, surfacing and street furniture, lighting and signage.

### Objective TV18

To implement environmental and public realm improvements in town and village centres to a high standard and finish in order to improve safety, image, identity and environmental quality. The Council will work with developers, stakeholders and local community groups to secure improvements to the public realm and pursue all avenues of funding to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of our settlements.

### Objective TV19

To require that new developments, streets, public spaces and other areas of public realm including parks are designed to reflect the design principles of Connectivity, Enclosure, Active Edge and Pedestrian Facilities/Activity<sup>4</sup> and enhance the biodiversity of the town/village in which they are situated.

### Objective TV20

To support proposals from local communities and community organisations to prepare a Village Design Statement for a particular village through a process involving community participation, the Heritage Council and the Council's Planning Department subject to availability of resources.

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<sup>4</sup> See Section 5.9.3 Street Design.

## 5.8 Place Based Design-Context

An understanding of 'place' context and appreciation of character is at the core of good design. New development should be designed to respect, enhance and respond to its natural, built, cultural and social context. This should not be seen as a constraint but as a resource to create interesting, attractive and distinctive places.

New development should be designed to respect and complement heritage assets and character. Cues can be taken from the existing built form, scale, massing, plot widths and urban grain. Building lines and building heights should be observed and the response should demonstrate how these factors have been taken into account while at the same time achieving compact and efficient growth. The intention is not to replicate scale and form but to respond appropriately and use opportunities presented by landform or adjacent urban development to create more intensive development patterns while avoiding abrupt changes in scale in historic environments.

Contextual development in our smaller towns and villages warrants special attention given the number of villages scattered throughout Wexford's countryside, their unique character and appeal and their smaller scale and thus sensitivity to change. The expansion of villages is appropriate and necessary to prevent the decline of rural areas, provide rural employment as an alternative to commuting and to provide an alternative to one off rural housing.

New development must respond to the natural landscape and make optimum use of the opportunities presented by the natural features of the site. Features such as watercourses, hedgerows, wetlands and tree stands must be identified and incorporated in the site. Care must be taken to ensure that features such as rivers and streams are left open, and that buildings and spaces appropriately address them. As well as adding to the character and value of the place these features act as natural measures to absorb surface water, absorb carbon and allow for the enhancement and dispersal of plant and animal diversity in our town and villages. It is important to identify how these natural features will be connected to each other and to those outside the site, as continuity is imperative for both surface water and biodiversity.

## Place Based Design Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TV21

To ensure that all new development is designed to respect, enhance and respond to its natural, built, cultural and social context and add to character and sense of place.

### Objective TV22

To ensure that new development has regard to the scale of the settlement and the ability of the settlement to absorb further development. In deciding whether any given development exceeds the absorption capacity of the settlement, as well as the absolute quantum of development, the Planning Authority will also have regard to scale, bulk and massing of the individual buildings and groups of buildings.

### Objective TV23

To ensure that new development responds to the natural features of the site and wider settlement. To ensure that features are identified in planning applications and preserved. The Design Statement required for the site (or site layout where a Design Statement is not required) should identify the features to be retained and design measures to enhance the biodiversity of the settlement such as linking green or blue features within and outside the site.

### Objective TV24

To encourage and participate in heritage led regeneration, including consideration of the potential to participate in the Heritage Council's Historic Towns Initiative, and to adopt 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.



## 5.9 Connected Places and Design of Streets

### 5.9.1 Street Networks, user priority and permeability

The majority of the public space or public realm in our towns and villages is comprised of streets. Streets are also the basic building block of urban structure and therefore the design of street networks and streets is of crucial importance to creating sustainable, walkable and attractive towns. However, one of the legacies of residential layout design in the recent past has been that design considerations have often been dominated and driven by the need to make provision for motor vehicles – to the detriment of other users. The standards and guidelines set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (hereon referred to as DMURS) **must be applied by the Council in relation to all urban roads and streets, that is, streets and roads with a speed limit of 60 km/h or less<sup>5</sup>.**

The Manual recognises the importance of assigning higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, without unduly compromising vehicle movement in order to create secure, connected places that work for all members of the community.

New development should provide for optimum levels of connectivity and permeability through careful consideration of layout and design. Permeability refers to the ease of movement within any given area particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Permeable urban environments encourage increased participation in sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport. Further Guidance on permeability is provided in Permeability Best Practice Guide (National Transport Authority, 2015).

While in general, the principle is that every street must lead to a street, network design does not have to result in complete permeability for all modes of transport.

### 5.9.2 Route Hierarchy

In general the urban street network is comprised of a hierarchy of routes of differing design and function. DMURS recognises the different ‘movement functions’ or roles which particular routes play and sets out a hierarchy of route types and characteristics. It identifies a route hierarchy with three route types; **Arterial, Link and Local Routes**. As well as detailed road design and movement function, the type of route will inform the design, building line/frontage, building type, building height, density and landscape treatment.

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<sup>5</sup> Except: (a) Motorways. (b) In exceptional circumstances, certain urban roads and streets with the written consent of sanctioning authority being either the Transport Infrastructure Ireland or Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport respectively.

**Arterial Routes** are the major strategic routes that connect major centres and nodes. They may also include orbital routes. Pedestrians, cyclists and public transport should be prioritised on these routes but they may also need to convey a volume of individual traffic movements. The routes have a higher design speed and greater width. They can accommodate buildings of greater height which will serve to provide continuity and enclosure of these wider routes. Legibility and landmarks will be important considerations on these routes to enable way finding and convey a sense of place in these more fast moving routes.

**Link Routes** provide the links to Arterial routes or between centres, neighbourhoods and/or suburbs. Their movement function will still be significant but they will have a lesser volume of traffic with a destination outside the town. They cater for shorter journeys and the design, width and design speed is lower. These routes can still accommodate building height which shall be proportionate to the road width to ensure appropriate enclosure (see below). There should be particular attention to the different characteristics of the areas through which they pass. A higher standard of design will be expected in places with more important 'place' function (see below).

**Local Routes** are the routes which provide access within communities and to link Arterial and Link routes. Their movement function is much less important and the 'place' function is paramount. They may even be fully pedestrian or they may serve a number of modes of transport. They are a more intimate space where people will dwell and the movement function is secondary to their function as a place.

DMURS notes that the character of these routes will change across their length as they pass through various 'places'; rural areas, villages, suburbs, neighbourhood centres/nodes and town centres. The design treatment will therefore also vary depending on the 'place context'. For example in locations such as neighbourhood centres and intersections a higher design quality will be expected and higher levels of pedestrian connectivity and vibrant and responsive frontages will be required.

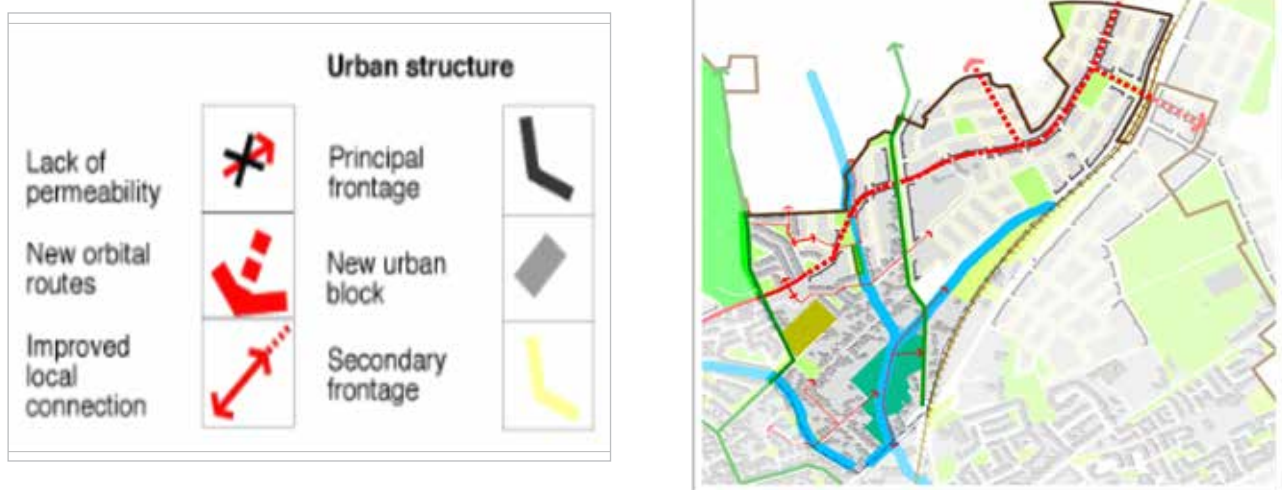
These roles will be assigned and new routes planned in the respective Local Area Plans. However, in many of the County's towns and villages there are no local area plans and in such instances<sup>6</sup> designers should seek the advice of the Planning Authority at the preplanning stage to ascertain the envisaged role for the route where this is not set out in a local area plan.

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<sup>6</sup> And in instances where the Route Type has not yet been assigned in the Town or Village Plan.

Figure 5-3 below shows the proposed route structure of a new area and shows how the route type influences the type of building frontages required (Principal and Secondary).

**Figure 5-3 Example of a Proposed Route Structure**



The Development Management Manual contained in Volume 2 provides further indicative cross sections for Arterial, Link and Local Routes<sup>7</sup>. The sections show carriageways, cycle tracks, building lines and heights, landscaping privacy strips and SUDS for each route type– all of which contribute to creating a comfortable, attractive and safe space which is designed to reflect the function of the route.

In designing new routes, it is important in the interests of street design, street enclosure and land efficiency that buildings front onto the street. Separate access roads which run parallel to the existing route will not be permitted.

### 5.9.3 Street Design

New street and road design must put primary emphasis on creating attractive places which are accessible by all and which, secondly, serve their movement function. A broad range of place-based measures such as built form, landscaping and levels of pedestrian and cyclist activity, as well as more conventional road design measures, will need to be taken into account in making streets function as places.

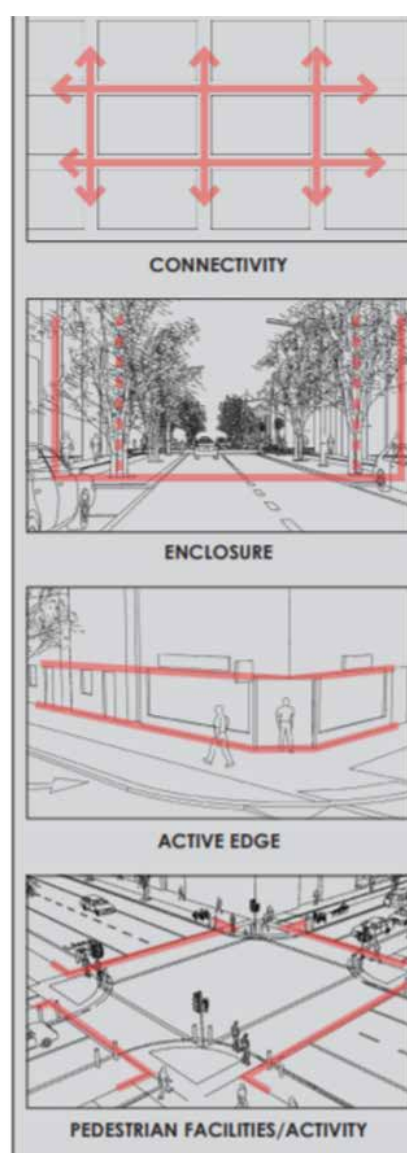
<sup>7</sup> It also includes a Wexford County Council derivative known as a 'Country Road' which seeks to retain the landscape character and biodiversity of approach roads to towns and villages.

A key challenge is to successfully promote the non-car based functions of 'the street' by promoting a 'sense of place', facilitating social interaction and encouraging walking and cycling. It is important that the space between buildings is carefully considered in relation to the scale of the buildings and the activities taking place on the new streets.

DMURS focuses on streets as attractive places and seeks to ensure that design is appropriate to context, character and location. The manual identifies four key characteristics of place based street design:

- Connectivity
- Enclosure
- Active Edge
- Pedestrian Facilities / Activity

**Connectivity** of the route network is dealt with extensively in Sections 5.9.1 and 5.9.2 of this chapter. At the street level the creation of vibrant and active places requires pedestrian activity and this in turn requires walkable, permeable street networks. Well-designed connections should be overlooked by active accommodation to give passive supervision. Passive vehicular traffic can also provide a level of surveillance. There should be good visibility from other areas to minimise opportunities for hiding/crime. It is beneficial to retrospectively improve connectivity with well-designed connections where possible to increase pedestrian activity and walkability. Further guidance is available in *Permeability - A Best Practice Guide* (NTA).



**Figure 5.4 Characteristics of place based street design**

**Enclosure** is an important element of street design. New streets and spaces should be continuously and adequately enclosed by building frontages and landscape. Existing continuity should be maintained where it exists (building lines and forms) and opportunities to address weaknesses should be realised through infill development or redevelopment. Further detail and dimensions are provided on the role of building height and street width in creating enclosure in Section 4.2.1 of DMURS.

An **active edge** livens the street creating a more interesting and engaging environment. An active frontage is achieved with frequent edges and openings to ensure that the street is overlooked to generate pedestrian activity as people come and go from buildings. Where residential development fronts onto streets, a higher level of privacy is desirable. This can be provided at ground floor level with a 'privacy strip' (see Figure 5.5 and Section 4.2.3 DMURS) or change in level to create separation and privacy without compromising the active edge. Providing a planted privacy strip helps to define public and private space, protect residential amenity and provides an attractive street edge.

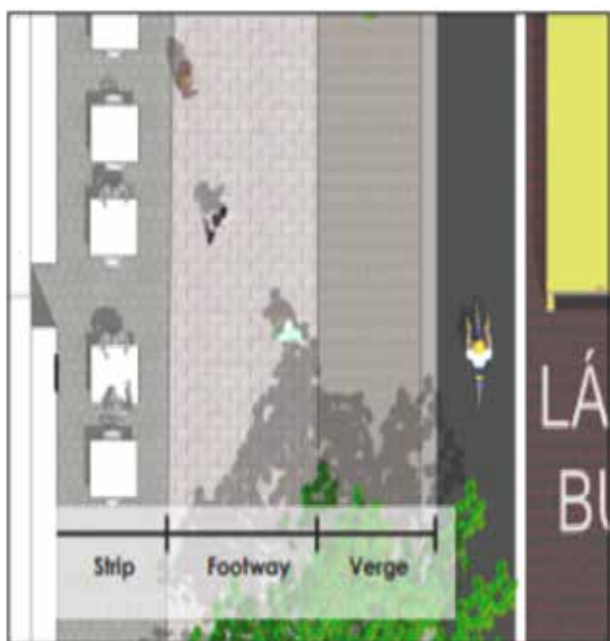
The inclusion of in-curtilage parking in front gardens results in large setbacks and reduces the sense of enclosure and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances (or in outer suburban areas and villages). Car parking should not dominate the streetscape. On-street or underground parking increases site potential and allows for a stronger street frontage. Where possible apartment developments should be designed to include own door entrances for ground floor units. This will create a greater level of street activity.



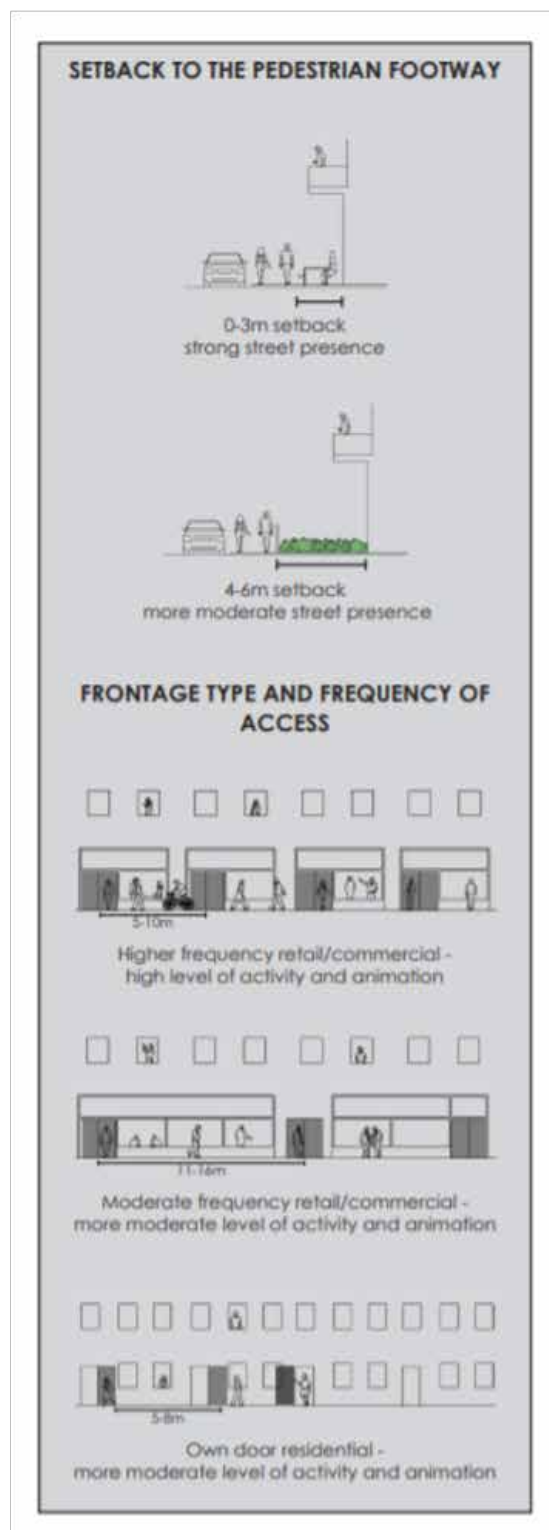
**Figure 5.5 Privacy Strip**  
(Source: DMURS)

Good **pedestrian activity/facilities** such as wide footpaths and well-designed crossings can make walking a more convenient and pleasurable experience that will further encourage pedestrian activity and vibrancy. DMURS provides more detail on the various zones within the pedestrian area - made up of the strip, footway and verge. These areas should be viewed and designed as three areas of activity.

**Figure 5.6 The three activity zones of the footpath (Source: DMURS)**



**Figure 5.7 Measures that indicate active and animated street interfaces (Source: DMURS)**



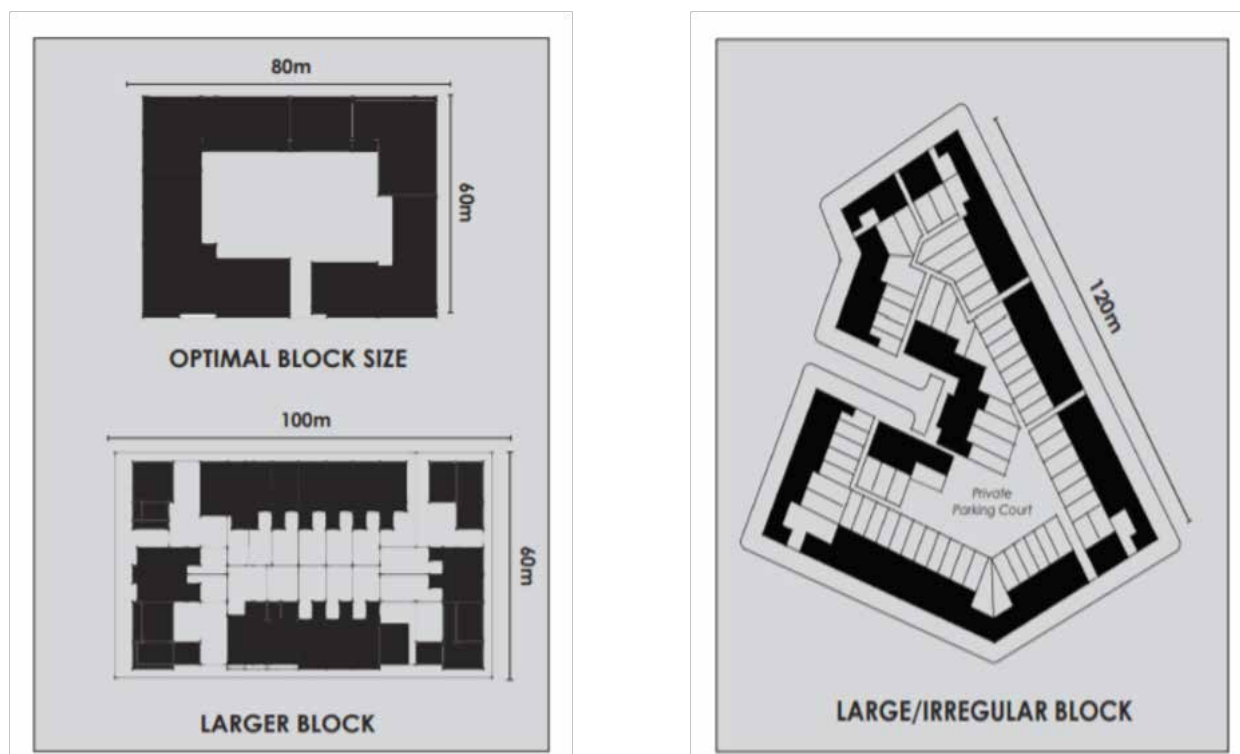
## Urban Blocks

Urban blocks are an important component of street design. They are the basic development parcels that remain once open space, streets, footpaths and other public spaces have been removed. Our historic towns are made up of contrasting buildings that work together because they sit together in coherent blocks. Proper block layout is also crucial to achieving compact urban form and the development of successful places.

Urban blocks need to be sized and shaped to accommodate development of different uses and types. DMURS sets out detailed guidance for the design of urban blocks. With regard to block dimensions the following apply:

- 60 – 80m is optimal for pedestrian movement and will sustain a variety of building types. This should be used within intensively developed areas such as centres to maximise accessibility;
- Larger blocks within centres and business parks / industrial estates may be required to cater for larger commercial or civic developments. In such cases mid-block pedestrian links should be provided;
- A block dimension of up to 100m will enable a reasonable level of permeability for pedestrians and may also be used in neighbourhoods and suburbs;
- In some cases, site constraints may require designers to apply larger block dimensions. However, maximum block dimensions should generally not exceed 120m.

Urban blocks for residential areas tend to be smaller than blocks for industrial areas where buildings and spaces are larger. The perimeter block provides the greatest flexibility of urban block types. It provides coherent frontage to streets and spaces and it provides a clear distinction between public and private spaces. The block and adjoining blocks should align to create well defined streets and spaces with relatively continuous active frontage, made up of doors and windows to create attractive and well supervised streets and public spaces.

**Figure 5.8 and 5.9 Block Types (Source: DMURS)**

#### 5.9.4 Streets - Detailed Design and Safety

DMURS provides further detail of the role of street trees, lighting, street furniture, materials, signage, historic streets, pedestrian and shared areas, cycling facilities including cycleway design and carriageway alignments. It also contains detailed advice on the design of radii, carriageway width, surfaces, visibility and splays, alignment curvature and deflections and parking.

Careful consideration should be given to junction design; all junctions must meet DMURS standards and there will be a presumption against roundabouts in favour of standard junctions (either signalised, priority or uncontrolled). Existing large scale roundabouts may where necessary be retrofitted or replaced by standard junctions along main routes to achieve better provision for cyclists and pedestrians and to provide for the redevelopment of key corner locations.

DMURS promotes a design approach which seeks to create self-enforcing low speed environments in urban areas. In terms of road safety, the speed at which a driver



travels is principally influenced by the characteristics of the street environment (Section 4.1.2). Integrated design approaches incorporate elements that instinctively alter behaviour thus reducing the need for more conventional measures. The Manual sets out<sup>8</sup> a matrix of appropriate design speeds which reflect the route type and context and user priority.

Where national roads pass through settlements, and where the speed limit on that road is between 50km/h and 60 km/h, regard shall also be paid to the Transport Infrastructure Document 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads', which describes the requirements that shall be implemented on national roads in terms of the provision of traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings.

## Connected Places and Street Design Objectives<sup>9</sup>

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TV25

All applications for new developments shall demonstrate (and graphically illustrate in the design brief where appropriate) how permeability considerations have been integrated into the development. In the first instance the needs of pedestrians must be considered and the scheme and its various routes should be designed to ensure walkability.

### Objective TV26

All new development must be laid out in connected streets. While network design does not have to result in complete permeability for all modes of transport, open networks are generally considered as the most permeable but it is also desirable to encourage filtered permeability to provide routes specifically for pedestrians or for pedestrians and cyclists and/or public transport but not the private car. All development must make provision and graphically show pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjoining lands notwithstanding whether that land is already developed but particularly adjoining greenfield and under-utilised land.

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<sup>8</sup> DMURS, Table 4.1, Page 64

<sup>9</sup> See also Section 8.4.5 in Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy which deals with Streets and Roads.

### Objective TV27

The design of streets on all 'route types' must have regard to their 'place context' and a higher quality of design will be required in locations with a higher place value. New developments and their associated streets and spaces shall put primary emphasis on creating attractive places, facilitating social interaction and provide for connectivity, enclosure, active edge and pedestrian facilities.

### Objective TV28

New development will be required to present an 'active edge' to streets and spaces to create a sense of place and variety and provide adequate surveillance in the interests of safety.

### Objective TV29

To ensure all new buildings and developments provide adequate 'enclosure' for the spaces they adjoin. Existing building continuity must be maintained and opportunities to infill to create enclosure must be taken.

### Objective TV30

To encourage, and in some cases require, the making of retrospective links to existing developments, where such links will improve accessibility, increase opportunities for walking and cycling, represents an improvement in the amenity and accessibility of existing developments. Such links are best made in conjunction with the provision of additional amenity space to make the links open and attractive.

### Objective TV31

Pedestrian activities must be well considered in the design of streets and schemes. On new streets which are likely to have a high level of usage the design shall clearly indicate the three divisions of the pedestrian zone of the street - made up of the strip, footway and verge. These areas should be viewed and designed as three areas of activity.

## Objective TV32

To require a design approach which seeks to create self-enforcing low speed environments which incorporate elements that instinctively alter behaviour, thus reducing the need for more conventional measures. DMURS sets out a matrix<sup>10</sup> of appropriate design speeds which reflect the route type and context and user priority.

## 5.10 Compact Growth and Regeneration

The NPF acknowledges that the physical format of urban development is one of our greatest national development challenges and identifies 'Compact Growth' as the first NSO. Increasing the number of people living within the footprint of our existing towns and villages will result in more sustainable and resilient growth as it maximises opportunities for people to walk, cycle and the potential for the development of public transport. It also optimises the use of physical and community infrastructure and supports the economic viability of local retail facilities and other services. High quality design, coupled with high quality amenity is, however, fundamental to establishing successful compact urban areas.

RPO 27 of the RSES recognises the need to be more flexible in terms of such growth in rural villages. A one size fits all will not be appropriate or sustainable.

Section 10(2)(h) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) has been extended and now requires a development plan to include objectives for the redevelopment and renewal of areas identified having regard to the Core Strategy, that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent –

- (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
- (ii) urban blight and decay,
- (iii) anti-social behaviour, or
- (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.

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<sup>10</sup> DMURS, Table 4.1, Page 64

This renewed emphasis on improving and regenerating areas requires local authorities to take a proactive approach to ensure their renewal.

There are significant opportunities for targeted regeneration and renewal while at the same time increasing the number of people living and working within the existing built up area of our towns and villages. These opportunities include:

- The creation of street networks, streets, buildings, blocks and places (See Section 5.9 of this chapter) which not only is an appropriate form of development in terms of permeability but is also an effective means of achieving compact growth.
- Infill, backland and brownfield development.
- Active land management including site assembly and the use of CPOs.
- Appropriate zoning of new land and matters such as density and building heights.
- Applying a more flexible approach to development management standards such as separation distances, open space provision and parking subject to performance criteria and design quality being achieved.
- Reusing or redeveloping existing sites including building more intensively
- Developing institutional lands

### 5.10.1 Infill, Brownfield and Greenfield Development

There are many opportunities to increase the number of jobs and people within central areas through infill development which achieves the dual objectives of compact growth and regeneration. The development of these sites will prevent car-dependent sprawl and resulting unsustainable patterns of commuting and service provision. It will also rejuvenate these areas, many of which have been declining in population, by bringing new people to the area and create demand and customers for existing services. There will therefore be a presumption in favour of development which can encourage more people, jobs and activities within our towns and villages. The Council has outlined in Objective CS04 its commitment to prepare an audit of available brownfield sites over the plan period.

In accordance with the requirement of the NPF the Council will ensure that 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements will occur within their existing footprint<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Built-up footprint of the settlement is defined as the CSO urban settlement boundary in accordance with NPO3c footnote 19.

The NPF states that this will apply to all settlements as defined by CSO<sup>12</sup>. This will be implemented through the various local area plans and settlement plans. There are a range of opportunities for the delivery of housing units on infill and brownfield sites within our town and villages.

## Types of Brownfield and Infill Lands

### Infill Sites

Potential sites may include gap infill sites, unused or derelict land, institutional lands and backland areas, up to larger residual sites assembled from a multiplicity of ownerships. Smaller scale infill may be achieved through:

- Conversion of non-residential properties to residential use;
- Subdivision of larger residential plots to provide residential units; or
- Subdivision of larger residential properties to provide individual units within them

### Brownfield Sites

Brownfield land is defined as 'any land which has been subjected to building, engineering or other operations, excluding temporary uses or urban green spaces'<sup>13</sup>. It may comprise redundant industrial or commercial lands, docks, barracks, hospitals or obsolete housing areas. The Council will identify appropriate brownfield land upon which housing could be delivered when preparing local area plans and settlement plans.

### Remediation of Brownfield Sites:

The Council will ensure that appropriate environmental appraisals are carried out early in the project development for brownfield sites and will require the preparation of Construction and Development Waste Plans carried out in accordance with the 'Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects' published by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. Further details are included in Section 9.7.5 in Chapter 9 Infrastructure and Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

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<sup>12</sup> A minimum of 50 occupied dwellings, with a maximum distance between any dwelling and the building closest to it of 100m and where there is evidence of an urban centres (shop, school etc).

<sup>13</sup> Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas -Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).

## Greenfield Expansion

In settlements which do not have local areas plans or settlement plans or defined boundaries under this Plan, the Council will only consider the sequential development of the village. In villages such as Rosslare Strand and Castlebridge, which have significant potential for inner and outer infill, development will only be permitted within the existing built-up area. Greenfield expansion outside the existing built up area will not be permitted. The Council will also protect the edge of all settlements from ribbon development in order to allow for their orderly development in the future.

## Scale of Infill

The scale of infill development will depend on the location of the site and the characteristics of the settlement. In areas where a LAP applies this will be specified in the LAP. Where no LAP is in place the Council will consider the scale of infill development having regard to the need to make efficient use of centrally located sites and the prevailing scale in the area. The Council will encourage development which intensifies the use of the land to, at minimum, the intensity of adjoining uses but optimally, subject to the appropriate protection of amenities of adjoining residences to a higher intensity. The Council will consider the relaxation of quantitative standards subject to certain performance standards being met.

## Re-use of Vacant Buildings and Upper Stories

The Council will encourage the reuse of vacant buildings and the use of the upper stories in towns and villages for either the same use or alternative uses including more intensive uses subject to the development meeting performance standards and protecting amenities of adjoining occupants.

With regard to both the reuse of vacant buildings and the use of upper floors in central areas, the Council will be flexible in the application of development management standards and will consider the introduction of schemes to incentivise such reuse.

### 5.10.2 Regeneration - Active Land Management and Local Authority Intervention

There are significant portions of well-located lands adjacent to town and village centres and public transport facilities, some of which are in public ownership. The Council will work together with the Land Development Agency to facilitate the appropriate redevelopment of these sites.

Other sites have complex ownership patterns and/or may present issues with multiple consent procedures (such as Foreshore Licences). Activating these areas may require a level of active land management which is prohibitively complex for private developers and which, before now, Councils have previously not been involved in.

The Council is committed to targeted intervention in the interest of rejuvenation and efficiency of land use/sustainability and has taken the first steps in this regard having purchased a centrally located brownfield site in Wexford Town. The Council has been successful in obtaining planning permission and Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) backing for Trinity Wharf, a high quality, compact urban development in an area of the town in need of regeneration. It is one of a number of schemes being pursued by the Council which will achieve the dual aims of compact growth and regeneration.

The Council will consider interventions such as site assembly using CPO, demolition and clearance or decontamination and the provision of facilitating infrastructure. When sites are acquired the Council will decide on the most appropriate mechanism to ensure appropriate rejuvenation which may include redevelopment for civic or amenity uses, public and private housing or the release of the land back to the market for redevelopment.

The Council will encourage and actively participate in such activities and will also leverage the variety of funds including LIHAF, Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds, Climate Activation Fund and Disruptive Technologies Fund to achieve compact growth and regeneration of our towns and villages. In this regard priority will be given to projects which result in social and economic rejuvenation and regeneration and the provision of amenities and services where these are deficient.

Table 5-1 shows the Council's priority locations for active land management and

regeneration. In some cases, these will be major development proposals and in smaller settlements this may be limited to support for public realm proposals and implementation of the Derelict Sites and Urban Regeneration and Housing Acts. In all cases this will be subject to appropriate resources and funding and it is not intended that all actions will take place in all locations. Table 5-2 contains priority projects and target delivery timelines.

**Table 5-1 Priority Locations for Active Land Management and Regeneration<sup>14</sup>**

Settlement	Proposed Interventions
Wexford Town	Master-planning/design briefs, developments consents, site assembly including CPO, site remediation, enabling infrastructure, site development works, property development, public realm development, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
Gorey Town	Master-planning/design briefs, developments consents, site assembly including CPO, sites remediation, enabling infrastructure, site development works, property development, public realm development, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
Enniscorthy Town	Master-planning/design briefs, developments consents, site assembly including CPO, site remediation, enabling infrastructure, site development works, property development, public realm development, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
New Ross Town	Master-planning/design briefs, developments consents, site assembly including CPO, site remediation, enabling infrastructure, site development works, property development, public realm development, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
Courtown and Riverchapel	Public realm, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
Rosslare Harbour	Public realm, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
Bunclody Town	Public realm, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
Castlebridge	Public realm, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.
Rosslare Strand	Public realm, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation.

<sup>14</sup> Note: This list is not exhaustive, and the Council may carry out further active land interventions in these and other settlements.



Settlement	Proposed Interventions
Ferns	Public realm, Derelict Sites
Kilmore Quay	Public realm, Derelict sites, CPO and land assembly.
Bridgetown	Public realm, Derelict Sites.
Taghmon	Public realm, Derelict Sites.

**Table 5-2 Timeline for Key Active Land Management Proposals**

Project	Proposal	Timeline
<b>Wexford Town</b>		
Monck Street Public Realm	Public realm intervention	Construction commence – Sept 2021
Trinity Wharf Urban Quarter, Marina and Boardwalk	Redevelopment of central, brownfield site, land assembly, development consent, remediation, infrastructure and realm development.	Planning permission granted by ABP – April 2020 Access road – construction commence - Q2 2021 Site development works – commence – Q4 2022
Crescent Quay Regeneration - Old Tesco Site	Redevelopment of central vacant properties, land assembly, design brief, infrastructure provision.	Planning permission granted by ABP – April 2020 Construction commence – September 2021
<b>Gorey Town</b>		
Market House	Land assembly/CPO, infrastructure provision.	Local Authority consent - May 2018
Esmonde Street	Public realm intervention.	Local Authority consent - December 2020 Construction commence – Q4 2021

Project	Proposal	Timeline
Ballytegan	Masterplan for sustainable neighbourhood, land acquisition, infrastructure provision, realm development.	Masterplan preparation to commence 2021
<b>Enniscorthy Town</b>		
Enniscorthy Tourism Project	Major public realm and tourism regeneration development surrounding/ including Enniscorthy Castle in centre of town.	Application for planning permission – Q2 2022
Enniscorthy Heritage Led Regeneration – under Heritage Towns Initiative	Public realm intervention/regeneration Slaney Street and Mary Street in centre of town.	Completion 2022
Enniscorthy Town Centre – Urban Renewal, Regeneration and Economic Plan	Development and implementation of an urban regeneration and renewal plan for the town centre.  Later phases to include: Developments consents, site assembly including CPO, site remediation, enabling infrastructure, site development works, property development, public realm development, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/ Urban Regeneration.	Completion of Plan 2022
<b>New Ross Town</b>		
New Ross Destination Town	Way finding, public realm improvement, place making and identification, Derelict/ Vacant sites/Urban regeneration	
High Hill Public Realm	Site assembly, public realm development.	Commence Construction – Q2 2021
Removal Oil Tanks on Quays	Site assembly, public realm development.	Start Construction – Q2 2021
John Street Hatch Lab	Site assembly, public realm development.	Application for planning – Q3 2021

### 5.10.3 Vacant Sites, Derelict Sites and Dangerous Sites

#### Vacant Sites

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended) introduced the Vacant Site Levy, the intention of which is to incentivise the development of vacant sites in urban areas for residential and regeneration purposes.

The levy will support the implementation of the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy objectives, particularly in respect of promoting the renewal and regeneration of urban areas, ensuring a compact urban form and sustainable growth patterns, and in achieving the population targets and meeting the housing needs of the county.

For the purposes of the 2015 Act, a site is a vacant site<sup>15</sup> if

- (a) in the case of residential land the site is in an area in which there is a need for housing, is suitable for the provision of housing and is, or the majority of the site is, vacant or idle.
- (b) In the case of regeneration land, the site or the majority of the site is vacant or idle and the site being vacant or idle has adverse effects on existing amenities or reduces the amenity provided by existing public infrastructure and facilities in the area in which the site is situated or has adverse effects on the character of the area.

The implementation of the Vacant Site Levy requires the Council to identify sites in the county which are vacant and come within the scope of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended). Any sites identified are to be entered on a Vacant Sites Register that is to be monitored by the Council. The amount of the Vacant Site Levy is set out in Section 16 of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended) and shall be equal to 7% of the market value of the site for 2019 and subsequent years (unless otherwise revised).

As part of the HNDA and the preparation of the Housing Strategy, areas with a 'housing need' as defined in the Act were identified. When new local area plans are prepared, lands will be designated for the purposes of applying the levy in the case of both residential and regeneration lands. This presents a snapshot of a particular time and will be a living document and will be updated regularly.

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<sup>15</sup> Site means an area of land exceeding 0.05ha identified by the planning authority in its functional area but does not include any structure that is a person's home.

Table 5-3 sets out the relevant zonings which are designated as Residential and Regeneration zonings in the development plans, local area plans and settlements plans to which the levy may be applied and lands which are designated for regeneration (until these are replaced by new LAPs where appropriate).

**Table 5-3 Land Use Zoning for the purpose of Vacant Sites Levy**

Plan	Residential Zonings	Regeneration
Wexford Town and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 (as extended)	Residential & Infill, Mixed Uses & Residential, Town Centre, Neighbourhood Centre and Commercial & Mixed Uses	All zoned lands within the plan area.
Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023	Residential, Long Term Residential and Central Business Area	The area designated as Regeneration lands on Map 11 in the plan.
Enniscorthy Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2008-2014 (as extended)	Existing Residential & Infill, New Residential, Mixed use & Residential, Commercial & Mixed Use, Town Centre and Village Centre.	All zoned lands within the plan area.
New Ross Town and Environs Development Plan 2011-2017 (as extended)	Existing Residential, New Residential, Town Centre, Neighbourhood Centre and Mixed Use.	All zoned lands within the plan area.
Courtown and Riverchapel Local Area Plan 2015-2021 (as extended)	Existing Residential, New Residential and Village Centres.	All zoned lands within the plan area.
Bunclody Settlement Plan	Town Centre, Existing Residential and New Residential.	Specific identified lands in the Town Centre and Commercial and Industrial lands.
Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane Settlement Plan	Village Centre, Existing Residential and New Residential	Lands identified for Regeneration in the Village Centre

Plan	Residential Zonings	Regeneration
Taghmon Local Area Plan 2009-2015 (as extended)	Low to Medium Residential, Mixed Use & Residential and Village Centre	All zoned lands within the plan area.
Clonroche Local Area Plan 2009-2015 (as extended)	Residential, Mixed Use & Residential and Village Centre	All zoned lands within the plan area.

### 5.10.4 Derelict Sites

Derelict sites are controlled under the Derelict Sites Act 1990. A “derelict site” means any land which detracts, or is likely to detract, to a material degree from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the land in question because of;

- (a) the existence on the land in question of structures which are in a ruinous, derelict or dangerous condition, or
- (b) the neglected, unsightly or objectionable condition of the land or any structures on the land in question, or
- (c) the presence, deposit or collection on the land in question of any litter, rubbish, debris or waste, except where the presence, deposit or collection of such litter, rubbish, debris or waste results from the exercise of a right conferred by statute or by common law.

The Council will continue to use its powers under the Derelict Sites Act to ensure that sites in urban and rural locations which are deemed derelict are investigated and remedied subject to available resources. It may be necessary to prioritise certain types of sites having regard to available resources. In this regard the Council will prioritise sites on main routes and thoroughfares, adjacent to heritage buildings or protected natural heritage sites or on tourism and amenity routes and trails, adjacent to schools and other sensitive receptors, where they interfere with economic development or employment uses and other sites where public health or safety concerns arise.

### 5.10.5 Dangerous Sites

The Council will continue to regulate Dangerous Sites under the Local Government (Sanitary Services Act) 1965.

### 5.10.6 Building Heights and Density

Scale and height are important elements of urban form. Scale is the size of a building in relation to its surroundings and incorporates height and massing. Height is the number of storeys of a building. In evaluating the scale and height of proposed development, it is necessary to balance the strategic planning need to make the most efficient use of each site while ensuring the highest standard of urban design, architectural quality and place-making outcomes on the other.

Local context is a key element in determining appropriate scale and height and a well-considered design is required to minimise effects on existing environmental, heritage, residential and visual amenities and assets.

The Urban Development and Building Heights - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018) acknowledge that increasing prevailing building heights have a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in our urban areas, particularly large towns. The Guidelines require that the scope to consider general building heights of at least three to four stories, coupled with appropriate density, in locations outside what would normally be defined as the city or town centre and which would include suburban areas, must be supported in principle at development plan and development management levels. The Guidelines also contain an SPPR which requires local authorities to identify in the development plans locations where increased building heights will apply (SPPR 1).

The Guidelines further state that in cities and towns identified for significant growth in the RSES 'it would be appropriate to support building heights of at least six storeys as the default while allowing the scope to increase above this level'. Wexford Town and Gorey have been identified in the RSES as Key Towns capable of significant growth.

The Guidelines state that they apply to all urban areas as defined by the CSO<sup>16</sup>. The Council considers, however, that a 'one size fits all' approach to building heights is not appropriate, particularly outside our four main towns.

## Compact Growth Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TV33

To pursue a compact growth policy in our existing settlements and maximise their potential as places to live, work and visit.

### Objective TV34

To require that all new development represents an efficient use of land and supports national policy objectives to achieve compact growth in towns and villages. The location of new development should be based on the sequential approach focussing on the development of lands within and closest to the town and village centre and should avoid 'leap-frogging' where development of new areas is removed from the existing contiguous village. Development of lands with no links to the town or village centre will be refused.

### Objective TV35

To promote the redevelopment and renewal of areas identified having regard to the Core Strategy, that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent –

- (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
- (ii) urban blight and decay,
- (iii) anti-social behaviour, or
- (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.

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<sup>16</sup> CSO defines urban areas as settlements of 1,500 persons or more.

### Objective TV36

To pursue a variety of methods to increase the number of people living and working in our towns and villages in terms of investment decisions, local authority own projects and in the assessment of planning applications. Such activities and methods will include, but are not limited to:

- The creation of street networks, streets, buildings and blocks and places which is both an appropriate form of development in terms of permeability and also an effective means of achieving compact growth.
- Utilising opportunities to develop infill, backland and brownfield development.
- Active land management including site assembly and the use of CPOs.
- Appropriate zoning of new land and matters such as density and building heights in local area plans.
- Applying a more flexible approach to development management standards such as separation distances, open space provision and parking subject to performance criteria and design quality being achieved.
- Reusing or redeveloping existing sites including building more intensively
- Developing institutional lands.

### Objective TV37

To establish a Wexford County Council inter-departmental rural regeneration team to co-ordinate active land management and assist with the implementation of projects and proposals that encourage, stimulate and support the regeneration and renewal of the county's rural towns and villages.

### Objective TV38

To prioritise projects and proposals which will result in both social and economic rejuvenation and regeneration and the provision of amenities and services where these are deficient and in areas where legacy issues arise. The Council will leverage the variety of funds available including LIHAF, Urban and Rural Regeneration and



Development Funds, Climate Activation Fund and Disruptive Technologies Fund to achieve compact growth in pursuance of this objective.

#### **Objective TV39**

To engage in active land management to facilitate the development of sites which would achieve the aims of compact growth and regeneration where such sites have not come to the market or where they have complex patterns of ownership or consent regimes.

#### **Objective TV40**

In pursuit of RPO 34 the Council will implement an Active Land Management Strategy including the measures outlined in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 and subject to available resources and appropriate funding sources.

#### **Objective TV41**

To identify infill and brownfield sites and provide details of the expected density, height and housing yield when preparing future local area plans and settlement plans.

#### **Objective TV42**

To identify obsolete and potential renewal areas within town and village centres and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of these areas and derelict lands and buildings when preparing future local area plans and settlement plans.

#### **Objective TV43**

To adopt a presumption in favour of the development of infill and brownfield sites and to apply flexibility in the application of development management standards allowing for the achievement of performance standards for issues such as the protection of adjoining residential amenities, privacy, light and amenity.

#### Objective TV44

To ensure the scale of infill development reflects the location of the site and the characteristics of the settlement. The Council will consider the scale of infill development having regard to the need to make efficient use of centrally located sites and the prevailing scale in the area. The Council will encourage development which intensifies the use of the land to at minimum the intensity of adjoining uses but optimally, subject to the appropriate protection of amenities of adjoining residences to a higher intensity.

#### Objective TV45

To support and facilitate the reuse of older/vacant buildings in our towns and villages for residential use in accordance with Bringing Back Homes – Manual for Reuse of Existing Buildings (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018).

#### Objective TV46

To promote and encourage residential uses on upper floors of appropriate buildings located in town and village centres and to require that independent street access to the upper floors of shops / commercial units is retained to ensure use of the upper floors of buildings for residential accommodation or commercial development.

#### Objective TV47

To use specific powers, such as the Vacant Sites Register as provided for under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, to address issues of vacancy and under-utilisation of lands in town and village centres in the county. For the purposes of the Urban and Regeneration and Housing Act the land use zonings identified in Table 5-3 are designated. The Council will examine and identify sites on these lands in order to facilitate regeneration and to increase the supply of housing.

### Objective TV48

To implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act and encourage and facilitate the redevelopment of derelict sites to bring them back into productive use and address environmental and visual amenity concerns. The Council will prioritise the following types of sites:

- main routes and thoroughfares,
- adjacent to heritage buildings or protected natural heritage sites,
- on tourism and amenity routes and trails,
- adjacent to schools and other sensitive receptors,
- where they interfere with economic development or employment uses, and
- other sites where public health or safety concerns arise.

### Objective TV49

In pursuit of Objectives TV47 and TV48 it is the objective of the Council, subject to available resources, to pursue a minimum of:

- Five sites per Municipal District per annum under Derelict Sites legislation; and
- Three sites per annum under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Acts.

### Objective TV50

To identify appropriate locations where increased building heights will be actively pursued when preparing future local area plans.

### Objective TV51

To give favourable consideration to buildings higher than the prevailing building heights in the following locations:

- Neighbourhood Centres.
- Arterial Routes and in particular routes with public transport and places with high 'place' value along these such as urban villages and major junctions.

- Routes served by local intra-town public transport.
- Bounding medium and large amenity areas where tall buildings will increase the sense of enclosure and provide surveillance.
- Other appropriate 'edge' sites such as quaysides.
- Local Community Spaces (Gorey LAP and other LAPs as appropriate)
- Corner sites and landmark sites which assist in way finding.

Subject to considerations of scale, heritage, amenity and design quality and in accordance with the requirements of Objectives TV52, TV53 and TV54.

### Objective TV52

To facilitate development incorporating higher buildings (i.e. buildings that exceed the contextual prevailing height) where it has been adequately demonstrated that the development complies with the assessment criteria set out in Section 3.2 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHPLG 2018).

### Objective TV53

To ensure that building height within future development makes a positive contribution to the built form of the area, is not obtrusive and does not adversely impact on the streetscape, local amenity or views.

### Objective TV54

To require all development proposals where the building height will be above prevailing heights, including infill development, to include an analysis of the impact of building height and positioning of buildings on:

- The immediate and surrounding environment e.g. streetscape, historic character;
- Adjoining structures;
- Open spaces and public realm; and
- Views and vistas.

## 5.11 Vibrant, Inclusive, Resilient and Adaptable

The sustainable development of our towns and villages must ensure that as well as being attractive and functional that they are vibrant and inclusive, resilient and adaptable (economically, socially and environmentally). These qualities are dealt with in the various Chapters of the Plan:

- Vibrant – Chapter 3 Core Strategy, Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 14 Recreation and Open Space and Volume 8 Retail Strategy
- Inclusive – Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing and Chapter 15 Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Strategy
- Resilient and Adaptable – Chapter 2 Climate Action, Chapter 3 Core Strategy, Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy, Chapter 10 Environment Management, Chapter 15 Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Strategy.

### Vibrant, Inclusive, Resilient and Adaptable Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective TV55

To support development which will add to the vitality and vibrancy of our towns and villages including development which will increase population, result in additional services and extend opening hours, subject to normal planning criteria including residential amenity.

#### Objective TV56

To ensure our towns and villages are inclusive and welcoming to all people.

**Objective TV57**

To prioritise investment in towns and villages where it will achieve most benefit in terms of addressing disadvantage and legacy issues.

**Objective TV58**

To ensure that new development in our towns and villages does not exceed the social or physical carrying capacity of the settlement.

CHAPTER 6

# Economic Development Strategy



## 6.1 Introduction

The economic wellbeing of the county underpins its general wellbeing by enabling people to be employed in a job of their choice, in a location of their choosing and provide an income which is acceptable to them.

This chapter sets out the Council's broad Economic Development Strategy and provides details on how this will be supported by the Council's functions and activities and the planning process. The Plan seeks to promote the county as a nationally and internationally attractive and distinctive location in which to conduct business due to its significant strategic location and other significant environmental attributes and factors. Continued economic development and job creation with enhanced regional accessibility will be supported by the work of the Planning and Economic Development Directorate and Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and guided by this Plan. The Strategy has been devised having regard to the policy documents set out in Section 6.4 and baseline conditions which exist in the county as set out in Section 6.5.

In recent years Ireland's economy has been performing strongly. Living standards had been continually rising and employment had reached the highest levels in years. However, in light of the on-going circumstances that surround the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy, vulnerabilities may become evident in the domestic economy such as declining productivity levels in SMEs, skills deficits and labour availability, as well as concentrations in some sectors. Furthermore international trade, Brexit, growing trade protectionism and other geopolitical risks provide further complexities. Technological advances and the transition to a low carbon economy present challenges but also numerous opportunities as our businesses and workers adapt in a changed economy.

## 6.2 The Role of the Council in Economic Development

The 'Action Programme for Effective Local Government – Putting People First' and the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 together set the platform for a stronger role for local government in economic development. This role includes the preparation of a six year evidence based Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), the promotion



and support of economic development through general local authority powers and functions, the operation of the LEO, the appointment of Economic Development Officers, the requirement that local authorities engage with the Government's 'Action Plan for Jobs' and the pursuit of economic development action in line with regional priorities.

The Council has been proactive in setting up an LEO, an Economic Development Unit (EDU) and a Special Projects Office (SPO). The LEO offers support to start ups and small businesses including training programmes, advice and information and selective financial assistance while the EDU supports new and existing Irish and international businesses throughout the county. The SPO has responsibility for delivering property solutions to address identified needs. The Council has also aligned its planning services, financial functions and infrastructure provision to ensure that the Local Authority as a whole operates in a manner which facilitates sustainable economic development.

### 6.3 Climate Action and Economic Development

The Council, will inter alia,

- Support businesses and activities to transition to a low carbon economy, finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their work practices such as Work Travel Plans and improving energy efficiencies in their operations, and to support them to become climate resilient.
- Support the development of the green economy including appropriate renewable energy and bioenergy economic developments that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and assist with the transition to a low carbon economy.
- Support the agriculture sector to transition to economically and environmentally viable farming methods that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, are beneficial for local biodiversity and rural communities whilst still delivering high quality food and providing a high standard of animal welfare.
- Continue to create job opportunities within our county to counteract unsustainable commuting out of the county for work, to focus on developing jobs in the four main

towns, reducing the distance that people have to travel to and from work and to develop more sustainable modes of travel.

- Ensure economic activity is directed away from areas vulnerable to coastal erosion and/or flood risk.

## 6.4 Policy Context

Economic and enterprise policy transects many Government departments, regional bodies and local agencies, resulting in a wealth of policy documents, plans and guidelines. This policy context focuses on economic development policy from a spatial planning perspective.

### National Planning Framework

All of the NSOs relate either directly or indirectly to economic development and creating the conditions to support growth in the economy and employment while protecting our urban and rural areas, our environment and the natural and built assets.

NSO 6 aims to develop a strong economy, supported by enterprise, innovation and skills. This is dependent on creating places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. It can be achieved by building regional economic drivers and by opportunities to diversify and strengthen the rural economy, to leverage the potential of places. This outcome will require the co-ordination of growth and place making with investment in world class infrastructure, including digital connectivity, and in skills and talent to support economic competitiveness and enterprise. NSO 3 recognises that rural areas play a key role in driving our economy and they must be a part of our country's strategic development to 2040.

NSO 2 and NSO 4 are focused on achieving enhanced regional accessibility (transport) and high quality international connectivity (digital), opening up opportunities to attract investment and growth. The remaining NSOs include a focus on creating the conditions to make places more attractive to live and work in and to ensure that supporting social infrastructures, such as childcare and education, are in place to attract workers, enable people to work and provide an educated workforce.

## ‘Realising our Rural Potential: The Action Plan for Rural Development’ (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2017)

This is the Government’s rural development policy document and it aims to unlock the potential of rural Ireland through a framework of supports at national and local level, which will ensure that people who live in rural areas have increased opportunities for employment locally, and access to public services and social networks that support a high quality of life. The Plan is focused around five key pillars, all of which will directly or indirectly improve the rural economy: supporting sustainable communities, supporting enterprise and employment, maximising rural tourism and recreation potential, fostering culture and creativity in rural communities; and improving rural infrastructure and connectivity.

## Future Jobs Ireland 2019; Preparing Now for Tomorrow’s Economy (Government of Ireland)

The focus of this policy document is to create highly productive, sustainable jobs and it focuses on five key pillars in the areas of innovation and technological change, improving SME productivity, enhancing skills and developing and attracting talent, increasing participation in the labour force and transitioning to a low carbon economy. There are 26 ambitions under these pillars that will enhance the resilience of our economy and ensure we are well placed to exploit future economic opportunities.

**Enterprise 2025 Renewed: Building Resilience in the Face of Global Challenges (Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, 2018)** sets out a portfolio approach to sector development, recognising that sectors contribute in different ways to the economy, delivering added value, export growth and quality of employment as illustrated in Figure 4.2 of the RSES.

Other key **national** economic policy documents and initiatives which have informed this plan include:

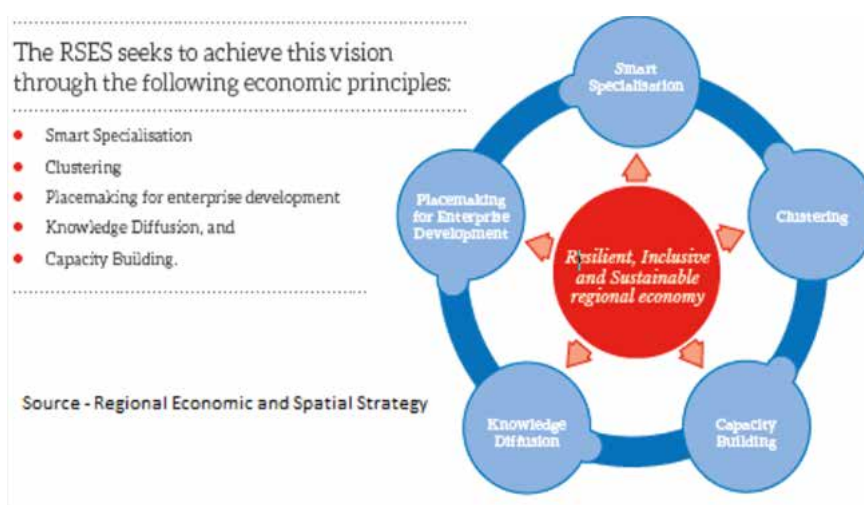
- The development of the agri-food sector (Food Wise 2025)
- The delivery of high speed broadband (National Broadband Plan)

- Developing the marine economy (Harnessing our Ocean Wealth and the National Marine Planning Framework).
- Realising the opportunities of the Bio economy and Circular economy (DBEI, 2019)
- Forestry (Growing for the Future and Business Area Unit Strategic Plans);
- Energy (White Paper-Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-30);
- Tourism (Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartland's initiatives)
- IDA Ireland's regional enterprise development (Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-19), Enterprise Ireland (Regional Enterprise Development Fund) and the Regional Enterprise Plan for the South-East to 2020 (see below).

## The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

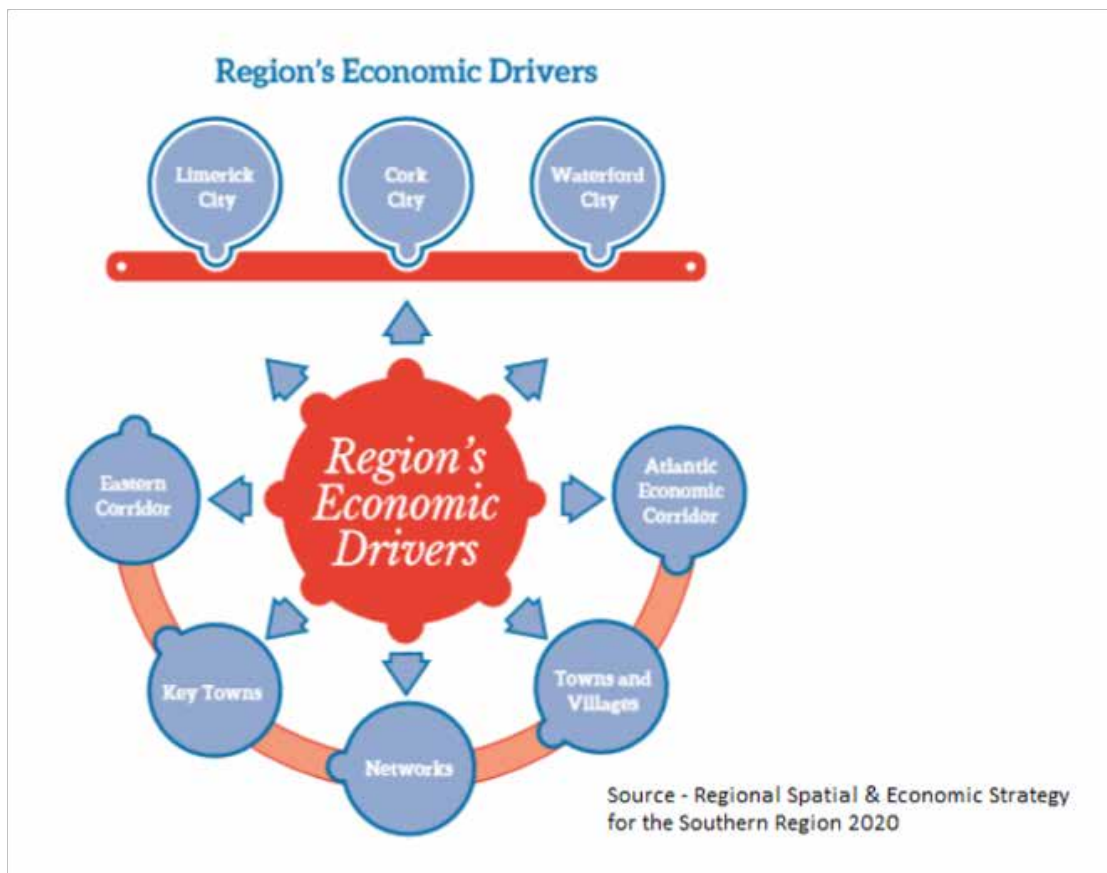
Element 5 of the Strategy is focused on building a competitive, innovative and productive economy. The economic vision for the region is to enable sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient growth. The economic principles to achieve this vision are highlighted in Figure 6-1.

**Figure 6-1 Regional Economic Principles**



Section 4.4 of the Strategy focuses on the development of key regional economic engines (Figure 6-2) identified as the MASPs, the Atlantic Economic Corridor and Eastern Economic Corridor followed by Key Towns, towns and villages. RPO 42 supports development of the Eastern Economic Corridor as a strategic economic driver in the region, extending economic and transport links from the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, to the South-east extending to Rosslare Europort.

**Figure 6-2 Regional Economic Drivers**



Keys town are also highlighted as regional economic drivers, with a need to develop centres of scale in these towns to perform this role, and to attract further economic development and investment. Large towns perform sub-regional economic roles, and the RSES supports the strengthening of their service and employment functions.

The RSES contains a range of supporting objectives to guide economic development including: Locations for economic development (RPO 62), developing the region's

tourism potential (RPO 53), developing the low carbon economy (RPO 56) developing skills and talent in the region through investments in education (RPO 63), supporting entrepreneurship (RPO 64 and 65) and growing the blue economy (RPO76-86).

The RSES also focuses on the economic role of the rural economy, and while it remains dependent on the traditional sectors of agriculture, forestry, construction and fishing, there is a need to focus on rural diversification, optimising the many opportunities offered by tourism, leisure and recreation and renewable energy production.

**The Regional Enterprise Plan for the South East Region to 2020** is developed around five key strategic objectives focused on: enhancing the existing environment for enterprise and activity; establishing the South-East as a 'learning region' and a place for choice of talent and investment; developing a regional engagement strategy that is aligned with the RSES; highlighting the critical infrastructural developments required to enhance the economic potential in the South East; and developing the South-East as a region that is attractive to both domestic and international visitors with a sense of place and connected tourist amenities.

At the local level, the **County Wexford LECP** identifies three high level goals which underpin the Economic Development Strategy. These are:

- **HLG4** Develop and market County Wexford as an outstanding business environment for starting, growing and attracting business.
- **HLG5** Continue to protect and enhance our infrastructure and promote resource efficiency in order to create the right conditions for long-term sustainable economic growth.
- **HLG6** Protect and sensitively utilise our natural, built and cultural heritage and together with the Arts, realise their economic potential.

## 6.5 Economic Profile of County Wexford

### 6.5.1 Socio Economic Baseline

#### Labour Force Participation and 'At Work'

In Census 2016 the total labour force in the county was 69,237 people. Labour Force Participation (LFP) measures the percentage of all people aged 15 or over who are available for work, that is either at work or unemployed. The LFP rate for Wexford was 59.3% which was the 12th lowest rate in the State. However, there are significant variations at sub-county level with highest LFP evident in Gorey at 63.5% and lowest rate in Campile at 49.4%.

**Table 6.1 Labour Force in County Wexford**

	2011	2016
Total Labour Force	67,477	69,237
Total in Employment	51,307 (76%)	57,759 (83%)

According to Census 2016, 83.4% of the total Labour Force was 'At Work'. This figure varies significantly across the county with the highest 'At Work' rate evident in Castlebridge (85.4%) and the lowest rate in Clonroche (59.1%). While the county's overall percentage was relatively low (5th lowest nationally) the total number of persons 'At Work' is the 14th highest in the State.

#### Labour Force Unemployment

In Census 2016 the total population classed as unemployed (both unemployed and looking for their first job) was 11,478 people. This has dropped from 16,170 people in Census 2011. This represents an unemployment rate of 16.6% compared to the national employment rate of 12.9%. Wexford has the 5th highest rate of unemployment in the country<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This is an improvement since 2011 when the County had the 3rd highest rate of unemployment.

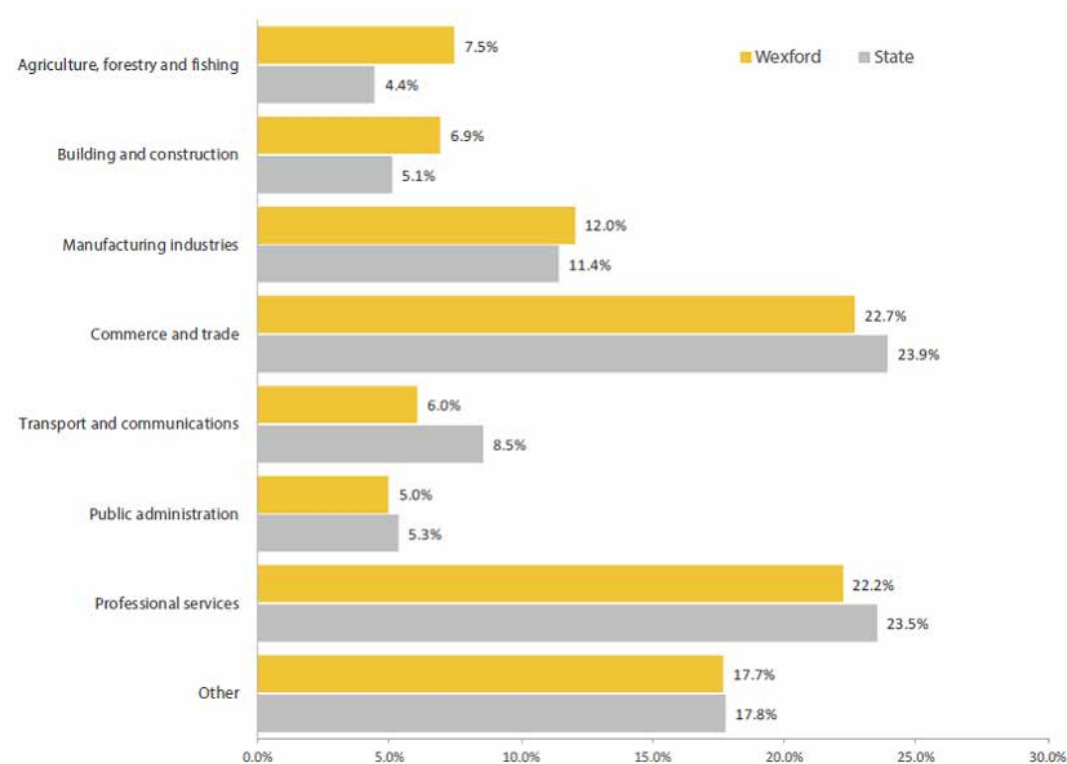
The spatial distribution of unemployment is varied with Kiltalea recording an unemployment rate of 7.5% compared with 28.3% in Bunclody, 38.1% in Taghmon and 40% in Clonroche. According to Census 2016 there are three unemployment blackspots<sup>2</sup> in the county. These were Enniscorthy Urban (32.1%), Rosbercon Urban (30.8%) and Killincooly (27.2%).

In April 2020, live register figures for County Wexford indicated that there were 8,855 people on the Live Register in 2020. However, in light of the current economic environment, it is likely that this number will increase significantly.

## Industry of Employment

The most dominant sectors of employment of resident employees in the county are 'Commerce and Trade' (22.7%) and 'Professional Services' (22.2%), representing almost 50% of employment of total residents. Employment is characterised by a higher than average dependence on 'traditional' sectors such as Agriculture, Forestry, Building and Construction and Manufacturing, when compared to State averages.

**Figure 6-3 Industry of Employment**



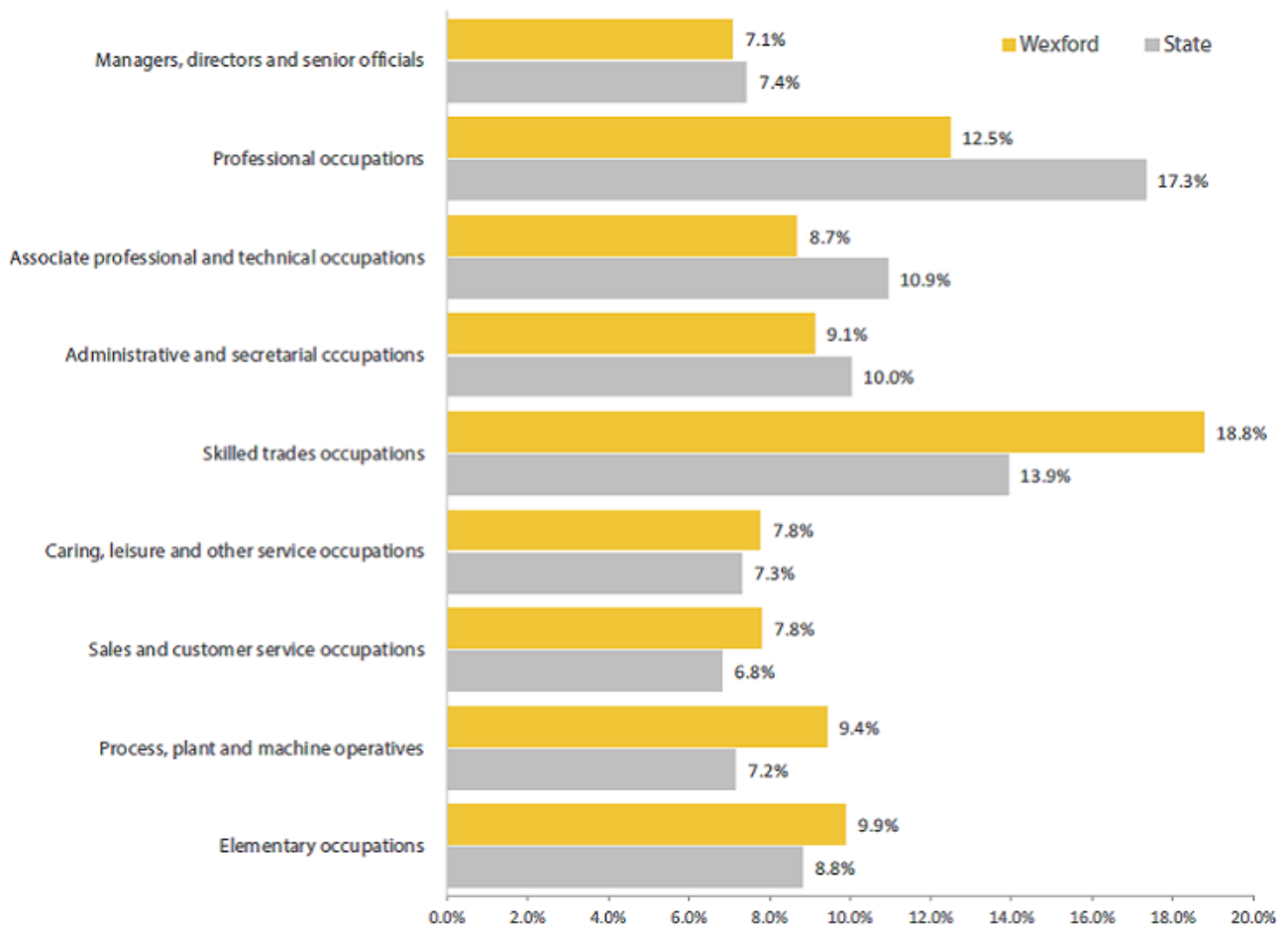
<sup>2</sup> An unemployment blackspot was defined as an Electoral District whose labour force exceeded 200 persons and where the unemployment rate (on a Principal Economic Status basis) exceeded 27 per cent.



## Occupations

Within any given sector there are a variety of employees performing different kinds of work and this section describes the kind of work performed, irrespective of the location of that work. Of the nine Occupational groups detailed in Figure 6.4 Wexford records considerably higher-than-average rates for three occupational groups; 'Skilled Trades Occupations' (18.8%), 'Process Plant and Machine Operatives' (9.4%) and 'Elementary Occupations' (9.9%). These three groups account for almost 40% of the labour force in the county. Since 2011, the 'Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations' occupational group has witnessed the highest rate of increase at 16.8% (763). The 'Professional Occupations' group has also increased significantly by a total of 8.8% (687) since 2011.

**Figure 6-4 Occupations**



## Pobal HP Deprivation Index

This Index is a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from various censuses. According to the Pobal HP Deprivation Index (Census 2016), Wexford was the 4th most disadvantaged local authority in the country, improving by one position from 3rd since 2011.

### 6.5.2 Existing Employment in Wexford

#### Key Sectors and Employers

Wexford has established a broad based enterprise sector with a solid reputation in Information Communication Technology (ICT), International Financial Services, Life Sciences and food production.

The ICT sector is responsible for 40% of national exports. Indigenous and multi-national technology firms are experiencing growth in terms of export figures and employment levels. Wexford has a vibrant tech start-up scene with companies such as Sonru, Innovate Technologies Ltd and Scurri all originating in the county. These companies have significantly expanded both nationally and internationally in recent years. Datapac, located in Enniscorthy Town, is Ireland's largest indigenous ICT solutions and services provider.

The International Financial Services sector is targeted as part of the South East Action for Jobs. Wexford Town is home to a number of global players in this field including BNY Mellon and Zurich Insurance.

The Life Sciences sector has grown steadily in the county, forming part of the South-East life sciences cluster. Companies include BD Enniscorthy<sup>3</sup> in Enniscorthy Town, Waters Technologies and CRI Medical Devices in Wexford Town and Interger<sup>4</sup> in New Ross Town.

Primary and secondary food production plays a key role in providing employment and contributing to the county's economic output. The success of Irish Country Meats, Slaney Foods, Kavanagh Meats, Stable Diet, J. Donohoe Beverages and Killowen Farm demonstrates the continued and growing strength of the food sector. The 'Wexford

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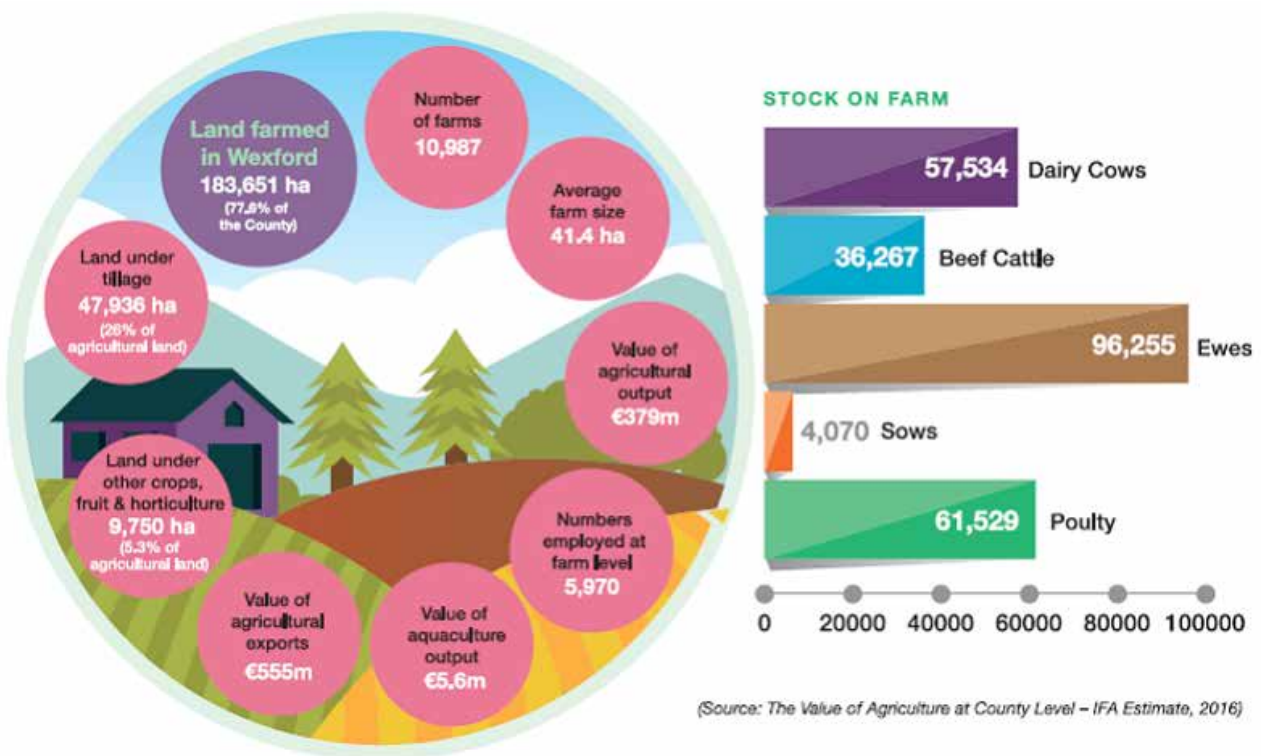
<sup>3</sup> Formerly known as Clearstream Technologies

<sup>4</sup> Formerly known as Lake Region

Food Family' brand showcases the modern value-added, entrepreneurial nature of this industry in Wexford.

Direct employment in agriculture and the value of economic output from agriculture and related rural industries are also vital to the economic wellbeing of the county. The value of agriculture is illustrated in Figure 6-5.

**Figure 6-5 Value of Agriculture to the County**



### Business Typologies

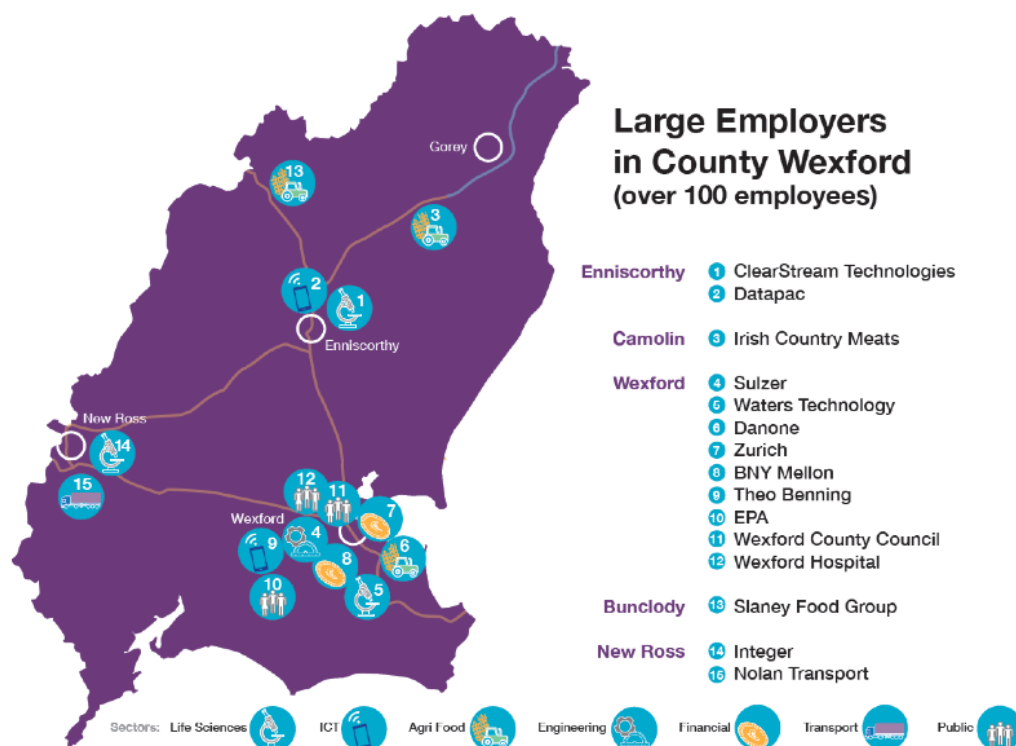
Businesses can be categorised by their scale (e.g. large, SME etc.) and origin (indigenous/FDI). They are primarily promoted and supported by three agencies depending on these typologies. The IDA is responsible for attracting FDI. Enterprise Ireland supports internationally competitive indigenous firms. The Council supports all sectors and types through its general workings but specifically has a support and development role for the SME sector through the LEO and it supports all other sectors through the EDU/Invest Wexford.

The South East accounts for 10.7% of the national population but has only 6.7% of IDA jobs<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, in terms of Enterprise Ireland funding, the South East secured only one of forty four new investments, accounting for just 2.15% of total investment in the most recent round of the Seed and Venture Capital funding (2013-2018)<sup>6</sup>. There are twelve IDA FDI companies located in the county. There are seven in Wexford Town, two in New Ross Town, two in Enniscorthy Town and one in Gorey Town.

Wexford is home to a number of successful indigenous businesses including Nolan Transport, Celtic Linen, Danone, Innovate, Sonru, Scurri, Eishtech, DoneDeal and Datapac. Indigenous Wexford companies such as Wexford Creamery, Kent Group Ltd., Sofrimar Ltd. and Atlantis Seafoods have gained an international reputation for their products.

There is a strong concentration of micro-enterprises (companies who employ ten or less people) in Wexford and a significantly lower level than the State rate are employed within large enterprises (>250). While this demonstrates a small dynamic and entrepreneurial base in the county, it also highlights the low level of large employers.

**Figure 6.6 Large Employers in County Wexford**



<sup>5</sup> South East Economic Monitoring Report (WIT, July 2017)

<sup>6</sup> ibid

## 6.6 Economic Development Strategy

This Strategy aims to increase opportunities for access to high quality, suitable employment for our residents and to improve fiscal conditions to allow investments in making Wexford an ever better place to live and work. This will be achieved through implementing the objectives of the NPF, Future Jobs Ireland 2019, the LECP, the RSES and this Strategy.

The Strategy is based around five key elements: People, Profile, Property, Place and Pillars (Figure 6.7). It will be delivered by the LEO, the EDU, the Local Community and Development Committee (LCDC), by managing development in accordance with this Plan and the general functions of the Council, together with various public bodies and employment agencies and the business community. The ‘People’ and ‘Profile’ elements will mainly fall within the remit of the LEO, EDU and the LCDC/LECP and will primarily sit outside the realm of this Plan.

**Figure 6-7 Economic Development Strategy**



## Strategic Economic Development Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED01

To facilitate sustainable economic development, increase and improve job opportunities and ensure that County Wexford provides an outstanding business environment.

### Objective ED02

To develop a strong economy in the county supported by enterprise, innovation and skill by building competitive regional economic drivers, supporting opportunities to diversify and strengthen the rural economy, supporting entrepreneurialism, sustaining and developing skills and talent and the development of high quality infrastructure, including digital connectivity.

### Objective ED03

To sustainably develop, deepen and enhance the county's regional economic resilience by widening economic sectors and boosting innovation, export diversification, and productivity and increasing access to new markets.

### Objective ED04

To facilitate and participate in the implementation of the Regional Enterprise Plan for the South East to 2020 and any future update of that plan, and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.

### Objective ED05

To develop the extended Eastern Economic Corridor and the towns and settlements on the corridor as a significant driver of economic growth in the Southern Region,

linking Rosslare Europort and the Southern Region with Dublin and Belfast. The Council will consult relevant stakeholders including other local authorities, the Southern Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Regional Authority in order to plan and optimise economic development.

#### **Objective ED06**

To work with infrastructure providers to ensure that economic development land and employment related uses are effectively serviced by all infrastructures and that new and existing uses are accessible by sustainable transport modes.

#### **Objective ED07**

To develop our towns to a sufficient scale and quality to be drivers of regional economic growth, investment and prosperity.

#### **Objective ED08**

To develop our urban and rural communities as engines of economic growth, establishing Wexford as a great place to set up a new business.

#### **Objective ED09**

To support a positive presumption in favour of locating appropriate employment where it would address unemployment blackspots, support sectoral and location-based strengths and synergies with existing employers and take advantage of 'ready to go' property solutions.

#### **Objective ED10**

To implement and facilitate implementation of the objectives and actions of the Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021, where appropriate and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective ED11

To protect the natural resources, amenities and heritage of our county and ensure that economic development does not significantly impact on this heritage, the environmental capacity or on the amenity of the residents of the county.

### Objective ED12

To support the delivery of the National Broadband Plan as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development in the county, and in particular for those who live and work in rural areas.

## 6.6.1 People

Capacity building will be crucial to building economic resilience and responding to emerging challenges. The development of an economy which is diverse, resilient and responsive will ensure that the county is prepared for challenges and shocks such as those recently presented by Brexit and Covid-19.

As well as resilience there is a need to ensure sufficient capacity to bid for and win funding. Working together with the Council's partners in the region, using shared information, resources and knowledge will ensure that the combined resources of the region can be utilised to develop mass and add weight to bidding capacity.

The ability to develop, nurture, retain and attract talent is critical and education and training institutions are needed to develop our people's skills and talent. The development of a Learning Region, envisaged in the RSES, will build our citizen's skills base to succeed in life and business. This is critical to securing greater economic resilience.

The Council will support Life-long Learning and the initiatives of the Regional Skills Forums to match the diverse skills of our people with a choice of employment opportunities.



The availability of an educated and highly skilled labour force is critical for a county's economic success and the development of high quality education infrastructure is a key enabling component. The Plan must therefore ensure that the differing land and property needs of the various types of education and education providers are available at the right locations. This includes conventional third and fourth level education, mentoring programmes and on-the job training and apprenticeships –both in traditional skills and in non-traditional areas such as finance, sales, ICT and back to work and other community schemes.

It is also vital that the Council facilitates developments which will help foster close linkages between education providers and employers. Future LAPs will ensure that education and economic development are located where such benefits can be maximised.

While we are fortunate to have a strong local Campus of Carlow IT in Wexford Town, the absence of a University in the South-East is a regional weakness. In Census 2016, County Wexford placed 3rd lowest in the State and lowest in the South East in terms of the numbers obtaining a third level education. The absence of a University in a region can also inhibit employers looking for a continual supply of graduates.

The UN has recently identified Wexford as one of three locations worldwide along with New York City and Vancouver to establish of Centres of Excellence in the global challenge to curb carbon emissions. This Centre of Excellence is in Enniscorthy Town. This is a sector which can provide jobs for those involved in cutting edge research as well as traditional fields of employment such as construction related professionals and trades.

The Education and Training Boards (ETBs), and other providers of adult education and training in the County, provide responsive and job specific training over a wide variety of employment sectors. Their role in the business ecosystem, and, in particular, their ability to tailor courses and provide opportunities for reskilling in response to challenges in the economy and employment market is crucial to the economic resilience of the County.

Furthermore, national policy requires that we develop the skills that our enterprise base requires and there is an obvious need to future proof employment, identifying those sectors that are vulnerable and those that provide opportunities for the future

and take steps to make sure that our people are as well-equipped as possible to take up the jobs of the future.

## People Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED13

To engage and invest in capacity building, including bidding capacity, at County and regional level to ensure economic resilience and responsiveness to emerging challenges and potential future economic shocks.

### Objective ED14

To support the development a Learning Region as envisaged in the RSES and further strengthen our higher and further education and training sector, research, development and innovation capacity.

### Objective ED15

To support the establishment of the South-East Technological University and facilitate the development of the Wexford Campus in Wexford Town.

### Objective ED16

To support and facilitate the development and expansion of Carlow IT, Wexford Campus.

### Objective ED17

To support and facilitate the development of the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Construction in Enniscorthy Town.

**Objective ED18**

To continue to identify specific opportunities for education development which serve the needs of existing employers, attract new employers and provide up-skilling including apprenticeship and third level facilities and development opportunities for the existing workforce and ensure that synergies between the two are facilitated through the land use planning process.

**Objective ED19**

To foster links between industry and education establishments and research and development uses by adopting adaptable land use zonings at appropriate locations.

**Objective ED20**

To seek to address the skills shortages challenges through improvements in lifelong learning rates in the county and explore the attraction and absorption of incoming talent, with emphasis on accommodation, education and integration. The Council will support the initiatives of the Regional Skills Forums to match the diverse skills of our people with existing and potential employment opportunities in the region.

**Objective ED21**

To support and facilitate the development of adult education in the County, including the Education and Training Boards, and to work with providers to facilitate development which will serve the needs of existing employers, attract new employers and provide up-skilling opportunities for the existing workforce.

**Objective ED22**

To support, through the Local Economic Office and the Council's Economic Development Unit, mentoring, learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration initiatives and enterprise to address unemployment and deprivation legacies in the county.

### Objective ED23

To continue to deliver, through the Local Economic Office and the Council's Economic Development Unit, mentoring and supports for start-ups and small businesses.

### Objective ED24

To foster entrepreneurship by supporting new start-up companies and supporting the identification of suitable sites to enable these businesses to be established.

### Objective ED25

To facilitate, through the support offered by the Local Economic Office and the Council's Economic Development Unit, new business formation, growth and industrial re-organisation by removing business start-up obstacles.

## 6.6.2 Profile

The Council's economic support structures such as the LEO, Invest Wexford, Visit Wexford and the Economic Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) ensure, through their developing plans and strategies, that the many attributes of the county are publicised and that raising the county's 'profile' is prioritised. The Council works closely with IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland to increase investment for Wexford.

Smart Specialism is a developing EU, national and regional approach which brings together key stakeholders to identify the competitive advantages of the area with the view to developing economic opportunities. It focuses on measures to improve the attractiveness of a location for national and foreign investment and increasing entrepreneurial activity. It has significant potential to raise the profile of the County as a place to operate a business and a place to do business with. The Council is committed to working with local communities, national enterprise bodies, higher education institutes and private enterprises to undertake the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process and evaluate how best to utilise these opportunities to raise the profile of the region and develop the identified specialisms.

The RSES highlights the importance of fostering entrepreneurship as it creates new businesses, jobs and wealth. Wexford has a strong tradition in entrepreneurship with some of our most successful businesses starting out as small ventures. We will continue to raise the profile of the county, and develop a business environment where like-minded people can collaborate, network and co-work with access to experienced mentors, which will stimulate entrepreneurship.

## Profile Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED26

To raise the profile of the county as a competitive, forward thinking and flexible place to do business and an attractive place to start and grow businesses.

### Objective ED27

To raise the profile of the County as an attractive location for financial services, ICT, sustainable construction and green and blue growth and life-sciences.

### Objective ED28

To highlight in the economic marketing of the County, the wide variety of qualities that make Wexford a great place to live compared to more congested locations in order to attract employers and employees seeking a better quality of life.

### Objective ED29

To encourage multinational corporations and indigenous industry connections, e.g. the Global Sourcing Initiative, trade missions to Ireland and peer networks for lean initiatives.

### Objective ED30

To map, monitor and evaluate our economic ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation and monitor and benchmark the county against other relevant jurisdictions nationally and overseas.

### Objective ED31

To maintain and leverage existing enterprise ecosystems to support enterprise development.

### Objective ED32

To work with key stakeholders including local communities, national enterprise bodies, higher education institutes and private enterprises to identify the competitive advantages of the area with the view to developing Smart Specialisms and measures to improve the attractiveness of the County as a location for national and foreign investment.

### Objective ED33

To identify Smart Specialisms through the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process to evaluate how best to utilise opportunities to raise the profile of the County and region and develop the identified specialisms.

## 6.6.3 Pillars

It is proposed to focus on a number of pillars or sectors in order that benefits will accrue from market forces such as agglomeration and specialisation. In turn pursuing such a strategy will assist in creating clusters of high skilled individuals who are attracted together as firms agglomerate. The pillars, which are identified in Figure 6.8, were selected based on existing employers and existing sectoral strengths which have potential for expansion and which are well suited to our existing work force.

The retail sector is an important economic sector in the County, and it has an important role in maintaining the vitality and vibrancy of the County's towns and villages. To this end a detailed Retail Strategy has been prepared to support its development. The Retail Strategy is included in Volume 8.

**Figure 6.8 Pillars for Growth**



## Pillars Objective

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED34

To facilitate the development of enterprises related to the identified pillars for growth at appropriate locations and facilitate the provision of facilities and infrastructure which will enable clustering and specialisation in the county as set out in Section 6.7 (locations for economic development).

### Objective ED35

To identify and pursue opportunities for enterprise growth, innovation and diversity within our county's sectors of strength, including the potential of enterprise ecosystems in sectors identified in the Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs) and their successors.

## 6.6.4 Property

'Property' is concerned with ensuring that there is adequate zoned serviced land and buildings at appropriate locations to facilitate economic development. It is also concerned with targeted interventions which the Council will make to provide solutions where these have not been embraced by the market or where difficulties such as complex land ownership patterns are inhibiting economic progress. It is also concerned with ensuring that policies are tailored to allow the provision of the variety of property types required by the different business typologies and identified 'Pillars'.

The Council is pursuing an evidence based approach to identify deficits in the provision of specific types of property required in the main towns, the opportunities based on the available workforce and, in particular, those commuting out of the county for work and the interventions required to maximise Wexford's existing assets and natural advantages. The responding measures will be achieved by a variety of methods including the use of Council assets and land banks, direct purchase, build and lease, the development of serviced sites in business and technology parks and joint ventures with the private sector.

Research commissioned by the Council found that there is a shortfall in large-scale modern office accommodation and good quality industrial property. This has led the Council to identify a number of property solutions in the four main towns. Further details on the projects being pursued are contained in Section 6.7 of this chapter.

The preparation of future local area plans will ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to accommodate all types of economic development. There will also be a focus on the repurposing and adaptation of existing vacant and underutilised buildings to provide property solutions.

### Property Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:



**Objective ED36**

To identify and invest in property solutions that will directly facilitate the creation of new jobs, improve the character of areas and reduce dereliction, regenerate areas and ensure the efficient use of well-located and serviced land.

**Objective ED37**

To continue to audit and monitor the quantum and quality of zoned and serviced land and, to resolve any identified deficit through the variation of this Plan or local area plan(s) and during the preparation of new local area plans.

**Objective ED38**

To ensure that the economic development and employment related land use zonings contained in this Plan and future Local Area Plans, reflect the variety of modern use types, the skills of the labour force and the variety of plot size to suit the variety of land use types and intensities.

**Objective ED39**

To protect land zoned for economic development, industry and employment related uses from inappropriate development that would undermine future economic activity or the sustainable development of such areas.

**Objective ED40**

To continue to audit and monitor the availability of the different types of property required to facilitate appropriate economic development and, where deficits are identified, make appropriate interventions. Priority will be given to high employment generating interventions, those which utilise brownfield sites and improve the public realm and those which provide solutions for start-ups and in areas where disadvantage militates against opportunities for entrepreneurship.

### Objective ED41

To provide and support the provision and improvement of infrastructure required to facilitate economic development including water, waste, transport (including rail lines and Rosslare Europort) and communications infrastructure to serve land and property.

### Objective ED42

To facilitate and participate in works to regenerate and revitalise existing business parks and industrial estates within towns and promote the regeneration of obsolete and/or under-utilised buildings and lands that could yield economic benefits, with appropriate uses subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective ED43

To support investments in energy efficiency of existing commercial and public building stock with a target of all public buildings and at least one-third of total commercial premises upgraded to BER Rating 'B'. Local authorities shall report annually on energy usage in all public buildings and will achieve a target of 33% improvement in energy efficiency in all buildings in accordance with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP).

### Objective ED44

To support the development of remote working hubs in settlements.

## 6.6.5 Place

Place is concerned with ensuring that economic development is located in the right locations and that the places we make are high quality and attractive to employers and the resident workforce and attract people with skill sets which are under-represented in the county.

### 6.6.5.1 Locations for Economic Development

The primary location for new commercial development will be in the four main towns. Commercial development in other small towns and villages shall be commensurate with their level in the Settlement Hierarchy. Our ports and harbours are critical assets and offer an opportunity for port-related and new development. Rural areas are vital for sustainable economic development and require careful management to ensure that competing pressures do not compromise their development and their unique character. Section 6.7 outlines the objectives in relation to economic development in each of these areas.

### 6.6.5.2 Place Making

The attractiveness of an area and a sense of place are important elements in realising economic development potential and attracting new investment and employees. The Council will actively pursue place making activities and local improvement measures such as support for Tidy Town efforts, public realm improvements, protection and enhancement of historical features and buildings, regeneration of urban areas and other measures to enhance the local environment.

The quality of new development and refurbishment / extension of existing structures is also fundamental in creating attractive places. The Council will, through the objectives and development management standards set out in this Plan, promote and facilitate high quality residential developments with supporting social and community facilities, ensure that the town centres are vibrant and provide for a mix of uses and a range of retail and retail services, identify measures to improve the public realm and increase the range and quality of recreational, amenity and cultural facilities in each of the towns and villages. This is further discussed in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages.

## Place Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED45

To direct commercial development to the settlements identified in the Settlement Hierarchy. Economic development proposals will be permitted within settlements on suitably zoned land or within towns and villages defined within the Core Strategy / Settlement Hierarchy, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Exceptions to the objective will be permitted in accordance with those outlined in this chapter, Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning, Chapter 14 Recreation and Open Space Strategy, Volume 8 Retail Strategy and Volume 10 Energy Strategy of the Plan.

### Objective ED46

The scale of a commercial development shall be commensurate with the scale of the settlement. In general large scale employers<sup>7</sup>, that is, those employing more than 50 employees should be located on serviced zoned land in the county's four main towns - Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town, Gorey Town and New Ross Town.

### Objective ED47

To ensure employment locations follow the hierarchy set out in Chapter 3 Core Strategy, and ensure they are built fit-for-purpose. This includes the provision of access to utilities, connectivity, and other enterprise development factors; to identify future locations for strategic employment development having regard to accessibility by sustainable transport modes and environmental constraints, and support a positive presumption in favour of locating appropriate employment where it would address unemployment blackspots, support sectoral and location-based strengths and synergies with existing employers, take advantage of 'ready-to-go' property solutions and local ambition.

### Objective ED48

To ensure that commercial development is located in the optimal location depending on whether it is 'people intensive' (customer and employee), 'land or space' intensive or is tied to a particular resource or dependent on a particular type of infrastructure

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<sup>7</sup> Which are not covered by the other sections of this Plan such as the Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Volume 8 Retail Strategy etc

(that is connection to the grid network which cannot be accommodated in the Settlement Hierarchy) and where such uses are compliant with the other location specific objectives of this Plan and land use zoning of the Local Area Plans.

#### **Objective ED49**

To ensure that commercial development in rural areas is related to agriculture, horticulture or other rural related resource or activity. Exceptions to this objective are detailed in Section 6.7.6 of this chapter, Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning, Volume 8 County Retail Strategy and Volume 10 Energy Strategy.

#### **Objective ED50**

To ensure retail development is located in accordance with the objectives contained in the Retail Strategy contained in Volume 8.

#### **Objective ED51**

To ensure that, where economic development uses bound sensitive uses such as residences, natural and built heritage assets or community and education uses, that an appropriate buffer is maintained to protect the sensitive use.

#### **Objective ED52**

To ensure that all planning applications for new development achieve a high standard of design in terms of contribution to the streetscape, layout, architectural design, building format, materials, finishes, conservation of features of architectural and historical merit and high quality public realm. All future development should make a positive contribution to the distinct identity of its settlement and succeed in enhancing a sense of place.

#### **Objective ED53**

To promote the re-use and regeneration of vacant buildings and the regeneration of

obsolete and/or under-utilised buildings and lands that could yield economic benefits with appropriate uses, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

#### **Objective ED54**

To facilitate remote working and consider the development of home office units for use by the occupiers of the dwelling. The unit shall be attached to the dwelling. In certain circumstances and subject to Section 5.4 Home Based Economic Activity in Volume 2 Development Management Manual the Council will consider detached units.

## **6.7 Specific Locations for Economic Development**

### **6.7.1 Eastern Economic Corridor**

The Eastern Economic Corridor is a critical element of the spatial components of the economic strategy of the County. Its designation in the RSES of both the Southern and Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly places Wexford in a pivotal position in extending the Belfast-Dublin Corridor and in linking the Southern Region with the Eastern and Midlands Region. The Council will pursue a strategy of strengthening and consolidating economic development and transport infrastructure and services on this corridor.

#### **Objective ED55**

To strengthen economic development opportunities and transport along the Eastern Economic Corridor from Belfast to Rosslare Europort and in particular in the settlements along the corridor.

### Objective ED56

To encourage clustering and the development of specialisations along the Eastern Economic Corridor both within the County and with other towns/cities on the Corridor outside the County.

## 6.7.2 Key Towns and Large Towns

The primary location for commercial development will be Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town, New Ross Town and Gorey Town.

The RSES identifies Wexford Town and Gorey Town as Key Towns. Key Towns have an economic function that provides employment for their surrounding areas and wider sub regional catchment. Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town are Large Towns and play an important part of the region's economic fabric.

This approach aims to ensure that the Key Towns achieve the 'Centres of Scale' to fulfil their roles, that the density of employment is achieved, to encourage firms to agglomerate, to maximise the efficiency of existing infrastructure and to mitigate against unsustainable travel patterns. The RSES also identifies the Trinity Wharf lands in Wexford Town as a Strategic Employment location for the town and county.

The LAPs for each town will ensure that adequate land in appropriate locations is zoned for economic development. The varying types of economic uses have different requirements in terms of land type, location, accessibility and availability of a skilled workforce. The location of new enterprises will largely depend on whether they are people intensive (customer intensive or employee intensive) or land intensive. These factors are critical in deciding the location of the facility, for example, customer intensive facilities should generally be located in the most accessible central locations.

The Council has been pursuing a progressive strategy to stimulate economic development in each of the four towns. This strategy is based on utilising specific attributes of each settlement including its existing commercial base, existing assets and workforce characteristics.

## Key Towns and Large Town Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED57

To finalise and implement an Economic Development Strategy for each of the four main towns which provides detailed proposals for the strategic economic development of each town and outlines the objectives, actions and initiatives to achieve optimal development.

### Objective ED58

To include an economic development spatial strategy in the Local Area Plans for each town to ensure that:

- i. The town fulfils its strategic economic role in accordance with the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy for the Southern Region.
- ii. Economic development is located in the optimal location depending on whether it is people intensive (customer and employee), land or space intensive or tied to a particular resource. People intensive activities, particularly those with large customer numbers, should be located in the most accessible locations where public transport is available.
- iii. The sequential approach is utilised in selecting land for economic development purposes to ensure that urban consolidation and brownfield regeneration is encouraged over greenfield development.

The preparation of the spatial strategy shall have regard to the principles of Health Place Audits and the guiding principles for the location of employment development as set out in the RSES.

### Objective ED59

To prioritise the provision of waste, water, ICT and transport infrastructure for the four towns and ensure that the areas identified for economic development in each town are adequately and appropriately served.



## Wexford Town

It is the objective of the Council to:

### Objective ED60

- Develop the Trinity Wharf lands as a Strategic Employment Location for the town and the county, and to maximise the economic development opportunities that this development will bring forward for the town, both directly and indirectly.
- Maximise the economic development opportunities offered by the strategic location of the town on the Eastern Economic Corridor.
- Further develop and expand the presence of the Financial Services, Life Science and ICT industries in the town.
- Further develop manufacturing industries in the town.
- Maximise the tourism potential of the town through the development of the Wexford Town 'Maritime Town' brand, the planned greenways and the vibrant arts and cultural scene in the town.
- Focus on the regeneration of key sites in the town including the regeneration of the Commercial Quay and Monck Street area.

## Gorey Town

It is the objective of the Council to:

### Objective ED61

- Maximise the economic development opportunities offered by the strategic location of the town on the Eastern Economic Corridor.
- Support the expansion of existing industries in the town.
- Support the expansion of ICT related employment in the town.
- Facilitate the future development of the M11 Business Park.
- Promote the Hatch Lab and support the provision of similar property

solutions as a means of providing office space for start-ups and providing commuters with office space near to their homes.

- Further develop the spin off potential offered to the town by its proximity to the popular tourism destinations in north Wexford.
- Support the further development of the town as destination for retail including niche boutiques.

## Enniscorthy Town

It is the objective of the Council to:

### Objective ED62:

- Maximise the economic development opportunities offered by the strategic location of the town on the Eastern Economic Corridor.
- Support the development of the National Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Construction at Killagoley and develop synergies and research and development opportunities around the theme of sustainable construction and NZEB.
- Maximise the opportunities offered by the Business and Technology Park and utilise it as a platform to attract new small and medium enterprises to the town.
- Support the designation of Enniscorthy as a Smart Town and utilise this designation to develop economic opportunities.
- Maximise the economic opportunities offered by developing the tourism potential of the town, both direct and indirect.
- Facilitate the expansion of existing industries in the town and support the development of new industries and employment opportunities.

## New Ross Town

It is the objective of the Council to:

**Objective ED63:**

- Maximise the tourism potential of New Ross town as a key economic driver for the town and county.
- Maximise economic development opportunities that may arise due to the town's proximity to the Waterford MASP, and its connection to the Southern Region and the Atlantic Economic Corridor.
- Develop the role of New Ross Port and associated port related economic development subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- Support the development of existing industries in the town including manufacturing, transport and logistics, maximising the opportunities offered by New Ross Port, the N25 By-pass and close proximity to Belview Port, Rosslare Europort and Dublin via the M11.
- Support the expansion of the Life Sciences industry in the town, and to support the development of new industries.
- Support the development of business hubs and flexible working spaces to provide start-up companies with office space and commuters the opportunity to work in an office environment close to their homes in the town.

### 6.7.3 Service and Strategic Settlements and Villages

Rural towns and villages are the local drivers for their surrounding areas. Their roles and scale vary across the region from large commuter-based settlements to towns with a strong service and employment function. The RSES emphasises the importance of networks between towns and villages including cross-boundary connections. These settlements are a focus of local services and can play an important role in the provision of local employment opportunities. Such employment can offer an alternative to persons commuting to large towns. The provision of other commercial or industrial employment generating uses in these settlements also has an invigorating effect on these settlements by providing day time trade and activity. These towns and villages can play an important role for their rural hinterland with local professional services, childcare, post office, retail and, in some cases, banks and

other lending institutions. Such development, which provides both local opportunities and at the same time provides services which are required by the rural community, will be encouraged.

The local authorities' Digital Strategy are critical in promoting and guiding on the new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise. This should complement the more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism) underpinned by the quality of the offering.

## Service and Strategic Settlements and Villages Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED64

To facilitate commercial development, including office, industrial and commercial development, at a scale appropriate to the nature and scale of the settlement.

### Objective ED65

To ensure that commercial development takes places in a sequential manner, with development such as local services, shops and professional services located in close proximity to the centre of the settlement. Where industrial or business park development is being considered, the location selected should minimise impacts on the public realm but should adjoin the settlement.

### Objective ED66

To facilitate the extension of an existing commercial development facility within a town or village provided the resultant scale and form of the enterprise is compatible with the character and scale of the area and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

**Objective ED67**

To facilitate the conversion of existing buildings, including residences where appropriate for employment generating uses, subject to Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

**Objective ED68**

To ensure that new development is appropriately designed, adds positively to the public realm of the settlement, is connected by footpaths and lighting and does not negatively impact on residential amenities.

**Objective ED69**

To support the strengthening of the viability of Service and Strategic settlements and villages including the protection of essential commercial rural services.

**Objective ED70**

To seek investment and initiatives that deliver smart technologies, revitalisation of mixed-use town and village centre streets, and pilot initiatives for regional good practice in renewal and re-use of buildings, in particular, for appropriate commercial developments.

**Objective ED71**

To seek investment, the timely delivery and the sustainable delivery of holistic infrastructures in towns and villages to support their service role, in particular, along the region's tourism corridors, greenways and blueways.

## 6.7.4 The Blue Economy

The planning of the country's marine area is currently undergoing an ambitious programme of reform, with an impending new regime for the management of development and activities in Ireland's Marine Area (See Section 12.3 in Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning).

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) promotes the sustainable development of a thriving marine economy and the development of vibrant, accessible and sustainable rural coastal and island communities while realising the potential of marine resources in a fair, balanced and transparent manner. The Framework focuses on the development of key marine assets including aquaculture and fisheries, energy, marine aggregates and mining, ports, harbours and shipping and tourism.

The RSES recognises that as an island we are dependent on our seas for trade, fishing, energy and tourism, and it supports the development of the marine resources and the Blue economy, while conserving biodiversity and ecosystem health.

The sea has, and will continue to be, a very important economic asset for our county. It provides employment to many people in coastal areas making a valuable economic contribution to local communities in the county. Dominant marine economic activities in County Wexford include ports, harbours and shipping, seafood and fisheries and tourism.

The Wexford coastline is 275km long and presents significant opportunities in terms of marine related development, continuing in the traditional sectors while exploring opportunities offered by off-shore energy production and marine biotechnology.

The opportunities offered by energy production are discussed further in Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning and Volume 10 Energy Strategy. The tourism opportunities are discussed in both Chapter 7 Tourism Development and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

## Ports, Harbours and Shipping

Rosslare Europort is a major port in the south-east of Ireland, located on the N25 and connecting with the N11 outside Wexford Town. The port, the State's second largest in terms of passengers, is a hub for all the major Roll on Roll Off (RORO) passenger and freight services and provides a gateway from Britain and continental Europe. The Port is operated by Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail).

Two separate railway lines run from the harbour - north to Dublin and west to Waterford. The Waterford railway was closed in September 2010 but the line is being retained to enable services to resume when circumstances demand. These lines offer a significant opportunity to move to Lift On Lift Off (LOLO) rail freight - a measure which could pay significant dividends in the reduction of GHG production associated with transport.

The RSES identifies Rosslare Europort as a Strategic Economic Location, and advocates for its elevation to Tier 1 Port Status. The port is now located on the Eastern Economic Corridor which provides significant economic development opportunities to expand the port's function and to support the development of other towns in the county along the Corridor.

The Europort provides opportunities for development at the harbour itself and also export related development throughout the county and South East. It has become apparent that Dublin Port's development is physically limited by the city and bay but these constraints do not exist in Wexford. The port has potential to relieve pressure on Dublin and provide a viable alternative. Existing development in the area includes motor and transport related industries, as well as tourism related services and facilities. Specific objectives relating to economic development of Rosslare Europort and port-related developments is discussed in Volume 3 Settlements Plan which includes land use zoning for Rosslare Harbour.

New Ross Port is Ireland's only inland port located approximately 32km from the sea on the River Barrow. The port specialises in handling dry and liquid bulk. The Council recognises the considerable potential that exists to develop existing commercial ports in terms of value-added shore based economic activity. This would contribute substantially to the economic development of the region.

## Aquaculture and Fisheries

The Council aims to maximise the long term contribution of the sea-fishing sector and inland fisheries to the county's economy and to the maintenance of the social fabric of rural and coastal communities. Aquaculture activity is carried out in Wexford Harbour and Bannow Bay. Most aquaculture activity in Bannow Bay involves intertidal oyster cultivation, in addition to some mussel cultivation.

Growth opportunity in the seafood sector lies in developing greater processing scale so as to capitalise on the supply of raw material. The sector has significant potential for sustainable growth in terms of value-added product in the areas of food ingredients, health and sport nutrition markets.

The marine sector presents many opportunities for new development which can be located in rural villages and towns. Kilmore Quay has established itself as a successful maritime village and is home to Sofrimar, Atlantis and Errigal Bay, successful indigenous seafood companies.

## Marine Aggregates and Mining

Marine aggregate are sedimentary sand or gravel materials located on the seabed. Extraction of marine aggregates typically involves dredging of the deposit to remove it from the seabed. Sands and gravels sourced from the seabed may be used in the construction of infrastructure such as buildings, roads and bridges. In line with the NMPF, the Council will ensure that mineral exploitation is required to be carried out to the highest environmental standards.

## Blue Economy Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED72

To support the sustainable growth and development of the marine sector and marine economy through the implementation of the National Marine Planning Framework and by facilitating marine related development at appropriate locations



in the towns, villages, ports and harbours of the county subject to compliance with relevant Directives, the relevant objectives in this Plan including Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy, Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning, and normal planning and environmental criteria. Marine development in rural areas will be considered in accordance with the section of this chapter on Rural Economy.

#### **Objective ED73**

To support the development of new coalitions amongst productive sector enterprises, coastal communities and public agencies to support the sustainable development of the marine resource and the marine economy. Any supports arising, which result in further expansion of or new enterprise, will be subject to the outcomes of the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment process.

#### **Objective ED74**

To strengthen and develop the strategic international, national and regional economic role of Rosslare Europort and to support the achievement of Ports of National Significance Tier 1 Status for Rosslare Europort.

#### **Objective ED75**

To protect the marine related functions of ports in the county including landside accessibility to ensure the future role of ports as strategic marine assets is protected from inappropriate uses.

#### **Objective ED76**

To support the export, fisheries, marine tourism and marine economy potential of ports and harbours in the county. All development proposals will be subject to environmental assessment, implementation of mitigation measures outlined in applicable SEAs and AAs and feasibility studies to establish that any expansions can be achieved without adverse effects on any European sites and the carrying capacity of the receiving environment of the ports.

**Objective ED77**

To support the role of ports, where appropriate, in facilitating the sustainable development and operation of off-shore renewable energy development, and to support sustainable and enabling infrastructure development to harness marine wealth including grid, pier and port facilities to support renewable energy and export potential.

**Objective ED78**

To ensure that any economic activity which utilises the marine resource shall have regard to compliance with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive which requires achieving and maintaining 'Good' Environmental Status of coastal and marine waters.

**Objective ED79**

To ensure that adequate and appropriate land is zoned in Rosslare Harbour and New Ross to facilitate a variety of scales of economic development and have regard to the land extensive nature of uses such as distribution, logistics and other related sectors in Rosslare Harbour and New Ross.

**Objective ED80**

To provide, or facilitate, the provision of appropriate infrastructure to ensure that economic potential arising from Rosslare Europort and New Ross Port for the region can be realised.

**Objective ED81**

To facilitate the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture and support its diversification at appropriate locations having regard to best environmental practice in order to maximise its contribution to employment and the economic well-being of rural coastal communities.

### Objective ED82

To facilitate and support the development of facilities for the catching and processing of fish at existing ports and harbours, subject to the protection of the environment and natural heritage and biodiversity.

### Objective ED83

To ensure that adequate measures are taken to protect designated shell fish areas as an important economic and employment sector.

### Objective ED84

To ensure that the highest environmental standards and controls are maintained in dealing with proposals relating to the extraction of marine aggregates and the mining sector and protects the amenities of local communities.

## 6.7.5 The Green Economy

The green economy encapsulates a wide range of economic activity from increasing renewable energy delivery to more energy efficient buildings to driving the bio-economy. Globally, it is a sector in transition with strong drivers for growth such as climate change targets, rising energy costs and more stringent environmental regulations and standards.

The transition to a low carbon economy offers many opportunities to develop economic activity in this area, such as the development of green technologies, sustainable construction and renewable energy developments, and the county has a number of enterprise strengths to ensure that it is well-placed to capture job opportunities in this area.

County Wexford is becoming a leader in the area of sustainable construction, facilitated by the NZEB training centre in Enniscorthy Town. There are opportunities to expand this sector to provide quality jobs and to develop synergies with third level institutions and research partners, providing quality jobs.

The strong agri-food industry in the county also offers opportunities to develop in partnerships with research centres such as the EPA and Teagasc in Johnstown Castle.

Renewable energy opportunities are explored in the Energy Strategy in Volume 10.

## Green Economy Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED85

To develop the county as a leading innovator in the green economy in areas such as sustainable agriculture, sustainable construction, the production of renewable energy and the bio-economy, and to support development of enterprises and technologies that employ green technologies and support a low carbon economy.

### Objective ED86

To support the development and expansion of the Sustainable Construction campus in Enniscorthy Town.

### Objective ED87

To develop social enterprises and the circular economy within local communities to benefit environmental protection, employment generation and community development.

### Objective ED88

To support the National Policy Statement on Bio-economy (2018), subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA and AA undertaken where necessary and the exploration of opportunities in the circular resource-efficient economy including undertaking a bio-economy feasibility study for the Region to identify areas of potential growth (including opportunities presented in the EU Bio-economy Strategy updated in 2018 for urban bio-economies and piloting circular bio economy cities) to inform investment in line with the national transition objective to a low carbon climate resilient and circular economy.

## 6.7.6 Rural Economy

The Government's Charter for Rural Ireland (2016) states that frameworks will be put in place "To support enterprise creation and development, maintain and restore the rural cultural heritage, support and protect existing towns and settlements, facilitate safe and secure rural communities and foster an increased quality of life for all rural dwellers".

Rural areas are facing challenges which vary from place to place but include urban generated pressures, declining and ageing population, difficulties in accessing sustainable employment opportunities, access to infrastructure and demands from new land uses including renewable energy. Realising our Rural Potential: The Action Plan for Rural Development (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2017) recognises that the changing nature of rural areas means that rural economic development is not amenable to single sector strategies but requires new integrated approaches to economic development.

Rural economic development incorporates a broad range of sectors and land uses including agriculture, forestry, energy production, extractive industry and maritime activities. There are also areas of economic activity which are dependent on rural resources but which are not necessarily best located in our rural areas – such as industrial scale agrifood. Wexford, known as the 'Model County' based on its model agricultural practices, has the potential to become a leader in agricultural and rural related development.

As outlined in Objective ED45 and Objective ED49 it is the Council's policy to direct commercial development to the settlements identified in the Settlement Hierarchy. Exceptions to these objectives will be permitted in accordance with those outlined in this chapter, Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning, Chapter 14 Recreation and Open Space Strategy, Volume 8 Retail Strategy and Volume 10 Energy Strategy. Developments referred to in Objectives ED89 to ED98 must comply with the location specific objectives of the Plan.

### Rural Economy Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

**Objective ED89**

To support the Action Plan for Rural Development led by the Department of Rural and Community Development and to support the development of priority areas under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 led by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

**Objective ED90**

To enhance the competitiveness of our rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services including ICT based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.

**Objective ED91**

To facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

**Objective ED92**

To leverage funding from sources such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to help develop the rural economy in the county.

**Objective ED93**

To develop innovation hubs and centres of excellence (with particular opportunities for innovation in agri-food, agri-tech, marine research, creative industries, knowledge economy etc.) as local drivers for growth.

**Objective ED94**

To support innovation, enterprise start-ups and the competitiveness of our rural economy.

**Objective ED95**

To develop a diverse base of smart economic specialisms in our rural economy, including innovation and diversification in agriculture (agri-Tech, food and beverage), the marine (ports, fisheries and the wider blue economy potential), forestry, peatlands, renewable energy, tourism (leverage the opportunities from the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brands), social enterprise, circular economy, knowledge economy, global business services, fin-tech, specialised engineering, heritage, arts and culture, design and craft industries as dynamic divers for the rural economy.

**Objective ED96**

To support and facilitate the development of vibrant rural areas with a diverse rural economy and to ensure that economic development in rural areas protects the natural and built heritage and environment of the area.

**Objective ED97**

To ensure that all buildings are appropriately sited and sympathetic to their surroundings in terms of scale, design, materials and colour. The grouping of buildings will be encouraged in the interests of visual amenity. In general, the removal of hedgerows to accommodate agricultural buildings will generally not be permitted.

**Objective ED98**

To ensure all developments permitted in rural areas in accordance with Objective ED49, including agricultural, horticultural and rural diversification do not impact negatively on the quality of the environment or character of the rural area or rural settlement. Applications for all such developments will be required to submit details to demonstrate that the proposed development:

- Will not result in the contamination of potable water, surface or ground waters, or impact on natural or built heritage;
- Is appropriate in terms of scale, location, design and that the character of the farm or settlement is retained and enhanced where possible;
- When located on a farm, it is located within, or adjacent to, existing farm buildings, unless the applicant has clearly demonstrated that the building must be located elsewhere for essential operational or other reasons;
- Is appropriately sited so as to benefit from any screening provided by topography or existing landscaping and does not seriously impact on the visual amenity of the area;
- Will not result in an unacceptable loss of residential amenity by reason of noise, odour or pollution;
- Will not result in a traffic hazard,
- Will provide for adequate waste management; and
- Where possible will restore and/or enhance built and/or natural heritage.

The Council will monitor and report on the number, nature and impacts of applications for economic development granted in rural areas outside of settlements. Reporting will take place as part of the 2 year review of the County Development Plan and as part of SEA.

#### 6.7.6.1 Agriculture Development

Agriculture includes horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the training of horses and the rearing of bloodstock, the use of the land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds. Agriculture is hugely important to the County's economy (see Figure 6.5).

Agricultural practices are continually changing and modernising. The increasing scale of farming, together with increasing use of chemicals, and new methods of production mean that there is pressure on the environment, in particular through soil



contamination, ground and surface water pollution<sup>8</sup> and impacts on natural and built heritage. Agricultural methods also have the potential to both add to and mitigate climate change. The Council will facilitate and encourage best practice in terms of new agricultural development.

The traditional form of agricultural buildings, farm layouts and field patterns are a valuable part of the character of our rural areas and are worthy of protection. New farm buildings are generally large in size and can have the appearance of industrial buildings and as a result there is potential for negative visual impacts. While the Council acknowledges that new farm buildings must be functional and efficient, they will also be required to be sympathetic to their surroundings and should be sited and designed to assimilate with the rural landscape.

## Agriculture Development Objectives

It is the objective of the Council;

### Objective ED99

To facilitate the development of sustainable agricultural practices and facilities within the county, subject to complying with best practice guidance, normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards in Volume 2.

### Objective ED100

To protect good quality agricultural lands from development which could be accommodated elsewhere and that would undermine the future agricultural productivity of the lands or irreversibly harm the commercial viability of existing or adjoining agricultural land.

### Objective ED101

To facilitate the modernisation of agriculture and to encourage best practice in the design and construction of new agricultural buildings and installations to protect the environment, natural and built heritage and residential amenity. Planning

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<sup>8</sup> 'Ireland's Environment - An Assessment' (EPA, 2016) highlights that improvements in water quality will not be seen if agricultural pressures are not adequately managed. The on-going and planned expansion in the agricultural sector under Food Wise 2025 may threaten improvements in water quality, if not adequately managed. The challenge is to target management measures to prevent any increases in nitrate and phosphorus concentrations in waters.

applications for new agricultural structures must clearly outline the use of the structure (livestock / equine / pig / poultry / storage) subject to Objectives ED97 and ED98.

### Objective ED102

To ensure agricultural waste is managed and disposed in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner having regard to the environment and in full compliance with the European Communities Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations (2014) and relevant best practice guidelines.

### Objective ED103

Intensive agriculture units will only be considered where it is clearly demonstrated by the applicant to the Council that the proposed development will not give rise to negative impacts on animal welfare, the environment, natural or built heritage or residential amenity. The scale and intensity of operations, including the cumulative impact of similar type developments in close proximity, shall be clearly detailed in the application and shall inform the assessment. All applications for such development shall be required to demonstrate that the proposal complies with Objective ED97 and Objective ED98 and

- Is located more than 500 metres from any residential property not located on the holding, or at a greater distance if there is potential for significant impacts on residential amenity, particularly in terms of odour.
- An assessment and modelling of odour has taken place where required.

#### 6.7.6.2 Rural Diversification including Agri-food

The diversification of the rural economy can both supplement existing rural incomes and add to the richness of the rural area. The Planning Authority recognises that a balance needs to be maintained between facilitating appropriate forms of rural development and protecting the rural environment. Farm based enterprise including agri-tourism proposals, open farms/pet farms and equestrian activities will be facilitated subject to environmental and development management standards. Agri-tourism proposals are dealt with under Chapter 7 Tourism Development.

Agri-food describes a wide variety of food production based on agricultural produce. The appropriate location for the processing of the raw material will generally depend on the scale of the facility and the source of the raw material. Small scale agri-food businesses, such as cheese production, have huge potential to provide value added income on existing farms. At the larger end of the spectrum are the industrial scale agri-food producers, such as Glanbia, which source food from a large area and these facilities are considered similar to any industrial type development and should be located in towns and villages. The many opportunities for growth are highlighted in Food Wise 2025.

There will be a general presumption against shops in rural areas outside of towns and villages. Exceptions are detailed in the Retail Strategy and may include small scale shops attached to a permitted tourist or recreational development or retail outlets associated with other rural activities where the retail aspect is secondary to the operation - shops selling agricultural produce, crafts, farm enterprises that incorporate a tea room / craft shop. In all such cases, the retail element will only be acceptable provided it remains ancillary to, and fully incorporated within, the primary rural enterprise/farm practice. Retailing in rural areas is dealt with under the Retail Strategy in Volume 8.

## Rural Diversification Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED104

To support the continued development of the agri-food industry as a lead sector in the green economy and a key growth sector for the county, through the implementation of Food Wise 2025, by facilitating food production and processing at appropriate locations and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective ED105

To facilitate farm or rural resource related enterprises, including food production and processing on farm holdings, where the key resource is produced on the

farm (or other nearby rural resource) or a number of farms in the locality subject to Objectives ED97 and ED98 and normal planning and environment criteria. The scale of the facility should be appropriate to the rural character of the area and will be assessed having regard to a number of factors including source of material, scale of the operation, building size, number of employees and hours of operation, waste generation, traffic movements to and from the site, water and wastewater requirements, environmental impacts including but not limited to noise and odour, and impacts on natural and cultural/built heritage and water. The restoration of vernacular farm buildings to facilitate such enterprises will be encouraged.

### Objective ED106

Where an extension to/intensification of an existing development referred to in Objective ED105 is proposed, it must remain of a scale which is appropriate to the rural area and it should not detract from the environment, rural character, natural or built heritage of the area. Development, from which the majority of the raw material is not from the farm (or other nearby rural resource) or within a reasonable distance thereof, will be required to locate on appropriately zoned lands in a town or village.

### Objective ED107

Development of the type referred to in Objective ED105 and Objective ED106 shall be required to submit adequate information to demonstrate that the proposed development:

- i) Will make a positive contribution to the local rural economy;
- ii) Will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the landscape and where possible, involves the reuse of redundant or underused buildings that are of value to the rural landscape; and
- iii) The design, layout, materials and boundary treatments are of a high quality and appropriate for a rural setting.

### Objective ED108

To permit a retail element as part of a rural diversification proposal in exceptional

circumstances, such as a small scale shop attached to a permitted tourist or recreational development or agri-food enterprise where the retail aspect is secondary to the operation - shops selling agricultural produce, crafts, farm enterprises. In all such cases, the retail element will only be acceptable provided it remains ancillary to and fully incorporated within the primary rural enterprise / farm practice and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective ED109

To control advertising structures in rural areas and to prohibit signage where it would damage the rural character and scenic amenity of the area or result in a proliferation of unnecessary signage. Advertising signage in rural areas shall be limited to official directional signage outside the village only. This shall be of a scale and size appropriate to the location and shall not be unduly obtrusive and should not give rise to a traffic hazard. Plastic and neon signs shall not be permitted in rural areas.

#### 6.7.6.3 Horticulture

Horticulture includes the production of fruit and vegetables, in addition to amenity products such as Christmas trees, nursery stock and cut foliage. The importance of horticulture to Wexford's rural economy is recognised and the potential for further growth and development of this sector will be facilitated in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

### Horticulture Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED110

To facilitate the establishment of new horticulture enterprises and the expansion of existing enterprises in rural areas subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective ED111

To ensure that applications for horticulture related development include adequate measures to mitigate impacts on soil water contamination, adopt sustainable practices in terms of soil and peat use and the use and management of pesticides and insecticides and adopt sustainable practices for the sustainable management of water from roofs by incorporating sustainable drainage systems and retention areas within the developments.

#### 6.7.6.4 Forestry

Forestry plays an increasingly important role in terms of rural development as a form of farm diversification and as a source of rurally based employment. Food Wise 2025 acknowledges that the Irish sawmilling and board manufacturing sector is competitive internationally and further growth is anticipated. In addition to economic benefits, forests are natural resources that provide recreational and environmental opportunities. After wind energy, wood fuels are the largest contributor to renewable energy in Ireland. Sustainably managed forestry can also become an important tourism asset.

### Forestry Objectives

It is the objective of the Council;

### Objective ED112

To facilitate the sustainable development of forestry in the county provided that no significant adverse impacts are caused to natural waters, wildlife habitats and biodiversity and that it does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the local landscape. Forestry developments should include environmental enhancement and restoration where possible.

### Objective ED113

To encourage the establishment of a self-sustaining forest industry based on a variety

of species and a wide range of post-felling services in proximity to large forested areas which are used for source material, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

#### **Objective ED114**

To facilitate the establishment of primary, secondary and tertiary forest based processing industries at appropriate locations subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

#### **Objective ED115**

To ensure that existing native woodlands are protected and enhanced and, where appropriate, encourage the conversion of coniferous forest to native woodlands with a focus on opportunities for habitat linkage and wider eco-services.

### **6.7.6.5 Aggregate Resources and Extractive Industry**

Quarrying and mineral extraction is a valuable resource to the county in terms of construction, employment and revenue. Wexford sand is much sought after for equestrian and sporting facilities. However, these considerations must be balanced against the significant impacts quarrying can have in terms of noise, dust, vibration, visual intrusion, on ground and surface waters, traffic generation and on the county's natural and built heritage (including archaeological).

The Council will assess each planning application for quarrying activity on its merits having regard to its site specific environmental capacity, landscape, natural and built heritage, residential and visual amenity and available infrastructure, such as an adequate road network. There should be an emphasis on extraction in locations which avoid impacts rather than locations where significant mitigation and restoration is required.

The exploitation of these materials and minerals, together with the decommissioning and restoration of all sites, must be carefully managed in order to minimise the

potential impact on the environment and amenities of the area. Where the proposal would directly, or indirectly, affect areas which are identified as being of European or national ecological and geological importance, that is, SACs, cSACs, SPAs, NHAs, pNHAs and County Geological Sites (CGS), a strict precautionary approach will be taken. Extraction from beaches and river banks will generally not be permitted.

The Council's considerations on quarrying matters will have regard to 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities' Section 28 Guidelines issued in 2004. The detailed matters which will be taken into account in the assessment of planning applications for extractive and processing developments are set out in Volume 2 Development Management.

## Aggregate Resources and Extractive Industry Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED116

To require extractive and processing industries to be appropriately sited, designed and managed to avoid significant adverse impacts on their surrounding environment, amenities, road/public safety, and built and natural heritage. The Council will have regard to 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities' (DEHLG, 2004) in its considerations on quarrying (as may be updated in the lifetime of this Plan).

### Objective ED117

To prohibit extractive industry development where it has not been demonstrated that adverse effects on the environment, landscape, heritage and surrounding residential, recreation or tourist amenities will not be generated, even if significant aggregate resources are identified. A strict precautionary approach will be taken where designated sites, proposed designated sites or protected species such as Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Heritage Areas, proposed National Heritage Areas or County Geological Sites may be affected.



### Objective ED118

To ensure that all extractive industry development complies with the relevant objectives of this Plan, including those in Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, Chapter 10 Environmental Management, Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and all relevant standards in Volume 2 Development Management Manual including, but not limited to, the specific standards for the extractive industry contained in Section 5.8 Aggregate Resources and the Extractive industry.

### Objective ED119

To ensure that the road network to serve the extractive industry development is adequate in respect of its condition, width and horizontal and vertical alignment to carry the anticipated number and types of vehicles generated by the operation of the development without unduly impacting on the capacity or function of the road and / or effecting the safety of other road users including walkers and cyclists.

### Objective ED120

To ensure that an effective buffer is provided for between proposed quarry operations and adjoining dwellings, landholdings, water courses, built and natural heritage (including archaeology), roads and other public infrastructure.

### Objective ED121

To restrict the removal of material, sand and gravel from beaches and river banks.

#### 6.7.6.6 Commercial Development in Rural Areas

This section deals specifically with commercial development in the open countryside which is not related to agriculture, rural resources, rural diversification or tourism. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to consider proposals for major industrial development on rural or un-zoned land where the specific characteristics of the industry such as noise, odour, resource requirements or unique energy requirements make it unsuitable for a town or village or a location proximate to residential properties<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Further details on the location of waste facilities are contained in Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy.

There are also limited circumstances where it may be necessary to consider proposals for economic development on lands not zoned for economic development based on their unique location requirements such as power supply or exceptional extensive land requirements which would not be an appropriate or efficient use of serviced zoned land. There are a number of brownfield sites in rural areas where the use has ceased. The re-use of brownfield sites is sustainable where it can utilise existing infrastructure. However, it is not appropriate where a rural related use is replaced with a use that would be more appropriately located on serviced land such as businesses which are customer or employee intensive or where the new development is replacing an existing non-rural related use and the new use would result in an intensification of this use.

In both such cases, the Council will require an evidence based report justifying the proposed location and demonstrating why the proposal cannot be located on zoned land in a town or village and that it will not be likely to have an unacceptable impact on the rural area in which it is located.

In recognising the importance of entrepreneurial spirit in setting up small businesses, the Council will permit the development of small workshops within the curtilage of a dwelling subject to the normal planning criteria and assessment of impacts on neighbouring properties. These units will be linked to the occupier of the dwelling and accessed through the same vehicular access to the dwelling. Such developments will be considered as commercial properties and subject to additional controls.

## Commercial Development in Rural Areas Objectives

It is the objective of the Council;

### Objective ED122

To consider proposals for major commercial development in rural areas in exceptional circumstances where:

- i. The specific characteristics of the proposed development such as noise, odour, resource requirements or unique energy requirements makes it unsuitable for a town or village location or a location proximate to residential properties: and

- ii. Where relevant, it is a development necessary to meet national or regional waste management or climate change objectives and targets.

The development will only be considered where the Planning Authority is satisfied that the requirements of Objective ED124 have been complied with and the resultant assessment by the Planning Authority has concluded that the location is appropriate and the development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective ED123

To consider proposals for economic development with unique location requirements in rural areas in exceptional circumstances and where the applicant has clearly demonstrated that the proposal meets the following criteria:

- i. The development is of regional, and/or national, economic significance, is a development of very significant economic investment and a form that is specialist in nature;
- ii. The development has specific location requirements in terms of access to the grid network and/or ready access to fibre infrastructure connections; and
- iii. The direct employment relative to site area is not high and therefore the use would not represent an efficient use of zoned serviced land.

The development will only be considered where the Planning Authority is satisfied that the requirements of Objective ED124 have been complied with and the resultant assessment by the Planning Authority has concluded that the location is appropriate and that the development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective ED124

To require planning applications for development proposals referred to in Objective ED122 and Objective ED123 to be accompanied by a detailed evidence based report which:

- i. Demonstrates compliance with the criteria in either Objective ED122 or Objective ED123 respectively;

- ii. Contains an assessment of zoned lands in the county and a justification as to why those lands are not suitable for the proposed development;
- iii. Identifies and assesses impacts on all sensitive receptors including residences, natural and built heritage, landscape, rural character and shall also examine the impact of the proposal on other rural related and rural dependant economic activities;
- iv. Demonstrates that the proposed development will not have a negative impact on these receptors; and
- v. Contains a Traffic and Transport Assessment/Road Safety Audit/Travel Plan to address the issue of accessibility by various modes of transport and demonstrate that the road infrastructure has capacity to cater for the proposed development. Developer funded infrastructural improvements will be conditioned, where deemed necessary.

#### Objective ED125

To consider the development of a replacement commercial use on a brownfield site in a rural area where an existing use has ceased and subject to compliance with Objective ED124 (iii), (iv) and (v). In general, the Planning Authority will not consider development which is people intensive (either employee or customer), the subdivision of the property or an increase in the intensity of activity on the site. The applicant will also be required to submit proposals to ensure that the proposal will have a positive impact on the visual character of the area.

#### Objective ED126

To consider the extension of an established commercial enterprise in the open countryside provided the resultant scale and form of the enterprise is compatible with the character and scale of the area and subject to compliance with the other relevant objectives of this Plan, compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2. The Planning Authority will not permit an extension or intensification of the use where it would render the scale of the enterprise no longer appropriate in a rural area. The scale of the enterprise/use will be assessed having regard to a number of factors including impacts on the character of the rural area and impacts arising for residents

and other rural related activities from traffic movements to and from the site, water and wastewater requirements and emissions including noise and odour.

#### **Objective ED127**

To facilitate new development and/or the conversion of part of a dwelling to an appropriate home-based economic activity in rural areas, where the dwelling remains as the main residence of the practitioner, and the economic use is clearly ancillary to the residential use and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

#### **Objective ED128**

To facilitate the development of small workshops within the curtilage of a dwelling to facilitate the setting up of a small business subject to the criteria set out Objective ED98. The Council will monitor and report on the number and nature of such applications granted.

### **6.7.6.7 Equine Industry**

There is a very rich history of breeding and racing horses in Wexford. There are a considerable number of people employed both directly and indirectly in the equine industry which is an important economic contributor in County Wexford. The Breeding and Racing industry supports a diverse workforce encompassing the core industry, directly related industries such as vets and farriers and secondary employment.

There is a racecourse in Wexford Town and various point-to-point venues throughout the county. There are also many equestrian schools and facilities located throughout the county for related leisure and sporting activities.

## Equine Industry Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED129

To support and promote the equine industry in the county as an economic and employment provider.

### Objective ED130

To support the racecourse and associated facilities at Bettyville, Wexford Town and other racing events throughout the county to ensure that they remain viable for long-term development for employment and economic activity.

### 6.7.6.8 Creative Industries

The Council will support the development of the creative media industry to capitalise on the economic, cultural and artistic potential of this sector in County Wexford. This will include supporting the continued development of the county as a location for the film industry and facilitating the creation of new film studios to maximise the benefits of the county's location and the existing creative industry in the region.

## Creative Industries Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ED131

To facilitate the development of film studios and media production facilities within the county.

### Objective ED132

To facilitate and support the film industry in the county for film locations, including the erection of temporary structures and services.

CHAPTER 7

# Tourism Development



## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the spatial planning strategy and objectives to guide and facilitate the development of a sustainable tourism industry in the county. While the Council strongly supports the development of tourism as a key pillar of economic growth for the county, it also recognises that there is a need to protect and manage the county's tourism assets and resources to ensure their long term sustainability and ensure that new tourism developments respect, respond and enhance their physical setting, environmental quality and local community.

The Council has a direct and indirect role in delivering tourism related developments. The Council's enhanced role in economic development will see it focus predominantly on tourism product development, co-ordination and facilitation of the tourism industry within the county. The Council is currently leading a number of proposed projects including greenways, blueways, a marina in Wexford Town, Carrigfoyle Outdoor Activity Centre, Ireland's Ancient East incorporating the Norman Way, the Wexfordia project which is a concept to develop new visitor experiences at three sites across the county, namely the Hook Lighthouse, the Dunbrody Famine Ship and the Irish National Heritage Park. A tourism development is also planned for Enniscorthy Town. As a planning authority the Council must ensure that public and private tourism and related developments are in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county including considerations relating to location, scale, siting, access, design and protection of the environment, heritage and amenity of host communities.

## 7.2 Climate Action and Tourism

The key aims include to:

- Ensure new tourism related development in coastal areas is located away from areas at risk of coastal flooding and coastal erosion.
- Ensure only water-compatible tourism related development occurs in areas at risk of flooding e.g. marine and water based sports and ancillary facilities.
- Develop, where possible, new tourism related development along, or in close proximity to public transport routes, making use of existing railways in the county.



- Ensure that EV charging networks are rolled out to the main tourism destinations in the county.
- Ensure new tourism related buildings are NZEB and ensure the design and layout of the site and buildings take account of predicted climate change.
- Work with relevant State bodies to protect the county's natural, built and cultural heritage from the impacts of climate change.
- Give consideration to appropriately located tourism developments that would allow our coastal areas maximise opportunities that the changing climate (warmer summers) will offer.
- Work with relevant State bodies, including Irish Water, to assess the capacity and resilience of water supplies in the county, particularly during summer months.

### 7.3 Policy Context

The preparation of this chapter had regard to national, regional and local policies relating to tourism development and promotion.

#### People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025

The Government's Tourism Policy Statement sets out a series of policy objectives and headline targets to increase overseas visitor revenue to €5 billion, to grow total employment by 50,000 to 250,000, and to achieve ten million overseas visitors. The document also sets out the role for local authorities in the development and promotion of tourism which, from a land use planning perspective, includes:

- To continue to act as a primary developer of a range of public tourism infrastructure including outdoor tourism infrastructure and urban and rural heritage,
- To support community efforts in destination development including assisting communities to align their efforts with the tourism agencies, brand architecture and consumer segmentation model,
- To provide a competitive environment for tourism enterprises through a continued focus on high quality maintenance of public infrastructure frequently used by visitors,

- To promote universal access in tourism initiatives and developments, and
- To support efforts in destination development and promotion for 'age friendly' tourist and accessible tourism in collaboration with communities, relevant Government Agencies and stakeholders.

## Realising Our Rural Potential-Action Plan for Rural Development

This Government Statement focuses on five key pillars to promote rural development. Pillar 3 relates to maximising rural tourism and recreation potential with the key objectives to:

1. Increase tourist numbers to rural Ireland.
2. Support sustainable jobs through targeted tourism initiatives including the support of key marketing initiatives such as Ireland's Ancient East,
3. Develop and promote activity tourism in rural areas through the development of blueways, greenways and other recreational opportunities, and
4. Develop and promote our natural and built heritage.

## National Planning Framework

The NPF recognises that the country's wealth of natural heritage, built heritage, landscapes, green infrastructure, rivers, coastal areas and the marine, and the Arts and culture offer significant capacity to directly and indirectly sustain communities, create employment and deliver real social benefits for rural areas in particular. NPO 22 aims to facilitate tourism development and, in particular, a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level, while NPO 60 requires the conservation and enhancement of the rich qualities of the natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

## Draft National Marine Planning Framework

The Draft National Marine Planning Framework recognises the importance of land-sea interactions in the tourism industry and the interdependence of the landside and marine elements. It aims to position Ireland as a world class sustainable coastal and marine tourism destination through the sustainable development of coastal and

marine recreation activities, to support coastal communities, to maintain the natural marine and coastal areas and improve access for tourism.

## Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The RSES outlines that a successful tourism sector creates significant benefits for many other sectors such as agriculture, food and drinks, transport and retail. RPO 53 sets out the tourism objective for the region which is:

- a) Enhance provision of tourism and leisure amenity to cater for increased population in the region including recreation, entertainment, cultural, catering, accommodation, transport and water infrastructure inter alia.
- b) Promote activity tourism subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes.
- c) Sustainably develop the road network and public transport services and facilities for improved visitor access, longer dwell times due to improved connectivity to ports and airports and tourism growth.
- d) Sustainably develop walking and cycling trails opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes and promote the sustainable designation and delivery of Greenway and Blueway Corridors.
- e) Facilitate appropriate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, prioritising sustainable projects that achieve maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.
- f) Identify and map catchment areas concerning culture, heritage and tourism of regional significance/scale. Such catchments should have the potential to deliver small-scale economic development and using wider local services such as post offices and local public transport.
- g) Support the relevant authorities in the development of specific monitoring protocols for visitor pressure to ensure that tourism activities are maintained within sustainable limits for the European sites in the region.

RPO 54 reinforces the need to monitor and assess the on-going effect of tourism on sensitive features with particular focus on natural, archaeological and built heritage assets, while RPO 173 states that there will be investment in the sustainable

development of infrastructure and service improvements on the transport networks along the region's key tourism corridors including Ireland's Ancient East.

### County Wexford Tourism Development Strategy 2019-2023

The aim of the strategy is for County Wexford to become one of Ireland's most compelling tourism destinations and, in doing so improve the quality of life of people and communities throughout the county. It is envisaged that the strategy will directly:

- create new employment opportunities throughout the county;
- create year-round sustainable tourism businesses-driving 'season extension';
- diversify sources of income to Wexford's local economy;
- create and improve local infrastructure, facilities and amenities; and
- bring people and communities together.

The strategy is seeking to increase tourism revenue by 18.7% and visitor numbers by 12% and in doing so creating approximately 800 new jobs in the county.

The strategic goal for visitor experience development is *"To strengthen, develop and elevate Wexford's range of compelling, unique and must-do visitor experiences, creating real standout and competitive differentiation."* The visitor experience development framework is focused on five key elements:

- 1) Establish the most compelling clustered experience of Ireland's Ancient East.  
This will be centred on a clustered experience encompassing the Hook Peninsula, Loftus Hall, the Dunbrody Famine Ship, the Irish National Heritage Park, Tintern Abbey, JFK Homestead and Arboretum.
- 2) Develop Wexford's Town profile as a unique and vibrant Maritime town.  
This will be centred on the town's Viking heritage, its long and rich seafaring history, unique maritime environment, water sports, festival and food offering and, in time, the Trinity Wharf Development.
- 3) Establish Wexford's contemporary coastal experience.  
This will be focused on coastal towns from Gorey to Fethard, and encompassing key Blueways and Greenways, developing clustering experiences that will rejuvenate Wexford's sunny South East's proposition and position it alongside leading coastal experiences such as Cornwall in the UK.

- 4) Culture and heritage experience development.  
The development and clustering of unique and diverse cultural and heritage experiences (including the Irish National Heritage Park, Enniscorthy, Ferns Castle, Wells House, Johnstown Castle and the Norman Way), brought to life through storytelling and animation.
- 5) Create a new and unique and original iconic experience.  
The exploration and development of a completely new and unique visitor experience to Wexford (this is a longer term/horizon objective).

### Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021

The Wexford LECP highlights the potential of tourism as an economic driver with a particular emphasis on its role in creating employment, supporting and sustaining rural communities and populations. High Level Goal 3 aims *"to continue to develop and promote County Wexford as a great place to live, work and visit"*. Key priorities under this goal, which the Plan supports and will facilitate the implementation of, includes:

1. Support rollout of Ireland's Ancient East and other collaborative marketing ventures;
2. Provide support and training to develop Wexford's niche tourism sector.
3. Increase Wexford's profile as a tourist destination for both international and domestic tourism.
4. Increase the variety of quality tourist accommodation and
5. Diversification of the tourism product.

## 7.4 Tourism Product

County Wexford is a popular tourist destination for both overseas and domestic visitors. In 2018 Wexford welcomed 3% (circa 288,000) of the overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending 2% of the €5,217bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland. In the same year, the county attracted 785,000 domestic trips (c. 7% of the 10,918 million domestic trips in 2018), spending €157 million (8% of domestic tourist spend).

The county has a diverse range of natural, built and cultural heritage assets. Such assets include natural amenity areas such as the Blackstairs Mountains, forests and

woodlands, river valleys, the coastline, coastal walkways, sandy beaches, nature reserves and a rich archaeological and built heritage. Strong performing attractions in the county include Wells House and Gardens, J.F.K Arboretum, Johnstown Castle Gardens and Agricultural Museum, Dunbrody Famine Ship and Visitor Centre, Irish National Heritage Park, Hook Lighthouse and Dunbrody Abbey.<sup>1</sup>

The county offers a range of quality tourist accommodation which together with tourist attractions will attract visitors to the county and encourage them to stay longer. Recent improvements to road infrastructure, including the M25 New Ross Bypass and the M11 Enniscorthy Bypass, have enhanced access and reduced journey times to Wexford. Wexford's proximity to two airports, Waterford City and Dublin Airport, and being the home of Rosslare Europort makes it easy for tourists to travel to the county.

The most exciting tourism opportunity for the county lies with Fáilte Ireland's 'Ireland's Ancient East' (IAE) programme. This is a branded visitor experience encompassing the rich heritage and cultural assets that Ireland has to offer in the midlands and south eastern region of the country. County Wexford is home to a wealth of cultural heritage and attractions, which form an integral part of Ireland's Ancient East, and therefore the county is in a significantly advantageous position to attract further visitor numbers to the county.

The Norman Way was one of the first tourism initiatives in the county to evolve from the programme. It is a heritage trail that runs along the south coast of the county, focused on a range of medieval sites which help the visitor understand the Norman way of life. Phase 1 of the Trail, which was officially opened in 2017, is focused on eleven sites from Lady's Island to St Mary's Church in New Ross. The 'Eurovelo 1 Atlantic Coast' route also follows the Norman Way giving cyclists the opportunity to enjoy the sites and scenic landscapes. The trail also offers opportunities for other tourist activities, restaurants, pubs and shops to benefit, and possibilities for the development of spin off local businesses. Phase 2 is currently under way.

The Council is also actively pursuing further developments under the IAE brand including:

- A new Norman experience at the Dunbrody Visitor Centre, New Ross Town.

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<sup>1</sup> Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Visitor Attractions Top attractions in County Wexford 2016 (+20,000 visitors)

- A new Viking village at the Irish National Heritage Park which will be linked to the nearby Wexford Town to reflect its Viking heritage.

Other current Council tourism related projects include:

- Enhanced visitor experience at Hook Lighthouse which would centre on the 'Story of a Thousand Shipwrecks' and the location and geology of the area by delivering a dynamic animated visitor experience.
- Enniscorthy Town tourism project/town centre enhancement
- Wexford Arts Centre
- Carrigfoyle Outdoor Activity Centre
- Greenways and blueways
- Cultural and events centre and marina as part of the planned Trinity Wharf Development in Wexford.
- Public realm projects in New Ross town (removal of oil tanks from the quay front, a public park at High Hill), Enniscorthy Town (Templeshannon Urban Renewal), Wexford Quayfront, Main Street Bunclody and Esmonde Street Gorey Town.

## 7.5 Tourism Development Spatial Strategy

The county has a strong tourism product with many opportunities to enhance the tourism offer and the visitor experience. This spatial strategy will facilitate the further development of a tourism industry which will act as a key economic driver in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner. The Strategy will also ensure that the industry develops in appropriate locations, and at a pace and scale which ensures that the natural and cultural assets, which form the basis of the industry, are not diminished in the long term.

### 7.5.1 Overall Goal

It is the goal of the Council, as set out in its County Tourism Strategy, to become one of Ireland's most compelling tourism destinations and in doing so improve the quality of life of people and communities throughout the county.

To achieve this, the Council will utilise Wexford's history including the Vikings, the Normans, the 1798 Rebellion and the 1916 Rising, its unique natural and built tourism assets and its strategic location to further develop tourism as a key economic driver for the county while ensuring that this takes place in a manner which respects the county's heritage, culture, people and environment.

## 7.5.2 Strategy

The spatial planning strategy will guide and facilitate the development of tourism products and experiences that are based around the use and enjoyment of our natural and built heritage assets by all. Having regard to this, the key aims are to:

- Ensure that the tourism industry in County Wexford continues to grow in a sustainable manner and to protect the county's natural and built resources and assets.
- Maximise the potential of tourism as a key pillar of economic growth for the county and region through the development of a high quality, strong, year-round tourism industry, which provides sustainable well-paid jobs.
- Maximise the potential of the Ireland's Ancient East Programme for the county through the participation in and facilitation of appropriate projects and initiatives.
- Promote improved access to the county through the further development of Rosslare Europort and the provision of enhanced public transport, road access, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, incorporating the principles of universal design throughout the county.
- Enhance towns and villages across the county so that they are vibrant, attractive, accessible and welcoming places to visit and to maximise their potential to support and benefit directly from the tourism industry.

## 7.5.3 Sustainable Tourism

There is a need to achieve a balance between appropriate tourism developments and economic, environmental and social sustainability. In this regard, the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community must be carefully balanced and it must be ensured that the tourism assets can continue to be enjoyed by future generations



and not prejudiced by short term or purely economic considerations. It is also imperative that natural assets such as habitats and species and water quality are not diminished or threatened by tourism development or activity.

#### 7.5.4 Making Tourism Accessible for Everyone

Everyone must be able to enjoy tourism amenities and experiences, regardless of age or ability. The Council, through its roles as a planning authority and a building control authority, will ensure that there is a wide range of accessible tourism experiences. While the Council acknowledges that some existing sites by reason of their historical design, siting or location may have accessibility limitations, the Council will make every effort to ensure tourism developments and associated spin off developments are accessible to everyone.

#### Tourism Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

##### Objective TM01

To protect and sustain the natural, built and cultural features that form the basis of the county's tourism industry including landscapes, historic buildings and structures, habitats, species and areas of natural heritage value and water quality.

##### Objective TM02

To facilitate, where appropriate, proposals to improve access for all at existing tourism sites and facilities, and to require all new tourism related developments to ensure the development is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, size or ability.

**Objective TM03**

To facilitate the development of a sustainable diversified tourism industry at appropriate locations and at a suitable scale, subject to compliance with the objectives of this chapter and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM04**

To implement the County Wexford Tourism Strategy 2019-2023 subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM05**

To continue to develop tourism products and tourist related infrastructure and to carry out enhancements to the public realm in towns and villages and environmental improvements to ensure that the county is an attractive place to visit and stay.

**Objective TM06**

To engage with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, the Arts Council, National Parks and Wildlife, Wexford Local Economic Office and other key stakeholders to promote and maximise the tourism potential of the county and to support the development of niche tourism sectors such as Geo-tourism, Eco-tourism, Food tourism and community-based tourism, while ensuring the protection of the natural, cultural and built heritage of the county.

**Objective TM07**

To support the future development of Destination Experience Development Plans which may be developed by Fáilte Ireland during the lifetime of this plan and to ensure continued collaboration and alignment with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and delivery of these plans subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM08

To develop a tourism cluster in the South-East focused around key tourist sites and attractions in conjunction with adjoining local authorities, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and other key stakeholders.

### Objective TM09

To deliver the Ireland's Ancient East Programme and facilitate the phased rollout of the branding strategy, orientation signage and the enhancement of the visitor experience at the chosen programme sites.

### Objective TM10

To maximise the potential of the main towns in the county as tourism visitor hubs, and to implement guidelines such as the Fáilte Ireland Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns to inform the development and operation of the towns as tourism destination towns, and to work with all stakeholders to leverage funding streams that will assist with maximising the tourism potential and offering of the towns.

### Objective TM11

To develop Wexford Town's profile as a unique and vibrant Maritime town which encompasses its natural environment, its history and heritage, water-based activities, festivals, innovation and food offering subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM12

To balance the development of tourism facilities, infrastructure and accommodation in our towns, villages and rural areas with the needs of the communities, the need to provide for housing and year round facilities and vitality for the resident population and the sustainable year round use of existing infrastructure such as wastewater treatment infrastructure.

### Objective TM13

To ensure that new tourism development is sustainable in terms of use of resources and resilient in terms climate change.

### Objective TM14

To support and develop our towns and villages and rural heritage sites including our beaches for tourism purposes through the facilitation of links by public transport, greenways, blueways and associated infrastructure subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM15

To support the development of the specific Council tourism projects referred to in Section 7.4 of this Plan and the County Wexford Tourism Strategy 2019-2023 subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria, and to utilise all available funding mechanisms to advance these projects including the Urban Regeneration Development Fund and the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

## 7.6 Locations for Tourism

The spatial planning strategy is focused on directing tourism development to our towns and villages. While rural based tourism offers significant potential for the county, it is prudent that it is carefully managed to protect these areas which are, in themselves, a tourism product. Accordingly, tourist development in rural areas will be carefully considered in accordance with the objectives and exceptions set out in this chapter, Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

### 7.6.1 Tourism in Towns and Villages

Towns and villages in the county provide a range of tourism attractions, facilities and services and are themselves destinations to which tourists come. Some settlements in the county, such as the coastal settlements of Rosslare Strand and Courtown, rely heavily on tourism because of their character, location and setting and also due to the unique range of entertainment, activity and lifestyle options that they offer.

Sustainable tourism facilities, when properly located and managed and particularly if they are easy to get to by a range of transport modes, will encourage longer visitor stays, help to extend the tourism season and add to the vitality of settlements throughout the year<sup>2</sup>. In this regard, tourist accommodation, visitor centres and commercial/retail facilities serving the tourism sector should generally be located within towns and villages and developed with the principles of universal design to ensure they are accessible for all. This will help to foster strong links to a range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustain the host settlement and its community. There are exceptions where tourist developments will be considered outside of towns and villages. These exceptions are discussed in Section 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism, Section 7.7.4 Integrated Resorts and Amenities and Section 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation.

#### Objective TM16

To facilitate the development of a variety of high quality tourist accommodation within towns and villages, subject to compliance with Section 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation and Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### Objective TM17

To facilitate the development of tourist attractions and tourist related commercial and retail developments such as craft and design and artisan food shops, that are appropriate in scale and design for its host town or village.

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<sup>2</sup> Fáilte Ireland-Guidance on Sustainable Tourism (2016).

### Objective TM18

To develop and maximise the tourism potential of the county by facilitating the appropriate expansion of existing and the provision of new universally accessible sustainable tourism attractions, facilities and infrastructure in towns and villages while ensuring the protection of the environment and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism

The economic benefits of rural tourism and the continued development of this sector have huge potential to revitalise local economies, provide job opportunities for the farming community and enhance the quality of life of rural communities.

The Council will continue to support rural based tourism projects where it relates to the use of a rural landholding and the enjoyment of a rural resource and is appropriate in scale for the rural location.

The following provides guidance on the types of land holdings and premises that may be considered for rural based tourism development:

- For agri-tourism/farm diversification projects a farm holding which is a minimum of 10ha.
- For equestrian related tourism, an equestrian farm which is a minimum of 10ha.
- For wood crafting, the timber should be either sourced on the site (an established forested landholding) or sourced close by to the site. Such facilities are envisaged as of craft scale and not commercial wood manufacture.
- Other examples of suitable landholdings include a county house with outbuildings and walled gardens.
- Individual premises along a Greenway such as a traditional dwelling, building or farm building from which it is proposed to provide a service to greenway users and other tourists such as a café, bicycle hire or a craft shop.

The Council will consider each proposal on a case-by-case basis. The rural resource tourism product/attraction must be located on the site, or in close proximity to the

site and the scale must be commensurate to the premises. It must be demonstrated that the proposed development does not adversely affect the rural character, environmental quality and amenity of the rural area.

Where an extension to an existing authorised project is proposed, the Council will consider whether the proposed increase in scale and intensification of use remains appropriate to its rural location, the impact on the environment and residential amenity or whether by reason of its increased scale and intensification, sourcing of inputs, number of employees and traffic generation it would be more appropriately relocated to zoned lands within a town or village.

It is acknowledged certain tourist facilities located in rural areas may be provided as stand-alone developments, and that ancillary uses (e.g. café, restaurant, shop) may be required in order to ensure the long term viability of the tourist facility. Additional uses will only be permitted in cases where the additional use is integrated with and connected to the primary use of the site as a tourist facility, and in cases where the Council is satisfied that the additional use is ancillary to the primary use of the site as a tourist facility. The additional use shall be located adjacent to the tourist facility, and avail of shared infrastructure and services, insofar as possible.

Proposals which include the provision of tourist accommodation in a rural area will be considered in the context of Section 7.7.5 Tourism Accommodation, Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning. The Planning Authority will not favourably consider proposals to convert a residential unit, which was previously granted/ used as a granny flat/self-contained unit for occupation by an immediate family member (whether authorised or not) for use as tourist accommodation.

## Rural Based Tourism Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM19

To consider the development of rural based tourism development where it is in accordance with Section 7.6.2 and where it is proposed to develop niche activities,

such as those relating to food (particularly value-added products), forestry (such as wood products), crafts, eco-tourism and agri-tourism, (for example farmhouse accommodation will be considered)<sup>3</sup>, open farms, farm holidays, health related retreats,<sup>4</sup> equestrian activities including bridle paths, bird-watching holidays, painting/ photography tuition, angling tourism, field studies and hill-walking where such development will not detract from the visual and rural amenity of the area and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM20

To permit proposals to extend an existing rural resource based tourism project where the scale and intensity of the use and project remains appropriate to its rural setting and where it will not detract from the rural character, amenities, residential amenities or environmental capacity of the area and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria. Proposals which include the provision of tourist accommodation will be considered in the context of Section 7.7.5 Tourism Accommodation and Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

## 7.6.3 Tourism in Coastal Areas

The County Wexford Tourism Development Strategy aims to develop a contemporary coastline experience. Building on Wexford's coastal towns and villages, beachfront accommodation, increasingly developed blue and greenways, coastal drives and walks (such as the Slí Carman Coastal Walks), water and land-based sports activities, range of islands reachable on day trips, nature and wildlife reserves, food and drink offering and culture the renewed proposition should be developed and promoted. Whilst Wexford's coastal offering should be developed and promoted so that a wide range of destinations and communities benefit, it will also be important to develop a number of leading lights within the experience offering with Courtown, Curracloe, Rosslare, Kilmore Quay and the Hook Peninsula receiving particular focus.

Coastal habitats and features such as wetlands and vegetated dunes play an important role in flood relief and in protecting from coastal erosion and are

<sup>3</sup> Proposals which include the provision of tourist accommodation will be considered in the context of Section 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation in this chapter and Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing

<sup>4</sup> This does not include a hotel.



important in their own right. Such features, habitats and species can be damaged or disturbed by tourism development and associated activity. Future development in coastal areas will be carefully managed to ensure that the character of these areas is protected and enhanced whilst achieving and maximising their economic potential. Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning addresses development in the coastal zone including tourism development within, and outside of, existing settlements and at beaches and harbours in coastal areas. The Council will direct tourist development, including tourist accommodation, to existing settlements in the coastal zone save for certain exceptions outlined in that chapter.

## Tourism in Coastal Areas Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM21

To consider proposals for tourism in the coastal zone subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and in accordance with the locational and other objectives in Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning and Chapter 6 Economic Development and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM22

To prohibit tourism development that would significantly diminish the natural heritage, scenic and recreational amenity and economic value of the county's coastline and coastal areas.

### Objective TM23

To ensure that tourism development or activity does not significantly impact on coastal habitats, species and features such as wetlands and vegetated dunes which play an important role in flood relief and in protecting from coastal erosion and are important in their own right.

**Objective TM24**

To ensure that tourism development in coastal areas is sensitively designed and considers views from scenic routes, paths and trails and from the popular sea transport routes.

**Objective TM25**

To facilitate development which would improve tourism potential and tourist numbers, such as marinas, sea angling, sailing, marine adventure activities, diving and surfing and beach nourishment at appropriate locations in accordance with this chapter and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM26**

To facilitate the development and facilities to support cruise tourism in Rosslare Harbour and the county.

**Objective TM27**

To carefully consider tourism developments which would interact with other maritime activities and uses, and to prohibit development which would unduly impact on fisheries, seafood, transport or other important marine uses.

**Objective TM28**

To encourage the development of infrastructure such as harbours for tourism and commercial purposes subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM29**

To support the co-ordinated development of the Irish Sea Way Trail subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directive and all other planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

## 7.7 Specific Tourism Developments

### 7.7.1 Activity and Adventure Tourism

The Action Plan for Rural Development 'Realising Our Rural Potential' recognises the potential of activity tourism to contribute to economic growth in rural areas. The Plan states 'outdoor adventure tourism is a key growth sector worldwide and has been identified as a priority for Irish tourism in future years'. The development and promotion of this sector provides opportunities for growth, in rural areas in particular, by facilitating businesses to leverage the tourism assets in their area in a sustainable way to support recreational activities. In Wexford activities such as canoeing, water sports, cycling, angling, walking trails, and mountain hiking tracks e.g. Blackstairs Mountains range (in consultation with Coillte and other landowners), beautiful beaches, and rivers provide ample opportunities for activity tourism.

#### Greenways/Active Travel Routes

Greenways/Active Travel Routes provide recreational pathways for use by visitors and residents and encourages and promotes walking and cycling in a safe and controlled environment. They are also a significant tourism asset and create opportunities for the development of new enterprises and spin off businesses along their routes to serve the needs of visitors and residents. The Council will focus on developing villages and links to other attractions along these routes such as Tintern, Hook Head and Bannow Island. The South East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 aims to develop a greenway network which will serve as a quality international tourism product, that can also link the wide range of recreational, cultural and heritage experiences in the region that are part of Ireland's Ancient East. The local authorities in the region have established and resourced a Regional Project Office to implement the strategy for the development of the regional Greenway/Blueway Network.

The Council is currently planning four greenways/active travel routes for the county:

1. The Rosslare to Waterford Greenway. The Council will examine the feasibility of developing a sustainable transport corridor along the disused Rosslare Europort to Waterford Railway which would accommodate a reopened passenger and freight line and a greenway for active travel and amenity use. This corridor would

include an off-road cycle and walking path from Rosslare Harbour to Waterford City alongside the rail line and will take in the villages of Kilrane, Rosslare, Killinick, Mayglass, Bridgetown and Wellingtonbridge and link in with the New Ross Town Greenway project.

2. New Ross Town to Waterford Greenway including Redbridge-Mount Elliot. This is a joint project with Kilkenny and Waterford local authorities.
3. Wexford Town to Rosslare Strand Greenway. This will be via the South Slobs.
4. Wexford Town to Curracloe Greenway –final route being considered.

The use of disused railways as greenways will be promoted by the Council. However, the Council will ensure these developments are designed in a manner which will not give rise to a conflict, or prejudice, the reopening of these railways in the future. This approach is supported in the RSES which outlines the need to safeguard disused railway line alignments for possible future use, for example conversion to greenways but the development of new greenways along disused railways should still allow for future rail use if feasible at a later stage.

Two greenways (No. 3 and No. 4) present issues in relation to potential impacts on SACs and SPAs and these projects can only proceed if they comply with the provisions of the Habitats Directive. These projects will only proceed if such issues can be satisfactorily resolved following AA and EIA at project level.

## Blueways

Inland waterways in the county have the potential to add to the tourist product given their recreational, aesthetic and ecological value. Waterways offer a diverse range of activities from walking routes, kayaking, boating, angling and bird watching. The Council is actively involved in the development of an approved and branded 'Blueway Trail' on, and along, rivers in the county which give access to other activities such as cycling, walking and canoeing. Feasibility studies are being carried out on a Slaney Blueway from Enniscorthy Town to Wexford Town. The Council will also support the extension of this blueway to Bunclody Town subject to feasibility assessment and environmental assessments. Any such proposal will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirement of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SACs and SPAs.

## Specific Tourism Developments Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM30

To encourage and facilitate sustainable and appropriate forms of activity and marine tourism in towns, villages and rural areas through the development of greenways, blueways and other recreational opportunities such as walking trails, water sports, outdoor and indoor activity centres, subject to compliance with the locational and other objectives of this plan, and subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirement of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SACs and SPAs.

### Objective TM31

To ensure that the development of greenways/active travel routes along disused railways safeguards the railways and does not prejudice their reopening for the sustainable movement of freight and/or passenger travel in the future.

### Objective TM32

To consider the development of small scale complimentary facilities and businesses along greenways, blueways and walking trails such as bicycle hire, cafés, craft and design shops, pubs and restaurants subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria. These facilities and businesses should be located within existing settlements so that they are easily accessible to both users of the routes/trails and the wider public. Consideration will also be given to the use of traditional and agricultural buildings for commercial purposes along these routes in accordance with Section 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism.

### Objective TM33

To consider the development of car parking facilities at designated entry/exit points along greenway and blueways routes, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM34

To facilitate the provision of outdoor activity based tourism facilities which extend the tourist season. Consideration will be given to this type of development in rural areas where the development is suitable for the rural location, is appropriate in scale for the rural location and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and with normal planning and environmental criteria. The Planning Authority may consider the provision of indoor facilities where it is ancillary to and complements an outdoor activity based tourism facility. Proposals to provide ancillary tourism accommodation will be subject to Section 7.7.5 and associated objectives.

### Objective TM35

To facilitate and encourage the development of new and expanded outdoor activities such as cycling routes, walking trails (including in the Blackstairs Mountains in consultation with Coillte and other landowners), mountain hiking, bird watching, water sports and canoeing. The location of these developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the nature of the proposal, its location and siting, its scale, potential for impacts on its host rural area and residential amenities and environment and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM36

To support and facilitate the development of tourism related infrastructure associated with inland waterways, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM37

To ensure the full recreational potential of the River Slaney and the River Barrow is realised whilst taking cognisance of the aims and objectives of the National River Basin Management Plan (2018 – 2021) and subject to compliance with Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM38

To protect the view and vistas from waterways from inappropriate development that would detract from the amenity of the waterways.

## 7.7.2 Business Tourism

Wexford is strategically located, has high quality road and rail connections enabling the county to capitalise on the growing conferencing and events market. The existence of a number of large hotels is also a critical factor in being able to facilitate large scale events. The Council will continue to work with hotels across the county that offer conference facilities to ensure that they can maximise the potential of this sector. Business tourism offers many potential spin-offs for the local area and economy and it is important that local tourist activities and facilities are supported by marketing and promotion by these hotels.

### Business Tourism Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM39

To support the development of conferencing facilities on appropriate sites in towns and villages as a means of attracting business and tourism subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 7.7.3 Creative Arts, Culture and Food Tourism

Creative arts and culture is enjoyed by everyone, both residents and visitors, from visual arts, theatre, music and dance to opera and film. Creative arts and culture generates significant economic revenue for the county, both direct and indirect, and it provides a variety of employment opportunities. The development of this sector

and associated venues and performance spaces will be encouraged and facilitated, where appropriate. The Council will encourage improvements to public realm spaces to consider the ability of these spaces to facilitate and accommodate stimulating new experiences e.g., festivals/performance spaces.

The county has a diverse range of arts and cultural facilities most notably the National Opera House which is home to the internationally renowned Wexford Opera Festival, Wexford Arts Centre, theatres in the main towns, art galleries, Gorey School of Art and Design, libraries, museums and cinemas. There are plans to extend this offering including the redevelopment of Gorey Market House and the refurbishment of Wexford Arts Centre. The Trinity Wharf development in Wexford Town also proposes a multi-use cultural and event centre.

Wexford has also become synonymous with festivals and events covering a variety of themes including maritime, food, literary and music providing opportunities for artists, musicians and food producers to showcase their talents and products.

The Council, in partnership with Creative Ireland, is promoting Wexford as a film location, targeting national and international film companies. The development of the film industry has value added economic potential for the county through the development of film trails/routes based around film locations in the county, for example, 'Brooklyn' in Enniscorthy Town and 'Saving Private Ryan' at Curracloe Beach.

Food and beverage consumption accounts for 35% of all international tourism revenues. The county's food and beverage offering has a significant role to play in developing tourism in the county and delivering great visitor experiences, increasing dwell time around the country and growing spend.

Fáilte Ireland is promoting the development of food tourism based on a vision that 'Ireland will be recognised by visitors for memorable food experiences which evoke a unique sense of place, culture and hospitality'. Wexford is synonymous with high quality food production and has developed a very good reputation in the areas of agri-food, seafood, artisan food production, and in more recent times, craft breweries. The Wexford Food Family was set up in 2011 to promote Wexford as a food brand locally, nationally and internationally. The county hosts annual food festivals showcasing and promoting the local food industry. There is an opportunity to develop a branded food and beverage trail which could be separate to, or complement, other established trails in the county.



## Creative Arts, Culture and Food Tourism Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM40

To safeguard the artistic, cultural and historic heritage of the county and to facilitate the expansion and development of facilities such as interpretative centres which are appropriate in scale, siting and design and suitably located adjacent to sites of interest, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM41

To develop the Arts, culture and heritage attractions throughout the county in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, the Heritage Council, the OPW, the Arts Council, National Parks and Wildlife and other key stakeholders.

### Objective TM42

To facilitate the development of appropriately scaled, designed and sited tourism facilities and infrastructure related to the film industry, including film trails/routes, signage and visitor attractions.

### Objective TM43

To support and encourage the growth of Food Tourism in the county, and to consider the development of food tourism related activities such as local farmers markets, artisan food producers, craft breweries and distilleries and to facilitate the development of a Wexford Food Trail in conjunction with other branded trails. These developments will be directed to towns and villages and will only be considered in rural areas where they are tied to an existing premises and a rural based resource and where it is appropriate in scale to the rural location and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. Where expansion is proposed to industrial scale and/or the development is no longer considered appropriate in scale to its rural location it will be directed to zoned land.

### Objective TM44

To support existing festivals and cultural events which take place in the county and to promote the development of a variety of new festivals and events to appeal to a range of different visitors and to increase the profile of the county as a key tourism destination.

## 7.7.4 Integrated Resorts and Amenities

The Council recognises that some forms of tourism development, due to their self-contained nature or scale, may require a location outside of existing settlements, for example, golf courses. Such developments, and their requirement to locate outside of existing settlements, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to their scale, nature, site suitability and normal planning and environment criteria.

The Council will give consideration to the development of a limited number of integrated tourism/leisure/recreation complexes at appropriate locations in the county. It must be demonstrated that the development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The use must be designed to respect the character of the area and any existing natural or built heritage features on the site. The proposal must not detract from the overall character and quality of the site's setting.

An integrated tourism/leisure/recreation complex may include a number of following uses: hotel and associated facilities, health/spa/wellness facilities, restaurant/café, conference centre, golf course, equestrian centre, nature trails, walking trails, trekking courses, indoor/outdoor water facility, fishing facility, museums/art galleries and associated facilities. The development must have a critical mass of activities to ensure that it is a self-sufficient destination tourism facility and not be developed in a piecemeal manner.

Such a complex may also include a small amount of ancillary tourism accommodation and leisure retail. The complex must be a significant attraction in itself to warrant/require tourist accommodation and leisure retail uses. These uses will be limited in

the scale/quantum permissible and must be ancillary to and for use by facility. The tourist accommodation shall be used for tourism purposes only, shall not be allowed to be used as permanent residences, shall be available for short term letting only, shall be retained in single company ownership and shall not be sold off individually.

The development must be based on an integrated and comprehensive master plan and business plan and facilities and accommodation must be maintained in a single ownership. An overall planning application will be required for the entire complex with proposals, where appropriate, for:

- The preservation/conservation of natural amenities on the site,
- The preservation/conservation of the heritage structures on the site,
- The retention of the open nature of the lands,
- Significant and appropriate landscaping of the site,
- Physical linkages, including cycle ways and/or footpaths to the nearest settlement, and
- A phasing agreement that the tourist attraction/facility is developed before or at the same time as any ancillary tourist accommodation or leisure retail.

## Integrated Resorts and Amenities Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM45

To facilitate the development of tourist related resorts and amenities in towns and villages, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM46

To consider the extension of an existing tourist related resort and amenity where it is outside of a settlement only where the proposal to extend the tourism/leisure/recreation offering is commensurate to the overall scale of the resort and is appropriate at that location. The proposal to extend must comply, where relevant,

with Section 7.7.4 and is subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria. The Council will only consider the provision of ancillary tourist accommodation where it remains subservient to the overall tourism/leisure/recreation offering. In general the provision of new accommodation shall be required to be accompanied by commensurate improvement to the resort amenities and facilities. The provision of tourist accommodation on the site will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with Section 7.7.4.

#### Objective TM47

To consider the development of new tourist related resorts and amenities and the development of a limited number of high quality integrated tourism/leisure/recreation complexes and resorts and amenities outside of existing settlements where it is demonstrated that the development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or where an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The development must be in accordance with Section 7.7.4 and is subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation

The provision of a variety of high quality tourist accommodation is important for visitors and it will encourage a longer dwell time in the county.

Tourist accommodation should be located within towns and villages in order to be in close proximity to services, public transport and amenities.

The Council will therefore direct new tourist accommodation including hotels, guesthouses, hostels, B&Bs and holiday homes to towns and villages, save for the exceptions outlined in this section, Section 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism and Objectives TM46 and TM47 in Section 7.7.4 Integrated Resorts and Amenities.

Proposals for tourist accommodation in towns and villages must be proportionate in size, appropriate in scale, siting and design to its host settlement. The Council will also consider cumulative impacts and will not consider proposals which give rise to the

proliferation of this use in a settlement. While the form of development will depend on the form of development in the settlement, in general the Council will discourage individual holiday homes on large sites in favour of compact development of streets and places in accordance with Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages.

In the case of a proposed change of use from residential to tourist accommodation, the Council will take into account a number of factors, including the applicable land use zoning (where relevant), whether the site is located within a designated Rent Pressure Zone, if there is an identified permanent housing demand (for rent or purchase) in the settlement as identified in Volume 9 Housing Strategy, the existing level of tourist accommodation and the appropriateness of tourist accommodation in that particular settlement. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

### **Farmhouse Accommodation**

With regard to tourist accommodation in rural areas, the Council will favourably consider proposals to develop self-catering tourist accommodation on a farm holding as part of a farm diversification project. This accommodation can be provided by an extension of the existing farmhouse or by the utilisation of other existing dwellings/structures on the farm holding. Only where it has been demonstrated that these are not viable options, will the Council consider new build development. Any new build development shall be in close proximity to the existing farmhouse.

### **Conversion of 'Granny Flats'/Self-Contained Units to Tourist Accommodation in Rural Areas**

Given the intended nature of these units and the material considerations applied when considering the granting of granny flats/self-contained units for use by an immediate family member, the Council will not favourably consider proposals to convert these units (where authorised or unauthorised) to tourist accommodation, regardless of whether the original use is now no longer required. This is in the interests of regulating development, avoiding haphazard development, protecting residential amenities and the proper planning and sustainable development of rural areas.

## Hotels in Rural Areas

The Council will support and encourage hotels in rural areas where it is demonstrated that the hotel development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or where an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The development must respect and enhance its rural location, the existing natural or built features on the site and its landscape setting. The development of ancillary holiday homes will not be permitted.

## Camping, Motorhome Parks, Glamping and Caravan Parks

The Council recognises the importance of this type of accommodation in developing the tourism industry in the county. The development of these facilities should generally be located within or nearby existing settlements with pedestrian and cycle linkages provided. Consideration will be given to camping/glamping and motor home parks in the rural area where it can be demonstrated that the development would not significantly impact on the rural character of the area and have no significant impact on the surrounding environment. The Council will support community groups and sports clubs to develop short-term stay zones for motor homes.

The development of extensions to existing “static” caravan parks within settlements will be assessed based on the wastewater treatment plant capacity and the need to provide permanent housing. Such developments will require a higher standard of amenities such as play areas, biodiversity areas, screen planting, walkways and cycle paths.

## Holiday Chalets

Chalets for use as holiday home accommodation have developed over time on an ad hoc basis mainly in areas within the coastal zone. There has been increasing pressure in recent years to replace these chalet structures. The Planning Authority recognises that most of these structures are in coastal areas where issues of coastal flooding and coastal erosion must be considered. The Planning Authority is also aware that many of these structures are served by inadequate infrastructure, including wastewater and roads. The Planning Authority will only consider the replacement or extension of existing holiday chalet structures where it complies with Objective TM59, and other relevant objectives of the Plan.

## B&Bs and Guesthouses

This type of accommodation remains a popular option for people, both in towns and villages and in rural areas such as farmhouse accommodation and country house accommodation. The use of not more than four bedrooms in a house, where each bedroom is used for the accommodation of not more than four persons as overnight guest accommodation, is considered exempted development for the purposes of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), provided that such development would not contravene a condition attached to a permission under the Act or be inconsistent with any use specified or included in such a permission. Applications for permission where the use of more than four bedrooms is proposed for this use, or it is proposed to build a purpose built B&B, will be favoured in towns and villages. Such applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis in rural areas, where the scale remains consistent with that associated with this type of accommodation and is appropriate to the rural location and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

## Hostels

This type of accommodation should ideally be located within towns and villages, preferably served by public transport. However, the Council will also give consideration to the development of small scale hostel accommodation along established walking/hiking routes and on the site of an outdoor activity tourist facility in a rural area such as an Adventure centre/outdoor pursuits centre. With regard to the latter, the accommodation shall remain ancillary to the existing tourism facility on the site, and will only be available for use by those utilising the tourism facility.

## Short term letting

Rural dwellings which have been permitted in recent times in County Wexford are restricted to permanent residence and cannot be used as short term/holiday rents. However, in some areas such as Courtown, housing developments have been permitted as holiday homes and can be rented for short term use without any further planning consents. Short term rentals are also a very important sector in providing tourism accommodation in County Wexford.

New legislation has been introduced to bring additional controls as a means to

provide more accommodation for long term housing rentals in areas designated as Rent Pressure Zones (Planning and Development Regulations 2019, S.I. No 235 of 2019).

## Tourist Accommodation Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM48

To facilitate the provision of proportionate high quality accessible tourist accommodation and the expansion/upgrade of existing hotels, guesthouses, hostels and B&Bs where the use and scale of the tourist accommodation is appropriate to and in keeping with the scale and character of the settlement.

### Objective TM49

To consider a proposal to change the use from residential to short term letting in a Rent Pressure Zone having regard to Guidance Note for Local Authorities for Regulating Short Term Letting (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, July 2019).

### Objective TM50

To give consideration to the development of a hotel facility in a rural area where it is demonstrated that the hotel development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or where an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The development must respect and enhance its rural location, the existing natural or built features on the site and its landscape setting and is subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. The development of ancillary tourist accommodation including holiday homes on or adjoining the site will not be permitted.

### Objective TM51

To require new holiday home developments, both individual and multi-unit, to take place in serviced towns and villages and to ensure that the scale and design of the



development is appropriate to the settlement, enhances the character and any special qualities of the settlement. The Council will only consider the development of new holiday homes in a rural area where the development is ancillary to an 'Integrated Tourism/Leisure/Recreation Complex' and where the proposal complies with the provisions of Section 7.7.4, the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### **Objective TM52**

To have regard to Fáilte Ireland's 'Registration and Renewal of Registration Regulations for Short Term Tourism Accommodation Rental' (Fáilte Ireland, 2018) or any future update of these guidelines, when considering planning applications for this type of development.

#### **Objective TM53**

To consider, on a case-by-case basis, proposals for new holiday chalet/caravan/mobile home parks within existing settlements where there is not a proliferation of such developments and subject to them having a critical mass of onsite amenities and facilities (such as pools/playgrounds/indoor activity centres/restaurants) over and above what would have traditionally been the case for such developments. The Council will not consider proposals which would result in a reduction in the capacity in the public waste-water treatment system that would be detrimental to the delivery of necessary permanent housing. All such developments shall be required to have the highest standards of accommodation (minimum specifications shall be provided and will be conditioned as part of the development), layout, design and landscaping.

#### **Objective TM54**

To consider, on a case-by-case basis, proposals to extend an existing authorised holiday caravan/mobile home park. The Council will consider the location of the park (within or outside of an existing settlement and the appropriateness of the increased scale of the park at that location), its existing layout, design, visual and environmental quality and the number of existing parks in its vicinity. The Council will not consider proposals where they give rise to a proliferation of this use in a settlement, rural or coastal area, and are unlikely to give favourable consideration to the extension of

such facilities outside of settlements unless they are on self-contained sites with a critical mass of onsite amenities (such as pools/playgrounds/indoor activity centres/restaurants) or connected by footpath, lighting etc. to a settlement. The Council will not consider proposals which would result in a loss of capacity in the public waste water treatment system that would be detrimental to the need for permanent housing in the area.

#### **Objective TM55**

To facilitate the development of sites for camping and glamping and campervans/ touring caravans/motor homes subject to site suitability and normal planning and environmental considerations.

#### **Objective TM56**

To consider the provision of farmhouse accommodation/self-catering accommodation on a farm holding as part of a farm diversification project. The accommodation shall be provided by an extension to the farmhouse or by the utilisation of other existing dwellings/structures on the farm holding. Only where it has been demonstrated that these are not viable options will permission be considered for a new build development. Any new build development shall be in close proximity to the existing farmhouse.

#### **Objective TM57**

To consider the development of small scale hostel type accommodation along established walking/hiking routes and on the site of an outdoor activity tourist facility in a rural area such as an Adventure centre/outdoor pursuits centre. With regard to the latter, the accommodation shall remain ancillary to the existing tourism facility on the site, and will only be available for use by those utilising the tourism facility.

#### **Objective TM58**

To facilitate B&B and guesthouse tourist accommodation developments in towns and villages, and to consider on a case-by-case such developments in a rural area where it is appropriate in scale to its rural location e.g. farmhouse accommodation or country

house, will not detract from residential amenity and complies with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM59

To strictly control the replacement and extension of existing holiday chalet structures. The Council will only consider such proposals where the following criteria are complied with:

- (a) It is demonstrated that the structure which it is proposed to replace has been on the subject site previous to 1st October 1964 when the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 came into effect or has the benefit of planning permission and is in accordance with the planning conditions pertaining to same.
- (b) It is proposed to replace the existing structure with a new structure which is equal to or not more than 20% of the floor area of that being replaced, or to extend the structure with an extension which is equal to or not more than 20% the floor area of the structure to be extended. This is to ensure that the scale and form of this type of development is consistent.
- (c) The replacement structure is for use as holiday home accommodation.
- (d) Risk of coastal erosion will be considered in accordance with relevant objectives in Section 12.5 of Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.
- (e) The risk of flooding to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. This should be demonstrated by a site-specific flood risk assessment, if deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.
- (f) The structure can be connected to the public waste water system, or effluent from the structure can be treated on-site in accordance with the EPA's Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (EPA, 2009).
- (g) Suitable water conservation measures form part of the development proposal.
- (h) Satisfactory access arrangements are in place, and
- (i) All other normal planning and environmental criteria are complied with.

### Objective TM60

To adopt a presumption against the change of use of granny flats/self-contained units for use by a family member (whether authorised or unauthorised) outside of settlements in rural areas to tourist accommodation.

## 7.7.6 Tourist Infrastructure

The provision of well-planned and attractive tourist infrastructure is important to the overall quality of the county's tourism product and to create a positive and good experience for visitors. Tourist infrastructure includes car and bus car-parking, footpaths and walkways, bicycle parking, seating, picnic and rest facilities, toilets and showers, lighting, signage and information boards and refuse and recycling facilities designed with the principles of universal design. The Council will consider proposals for tourist infrastructure on a case-by-case basis having regard to the type of tourist attraction, its setting and character and the ability to successfully integrate the proposal on, or adjoining, the site. The Council will assist tourist bodies and local community groups in the provision of adequate recreational and tourism infrastructure.

The provision of tourist orientation signage and wayfinding infrastructure is important as it allows visitors to travel with ease between their destinations and to detour to points of interest along the way which will increase dwell time in the area. While the Council acknowledges the signage needs of local businesses there is a need to avoid a proliferation of signage for reasons including traffic safety and visual amenity/erosion of scenic amenity. In this regard, there is a need for co-ordinated approach to signage and the preparation of signage plans for key areas/activities in the county such as the branded signage for Wexford Trails. Ireland's Ancient East also has its own branded signage and the Council will facilitate its roll out in the county.

### Tourist Infrastructure Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

**Objective TM61**

To facilitate improvements to tourism infrastructure including proposals to improve car, bus and bicycle parking, proposals to provide electric car and bicycle charging infrastructure, directional signage/information boards and service/rest facilities designed in accordance with principles of universal design subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and without detracting from the physical setting, character or visual quality of the tourism asset.

**Objective TM62**

To facilitate the development of co-ordinated and branded orientation, signage and wayfinding infrastructure for tourist attractions and tourist facilities subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM63**

To assist Fáilte Ireland in the roll out of the branded signage relating to Ireland's Ancient East.



CHAPTER 8

# Transportation Strategy



## 8.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the Council's strategy to provide an effective and sustainable transport system which is accessible to all. An effective transport system is integral to economic competitiveness in the county and improves personal wellbeing. The overall priority in national and regional transport policy is to promote a model shift towards sustainable means (public transport, walking and cycling) and away from outright reliance on the private motor vehicle. While this will prove challenging in a county with such a high number of people living in rural areas the Council is committed to achieving change.

The Council's role as a Roads Authority means it can promote sustainable transport through its management of the county's roads network. This includes the provision of footpaths, street lighting, cycling infrastructure, the setting of speed limits, crossings, one-ways systems, pedestrianisation etc. The application of the principles, approaches and standards of the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Department of the Environment Community and Local Government, 2013/2019) (hereafter referred to as DMURS/the Manual), is mandatory in the exercise of these functions in towns and villages.

The Council's role as a Planning Authority means it can promote sustainable transport systems through the integration of land use and transportation, the promotion of compact development to minimise journey length and maximise opportunities to use sustainable modes. It can also ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided and conducive, attractive and safe streets and transport systems are developed. These elements are further developed in the strategy below.

Significant technological change is likely to emerge in the short and medium term which will impact on transportation issues in the county, e.g. in the provision of electricity and other fuel sources, in digital connectivity and in autonomous vehicles, car and bike sharing etc. The Council must respond in a pro-active and collaborative manner to ensure that the county is ready for, and can fully benefit from, such changes.



## 8.2 Climate Action and Transportation

Transportation is one of the most significant generators of greenhouse gasses and consumers of energy. In 2017, 19.8% of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions were attributable to transport sources. It is therefore one of the sectors with the most potential to mitigate climate change. So important is transport to climate change mitigation that much of the strategy for transport planning (contained in Section 8.4) and land use planning (contained in the Core Strategy and Settlement Plans) stems from the need to replace fossil fuel consumption and associated climate impacts. Transport infrastructure is also vulnerable to climate change, and actions and policies are needed to adapt to such challenges.

Transport considerations are integral to climate change legislation and national, regional and local policy. Section 10(2)(n) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that development plans must include sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas to reduce energy demand, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, in particular in regard to the location, layout and design of new development.

Decarbonising transport is a key element of the National Mitigation Plan (NMP) (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2017). The plan includes thirty measures relating to the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, sustainable settlement planning, the use of alternative fuels to diesel and petrol, and the use of intelligent automatic transport systems. The Climate Action Plan to Tackle Climate Breakdown (Department of Communications, Natural Resource and Climate Action, 2019) addresses transport and includes 29 actions relating to alternative fuels, public transport, active travel and emission reduction generally.

The Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was adopted in 2019 and includes transport related goals relating to the integration of land use with transport in development plans, EV infrastructure, and factoring extreme weather resilience in the design and maintenance of transport infrastructure in the county.

The Planning Authority will, inter alia:

- Ensure that land use patterns and transport systems are integrated and that development occurs in a compact manner so that journey distance is reduced and walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised.

- Facilitate the shift to new environmentally friendly technology and away from greenhouse gas generating vehicles.
- Integrate green infrastructure and SUDS into existing and new streets and roads.
- Ensure that new transport infrastructure is resilient to climate change and that existing transport infrastructure is protected from the effects of climate change such as increased erosion and increased storminess and storm surges.

## 8.3 Policy Context

### 8.3.1 National Transport Policy and Guidelines

NSO 4 of the NPF specifically relates to Sustainable Transport. NSO 1 Compact Growth, NSO 2 Regional Accessibility, NSO 6 High Quality International Connectivity and NSO 8 Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society also relate directly to transportation. The National Development Plan 2018 -2027 sets out of national investment priorities including transport infrastructure. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS) are currently preparing a 'Planning and Land Use Transportation Outlook' which will provide the long term strategy for this investment. This document is expected to be published late in 2020.

'Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020' sets out the Government's goals to reduce overall demand for travel, maximise efficiency of the transport network, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, reduce emissions and improve access to transport and quality of life. DTTS is currently undertaking a review to produce a policy document to succeed the Smarter Travel 2009-2020 initiative. DTTS and other agencies such as the National Transport Agency (NTA) have issued a range of strategies and guidance relating to sustainable transport including that relating to Alternative Fuels Infrastructure (2017), Permeability (2015), and the National Cycling Manual (2013).

The Programme for Government 2020 contains extensive commitments in support of sustainable transport.

DMURS provides guidance on how the objectives of sustainability may be achieved by design in urban areas. DMURS also contains detailed guidance on designing attractive

and safe roads and streets and on technical aspects including sightlines within the 60kmh zone. Outside of the 60kmh zone guidance on sightlines is provided in Rural Road Link Design; Geometric Design of Junctions 2017/2019.

The Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) provide guidance on how national roads should be dealt with in development plans, local area plans and planning applications. Other guidelines directly related to transport include Area Based Transport Assessment - Guidance Notes (Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), 2018) which deal with the assessment of traffic generation resulting from specific types of development and locations, the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (TII, 2014) and the guidance on Road Safety Audits (TII 2017).

### 8.3.2 Draft Marine Planning Framework

The Draft Marine Planning Framework contains policies and objectives relating the function and development of the Country's ports and harbours and marine transport, including Rosslare Europort.

### 8.3.3 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

Transport considerations are integral to the RSES. Strategy Statement 4 for the region is 'Transforming our transport systems towards well-functioning, sustainable integrated public transport, walking and cycling and electric vehicles.' Chapter 6 of the RSES addresses digital and physical connectivity, and includes a Regional Transport Strategy. The Strategy has 36 RPOs including those relating to international connectivity (RPO 139, RPO 140), preparation of Regional Freight Strategy (RPO 141), Ports (RPO 142-RPO147), the integration of planning and transport (RPO 151, RPO 154) and a range of policies and actions for local authorities under local planning objectives (RPO 152).

RPO 157 requires local authorities to prepare Local Transport Plans for key settlements based on the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes produced by TII and NTA. RPO 158 commits to seeking investment for intra-regional rural connectivity including rural public transport which are seen as 'life lines' and RPO 159 seeks investment to ensure that transportation networks are accessible to

all and are socially inclusive. RPO 160 contains ten sub-objectives relating to Smart and Sustainable mobility and RPO 163 relates to Sustainable Mobility Targets and requires local authorities to set targets for modal shift in their development plans. RPO 176 introduces the concept of the '10-minute town' whereby a range of services and uses are accessible in short walking and cycling distances from homes or are accessible by high quality public transport.

Of particular relevance to County Wexford, the RSES contains policies and objectives which promote an Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). Key Enabler Number 1 of the RSES is 'Connecting our Region – enhanced infrastructure from North to South and East Coast to West Coast, connecting to the Atlantic Economic Corridor and developing an extended Eastern Economic Corridor to Rosslare Europort'. The EEC is further developed throughout the strategy including objectives RPO 30 (Drivers of Growth), Section 4.4 Economic Engines and RPO 42 (Economic Growth), RPO 140 (International Connectivity) and RPO 166 (Investment in Multi-modal Connectivity). The RSES also contains extensive referencing and support for Rosslare Europort including RPO 146 and the achievement of Tier 1 status for the Port (RPO 142). Specific strategic road and rail improvements and projects in County Wexford are also supported in the Strategy.

## 8.4 Sustainable Transport Strategy

### 8.4.1 Goal

The goal of the Council is to reduce overall travel demand and achieve a modal shift through land use planning, optimising opportunities to make sustainable travel choices, providing a high quality transport network and system which is effective, accessible and responsive to technological change and to reduce the contribution of transport to climate change.

### 8.4.2 Strategy:

The Council will achieve its goal through the following key measures:

- Reducing demand for travel by integrating land use planning and transport

planning and ensuring that new development is compact and connected and located in proximity to existing services and employers and/or at locations with the highest levels of accessibility for public transport and optimises the potential for sustainable modes such as walking and cycling.

- Prioritising sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling by ensuring that the development of our towns and villages and the respective route networks are designed in a manner which is permeable, attractive and safe for those users.
- Reducing the carbon generated by the movement of people and goods by prioritising the development of appropriate infrastructure such as public transport, rail freight, cycle paths, electric vehicles etc.
- Ensuring that international, national and regional connectivity is developed to adequately serve the needs of the people and economy and ensuring that transport infrastructure and services for all modes of travel is enhanced on the Eastern Economic Corridor from Belfast to Dublin to Rosslare Europort including Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford.
- Preparing Local Transport Plans for the towns of Wexford, Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross.
- Setting standards to ensure that development takes place in a manner which is efficient, sustainable, safe and universally accessible and requiring that infrastructure is incorporated in new developments to accommodate alternative fuels to diesel and petrol.
- Responding in a pro-active and collaborative matter to ensure that the county is ready for, and can fully benefit from, technological changes in transport including in the provision of Electric and other alternative fuels infrastructure.

The sections and objectives in this chapter have generally been laid out in terms of user categories (public transport etc.) or infrastructure type, however in many cases these users occupy the same space on both the strategic network and at street level. Therefore, the strategic elements of the network, the achievement of a modal shift on all routes and the design of urban roads and streets are briefly dealt with before the individual users and infrastructures type.

### 8.4.3 Our Transport Network

Effective connectivity to, from and within the county is essential if County Wexford is to retain and strengthen its economic competitiveness, ability to attract inward investment and its attractiveness as a tourism destination. The Council is committed to enhancing the county's international, national, regional and local connectivity.

The network hierarchy is comprised of our key international and national routes, including elements of the Trans European Network (TEN-T), our intra-regional routes, our intra-county regional and county routes and our urban roads and streets. Wexford also has the significant advantage of having a connection to the UK and continental Europe via Rosslare Europort and it has a port at New Ross Town for handling bulk liquids and a number of harbours throughout the county. The Council is currently adding to our sustainable network through the development of a series of greenways, trails and blueways.

Figure 8-1 illustrates the strategic elements of the route network of County Wexford. These are the primary routes for travel out of the county, between the main towns in the county and cross sea travel. On these routes there are multiple elements, e.g. at the top of the hierarchy, the TEN-T network contains roads, rail and ports and multiple users/uses such as cars, public transport and freight. At this level in the hierarchy the 'movement function' of the route is critical.

**Figure 8-1 Strategic Transportation Network**



The development of both the transport and economic functions of the EEC is seen as crucial to balanced regional development in both the RSES for the Southern Region and that of the Eastern and Midlands Region. The corridor extends from Belfast to Rosslare Harbour via Dublin, Wicklow, Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford towns. The RSES for the Southern Region mentions that the EEC links to New Ross and onward to the rest of the Southern Region completing the connection to the Atlantic Economic Corridor in the west.

At the other end of the hierarchy, urban roads and streets accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars. On these routes the 'place' function of the route becomes more important as we try to create conditions to encourage use of sustainable modes and attractive environments. This element of the network offers the most potential to positively influence travel behaviour and create opportunities to facilitate sustainable transport choices while at the same time making attractive places to live and visit.

In order to ensure that land use and transport is appropriately planned for at this level, the RSES introduced a requirement to prepare Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for Key Towns and main settlements. LTPs will assess existing and potential transport systems and networks in the towns to inform Council decision making on zoning, future transport networks and infrastructure investment.

#### 8.4.4 Modal Shift

The benefits to society as a whole associated with this shift include:

- Reduced adverse environmental impacts from emissions including greenhouse gases.
- Physical and mental health benefits associated with walking and cycling.
- Town and village environments which are safer, quieter, and more attractive generally.
- Benefits for economic competitiveness from reduced congestion.

Achieving a major modal shift to more sustainable transport modes will be a substantial challenge, given that the county has and will continue to have a significant

proportion of its population living in areas where it is difficult to undertake many journeys by public transport or by walking or cycling. In such areas many people are reliant on private cars. Business activity will also continue to be heavily dependent on private vehicular transport. Notwithstanding this, the Council believes that progress in promoting sustainable transport throughout the whole county can and must be made, however incremental in the short term, and this chapter sets out the objectives through which this may be achieved in rural as well as urban areas.

RPO 163 of the RSES reflects existing and emerging national policy in proposing that targets are set in development plans, local area plans and local transport plans to increase the share of journeys undertaken by sustainable transport.

Achieving significant modal shift is dependent on a wide range of factors, much of which is outside the remit of the Council such as national economic performance, Government investment in sustainable transport infrastructure and school and private bus service provision. Notwithstanding this, Tables 8-1 to 8-10 contain ambitious targets for travel to work and to school. These targets will be reviewed as part of the LTP process for the four main towns.

**Table 8-1 Travel to Work - County Aggregate (%)**

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	93.4	6.6
<b>Target 2027</b>	90	10

**Table 8-2 Travel to Work – Wexford Town (%)**

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	75.6	24.4
<b>Target 2027</b>	70	30



Table 8-3 Travel to Work – Gorey Town (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	76.8	23.2
<b>Target 2027</b>	70	30

Table 8-4 Travel to Work – Enniscorthy Town (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	79.3	20.7
<b>Target 2027</b>	70	30

Table 8-5 Travel to Work – New Ross Town (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	80.7	19.3
<b>Target 2027</b>	70	30

Table 8-6 Travel to School – County Aggregate (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	62.4	38.6
<b>Target 2027</b>	55	45

Table 8-7 Travel to School – Wexford Town (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	57.9	42.1
<b>Target 2027</b>	49	51

Table 8-8 Travel to School – Gorey Town (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	54.5	45.5
<b>Target 2027</b>	49	51

Table 8-9 Travel to School – Enniscorthy Town (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	50	50
<b>Target 2027</b>	45	55

Table 8-10 Travel to School – New Ross Town (%)

Year	Private car/motorbike	Public transport/walking /cycling
<b>Baseline 2016</b>	56.6	43.4
<b>Target 2027</b>	49	51

### 8.4.5 Design of Urban Roads and Streets

The guidelines set out in DMURS must be applied by the Council in relation to all urban roads and streets, that is, streets and roads with a speed limit of 60 kmh or less<sup>1</sup>. The Manual recognises the importance of assigning higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, without unduly compromising vehicle movement in order to create secure, connected places that work for all members of the community. We have moved from thinking of roads as primarily for use by vehicles to places for use and movement of all users in accordance with this prioritisation.

The Manual recognises that a broad range of place-based measures such as built form, landscaping and levels of pedestrian and cyclist activity, as well as more conventional road design measures, will need to be taken into account in designing

<sup>1</sup> Except: (a) Motorways (b) In exceptional circumstances, certain urban roads and streets with the written consent of the sanctioning authority, being either Transport Infrastructure Ireland or the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport respectively.

these roads and streets. New street and road design must put primary emphasis on creating attractive places which are accessible by all and which serve their movement function.

The Manual recognises a hierarchy of routes and sets out the function of the main types of routes (Arterial, Link and Local) and to ensure that they are designed in a manner which will balance their respective 'movement' and 'place' functions<sup>2</sup>.

It is vital that roads and streets are designed in a manner which ensures that they can be easily used by all. Road design must consider the ease of movement and safety of all users including wheelchair users, persons with mobility issues, persons with visual impairments, older people and people with pushchairs. The design response may include visual and textured differentiation, use of appropriate gradients and levels and technological solutions. In designing developments it should be ensured that accessibility is considered 'end to end', that is, from the door of the accessible dwelling through to parking, street, public realm and destination buildings.

The Manual promotes a design approach which seeks to create self-enforcing low speed environments in urban areas. In terms of road safety, the speed at which drivers travel is principally influenced by the characteristics of the street environment. Integrated design approaches incorporate elements that instinctively alter behaviour thus reducing the need for more conventional measures. The Manual sets out<sup>3</sup> a matrix of appropriate design speeds which reflect the road type and context (e.g. local road, town centre or suburban) and user priority. Particular attention must be given to junction design. All junctions must meet DMURS standards and there will be a presumption against roundabouts in favour of standard junctions.

Further detail is provided on the design of street networks, the main types of routes, the design of roads and streets in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages and Volume 2 Development Management Manual. Technical information such as the specification for road types, design speeds and surfaces, visibility and splays, alignment curvature and deflections and parking is contained in the Manual and the technical Appendices.

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<sup>2</sup> See Section 5.9 in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Town and Villages for further detail in this regard.

<sup>3</sup> DMURS, Table 4.1, Page 64

## Strategic Transport Objectives

### Objective TS01

To implement the principles and objectives of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Street (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Department of the Environment Community and Local Government, 2013 and 2019) and the Spatial Planning and National Roads, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012) and the National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022 and the other guidance listed in Section 8.3 Policy Context and any updated version of these documents.

### Objective TS02

To minimise the generation of greenhouse gases by the transport sector using the avoid-shift-improve principle and by effectively integrating land use and transport planning through:

- The Core and Settlement Strategy of the Plan;
- Implementation of the 10 Minute Town concept;
- Prioritising the development of lands within or contiguous to the existing urban areas, which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport;
- Directing larger scale trip intensive developments into locations which are highly accessible by sustainable transport modes and direct uses such as office and retail into central locations ensuring there is integration between various sustainable transport infrastructure, especially in developing connections between active travel, rail and bus; and
- Consolidating and intensifying residential and employment development in a manner which renders it serviceable by public transport and ensures that it is highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

### Objective TS03

To strengthen the county's regional, national and international connectivity by all transport modes.

**Objective TS04**

To seek investment in and secure the development of the TEN-T network to include the extension of the Belfast – Dublin corridor to Rosslare Europort ensuring the integrated development of the Eastern Economic Corridor.

**Objective TS05**

To develop and support the development of enhanced multimodal transport infrastructure and services, including rail, on the Eastern Economic Corridor, which runs from Belfast to Rosslare Europort via Dublin, Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford Town and has strong links to the Southern Region and the Atlantic Economic Corridor via New Ross.

**Objective TS06**

To support actions which will transition ports, freight and all transport modes towards a low carbon future, including by enhanced rail infrastructure and services.

**Objective TS07**

To plan for the appropriate development of all aspects of the transport network for all modes and to ensure that the design and investment decisions prioritise sustainable transport modes.

**Objective TS08**

To prepare Local Transport Plans in accordance with the Area Based Transport Assessment Guidelines (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2018) for Wexford, Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross towns and their hinterlands.

**Objective TS09**

To seek to achieve a modal shift from greenhouse gas generating vehicles to sustainable modes in accordance with the targets in Table 8-1 to Table 8-10. These targets will be further developed in the local area plans and local transport plans

for Wexford, Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross towns. The Council will monitor and review these targets over the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

### Objective TS10

To support and enable the integration of transport modes including development at public transport interchanges and transport hubs in the main towns to facilitate transitions between different modes of transport.

### Objective TS11

To ensure that streets and roads, public transport facilities and interfaces are designed to be universally accessible. The design of streets and roads, transport facilities and networks shall ensure that accessibility is considered 'end to end', that is, from the door of an accessible dwelling through to parking, street, public realm and the destination building.

### Objective TS12

To promote sustainable transport in rural areas of the county through promoting compact growth in villages, working with public transport providers to facilitate better services and necessary supporting infrastructure, providing for safe and convenient walking and cycling through the provision of footpaths, street lights, crossing points and in traffic management including the setting of speed limits and promotion of considerate driving.

### Objective TS13

To assign 'route types' (Arterial, Link, Local) which indicate the 'movement' function of routes in the 'route hierarchy' when preparing local area plans. The design<sup>4</sup> of the development and streets shall be appropriate to the 'movement' function and 'place' function of the route<sup>5</sup>.

### Objective TS14

In areas where there is no local area plan with an assigned 'route hierarchy' in place,

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<sup>4</sup> Building heights, route width, pedestrian and cycling facilities, SUDS etc.

<sup>5</sup> See section 5.9 in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Town and Villages for further detail in this regard.

the applicant should:

- Consult with the Planning Authority to seek advice on the envisaged route functions in the scheme.
- Assign a 'route hierarchy' and 'route types' (Arterial, Link, Local) at an early stage in the design process and ensure that the scheme design reflects the respective 'movement' and 'place' function.

In assessing planning applications in such areas the Planning Authority will ensure that roads and streets are designed<sup>6</sup> in accordance with their 'movement' and 'place' functions<sup>7</sup>.

### Objective TS15

To adopt a presumption in favour of an 'Open Route Network' in all developments. The design may then be refined to incorporate filtered permeability networks and/or three way-off set networks where there are clear benefits in terms of prioritising more sustainable modes of transport and improving safety. Proposals for new development (including new residential development in urban areas) shall not include dendritic street networks which place heavy restrictions on movement.

### Objective TS16

To ensure that all urban roads and streets<sup>8</sup> in our towns and villages, including residential streets and housing estates, are designed in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (2013/2019) and any updated version of the Manual, and the TII document 'Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' where relevant in order to<sup>9</sup>:

- provide safe and convenient infrastructure for walking and cycling.
- ensure that all streets and route networks are designed to balance the needs of place and movement.
- ensure that roads and streets, including their landscaping, street furniture and lighting, function as attractive, fully accessible and safe places.

<sup>6</sup> Building heights, route width, pedestrian and cycling facilities, SuDS etc.

<sup>7</sup> See Section 5.9 in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages for further detail in this regard.

<sup>8</sup> i.e. Streets and roads with a speed limit of 60 kmh or less and new development in towns and villages where such limits will apply in the future, subject to the exceptions outlined above.

<sup>9</sup> See section 5.9 in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Town and Villages for further detail in this regard.

- passively calm traffic through the creation of self-regulating street environments, particularly in sensitive areas and where vulnerable users are present and to impose speed limits which are reflective of the context and function of the road.
- create roads and street networks which are easily permeable by active travel modes and to support appropriately designed and safe measures which improve the permeability of existing street layouts.
- facilitate accessible, convenient, attractive and user friendly public transport infrastructure in appropriate locations.
- ensure that roads and streets and cycling and walking networks can adapt to climate change and as appropriate can accommodate green infrastructure and biodiversity networks.

Where possible retrofitting modifications of existing roads and streets shall be undertaken to achieve the goals of this objective.

Where amendments or extensions are being proposed to existing schemes they shall also be consistent with the Manual.

### Objective TS17

To ensure that any signage on public roads, footpaths or cycle paths shall not cause an obstruction to any transport user.

### Objective TS18

To respond in a pro-active and collaborative manner to ensure that County Wexford is ready for, and can fully benefit from, technological changes in transport including the provision of electric and other alternative fuels.

### Objective TS19

To ensure that Traffic and Transport Assessments, Mobility Management Plans, Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Impact Assessments are carried out in accordance with the requirements of Section 8.10 of this chapter and Section 6.2 of Volume 2 Development Management Manual to inform planning decisions and local authority own development including road and transport infrastructure development.



### Objective TS20

To support the creation of new edge of town transportation hubs connected to the National Bus routes providing park and ride, park and cycle and park and walk transport interchanges for the four main settlements.

### Objective TS21

To ensure that new transport infrastructure developed by the Council incorporates appropriate green infrastructure and functions as a biodiversity corridor and ensure that these elements are integrated into the proposals of other transport network providers.

## 8.5 Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling are the transport modes which have the least adverse environmental impacts and the most health and public realm benefits for society as a whole. The Council will, in the exercise of its functions in land use planning, development management and the management and provision of road and street infrastructure, facilitate and promote convenient, pleasant and safe walking and cycling in urban and rural areas by:

- promoting compact development in towns and villages at the appropriate locations and at the appropriate density.
- applying the principles, approaches and standards of DMURS and other relevant design Guidance and strategies to facilitate and promote walking and cycling.
- promoting street networks which are fully permeable to pedestrians and cyclists.
- giving full consideration to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in road and street management measures including the provision of footpaths, street lighting, cycling infrastructure, crossings and the setting of speed limits.
- preparing local transport plans for the four main towns to inform zoning decisions and the development of walking and cycling networks.

- working with significant trip generators such as schools and major employers to improve access by walking and cycling.

The Council will have regard to Government policy and guidance including the Permeability Best Practice Guide (National Transport Authority, 2013), the National Cycle Policy Framework (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2013) and the National Cycle Manual (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2011) and any updated or new policy or guidance issued during the life of this Plan.

Improvements in e-bike technology has the potential to encourage more cycling, particularly in the hillier parts of the county. The Council supports the Toolkit for School Travel (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, National Transport Authority, Green Schools/ An Taisce, 2013 ) which promotes cycling and walking for trips to school and will seek to provide and facilitate the provision of safe routes to school.

Both walking and cycling are popular fitness / leisure activities and have the potential to deliver tourism growth. The Council supports the Get Ireland Walking Strategy (Sports Ireland) and other initiatives such as Slí Na Slainte, and has been proactive in developing the Eurovelo cycling route which follows the Norman Way heritage route. The Council has also been at the forefront of cycling safety with the 'Stayin' Alive at 1.5' campaign.

Greenways facilitate walkers and cyclists and the completion of the N/M11 and N25 national road schemes may allow opportunities for the provision of safe cycling and walking on existing national roads to be by-passed. Objectives relating to fitness, leisure and tourism aspects of walking and cycling are included in Chapter 7 Tourism Development and Chapter 14 Recreation and Open Space Strategy.

The Council will prepare strategies for walking and cycling in the county to inform and co-ordinate the development of the necessary accessible infrastructure to facilitate and encourage more walking and cycling for both everyday transport and leisure purposes.

## Walking and Cycling Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TS22

To prepare a Walking Strategy for the county to inform the development and co-ordination of the necessary accessible infrastructure to facilitate and encourage more walking for both everyday transport and leisure purposes.

### Objective TS23

To prepare a Cycling Strategy for the county to inform the development and co-ordination of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate and encourage more cycling for both everyday transport and leisure purposes.

### Objective TS24

To implement the Core and Settlement strategies of this Plan to encourage population growth in towns and villages where people can more easily undertake journeys on foot or by bicycle. Within towns and villages, residential and other developments will be encouraged at appropriate locations and at the appropriate density to facilitate walking and cycling. Local transport plans will inform decision making on land use zoning, walking and cycling networks and the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure in the four main towns and linkages to the towns from their hinterlands.

### Objective TS25

The design of new developments, streets and street networks shall be in accordance with DMURS and the TII document 'Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' where relevant and shall recognise the importance of assigning higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists and ensure that they are fully permeable by pedestrians and cyclists. Where practical, new developments should integrate fully with existing roads and streets to facilitate permeability. Proposed modifications to existing roads and streets shall also have regard to these guidance documents. Scheme designs shall also have regard to the Permeability Best Practice Guide (NTA, 2015), other Government guidance and advice as may be updated, Chapter 5 of this Plan and the development management guidance in Volume 2.

### Objective TS26

To protect existing and provide new safe linkages in existing developments and street patterns where such linkages improve permeability by walking and cycling. The delivery of retrospective links should, where possible, be made in conjunction with the provision of additional amenity space to make the links open and attractive.

### Objective TS27

To maintain, improve and provide appropriately designed and universally accessible infrastructure (including by mobility scooters) for walking and cycling in urban and rural areas of the county as resources allow (including footpaths, cycle paths, pedestrian crossings, dropped kerbs, road surfaces, cycle parking, junction designs and street lighting). There shall be a clear preference for cycleways to be segregated where possible. As far as reasonably possible, the design of future roundabouts will be 'Dutch style' roundabouts with priority cycle lanes and pedestrian ways. In undertaking traffic management schemes the Council will ensure that they facilitate convenient, pleasant and safe cycling and walking in towns, villages and rural areas. Trials may be undertaken to establish the practicalities of new infrastructure and modifications to roads and streets.

### Objective TS28

To require Travel Plans for workplaces and schools in accordance with Section 6.2.4 of Volume 2 Development Management Manual to promote and facilitate safe and convenient access by walking and cycling and to work and engage with existing significant trip generators to the same end.

### Objective TS29

To provide cycling and walking routes as resources allow within and between settlements, and between settlements and rural trip generators (including places of employment, sports facilities, tourism assets including greenways and other amenities). The Council will provide a cycle way, segregated where possible, between County Wicklow, Gorey, Camolin, Ferns and Enniscorthy, with a view to extending this cycle

way towards Rosslare Europort and New Ross. The provision of such cycling and walking routes shall be subject to the protection of habitats, environment, amenity and heritage and Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirement of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SACs and SPAs. Green infrastructure and sustainable drainage shall be designed into such routes where possible.

### Objective TS30

To support the work of schools and community groups in the development of initiatives which facilitate and encourage walking and cycling.

## 8.6 Public Transport

The availability of public transport is critical to reduce per capita carbon emissions by minimising the number of individual car-based journeys. It is also an essential service for people who do not have access to a private car. The provision of public transport services is critical to the sustainable development of smaller towns, villages and rural areas and to regional, national and international connectivity.

The Council does not directly provide public transport services but can influence the effectiveness, viability, attractiveness and sustainability of bus, rail and taxi services through:

- ensuring that development takes place in locations which can be served by existing and potential new public transport networks.
- ensuring that land in proximity to existing and potential public transport facilities and routes is developed to an optimum scale and density so that enhanced public transport services are viable.
- enabling the necessary infrastructure for users and operators of public transport and protecting public transport infrastructure from development which may impede its future use and development.
- planning for the integration of public transport services and networks with other means of transport.

Public transport considerations will be central to the local transport plans, which will be informed by consultations with operators and will examine existing and possible future public transport provision and required infrastructure.

The DTTS Sustainable Mobility Review (2020) is examining future government transport policy in Ireland, including public transport provision in rural areas. The Council will act where it can to implement any policy changes, guidance and actions which emerge from this review.

### 8.6.1 Rail

Rail travel can have significant advantages as a sustainable transport mode. However, ineffective infrastructure and operations combined with the comparative ease of using road based passenger or freight journeys, has meant that the use of rail services in the county has been in long term decline.

The Rosslare – Dublin line is currently the only operating rail route in the county. The Rail Review 2016 Report (NTA, 2016) suggested that part of the line, including that between Gorey and Rosslare, was not financially viable in the long term. However, the Council considers that the review did not address the potential of the line to meet future travel demands or sustainable transport policy objectives which have been significantly strengthened in the more recent NPF and Climate Action strategies. The line is also a key element of the EEC and has the potential to perform an enhanced role in the development of sustainable tourism growth in the county. The Council will therefore continue to resist any proposals to further reduce or close services on any part of the line and will work to support ideas and proposals which would enhance its potential for growth in use.

The RSES supports the use of disused railway lines as greenways but requires that the use of the Rosslare-Waterford line does not prejudice the reintroduction of rail services on the line due to the important role it plays in connecting Rosslare Europort to the rest of the Southern Region. With appropriate upgrades the lines have potential to link significant populations in the south of the county and to carry freight and passengers from Rosslare Europort to the Waterford City Region, the growth of which is envisaged in the NPF.

There is clear potential for freight services to make better use of railway infrastructure. The importance of Rosslare-Europort for the country as a whole is likely to increase as a consequence of the departure of the UK from the European Union. The provision of enhanced rail freight handling infrastructure is supported by the Council as is the proposed Regional Freight Strategy proposed in the RSES.

### 8.6.2 Bus

There are currently extensive bus services on the Wexford, Enniscorthy and Gorey to Dublin/Dublin airport route, and less frequent inter-county services on other routes, including services to/from New Ross and Bunclody and serving Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow. Services are provided by both public and private operators.

Bus Éireann, Wexford Bus and Local Link also provide services in rural areas of the county and Wexford Bus provides a town service in Wexford Town.

The Local Link service, funded under the Rural Transport Programme, and managed locally on behalf of the National Transport Authority, links many of the smaller settlements and rural areas around the county. The services range from door to door, scheduled weekly, daily and evening services through to full seven day commuter services. The services are contracted to private operators. For rural communities, these services provide access to urban services and play a vital role in addressing social isolation.

There is a network of school bus services serving rural areas in the county and these services help to reduce congestion from private vehicle use for drop-off and collection.

### 8.6.3 Taxi

The Council acknowledges and supports the role of taxis as a flexible public transport service. Taxi services are vital for the many people who may not have ready access to private cars and for the evening economy.

### 8.6.4 Park and Ride

Park and ride facilities provide an opportunity to act as a bridge between private cars

and public transport and have the potential to reduce congestion in central areas and wasteful use of central areas for parking. They are of particular use for people who cannot make the first part of their journey by public transport due to remoteness or scheduling of services. They can accommodate both commuters and shoppers whose journey may originate within the specific towns or people from rural areas.

### 8.6.5 Transport Sharing

Car and bike/scooter sharing services form part of the public transport system in other towns and cities nationally and internationally and the Council will work with operators to enable the possible future establishment and effective management of such services.

### Public Transport Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective TS31

To support and promote bus, rail and taxi public transport services in the county in line with existing and emerging Government policy.

#### Objective TS32

To implement the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy which prioritises population growth and development in towns and villages where it can be served by effective, convenient and economically viable bus and rail public transport services. Within those settlements, the Council will ensure that development takes place at appropriate locations and densities where they are most accessible by sustainable modes and along public transport corridors.

#### Objective TS33

To support national transport agencies in delivering appropriate improvements to the public transport network and to facilitate proposals, including infrastructure



developments, which provide for new public transport services and enhance the quality, frequency and speed of existing train and bus public transport services.

### Objective TS34

To support and facilitate the provision of infrastructure serving public transport including, but not limited to, new transport mode-interchanges, bus and rail stations, bus shelters, adequate bus parking, bus lanes, car parking facilities, taxi ranks and cycle parking and lanes. Such facilities will be supported, particularly in settlements on and in proximity to national routes, where they:

- Facilitate universal access;
- Promote the effectiveness and viability of services;
- Promote the convenience and attractiveness of public transport for all sections of the community;
- Allow for efficient integration between different transport modes;
- Connect key locations such as tourism assets, leisure and recreational destinations; and
- Provide appropriate and sensitive parking and infrastructure for all modes at tourism and amenity sites.

### Objective TS35

To facilitate and encourage measures which will increase usage of railway services including car parking facilities, integration of public transport, provision of taxi ranks and improvements to railway stations and measures to incorporate access for all.

### Objective TS36

To ensure the provision of public transport stops and routes are co-ordinated with developments through liaising with public transport providers and co-ordinators including Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann, Wexford Link and private operators.

### Objective TS37

To strictly control development proposals that would adversely affect the effectiveness, safety, viability and convenience of bus and rail public transport services including:

- The protection of lands adjacent to railway lines and stations against encroachment by inappropriate uses that could compromise the long-term development of the rail facility
- Prohibiting development that would impact on the safe operation of current and future rail services.

### Objective TS38

To promote and support proposals for physical improvement works which would enhance the effectiveness and viability of the Rosslare – Dublin railway line as a sustainable transport choice. Such improvements include:

- Improvements to the line's infrastructure which would result in increases to the frequency and speed of services;
- Electrification of the service;
- The provision or re-opening of new stations in the county;
- Better integration with other transport modes, including integration with any expanded DART and LUAS services in South Dublin / County Wicklow;
- Works which improve passenger comfort, convenience and accessibility; and
- Works to reduce the risk of coastal erosion and other damage affecting the viability of the line.

### Objective TS39

To promote and support the development of rail freight services and support the development of the necessary infrastructure for rail freight services at appropriate locations in accordance with the Regional Freight Strategy to be prepared under the RSES.

### Objective TS40

To promote and facilitate the provision of bus passenger waiting facilities including the provision of accessible and age-friendly bus shelters. The use of pollinator-friendly bus shelters will be encouraged.

### Objective TS41

To examine the feasibility of reopening the disused Rosslare Europort to Waterford Railway as a sustainable transport corridor which would accommodate a reopened passenger and freight line and a greenway for active travel and amenity use. The Council will seek appropriate funding to facilitate the development of this important corridor between Rosslare Europort and Belview and Waterford MASP.

## 8.7 Roads

The Council recognises that, while other forms of transport perform better in terms of sustainability and carbon emissions, an effective road network for cars and commercial vehicles is essential. The county's rural populations and businesses will continue to be significantly reliant on private vehicular transport and the road network.

In towns and villages, in order to optimise the environmental and social benefits from a modal shift towards walking, cycling and public transport, the Council will apply the principles, approaches and standards of DMURS<sup>10</sup> in the management of the road and streets network, and will give consideration to other measures influencing the use of motor vehicles including reviews of existing and proposed parking provision, restricting car access on certain streets by cars and the possible designation of low emission zones as referred to in the Climate Action Plan. In this regard however, the Council will be conscious of the need to avoid creating significant traffic congestion, to avoid undue adverse impacts on residents and businesses and to facilitate appropriate access for people with disabilities.

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<sup>10</sup> See Section 5.9 Connected Places and Design of Streets in Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages

Local transport plans will include assessments of the effectiveness of the existing road network and may recommend that appropriately designed new road links are provided, where such links would also facilitate sustainable transport modes and would contribute to improved permeability, emissions reduction and improve place making.

The Council has established an EV working group and will work with developers and relevant infrastructure providers to ensure that the residents and businesses of the county can successfully switch from petrol and diesel fuel sources as envisaged in national policy.

The recent completion of the N25 New Ross by-pass, the M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy to Oilgate and the N30 Enniscorthy to Davidstown have significantly improved inter-connectivity with the rest of the Southern region and the country as a whole, including for bus services. Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross should greatly benefit from the diversion of through-traffic and greater opportunity now exists for improvements to the public realm and for sustainable transportation in these towns. Facilitating better national road access to Rosslare Europort for freight and other traffic is also of great importance to the economy of the county, region and country as a whole and such improved access should also reduce the social, environmental and financial costs of congestion affecting settlements on the current route.

On national, regional and local roads and in towns and villages, the Council will facilitate and carry out work that will improve the safety, efficiency and, where appropriate, capacity of the network. The Council supports the principles and aspirations of the Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020 (Road Safety Authority, 2013) and will implement the recommendations of a new Road Safety Strategy to be prepared by the RSA in 2021 to succeed the 2013-2020 strategy.

Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTA), including mobility management plans, will be sought, where necessary, to inform planning decisions on developments which have the potential to create significant additional demands on the road network. Road Safety Impact Assessments (RSIA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA) shall also be sought where appropriate to inform planning decisions (see Section 8.10 of this chapter). The application of DMURS in road design will also control speed by altering driver behaviour using built form and road and street layout.

The Council will ensure that the road network is designed to balance the needs of all users, placing pedestrians, cyclists and public transport at the top of the hierarchy of users. In this regard, the Council will ensure as far as reasonably possible that future roundabouts are 'Dutch-style' roundabouts with priority cycle lanes and pedestrian ways.

The NMP promotes the use of alternative fuels to diesel and petrol to reduce overall carbon emissions and improve air quality. The Government policy document 'Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 to 2030' (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2017) sets out measures to achieve the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the use of these fuels. Many of the alternative fuel sources could use existing infrastructure (e.g. at existing petrol filling stations).

## General Roads Objectives

It is the objective the Council:

### Objective TS42

To provide and maintain a safe, efficient and sustainable roads network in the county, to secure improvements to the road network and to balance the needs of all users placing pedestrians, cyclists and public transport at the top of the hierarchy of users.

### Objective TS43

To ensure that the public safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, has the highest priority in the design of development and vehicular access points and in the exercise of traffic management functions. Road Safety Impact Assessments, Road Safety Audits and other road safety reports shall be sought where appropriate to inform planning decisions<sup>11</sup>.

### Objective TS44

To apply the principles, approaches and standards of DMURS and other Government Guidance and advice as may be updated, in the design and management of road and street networks and hierarchies in towns and villages.

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<sup>11</sup> See Section 8.10 Traffic and Transport Assessments, Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Impact Assessments of this chapter.

### Objective TS45

To review current and new car parking provision, to consider restricting motor vehicle access on certain roads and streets and to consider the designation of low emission zones where such measures would promote sustainable transport modes and would have wider environmental and social benefits having regard to the need to avoid creating significant traffic congestion and undue adverse impacts on residents and commercial activity and to facilitate appropriate access for people with disabilities.

### Objective TS46

To ensure that all developments are appropriately located having regard to the principles of sustainable development and the provision of an effective road network. A Traffic and Transport Assessment, prepared in accordance with the relevant national guidelines for such shall be sought where appropriate to inform planning decisions.

### Objective TS47

To require all developments to make appropriate provision for safe access and arrangements for servicing and deliveries, having regard to:

- the nature and location of the development;
- priority for sustainable transport choices including public transport, walking and cycling;
- effective surface water management;
- amenity of adjoining uses; and
- Volume 2 Development Management Manual

### Objective TS48

To require the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electric vehicles in new developments and on existing streets and to facilitate charging infrastructure on existing roads and streets, buildings, car-parks and at tourism sites in positions which give due consideration to other users of pavements and roads.

### Objective TS49

To ensure all new car parks and expansion of car parks provide 20% of the spaces with electric vehicle charging points and provide culverts and infrastructure to “drop in” new charging points.

### Objective TS50

To facilitate the development of infrastructure for the full range of sustainable alternative fuels at existing service stations and other locations subject to fire safety standards and normal planning and environmental considerations.

### Objective TS51

To support the implementation of national policy and guidance on the installation of infrastructure necessary to facilitate autonomous vehicles.

### Objective TS52

To ensure that proposals for new and/or enlarged service areas, service stations and truck parking facilities on the roads network are located and designed in accordance with the relevant national guidelines. Such guidelines include the Spatial Planning and National Roads, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012), Service Area Policy (National Roads Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2014), and Retail Planning - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012).

### Objective TS53

To provide for effective directional signage for all users of roads and streets and to strictly control other signage and advertising on the road network in the interests of public safety and amenity having regard to:

- Spatial Planning and National Roads, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012);

- the National Roads Authority's policy statement on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads (March 2011); and
- any updated versions of these documents.

#### Objective TS54

To ensure that the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations SI 140 of 2006 and the objectives of Wexford County Council's Noise Action Plan (2019) are taken account of in the assessment of relevant planning applications, and zoning of land and that appropriate noise mitigation measures are incorporated into development design.

#### Objective TS55

To encourage the use of road corridors, including national road corridors as green infrastructure networks and to encourage roads infrastructure design which maximises opportunities for biodiversity.

#### Objective TS56

To allow the use of road networks, including national roads, for grid connection and other non-roads related infrastructure only when it has been demonstrated that the infrastructure would not adversely impact upon the structures, maintenance, and safety of the road.

### 8.7.1 National Roads

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has overall responsibility for the future development and the operation of the national road network. The Council will continue to work with TII to support major improvements to the national road network and to maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of national roads and associated junctions in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012).



The M/N11 and N25 are important roads for the country and region as a whole and are part of the Pan-European comprehensive TEN-T network. The completion of the M11 Gorey-Enniscorthy-Oilgate Scheme and N25 New Ross By-Pass scheme in 2019 and 2020 has reduced inter-regional journey times and will bring other economic and social benefits to the county.

### 8.7.1.1 National Roads Projects

#### Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour

The improvement of road linkages to Rosslare Europort is supported in the NPF, the National Development Plan 2018-2027, the National Marine Planning Framework and the RSES for the Southern Region.

Following an option selection process which assessed possible route options against Economic, Safety, Environmental, Accessibility and Social Inclusion, Integration and Physical Activity criteria, and examined multi-modal scheme options and alternatives, a preferred scheme option corridor was selected and published in June 2021. Following detailed scheme design and the completion of environmental and appropriate assessment processes, it is anticipated the scheme could proceed through the statutory planning processes in 2023.

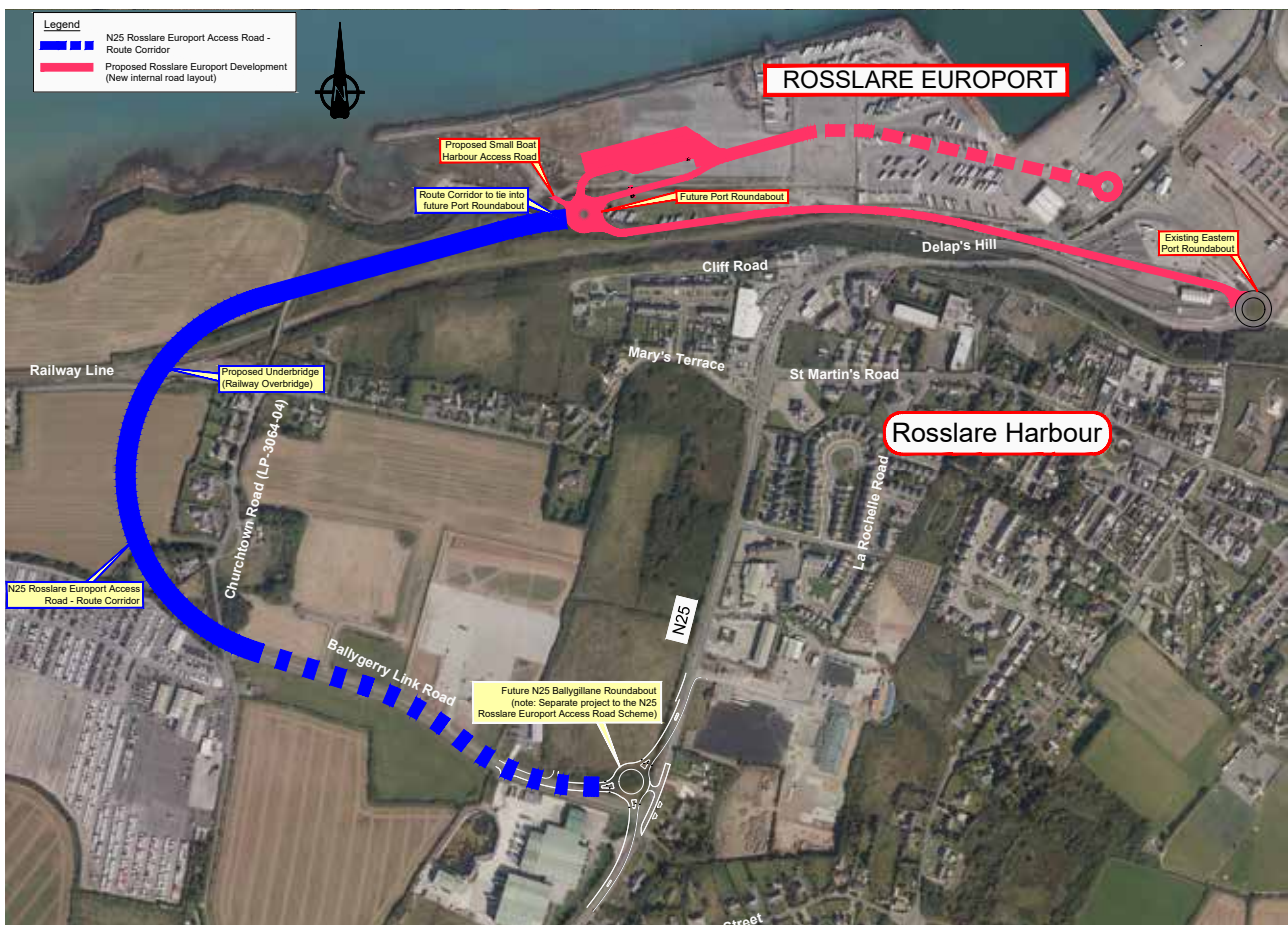
#### N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road

The development of the access road to Rosslare Europort and associated linkages is part of the critical infrastructure required for the port to grow and also deal with the continuing changes required as a result of the UK leaving the European Union. The consent process is likely to be advanced ahead of the Oilgate to Rosslare project to enable improved freight access to the port.

Following the completion of Phase 2 (Option Selection), the Council has confirmed the scheme option. The chosen option combines the construction of a new offline access road to the port and the upgrade of the existing Ballygerry Link Road as shown in blue in Figure 8.2. The design and environmental assessment of the proposed scheme will then proceed, and it is anticipated that the project could proceed through the statutory planning processes by 2022. Separately, the 'N25 Ballygillane

Roundabout' scheme received Part 8 Planning approval in January 2020. That project will provide a roundabout on the N25 at its junction with the L7021 Link Road. The N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road project will be developed to fully integrate with the approved N25 Ballygillane Roundabout scheme, and the approved Rosslare Europort Masterplan development (shown in red in Figure 8.2).

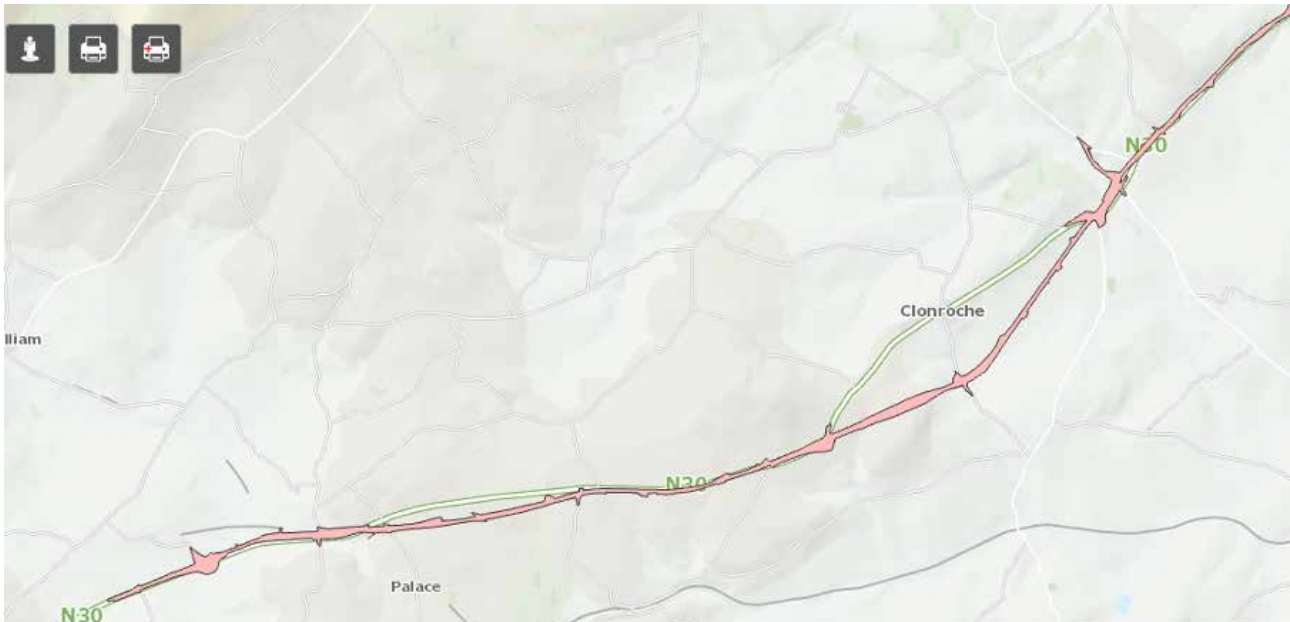
Figure 8.2 N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road Scheme Option



### N30 Clonroche By-pass

The N30 Clonroche By-pass has been fully approved and although no works are currently scheduled the route corridor will be protected from development which may compromise its future construction (see Figure 8-3)

Figure 8-3 N30 Clonroche By-pass Route Corridor National Road Improvements



The Council will support the development of improvement works to the National Road network given the importance of the N25, N30 and N80 in providing access from the Midlands to Rosslare Europort and the wider region to Belview Port.

The RSES and the Council support improvements to the N80 which link the county to the Midlands and improvements to the linkage with the N9 from New Ross (which would largely take place in County Kilkenny) but no works are currently scheduled in this regard.

#### 8.7.1.2 Development and National Roads

In order to protect the safety, carrying capacity and efficiency of the national route network, access, zoning and development proposals (including rural development and housing) which may introduce traffic movements onto national roads and national road junctions, will be strictly controlled, particularly where the speed limit exceeds 60 kmh. An evidence based approach will be used in the assessment of the impacts of development and land use zoning proposals on the safety, capacity and function of national roads (including potential upgrades) and junctions.

The objectives in this chapter that relate to accesses to and proposals which affect

national roads have been prepared in accordance with Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012) and Circular 16/2011 issued by the National Roads Authority (now TII).

## National Roads Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TS57

To work with Transport Infrastructure Ireland to protect and improve the safety, capacity and efficiency of the existing national roads network in County Wexford.

### Objective TS58

To support the development of the national primary routes to a minimum dual carriageway standard.

### Objective TS59

To support the development of the Oilgate to Rosslare National Road Scheme.

### Objective TS60

To support the development of the Clonroche By-pass and future upgrades of the N30.

### Objective TS61

To support the upgrade of national roads to improve connectivity throughout the region and improve access to Rosslare Europort and Belview Port.

### Objective TS62

To promote the development of the access road and link roads to Rosslare Europort

at Rosslare Harbour, to improve accessibility and connectivity to Rosslare Europort, secure the sustainability of access to the Port and mitigate the risks from current constraints and limitations of the existing access.

### Objective TS63

To support the future upgrading of the N80 to improve capacity and safety given the roads importance to connect to the Midlands and Rosslare Europort. Further to this objective, the Council will work with Transport Infrastructure Ireland and all other stakeholders in the development and assessment of options, including those relating to the link road and/or a possible by-pass of Bunclody Town, to improve regional journey times and to reduce the impacts of national road traffic on the public realm and maximise opportunities for walking and cycling in Bunclody town centre, its access routes and hinterlands. Any such options shall be subject to compliance with the Environmental Impact and Habitats Directives.

### Objective TS64

To support, facilitate and enable the implementation of the national roads projects listed in Section 8.7.1.1 and provided for in Objectives TS59, TS60, TS61, TS62 and TS63, on a phased basis where necessary, to a standard and design which meets the requirements associated with expected usage. The Council will have regard to the Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012), Circular 16/2011 (NRA/TII) and consultations with the TII and other relevant Government departments and the public and will:

- Generally retain required lands free from development including any identified preferred route corridors.
- Require that adjacent development of sensitive uses, such as housing, schools and nursing homes, are compatible with the construction and long-term operation of the national road.
- Ensure that other development objectives, including the zoning of land, do not compromise the route selection process.
- Seek to minimise adverse impacts on local residents and on the natural and built environment.

- Adopt a flexible approach in accordance with the provisions of TII/NRA Circular 16/2011.

### Objective TS65

To use an evidence-based approach to assess the impacts of development and land use zoning proposals on the safety, capacity and function of national roads (including potential upgrades) and junctions. The Council will prohibit development and will not zone land for development where it would impact on the safety, capacity and efficiency of the national roads network in the county.

### Objective TS66

To avoid the creation of any new direct access points to development or the generation of increased traffic from existing direct access points to the national road network to which speed limits of greater than 60 kmh apply. The Council may apply a less restrictive approach, for access onto non-motorway sections of national roads, for development in the following three categories:

#### Category 1

Developments of national and regional importance which by their nature are most appropriately located outside of urban areas, and where the locations concerned have specific characteristics that make them particularly suitable for the development proposed. In considering the appropriateness of making any such exception the Planning Authority will also take the following matters into account:

- The relevance and appropriateness of the proposed development in supporting the aims and objectives of the National Planning Framework and Region Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.
- The requirements of other planning guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Act, including the Retail Planning Guidelines (2012) which include a general presumption against large retail centres being located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads, including motorways.
- The nature of the proposed development and the volume of traffic to be generated by it and any implications for the safety, capacity and efficient operation of national roads. Retail or residential development will not be considered under this category.
- Demonstration of satisfactory demand management measures.

- Any plans for future upgrades of national roads and other transport infrastructure/ services.
- The suitability of the location compared to alternative locations.
- The pattern of existing development in the area.
- The precedent that could be created for cumulative development in the area and the consequent implications for the national road network.

The Council will only consider developments of national or regional importance under this category where access is proposed to/from non-motorway and non-dual carriageway national roads. The Council will have regard to whether or not that national road is to be by-passed in its considerations. Such proposals are required to be subject to an evidence base and incorporated into the Development Plan by amendment or variation in accordance with the provisions of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) or in exceptional circumstances by Material Contravention of the Plan under Section 34(6) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Planning Authority will consult with TII and have regard to their advice in all such instances.

**Category 2**

Developments relating to the existing established large enterprise/employer on the national road network at Slaney Meats (N80) which is identified on Figure 8-4.

**Figure 8-4 Slaney Meats**



### Category 3

Developments on lands zoned under the Clonroche Local Area Plan 2009 (as extended), in order to facilitate necessary and orderly development of the village.

In all three categories of such exceptional circumstances:

- It must be demonstrated by the applicant that there is no alternative access point available other than to the national road network at a location where a speed limit greater than 60 kmh applies and that the envisaged usage of the access point will not compromise the safety, capacity and efficient operation of national roads.
- The applicant will be responsible for preparing the required Road Safety Audit and Transport and Traffic Assessment reports. The Council shall use the assessments provided, together with available data, to establish an evidence base. Permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that any proposed development does not compromise the safety, capacity and efficiency of the national road network.
- The Council will work with Transport Infrastructure Ireland to review the speed limits in areas where existing employers or existing or proposed zoned land exists with the intention of reducing, where required, the speed limits subject to the appropriate statutory process.
- The applicant will be required to provide details of, and funding for, any capacity enhancements or traffic or demand management measures required.

### Objective TS67

To facilitate a limited number of new accesses or the intensified use of existing accesses, to the national road network on the approaches to, or exit from, towns or villages that are subject to a speed limit of between 50 kmh and 60 kmh (otherwise known as the transition zone). The Council will assess proposals for new or intensified access points having regard to Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012) and The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages (TII, 2018). Proposals for such accesses will also be subject to Objective TS69.



### Objective TS68

To facilitate new accesses or the intensified use of existing accesses to the national road network within the 50 kmh zone within existing towns and villages in accordance with normal road safety, traffic management and urban design criteria for built up areas subject to Objective TS69.

### Objective TS69

Where an application to which Objective TS67 or Objective TS68 applies the applicant shall where appropriate, submit a Road Safety Audit and a Transport and Traffic Assessment. In assessing such applications, the Planning Authority will have regard to the Road Safety Audit, the Transport and Traffic Assessment, the capacity and efficient operation of the national road at that location, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2013/2019) and the promotion of convenient, safe and attractive cycling and walking in towns and villages and the Development Management Manual contained in Volume 2.

### Objective TS70

To support the development of cycle tracks adjacent to the routes of new road schemes.

### Objective TS71

The Council will safeguard the capacity and efficiency of national road network drainage schemes.

## 8.7.2 Regional Roads

Regional roads serve a very important function in the county's transport network by providing direct links capable of accommodating significant traffic levels between towns and villages, serving the rural areas in between, and providing access to national roads. Having regard to these functions and the over-riding public safety

imperative, the Council will continue to invest in the maintenance and improvement, where necessary and as resources allow, of the County's regional roads and will prevent development which would compromise these functions and/or the safety of all road users.

Where regional roads pass through towns and villages the Council will apply the principles, approaches and standards of DMURS to the design and management of the roads and adjoining development.

The Council will strictly control new access points and material intensification of existing access points outside the 60kmh zone in the interests of public safety and to safeguard the functions of, and investment in, regional roads. Accesses will also be controlled between the 50-60kmh zone, where such accesses would undermine the purpose of the transition zone.

The assessment of planning applications for new or materially intensified access points to regional roads will have regard to the speed limit in place on that road and the volume of traffic which that road carries.

Table 8-11 identifies and categorises the regional roads and Objectives TS73 and TS74 set out the criteria to be addressed for each category. These objectives implement a stricter control over the formation of new and the intensification of existing access points on certain regional roads. Objective TS75 and Development Management Manual Policy 6.6 sets out the other criteria to be addressed in the assessment of applications, including the provision of sightlines.

**Table 8-11 Regional Roads**

Class 1	Class 2
R725 Gorey – Carnew	R700 New Ross – R714
R733/R770 Wexford - Arhurstown – Ballyhack	R702 Enniscorthy – Killealy
R739 N25 junction - Kilmore Quay	
R741 Wexford – Gorey	R729 New Ross-Poulmounty
R772 (former N11) Oilgate – Wexford/Wicklow border	R730 Wexford – Killealy

Class 1	Class 2
R723 Ballymacar roundabout - New Ross	R731 Ballynabanogue – Killanne
R714 Mountgarret Bridge to Corcoran’s Cross	R733 Arthurstown – New Ross
	R734 Ballintесkin – Hook Head
	R735 Gusserane – Clonroche
	R736 Rosslare – Ballynaboola
	R737 Haggard – Duncannon
	R738 Barntown – Baldwinstown
	R740 N25-Rosslare
	R742 Wexford – Kilmuckridge – Courtown – Gorey
	R744 Enniscorthy – Blackwater
	R745 Ferns – Ballindaggan
	R746 Wheelagower – Bunclody

## Regional Roads Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TS72

To manage, maintain, improve and implement traffic management measures to regional roads as necessary, having due regard to public safety, and the strategic function of, and investment in, regional roads, as resources allow.

### Objective TS73

To prevent new, or the material intensification of existing, access points to Class 1 regional roads where a speed limit of more than 60kmh applies (see Table 8-11 Regional Roads). This objective will not apply in the following locations and circumstances:

- For farmers, and their sons or daughters<sup>12</sup>, proposing to build a dwelling house for their own permanent private use, provided that a need for that dwelling has been clearly established and where there is no suitable alternative access/egress possible from the family landholding onto a local road.
- For replacement dwellings.
- The intensification of use of an existing entrance to accommodate the sub-division of the site of an existing authorised dwelling house site to provide a dwelling for the use of a son or daughter of the original site owner, where a need for that dwelling has been clearly established and where there is no suitable alternative access point possible from the family landholding onto a local road. Proposals for granny flat type developments at such properties will be considered on their merits having regard to the characteristics of the site and the anticipated level of intensification of use of the existing access/egress point.
- For developments of a commercial nature, where a clear need for the development is established, which could not be met in other locations, and where there is no suitable alternative access to a local road possible or appropriate.

Planning applications for these types of development shall also be assessed having regard to Objective TS75. This objective also applies where access to the regional road is proposed via an existing private lane.

#### Objective TS74

To prevent new, or the material intensification of, existing access points to Class 2 regional roads where a speed limit of greater than 60 kmh applies (see Table 8-11 Regional Roads), except where a need for the development at that location has been clearly established and there is no suitable alternative access possible from a local road.

These planning applications shall also be assessed having regard to Objective TS75. This objective also applies where access to the regional road is proposed via an existing private lane.

#### Objective TS75

Planning applications for developments which propose new, or intensified accesses,

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<sup>12</sup> The applicants must be living on a viable active farm holding being operated by the family and the holding must be in the family at least 20 years.

onto Regional Roads outside the 60kmh speed limit shall comply with Objectives TS73 and TS74 respectively and shall be assessed having regard to:

- The capacity and efficient operation of the regional road at that location. A Traffic and Transport Assessment will be required to be undertaken where appropriate, in accordance with the requirements of Section 8.10.
- Public safety and the need to avoid an undue proliferation of accesses to the regional road at that location. A Road Safety Audit will be required in accordance with the requirements of Section 8.10.
- The promotion of convenient, safe and attractive cycling and walking.
- Compliance with all other relevant objectives and development management standards including those relating to the provision of sightlines.

This objective also applies where access to the regional road is proposed via an existing private lane.

### Objective TS76

To facilitate new accesses, or the intensified use of existing accesses, to the regional road network within towns and villages where a speed limit of less than 60 kmh applies.

Planning applications shall be assessed having regard to:

- The capacity and efficient operation of the regional road at that location. A Traffic and Transport Assessment will be required to be undertaken where appropriate.
- The characteristics of the site.
- The likely level and characteristics of traffic associated with the development /use proposed.
- Public safety and the need to avoid an undue proliferation of accesses to the regional road at that location; Road Safety Audit may be required to be undertaken where appropriate.
- The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2013/2019) and the promotion of convenient, safe and attractive cycling and walking.

- Compliance with all other relevant objectives and the development management standards of the development plan/local area plan which relate to the lands, including those relating to the provision of sightlines.

This objective also applies where access to the regional road is proposed via an existing private lane.

### 8.7.3 Local Roads

Wexford has a comprehensive local road network covering all parts of the county. These roads serve an important function for rural communities and agricultural enterprises. These roads have been designated as Primary and Secondary/Tertiary based on their traffic levels, width and alignment.

The Council will consider development proposals for new and intensified access points on local roads on a site-by-site basis having regard to the characteristics of the site and the development proposed, adjacent development, the Primary or Secondary/Tertiary designation of the road, the sight distances available and the condition and the vertical/horizontal alignment of the road, at all times having the utmost regard for public safety and traffic safety issues.

#### Local Roads Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

##### Objective TS77

To manage, maintain, undertake improvements and implement traffic management measures to local roads in the county where necessary, having due regard to public safety and traffic safety, as resources allow.

##### Objective TS78

To facilitate new accesses, or the intensified use of existing accesses, to the local road network having regard to:

- The characteristics of the site;
- The likely level and characteristics of traffic associated with the development /use proposed;
- The Primary or Secondary/Tertiary designation of the road;
- The condition, alignment and capacity of the local road at that location;
- Public safety and the need to avoid an undue proliferation of access points at that location;
- The avoidance of undue loss of significant existing natural and built features at the road edge;
- Where the speed limit is less than 60kmh the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS 2013/2019) and the promotion of convenient, safe and attractive cycling and walking; and
- Compliance with all other relevant objectives and development management standards including those relating to the provision of sightlines.

This objective also applies where access to the local road is proposed via an existing private lane.

## 8.8 Sightlines which Require Works

The Council will ensure that all developments are served by safe accesses onto public roads in accordance with the standards contained in Volume 2 Development Management Manual. Following monitoring by the Planning Department in 2019 it became apparent that some vehicular accesses were constructed without the required sightline measures conditioned by the planning permissions. This issue was more prevalent where the achievement of sightlines necessitated works to lands outside the ownership of the applicant and required consent from an adjoining landowner. As a result the Council will now require the measures outlined in Objective TS79.

### Objective TS79

Where works are required to achieve sightlines at a vehicular access, the following criteria must be complied with:

- The necessary works to achieve the required sightlines must be indicated within the site edged red submitted with the planning application.
- No construction of the dwelling shall take place until the sightlines are in place.

## 8.9 Travel Plans

A Travel Plan or Mobility Management Plan is a long-term management strategy employed by an organisation that seeks to promote and deliver sustainable transport objectives through positive action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed. The Plan should be prepared in accordance with the National Transport Authority document 'Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities' (2012). The thresholds for travel plans are set out in Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

### Objective TS80

To require the submission of a Travel Plan for all new developments or intensifications of existing developments that generate significant trip demand. Plans should be prepared in accordance with 'Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities' (National Transport Authority, 2012) and in accordance with Section 6.2.4 and Table 6-4 in Volume 2 Development Management Manual and should seek to reduce reliance on car based travel and encourage more sustainable modes of transportation over the lifetime of a development. School travel plans should be prepared in accordance with the National Transport Authority document 'Toolkit for School Travel' (2019).



## 8.10 Traffic and Transport Assessments, Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Impact Assessments

### 8.10.1 Traffic and Transport Assessment

Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) is the methodology used to assess the transport impacts<sup>13</sup> of a proposed development where the development may generate significant additional trips with potentially significant implications for the national and non-national roads. It is also intended to incorporate any necessary measures to ensure roads and junctions and other transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the development remains fit for purpose and encourage a shift towards sustainable travel modes. The TTA needs to consider the impact of the proposed development on the entire transport network (not just roads).

TTA will be required for developments of a type listed in Tables 6-1 and 6-2 of Volume 2 Development Management Manual. It will be required for National, Regional or Local Roads in accordance with the requirements of Traffic Management Guidelines (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport /Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government/Dublin Transport Office, 2003).

The TTA should include proposals to reduce reliance on car-based travel, including a travel or mobility management plan, and encourage more sustainable forms of transportation. Where a TTA is required a Road Safety Audit will also be required.

### 8.10.2 Road Safety Audits

Road Safety Audits (RSAs) involve the evaluation of a road or development scheme during design, construction and early operation stages to identify potential hazards to all road users. Road Safety Audits (RSAs) shall be undertaken for development proposals which require a new access, or significant changes to an existing access, road or roadside layout, to a national road and other roads.

### 8.10.3 Road Safety Impact Assessment

A Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA) is an assessment required under EU

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<sup>13</sup> Including, but not limited to, road traffic

Directive 2008/96/EC. It is a strategic comparative analysis of the impact of a significant new road, or for substantial modifications to an existing road on the safety performance of the road network. Its application is limited to proposals where the anticipated effect on the national road network is substantial and is therefore only required for major new road projects and road realignment in excess of 2km. Other proposals which do not meet these criteria may benefit from RSIA.

### Objective TS81

To require that a Traffic and Transportation Assessment (TTA) is undertaken for development listed in Section 6.2.1 of Volume 2 Development Management Manual. The TTA shall be prepared having regard to the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, May 2014), Traffic Management Guidelines (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport /Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government/Dublin Transport Office, 2003) and Spatial Planning and National Roads; Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2012). The TTA should include a Travel Plan/Mobility Management Plan which promotes sustainable travel where appropriate.

### Objective TS82

To require that a Road Safety Audit (RSA) is undertaken in accordance with Section 6.2.2 of Volume 2 Development Management Manual for development which requires a new entrance, or intensified use of an existing entrance, or significant changes to an existing entrance, or alterations to the carriageway or road layout adjoining a national road, or for development on local or regional roads as appropriate. The RSA shall be prepared in accordance with Road Safety Audit GE-STY-01024 (TII, March 2015). The costs of mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer.

### Objective TS83

To require that Road Safety Impact Assessments are carried out where appropriate in accordance with the standards set out in Section 6.2.3 of Volume 2 Development Management Manual. The costs of mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer.

## 8.11 Ports

Rosslare Europort is identified as a Tier 2 port of national significance in the current National Ports Policy (DTTAS, 2013) and is included in the list of ports comprising the TEN-T 'comprehensive' transport network around the European Union. In 2019 it was the second busiest port in the country in respect of roll-on, roll-off freight traffic and passenger numbers. Rosslare Europort is a critical element of the transportation infrastructure of the county, region and country as a whole. It is the closest port in Ireland to mainland Europe and this will be increasingly important post-Brexit. It will also continue to be the optimum port for future passenger and trade traffic to/from the UK.

The RSES and the Council support the development of the Port to Tier 1 Status and will endeavour to ensure that it is upgraded to Tier 1 status in any revised National Ports Policy as part of the Core TEN-T transport network.

The Council will support proposals which enable the port to enhance its critical transportation role for the county, region and country as a whole. This would include:

- improvements to linkages to the port by road, rail - passenger and freight, bus and walking and cycling.
- portside infrastructure at the Port needed to support increased capacity and improvements to the freight handling and passenger experience.
- customs and port related administration services.

Volume 3 Settlements contains detailed objectives for the development of Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane including the development of the Port and the development of land at the port. Further objectives are contained in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

New Ross port is identified as a Port of Regional Significance in the National Ports Policy and may also experience demand for growth as a consequence of the departure of the UK from the European Union. The Council will continue to support its growth at Marshmeadows, which may include the facilitation of an additional wharf and the construction of warehousing and open storage.

The other ports and harbours around the county, including Wexford Harbour, Kilmore Quay, Courtown, Fethard, Carne, Cahore, Duncannon, Slade, St. Helen's and Ballyhack, have a lesser role in the county's transportation network but perform important functions in terms of fishing, marine tourism and recreation. The Council's commitment to these ports and harbours is set out in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

The Council will work with Government departments to ensure that development at all ports and harbours in the county is compliant with the Habitats Directive, Shellfish Directive and the Water Framework Directive and the National Marine Planning Framework.

## Ports Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TS84

To support the improvement of passenger amenities at Rosslare Europort including bus and rail facilities.

### Objective TS85

To support the further development of Rosslare Europort to increase capacity including measures to extend existing berths and to provide additional berths.

### Objective TS86

To support the development of rail freight handling facilities and infrastructure at Rosslare Europort.

### Objective TS87

To support the development of New Ross Port and associated port related developments on lands adjoining the port.

**Objective TS88**

To support industrial development that requires the bulk transfer of materials or finished products adjacent to or within the environs of the county's ports.

**Objective TS89**

To encourage the development of associated infrastructure including access, wastewater treatment, communications and power to ensure the growth of the county's ports and fishing ports.

**Objective TS90**

To support the development of additional customs and security facilities to ensure the operation of and increase the capacity of the ports.

**Objective TS91**

To support the development and expansion of the county's fishing ports including Kilmore Quay, Courtown Harbour, Ballyhack, Duncannon and Wexford.

**Objective TS92**

To support the sustainable growth of the traditional fishing ports including Cahore, St Helens, Carne, Fethard and Slade and to promote the development of amenities for workers and tourist visitors.

## 8.12 Air Travel

The Council supports the continued operation and growth of Waterford Airport as an important element of the transport and communications infrastructure of the region (as envisaged in the NPF). The Council also supports measures to enhance connections, particularly by public transport, from County Wexford to Waterford Airport and the other airports in the country.

## Air Travel Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TS93

To support the continued operation and growth of Waterford Airport and measures to enhance connections, particularly by public transport, from County Wexford to Waterford Airport and the other airports in the country.

### Objective TS94

To consider the development of air strips in locations that would not have an adverse impact on residential areas.

CHAPTER 9

# Infrastructure Strategy



## 9.1 Introduction

The Council has many responsibilities and functions that relate to the sustainable planning, delivery and management of public and private infrastructure. The Council, through its statutory land use plans and development management functions, plan and manage the provision of infrastructure in the county. A development plan must make provision for infrastructure including transport, energy, communications, water and wastewater services, waste recovery and disposal facilities and any ancillary facilities or services<sup>1</sup>.

Local authorities now have an enhanced role in promoting economic development and local authorities are regarded as important enablers of economic development with many of their mainstream functions, in particular, planning and infrastructure, critical to enterprise and economic activity. A planned approach to infrastructure delivery will maximise returns on the investment made in terms of economic development and job creation and contribute to a good quality of life and wellbeing for all residents.

For the purposes of this chapter, the term infrastructure extends to water, wastewater, waste management, telecommunications and ICT infrastructure. It also relates to flood risk and surface water management. Transport infrastructure is dealt with in Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy and Green Infrastructure is dealt with in Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure. This chapter provides the spatial framework and objectives for the planning and provision of this infrastructure, either directly by the Council, or by other agencies or operators. This provision must also have regard to the Council's other functions including their environmental responsibilities and ensuring compliance with relevant European and National legislation. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the other chapters in the plan, in particular, Chapter 10 Environmental Management and the Development Management Manual in Volume 2.

## 9.2 Climate Action and Infrastructure Planning

Much of this infrastructure is essential to emergency planning and response in times

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<sup>1</sup> Mandatory objective 2(b) of Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).



of extreme weather events/critical incidents e.g. telecommunications. To this end:

- Infrastructure developed above ground should avoid flood risk areas and areas at risk of coastal erosion.
- Site selection, location, design and materials will need to have regard to and be resilient to the changing climate (high winds, temperature fluctuations, increased storminess and changes in rainfall).
- Infrastructure developed below ground should avoid flood risk areas and areas at risk of coastal erosion.

### 9.3 Policy Context

The preparation of this chapter had regard to relevant national legislation and guidelines, regional and local plans and policies, in particular, the need to ensure that the Plan is compliant with the Water Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive and all other relevant EU and national legislation and regulations in relation to the protection of water quality and waste management.

The most significant change in recent years has been the establishment of Irish Water who became responsible for all public water services involving the supply of drinking water and the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater. While the Council, through a Service Level Agreement with Irish Water, continues to provide day to day operations, all capital investment decisions and the implementation of the capital programme delivery across the country is the responsibility of Irish Water.

The Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) sets out Irish Water's strategic objectives for the delivery of water services in Ireland up to 2040 and identifies current and future challenges regarding the provision of the services. It identifies priorities to be tackled in the short to medium term. The Council will work closely with Irish Water to ensure that the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure will not be a limiting factor in terms of achieving targeted population growth and employment growth as set out in the Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Economic Development Strategy of this Plan.

## 9.4 Infrastructure Strategy

This strategy is focused on the provision of high quality water, wastewater and waste management facilities and telecommunications infrastructure that will facilitate and sustain the planned growth of the county over the lifetime of the Plan and beyond.

### 9.4.1 Goal

The overall goal is to ensure that Wexford has high quality infrastructure to facilitate and sustain the growth of the county over the lifetime of the plan and beyond whilst having regard to, and complying with, all relevant EU Directive and national legislation and enhancing the environmental quality of the county.

### 9.4.2 Strategy

- To facilitate Irish Water in the protection, improvement and conservation of the county's water resources and in the provision of necessary water services infrastructure to support the growth of the county in a sustainable manner and in accordance with all relevant EU and national legislation and guidance.
- To facilitate the provision of key infrastructure in a timely manner to support the growth of county in line with the Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Economic Development Strategy.
- To facilitate the delivery of private water and waste water infrastructure in accordance with all relevant EU and national legislation and guidance.
- To promote and facilitate best practice in the prevention, re-use, recovery, recycling and disposal of all waste produced in the county.
- To facilitate the development of high speed telecommunications and ICT infrastructure throughout the county in order to grow and develop economic activity, to enhance learning and education facilities and contribute to the social wellbeing of our residents, particularly in rural areas in the county.
- To minimise the risk to people, businesses, infrastructure and the environment through the identification and management of existing and potential future flood risk.

## Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective IS01

To ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.

### Objective IS02

To work with Irish Water to protect existing water and wastewater infrastructure in the county and facilitate the development of new infrastructure ensuring its provision is integrated with the county's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy and land use plans, improves environmental quality and ensures the sustainable development of the county whilst complying with all relevant European and national legislation.

### Objective IS03

To have regard to the Section 28 Water Services Guidelines for Planning Authorities when carrying out the forward planning and development management functions of the Planning Authority.

### Objective IS04

To provide and upgrade waste water treatment infrastructure to address environmental problems and protect water bodies.

### Objective IS05

To provide water treatment facilities to safeguard public health.

### Objective IS06

To promote the circular economy and facilitate best practice in the prevention, re-use, recovery, recycling and disposal of all waste produced in the county.

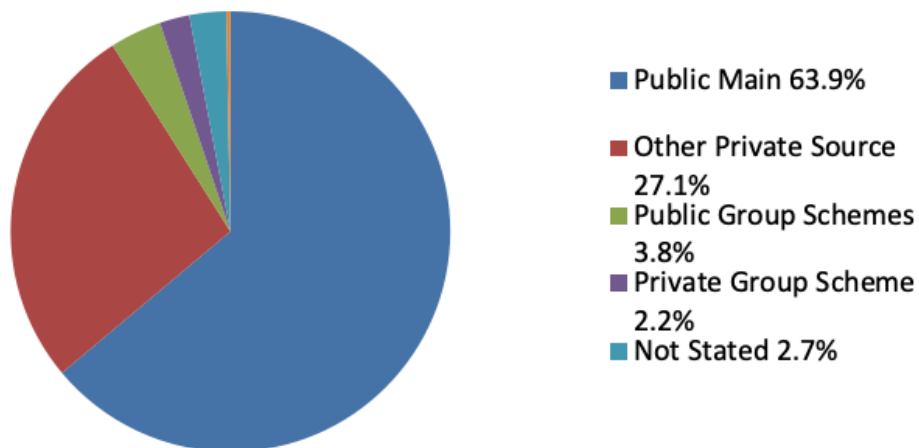
### Objective IS07

To support the development of high speed, high capacity digital and mobile infrastructure in the towns, villages and rural areas across the county in order to provide high quality digital connectivity to support the social and economic growth of the county and the region.

## 9.5 Water Supply

The county's drinking water supplies are derived from natural resources, either surface water or ground water and it is therefore important that these resources are protected so that reliable, safe and good quality water supplies are always available. The provision of reliable water supplies is also critical to achieve the growth planned for the county for the period of this plan, in particular, population and economic growth. Figure 9-1 details the breakdown of water supply to households recorded in Census 2016.

Figure 9-1 Sources of Water Supply in County Wexford, 2016



### 9.5.1 Public Water

Census 2016 recorded that 64% of private households in the county were served by public water supplies which was considerably lower than the State average (77%). Relative to other local authority areas, Wexford had the 15th highest number and the 7th lowest rate of households with 'public main' water supply. It is a priority of the Council to increase the number of households served by public water in the interest of protecting water resources, sustainable development and maximising investments in this infrastructure. In this regard, the Council will require developments to connect to public water supply, where available, rather than providing a private well on site.

Table 9.1 lists Irish Water Public Water Supplies and Capacities based on information received in March 2022. The table includes reference to the settlements where supply issues have been identified.

**Table 9-1 Irish Water Public Water Supplies and Capacities**

Source: Irish Water March 2022

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Water Resource Zone (WRZ)	Capacity of source/treatment
Level 1 Key Towns	Wexford Town	South East Wexford	Capacity available in the main networks to cater for the 2027 population target. Capacity is available in the WRZ to cater for the population targets with assistance of water conservation measures and network improvements to provide the level of services required.
	Gorey	Gorey	Capacity available in the main networks serving the town and in the WRZ to cater for the 2027 population target.
Level 2 Large Towns	Enniscorthy Town	Enniscorthy	Capital upgrades are progressing to increase capacity for the town which will allow additional water to be delivered into the town. There is capacity available in the main networks to cater for the 2027 population target. Capital upgrades required to the WRZ. There is a project in the Capital Investment Programme which will be delivered during the lifetime of the Plan.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Water Resource Zone (WRZ)	Capacity of source/treatment
	New Ross Town	New Ross	Capacity available in the main networks supplying the town. Capacity available in the WRZ to cater for the population targets to 2027 with assistance of water conservation measures and network improvements to provide the level of services required.
Level 3a Service Settlements	Bunclody Town	Bunclody	Capacity available in the main networks to cater for the 2027 population target. Capacity available in the WRZ but not for the full 2027 population target. A project is progressing to increase capacity which is anticipated will be completed within the lifetime of the Plan.
	Castlebridge	South East Wexford	Capacity available in the main networks supplying the village to cater for the 2027 population targets. Capacity potentially available in the WRZ to cater for the 2027 population targets with the assistance of water conservation measures and network improvements to provide the level of service required.
	Courtown and Riverchapel	Gorey Rural	Capacity available in the main networks serving the villages and in the WRZ to cater for the 2027 population target.
	Ferns	Ferns Regional	Capacity is available in the main networks supplying the village to cater for the 2027 population targets. Capacity is potentially available in the WRZ to cater for those targets with the assistance of water conservation measures and network improvements to provide the level of service required.
	Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane	South East Wexford	Capacity available in the main networks serving the villages and in the WRZ to cater for the 2027 population target.
	Rosslare Strand	South East Wexford	Capacity available in the main networks serving the village and in the WRZ to cater for the 2027 population target.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Water Resource Zone (WRZ)	Capacity of source/treatment
Level 3b Strategic Settlements	Bridgetown	South East Wexford	Capacity available.
	Campile	South East Wexford	Capacity available.
	Clonroche	Clonroche	Currently limited capacity. Solutions for improving capacity are being assessed through the full options assessment stage of the NWRP, due to be completed in mid-2021. In addition, the solutions will address treatment issues.
	Coolgreany	Coolgreany	Capacity available
	Kilmore Quay	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Kilmuckridge	Gorey	Capacity available
	Taghmon	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Wellingtonbridge	South East Wexford	Capacity available
Level 4 Large Villages (those with Irish Water Public Water Supplies).	Adamstown	Adamstown	Capacity available.
	Ballaghkeen	South East Wexford	Capacity available.
	Ballindaggin	Ballindaggin	Limited capacity available.
	Ballycanew	Gorey	Capacity available
	Ballycullane	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Ballyhack	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Ballyhogue	Ballyhogue	Capacity available
	Ballymurn	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Barntown	South East Wexford	Capacity available.
	Blackwater	Sow	Capacity available.
	Bree	Bree	Capacity available.
	Camolin	Camolin	Capacity available
	Carrig-on-Bannow	South East Wexford	Capacity available

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Water Resource Zone (WRZ)	Capacity of source/treatment
	Clongeen	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Duncannon	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Fethard-on-Sea	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Murrtown	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Oilgate	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Oulart	Sow	Capacity available
	Piercestown	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Ramsgrange	South East Wexford	Capacity available
	Tagoat	South East Wexford	Capacity available.

Table 9-2 lists the proposed public water supply projects in the county identified in the Irish Water Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024. The Council will work alongside Irish Water to facilitate the delivery of these and any other public supply water projects that may arise during the lifetime of this Plan.

**Table 9-2 Proposed Irish Water Public Water Projects 2020-2024<sup>2</sup>**

Source: Irish Water Capital Investment Programme 2020-2024

Project	Project Description
Gorey Regional Water Supply Contract 4 (Water Treatment Plant, reservoir and pumping station)	Provision for Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and upgrade to address drinking water quality and demand deficiencies associated with Ballyminaun, upgrade Barnadown pumping station, interconnecting network and provision for reservoir at Ballyminaun WTP. Additional decommissioning of Barnadown WTP, Kilmuckridge WTP, Ballykale WTPs and Coolishall WTPs.

Clonroche is currently the only water supply on the EPA's Drinking Water Remedial Action List due to 'elevated levels of pesticides above the standard in

<sup>2</sup> The projects and programmes listed are expected to be either commenced, progressed or completed during the 2020-2024 period. This list is continuously being refined and is subject to budget, technical and environmental constraints, as well as statutory approvals.



the Drinking Water Regulations'. The proposed action is a complete catchment-focused engagement involving Irish Water and the relevant stakeholders to achieve compliance with the limits for pesticides. This action programme is to be completed by January 2021 in line with the EPA's direction.

## 9.5.2 Group Water Schemes and Private Water Supplies

As highlighted in Figure 9-1, many of the county's households obtain their water supply from group water schemes or private wells. These supplies provide alternatives for areas that are not served by public water supply infrastructure and comprise mainly of group water schemes for rural clusters and small settlements and private wells for individual dwellings, farms and other developments.

Private wells/'other private source' accounted for 27.2% of water supply to households in Census 2016. This rate was considerably higher than the State average (10.1%) and was the highest rate of all local authorities. This is reflective of our rural settlement pattern and raises issues around sustainability of this pattern of development.

The Rural Water Programme facilitates the development of water services in rural areas and it plays an important role in helping to improve deficiencies in group water schemes and private supplies where no alternative group or public water scheme is available. Investment under the programme is prioritised for upgrades which help to deliver measures identified in the National River Basin Management Plan to meet the Water Framework Directive, to meet the requirements of the Drinking Water Directive and the overall proper planning and sustainable development of rural areas.

## 9.5.3 Groundwater Protection Schemes

Groundwater Protection Schemes seek to preserve the quality of groundwater in the county for drinking purposes, for the benefit of present and future generations. These schemes provide guidelines to the Council when carrying out its planning and licensing functions and assist in decision-making relating to controlling the location and nature of developments and activities of potentially polluting activities.

## 9.5.4 Water Conservation

Water conservation is key to the sustainable use of our water resources and it is a priority in all areas of the county, whether served by public or private supplies. Irish Water is currently implementing a Leakage Reduction Programme which is focused on providing a reliable uninterrupted water supply, improved water quality, reduced leakages and improved supply connections. The Council will facilitate the delivery of this programme and encourage all new developments to incorporate appropriate water conservation measures.

### Water Supply Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective WS01

To work with all stakeholders to protect existing and potential water resources for the county and to reduce the level of treatment required in the production of drinking water, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), the National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 and any updated version, the Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters, the National Biodiversity Plan 2017-2021, the provisions of the County Groundwater Protection Scheme and any other protection plans including the National Water Resources Plan and Drinking Water Protection Plans for water supply resources.

#### Objective WS02

To require climate adaptation to be demonstrated in the location, siting and design of new water infrastructure developments.

#### Objective WS03

In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and the Economic Development Strategy, the Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan and Investment Plan, to ensure

the provision of sufficient storage, supply and pressure of potable water to serve all lands zoned for development and in particular, to secure the delivery of strategic water supply schemes and other localised water improvement schemes in the smaller towns and villages required during the lifetime of the plan.

#### **Objective WS04**

To work alongside Irish Water to facilitate the water projects identified in Table 9-2 and any other projects that may arise during the lifetime of this Plan subject to compliance with all relevant EU and national legislation and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### **Objective WS05**

To work with the EPA to address issues with water supplies identified on their Drinking Water Remedial Action List during the lifetime of the County Development Plan including the water supply in Clonroche.

#### **Objective WS06**

To require all proposed future public and private water abstractions within the plan area to comply with the provisions of the Habitats Directive.

#### **Objective WS07**

To require new developments to connect to public water supplies for drinking water where services are adequate or where they will be provided in the near future.

#### **Objective WS08**

In rural areas, where connection to an existing public water supply is not possible, or the existing supply system does not have sufficient capacity, the provision of a private water supply will be considered where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in EU and national legislation and guidance, would not be prejudicial to public health or would not impact on the source or yield of an existing supply, particularly a public supply.

**Objective WS09**

To protect water services abstraction points and infrastructure from inappropriate development and zoning.

**Objective WS10**

To protect existing way leaves and areas, including buffer zones, around public water services infrastructure through appropriate zoning and to facilitate the provision of appropriate sites for public water infrastructure, as required.

**Objective WS11**

To ensure that development proposals comply with the standards and requirements of the Irish Water: Code of Practice for Water Infrastructure (July 2020), and any updated version of this document during the lifetime of the plan.

**Objective WS12**

To promote water conservation and best practice water conservation practices in all new developments and to facilitate the implementation of the Irish Water Leakage Reduction Programme.

**Objective WS13**

To promote rain water harvesting systems to reduce the need for main water usage.

**Objective WS14**

To support the provision of appropriately designed and located available tap water refill points in settlements and other locations in the county.

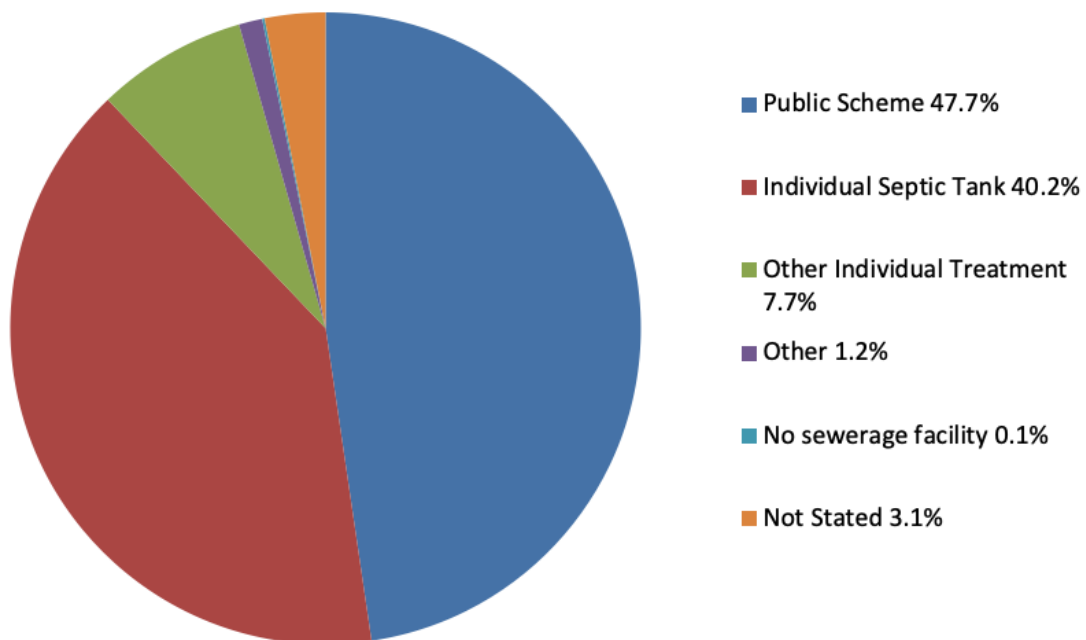
## 9.6 Wastewater

The treatment and disposal of wastewater in an environmentally sound manner is important not only for human health but also for the social and economic development of the county. Pollution from wastewater treatment facilities arises where there is inadequate treatment; storm water overflows operating incorrectly; or direct discharges of untreated wastewater<sup>3</sup>.

Wastewater is disposed of to either a public wastewater treatment system or to a private individual wastewater treatment system. Figure 9-2 details the types of wastewater disposal for private households in the county in 2016. It is essential that all wastewater is treated in accordance with best practice to ensure the protection of the environment and public health.

**Figure 9-2 Types of Wastewater Disposal in County Wexford, 2016**

Source: CSO Census 2016



<sup>3</sup> Ireland's Environment-An Assessment 2016, EPA, 2016, page 133.

## 9.6.1 Public Wastewater Facilities

According to Census 2016, the dominant form of wastewater disposal was 'Public Scheme' with a rate of 47.7% (25,742 households). This is considerably lower than the State average of 65.9%. Relative to other local authorities, Wexford has the 14th highest number of households and the 10th lowest rate of households using a 'public scheme'.

Table 9-3 lists the settlements in Levels 1-4 in the Settlement Strategy, the capacity of their wastewater treatment plants and available headroom (as of 29th April 2020).

- Level 1 and 2 settlements have sufficient headroom.
- Of the 14 Level 3a Service and Level 3b Strategic settlements, three have no headroom – Kilmore Quay, Campile and Wellingtonbridge.
- Of the 25 settlements at Level 4 Large Villages, five have no headroom – Ballycanew, Camolin, Clongeen, Duncannon, Fethard-on-Sea and there are no public wastewater facilities in Ballyhack, Craanford and Ramsgrange.
- In addition, 16 of 35 Level 5 settlements have public wastewater facilities with varying amounts of available headroom in all but two of those settlements (Davidstown and Boolavogue).

**Table 9-3 Overview of Public Wastewater Infrastructure in Level 1-Level 4 Settlements**

Source: Irish Water Wastewater Capacity Register 29th April 2020. This is subject to change.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Capacity	Headroom
Level 1 Key Towns	Wexford Town	45,000	14,011
	Gorey	36,000	14,442
Level 2 Large Towns	Enniscorthy Town	26,200	12,451
	New Ross Town	16,000	6,038
Level 3a Service Settlements	Bunclody Town	6,500	3,883
	Castlebridge <sup>4</sup>	-	

<sup>4</sup> This settlement is served by the Wexford Town Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Capacity	Headroom
	Courtown and Riverchapel <sup>5</sup>	-	
	Ferns	2,000	449
	Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane	9,383	6,885
	Rosslare Strand	8,500	2,826
Level 3b Strategic Settlements	Bridgetown	2,000	1,305
	Campile	150	0
	Clonroche	650	166
	Coolgreany	2,400	1,171
	Kilmuckridge	2,000	475
	Kilmore Quay	-	0
	Taghmon <sup>6</sup>	-	
	Wellingtonbridge	37	0
Level 4 Large Villages	Adamstown	500	162
	Ballaghkeen	650	185
	Ballycanew	100	0
	Ballycullane	400	251
	Ballindaggin	108	18
	Ballyhack	0	0
	Ballyhogue	178	45
	Ballymurn	650	77
	Ballywilliam	310	206
	Barntown <sup>7</sup>	-	
	Blackwater	2,000	925
	Bree	300	68

<sup>5</sup> This settlement is served by the Gorey Town Wastewater Treatment Plant

<sup>6</sup> This settlement is served by the Wexford Town Wastewater Treatment Plant.

<sup>7</sup> This settlement is served by the Wexford Town Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Capacity	Headroom
	Camolin	100	0
	Carrick-on-Bannow	600	341
	Clongeen	220	0
	Craanford <sup>8</sup>	0	
	Duncannon	-	-
	Fethard-on-Sea	150	0
	Killinerin	300	42
	Murntown <sup>9</sup>	-	
	Oilgate	157	47
	Oulart	350	127
	Piercestown <sup>10</sup>	-	
	Ramsgrange <sup>11</sup>	0	
	Tagoat	800	319

The EPA Urban Waste Water Report 2018 highlighted eight areas in the county which need to be addressed. These are listed in Table 9-4.

<sup>8</sup> There is no public wastewater treatment plant in Craanford.

<sup>9</sup> This settlement is served by the Wexford Town Wastewater Treatment Plant

<sup>10</sup> This settlement is served by the Wexford Town Wastewater Treatment Plant

<sup>11</sup> There is no public wastewater treatment plant in Ramsgrange.



**Table 9-4 EPA Urban Wastewater Areas of Concern**

Source: Urban Wastewater Report EPA, Wexford County Council Water Services Section

Settlement	Reason
Arthurstown, Ballyhack, Duncannon and Kilmore Quay	Discharging untreated waste water to the environment.
Ballycanew, Clonroche and Coolgreany	Putting pressures on inland and/or coastal waters.

### 9.6.2 Planned Public Wastewater Projects

The planned upgrades to the Irish Water public wastewater facilities are listed in Table 9-5. Some of these projects will address the EPA's issues relating to Arthurstown, Ballyhack, Duncannon and Kilmore Quay.

**Table 9-5 Irish Water Investment Plan Public Wastewater Projects 2020-2024<sup>12</sup>**

Settlement	Project Description
Kilmore Quay Village and Environs Waste Water Outfall	Provision for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to protect environment and quality of receiving waters, increase capacity and facilitate future growth. Completion expected Q1, 2024.
Duncannon WWTP (to include Arthurstown and Ballyhack)	Provision for the WWTP to protect environment and quality of receiving waters, increase capacity and facilitate future growth. Completion expected Q1 2023.
Enniscorthy WWTP	Upgrade of WWTP to protect environment and quality of receiving waters and facilitate growth. Construction completed and WWTP upgrade is commissioned and operational.
Enniscorthy Main Drainage	Upgrade of the foul collection network in the town of Enniscorthy, Co Wexford.
Wexford Town Distillery Road PS Upgrade - WW Network	Provision of infrastructure to facilitate growth and address existing capacity issues by increasing the capacity of the wastewater network entering the existing WWTP.

<sup>12</sup> The projects and programmes listed are expected to be either commenced, progressed or completed during the 2020-2024 period. This list is continuously being refined and is subject to budget, technical and environmental constraints, as well as statutory approvals.

The following projects also form part of the Capital Investment Programme (CIP) 2020 – 2024. These projects have been re prioritised by Irish Water due to financial restraints and are now very unlikely to be delivered within the lifetime of the current CIP:

- 1) The Fethard-on-Sea WWTP was due to be delivered in 2022 but is now unlikely to be built before 2025.
- 2) An upgrade to the Slaney water intake in Clohaston Enniscorthy has been granted planning permission but is unlikely to be constructed within the current CIP.
- 3) The Ferns WWTP upgrade will probably complete design within the CIP but will not go to construction.

While there is sufficient headroom in the Level 1 and Level 2 settlements to accommodate the planned population and economic growth for those locations during the lifetime of the Plan, there are still significant deficiencies, particularly in our large and small villages. These deficiencies will undermine the ability of the Council to achieve the implementation of growth targets and objectives set by the NPF, in particular, NPO 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 18a and 18b. Accordingly, it remains a priority of the Council that Irish Water aligns their work programme with the Plan's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy to secure the NPO objectives and address possible risks of pollution and environmental damage.

### 9.6.3. Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme

NPO 18b in the NPF introduced the concept of a programme for 'new homes in small towns and villages'. This programme will be developed with local authorities, public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own home and live in small towns and villages.

The Council welcomes this programme, and its potential to re-invigorate our large and small villages and to offer a much needed alternative to one-off rural housing which is a significant pressure point in the county. While all of our smaller towns and villages would benefit from this programme, the candidate settlements are listed in Table 9-6.

**Table 9-6 Candidate Settlements for the New Homes in Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme**

Settlement	Settlement Level
Wellingtonbridge	3b
Campile	3b
Adamstown	4
Ballindaggin	4
Ballycanew	4
Camolin	4
Clongeen	4
Killinerin	4
Oilgate	4
Tagoat	4
The Ballagh	4
Davidstown	5(1)

Communal private waste water treatment plants will not be considered for residential developments. Private waste water treatment plants will be considered in exceptional circumstances for commercial and tourism uses. The Council will give careful consideration to such proposals, and at minimum will only consider proposals where the communal wastewater treatment system will be retained in single ownership. This is required to ensure that the system will be properly maintained. The Council must also be satisfied that the development complies with all relevant EPA guidance, EU Directives and the normal planning and environmental criteria.

### 9.6.4 Individual Private Wastewater Systems in Rural Areas

As identified in Figure 9-2 47.9% of private households in the county were served by a private individual septic tank or other type of individual treatment system. This rate was considerably higher than the State average of 28.8%. This is reflective of our rural settlement pattern, the high dependency on individual treatment systems and the lack of investment in public waste water treatment plants in the rural villages of the county.

The provision of on-site wastewater treatment systems to serve new one-off rural housing must be carefully considered as these systems place significant pressure on water quality. In this regard:

- Particular protection will be afforded to the catchments of 'high' status surface water bodies in order to protect this status and ensure there is no deterioration of water quality. The development of the Blue Dot Catchments for the protection of high status waters will play an important role in this<sup>13</sup>. The extension of the grant scheme for repairs, upgrade and replacement of domestic waste-water treatment systems will give priority to high-status catchments.
- Equally, these developments will be carefully considered in areas where the water quality status is less than 'good' (in order not to deteriorate water quality further in pursuit of the WFD objective to achieve at least 'good' status in all our waterbodies by 2027).
- The same approach will apply to ground water bodies in the county in order to maintain 'good' status and improve the 'poor' status ground waterbodies.

For new development where it is proposed to serve a dwelling house with a domestic wastewater treatment system, it must be demonstrated that the proposed onsite system can safely and adequately dispose of the effluent in accordance with the Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving Single Houses (EPA 2021) and complies with the Water Framework Directive and the provisions of the relevant River Basin Management Plan.

It is essential that these systems are properly installed, regularly monitored and maintained so as protect public health and the environment. The Council will continue to carry out inspections under the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems-the aims of which is to protect human health and water quality from the risks posed by these systems.

### 9.6.5 Wastewater Treatment Systems and Private Wells

Many private wells are at risk of contamination from sources such as wastewater treatments systems. Recommended separation distances have been established between onsite wastewater treatment systems (specifically the percolation area or polishing filter) and wells or boreholes. Table B.3 of the EPA's Code of Practice

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<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 10 Environmental Management for further details on the Blue Dot Programme/Pristine Waters.

specifies the recommended minimum distances taking into consideration a number of factors. These factors include the permeability of the soil/subsoil, the permeability of the bedrock, the flow direction of the groundwater and the level of treatment of the effluent. Distances may be increased where the bedrock is shallow, preferential flow paths are present or the effluent and bacteria enter the bedrock rapidly.

The Council may consider alternative individual treatment systems for existing developments only, where ground conditions are such that the existing system, per the EPA Code of Practice, would not treat effluent satisfactorily (such alternatives may include zero discharge systems).

## Wastewater Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective WW01

To require that all wastewater generated is collected, treated and discharged after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner, having regard to the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance and subject to complying with the provisions and objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive, the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any updated version during the lifetime of the Plan, the Pollution Reduction Programmes for Shellfish Waters, Urban Wastewater Water Directive and the Habitats Directive.

### Objective WW02

To require climate adaptation to be demonstrated in the location, siting and design of new waste water infrastructure developments.

### Objective WW03

In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and the Economic Development Strategy, the Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's *Water Services Strategic Plan and Capital Investment Plan*, to ensure the provision of sufficient wastewater capacity to serve all lands zoned

for development and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of strategic wastewater treatment plant upgrades and any other smaller, localised wastewater treatment plant upgrades required during the lifetime of the plan.

#### **Objective WW04**

To facilitate Irish Water in the delivery of public wastewater services which address the residential, commercial and industrial needs of the county subject to compliance with all relevant EU and national legislation and guidelines and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### **Objective WW05**

To work alongside Irish Water to facilitate the wastewater projects identified in Table 9-5 and any other projects that may arise during the lifetime of this Plan subject to compliance with all relevant EU and national legislation and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### **Objective WW06**

To ensure that proposals in the coastal and maritime area do not significantly adversely affect existing and planned wastewater management and treatment infrastructure (where a consent, authorisation or lease has been granted to or formally applied for by Irish Water) unless compatibility with such infrastructure can be satisfactorily demonstrated or there are exceptional circumstances.

#### **Objective WW07**

To work with Irish Water, other public infrastructure agencies and local communities to develop the programme for 'new homes in small towns and villages' as set out in NPO 18b of the National Planning Framework for the settlements listed in Table 9-6. This programme will provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages in the county and is subject to complying with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective WW08

To facilitate the connection of existing developments to public wastewater services wherever feasible and subject to connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available.

### Objective WW09

To ensure that development proposals comply with the standards and requirements of the Irish Water: Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure, December (2020), and any updated version of this document during the lifetime of the Plan.

### Objective WW10

To consider the development of private wastewater treatment systems to serve commercial and tourism uses (employment generating developments) outside of serviced settlements and in rural areas where the system is in single ownership and where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed wastewater treatment system is in accordance with the 'Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal System Serving Single Houses, EPA 2021 and Wastewater Treatment Manuals – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centre and Hotels, EPA 1999', and any updated versions of these documents during the lifetime of the Plan, the Water Framework Directive, the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, the Habitats and Shellfish Waters Directives and relevant Pollution Reduction Programmes.

### Objective WW11

To consider the development of single dwelling houses only where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed wastewater treatment system is in accordance with the 'Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal System Serving Single Houses, EPA 2021' and any updated version of this document during the lifetime of the Plan, and maintained in accordance with approved manufacturer's specifications and subject to compliance with the Water Framework Directive, the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, the Habitats and Shellfish Waters Directives and relevant Pollution Reduction Programmes.

### Objective WW12

To work with Irish Water to examine the feasibility of connecting unsewered areas, including individual properties and premises served by on-site wastewater treatment facilities to existing and planned wastewater networks.

### Objective WW13

To protect existing wastewater infrastructure, including way leaves and buffer zones, from inappropriate development and zoning.

### Objective WW14

To facilitate the provision of appropriate sites for public water infrastructure, as required and to protect those sites and associated wayleaves and buffer zones, from inappropriate development and zoning.

## 9.7 Waste Management Infrastructure

One of the key drivers for a sustainable economy is the concept of a 'circular' economy which aims to reduce waste and ensure that materials are used as efficiently as possible. Being more circular involves getting the most from products by using them as fully as possible; by sharing items with others to re-use where possible; and by increasing our levels of recycling to at least recover the value of the materials used to make these products. For businesses, the circular economy reduces costs, improves the raw material supply chain and offers opportunities such as new business models and markets. For individuals, the circular economy offers a sustainable lifestyle with reduced environmental impact and lower household bills<sup>14</sup>.

The NPF, through NPO 56, aims to sustainably manage waste generation, invest in different types of waste treatment and support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, to support a healthy environment, economy and society. The RSES supports the development of a circular economy, and will support the use of smart technologies and innovative approaches

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.epa.ie/mobile/irelandsenvironment/sustainableeconomy/>



to waste management which promote waste prevention and increased reuse, recycling and recovery of waste, with additional environmental benefits.

The European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan: 'A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner More Competitive Europe', launched in March 2020, forms one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal. The New Circular Economy Action Plan builds on the aims and achievements of the first Circular Economy Action Plan 'Closing the Loop' which was launched in 2015.

The Southern Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 (SRWMP) embraces the circular economy approach and provides the framework for the prevention and management of waste in a safe and sustainable manner. The targets of the plan include a 1% reduction in the quantity of household waste generated per capita over the period of the plan, achieve a recycling rate of 50% of managed municipal waste by 2020 and reduce to 0% the direct disposal of unprocessed residual municipal waste to landfill from 2016 onwards in favour of higher value pre-treatment processes and indigenous recovery practices.

Some of the key measures identified by the SRWMP for local authorities include:

- Encourage more reuse and repair activities in the region, particularly at civic amenity facilities;
- Enforce the regulations related to household and commercial waste to tackle the problem of unmanaged waste and other issues;
- Plan and develop higher quality waste treatment infrastructure including new reprocessing, biological treatment, thermal recovery and pre-treatment facilities;
- Grow the biological treatment sector, in particular composting and anaerobic digestion, by supporting the development of new facilities.

While the collection of waste is essentially privatised in Ireland, local authorities have a key role in the provision and management of civic amenity and bring back infrastructure. Local authorities are responsible for the aftercare of a significant number of closed and historic landfill sites<sup>15</sup>.

As a planning authority, the Council's role is limited to guiding the location of new waste management facilities; setting the relevant development management

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<sup>15</sup> Ireland's Environment-An Assessment, EPA, 2016 page 95.

standards and ensuring these developments comply with the relevant EU and national legislation and guidelines and are in accordance the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

### 9.7.1 Waste Management Infrastructure

Waste management infrastructure includes bring centres, civic amenity centres, waste transfer stations, material recovery facilities, biological waste treatment facilities, authorised treatment facilities for end-of-life vehicles and landfills. Table 9.7 provides a description of the nature of some of these facilities.

The most significant shift in residual waste treatment has been the shift from disposal to landfill to energy recovery. There is no operating landfill in the county, and the existing landfill at Holmestown is currently closed. The Council operates a recycling and waste centre at Holmestown and also operates recycling centres at Enniscorthy Town, New Ross Town and Gorey Town. These centres cater for the recycling of a number of waste products including electrical goods, textiles, waste oil, oil filters and scrap metals. The Council also operates 110 bring sites catering mainly for the recycling of glass bottles/jars and drink cans.

**Table 9.7 Types of Waste Management Facilities**

Type of Waste Facility	Description
Waste Transfer Station	This is a facility where waste materials are taken from smaller collection vehicles and placed in larger vehicles to transport to other waste facilities for recovery, treatment or disposal.
Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)	This facility recovers recyclable material from waste. A clean MRF is a facility which separates dry recyclables into separate recycling streams. A dirty MRF is a facility which separates both the dry recyclable fraction and the organic fraction of waste.
Waste Recovery Facility	This facility refers to a specific process involving the removal of recyclable material at a materials recovery facility, and composting the organic waste to stabilise it.

Type of Waste Facility	Description
Waste to Energy	This is a method of converting waste into a usable form of energy, usually through combustion or decomposition. This would include the anaerobic digestion of organic waste.
Waste Disposal	Through the promotion of recycling and recovery the amount of residual waste disposed to landfill should be reduced. At present there is no licensed landfill in the county.
Authorised Treatment Facilities for End-of-Life Vehicles	These are facilities where the collection, storage and treatment of end-of-life vehicles may take place. Such facilities must operate under a waste licence or waste permit.

### 9.7.2 Sludge Management Facilities

The provision of authorised facilities for the treatment and management of sludge from both public and private wastewater plants is important. Wastewater sludge is what remains in a wastewater treatment plant after the treated water has been discharged to either ground or surface waters. It is made up mainly of energy rich organic matter that has been removed during the treatment process and is a valuable by-product of the wastewater treatment process. Further treatment is required to this sludge to ensure the safe and efficient re-use or disposal of this resource. There are a number of sludge treatment options including anaerobic digestion<sup>16</sup>, composting<sup>17</sup> and lime stabilisation<sup>18</sup>.

Irish Water’s National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan 2016-2021 (NWSMP) indicates that at present 98% of wastewater sludge is treated to produce a biosolids<sup>19</sup> product, which after being processed to an approved standard, can be used beneficially as a fertiliser/soil conditioner in agriculture. Irish Water estimates that the quantity of wastewater sludge generated is expected to increase by more than 80% by 2040 as new and upgraded plants are completed to treat wastewater. In this regard, Irish Water proposes to expand on the provision of ‘sludge centres’, to upgrade existing sludge centres to provide anaerobic digestion, where appropriate, and in particular to expand the number of what are termed, satellite dewatering sites<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Anaerobic digestion is a biological sludge treatment process during which microorganisms break down biodegradable material in the absence of oxygen producing a stable sludge product and biogas which is combusted to generate heat and electricity.  
<sup>17</sup> Composting is the mixing of Nitrogen rich (sludge) and Carbon rich (wood chippings, straw etc) to ensure that predetermined quality targets are met.  
<sup>18</sup> Alkaline stabilisation is the treatment of sludge by the addition of an alkaline product, usually lime, to raise the pH of the sludge to ensure predetermined quality targets are met.  
<sup>19</sup> Biosolids are wastewater solids that have been treated to an approved standard using treatment processes such as advanced digestion, composting, thermal drying or lime stabilisation and are suitable for use in agriculture.  
<sup>20</sup> Satellite dewatering sites act as ‘intermediate centres’ at which liquid sludge is dewatered, that is, water is eliminated from sludge using mechanical dewatering to reduce sludge volume to reduce the number of traffic movements and the cost of sludge transportation. These sites are typically located at medium to large wastewater treatment plants.

There is currently one Sludge Hub Centre<sup>21</sup> in operation in the county, at Wexford Town. This hub has import facilities for liquid and cake sludge and treatment by thermal drying<sup>22</sup>. This sludge hub was completed in 2003 and is considered to have sufficient capacity for the foreseeable future. The Sludge Hub Centre in Wexford currently accepts imports of liquid sludge. In order to reduce liquid sludge transport costs and to allow for acceptance of septic tank sludge, the NWSMP recommends the development of satellite dewatering sites with liquid sludge import facilities at Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey.

With regard to lime stabilisation, it is the intention that, through the Sludge Hub projects, some form of heat treatment could be provided at these sites which would eliminate the need for lime stabilisation.

Sludge management is governed by waste legislation based on European Directives and national legislation. Sludge from wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks can only be used in agriculture in accordance with the Waste Management (Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) Regulations, 1998, the Waste Management (Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) Regulations, 2001 and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Codes of Good Practice for the Use of Biosolids in Agriculture. These regulations and codes of practice require that sludge is only used in accordance with a Nutrient Management Plan, which the Council are responsible for assessing.

### 9.7.3 Location of Waste Management Infrastructure

The provision of this infrastructure is important in the interests of public health and protecting the environment, and the Council will continue to facilitate suitable waste management facilities at appropriate locations throughout the county ranging from recycling banks and bring centres to waste transfer stations.

In general, the Council will direct waste management facilities such as waste transfer stations, waste material and recovery facilities, sludge management facilities and anaerobic digester units and authorised treatment facilities for end-of-life vehicles to appropriately zoned lands. This approach will not apply to smaller facilities such as recycling banks and bring centres. Proposals on zoned land must comply with the criteria outlined in Objective WM05.

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<sup>21</sup> A Sludge Hub Centre is a centralised regional sludge treatment facility which provides for treatment of wastewater sludge to produce biosolids and is typically located at large wastewater treatment plants.

<sup>22</sup> Thermal drying is undertaken by direct or indirect application of an external heat source to evaporate water from the sludge.

The Council will only consider the location of these facilities outside of zoned lands where extensive lands are required, where they are related to existing or planned Irish Water sites, or where the characteristics of the facility are such that a rural location is necessary to achieve necessary separation distances from residential properties or where the development is necessary for the proper implementation of the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021. With regard to the provision of sludge management facilities, these facilities are best suited to sites of existing public wastewater treatment facilities due to the nature and characteristics of existing operations on these sites and the need to strictly control the treatment of sludge.

Where a location outside of zoned land is proposed, it will be necessary for the criteria outlined in Objective WM06 to be complied with.

#### 9.7.4 Hazardous Waste

The current National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (NHWMP) 2014-2020 sets out the priorities to improve the management of hazardous waste. There is no commercial hazardous waste landfill in the State, and there are limited hazardous waste treatment operations (these are mainly used for oil recovery, healthcare waste treatment and solvent reclamation), meaning that Ireland is dependent on export for treatment of many hazardous waste streams. A progress report on the plan (October 2018) found that while many recommended actions had been advanced, stronger focus is needed in the areas of hazardous waste prevention and the development of hazardous waste management infrastructure to allow Ireland to become more self-sufficient in the treatment and management of its hazardous waste<sup>23</sup>. The Council will continue to require that hazardous waste is disposed of in a safe manner in accordance with the NHWMP and any subsequent amendments or revisions of this Plan.

#### 9.7.5 Construction and Demolition Waste

Construction and demolition waste (C&D waste) is generally associated with waste materials arising from construction, demolition and renovation activities. Landfill has traditionally been the main receiving point for the disposal of waste associated

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/waste/>

with construction and demolition building materials but reuse and recycling of C&D waste is now recognised as a more sustainable alternative. The EC (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011 sets a 70% target for the re-use, recycling and recovery of man-made C&D waste in Ireland by 2020.

The Council will have regard to the requirements of the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects (DEHLG, 2006) and any updated version of the guidelines when assessing planning applications for developments which will generate significant levels of C&D waste.

### 9.7.6 Agricultural Waste

This is the waste generated by agricultural activities and includes animal slurry, spent mushroom compost and straw. It must be disposed of in a safe manner to prevent the pollution of ground waters and surface waters and to protect public health in accordance with the Nitrates Directive and the Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations 2017 (SI 605 of 2017).

### 9.7.7 Litter Management

According to the EPA, the presence of litter and fly-tipped waste in the environment is one of the most visible and undesirable aspects of waste generation. While local communities and local authorities are actively involved in clean-up projects across the country, it is clear that enforcement and resources are still required to tackle ongoing litter and fly tipping problems.

## Waste Management Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective WM01

To sustainably manage waste generation, support the investment in different types of waste treatment and support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, to support a sustainable and healthy environment, economy and society.

### Objective WM02

To implement the provisions of the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021, and any updated version published during the lifetime of the Plan, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective WM03

To support the development of appropriately sited waste recycling and recovery facilities, such as bring centres, civic amenity centres, waste transfer stations, material recovery facilities, community recycling facilities and waste recovery facilities and authorised treatment facilities for end-of-life vehicles as a means of facilitating a reduction in the quantity of waste that goes to landfill disposal sites subject to compliance with the locational requirements for waste management facilities contained in Section 9.7.3 and subject to compliance with Objectives WM05 or WM06, normal planning and environmental criteria and the relevant development management standards set out in Volume 2.

### Objective WM04

To encourage and facilitate the development of new alternatives and technological advances in relation to waste management such as Organic Waste to Energy/ Combined Heat and Power schemes subject to compliance with the locational requirements for waste management facilities contained in Section 9.7.3 and subject to compliance with Objective WM05 or Objective WM06 and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective WM05

Where it is proposed to develop waste management facilities on zoned land, it will be necessary for the following criteria to be satisfied:

- The proposal should comply with the zoning objective for the subject lands.
- The need for the proposal at the particular location, in particular having regard to

the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021, the Irish Water National Sludge Waste Management Plan 2016-2021, and any future updated versions of these plans produced during the lifetime of the Plan;

- The site should be located outside of a flood risk area.
- There should be no adverse impacts on amenities.
- There should be a minimal risk of pollution.
- An appropriate buffer zone shall be provided around the site in order to protect the amenities of adjoining lands and properties. This buffer zone will be determined by the Planning Authority, in consultation with the EPA, where relevant.
- The development should comply with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any future updated version during the lifetime of the Plan.
- The development must comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

### Objective WM06

Where it is proposed to develop waste management facilities on unzoned land, the following criteria should be satisfied:

- The need for the proposal at the particular location, in particular having regard to the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021, the Irish Water National Sludge Waste Management Plan 2016-2021, and any future updated versions of these plans produced during the lifetime of the Plan.
- The site should be within or as near as possible to Wexford Town and Gorey Town (as Key towns) or Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town (as Large Towns).
- The site should be located outside of a flood risk area.
- There should be no adverse impacts on amenities.
- There should be a minimal risk of pollution.
- The development should comply with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any future updated version during the lifetime of the Plan.
- The development must comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.



### Objective WM07

To support the provision of infrastructure for composting and other forms of processing for bio-waste such as anaerobic digesters subject to complying with the location requirements for waste management facilities in Section 9.7.3, Objective WM05 or WM06 and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective WM08

To restrict the provision of sludge management facilities to the sites of existing public wastewater treatment facilities due to the nature and characteristics of existing operations at these sites and the need to strictly control the treatment of sludge.

### Objective WM09

To support the reuse of Construction and Demolition waste and to encourage the development of Construction and Demolition recycling facilities at appropriate sites, including quarries, subject to complying with normal planning and environmental criteria and the relevant development management standards set out in Volume 2. Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plans will be required for developments specified in Volume 2 Development Management Manual or as otherwise may be requested by the Planning Authority.

### Objective WM10

To require that the disposal of agricultural waste is carried out in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner having regard to the protection of the environment and public health and in compliance with the Nitrates Directive, Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations 2017 (SI 605 of 2017), the Habitats Directives and any other relevant statutory provisions.

### Objective WM11

To protect and maintain the excellent quality of 'High' status water bodies and to raise awareness and provide support for land owners in these areas under the Blue Dot

Catchment Programme established by the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021.

### Objective WM12

To have regard to Irish Water's National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan 2016-2021 and any updated version published during the lifetime of the Plan, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective WM13

To ensure that the treatment and management of sludge waste is carried out in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner having regard to the protection of the environment and public health and in compliance with the Waste Framework Directive, the Nitrates Directive, the Waste Management Act and all relevant statutory instruments.

### Objective WM14

To use regulatory enforcement powers available to the Council under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and under the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) to address unauthorised waste facilities and the illegal disposal of waste in the county.

### Objective WM15

To require the appropriate provision for the management of waste within developments, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of such waste in accordance with the relevant development management standards set out in Volume 2.

### Objective WM16

To require the provision of adequately sized public recycling facilities at suitable locations in association with new commercial developments and in tandem with significant change of use/extensions of existing commercial developments where

appropriate and in accordance with the development management standards set out in Volume 2.

## 9.8 Historic Landfills

The Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 524 of 2008) provide for the certification of historic unlicensed waste disposal sites in operation between 1977 and 1996. The Council has identified 12 such historic unlicensed landfills in the county.

### Historic Landfills Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective HL01

To have regard to the Code of Practice: Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites (Environmental Protection Agency, 2007) when zoning lands for development and/or considering future developments on or in the vicinity of identified historic landfill sites.

#### Objective HL02

To implement remediation plans for the identified historic landfills in the county.

## 9.9 Graveyards and Crematoria

The Council operates 12 Open Burial Grounds and maintains approximately 112 old, closed burial grounds throughout County Wexford. These burial grounds range in age from several hundred years old to the newly extended burial ground in Enniscorthy Town.

The Council provides technical, and where feasible financial assistance, to local communities to maintain parish operated burial grounds. Proposals for extensions to

existing burial grounds or for a new burial ground shall have regard to the Council's Burial Ground Strategy 2017 and Bye Laws – All Burial Grounds 2017, and will be considered by the Planning Authority at appropriate locations in the county subject to complying with normal planning and environmental criteria.

Cremation offers an alternative to burial. There is currently no human crematorium in the county. The development of a crematorium, together with the provision of a chapel/funeral service home within the same grounds, will be considered by the Planning Authority at appropriate locations in the county subject to complying with normal planning and environmental criteria. Proposals for pet crematoria will be assessed in the same manner.

## Graveyards and Crematoria Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective GC01

To facilitate the provision of burial grounds or extensions to existing burial grounds, including natural, woodland and green burial grounds, in cooperation with local communities, at appropriate locations throughout the county subject to complying with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective GC02

To facilitate the provision of new or extended funeral homes which are designed to sensitively meet the needs of the service subject to complying with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained Volume 2.

### Objective GC03

To consider the provision of crematoria and associated facilities including a chapel/funeral service home at appropriate locations in the county subject to complying

with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

#### Objective GC04

To ensure that biodiversity of existing burial grounds is protected and that actions are taken to increase biodiversity value in existing and proposed burial grounds in the county.

## 9.10 Telecommunications and Information and Communications Technology Strategy

The Council is committed to the development of high quality, high speed telecommunications networks and infrastructure throughout the county and will maximise the opportunities that it offers for our urban and rural areas and for our residents and workers. However, this must be managed to ensure a balance between the provision of this infrastructure in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenity and environmental quality.

The importance of telecommunications and Information and Communications Technology (ICT), including international connectivity, is critically important to support the future needs of society and enterprise across the country. The importance of this infrastructure transcends many of the NPF NSOs, in particular, NSO 3 Strengthened rural economies and communities and NSO 6 A Strong economy supported by enterprise, innovation and skills. The NPF acknowledges the importance in the short-term of rolling out the National Broadband Plan (NBP)(NPO 24) as a means for developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development for those who live and work in rural areas.

The NPF also highlights the opportunities offered by harnessing the data economy and in this regard prioritises the roll out of the NBP, the enhancement of international fibre communications links and the promotion of Ireland as a sustainable destination for ICT infrastructure such as data centres and associated economic activities.

The Connectivity Strategy in the RSES seeks to enhance regional accessibility by developing high quality digital connectivity throughout the region. It emphasises the critical importance of enhanced quality and the provision of digital and mobile telecommunications and infrastructure in the revitalisation of cities, towns, villages and rural areas across the region.

The RSES supports the development of 'Smart' cities and towns which goes beyond the use of ICT. It means smarter transport networks, upgraded water supply and waste disposal facilities, more efficient ways to light and heat buildings, enhanced public administration, safer public spaces and meeting the needs of the ageing population. This will require on-going investment in broadband, fibre technologies, wireless networks and integrated infrastructure. The RSES acknowledges the steps taken by Enniscorthy Town towards the achievement of Smart Town status with the establishment of a FAB LAB in 2017, the development of a Technology Park for smart businesses and the establishment of the NZEB training centre.

The Council will continue to support appropriate telecommunications and ICT proposals that will ensure and enhance connectivity of Ireland's rural and island communities to high quality telecommunications networks and will support proposals where evidence is provided of an approach to development and activity that integrates the needs of cables and pipelines.

### 9.10.1 Communication Masts and Antennae

The location of masts remains a contentious issue and one which is and will be carefully considered by the Planning Authority. In general:

- In the vicinity of larger towns masts should be located in industrial estates or on industrially zoned land. The development of masts in commercial or retail areas will be considered.
- Free-standing masts will generally not be located in a residential area, beside schools or community buildings. Only when all other alternatives are either unavailable or unsuitable, will such a location be considered by the Planning Authority.
- In rural areas they will not generally be favourably considered in Uplands, Distinctive, River Valley and Coastal landscape character units except in accordance with Objective TC11.

The sharing of masts with other telecommunications operators will be encouraged as means of maximising investment and reducing the visual impacts associated with this type of development. Where it is not possible to share a support structure, applicants will be encouraged to share a site or to site adjacently so that masts and antenna may be clustered.

### 9.10.2 Broadband

The availability of a high-quality, high speed broadband network to all businesses and households is very important for the economic and social progress of our county. The targets of the NBP include:

- 70 Mbps -100 Mbps available to at least 50% of the population with a majority having access to 100 Mbps.
- At least 40Mbps and in many cases faster speeds to at least a further 20% of the population and potentially as much as 35% around smaller towns and villages.
- A minimum of 30 Mbps available to all, no matter how rural and remote.

The roll out of the NBP in the county is being achieved through a combination of commercial investment by the telecommunications sector and State intervention to provide high-speed broadband to the unserved parts of the county where the market has failed due to factors such as low population density. As of Q2, 2019, and out of the 82,909 premises in the county, 74% fall under the remit of commercial deployment and 26% under the remit of State intervention<sup>24</sup>.

## Telecommunication and ICT Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TC01

To facilitate the delivery of high-speed, high capacity digital and mobile infrastructure at appropriate locations in the county and facilitate the continued roll out of the National Broadband Plan as a means for developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development for those who

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.dcae.gov.ie/documents/NBP\\_MAP\\_COUNTY\\_Wexford.pdf](https://www.dcae.gov.ie/documents/NBP_MAP_COUNTY_Wexford.pdf) (viewed 3rd April 2020).

live and work in urban and rural areas in the county and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective TC02

To support proposals that will ensure existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society and enterprise in Ireland, and to support appropriate proposals that will ensure and enhance connectivity of Ireland's rural communities to high quality telecommunications networks, and to support proposals where evidence is provided of an approach to development and activity that integrates the needs of cables and pipelines.

### Objective TC03

To support the implementation of a Digital Strategy for the county, seek investment for the actions identified, and support the role and initiatives of the Mobile and Broadband Taskforce in addressing digital and mobile coverage blackspots and rural communications connectivity.

### Objective TC04

To support the development of Enniscorthy Town and other towns, villages and rural areas in the county as 'Smart' locations, and to facilitate the deployment of disruptive technologies and smart infrastructure in these locations.

### Objective TC05

To support the provision of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate the development of remote working hubs in settlements in line with Harnessing Digital – the Digital Ireland Framework and the National Development Plan.

### Objective TC06

To support investment for initiatives in smart technology as an enabler for education and life-long learning in all locations.



### Objective TC07

To have regard to Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures- Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1996), Circular Letter of 2012 (PL07/12) and any updated guidelines published during the lifetime of the Plan.

### Objective TC08

To co-operate with telecommunications service providers in the development of this infrastructure, having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective TC09

To require co-location and clustering of new masts and support structures on existing sites, unless a fully documented case is submitted explaining the precise circumstances against co-location and clustering. Where it is not possible to share a support structure, the applicant should, where possible, share the site or an adjacent site so that the antennae may be clustered.

### Objective TC10

To adopt a presumption against the erection of antennae in proximity to residential areas, schools and community buildings.

### Objective TC11

To minimise, and avoid where possible, the development of masts and antennae within the following areas:

- Prominent locations in the Distinctive, Uplands, River Valley and Coastal landscape character units.
- Locations which impede or detract from existing public view points to/from Distinctive, Uplands, River Valley and Coastal landscape character units, and rivers, estuaries or the sea.

- Historic landscapes and battlefields.
- Areas within or adjoining the curtilage of protected structures.
- Areas on or within the setting of archaeological sites.
- Within or adjacent to Natura 2000 sites.

The Council may consider an exemption to this objective where:

- An overriding technical need for the equipment has been demonstrated and which cannot be met by the sharing of existing authorised equipment in the area, and
- The equipment is of a scale and is sited, designed and landscaped in a manner which minimises adverse visual impacts on the subject landscape unit.

### Objective TC12

To ensure the location of telecommunications structures minimise and/or mitigate any adverse impacts on communities, the natural and built environment and public rights of way.

### Objective TC13

To require ducting for broadband fibre connections to be provided during the installation of services, in all new commercial and housing schemes and during the carrying out of any work to roads or rail lines.

### Objective TC14

To encourage the provision of WiFi zones in public buildings.

### Objective TC15

To support the relocation or replacement of existing telecommunications infrastructure where the proposed location or form will be more suited in terms of visual amenity, residential amenity, the environment, biodiversity and built or natural heritage.

## 9.11 Flood Risk and Surface Water Management

Flooding is a natural process that can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations. It can have significant impacts on human activities, and in addition to economic and social damage, floods can have severe environmental consequences. Flood risk management and climate change are challenging issues that require a direct response by the Council. With a substantial length of coastline, low lying coastal areas and estuaries as well as inland rivers and streams there are already significant impacts. The additional impacts placed on our environment from the predicted increase in sea levels and river flows will be significant.

There is therefore a need to manage and minimise future flood risk. Land use management and spatial planning has a key role to play with respect to flood risk management, in particular in ensuring that future development avoids or minimises increases in flood risk.

### 9.11.1 Flood Risk

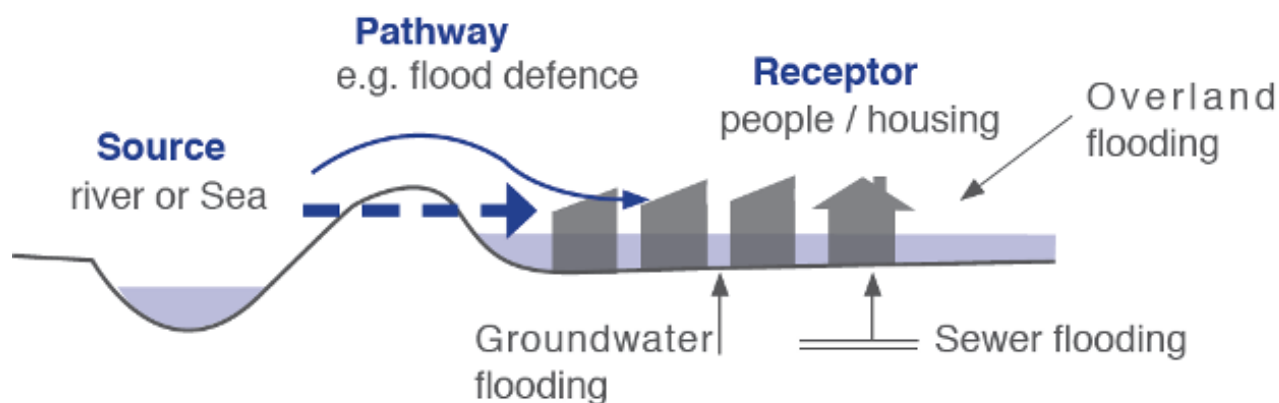
Flood risk is the damage that may be expected to occur as a result of flooding at a given location. Flood risk is generally accepted to be a combination of the likelihood (or probability) of flooding and the potential consequences arising. Flood risk can be expressed in terms of the following relationship:

Flood Risk = Probability of Flooding x Consequences of Flooding

The assessment of flood risk requires an understanding of the sources, the flow path of floodwater and the people and property that can be affected. The source - pathway - receptor model, shown in Figure 9-3 illustrates this and is a widely used environmental model to assess and inform the management of risk.

**Figure 9-3 Source Pathway Receptor Model**

Source: Figure A1 Flood Risk Management –Guidelines for Planning Authorities Technical Appendices.



### 9.11.2 Policy Context

#### EU Flood Directive 2007/60/EC

The Directive requires member states to carry out preliminary flood risk assessment of their river basins and coastal areas to identify areas where potential significant flood risk exists. Member states are then required to prepare flood hazard and flood risk maps for the identified areas and prepare flood risk management plans for these areas.

#### Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS)

The National CFRAM programme commenced in 2011 and is the principle response to EU 'Flood' Directive (2007/60/EC) on the assessment and management of flood risk. It was transcribed into Irish law under SI No.122 of 2010. The OPW is the lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland and is the national competent authority for the EU 'Flood' Directive.

Detailed flood maps were published in 2014-15 and flood management plans for these areas were finalised in 2019. Within County Wexford, the CFRAM targeted areas of significant flooding (Areas for Further Assessment) included the settlements/ areas of Wexford Town, New Ross Town, Gorey Town, Enniscorthy Town, Courtown, Bunclody, Blackwater, Kilmore, the South Slobs and the North Slobs. The CFRAM

management plans set out the long term strategies and measures required to manage risk in these areas. Both the mapping and the plans have been incorporated into the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that informed the preparation of the Plan (see Volume 11).

## The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines

These guidelines, which were published in 2009 and subsequently amended under Circular PL2/2014, describe best flood risk practice in land use and spatial planning. The Guidelines outline that the aim of flood risk management is to minimise the level of flood risk to people, business, infrastructure and the environment through the identification and management of existing and potential future flood risks.

The guidelines identify the three key principles that should be applied when considering flood risk:

- Avoid the risk where possible.
- Substitute less vulnerable uses where avoidance is not possible.
- Mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

The guidelines require planning authorities to address flood risk management in their respective land use plans by preparing strategic flood risk assessments and in planning applications through site specific flood risk assessments.

### 9.11.3 Sources of Flood Risk in County Wexford

#### Fluvial

Fluvial flooding is associated with the exceedance of river channel capacity during higher flows. The process of flooding on watercourses depends on a number of characteristics associated with the catchment including; geographical location and variation in rainfall, steepness of the channel and surrounding floodplain and infiltration and runoff rates associated with urban and rural catchments. Additional flood risk may present itself at bridges and culverts where blockage can lead to a local increase in water levels and exacerbate the impacts of flooding.

## Tidal and Coastal

Tidal and coastal flooding is caused by higher sea levels than normal, predominantly related to storm surges and results in the sea or tidally influenced rivers overflowing onto the land. This type of flooding is influenced by high tides and storm surges caused by low atmospheric pressure, exacerbated by high winds and wave action. With a significant length of coastline, many settlements in the County are sensitive to the impacts of tidal flooding, many in combination with fluvial flooding. Coastal communities will also be particularly vulnerable to sea level rise and increased coastal erosion.

## Surface water

Flooding of land from surface water runoff is usually caused by intense rainfall that may only last a few hours. The resulting water follows natural valley lines, creating flow paths along roads and through and around developments and ponding in low spots, which often coincide with fluvial floodplains. Any areas at risk from fluvial flooding will almost certainly be at risk from surface water flooding.

## Groundwater

Groundwater flooding occurs when the level of water stored in the ground rises as a result of prolonged rainfall, to meet the ground surface and flows out over it, i.e., when the capacity of this underground reservoir is exceeded. Groundwater flooding tends to be very local and results from the interaction of site-specific factors such as local geology and tidal variations. While water level may rise slowly, groundwater flooding can last for extended periods of time, and as such flooding may often result in significant damage to property and disruption.

### 9.11.4 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

In accordance with the guidelines, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was prepared. The purpose of an SFRA is to provide a broad (wide area) assessment of all types of flood risk to inform strategic land-use planning decisions. The SFRA includes Stage 3 Flood Risk Assessments for the settlements of Bunclody Town and Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane as the Plan includes zoning for both of these settlements. The

approach to zoning, including the application for the sequential approach and the Development Plan Justification Test, was informed by the results of those FRAs.

Future zoning in the county, including the new local area plans for Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and New Ross Town, will be subject to Stage 3 FRAs and the Development Plan Justification Tests before decisions on zoning are made.

The SFRA includes:

- A broad flood risk assessment of the settlements in Levels 1-5 of the settlement hierarchy
- A Stage 3 Flood Risk Assessment of Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane and Bunclody Town to inform land use zoning.
- Updated flood zone mapping to include finalised CFRAM mapping, Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PRFA) fluvial and coasting flood mapping and JBA Consulting fluvial flood zone mapping for the county.
- A defined approach to the assessment of climate change impacts in flood risk management.
- Policies and objectives relating to flood risk management including climate change adaptation.

### 9.11.5 Flood Mapping

The Council will use all available sources of information when screening for flood risk during the preparation of local area plans and when assessing development proposals. These sources include:

- The CFRAM flood zone mapping.
- The OPW National Indicative Fluvial Mapping.
- Fluvial flood zone maps prepared by JBA for the county.
- Flood zone maps prepared for flood relief schemes, e.g. Enniscorthy Town

The SFRA contains a set of flood maps for the county which incorporates some of the above. These maps are available to view on the Council's website. The OPW National Indicative Fluvial Mapping do not form part of the SFRA.

Other flood mapping resources include: the OPW benefitting land maps, mineral alluvial soil mapping and the Ordnance Survey 'lands liable to floods' mapping, Geological Survey Ireland flood mapping and climate research projects such as the GWFlood project and the GWClimate project, flood studies and reports and working knowledge from local authority engineers.

### 9.11.6 Advice Note

Flood hazard and flood risk information is an emerging dataset of information. The flood hazard maps used by the Council may be altered in light of future data and analysis. Therefore, all landowners and developers are advised that Wexford County Council accepts no responsibility for losses or damages arising due to assessments of vulnerability to flooding of lands, uses and developments. Owners, users and developers are advised to take all reasonable measures to assess the vulnerability to flooding.

The Council will screen for flood risk based on flood maps that form part of the SFRA and any future updated versions of these maps or any other future flood maps or risk assessment information provided by the Office of Public Works, or other consultants engaged by the Council for that purpose.

The flood zone maps in the SFRA are from two different sources; JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists and the Office of Public Works. The JBA fluvial flood zone maps for the county are based on broad-scale modelling techniques, with the exception of the fluvial flood zone maps for the area of the Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane Settlement Plan which are based on detailed modelling.

The Office of Public Works maps are divided into two sets. There are detailed flood maps for ten Areas for Further Assessment (AFA) in the county which are based on detailed modelling. The remainder of the county is covered by PFRA flood maps which are based on broad-scale modelling techniques.

The maps and the identified flood zones will require verification at an individual site level where it appears that the detailed or indicative flood zone does not match the actual conditions or the topography of the site. The onus will be on the applicant to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the subject site is not vulnerable to flooding.



This must be proved based on appropriate scientific data and assessment carried out by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional in line with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009).

### 9.11.7 Sequential Approach

The Guidelines recommend a sequential approach to spatial planning, promoting avoidance rather than justification and subsequent mitigation of risk. The Council will apply the sequential approach when zoning lands during the preparation of local area plans and when assessing planning applications for development in areas at risk of flooding.

The sequential approach is a key tool in ensuring that development is directed towards land that has a low risk of flooding. This approach will make use of all available information, including existing flood risk assessments, CFRAMS, flood zone maps and the classification of vulnerability of flooding of different types of development.

### 9.11.8 Justification Tests

The guidelines define the Justification Test as an assessment of whether a development proposal within an area at risk of flooding meets specific criteria for proper planning and sustainable development and demonstrates that it will not be subject to unacceptable risk nor increase flood risk elsewhere. The Justification Test should be applied only where development is within flood risk areas that would be defined as inappropriate under the screening test of the sequential risk based approach<sup>25</sup>. Inappropriate development that does not meet the criteria of the development plan Justification Test should not be considered at the plan-making stage or the development management Justification Test should not be approved within the development management process.

### 9.11.9 Riparian Zones and Flood Risk Management

River corridors and their associated riparian zones are important for flood risk

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<sup>25</sup> The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009), p.60.

management and water protection. The riparian zone needs to be considered as an integrated part of a river, and any unnecessary interference with this zone can be damaging to flood attenuation and flood management features of the zone. The Planning Authority will have regard to the guidelines set out in the document 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (Inland Fisheries Ireland 2020) when considering development proposals in the vicinity of rivers and streams. The design, layout and functions of the riparian zone is also discussed in detail in Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure and this should be consulted when designing schemes adjoining watercourses, including public open spaces, recreational areas and activities and the location of dwellings and private gardens.

### 9.11.10 Development Management

The SFRA provides further detail of the application of the sequential approach, flood zones, climate change, vulnerability of developments, the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessment, the development management justification test, mitigation and residual risk

#### Flood Risk Management Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

##### Objective FRM01

To carry out flood risk assessments when implementing the forward planning and development management functions of the Council for the purposes of regulating, restricting and controlling development in areas at risk of flooding, and to minimise the level of risk to people, business, infrastructure and the environment through the identification and management of existing and potential future flood risk.

##### Objective FRM02

To implement and comply fully with the recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared as part of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028.

**Objective FRM03**

To ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of future statutory local area plans through the preparation of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments for the respective plan areas in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) and Circular PL2/2014, and any future update of these guidelines.

**Objective FRM04**

To ensure that climate change is fully embedded in future flood risk management in land use planning and flood risk management activities in the county, providing for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the County Wexford Climate Action Plan 2019-2025 and the OPW Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time and in accordance with the County Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 11.

**Objective FRM05**

To have regard to the flood risk assessments carried out for the settlements in Section 5 of the County Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and to have regard to the advice set out therein when preparing local area plans and assessing planning applications in those settlements.

**Objective FRM06**

To consider applications for minor developments such as change of use, extensions and infill development in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) and Circular PL2/2014, and any future update of these guidelines and the County Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 11.

**Objective FRM07**

To ensure that all future development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management –Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) and Circular PL2/2014, in particular through the application of the sequential approach and the Development Management Justification Test. In this regard, the Planning Authority will apply the precautionary principle and will screen all proposals for flood risk and will pay particular attention to lands within, along the edge or adjacent to Flood Zone A or B.

**Objective FRM08**

When potential flood risk is identified in either Flood Zone A, B or C, the Planning Authority will require the applicant to submit an appropriately detailed site-specific flood risk assessment. The assessment, which shall be carried out by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional, shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of the risk to the proposed development, and shall consider all sources of potential flood risk including, where relevant, fluvial, coastal, surface water/pluvial and groundwater sources. The assessment shall be fully in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, OPW 2009) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 11 of the County Development Plan and the requirements set out therein, and shall address climate change, residual flood risks, avoidance of contamination of water sources and any proposed site specific flood management measures.

**Objective FRM09**

To ensure that compensatory storage is provided to balance floodplain loss as a result of raising ground levels within Flood Zone A or B. The storage should be provided within the flood cell and on a level for level basis up to the 1% level.

**Objective FRM10**

To continue to assist the Office of Public Works in developing catchment-based flood risk management for rivers, coastlines and estuaries in County Wexford as part of the

South-Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS), and to have regard to any future flood risk maps and flood risk management plans for areas within the county prepared as part of the South-East CFRAMS study.

#### **Objective FRM11**

To facilitate the provision of new, or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures where necessary, and in particular to support the implementation of proposed flood schemes being progressed through the planning process during the lifetime of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 subject to compliance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and the protection of natural and built heritage and visual amenities.

#### **Objective FRM12**

To protect the integrity of any formal (OPW or Wexford County Council) flood risk management infrastructure thereby ensuring that any development does not negatively impact any existing defence infrastructure or compromise any proposed new infrastructure.

#### **Objective FRM13**

To consult with the Office of Public Works in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible.

#### **Objective FRM14**

To require the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage and nature-based techniques where appropriate, for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks, to improve water quality, enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure and contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation.

**Objective FRM15**

To ensure that where flood risk management works take place that the natural and cultural heritage and rivers, streams and watercourses are protected, and improved where possible.

**Objective FRM16**

To protect and enhance and restore the county's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas as 'green infrastructure' which provides space for the storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and the objectives contained in Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure.

**Objective FRM17**

To adopt a presumption in favour of leaving floodplains, wetlands and other natural flood management measures unaltered except in central locations.

**Objectives FRM18**

To ensure riparian buffer zones, a minimum of 10 metres in width (in some cases buffer zones of up to 50 metres may be appropriate), are created between all watercourses and any future development. In considering the appropriate width, the Council will have regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (Inland Fisheries Ireland 2020).

**Objective FRM19**

To only consider proposals for the culverting/piping of streams and watercourses where these works are absolutely necessary and appropriate. Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) will be consulted, where appropriate.

### 9.11.11 Surface Water Management

The management of surface water is important so as to avoid increased flood or pollution risk in the storm water network, rivers and streams in the county's towns, villages and rural areas. In this regard, the Council will require compliance with best practice guidance for the collection, reuse, treatment and disposal of surface water for all future development proposals.

Traditionally, rain falling on impervious surfaces was directed into a receiving watercourse through surface water drainage systems. While such drainage systems are effective at transferring surface water quickly, they provide only limited attenuation causing the volume of water in the receiving watercourse to increase more rapidly, thereby increasing flood risk.

Sustainable Drainage Systems, commonly known as SuDS, is an approach that seeks to manage surface water as close as possible to its origin by various nature-based or engineering solutions that replicate natural drainage processes, before it enters the watercourse. Nature based solutions can be equally or more effective, better for biodiversity, the environment and in terms of visual amenity.

SuDS and nature-based solutions provide an integrated approach which provides many benefits including :

1. Water quantity by controlling the quantity of run-off to support the management of flood risk, and maintain and protect the natural water cycle;
2. Improving water quality by managing the quality of the runoff to prevent pollution;
3. Amenity by creating and sustaining better places for people;
4. Biodiversity by creating and sustaining better places for nature, and
5. Climate adaptation and mitigation such as building resilience, micro-cooling and carbon sequestration.

The application of SuDS techniques and nature-based solutions allows surface water to be either infiltrated or conveyed more slowly to water courses using porous surface treatments such as bioretention areas, ponds, swales, basins, rain gardens, wetlands, filter drain, green roofs or other installations. This approach is often less expensive to construct and easier to maintain than underground solutions, whilst providing the multiple additional benefits previously outlined.

The Council will require the application of SuDS and nature-based solutions in new development proposals and proposals to extend an existing development. While traditionally, the application of SuDS techniques is site-specific and depends on the site's characteristics, the Council will work with designers and developers to deliver an integrated and area-based approach where possible so that the approach works like a mini-catchment.

Applicants will also be required to demonstrate that climate change considerations have been incorporated into the design and the role of green infrastructure in providing nature-based solutions must also be demonstrated. All applications should include a commensurate drainage assessment which outlines the drainage design considerations/strategy in line with the flood risk, surface water management and climate change requirements and objectives in the Plan.

## Surface Water Management Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SWM01

To require the application of SuDS in accordance with the CIRIA SuDS Manual 2015 and any future update of this guidance, or other best practice guidance as may be specified or required by the Council. The application of SuDS should prioritise the use of appropriate nature-based solutions where possible. All proposals should include a commensurate drainage assessment used to design the surface water management system for the site, and this assessment should outline the drainage design considerations/strategy in line with the flood risk, surface water management and climate change requirements and objectives of the County Development Plan and the County Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 11.

### Objective SWM02

To require new developments to provide for the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks within the application site boundaries.



**Objective SWM03**

To work alongside Irish Water to ensure the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks where feasible and undertake drainage network upgrades to help remove surface water misconnection and infiltration.

**Objective SWM04**

To promote and support the retrofitting of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in established urban areas.

**Objective SWM05**

To identify existing surface water drainage systems vulnerable to flooding and develop proposals to alleviate flooding in the areas served by these systems in conjunction with the Office of Public Work subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Objective SWM06**

To encourage the use of Green Roofs particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure and educational buildings.

**Objective SWM07**

To discourage the use of hard non-porous surfacing and pavements within the boundaries of rural housing sites.

**Objective SWM08**

To incorporate an integrated area based approach to SuDS and nature-based solutions and green infrastructure in the preparation of future local area plans.

## 9.12 Power Transmission

The Council will support the reinforcement of the electricity transmission grid to improve energy supply to the county. Where strategic route corridors have been identified, the Council will support the statutory providers of national grid infrastructure by safeguarding such corridors from encroachment by other developments that might compromise the provision of energy networks, provided these corridors do not have adverse impacts on residential amenity or the environment. Where proposed high voltage lines traverse existing or proposed residential areas they should be located underground where appropriate, in the interest of residential amenity

The Council will encourage the undergrounding of the network in sensitive locations. The Council will also seek the removal of overhead power cables within all urban areas.

### Power Transmission Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective PT01

To facilitate the provision of and improvements to energy networks in principle, provided that it can be demonstrated that:

- The development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure.
- The route proposed has been identified with due consideration for social, environmental and cultural impacts.
- The design is such that will achieve least environmental impact consistent with not incurring excessive cost.
- Where impacts are inevitable mitigation features have been included.
- Proposals for energy infrastructure should be assessed in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

### Objective PT02

To support, subject to the objectives of this section and Volume 10 Energy Strategy, connecting infrastructure for the integration of low carbon and renewable energy generation projects including community scaled projects with power transmission infrastructure.

### Objective PT03

To support the upgrading of existing electricity networks and the reuse of existing power line routes.

### Objective PT04

To support the upgrade of existing and development of new electricity substations in locations that do not have a significant negative impact on nearby residents and are subject to landscaping screening.

### Objective PT05

To support the removal and undergrounding of overhead power lines in urban areas.

## 9.13 Gas Network

Currently the County is connected to the national gas network at Great Island with parts of Wexford Town connected to the system. Expansion to the remaining three main towns would be considered positively by the Council particularly when serving industrial uses with high energy demands.

### Gas Network Objective

It is the objective of the Council:

**Objective GN01**

To support the extension of the gas network throughout County Wexford, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective GN02**

To promote renewable gas leading to carbon emission reduction in agriculture, industry, heating and transport as well as sustainable local employment opportunities and support the transition of the gas network to a “carbon neutral” gas network by 2050.

CHAPTER 10

# Environmental Management



## 10.1 Introduction

Our health and wellbeing is supported by a clean and well-protected environment. Our basic needs are clean air, safe drinking water and healthy food<sup>1</sup> and these should be treated as valuable assets that need to be protected to benefit our health and also the wider economy<sup>2</sup>. A high quality, clean and safe environment is important for the economic development of the county, in particular, tourism, agriculture, forestry and services.

While the quality of the environment in the county is generally good, there are many challenges surrounding its protection, both now and in the future. The Council is committed to protecting our environment and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. As a local authority the Council has many related responsibilities such as protecting water and air quality and managing noise and light pollution. As a planning authority, the Council's statutory land use plans must include objectives to conserve and protect the environment, promote compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for surface water bodies and ground water bodies and to control establishments under the Major Accidents Directive.

This chapter sets out, from a spatial planning perspective, the framework to sustainably manage our environment by ensuring that land use and future developments protect and enhance, where possible, environmental quality and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our county. The chapter should be read in conjunction with the remainder of the Plan and the Development Management Manual in Volume 2.

## 10.2 Climate Action and the Environment

With regard to the environment, climate action in the Plan focuses, inter alia, on the following:

- Developing sustainable transport modes and permeable towns and villages which reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Ireland's Environment-An Assessment 2016, Environmental Protection Agency, 2016, page 123.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 211

- Promoting renewable energy and green industries to reduce GHGs and improve air quality.
- Managing development in flood risk areas and requiring SuDS to be used in all relevant developments to avoid surface water run-off and pollutants entering watercourses.
- Requiring water conservation in new developments.
- Requiring new agricultural developments to comply with the Nitrates Directives and facilitating development that will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Green, Low Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS).
- Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecosystems.

### 10.3 Policy Context

The preparation of this chapter had regard to the suite of EU, national legislation and guidelines that relate to the protection and management of the environment including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Habitats, Birds, Water Framework, Groundwater, Bathing Water, the Shellfish Waters, the Marine Strategy Framework, Nitrates, Noise and Air Quality Directives.

In terms of spatial planning, the NPF, through NSO 8, focuses on the sustainable management of water, waste and other environmental resources. The implementation of NPO 57 will ensure water quality and resource management by managing flood risk in accordance with guidelines, ensuring that the River Basin Management Plans are fully considered in the planning process and integrating sustainable water management solutions such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs). NPO 63 aims to ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.

Environmental protection is a core component of the RSES for the Southern Region and the Strategy statement underlines the need 'to safeguard and enhance our

environment through sustainable development, transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient society'. The RSES highlights that planning is critically important to the management of water resources, as well as noise, light and air quality management. There is a suite of supporting objectives in the RSES focused on protecting, conserving and enhancing our natural capital with specific objectives relating to ecosystem services, water resources, water quality and the Water Framework Directive, flood management, green infrastructure and biodiversity, air quality, noise and light.

The current River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 also recognises the need for alignment and integration with the planning system in order to ensure effective water management and compatibility between planned growth and environmental sustainability. It outlines that planning is critically important to the wellbeing of our water bodies, and the planning system therefore makes a significant contribution to water objectives by ensuring that development that could pose a risk is avoided in the first instance, where feasible, and by including appropriate planning conditions in planning permissions for new development.

## 10.4 Environmental Management Strategy

### 10.4.1 Goal

It is the goal of the Council to ensure that the natural resources and environmental conditions that are fundamental for the social and economic wellbeing of the current and future generations of our county are sustainably managed and protected.

### 10.4.2 Strategy

This strategy provides the spatial framework to deliver environmental protection and sustainable development. The strategic aims are:

- To recognise the benefits of a good quality environment for the health and wellbeing of our residents, visitors, habitats and ecosystems.



- To protect and improve water quality and to ensure that everyone has access to safe and clean drinking water supplies and aquatic habitats and ecosystems can thrive.
- To protect environmental quality by ensuring that land use and developments do not negatively affect air quality or give rise to noise or light pollution.
- To adopt a precautionary approach in the assessment of planning applications, preparation of plans and carrying out of projects and ensure that required assessments are carried out at the appropriate levels.

## Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective EM01

To ensure that proposed projects/developments comply with the requirements of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, and as transposed into Irish law under national legislation, including in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). In accordance with Article 3 of Directive 2014/52/EU, where EIA is required the environmental impact assessments presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, the direct, indirect and cumulative significant effects of a project on the following factors: population and human health; biodiversity (with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC); land, soil, water, air and climate, material assets, cultural heritage, and the landscape, and the interaction between the foregoing factors.

### Objective EM02

To ensure that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site, or where such a development proposal is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), the planning authority will, as required by law, carry out an

appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will the planning authority agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions. A development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.

### Objective EM03

To ensure that proposed plans and programmes comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, as transposed into Irish law under national legislation.

### Objective EM04

To ensure that plans, including land use plans, will only be adopted, if they either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European Site, or where such a plan is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), Wexford County Council will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will Wexford County Council adopt the plan, incorporating any necessary mitigation measures. A plan which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be adopted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.

### Objective EM05

To implement the provisions of EU and National legislation and other relevant legislative requirements on protecting and improving surface and ground water quality, air quality and climate, and on reducing adverse noise and light nuisance, as appropriate and in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders in the interests of the protection of the environment, public health and the sustainable development of the county.

## 10.5 Water Quality

The Council has statutory responsibilities to protect and manage water quality. It is responsible for maintaining, improving and enhancing the environmental and ecological quality of the county's waters by implementing a series of measures including pollution control and licensing of effluent discharges. The varying demands on water resources in the county must be balanced with the need to protect these resources to ensure an adequate supply of clean water for all and to protect the habitats and ecosystems that depend on it.

Water supplies in the county come from surface water and groundwater sources. The protection of these valuable resources is of vital importance to protect both human health and provide for a healthy environment.

Surface waters include lakes, reservoirs, streams, rivers and coastal waters, and the main threats to the quality of surface water comes from agricultural, forestry, , outfalls from municipal wastewater treatment works, on-site wastewater treatment systems, and licensed and unlicensed discharges and storm water run-off.

Groundwater is important as a source of drinking water in the county, in particular, in our rural areas. Groundwater also supports river flows, lake levels and ecosystems. Groundwater is contained in aquifers which are underground layers of rock that contain water. Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) categorises aquifers according to their vulnerability to pollution, that is, the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. In this regard, development must be controlled and managed appropriately, particularly in areas of high groundwater vulnerability to avoid the transmission of pollutants into important aquifers.

Groundwater protection schemes aim to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater by applying a risk based assessment approach to ground water protection and sustainable development. These schemes provide guidance to the Council when carrying out its functions, in particular planning and licensing, and assist in decision making relating to controlling the location and nature of developments and potentially polluting activities.

### 10.5.1 Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the legal framework to protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems, prevent their deterioration and ensure long term, sustainable use of water resources. The WFD sets out the strategic response to the threat of pollution and the demand from the public for cleaner rivers, lakes and beaches. Its four objectives are:

- Prevent further deterioration of water quality;
- Restore 'good' status of water quality;
- Reduce chemical pollution of water sources;
- Achieve protected area objectives<sup>3</sup>.

Article 4 of the WFD sets out specific environmental objectives for surface water, groundwater and protected areas:

For Surface Waters:

- To prevent deterioration of the status of surface waters
- To protect, enhance and restore surface waters, with the aim of achieving good status for all water bodies
- To protect and enhance heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies in order to achieve good ecological potential and good chemical status for those water bodies
- To progressively reduce pollution from priority substances and cease or phase out emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances into surface waters.

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<sup>3</sup> Protected area are those requiring special protection under existing national or European legislation, either to protect their surface waters or groundwater, or to conserve habitats or species that directly depend on these sites.

For Groundwater:

- To prevent deterioration of the status of groundwater
- To protect, enhance and restore all bodies of groundwater and ensure a balance of abstraction and recharge, with the aim of achieving good groundwater status.
- To reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in the concentration of pollutants in groundwater

For Protected Areas:

- To achieve compliance with objectives and standards under which the individual protected areas have been established.

### 10.5.2 River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021

The provisions of the WFD are implemented through River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). The first cycle of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) ran from 2009-2015. Ireland was divided into eight River Basin Districts (RBDs) or areas of land that are drained by a large river or number of rivers and the adjacent estuarine / coastal areas. The eight RBDs devised separate plans with the objective of achieving at least 'good' status for all waters by 2015.

The second cycle of the RBMP 2018-2021 is currently underway and all eight RBDs have merged to form one national RBD. The RBMP sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan is due to be published in December 2021 and will run for six years from 2022 to 2027.

### 10.5.3 Overview of Water Quality in County Wexford

#### Surface Waters-Rivers

The latest 'Water Quality in Ireland Report 2013-2018' was published by the EPA in December 2019. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's rivers, lakes, canals, groundwaters,

transitional waters and coastal waters collected over a six-year period between 2013-2018.

The report indicates that for Wexford County Council 1% of its rivers had 'high' status, 32% had 'good' status, 39% had 'moderate' status, 13% had 'poor' status while 1% had 'bad' status.

There are two major rivers in County Wexford; the River Slaney and River Barrow. The water quality status of the River Barrow ranges from 'moderate' to 'good' as it flows in a southerly direction through Wexford. The River Slaney water quality status is generally 'good' as it flows through Wexford.

There were nine river water bodies in Ireland with a 'bad' water quality status, one of which is in County Wexford, Aughboy\_010 (Wexford). Figure 10-1 shows the water quality status of the rivers in County Wexford during this monitoring period.

## Surface Water-Transitional and Coastal Waters

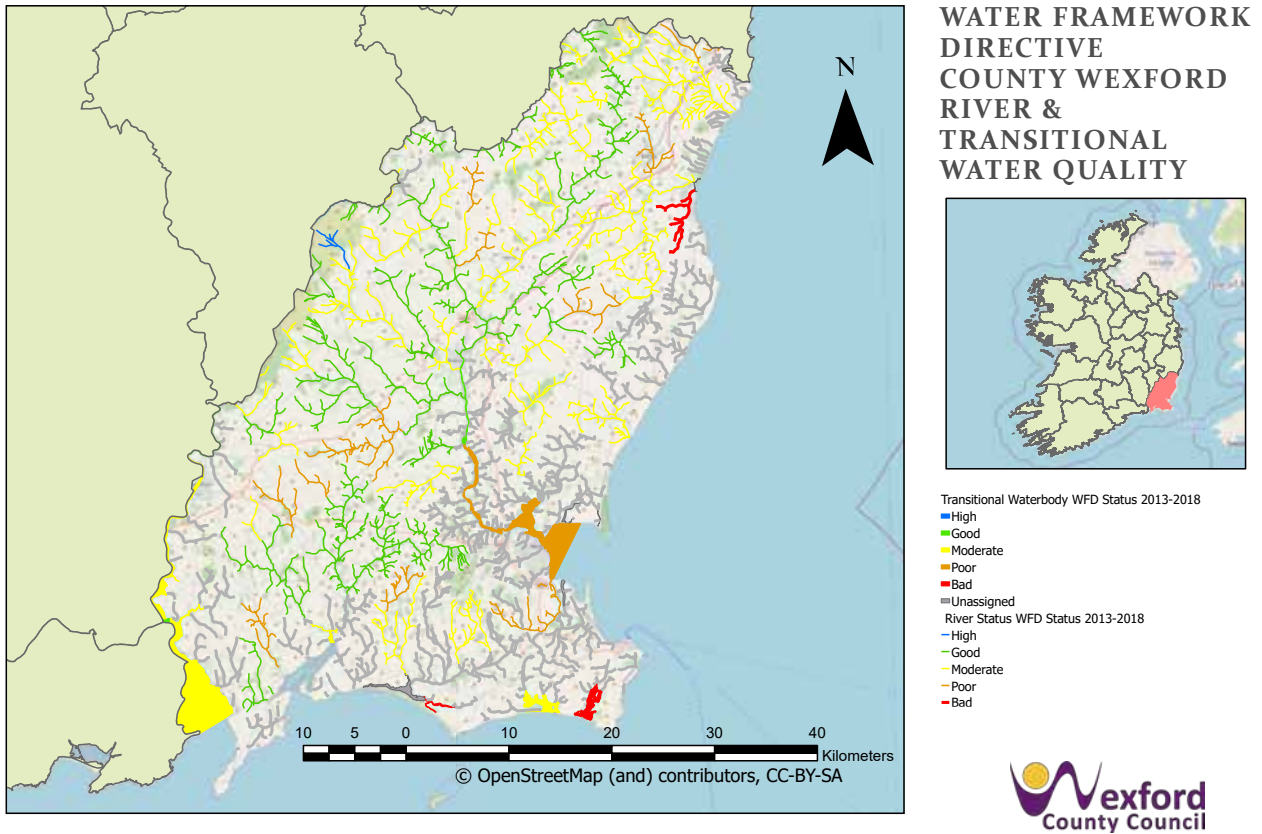
There are 14 transitional water bodies in the county. During the 2013-2018 monitoring period, 'bad' status was recorded for Lady's Island Lake and Ballyteige Channels with the Lower Slaney Estuary recording 'poor' status. Three water bodies had 'good' status, four had 'moderate' status with the remaining four unassigned a status.

In terms of coastal waters there are six waterbodies for County Wexford. Three of these recorded 'moderate' status, one recorded 'good' status while the remaining two were unassigned a status.

## Groundwater Quality

The EPA 2010-2015 Catchment Assessment Report indicates that of the 12 groundwater bodies in County Wexford 9 were 'Good' status and three were 'Poor' status.

Figure 10-1 WFD Water Quality Status of the River and Transitional Waterbodies in County Wexford



### 10.5.4 Protecting and Improving Water Quality

The aim is to protect water bodies with ‘high’ and ‘good’ status and to work towards achieving ‘good’ status for the remaining water bodies by the 2027. The Council will implement measures in the RBMP 2018-2021. All measures undertaken by the Council or in partnership with various stakeholders including Irish Water, the EPA, Inland Fisheries, Forestry Services, Teagasc, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) and others, will assist with achieving on-going improvements in the environmental status of water bodies from source to the sea.

The key actions under the RBMP include:

- Improved wastewater treatment through planned investment by Irish Water. This will help improve water quality and prevent deterioration of quality in targeted water bodies including protected areas.

- Improve conservation and leakage reduction.
- Scientific assessments of water bodies and implementation of local measures by 43 new, specialist, local authority investigative assessment personnel.
- A new sustainability and advisory support programme for the Dairy industry and the continued implementation of the Green, Low Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS).
- The development of water and planning guidance for local authorities to help these authorities to consider the risks to water quality during planning and development decision-making.
- Extension of the Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems grant scheme to assist with the costs of septic tank remediation in High Status water areas.
- The establishment of the Local Authority Waters Programme.
- The development of a Blue Dot Catchment Programme to create a network of excellent river and lake areas. Agencies will work together to protect or restore excellent water quality in these water bodies.
- A new Community Water Development Fund to enable and support community water initiatives and a bottom up approach.

### 10.5.5 Priority Areas for Action

The RBMP identifies 189 Priority Areas for Action in the country. The Local Authorities Waters Programme will lead in these areas, working with local communities and collaborating with other public bodies to improve water quality during the four year period of the RBMP.

The identified 'Priority Areas for Action' in County Wexford are listed in Table 10-1. The Council will ensure that future planning applications in these areas contribute to the achievement of the objectives for these areas, where possible.



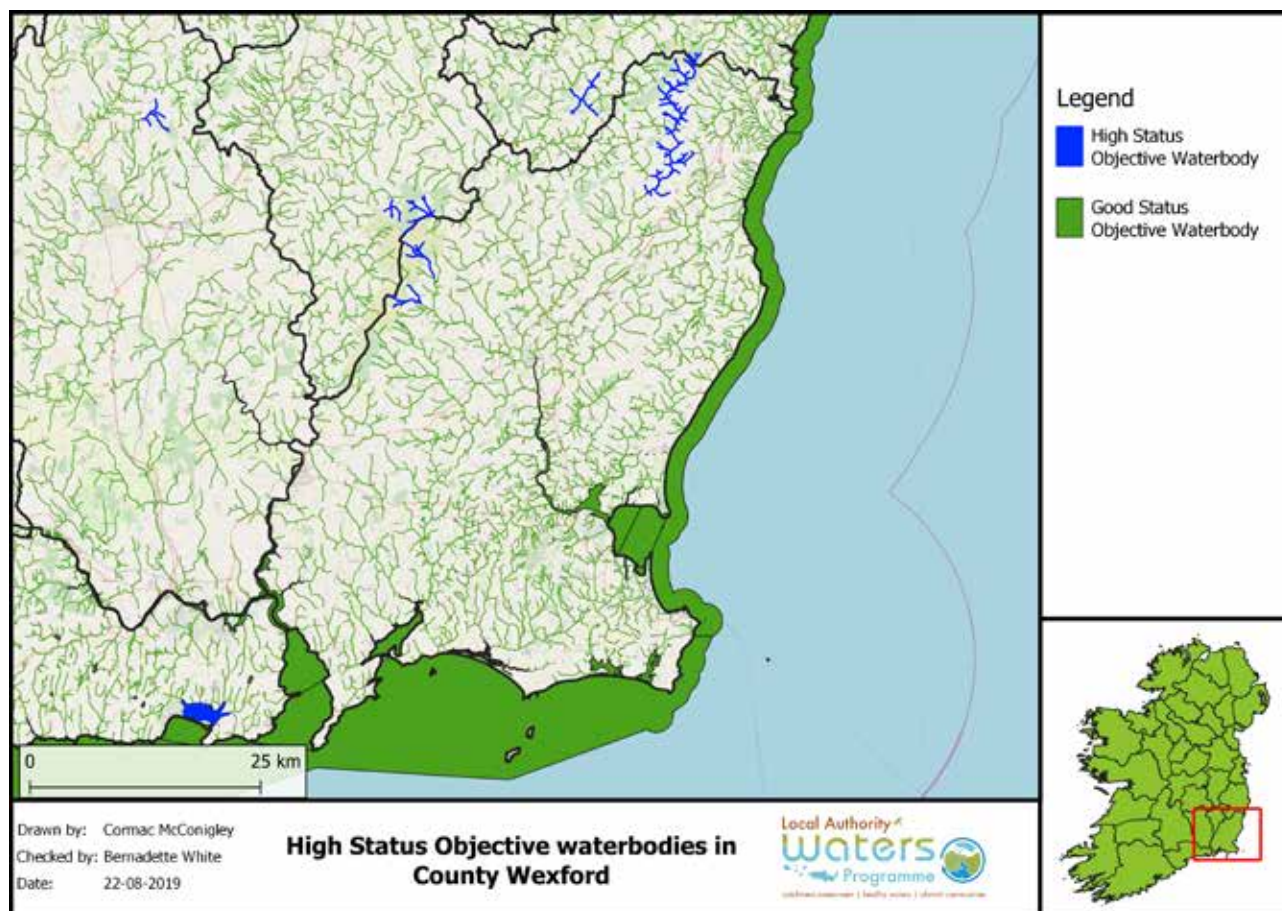
Table 10-1 Priority Areas for Action in County Wexford

1. Sow
2. Wexford Coastal Lagoons
3. Owenavorrhagh
4. Urrin
5. Wexford Harbour
6. Blackwater
7. Bannow
8. Waterford Harbour

### 10.5.6 Blue Dot Catchment Programme

This is a new programme under the RBMP to create a network known as the Blue Dot Catchment Programme of excellent river and lake areas. Agencies will work together to protect or restore excellent water quality in these water bodies. High status objective sites are water bodies that are at pristine and near pristine condition, or have been at this status in recent years, and support important species such as Atlantic salmon, or support economic and recreational activities associated with unspoilt areas. They require additional care, and developments in these areas need to reflect their sensitive nature. A targeted programme including supports for septic tank owners to address inadequately functioning treatment systems in these areas will be put in place. Figure 10-2 shows the waterbodies identified for this programme in County Wexford.

Figure 10-2 Waterbodies Identified under the Blue Dot Catchment Programme



### 10.5.7 Bathing Waters

Bathing waters in the county are subject to the Bathing Waters Directive and the associated Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008. In 2018 there were eight designated bathing waters in the county: Ballinesker, Ballymoney North Beach, Carne, Courtown North Beach, Curraclloe, Duncannon, Morriscastle and Rosslare Strand. Seven of these bathing waters recorded 'Excellent' status in 2018, while Duncannon recorded 'Good' status. The highest quality standard was also recorded for the other bathing areas in the county that are monitored: Ballyhealy, Booley Bay, Cahore, Cullenstown, Culleton's Gap, Grange, Kilmore Quay, Old Bawn and St Helen's Bay.

With regard to Duncannon the Council is leading a local water quality project called the 'Duncannon Blue Flag Farming and Communities Scheme' which received funding

of €713,000 from the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) initiative. The project is designed to improve the bacterial quality of the two coastal streams that flow onto Duncannon beach by reducing pollution from agricultural and domestic sources. This should contribute to the recovery and long term retention of the Blue Flag status at Duncannon beach. The proposed wastewater treatment plant for Duncannon and Ballyhack will also significantly improve water quality in Duncannon.

## Water Quality Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective WQ01

To protect existing and potential water resources for the county, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/ EC), the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any updated version, the Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters, the provisions of a Groundwater Protection Scheme for the county and any other protection plans for water supply sources, with an aim to improving all water quality.

### Objective WQ02

To promote compliance with the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 and any other relevant legislations.

### Objective WQ03

To ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and cleaner environment.

**Objective WQ04**

To work with the Local Authority Waters Programme and other relevant State agencies to develop and implement the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any future river basin management plan subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

**Objective WQ05**

To strive to achieve and maintain at least 'Good' status except where more stringent obligations are required, and no deterioration of status for all water bodies including protected areas, under the Marine Strategy Framework and its programme of measures, the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan.

**Objective WQ06**

To apply a catchment based approach to the assessment of planning applications which may impact on water quality, and to ensure that the development would not result in a reduction in the water quality status of a waterbody in that catchment.

**Objective WQ07**

To screen planning applications according to their Water Framework Directive status and have regard to their status and objectives to achieve 'good' status or protect and improve 'high or good status'.

**Objective WQ08**

To achieve compliance with the objectives and standards under which the individual protected areas have been established.

**Objective WQ09**

To have regard to Groundwater Protection Schemes and aquifer vulnerability applying a risk based assessment approach when preparing local area plans, carrying out local authority works and assessing planning applications.

**Objective WQ10**

To protect, enhance and restore all groundwaters and ensure a balance of abstraction and recharge, with the aim of achieving good groundwater status and to reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in the concentration of pollutants in groundwater.

**Objective WQ11**

To take actions to reduce chemical and biological pollution of water sources and to also consider this when assessing planning applications.

**Objective WQ12**

To protect and enhance heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies in order to achieve good ecological potential and good chemical status for those water bodies and to progressively reduce pollution from priority substances and cease or phase out emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances into surface waters.

**Objective WQ13**

To work with the Local Authority Waters Programme and other relevant State agencies and local communities to achieve the objectives for the Areas for Action identified in the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and to ensure that new developments do not result in a deterioration of water quality in these areas.

**Objective WQ14**

To have regard to any future guidance issued for planning authorities on the relationship between land use planning and river basin management planning to ensure future development plans and local area plans and planning decisions are consistent with River Basin Management Plans and with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

### Objective WQ15

To ensure that development permitted would not negatively impact on water quality and quantity, including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.

### Objective WQ16

To develop the associated Blue Dot Catchment Network Programme under the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 to protect and maintain the excellent quality of 'High' status water bodies.

### Objective WQ17

To promote and support locally led community initiatives aimed at driving local water-quality improvements subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

### Objective WQ18

To participate and support the farming community in the application of schemes such as the Duncannon Blue Flag Farming and Communities Scheme and the LIFE programmes to achieve the objectives of the respective Directives in a collaborative manner.

## 10.6 Air Quality

The NPF, through NPO 64, aims to improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design.

The Plan has incorporated all of the foregoing across the various chapters and strategies. The Council will also continue to improve air quality by having regard to the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) which implement Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. While much of this regulation is outside of the remit of land use planning, the policy approach of the Council is to integrate land use planning and transportation and to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency which will reduce greenhouse gases and emissions from vehicles. The Council will also encourage the use of the Best Available Technology (BAT) in specific industrial facilities likely to give rise to emissions concerns, including air and odour.

## Air Quality Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective AQ01

To have regard to the Air Quality Standards Regulation 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) when assessing planning applications for development which may have effects on air quality.

### Objective AQ02

To encourage sustainable industrial developments by promoting the use of cleaner technologies and production techniques, reducing waste production, conservation and recycling of materials.

### Objective AQ03

To manage development to provide the efficient use of land and infrastructure, thereby controlling and limiting air emissions.

### Objective AQ04

To require the submission of measures to prevent and reduce dust and airborne particulate emissions for activities that may have a negative effect on air quality.

### Objective AQ05

To promote a modal change from private car use to other types of travel and to promote the use of public transport as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.

### Objective AQ06

To implement Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) standards and beyond to reduce the particulate matter generated by the combustion of fossil fuels<sup>4</sup>.

## 10.7 Noise

The role of the Council, as a planning authority is to guide the location of development and ensure compatibility between land uses and protect noise sensitive receptors by setting appropriate standards. In line with NPO 65, the Council will promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Action Plans.

In the delivery of more compact growth and efficient forms of development within our settlements, it is important to proactively manage noise. In addressing this, the NPF supports:

1. Noise Management and Action Planning which includes measures to avoid, mitigate, and minimise or promote the pro-active management of noise, where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life, through strategic noise mapping, noise action plans and suitable planning conditions.
2. Noise, amenity and privacy considerations which includes but is not limited to good acoustic design in new developments, in particular residential development. This is to be achieved through a variety of measures such as setbacks and separation between noise sources and receptors, good acoustic design of buildings, building orientation, layout, building materials and noise barriers and buffers zones between various uses.

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<sup>4</sup> The European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Recast required that all new buildings be Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) by 31st December 2020. NZEB homes are 70% more energy efficient than the performance requirements in 2005.



3. Quiet Areas which allow for the further enjoyment of natural resources, such as our green spaces and sea frontage, through the preservation of low sound levels or a reduction in undesirably high sound levels. This is particularly important for providing respite from high levels of urban noise. As part of noise action plans, an extra value placed on these areas, in terms of environmental quality and the consequential positive impact on quality of life and health due to low sound levels and the absence of noise, can assist in achieving this.

### 10.7.1 EU Noise Directive

The EU Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) relates to the assessment and management of environmental noise. The Directive applies to noise, to which humans are exposed, particularly in built-up areas, in public parks or other quiet areas in an agglomeration, in quiet areas in open country, near schools, hospitals and other noise-sensitive buildings and areas. The Directive was transposed into Irish law by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 140).

### 10.7.2 County Wexford Noise Action Plan 2019-2023

The Council has prepared a Noise Action Plan (NAP) in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2018 (S.I No. 549) which give effect to the EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of noise.

The objective of the NAP is to avoid, prevent and reduce where necessary, on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to long term exposure to environmental noise. It was determined that the only noise source requiring assessment is generated by major roads in the county carrying traffic in excess of the current threshold levels. These include roads identified as major roads in the county are the N11, M11, N25, N30, N80, R730, R733, R741 and R769. The NAP is based on strategic noise mapping prepared by the TII on behalf of the Council.

The aim of the NAP is to manage existing road noise within the plan area and to protect the future environmental noise within the plan area. It outlines that the potential noise impacts of future development will be adequately managed

through the planning and licencing processes including the existing provisions of Environmental Impact Assessments.

The Council will utilise the planning process:

- (a) To incorporate the aims of the present and future noise action plans into the Plan and into relevant local area plans protecting larger areas from road noise.
- (b) To encourage developers (or require at the discretion of the planning authority) to provide a sound impact assessment and implement mitigation measures as for developments proposed near major roads (i.e. traffic volumes in excess of 3 million vehicles per annum or otherwise on a case by case basis).
- (c) Ensure that future developments are designed and constructed in accordance with best Irish practice to minimise noise disruptions through good acoustic design.

The Noise Action Plan also identifies the locations for further investigation as potential quiet areas (Table 10-2). It indicates that the Council will carry out, following consultation with the EPA, a review of the landscape assessment and characterisation process in order to identify a process to delimit Quiet areas in the country that will be complementary to the County Landscape Characterisation Assessment Study. This will identify areas for delimiting which will be submitted to the EPA and the Minister for approval.

**Table 10-2 Potential Quiet Areas in County Wexford**

<p>Quiet Areas in Settlements</p>	<p>Vinegar Hill, Enniscorthy Town                  Gorey Town and District Park                  Mount Carmel/New Ross Youth Centre, New Ross Town</p>
<p>Quiet Areas in the Open Country</p>	<p>Mount Leinster/Black Rock, Blackstairs Mountain                  Blackstairs Commons, Blackstairs Mountain                  Bantry Commons, Blackstairs Mountain                  Tacumshin Lake, Ballyhealy                  The North Slobs (River Slaney Estuary)                  Drinagh Intake, West of Rosslare                  Kilbride Wood, Kilbride                  Coolatrindle/Ruanmore, Court                  Annagh Hill, Annagh                  Croghan Mountain, Croghan</p>

### Noise Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective N01

To promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Actions Plans.

#### Objective N02

To have regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the Environmental Protection Agency Act (Noise) Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications.

**Objective N03**

To have regard to the Wexford County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023, in particular Appendix B Roadways Qualified for Noise Mapping, Appendix C Strategic Noise Maps and Appendix D Potential Noise Hotspots, in the preparation of future local area plans and to ensure that planning applications comply with the provisions and requirements of that plan, and any future revisions/update to it.

**Objective N04**

To incorporate the aims of the present and future noise action plans into local area plans and in the assessment of planning applications to protect larger areas from road noise.

**Objective N05**

To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Objective N06**

To ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to be accompanied by a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions.

**Objective N07**

To ensure that future developments are designed and constructed so as to minimise noise disturbance taking into account the multi-functional uses of streets including residential, movement and recreation as provided for in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2013).

### Objective N08

To require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.

### Objective N09

To minimise noise from traffic by promoting development patterns that combine walking, cycling and public transport.

### Objective N10

To carryout traffic management measure such as reduction of speed limits, traffic flow control, mitigation of environmental noise hotspots, traffic congestion management, road surface improvements and road maintenance and the promotion of the use of electric vehicles.

### Objective N11

To encourage, or require at the discretion of the Planning Authority, developers to produce a sound impact assessment and implement mitigation measures for developments proposed near major roads (i.e. traffic volumes in excess of 3 million vehicles per annum or otherwise on a case by case basis).

### Objective N12

To ensure that future developments are designed and constructed in accordance with best practice to minimise noise disturbances through good acoustic design.

## 10.8 External Lighting

The provision of adequate external lighting is required to contribute to the creation of a safe and secure environment. However, as inadequately designed lighting can give rise to nuisance and impacts on biodiversity, the Council will carefully consider

this type of development. Lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary and should shield the light given out so as to avoid a glare, potentially resulting in a traffic hazard, nuisance to nearby properties and a threat to wildlife and their habitats. The Council will require all proposed external lighting proposals to be carefully and sensitively designed, in particular flood lighting for sports and recreational facilities. The relevant development management standards are set out in Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

## External Lighting Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective EL01

To require developments providing external lighting to clearly demonstrate that the lighting scheme is the minimum needed for security and working purposes.

### Objective EL02

To ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised thereby protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species.

### Objective EL03

To ensure all new public lighting complies with the Council's standard for taking in charge and provides for low energy use lighting in accordance with these standards.

### Objective EL04

To explore opportunities and support the establishment of 'Dark Sky' parks and reserves at suitable locations in the County, where appropriate.

## 10.9 Major Accidents Directive

SEVESO III Directive (2012/18/EU) was adopted taking into account, amongst other factors, the changes in EU legislation on the classification of chemicals and the increased rights for the public to access information and justice and is the main EU legislation dealing with the control of onshore major accident hazards involving dangerous substances. The Directive aims to prevent major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and chemicals and the limitation of their consequences for people and the environment.

The Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (the “COMAH Regulations”), implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU). The intention of the COMAH Regulations is to achieve controls on the operators of the establishments subject to the Regulations: the larger the quantities of dangerous substances present at an establishment, the more onerous the duties on the operator. There are two categories of major accident establishments: Upper Tier and Lower Tier; which are defined based on the volume of the dangerous substances present. The existing SEVESO sites in the county are listed in Table 10-3<sup>5</sup>:

**Table 10-3 SEVESO Sites in County Wexford**

Upper Tier	European Refreshments, Sinnottstown, Drinagh, Wexford
	Nitrofert Ltd, Raheen Port, New Ross
	Rochefreight Warehousing Ltd, Wexford Road, Rosslare Harbour.
Lower Tier	Goulding Chemicals Ltd, Stokestown, New Ross
	SSE Generation Ireland Ltd, Great Island Generation Station, Campile, New Ross.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires development plans to include objectives for the control of major accident sites and development for the purpose of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident.

<sup>5</sup> As of February 2019. The list of establishments is subject to change. The up-to-date list of Major Accident/Seveso establishments in County Wexford can be obtained from Wexford County Council or the Health and Safety Authority.

This is achieved by controls on the siting of new establishments and modifications to existing establishments, as well as developments in the vicinity of such establishments.

Land use policy must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, buildings and areas of public use, major transport routes as far as possible, recreational areas and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest. Seveso III gives the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), as a prescribed body, a greater role in providing technical advice to planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála. The application of the COMAH Regulations has resulted in increased distances for which the HSA are required to be consulted, in relation to existing SEVESO sites or on the receipt of appropriate planning applications.

The HSA's Guidance on Technical Land-use Planning Advice for Planning Authorities and operators of COMAH establishments (Consultation Draft) (2020) outlines the risk-based approach which will be used by the HSA to advise on planning applications as well as the development of generic land use planning zones around establishments.

## Major Accidents Directive Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective COMAH01

To control the following for the purposes of reducing the risk or limiting the consequences of a major accident (regard will be had to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive):

- The siting of Major Accident Hazard sites.
- The modification of an existing Major Accident Hazard site.
- Development in the vicinity of a Major Accident Hazard site as specified in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).



**Objective COMAH02**

To consult with and have regard to the technical advice of the Health and Safety Authority when preparing development plans and local area plans and assessing planning applications where the Major Accidents Directive and any associated regulations are relevant.



CHAPTER 11

# Landscape and Green Infrastructure



## 11.1 Introduction

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. Landscapes vary due to their underlying geology, soils, topography, land cover, hydrology, historic and cultural development and climatic considerations. The landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people and often gives a locality its ‘sense of place’. Landscapes are also recognised for their environmental, social and economic benefits.

Landscapes are constantly changing and the process of Landscape Character Assessment has an important role to play in managing and guiding that change. The Landscape Character Assessment is contained in Volume 7 of the Plan. The assessment aims to build upon the work carried out during the preparation of previous development plans with the aim of protecting what is valuable in our landscapes while recognising that they are living landscapes which evolve over time.

## 11.2 Climate Action and Landscape

Our landscapes can be greatly impacted by climate change but they also offer great opportunities for successful climate change mitigation and adaptation. In this regard the planning authority will, inter alia:

- Protect and enhance the role of natural features and habitats, such as wetlands and vegetated dunes, in regulating flooding and protecting from coastal erosion.
- Work alongside the relevant authorities to protect our natural and cultural heritage assets, in particular in amenity landscapes and protected areas from the effects of flooding, coastal erosion/coastal flooding/sea level rise.
- Support appropriate renewable energy developments in appropriate landscapes that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Adopt a presumption in favour of minimum intervention necessary in natural processes.
- Protect and enhance the spaces around our river channels, the riparian zone and associated buffer, from development which would reduce its ability to attenuate and filter flood water.

- Protect and expand green infrastructure provisions in existing and new developments and places.
- Promote the development of natural carbon sink activities such as the planting of trees and restoration of wetlands and peatlands.

### 11.3 Policy Context

The European Landscape Convention, also known as the Florence Convention, promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes. Ireland ratified the Convention in 2002. 'A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025' published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in May 2015, aims to implement the Florence Convention by providing for specific measures to promote the protection, management and planning of the landscape.

The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of planning in its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which requires that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.

NPO 61 of the NPF aims to facilitate landscape protection, management and change through the preparation of a National Landscape Character Map and the development of guidance on the preparation of local landscape character assessments (including historic landscape characterisation) to ensure a consistent approach to landscape planning. The RSES notes that our regions diverse landscapes and seascapes are key assets which require careful protection.

The Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2000) provide current guidance for planning authorities on the preparation of a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

## 11.4 Goal

The overall goal is to protect the inherent beauty of our landscape and to promote and enable appreciation and enjoyment of the County's landscapes and to protect, restore and enhance the County's green infrastructure and biodiversity for the benefit of all.

## 11.5 Strategy

- To protect the inherent characteristics and quality of our landscape both in their own right and for the economic benefits derived from them.
- To sustain the natural and cultural heritage of our landscapes while respecting that it is a changing landscape.
- To ensure that development is respectful and appropriate to its landscape context
- To promote enjoyment and appreciation of our landscapes.
- To protect the elements of our landscapes which perform important functions such as regulating floods, carbon sinks, green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

## 11.6 Landscape Character Assessment

A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identifies areas of common character called landscape character areas or landscape character units (LCU). An LCU has a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes it different from its neighbouring landscape. Each LCU has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural, historical and ecological features.

The objective of an LCA is to analyse the character, value and sensitivity of landscapes identified within a particular area. By understanding how different landscapes developed and evolved from both a natural and social perspective, decisions relating to the management and planning of the landscape can be made on an informed basis. Outputs of the LCA include a map of landscape character units, and a description of each area an assigned sensitivity.

The LCA for the Wexford CDP 2013-2019 has been carried through to this plan with slight amendments to the naming and descriptions of the LCUs. Landscapes have also been assigned a sensitivity description in order to facilitate the management and assessment of landscape impacts. The objectives associated with the LCA have also been updated.

The Council considers it prudent to await the publication of an updated National Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines before embarking on a comprehensive review of the LCA. The LCA is contained in Volume 7 and a summary together with appropriate objectives are included below.

## Landscape Character Units

These are described briefly below and in more detail in Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment. The LCA is a broad level assessment and in reality there are no abrupt changes in landscape character at the boundaries of the various units. As such the boundaries of an LCU are indicative only and all policies in this plan which apply to any given unit may equally be applied to an area adjoining the particular unit. This can only be determined following a site visit and visual assessment by the Council.

The LCA identified four LCUs. Within these LCUs are also Distinctive Landscape features which, for policy purposes, are treated as another LCU. There are therefore five LCUs in the LCA:

### 1. Uplands

This landscape, which extends along the north-western and northern parts of the county, contains concentrations of more elevated and steeper land, ridges and skylines, which are very prominent in the overall landscape of the county and are generally more sensitive to development. Whilst having lower population densities than the Lowland landscape, the Uplands do accommodate significant living and working populations. Low intensity agriculture is the predominant economic activity in this landscape. However, commercial wind farms have become a recent addition in recent years.

## 2. Lowlands

The Lowland LCU area generally comprises gently undulating lands and relates to extensive areas of the county. This landscape has characteristics which provide it with a higher capacity to absorb development without causing significant visual intrusion. The landscape is characterised by higher population levels and more intensive agriculture. It is punctuated by many of the county's hills and ridges, the more sensitive of which have been defined as Distinctive Landscapes. Where the lowlands meet the Distinctive lands or Uplands there are transitional areas which are more sensitive to development.

## 3. River Valley

The Slaney and Barrow River Valleys include the rivers and their associated riparian and woodland habitats and topography. They offer significant scenic qualities, which are sensitive to development.

## 4. Coastal

The county's coastal landscape has a character that often overlaps with the Lowland LCU. The east coast is generally characterised by long, relatively straight coasts of sand and shingle backed up by low cliffs and sand dunes. The south coast has long beaches and dune systems.

The Coastal LCU is punctuated by prominent features such as promontories, water bodies, slob lands and the Hook Peninsula which add interesting dimensions to the qualities of the landscape. It includes major urban areas such as Courtown, Wexford, Rosslare Strand and Rosslare Harbour.

The Coastal LCU is sensitive to development in some locations. It has experienced great pressure from tourism and residential development.

## 5. Distinctive Landscapes

The LCA identifies Distinctive Landscapes. While strictly speaking they are not an LCU as they contain a variety of different characteristics and features they have been grouped for the purpose of policy application. They represent features in the landscape and seascape which have visual interest and prominence, and which are



generally sensitive to development. Many of these landscapes also have profound historical, socio- cultural and/or religious interest.

The Distinctive Landscapes, as identified on Map No. 7.1, include:

- Water Bodies: Lady's Island, Tacumshin Lake, Ballyteigue Burrow, Bannow Bay and Wexford Harbour.
- Islands: Saltees Islands and Keeragh Islands
- Coastal promontories: Forlorn Point (Kilmore Quay), Carnsore Point, Rosslare Point, Kilmichael Point and Cahore Point
- The Hook Peninsula
- Screen Hills
- Wexford Slobs and Inish and Ballyteige Slobs.

## 11.7 Other Landscape Features

There are a number of other ecological, heritage, cultural and historical layers which help to shape the landscape and should be taken into consideration in future development proposals. Ecological, scenic and amenity designations reflect areas of elevated public awareness and as such may be considered also to have a significant landscape value. While some of these features have mapping associated with them (such as the Geological Heritage sites – see Map 2b in Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation) others do not and these will be added to the Councils LCA mapping information as they become available. Further detail on these landscapes is included in Volume 7. These sites include:

- Designated Sites
- Ecological Networks and Wildlife Corridors
- Geological Sites
- Ancient and Long Established Woodlands
- Historical and Cultural Elements
- Battlefields

## 11.8 Landscape Sensitivity

Following the identification of the LCUs, a sensitivity rating was developed for each unit. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and value. Table No. 11-1 identifies the sensitivity rating for each landscape type.

**Table 11.1: Sensitivity Rating**

	Landscape Sensitivity Rating		
	Low	Moderate	High
Uplands			
Lowlands			
River Valleys			
Coastal			
Distinctive Landscapes			

Low sensitivity landscapes are more robust landscapes which are tolerant to change and have the ability to accommodate development without significant adverse impacts on the character of the landscape. These landscapes comprise the majority of the Lowlands.

The upper reaches of the lowlands have a Moderate sensitivity. Moderate sensitivity landscapes can accommodate development but with limitations in scale and magnitude. These transitional areas of the lowlands are where the lowlands meet the other LCU.

River Valley Landscapes are classed as having a Moderate to High sensitivity.

Uplands, Coastal and Distinctive Landscapes have a High Sensitivity to change and a limited ability to absorb new development. Development proposed within these areas

must be shown not to impinge in any significant way upon their character, integrity or uniformity when viewed from the surroundings. Particular attention should be given to the protection of the character and distinctiveness of these areas as viewed from scenic routes and the environs of archaeological and historic sites.

River Valley landscapes are classified as having Moderate to High Sensitivity. In Moderate and High Sensitivity areas development has the potential to have significant individual or cumulative impacts. Applications for development in these areas must demonstrate an awareness of these inherent limitations by having a very high standard of site selection, siting layout, selection of materials and finishes. Development in these areas which is likely to have an individual or cumulative visual impact on the landscape will only be permitted where the applicant has demonstrated an overriding need for the development, including transport and energy infrastructure, in the proposed location (refer to Section 4.9 Housing in the Open Countryside in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing where such applications relate to rural housing).

The features and landscapes contained in Section 11.7 will vary in sensitivity from geological sites which often have a low sensitivity to change to natural heritage sites which have a high sensitivity to change.

## 11.9 Scenic Routes and Protected Views

A Development Plan must contain objectives for 'the preservation of views and prospects'.<sup>1</sup> This plan does not designate specific routes but notes that scenic routes may fall into a number of categories:

- Routes through Uplands, Coastal, River Valleys and Distinctive Landscapes
  - Trails such as the Eurovelo, Norman Way, Greenways and Wexford Walking Trails
- Sightseeing visitors are more likely to be concentrated along these routes.

Other scenic views include might include:

- views to the sea and views towards land from the sea and rivers in locations which may host tourism or amenity/journeys arrivals by boat
- views from landmark structures such as bridges and urban settlements

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<sup>1</sup> Mandatory objective 2(e) of Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

- Planned views and vistas such as those associated with planned settlements and heritage properties and gardens

The Plan recognises the fact that all landscapes are living and changing, and therefore in principle a development on such a route would not necessarily be prohibited, but development, where permitted, should not hinder or obstruct these views and prospects, should not have significant negative impacts either individually or cumulatively and should be designed and located to minimise their impact.

## 11.10 Assessing Visual Impacts

### 11.10.1 Visual Impacts

The capacity of an area to visually absorb development is influenced by a combination of the following factors:-

1. Topography - development in elevated areas will usually be visible over a wide area; development in enclosed areas will not.
2. Vegetation - areas which support (or which have the potential to support) trees, tall hedges and woody vegetation can screen new development from view. Areas which cannot easily sustain such vegetation will be unlikely to screen new development.
3. Development - New development is less likely to be conspicuous in the context of existing development in the landscape.

Impacts may be individual or cumulative, resulting in the gradual erosion of the scenic quality of the area. They may be extensive or cover a small area but be significant. They may be temporary, short, long term or permanent and their significance depends on both the nature of the development, the capacity of the landscape to absorb it and the value that is placed on the specific landscape.

Impacts may be due to the siting of a development or they may be due to the scale or design. They may also be because the resulting development is alien to the environment in which it is situated.

There will be a presumption against developments which are located on elevated and

exposed sites. The impacts associated with such developments are further increased when the development, when viewed in context, will break the skyline.

### 11.10.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

In general, the visual impacts of most development will be assessed by the Council in the normal course of the assessment of the planning application. In some instances, the Council may require an applicant to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to assist in the assessment of a given development on the landscape due to either the scale, siting or design of the development or the sensitivity of the landscape.

LVIA is a tool used to identify and assess the effects of change resulting from development on the landscape as an environmental resource and on people's view and visual amenity. An LVIA should identify the significance and magnitude of effects that are expected to occur as a result of a proposed development. The LVIA should be prepared in accordance with best industry standard/practice.

Proposals for significant development (e.g. renewable energy projects, telecommunications infrastructure and the extractive industry) should be accompanied by a LVIA which includes Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which indicate the areas over which the proposed development may be seen. Representative assessment viewpoints should also be identified. The number of viewpoints required will vary with the location and scale of the proposal. Priority should be given to views from sensitive locations (e.g. residential areas, areas popular with visitors or areas used for outdoor recreation), scenic routes and views from elevated locations. Photomontages should be included from each viewpoint showing the proposed development with and without any proposed screen planting. The LVIA should also include an assessment of the cumulative visual impacts of the proposed development in combination with other significant developments and structures existing and permitted in the area, as well as other live planning applications.

The Council may occasionally require the submission of LVIA reports for smaller developments than those mentioned above where there is a concern that a given proposal may have a significant negative impact on the landscape. LVIA may assist the planning authority in assessing the visual impact of the proposal and potential for mitigation and this may result in a more favourable outcome for a planning applicant.

The LVIA should be applied in a manner that is proportionate to the complexity, scale and likely significance of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

The planning authority will also use all tools available to it such as slope analysis and DTM and will add these to their GIS systems and use them in assessment as they are developed by the Council.

## Landscapes Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective L01

To have regard to the Landscape Character Units and their assigned Landscape Sensitivity, the Draft Landscape and Landscape Assessment-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2000) and any updated versions of these guidelines published during the lifetime of the Plan, and any National Landscape Character Assessment prepared when assessing planning applications or when carrying out local authority own development.

### Objective L02

To review the Landscape Character Assessment and the landscape objectives in the Plan, after the publication of future Landscape Assessment Guidelines issued by a Minister of the Government with respect to landscape. The revised Landscape Character Assessment will address historic and cultural landscape and seascape character analysis.

### Objective L03

To carry out landscape characterisation and sensitivity analysis to inform local area plans.

### Objective L04

To require all developments to be appropriately sited, designed and landscaped

having regard to their setting in the landscape, ensure that any potential adverse visual impacts are minimised and that natural features and characteristics of the site are retained.

#### **Objective L05**

To collaborate with adjoining local authorities, the Southern Regional Assembly and adjoining Regional Assemblies to co-ordinate a consistent approach to landscape planning and management policies, where possible and feasible.

#### **Objective L06**

To ensure that developments are not unduly visually obtrusive in the landscape, in particular, in or adjacent to the Upland, River Valley, Coastal or Distinctive Landscape Character Units.

#### **Objective L07**

To ensure that, where a development will have a negative impact in the Upland, River Valley, Coastal, or Distinctive Landscape Character Unit, an overriding need is demonstrated for that particular development and ensure that careful consideration is given to site selection. The development should be appropriate in scale and be sited, designed and landscaped in a manner which minimises potential adverse impacts on the subject landscape.

#### **Objective L08**

To encourage appropriate development which would enhance an existing degraded landscape and/or which would enhance views to or from an Upland, River Valley, Coastal or Distinctive Landscape Character Unit from public viewpoints.

#### **Objective L09**

To seek to minimise the individual and cumulative adverse visual impacts that rural housing may have on Upland, River Valley, Coastal and Distinctive Landscape Character Units. In this regard, in locations where the Council considers that there

is a risk of individual or cumulative adverse impacts, the Council will only consider proposals for housing developments where a need for the dwelling has been demonstrated in accordance with the criteria contained in Table 4-6 in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing in Volume 1 Written Statement.

### **Objective L10**

The fencing or enclosure of lands, such as upland commonages, traditionally open to and used by the public will generally not be favourably considered unless it is essential for the operation of an agricultural holding or other demonstratable essential reason. Where permitted the nature of the material to be used and the height of the fence will be required to be visually appropriate. Where rights of way exist stiles or gates at appropriate places will also be required.

### **Objective L11**

To protect views worthy of protection, including views to and from the sea, rivers, landscape features, mountains, tourism sites and landmark structures such as bridges and urban settlements from inappropriate development that by virtue of design, scale, character or cumulative impact would block or detract from such views.

### **Objective L12**

To protect planned views and vistas, such as those that might be associated with planned settlements, heritage properties and monuments and ensure that new development does not detract from such views as may be identified within towns, formal settings and designated landscapes. In evaluating planning applications for development in the foreground of such views and vistas, consideration shall be given to the effect such development may have on the view or prospect.

### **Objective L13**

To consider the special qualities of the landscapes listed in Section 4.0 Other Landscape Considerations in Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment when assessing development proposals in these areas. In assessing impacts the Council will consider the specific landscape qualities for which they have been designated.



#### Objective L14

To adopt a presumption against developments which are located on elevated and exposed sites and where the landscape cannot accommodate such development with appropriate mitigation.

#### Objective L15

To adopt a presumption against the siting of telecommunications equipment in prominent locations in Upland, River Valley, Coastal and Distinctive Landscape Character Units unless an over-riding need is demonstrated to the Planning Authority.

#### Objective L16

To require Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Reports to be submitted for developments which may have a significant negative impact on the landscape.

#### Objective L17

To produce a DTM, slope analysis and 3D visualisations as resources allow and make them available alongside the County Development Plan landscape designations to be used by applicants and the Council alike in the assessment of visual impacts.

## 11.12 Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green and blue Infrastructure, referred to in this Plan as green infrastructure, can be defined as an interconnected network of natural space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations. Green Infrastructure describes the functionality of rivers, inland waterways, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, farmland, coastal areas, parks and open spaces, natural conservation areas, gardens and allotments and the services provided by it. It includes, for example, existing ditches to carry water rather than piped networks. Retaining the existing green infrastructure of an area has biodiversity

benefits and also designs out network restrictions caused by streams being culverted and allows for the retention of small localised ponds or such water features.

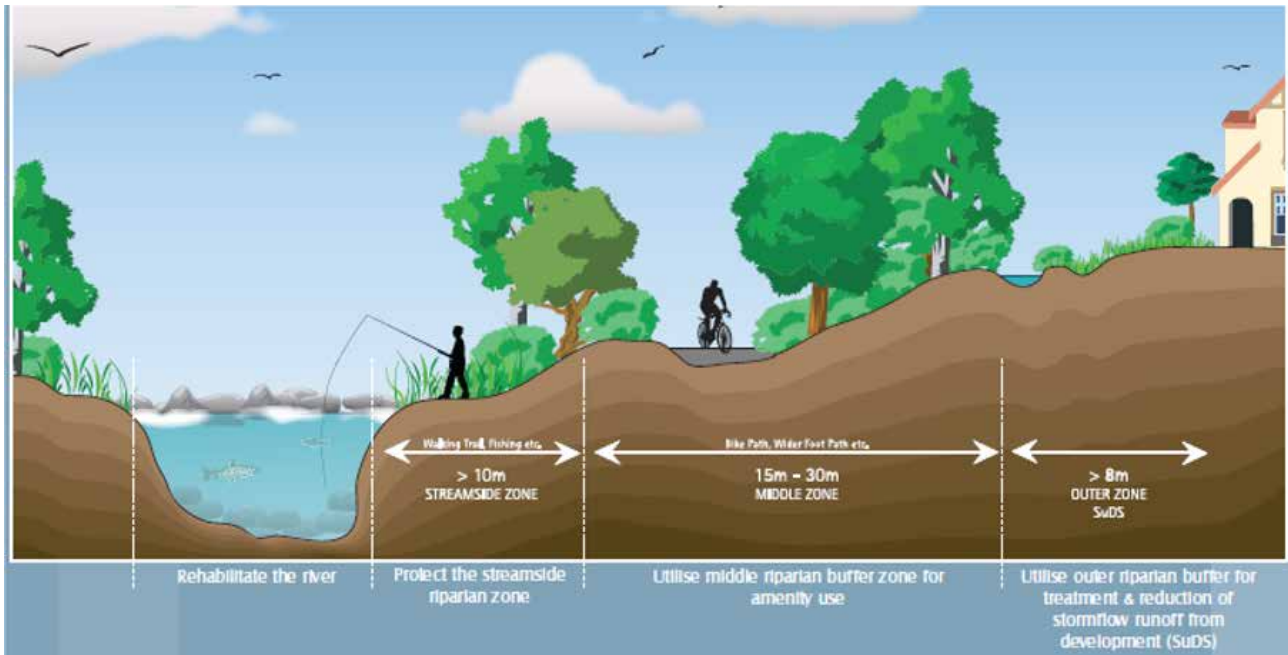
Green Infrastructure has positive economic, social and health benefits. It contributes to the protection of urban and rural environments for people, and the protection, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which in turn delivers environmental and quality of life benefits such as improving air, water and soil quality, flood protection, access provisions and linkages, climate change/amelioration and pollution control.

Nature-based Solutions (NBS) – with healthy and biodiverse ecosystems at their core - are central to achieving objectives relating to the protection and restoration of biodiversity and play a critical role in climate change adaptation and becoming more climate resilient. NBS are about using nature's own resources – clean air, water and soil in a smart way to tackle environmental challenges. These solutions work with nature to provide sustainable, cost effective ways to achieve a greener economy that is competitive and resourceful. It will be a key component and will form a key component of surface water management and green infrastructure in the county.

River corridors and their associated riparian zones are important for ecological and amenity reasons, flood risk management and water protection. Proposals for development along river corridors and in riparian zones shall have regard to the principles for protecting watercourses as set out in the document 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020 ) and any updated version of these Guidelines.

It will be necessary to set aside buffer zones with a sufficient area of land along the river corridor. The width of the riparian zone will be dependent on the width of the river and the nature of the site and as such it will be decided on a case by case basis. However, a minimum of 10 metres in width will be required. In some instances, buffers of up to 50 metres may be appropriate (as set out in the Guidelines). It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river and riparian zone (see Figure 11.1 for the suggested layout of a riparian buffer zone). Applicants are advised to refer to the above document and contact the Planning Authority at pre-planning stage with regard to buffers and the requirement for ecological assessment.

Figure 11-1 Indicative Layout of a Riparian Zone



A well-designed network of Green Infrastructure will help to:

- Provide high quality open spaces with associated health and social benefits for people through the provision of play areas, safe and attractive areas and routes for meeting, walking and cycling.
- Provide opportunities and space for contact with nature which is considered essential for good health and wellbeing.
- Allow communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change and flooding.
- Act as a natural water management infrastructure including drainage and flood attenuation, filtration and pollution control.
- Protect wildlife through the provision of buffer zones.
- Incorporate nature-based solutions that contribute to the protection, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

## Green Infrastructure Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective GI01

To ensure the protection, enhancement and maintenance of the natural environment and recognise the economic, social, environmental, biodiversity and physical value of green spaces through the integration of Green Infrastructure planning and development in the planning process. Planning applications for development must demonstrate compliance with the following requirements:

- a) The integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions into the overall site concept and layout;
- b) The retention and enhancement of landscape connections such as trees, hedgerow and water features that provide habitats for species and allow movement between areas as much as possible. This is particularly important for development in rural areas and one-off housing. Such connectivity both within and to features outside the site should be demonstrated in the application. In the event that it is not possible to retain landscape connections, and in order to ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity, proposals to mitigate and compensate/provide for new connectivity shall be detailed;
- c) To demonstrate, where applicable, the downstream impacts of significant landscape modifications and proposals to mitigate and compensate for same;
- d) To design the footprint of the development to avoid impacts on areas of high biodiversity value;
- e) Avoid building on flood plains. Incorporate these features into the design and use them as flood prevention and water management features;
- f) Ensure that adjacent designated sites are not impacted by the proposed development. This is particularly important for developments adjacent to wetlands;
- g) Landscaping plans shall use species appropriate to the physical and environmental conditions of the site including soil conditions, availability of space and aspect. These plans should use a high diversity of native trees, incorporating a variety of sizes and age classes to improve visual and structural diversity. New hedging and hedge reinforcement in rural areas must comprise native species. Landscaping plans must also incorporate the principles of the 'Pollinator Friendly Planting Code – Professional Planting Recommendations' of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015 – 2020 and any updated version of this code;

- h) Avoid culverting unless absolutely necessary and unavoidable;
- i) Creation of open drainage ditches instead of underground pipes where appropriate as these provide additional habitats and a water source for wetland species;
- j) Ensure that invasive species are not used in terrestrial or aquatic planting schemes; and
- k) Reduction of hard, impermeable surface to a minimum and to consider the use of green roofs.

### Objective GI02

To identify, protect, enhance and manage Green Infrastructure in all Local Area Plans in an integrated and coherent manner. This will include the mapping of existing and proposed green infrastructure and connections at a suitable scale.

### Objective GI03

To support investment in the on-going maintenance and enhancement of existing green infrastructure and support the provision of new public parks, green space corridors and other public open spaces in tandem with projected population growth to create green healthy settlements throughout the county. Wexford County Council shall identify the locations of new public parks and open spaces and ensure that decision-making in relation to the development of new or enhanced Green Infrastructure and new public parks and facilities is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

### Objective GI04

To have regard to the 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020) and any updated version of this guidance when considering development proposals in the vicinity of rivers and streams.

### Objective GI05

To ensure riparian buffer zones, a minimum of 10 metres in width (in some cases buffer zones of up to 50 metres may be appropriate), are created between all watercourses and any future development. In considering the appropriate width, the Council will have regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020) and any future updated version of these guidelines.

### Objective GI06

To only consider proposals for culverting/piping of streams and watercourses where these works are absolutely necessary and appropriate. Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) will be consulted, where appropriate.

### Objective GI07

To consider the appropriate reopening of existing culverts and infilling along watercourses to allow degraded watercourses to return to more naturally functioning systems, provide natural flood relief, provide for biodiversity gain and where appropriate, permit the recreational use of inaccessible riverbanks. This shall be done in consultation with the Office of Public Works and other key stakeholders such as Inland Fisheries Ireland, LAWPRO and National Parks and Wildlife Service and is subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective GI08

To promote the appropriate retrofitting of streets and spaces in towns and villages with green infrastructure and nature-based SuDS solutions particularly in areas contributing to combined drainage systems.

**Objective GI09**

To promote the re-opening of existing culverts to daylight streams as part of a wider biodiversity restoration plan. This will require a multi-stakeholder approach including the OPW, Inland Fisheries, LAWPRO and NPWS. Consent, if necessary, should be obtained from the OPW to make these amendments of under the Arterial Drainage Scheme.





CHAPTER 12

# Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning



## 12.1 Introduction

Our coastal areas are home to vibrant coastal communities, attractive coastal settlements, coastal landscapes and seascapes of intrinsic natural amenity value and a diverse range of coastal habitats, some of which are of international and national importance protected by conservation designations. These areas are also home to a variety of land uses including ports, harbours, fishing and aquaculture, tourism, leisure and amenity all of which make a valuable economic contribution to local communities and the county.

However, these areas are facing many challenges with competing demands on limited resources. The pressures include vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, residential and holiday home development, balancing the demands of tourism with the need to protect the tourism product and protecting our coastal natural and cultural heritage.

The sea is a very important asset for our county and region, offering significant economic potential, particularly, in the areas of fishing and aquaculture, transport, shipping, tourism and offshore energy production. Many activities and uses that take place on land or in the sea can have impacts on both the land and the maritime area, and it is therefore important that these interactions are considered. The planning of the country's marine area is undergoing an ambitious programme of reform, with an impending new regime for the management of development and activities in Ireland's maritime area (See Section 12.3). The new regime will give coastal local authorities and An Bord Pleanála additional responsibilities with regard to development management in parts of the maritime area.

The Plan sets out the spatial planning framework for future development in the county's coastal areas. The policy approach responds to the challenges facing these areas, controlling the scale and rate of development which can be accommodated without damaging or detracting from the qualities and attractions of the coast. It also focuses on bringing water to at least good status and protecting and restoring habitats and species to favourable conservation status while maximising the economic development potential of these areas to create employment for the local community and to further enhance these areas as attractive places to live, visit and to work.

## 12.2 Climate Action in Coastal Areas

Our coast is one of the most vulnerable areas in the county to the impacts of climate change. In this regard, the planning authority will, inter alia,

- Avoid vulnerable development in areas under threat from coastal erosion and/or coastal flooding/sea level rise.
- Ensure new developments do not exacerbate erosion or flood risk at that location, or elsewhere along the coast.
- Preserve and enhance natural features and habitats, such as wetlands, hedgerows and vegetated dunes, in regulating flooding and protecting from coastal erosion.
- Work alongside the relevant authorities to protect our natural and cultural heritage assets, in particular in coastal areas under increased risk from coastal erosion/ coastal flooding/sea level rise.
- Ensure new development in coastal areas is climate proofed and resilient to all elements of climate change.
- Give consideration to appropriate tourism developments that would allow our coastal areas maximise opportunities that the changing climate (warmer summers) will offer.
- Support appropriate renewable energy developments that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including appropriate infrastructure to facilitate offshore renewable energy development in appropriate locations.
- Facilitate development at ports and harbours which will improve safety in marine activities to avoid potential damage from climate change such as increased storminess and storm surges.
- Ensure that climate change is fully integrated into the forthcoming Coastal Strategy being prepared by the Council.
- Have regard to the National Marine Planning Framework and its associated climate action policies when approved and published.
- Support citizen science monitoring of the coastal zone including climate change indicators and impacts of extreme weather and use this for informed timely decision making, covering, in particular, extreme events like mass death of organisms due to heat waves and removal of marine litter accumulations after storms and floods.

## 12.3 Marine Spatial Planning

### 12.3.1 EU Marine Spatial Planning Directive 2014/89

Marine spatial planning is a new concept introduced under this Directive. It is a process that brings together multiple users of the ocean to make informed and coordinated decisions about how to use marine resources sustainably. It is a process by which the relevant public authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives<sup>1</sup>. This must be presented in a Marine Spatial Plan by the 31st March 2021, and the Directive outlines the range of activities that must be included in the plan. In Ireland, this plan will be known as the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (see Section 12.3.5).

### 12.3.2 Marine Planning Policy Statement

This statement serves as a parallel to the 2015 Planning Policy Statement which underpins the operation of entire land-planning system in Ireland. The statement outlines the ambitious programme of reform for marine planning, and it outlines that, in parallel to land based planning, the marine planning system will comprise three elements: marine forward planning, marine development management and enforcement.

### 12.3.3 Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018

Amongst other matters, this Act gives effect to the Marine Spatial Planning Directive, establishing a framework for the preparation of the marine spatial plan and to provide for matters connected therewith. It states that the Act refers to the maritime area and does not apply to those parts of the maritime area to which a development plan, a local area plan, the national planning framework, a regional spatial and economic strategy, a guideline or a directive under Part II of the Principal Act applies.

The Act requires public bodies, which includes local authorities, to adopt measures that are consistent with its functions and necessary to secure the objectives of the NMPF. In this regard, functions include:

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, National Marine Planning Framework- Consultation Draft, p.9 (published November, 2019)

- The formulation of any policy, programme or plan in relation to development or activity, or proposed development or activity, in the maritime area.
- The giving of any consent or approval for the purposes of any such proposed development or activity.
- The regulation of any such development or activity.

The Act also provides that the Minister may give a direction to a public body to adopt measures relating to the implementation of marine spatial planning, compliance with the marine spatial plan or compliance with the State's obligation under the Directive.

### 12.3.4 Marine Planning and Development Management Bill 2019

The impending Act will address a number of key areas including:

- Introduce powers for the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to put in place statutory marine planning guidelines (parallel to statutory planning guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000);
- Provide an enhanced statutory basis for marine forward planning with decisions to be taken in a manner that secures the objectives of the NMPF.
- Introduce a single State consent system for the entire maritime area (replacing foreshore leases and licences which are limited to the territorial sea) with the Ministers for Housing, Planning and Local Government and Communications, Climate Action and Environment assuming responsibility for the State consents enabling occupation of the maritime area for development and activities within their respective remits.
- Eliminate the unnecessary duplication of development management processes (including environmental assessments) for activities or developments that are currently assessed under both the foreshore and planning regimes.
- Introduce a single development management process for the maritime area for activities and developments to be administered by An Bord Pleanála/local authorities as appropriate to development type and location.
- Provide for strengthened enforcement and compliance of State consents and development management.

- Provide for transitional arrangements including, inter alia, a future development management pathway for offshore renewable energy projects.
- Provide for a system of designation of Strategic Marine Activity Zones.

One of the main features of the new regime will be to extend the existing planning permission functions of coastal local authorities to the outer limit of a newly defined nearshore. Part 2 of the Bill provides for the designation of this new nearshore area in which coastal local authorities will exercise certain planning and enforcement functions. This area will be coastal, and it will extend a number of kilometres from the shoreline. The boundaries of this nearshore area will be determined by factors such as the particular geography of the coastline, practical matters relating to coastal local authority boundaries and practicalities in relation to the exercise of coastal local authority functions<sup>2</sup>.

### 12.3.5 National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

The NMPF is a 20-year national plan for the country's maritime areas, setting out how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas. It will provide the over-arching framework for marine decision-making that is consistent, evidenced based and secures a sustainable future for our country's marine area. The NMPF contains a series of overarching policies over environmental, social and economic themes, and provides sectoral policies for 16 sectors ranging from renewable energy, aquaculture, port, harbours and shipping to tourism and defence. The NMPF gives a commitment to prepare sub-national and/or regional plans.

The NPF supports the alignment of land use spatial planning and marine spatial planning. NPO 38 requires regional and local development plans to take account of and integrate relevant maritime spatial planning issues. The Plan must be consistent with the NMPF, and as outlined in Section 12.3.2, the Minister may direct a planning authority to take measures to ensure their development plan complies with the NMPF. Relevant common policy areas will include renewable energy, electricity networks, coastal and flood defences, fishing and aquaculture, ports and harbours, public access, tourism and recreation, protected sites and species, seascape and landscape.

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<sup>2</sup> General Scheme of the Marine Planning and Development Management (MPDM) Bill Frequently Asked Questions, page 11

The effective date from which it will become a legal obligation to comply with the requirements of the NMPF will be the date on which it is approved and adopted, currently expected to be late 2020/early 2021. Until then, there is no plan in place to comply with<sup>3</sup>. Once the NMPF is adopted, the Planning Authority will review the Plan to ensure that it is consistent with the adopted NMPF. It should be noted however that many of the objectives of the Draft NMPF have been integrated into this chapter and/or are implemented through the various chapters of the Plan. The commitment to have regard to the NMPF, future associated sectoral plans and Section 28 marine planning guidelines is given here while Table 12-1 lists where the high level objectives and their components and the 16 key sectors/activities are addressed within the relevant chapter(s) in the Plan with corresponding objective numbers listed.

**Table 12-1 Incorporation of the Draft National Marine Planning Framework into the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028**

NMPF High Level Objectives and Key Sectors/Activities	Chapter/Strategy No.	Key Objectives No.
Environmental-Ocean Health	10, 12 and 13	WQ01, WQ02, WQ05 and WQ15, CZM 39 and 43
Social Engagement with the Sea	6, 8, 12 and 13	CZM21 and 22
Economic Thriving Maritime Economy	6, 8, 12	ED72
Aquaculture	6 and 12	CZM47, 53 and 83. ED80 and 90.
Defence and Security	12	CZM54
Energy -Carbon Capture	12, Volume 10	CZM48
Energy - Off shore Gas	Volume 10	-
Energy Transmission	12, Volume 10	CZM49 and 50
Energy - Petroleum	Volume 10	-
Energy - Offshore Renewable Energy	12 and Volume 10	CZM51

<sup>3</sup> Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, National Marine Planning Framework-Consultation Draft, 2019, p23.

NMPF High Level Objectives and Key Sectors/Activities	Chapter/Strategy No.	Key Objectives No.
Fisheries	6 and 12	ED82, TS91 and 92 and CZM47
Marine Aggregates and Mining	6	Section 6.7.4
Ports, Harbours and Shipping	6, 7, 8,12 and Volume 3	ED72 and 76, TS85, 87, 89 and 90 and CZM52
Safety at Sea	12	CZM16
Sport and Recreation	12 and 14	CZM58-CZM71
Telecommunications	9	TC02
Tourism	7 and 12	TM21-28 and CZM56-65
Wastewater treatment and disposal	9 and 10	WS01, WW01,WW06, WQ01, WQ02 and WQ05

## 12.4 Coastal Zone Management Spatial Strategy

### 12.4.1 The Coastal Zone

The policies and objectives of this chapter refer to the entire coastal area of our County. It includes the foreshore and the areas within any of our coastal towns and villages. It will also include the new nearshore once defined. The area to which these policies apply are not defined on a map.

The Plan contains two maps which relate to the coastal area and they each have a different application:

- Map 3 Coastal Zone in Volume 1 Written Statement shows the Coastal Zone and it is read conjunction with Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing in so far as it relates to rural housing.
- Map 7.1 Landscape Character Units in Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment shows the Coastal Landscape Unit, and it is read in conjunction with the policies and objectives of Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment.



## 12.4.2 Goal

The overall goal for the coastal zone and maritime area is to ensure that it is protected and managed to balance social, economic and environmental interests while allowing these areas to be used in a planned and sustainable manner. This will be achieved by:

- Adapting to and managing the challenges of climate change in coastal areas and the maritime area.
- Promoting vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal communities by facilitating appropriate social and economic development and/or regeneration of these areas to provide self-sustaining, socially inclusive and vibrant places to live, work and visit.
- Adopting an integrated and collaborative approach to the management of coastal areas and the maritime area to ensure their long term sustainability and stability.
- Implementing and managing the land/sea interactions and facilitating development which is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, in the maritime area in accordance with the draft NMPF.
- Maximising the economic potential of the coastal and maritime areas and its resources in a sustainable manner.
- Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of coastal landscapes and seascapes, biodiversity, the cultural, historic and architectural heritage and archaeological features of the coast and maritime area.
- Promoting preservation and enjoyment of marine related cultural and heritage assets.
- Adopting ecosystem-based approaches and ensuring the pressure of human activities take into account the precautionary principle and the need to achieve good environmental status and the appropriate management and restoration of habitats and species to favourable conservation status.
- Realising the potential of marine resources in an integrated fashion.

### 12.4.3 An Integrated Approach to Coastal Zone Management

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is about the sustainable management of the coastal zone. It is a process which brings together all those involved in the development, management and use of the coast to help ensure future management takes place in an integrated, informed and efficient manner. Both the NPF and the RSES support the development of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans (ICZMP). The NMPF has added significantly to policy development in this area and this chapter incorporates the policies of that plan into ICZM insofar as possible.

There are many bodies and State agencies involved in managing different aspects of the coastal zone in Ireland and as some of the responsibilities of these groups overlap, an integrated approach is required in order to ensure the efficient use of investment and resources. The Council will continue to advocate for the prioritisation of this approach to coastal zone management and will continue to work with the local communities, adjoining local authorities, the Southern Regional Assembly and the Marine Spatial Planning division of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to ensure that potential trans-boundary issues relating to coastal zone management are addressed at both the strategic and local level.

#### Coastal Zone Management Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

##### Objective CZM01

To ensure the sustainable development of the county's coastal areas and the maritime area for the long term benefit of coastal communities and the economic well-being of these areas and the county whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality and managing and restoring biodiversity.

##### Objective CZM02

To prepare a County Coastal Strategy, which will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and compliance with the Habitats Directive, to provide the framework

to sustainably manage our coastal areas, in particular, those areas at risk of coastal erosion and coastal flooding, and to have regard to the Strategy when preparing land use plans and assessing planning applications.

### **Objective CZM03**

To maximise the economic development potential of the county's coastal and maritime areas subject to compliance with the objectives of the County Development Plan with regard to the location of economic development, the protection of the scenic amenity and views associated with coastal areas and the maritime area which is crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural well-being of coastal communities, the protection and restoration of coastal features, habitats and species, compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of these areas.

### **Objective CZM04**

To seek investment in the sustainable development of infrastructure (physical and social), access (upgraded pier infrastructure, landing facilities and passenger and cargo ferry services), regional connectivity (transport networks and digital) and enterprise growth and deliver initiatives with local communities and other stakeholders to strengthen and sustainably grow coastal communities subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### **Objective CZM05**

To collaborate with the Southern Regional Assembly, the Marine Spatial Planning Division of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, adjoining coastal local authorities, local communities and relevant stakeholders to prepare and implement an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for the coastal and estuarine areas of the county and region.

**Objective CZM06**

To work alongside the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and other relevant government departments and bodies in the implementation of the National Marine Planning Framework.

**Objective CZM07**

To review the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 after the adoption of the National Marine Planning Framework and the enactment of the Marine Planning and Development Management Act to ensure alignment and consistency between land use and marine planning.

**Objective CZM08**

To implement any future Marine Planning and Development Management Act in so far as it relates to the duties and functions of the Planning Authority, in particular, the assessment of planning applications and planning enforcement in the newly designated nearshore area.

**Objective CZM09**

To work alongside the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Community with regard to the designation of the new nearshore area for the county and to ensure that future development of this area complies with the objectives in the County Development Plan, is subject to proper planning and sustainable development, compliance with the Habitats Directive and all other relevant planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective CZM10**

To have regard to any future Section 28 Guidelines issued by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government relating to marine spatial planning when carrying out, where relevant, the forward planning, development management and enforcement functions of the Planning Authority.

### Objective CZM11

To support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime area and the maritime economy in accordance with the objectives of this chapter and the relevant objectives in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy, Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure, Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and Volume 10 Energy Strategy as referred to in Table 12-1 and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective CZM12

To support transboundary consultations and cooperation by requiring proposals that have transboundary impacts beyond the maritime area, either on the terrestrial environment or neighbouring international jurisdictions, to show evidence of consultation with the relevant public authorities, including terrestrial planning authorities and other country authorities.

### Objective CZM13

To support proposals that optimise the use of maritime space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operation with other activities and enhancing other activities where appropriate subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

### Objective CZM14

To support development in the coastal zone and maritime area that will facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy such as carbon capture and storage and renewable energy developments including offshore tidal and wind energy subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of these areas.

**Objective CZM15**

To support the achievement of Ports of National Significance Tier 1 status for Rosslare Europort, and to provide for the appropriate development of Rosslare Europort and other harbours in the county to ensure the effective growth and sustainable development of the county and the region subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Objective CZM16**

To support development which provides for safety at sea, navigation safety and maritime search and rescue operations and ensure that they are key considerations in the assessment of development proposals, in particular, the development or expansion of port facilities, or the development of infrastructure in or adjacent to the maritime area including offshore wind farms and other temporary or permanent fixed infrastructure.

**Objective CZM17**

To work with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in the preparation of sub-regional plans for the maritime area and nearshore area which will maximise the beneficial impacts of the development of the maritime area while protecting County Wexford, its landscape and seascapes, environment, economy and people.

**Objective CZM18**

To participate in the preparation of sectoral guidelines and plans by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

**Objective CZM19**

To support the development of a research driven marine cluster in the Southern Region to support the development of marine ICT and biotechnology subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and all normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective CZM20

To support the implementation of the South East Fisheries Local Action Group Local Development Strategy 2016 subject to compliance with all relevant EU Directives and national legislation and normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 12.5 Managing the Coastal Zone and Maritime Area

There are components in the coastal zone and the maritime area that need to be considered in all developments. Objectives relating to these components are included at the end of this section, and development proposals will be required to demonstrate compliance with these objectives, where relevant.

### 12.5.1 Coastal Communities and Social Benefits

The Council will continue to seek investment in infrastructure and facilities that improve the quality of life of our coastal communities, and support the development of direct and indirect economic and employment opportunities associated with the coastal and maritime area.

The Council is however mindful that these developments should maintain and if possible improve the social benefits that these coastal communities enjoy. Social benefits related to coastal living include, but are not limited to, health and well-being, enjoyment, cultural identity and a sense of place. These can include direct benefits such as the enjoyment of sea views and coastal landscapes during all seasons and recreation in and adjoining the coastline and maritime area, to indirect benefits such as marine related employment including fishing, aquaculture and tourism. The effects of developments in coastal areas and maritime areas on air quality must be also be considered, in particular, proposals that may result in air pollution and the consequence impacts on air quality for coastal communities.

In this regard, there is a need for developments to consider the potential social impacts on local coastal communities (positive and negative, direct and indirect, permanent and temporary as well as those resulting from cumulative impacts).

### 12.5.2 Universal Access

The Council will continue its work to improve universal access for all in coastal and maritime areas, including facilitating access to and enjoyment of beaches and the enjoyment of recreation activities. The Council will require new developments in these areas to be accessible, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their age and ability, enjoys equal access.

### 12.5.3 Climate Action

Climate change will manifest itself in the coastal zone and maritime area through increased sea levels and storm surges, which in turn will result in increased risk of coastal flooding and coastal erosion. In this regard, climate action, coastal erosion (Section 12.5.4) and coastal flooding (Section 12.5.5) need to be carefully considered by all development proposals. The impacts of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems also needs to be carefully considered. Rising sea temperatures and sea levels and ocean acidification have been identified as some of the key climate change impacts for coastal and marine environments. These factors have the potential to seriously affect the functioning of coastal and marine ecosystems, for example, the impacts of increased temperatures on mudflats.

### 12.5.4 Coastal Erosion

There is approximately 125 km of 'soft' shoreline (shoreline prone to erosion) along the county's coastline. Coastal erosion and coastal flooding are serious issues for the Council especially as the frequency and intensity of storms and coastal flooding events and the associated threats to critical and public infrastructure increases.

The OPW is the State agency responsible for both coastal erosion and flood risk management. In 2013, the OPW completed the Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (ICPSS). These studies provide strategic assessment of the extent of coastal erosion and coastal flooding along the south-east and southern coastlines. The assessments estimated the erosion lines for the coastline in the years 2030 and 2050.

The erosion maps identify the following areas as being prone to erosion: Kilpatrick, Ardamine, Glascarrig, Killincooly to Ballinesker, Rosslare, Tacumshin to Kilmore



Quay, Ballyteige Burrow to Cullenstown and Fethard. The studies also identified low confidence rates for erosion predictions in localised areas where coastal defence works are in place. These areas include Courtown, Pollshone, Cahore, Blackwater and Rosslare. It is important to note that the impacts of climate change and the related sea level rise and increased frequency and severity of coastal storms are not taken into account in these studies.

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI), in partnership with the Discovery Programme through the CHERISH project, is surveying sections of the Irish coastline and producing digital elevation models. In Rosslare, a 200m section of an eroding sediment cliff was surveyed in 2017 and in 2018. Up to 4m change in elevation was seen with nearly 5,800 m<sup>3</sup> of material eroded as the shoreline retreats. This is not uniform, with erosion focused at discrete regions on the shoreline. Interestingly, nearly 5,300 m<sup>3</sup> of sediment was deposited within the studied area, meaning that while erosion is occurring, much of that material is not moving far. In total, only 500 m<sup>3</sup> of sediment transported out of the studied region, perhaps just offshore.

This type of data is essential for informed decision making in the area and will be used for the management of infrastructure, land-use and planning, and for future climate-change adaptation and mitigation. The Council will continue to work with the GSI and the OPW to ensure that risks posed by coastal erosion are carefully managed so as to protect people, property and coastal habitats. The Council has a key role to play in managing coastal erosion including coastal maintenance and emergency works and managing coastal protection schemes. The OPW has some funding available for local authorities to carry out coastal defence works. However, due to limited funding schemes are prioritised based on risks to public safety and public infrastructure.

To this end, the Council has commenced work on a County Coastal Strategy which will make recommendations about the management of development in vulnerable areas and approaches to coastal protection. It may be necessary to vary the Plan to incorporate these recommendations following the adoption of the strategy.

The Council will carefully consider the location and siting of new developments and vulnerability to coastal erosion, particularly dwellings and critical infrastructure. In this regard, the Council will assess development within settlements with coastal protection works in place or underway (Objective CZM34) differently to development

within settlements without coastal protection works and where coastal erosion is a threat (Objective CZM35). Applicants should liaise with the Planning Authority in advance of submitting a planning application to determine which objective will apply. It should be noted that 'a soft shoreline' is a shoreline prone to erosion. The Council will also adopt a presumption against allowing development in settlements on soft shorelines/area at risk of coastal erosion where this would extend the length of the coastline that would require coastal protection works.

### 12.5.5 Coastal Flooding

Tidal and coastal flooding is caused by higher sea levels than normal, predominantly related to storm surges and results in the sea or tidally influenced rivers overflowing onto the land. This type of flooding is influenced by high tides, storm surges caused by low atmospheric pressure exacerbated by high winds and wave action. With a significant length of coastline, many settlements are also sensitive to the impacts of tidal flooding, many in combination with fluvial flooding. The impacts of climate change will increase the risk posed by coastal flooding, and similar to coastal erosion, these risks must be carefully managed.

The ICPSS identifies the hazard and potential risk from coastal flooding at a strategic level. The SFRA contained in Volume 11 identifies areas along the coast at risk from coastal flooding, and outlines the considerations that need to be made in respect of climate change and anticipated sea level rises.

The Council will continue to work with the OPW and other key agencies and departments relevant to coastal erosion and coastal flooding including National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

### 12.5.6 Ecosystem Services

The biological diversity of our coast is complex and an invaluable part of the county's natural heritage. Natural features such as wetlands, dunes and vegetation are important corridors and stepping stones for the dispersal of biodiversity and the Council is obliged to protect them under Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

Coastal habitats such as dune systems and shoreline habitats are dynamic and interconnected. Erosion is a natural process which many coastal habitats depend on, and it is therefore important that the natural circulation of sediment and organic matter is allowed to continue without physical obstruction and that natural erosion is allowed to continue in order to conserve these habitats. In relation to flooding, overtopping is a natural process in certain coastal habitats such as lagoonal systems where such “shock” events, corresponding to a sudden increase in salinities, are a natural feature of their ecology.

Other coastal features, habitats and species can be fragile and susceptible to damage from natural erosion and flooding and from developments and activities. The Council will ensure that these features are protected both for the services they provide and in their own right. It is also important to ensure that non-indigenous species and invasive species introduced by human activities do not adversely alter ecosystems in coastal and maritime areas.

While the provision of public access points to beaches is important, multiple access points can result in negative ecological impacts such as interfering with ground nesting sites and causing breaks in dunes/grasslands and interrupting Article 10 corridors. The Council will limit the number of accesses from developments to beaches and will consider access points where they provide public access as well, that is, where the applicant will enter into an agreement to provide public access too from the same access. This could be achieved by segregating the access from the private garden at the edge of the site.

Biodiverse ecosystems play a very important role in regulating our environment and there is a need to ensure protection of wildlife and their habitats. The Council recognises the inherent socio-economic and environmental value of wildlife and the importance of protecting highly mobile species such as fish, birds, marine mammals such as seals and marine reptiles such as turtles from disturbance, which is when species spend extra time or energy to avoid a human activity or output. This must be considered for developments in both the coastal area and the maritime area. Sources of displacement or disturbance can include vessels, offshore structures, lighting on offshore structures and underwater noise. It is also important to ensure that the integrity of the sea floor and deep-sea habitats are protected and not adversely affected by development or activity or the deposition of marine litter in the maritime area.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which was put in place to protect the marine ecosystem and biodiversity upon which our health and marine-related economic and social activities depend, requires a coherent and representative network of spatial protection measures, including marine protected areas (MPAs) to be put in place where appropriate. The use of this area-based protection approach will help to maintain, conserve and restore marine ecosystems to achieve or maintain the good environmental status of the maritime area.

As outlined in Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation, some MPAs are already in place in the county through the Natura 2000 networks of SACs and SPAs designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives respectively. Both existing and future designated MPAs will be protected by the Council through compliance with the Habitats Directive and other relevant legislation.

### 12.5.7 Built and Cultural Heritage

Our coastal areas and their maritime features including harbours, piers and landings, are an important part of our built heritage and contribute to defining the cultural heritage of these areas. The Council will continue to protect heritage assets along the coast and under the sea in order to safeguard this heritage for its intrinsic value, social benefits and its services to other activities, e.g. tourism. Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation, which includes a section on underwater heritage, will be consulted when considering development proposals in the coastal zone and maritime area.

### 12.5.8 Seascape and Landscape

Many areas of our coastline are distinctive for their natural beauty and their diverse range of activities. The Council must consider the potential impacts on seascape and landscape to ensure that both iconic views and character are protected and also to aid in the process of enabling development where it is most appropriate, e.g. the effects of development such as wind and tidal energy projects, port development, coastal defences, cable landings and pipelines on an area's seascape and landscape will need to be carefully considered.

### 12.5.9 Water Quality

Good water quality in coastal areas and the maritime area is very important, in particular, for the local communities, supporting habitats and ecosystems and for economic development. There are also habitats that can play a part in managing water quality. The main threats to water quality in these areas are eutrophication and contaminants caused by various activities including agriculture, shipping, aquaculture, wastewater treatment plants and industrial waters. The Council will ensure that development proposals will not result in adverse impacts on water quality, and where possible contribute to an improvement, in order to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and other Directives including Bathing Water, Shellfish Waters and the associated Pollution Reduction Programme and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. This is discussed further in Chapter 10 Environmental Management.

### Managing the Coastal Zone and Maritime Area General Objectives

(These objectives will be applied, where relevant, to all proposed developments in the coastal zone, both within and outside of existing settlements and in the maritime area when/where applicable).

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective CZM21

To support proposals for new development or activities in coastal and maritime areas that enhance or promote social benefits for the local communities, and where considered necessary an applicant will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts on local communities will be avoided, mitigated or minimised appropriately.

#### Objective CZM22

To require developments that will be used by the public to be universally accessible to ensure that everyone enjoys equal access regardless of their age or ability.

**Objective CZM23**

To consider a limited number of access points from developments to a beach. The Council will consider an access where the applicant agrees to enter into an agreement to provide public access to the beach from the proposed access and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective CZM24**

To address, as part of the County Wexford Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, and the forthcoming County Wexford Coastal Strategy, the effects of sea level changes and coastal flooding and erosion in the coastal zone and maritime area and to support the implementation of adaptation responses in vulnerable areas subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Objective CZM25**

To have regard to the potential impacts of climate change in the future land use plans and the assessment of planning applications in the coastal zone and maritime area.

**Objective CZM26**

To work with the OPW to develop appropriate strategies for the management of identified coastal erosion and flood risk and associated risks.

**Objective CZM27**

To have regard to the findings and recommendations of the Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Studies and any future update of these studies during the preparation of local area plans, the assessment of planning applications and the carrying out of local authority developments.

### Objective CZM28

To support the development of updated national modelling of coastal erosion and in the absence of such adopt a precautionary approach to development in the coastal area.

### Objective CZM29

To have regard to all available mapping resources and studies relating to coastal erosion and flooding along the county's coastline in the preparation of local area plans, the assessment of planning applications and in the carrying out of local authority own works. These mapping resources and studies include those of the Geological Survey Ireland such as the coastal vulnerability index and mapping, those referenced in the County Coastal Strategy, the flood zone maps that form part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the County Development Plan and which include the OPW's Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study coastal flood maps, and the recently published National Indicative Fluvial mapping prepared by the OPW.

### Objective CZM30

To carefully consider development proposals in areas identified at risk of coastal erosion, which include but are not limited to Kilpatrick, Ardamine, Glascarrig, Killincooly to Ballinesker, Rosslare, Tacumshin to Kilmore Quay, Ballyteige Burrow to Cullenstown and Fethard, and areas where coastal defence works are in place but confidence rate are low including but not limited to Courtown, Pollshone, Cahore, Blackwater and Rosslare.

### Objective CZM31

To carry out environmentally sensitive local authority own coastal protection works where necessary and subject to the works being appropriately designed and where it is demonstrated that the works would not exacerbate existing problems of coastal erosion or result in altered patterns of erosion, deposition or flooding elsewhere along the coast to the detriment of other properties, important habitats, species, marine life, coastal features or designated sites.

### Objective CZM32

To prepare coastal erosion management plans and support the development of coastal protection or management works for the following locations subject to compliance with the Habitats and SEA/EIA Directive and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria:

- Rosslare Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Plan.
- Courtown North Beach Nourishment and Marina Feasibility Study.
- Grange, Fethard on Sea Coastal Erosion Management Plan.
- Bastardstown / Ballyhealy Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Plan for the area between Kilmore Quay and Carnsore.

### Objective CZM33

To consider proposals for environmentally sensitive coastal works in limited circumstances, which include but are not limited to the protection of an inhabited permanent residence/ habitable dwelling and critical infrastructure such as access roads. Where coastal protection works are proposed in these circumstances the onus will be on the applicant to provide evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events in assessing such applications. The onus will also be on the applicant to ensure that the proposed works would not have a negative impact on the erosion of nearby properties. Pedestrian access for the public to the beach must be retained and if necessary access for people with disabilities.

### Objective CZM34

#### **(new developments within settlements that have coastal protection works)**

Within coastal settlements located on a soft shoreline or where there is an identified area of coastal erosion risk, the Council will consider the development of buildings or uses (including caravans or temporary dwellings) where there are existing coastal protection works in place or these works are underway. In order for the development to be considered:



- (a) The development must not extend the length of the coastline that would require additional coastal protection works.
- (b) The applicant must objectively establish based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, the effectiveness of the existing coastal protection works and any potential impacts of the proposed development on erosion or deposition.
- (c) The onus will be on the applicant to provide the evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events and the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29 in assessing such applications.
- (d) The applicant must also demonstrate that the proposed development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and is compliant with the Habitats Directive.
- (e) This objective will not apply to minor extensions to existing buildings.

### Objective CZM35

#### **(new developments within settlements with no coastal protection works)**

Within established coastal settlements located on a soft shoreline and where there is an identified coastal erosion risk and where there are no coastal protection works in place and no such work is underway or planned by the Council, the Council will only consider the development of infill sites where the development is a minimum of 100m (or such greater distance as may be specified by the Planning Authority having regard to the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29) from the soft shoreline. In those circumstances the following applies:

- (a) The development must not extend the length of the coastline that may require coastal protection works in the future.
- (b) The applicant must objectively establish based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, any potential impacts of the proposed development on erosion or deposition.

- (c) The onus will be on the applicant to provide the evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events and the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29 in assessing such applications.
- (d) The applicant must also demonstrate that the proposed development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and is compliant with the Habitats Directive.

### Objective CZM36

#### **(new development outside of settlements)**

Where the principle of a development outside of an existing settlement in the coastal zone is acceptable and it complies with the location objectives of the Plan, the Council will only give consideration to the development of buildings and uses (including caravans and temporary dwellings) where the development is a minimum of 250m (or a greater distance as may be specified by the Planning Authority having regard to the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29) from the soft shoreline or an area identified as at risk from coastal erosion. In order for the development to be considered:

- (a) The applicant must objectively establish based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, the effectiveness of any existing coastal protection works and any impacts of the proposed development on erosion or deposition.
- (b) The onus will be on the applicant to provide evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events and the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29 in assessing such applications.
- (c) It must be demonstrated that the development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features and is compliant with the Habitats Directive.

- (d) The Planning Authority will not permit a development where such development could not be adequately defended over its lifetime without the need to construct new or additional coastal defence works.
- (e) This objective will not apply to minor extensions to existing buildings.

#### **Objective CZM37**

To prohibit development within areas liable to coastal flooding other than in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009), Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy and Volume 11 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

#### **Objective CZM38**

To restrict the removal of beach material, sand and gravel.

#### **Objective CZM39**

To establish a coastal monitoring programme to provide information on coastal erosion on an on-going basis.

#### **Objective CZM40**

To protect the environmental quality of our coastal and maritime areas by ensuring that new developments do not detract from water quality and ensuring that wastewater treatment and non-point sources are appropriately located.

#### **Objective CZM41**

To apply an ecosystem approach to planning in the coastal and maritime areas to ensure the protection of biodiversity habitats and species and marine protected areas to ensure that development or activity in the coastal zone or maritime area does not give rise to displacement or disturbance of species, or does not adversely impact on coastal habitats, species and features such as wetlands and vegetated dunes which

play an important role in flood relief and in protecting from coastal erosion, and are important in their own right.

#### **Objective CZM42**

To protect heritage assets in the coastal zone and maritime area including underwater heritage in accordance with Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and Volume 5 Record of Protected Structures and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

#### **Objective CZM43**

To adopt a presumption against development which would have inappropriate impacts on the seascape and landscape of the coastal area.

#### **Objective CZM44**

To protect water quality in our coastal and maritime areas and to ensure that development proposals would not result in adverse impacts on water quality in order to comply with objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the associated National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, the EU Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and associated Pollution Reduction Programme, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.

#### **Objective CZM45**

To maintain, conserve and restore marine ecosystems in existing and future designated Marine Protected Areas in order to achieve or maintain good environmental status of the maritime area.

## 12.6 Specific Land Use/Land Side Developments in the Coastal Zone

As previously outlined our coastal areas are home to a variety of land uses ranging from residential and economic to tourism and recreation. This section does not cover all land use categories and accordingly all other chapters should be consulted to ascertain the applicable objectives, in particular, Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing for one off rural housing and holiday homes, Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy and Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy, Chapter 10 Environmental Management and Volume 10 Energy Strategy.

### 12.6.1 Landside Developments to Facilitate Development in the Maritime Area

There are many interactions and co-dependencies between the development of the maritime area and landside. Land based infrastructure can be critical to realising the economic and social benefits of marine activities. This type of infrastructure includes but is not limited to physical structures or facilities for landing, storage and processing of catch or freight, for passenger transfer or utilities transmission, slipways and boat repair facilities. In this regard, the Council will support the appropriate development of landside infrastructure and facilities. This is discussed further in Section 12.6.2 to Section 12.6.9.

#### Landside Developments to Facilitate Development in the Maritime Area Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

##### Objective CZM46

To support the development of appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa), and support proposals for appropriate infrastructure that facilitates the diversification or regeneration of marine industries subject to compliance with the objectives of this County Development Plan, the

protection of the scenic amenity associated with coastal areas and the maritime area which is crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural identity of coastal communities, the protection of coastal features, habitats and species and compliance with the Habitats Directive, normal planning and environmental criteria and proper planning and sustainable development.

## 12.6.2 Fisheries and Aquaculture

These sectors are an integral part of our coastal economy and co-exist in various locations with other marine sectors such as ports, marine leisure and tourism. As outlined in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, the Council supports the development of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sectors, driven by skilled workforces and promotes sustainable industries that protect and enhance the social and economic fabric of rural coastal communities, which are dependent on these sectors. The Council will continue to support the development of appropriate landside facilities and other developments that offer value added opportunities for these sectors. The Council will work with these sectors to promote improved marine litter management and the provision of reclamation facilities, as appropriate, in developments in coastal and maritime areas.

### Fisheries and Aquaculture Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective CZM47

To support the development of vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sectors that produce high quality foods, protect and enhance the social and economic fabric of rural coastal communities and conserves biodiversity around our coastline and ensures good marine litter management, and to support the development of associated landside infrastructure subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 12.6.3 Energy Developments in the Maritime Area

Energy developments in the maritime area will require landside infrastructure e.g. interconnectors, pipelines and cables.

### 12.6.3.1 Carbon Capture and Storage

Carbon Capture Storage (CCS) has the potential to assist Ireland in meeting its emissions reduction targets by supporting the transition to low carbon electricity generation and industrial activity. It involves the capture of CO<sub>2</sub> at source from electricity generation or industrial activity. This is then transported either by pipeline to a geological formation such as a depleted gas or oil field for storage, or alternatively by ship to a remote storage location. The CO<sub>2</sub> is injected into the geological reservoir for permanent storage.

### Carbon Capture and Storage Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective CZM48

To support the use of existing infrastructure and the provision of new landside infrastructure such as pipelines to facilitate the development of carbon capture storage where considered feasible and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and ensuring that all safety, health and environmental issues relating to the deployment of this storage are considered and are acceptable.

### 12.6.3.2 Energy Transmission

The Council acknowledges that the building of interconnection infrastructure that links Ireland to larger cross border markets will provide security of supply which is a critical component underpinning economic development. This will also increase competition, bringing direct benefits through lower energy costs. Increased levels of storage and interconnection will also be critical to absorbing a high level of renewable generation onto the system as renewables require back-up which will have to be provided by quick response plant, storage or interconnection.

### Energy Transmission Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CZM49

To support energy transmission proposals that maintain or improve the security and diversity of Ireland's energy supply, including interconnectors, while ensuring that the development is informed by consideration of space required for other activities of national importance described in the National Marine Planning Framework and subject to Objective CZM46 and complying with all relevant safety, health and environmental requirements.

### Objective CZM50

To support the development of land-based, coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports energy transmission subject to complying with Objective CZM46 and to ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect energy transmission proposals in sites held under a permission, or that are subject to an on-going permitting or consenting process for energy transmission proposals.

#### 12.6.3.3 Offshore Renewable Energy

Offshore renewable energy has a key role to play in the transformation to a clean, low carbon system. It also minimises the amount of energy that has to be generated on land. This is discussed in further detail in Volume 10 Energy Strategy. The Council will support this development, and the development of land-based infrastructure required to develop and maintain these developments.

It is also noted this sector offers significant opportunities for Rosslare Europort. It will have a critical role in facilitating the necessary development of both offshore renewable generation and grid infrastructure, requiring investment to handle plant, equipment and cabling, and the associated shipping during the construction, operation and maintenance phases of future projects.

### Offshore Renewable Energy Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:



### Objective CZM51

To support, within the context of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) and its successors, the development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements subject to compliance with the objectives of this County Development Plan, the protection of the scenic amenity and coastal views associated with coastal areas and the marine area which are crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural well-being of coastal communities, the protection of coastal features, habitats and species and compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria and proper planning and sustainable development.

## 12.6.4 Ports, Harbours and Shipping

Landside infrastructure is critically important for the functioning of these operations and maximising their economic potential and social benefits to the local communities. The Council will continue to support direct and indirect related infrastructure, while at the same time safeguarding the ports and harbours from inappropriate development that may compromise their activity and expansion in the future. The development of our ports and harbours are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy.

### Ports, Harbours and Shipping Objectives:

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CZM52

To safeguard access to Rosslare Europort, harbours and navigation channels in the coastal zone and maritime area, and to safeguard our ports and harbours from inappropriate development that would compromise current activities or the future expansion of the port and harbours.

### Objective CZM53

To support the development of landside infrastructure associated with port, harbours and shipping activities and to support the co-location with other infrastructure such as fisheries, aquaculture and tourism subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 12.6.5 Defence and Security

The role of the Defence Organisation in the maritime area includes maritime security such as fishery protection services and the operation of the State's Fishery Monitory Centre.

In the carrying out of their duties, the Naval Service and Air Corps may require unimpeded access and the ability to deploy throughout the Irish maritime area at any time. They may also require the exclusive use of certain areas of sea at particular times. Military activities in the maritime area may involve operational, practice and training activities, routine patrolling, transporting equipment and personnel in and out of the country, and communications including using radar<sup>4</sup>. In this regard, proposals must consider the operational requirements of the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks, and the Defence Organisation should be consulted to ensure that a proposal will not result in an unacceptable interference with the performance of those tasks.

### Defence and Security Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CZM54

To support the work of the Defence Organisation and to ensure that relevant development proposals considered by the Planning Authority will not result in an unacceptable interference with the performance by the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks.

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, National Marine Planning Framework-Consultation Draft, 2019, page 96

### 12.6.6 Telecommunications

The Council will continue to support proposals that will ensure existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society and enterprise across the country. This may require landside infrastructure such as cables and pipelines, and the Council will support such proposals where evidence is provided of an approach to development and activity that integrates the needs of cables and pipelines. (Refer to Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy).

#### Telecommunications Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

##### Objective CZM55

To support proposals that will guarantee existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society and enterprise and to support the development of associated landside infrastructure where evidence is provided of an approach to development and activity that integrates the needs of cables and pipelines and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and proper planning and sustainable development.

### 12.6.7 Wastewater treatment and disposal

The Council will continue to support Irish Water proposals relating to wastewater treatment and disposal, in particular, proposals which address the discharge of untreated wastewater into coastal waters. (Refer to Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy).

### 12.6.8 Tourism and Recreation in the Coastal Zone

The county's coastal areas and the maritime area offer significant potential for tourism related development with associated employment opportunities for the county and the region. The development of tourism projects in coastal areas needs to

be carefully managed as over-development and an increase in tourism activity pose threats to the ecology and resources of the coastline and the overall quality of the tourism product.

Our coastal and maritime areas offer a range of marine sport, leisure and adventure activities. These include sailing, canoeing, sea kayaking, water skiing, coastering and sea swimming. These offer opportunities for physical activity and the development of outdoor recreation tourism. The Council will continue to support the development of outdoor activities, including the provision of land-based infrastructure, and associated overnight accommodation in line with the objectives on tourist accommodation in Chapter 7 Tourism Development.

Harbours and marinas provide services for tourists and local people involved in water-based activities. They provide access to towns and villages and their associated services and amenities, thereby contributing to these local economies. The Council recognises the importance of safeguarding and developing these facilities. There are currently two Blue Flag marinas in the county: Kilmore Quay Marina and 'Three Sisters Marina' in New Ross Town.

A coastal path has been developed along many parts of the coastline. Although not continuous, the coastal path extends approximately 221km from Kilmichael Point in the north-east corner of the county to Ballyhack Village in the south-west. The coastal path offers potential as both a casual walkway and as a link between coastal areas.

Many of the coastal settlements have experienced development pressures for holiday home accommodation and second homes. To ensure long term sustainability the focus will be on clustering holiday home accommodation in the existing villages along the coastline. The Council also recognises the need to facilitate the development of local retailing and services in these areas as this will help the local economy and local communities capitalise on the economic potential of existing and planned holiday accommodation developments. The scale of this type of development will be carefully monitored to ensure the protection of the character and environment of the coastal areas.

The Council will continue to carry out improvements to our coastal amenities to improve the tourism and recreation potential of our coastal areas. This will include the improvement of existing ports and harbours, the development of marinas at

appropriate locations (e.g. Trinity Wharf, Wexford Town and Courtown Harbour and beach nourishment (e.g. Courtown Harbour). All such development will be fully accessible and subject to appropriate environmental assessments.

## Tourism and Recreation in the Coastal Zone Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CZM56

To direct tourism related developments to existing settlements within the coastal zone save for the exceptions outlined in Section 12.8 of this chapter and in Chapter 7 Tourism Development and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and all normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective CZM57

To promote the sustainable development of inclusive water-based sports and marine recreation, and to promote the inclusive development of water-based sports and marine recreation, where appropriate.

### Objective CZM58

To support landside development which optimises on maritime tourism such as sea angling, sailing, marine adventure activities, diving and surfing at locations in accordance with Chapter 7 Tourism Development and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Objective CZM59

To support proposals which improve access to marine and coastal resources for tourism activities and sport and recreation, where appropriate and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46, Chapter 7 Tourism Development and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Objective CZM60**

To ensure that development proposals do not adversely impact on sports clubs and other recreational users, in particular, their facilities and other physical infrastructure, or unduly interfere with access to and along the shore, to the water or use of the resource for recreation and tourism.

**Objective CZM61**

To ensure that, where relevant, development proposals enhance water safety through the provision of appropriate International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) and European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) compliant safety signage and ensure that due consideration is given to best practice guidance for marine and coastal recreation areas by the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group.

**Objective CZM62**

To require tourism and recreation developments in the coastal and maritime areas, including harbours and marinas, to be universally accessible.

**Objective CZM63**

To encourage and facilitate extensions of the use of harbours, where appropriate, to include elements of active and passive leisure, tourism, transport and fishing and service enterprises to create vibrant, attractive focal points for existing coastal settlements subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective CZM64**

To facilitate the development of marinas, jetties and associated facilities for maritime leisure developments at appropriate locations including the site of Trinity Wharf, Wexford Town and Courtown Harbour. The developments should be universally accessible and the siting of the installations should not detract from the visual amenity, environmental quality of the area or public access to beaches

and are subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### **Objective CZM65**

To support the development of marine tourism clusters along the south-east coastline subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### **Objective CZM66**

To support the further development of a way-marked Coastal Walkway, where possible and appropriate, along the full length of the county's coastline and connecting where possible to similar walkways in adjoining coastal counties. This will be done in conjunction with the adjoining local authorities, landowners and other partner agencies. All programmes and works to develop the coastal walkway will be required to respect the residential amenities of coastal communities, comply with Objective CZM41, the Habitat's Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### **Objective CZM67**

To ensure that there is appropriate public access to the coast including the provision of coastal walkways and cycle ways subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. Every effort should be made to ensure that this public access is designed to provide universal access for all, and locations where the topography and terrain allow should be pursued in this regard.

### **Objective CZM68**

To encourage tourism and recreation facilities and developments to be accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and take advantage of sustainable transport alternatives through the provision of pathways, cycleways and links to the public transport system where possible, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective CZM69

To promote public access, including public walkways to beaches and the seashore, where environmentally appropriate and subject to the protection of amenities of coastal communities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective CZM70

To maintain and upgrade facilities in coastal areas through the provision of appropriate support facilities such as car parking, coach parking, cycle parking, universally accessible public toilets and refuse disposal facilities and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective CZM71

To support and promote the development of coastal routes as tourism attractions and local amenities, in co-operation with statutory and relevant organisations, for recreational activities including walking, cycling, pony trekking, whale/dolphin watching and bird-watching. These routes should provide links to other activities and facilities where feasible and practicable and are subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 12.6.9 Beaches and Bathing

The county's coastline is scattered with many beaches which are attractions for tourists and residents. The EU Bathing Directive 2006/7/EC aims to preserve, protect and improve the quality of all designated bathing waters to protect the health of people who choose to bathe in these waters. Beaches that comply with the 'excellent' standard in accordance with the Directive can be awarded the Blue Flag. In 2020, there were eight designated bathing areas in the county and six of these were Blue Flag beaches.

In 2020 there were nine Green Coast Award beaches in the county. The aim of this award is to recognise beaches of high environmental quality. To achieve the award, beaches must have excellent water quality and have effective and appropriate management to ensure the protection of the natural environment.



The Council continues to be proactive in improving universal accessibility to beaches. It launched the successful beach wheelchair initiative in 2015 which has now been rolled out to eight beach locations in the county. The Council will continue to carry out improvements to beach accesses ensuring that in so far as possible beaches can be accessed and enjoyed by everyone.

**Table 12-2 Designated Bathing Areas, Blue Flag and Green Coast Beaches 2020**

Designated Bathing Areas	Blue Flag Beaches	Green Coast Award Beaches
Ballymoney North Beach	Ballymoney North Beach	Ballyhealy
Ballinesker	Ballinesker	Booley Bay
Carne	Carne	Cahore Point
Courtown North Beach	Morriscastle	Culleton's Gap
Curracloe (White's Gap)	Curracloe	Grange
Duncannon	Rosslare Strand	Old Bawn
Morriscastle		St Helen's Bay
Rosslare Strand		Cullenstown Strand
		Baginbun

Beaches are also home to an array of coastal habitats, for example, sand dunes which also act as a natural coastal defence. Human activities, such as walking routes and weather events can interfere with the stability and regeneration of sand dunes. It is therefore important that beaches and sand dunes are protected and well managed.

Coastal protection works include beach nourishment which is a process involving dredging material (sand, gravel, pebbles) from a source area (offshore or inland) to feed a beach. Nourishment plays an important role in the maintenance of beaches, in particular, to compensate for natural erosion and it can protect the area against storm surges. It can also be used to maintain beach width for tourism and

recreational purposes. The Council will continue to carry out beach nourishment works where considered necessary.

## Beaches and Bathing Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CZM72

To protect beaches, access to beaches and designated bathing areas as valuable local amenities and as a tourism resource.

### Objective CZM73

To protect bathing waters in order that they meet the required bathing water standards and to implement the findings and recommendations of the Bathing Water Quality in Ireland reports as published.

### Objective CZM74

To ensure that coastal areas and bathing waters are maintained to the highest levels and to work to retain the status of Blue Flag and Green Coast beaches and increase the number of beaches with these statuses.

### Objective CZM75

To prohibit developments or activities on or adjacent to beaches where such development would either significantly interfere with the recreational use of the area or cause damage to the ecological or visual integrity of the beach or sand dune system.

### Objective CZM76

To provide car parking, cycle parking, universally accessible toilet and waste facilities at suitable locations at the county's bathing areas, where possible, and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective CZM77

To improve universal accessibility to beaches for people with disabilities subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective CZM78

To promote safe practices and the provision of information to the public in relation to safety in coastal zone areas.

### Objective CZM79

To carry out beach nourishment works where necessary for maintenance, in particular to compensate for erosion, and to maintain beach width for tourism and recreational purposes subject to compliance with the Habitats Directives, other relevant Directives and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 12.7 Development within Settlements in the Coastal Zone

Existing coastal settlements have, and continue to play, an intrinsic role in the economic, recreational and social development of the county. The Council will encourage appropriate development in these existing settlements, and in particular, will encourage developments which provide opportunities to expand local services and facilities that benefit both permanent residents and visitors. The Council will direct new holiday home schemes and second homes to these existing settlements in the interests of sustainable development and proper planning of the coastal areas.

While the Council will adopt a presumption against the development of new dwellings, new developments including critical infrastructure or significant extensions to existing dwellings or properties which rely on the provision of coastal protection works and where the Council does not have plans to carry out those works, Objective CZM35 does allow for new developments to be considered in certain circumstances.

**Note:** The strategic objectives contained in Section 12.4 and the general objectives

contained in Section 12.5 and 12.6 also apply, where relevant, to developments within existing settlements.

## Development within Settlements in the Coastal Zone Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CZM80

To ensure that development is in keeping with the scale and character of the coastal settlement and that the design positively contributes to and enhances the coastal landscape setting.

### Objective CZM81

To control the nature and pattern of development within existing settlements in the coastal zone and ensure that development is prohibited where it poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in adverse patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.

### Objective CZM82

To consider proposals for new developments within coastal settlements located on the soft shoreline or in areas identified at risk of coastal erosion in accordance with Objective CZM34 and Objective CZM35.

## 12.8 Development outside of Existing Settlements in the Coastal Zone

The Council recognises the importance of retaining the character of the coastal zone so as to protect the quality of the tourism product, the environment and to ensure the overall proper planning and sustainable development of the coastal zone. The Council will carefully consider development proposals outside of existing settlements, and in the case of one-off rural housing, will only consider developments where

the applicant has demonstrated a need to reside at the particular location in the coastal zone in accordance with the sustainable rural housing strategy in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing. The locational objectives in Chapter 6 Economic Development and Chapter 7 Tourism will also apply.

**Note:** The strategic objectives contained in Section 12.4 and the general objectives contained in Section 12.5 and 12.6 also apply to developments outside of existing settlements.

## Development outside of Existing Settlements in the Coastal Zone Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective CZM83

To restrict development outside the boundaries of existing coastal settlements to that which is required to be located in that particular location such as:

- Development to support the operation of existing ports, harbours, marinas, fisheries and aquaculture.
- Agricultural development.
- Tourism development appropriate to the particular coastal location (other than new build holiday home accommodation) where there is a demonstration of a location or resource based need in accordance with the objectives set out in Chapter 7 Tourism Development.
- Other developments where an overriding need is demonstrated.

The development must comply with Objective CZM46, Objective CZM36 relating to coastal erosion and demonstrate that it will not give rise to adverse patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coastline.

### Objective CZM84

To consider one-off housing in areas outside of the boundaries of settlements in the coastal zone in accordance with the rural housing objectives in Chapter 4 Sustainable

Housing and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### **Objective CZM85**

To encourage small-scale rural resource based economic or tourism businesses to renovate and reuse existing traditional farm buildings such as traditional stone buildings or buildings of architectural merit for use by the economic/tourism, business . The business use must comply with the relevant locational objectives in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and/or Chapter 7 Tourism Development and is subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria including protecting the character and visual amenities of the coastal area and residential amenities.

### **Objective CZM86**

To ensure that developments in the coastal zone are sensitively sited, designed and landscaped and do not detract from the visual amenity of the area, the seascape or coastal landscape character unit.

### **Objective CZM87**

To prohibit development outside the boundaries of existing coastal settlements where such development could not be adequately defended over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct new or additional coastal defence works.

## 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 (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- WX015-003017- WX015-003018- WX015-003028-
133	Ferns (St. Peters Church)	Ferns Upper	Ownership	WX015-003005-
133	Ferns Cathedral & Crosses	Ferns Upper	Ownership	WX015-003002- WX015-003003- WX015-003009- WX015-003010- WX015-003011- WX015-003012- WX015-003013- 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- WX045-028002- 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 (Scarawalsh By.)	704250,663590	Battlefield	No
	BALLYELLIS (Scarawalsh By.)			
WX006-086----	BALLYGULLEN (Gorey By. 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.	Townland	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.



CHAPTER 14

# Recreation and Open Space Strategy



## 14.1 Introduction

The Council, as a Planning Authority, has an important role to play in creating living environments that promote and facilitate active and passive recreation, physical activity and social inclusion. This chapter sets out the strategy and objectives to guide the spatial development of open space and recreation facilities in the county and to facilitate increased participation in physical and recreational activities. These facilities, while contributing to the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents, are also important stimuli in attracting employment and enterprise to the county and in the development of recreation tourism, making the county an attractive place to live, work and visit.

## 14.2 Climate Action and Recreation

Recreation and open spaces offer many opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate. In this regard, the planning authority will, inter alia:

- Ensure that recreation facilities and open spaces are located in existing settlements, close to residential areas and other community facilities to reduce the need to travel, and use sustainable transport modes to get there e.g. public transport, walking and cycling.
- Prioritise walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments.
- Develop a connected network of greenways for safe recreational cycling and walking.
- Develop well-managed, well-located and well-connected open spaces that operate as part of a wider green network in the urban settlements.
- Protect and expand green infrastructure provisions in existing and new recreation and open space areas, including the retention of existing and planting of new trees.
- Protect and enhance the spaces around our river channels, the riparian zone and buffer from development which would reduce its ability to attenuate and filter flood water.
- Ensure that recreational buildings are climate resilient and energy efficient.

## 14.3 Policy Context

This chapter has been prepared in line with relevant national, regional and local strategies, in particular, Healthy Ireland, the NPF and the RSES.

### National Physical Activity Plan

'Get Ireland Active' is the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) for the country and it stems from the Government's Healthy Ireland-A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025. Action 4 of the Plan focuses on the built and natural environment and how the promotion of its use and the promotion of active transport are the most practical and sustainable ways to increase physical activity as part of the everyday routine. The way the built environment is designed, planned and built can also act as a barrier to be active and can reinforce sedentary behaviour and car dependence<sup>1</sup>.

### National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2018)

This policy sets out a Vision for Irish Sport in 2027 along with 57 actions to transform the sporting landscape over the next decade. Action 13 of the Plan focuses on how the wider natural and built environment can facilitate participation in sport and physical activity taking account of the type of activities in which adults are increasingly participating such as running, cycling, outdoor adventure pursuits and recreational walking.

### Sport Ireland Policy on Sport and Physical Activity in the Outdoors

This policy recognises and encourages all forms of sport and physical activity in the outdoors undertaken for social, recreational or competitive purposes. It includes sport and recreation facilities that are carried out in a natural or semi-natural environment and involve dealing with natural elements. It also includes sport and recreation activities that take place on infrastructure such as trails, greenways, cycle tracks and roads, both in urban and rural landscapes. The policy highlights the social, physical and health benefits associated with participating in sport and physical activity and it also supports the implementation of policies on participation in sport by people with disabilities and women in sport.

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<sup>1</sup> Get Ireland Active -National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland, Department of Health and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2016, p23.

## National Planning Framework

Quality of life and place lies at the heart of the NPF. In line with the NPAP, the NPF outlines that design affects people's behaviour, and the places in which we live, work and play can affect both our physical and mental wellbeing. Communities that are designed in a way that supports physical activity e.g. generously sized footpaths and cycle lanes and accessible recreational areas, encourage residents to make healthy choices and live healthier lives.

Through NSO 8 Enhanced amenities and heritage, the NPF seeks to ensure that towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. This will require investment in well-designed public realm which includes public spaces, parks and streets as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas such as national and forest parks and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. NPO 26 supports the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the NPAP while NPO 27 focuses on prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and future developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

## Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The RSES further outlines that the quality of recreational and sporting facilities contributes to good physical and mental health and wider social, cultural and economic benefits for communities. It outlines that local authorities and partner organisations should seek to provide for a range of open space and sporting and recreational facilities to include:

- Formal open spaces (passive);
- Informal (active) open space or recreational areas designed for greater physical and sporting activities;
- Access and co-operative arrangements for use of open spaces belonging to privately managed or community/voluntary clubs and organisations;
- Provision for full accessibility to sporting and recreational areas and facilities;
- Sustainable linkages to nearby communities and neighbourhoods including provision of new or enhanced cycling and walking routes; and
- The development of greenways, blueways and peatways and connecting settlements in the region along greenway corridors.

RPO 198 Sport and community organisations, RPO 199 Larger sports projects, RPO 200 Green infrastructure and recreation and RPO 201 National trails, walking routes, greenway and blueway corridors have been incorporated into this strategy.

### **Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021**

One of the key priorities of the Wexford LECP is the need to support the general physical and mental health and wellbeing of the county's citizens. High Level Goal 2 is *"to support and promote the development of socially inclusive sustainable communities in County Wexford and ensure that all citizens enjoy optimal health and well-being"*. The LECP emphasises the value of community facilities, local sports organisations and recreational open space as important resources to improve health and well-being and to cultivate healthy attitudes. There are a number of direct and indirect objectives and actions in the LECP to implement this goal and the County Development Plan supports the LECP in this regard.

### **Healthy Wexford County Plan 2020-2022**

This Plan supports the implementation of Healthy Ireland, the national health and wellbeing framework, at a local level, to improve the health and wellbeing of all in County Wexford. The Plan has six key priority areas and includes a number of associated actions. These include the development of local infrastructure such as trails, playgrounds, nature corridors and parks, providing access to physical activity infrastructure such as beaches and trails to people with disabilities, integrating physical activity infrastructure (i.e., cycle paths) into new developments and rejuvenating town and village spaces for the enjoyment of the community. The County Development Plan supports the Healthy County Plan in this regard.

### **Sport Active Wexford**

Sports Active Wexford is one of a national network of 29 Local Sports Partnerships established under the aegis of Sports Ireland. It published its Strategic Plan 2017-2021 in November 2017. The aim of the Plan is to increase participation levels in physical activity by all Wexford people regardless of age, gender or ability. The Plan is focused around three themes-(i) empowering communities, (ii) enabling inclusion and (iii) supporting the sports sector. The overall vision is for a county where all people are encouraged and enabled to participate in some form of physical activity, stay

physically active across the life stages and succeed in achieving their goals.

## 14.4 Recreation and Open Space Strategy

The Council is committed to developing sustainable communities who have a good quality of life and personal health and wellbeing. The provision of a high quality network of open spaces and recreation facilities will contribute to this and will make the county an attractive place to live, work and visit. This strategy sets out the spatial planning approach to the development of open space and recreation facilities. Its focus is to ensure that these spaces and facilities are planned in a strategic manner to allow both urban and rural communities across the county to access a range of high quality, safe and accessible open space and recreational opportunities to improve their quality of life and wellbeing.

### 14.4.1 Goal, Strategic Aims and Objectives

The overall goal is to ensure that County Wexford is a healthy county with physical environments, amenities and resources that everyone, regardless of their age or ability, can use and to ensure good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The strategic aims to achieve this are to:

- Develop healthy communities by promoting physical activity and active living as a means of enhancing health, wellbeing and social inclusion.
- Ensure that new developments apply the highest standards of place making integrating a variety of recreational uses of space such as sport, play and passive uses
- Ensure the spatial planning, development and design of our towns and villages promotes active living and physical activity by prioritising cycling and walking and the development of local recreational spaces.
- Provide for the development of facilities that contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the county's residents and facilitate participation by all in sport, recreation and play.
- Ensure that open space and recreation developments and activities are carried out in a sustainable manner and ensure the protection of environmental quality, natural and built heritage and residential amenities.

- Ensure that open spaces are designed as multifunctional spaces which may provide flood relief, sustainable urban drainage systems, biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as their active and passive recreation functions.

## Recreation and Open Space Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective ROS01

To support the implementation of the National Sports Plan 2018-2027, Get Ireland Active-the National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland 2015-2020, Sport Ireland Policy on Sport and Physical Activity in the Outdoors, the Wexford Healthy County Plan 2020-2022, the Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 and the Sports Active Wexford Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and any updated version of these plans as a means of promoting physical activity and active living in order to enhance health, wellbeing and social inclusion subject to the objectives of the County Development Plan.

### Objective ROS02

To support the implementation of any future Recreation Strategy for the county subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective ROS03

To ensure urban and rural communities have access to a range of high quality open space, sporting, recreation and play facilities that are appropriate in scale and location and are universally accessible and suitable for all ages. These facilities should be located in existing settlements, close to residential areas and other community facilities so as to maximise participation levels and reduce the need to travel.

### Objective ROS04

To ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

### Objective ROS05

To ensure that open spaces and recreational facilities are multi-functional spaces incorporating biodiversity, SuDS and flood attenuation, where appropriate.

### Objective ROS06

To support community groups and sporting organisations in the development of parks, spaces, community gardens, allotments and community gardens, sporting facilities and play facilities subject to residential amenity and proper planning and sustainable development.

### Objective ROS07

To promote an awareness/educational campaign on the wildlife and sensitivity of habitats to public recreational use in areas of high biodiversity such as upland areas, coastal areas, designated sites and ecological networks, including the provision of appropriate signage.

## 14.5 Open Space

### 14.5.1 The Role of Open Space

High quality, accessible parks, open spaces and greenways provide health benefits and are important components in the development of quality urban and rural environments. Open space can take many forms and provides a variety of functions, including passive recreation, active recreation, play, visual amenity, ecology, drainage



regulation and even meet socio-economic needs (meeting places, allotments and travelling carnivals).

There are generally three categories of open space provision – public, semi-public or sport club spaces and private open space. Public open space is a vital element in the creation of a quality urban environment, offering opportunities for passive and active recreation, contributing to the quality of life of communities and the identity of towns or villages, whilst also offering environmental and ecological benefits. Private open space provision is a fundamental element of residential amenity, offering the resident an opportunity for safe and private recreation.

Community clubs and sporting organisations have a crucial role in providing for the sporting and recreational needs of our communities. They usually operate on a membership basis. These spaces are vital for physical activity and are also important for community identity and must be planned for in the development of our towns and villages.

## 14.5.2 Open Space in Town and Villages

Compact growth<sup>2</sup>, and the consolidation of the existing built-up areas in our towns and villages through increased residential densities and maximising the potential of under-developed lands, requires careful consideration and there must be an increased focus on the delivery of high quality public and private open spaces.

The Council continues to expand its network of public parks in the main towns including the recently developed Min Ryan Park at Killeens, Wexford Town and the redevelopment of Gorey Town Park and Showgrounds. Library Park in the centre of New Ross Town and the Orchard Peace Park in Enniscorthy Town make a significant contribution to the visual, landscape and recreational amenities of these areas.

The planning of future open spaces within towns and villages will have regard to a number of different factors including, inter alia, the level of existing open space provision in the area, the location of existing and planned residential areas, the need to provide high quality open spaces within a short walk of most dwellings and the most appropriate locations for new or upgraded open spaces.

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<sup>2</sup> National Strategic Outcome 1 of the National Planning Framework

### 14.5.3 Hierarchy of Public Open Spaces

The Council will apply the hierarchy of public open spaces set out in Table 14-1 and lands will be zoned accordingly in local area plans for Level 1 and Level 2 open spaces. This is to ensure these open spaces are delivered at appropriate locations. The need for all three levels will depend on the nature, function and size of the settlement.

A lot of settlements in the county will not have a local area plan and as such there will be no formal hierarchy of open space. This will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the size of the existing settlement and proposals to develop the settlement.

In general, Service and Strategic Settlements and Large Villages will require one Level 2 Neighbourhood Park which will be required to be integrated or partially integrated into new developments. They will also be required to have a spatial balance of Level 3 Pocket Parks within existing and new residential developments. Small Villages, depending on their existing population level, may only require Level 3 Pocket Parks but all settlements benefit from communal public spaces and the Council will support their provision. In all cases, the Council will consider the appropriate location for the Level 2 Neighbourhood Parks and will work with local community groups and developers of future residential schemes to secure the delivery of both Level 2 and Level 3 open spaces.

**Table 14-1 Hierarchy of Public Open Spaces**

Level	Description	Function
1	Hub Parks	These are the highest level of open space and provide a range of high quality open spaces for active and passive recreation, e.g. open playing fields, walking tracks, park runs, cycle paths, outdoor gym and a playground <sup>3</sup> . These parks will be located at strategic, accessible locations within a town.
2	Neighbourhood Parks	These are high quality open spaces which should be distributed so that most homes are within a 10 minute

<sup>3</sup> See Section 14.6 Play Facilities. It is envisaged that this will be to a Destination playground or an equivalent standard as set out in the Council's Playground Strategy 2017-2022.

Level	Description	Function
		walk of them. These spaces must be sufficient in size to be useful spaces and as such should be between 1ha-2ha. In general, 15% <sup>4</sup> of the total area of a residential site will be allocated to public open space. Neighbourhood parks will account for 10% of this allocation. These parks may be achieved by combining with existing spaces to make one large useful open space. It is envisaged that they will provide active playing fields, a playground <sup>5</sup> , outdoor gym equipment and seating areas.
3	Pocket Parks	Pockets parks will account for the remaining 5% of the public open space allocation in a residential scheme. These are the lowest level of public open space but are very important components of successful neighbourhoods. These spaces provide important visual and social functions and they provide play areas for small children. Pocket parks must be well located within the development and be adequately overlooked and protected from vehicular traffic.

### 14.5.4 Delivery of Public Open Spaces

The mechanism for the delivery of all three levels will be determined in the relevant local area plan or as follows in the event that there is no local area plan in place.

#### Hub Parks

The delivery of a Hub Park will be either by the Council supported by the Development Contribution Scheme or delivered in tandem with the development of residential lands and other lands.

#### Neighbourhoods Parks

Developers will deliver these parks as part of their overall development proposal. The park should therefore be included within the site edge red and full specifications of the design and layout of the park shall be submitted with the planning application. It is noted the location of these parks may not reflect landowner parcels. Where there

<sup>4</sup> It will not be appropriate to provide small parcels to aggregate to the required 15% public open space. A minimum of 10% must be in one large useful space.

<sup>5</sup> See Section 14.6 Play Facilities. It is envisaged that the playground will perform a Neighbourhood Playground function as defined in the Council's Playground Strategy 2017-2022.

are two or more land ownerships involved in the neighbourhood parks, a proposal must be submitted with the planning application to address this. The delivery may also be phased within the scheme where appropriate.

If there is no identified/zoned Neighbourhood Park parcel in the area of the proposed development, the 10% neighbourhood park open space allocation may be provided as follows:

- It may be offset against other neighbourhood parks previously provided by the developer where there is in excess of the 10% of the previous development site and which will serve the proposed development. That Neighbourhood Park must be within a five minute walk of the proposed development. In order to avail of this, it will be necessary to identify the open space in the earlier planning application, identify which lands it serves and to design the space so that it serves both developments in terms of area, quality, linkages and play facilities.
- The 10% is provided within the residential scheme as a single space.
- The developer may contribute a special financial contribution to be used by the Council in the provision of a neighbourhood park in the area.

## Pocket Parks

These will be delivered by the developer as part of the overall development proposal.

## Deviations from Quantitative Standards

In cases where the density required or site topography or configuration do not allow for the quantitative standards above, the Planning Authority will accept an increase in the qualitative standards of the site in lieu or the payment of a special development contribution to the Planning Authority. In such cases, the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate that the new development will be high quality. The developer must, at minimum, invest the equivalent monetary value of the deficit in the 15% in improvements to the quality of the scheme. The developer shall submit a valuation of the deficit and add to it the cost of 'standard landscaping' (site works and grass/footpaths/planting). The net improvements must be at minimum equivalent to site cost and the landscaping costs. The costing for the land must be based on evidenced current market value and the cost of the landscaping (both standard and proposed) must be provided by a landscape architect or quantity surveyor. Where

such a reduction in quantum of space is accepted the Planning Authority will require the proposed design to be of exceptional quality. Examples of improved quality will be high quality paved public realm areas, biodiversity enhancements, play or outdoor gym equipment, high quality seating/outdoor dining areas.

In all cases, full specifications for paving, landscaping, planting etc. will be required to be submitted with the planning application in order for the Planning Authority to fully assess the quality of the space.

### 14.5.5 Communal Amenity Space in Apartment Developments

The provision and proper future maintenance of well-designed communal amenity space is important in meeting the amenity needs of residents. In particular, accessible, secure and usable outdoor space is a high priority for families with young children and for less mobile older people. The minimum required areas for public communal amenity space are set out in the Sustainable Urban Housing-Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2020) and Table 14-2.

**Table 14-2 Minimum Floor Areas for Communal Amenity Space**

Apartment Type	Community Amenity Space
Studio	4m <sup>2</sup>
One bedroom	5m <sup>2</sup>
Two bedroom (3 person)	6m <sup>2</sup>
Two bedroom (4 person)	7m <sup>2</sup>
Three bedroom	9m <sup>2</sup>

Where these standards will result in less than 15% being provided, the Planning Authority will require an improvement in the quality of the scheme in accordance with criteria outlined in Section 14.5.4. In the case of apartment developments, the quality of the open space is particularly important as private amenity space is much smaller and the 'standard landscape' costing must comprise site works and paving. In general, the higher the density the higher the specification for the public spaces shall be.

The applicant will be required to consider innovative solutions such as roof gardens, outdoor exercise facilities, play facilities, and high quality paved surfaces fully designed with high quality street furniture and landscape features. There should be an emphasis on high quality and ease of maintenance.

### 14.5.6 Merging and Linking Public Open Spaces

Open space is an excellent way of integrating new and older developments by adding new open space to an existing open space. The Council will encourage new developments to merge with existing development where possible. This will be mutually beneficial providing spaces which are large enough to be usable while increasing permeability and integrating communities. This approach could facilitate the provision of an attractive, safe pedestrian linkage to the adjoining new development increasing permeability and making walking and cycling easier, and can be achieved through successful community consultation.

### 14.5.7 Designing Public Open Spaces

Open spaces must be designed and laid out to a high standard and emphasis must be placed on quality and long term sustainability of the open space. Public open spaces should be overlooked on all sides and designed to ensure the potential for anti-social behaviour is minimised through passive surveillance.

The Council will implement the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Community, 2009) which provides detailed guidance on the provision of open space in new residential developments. Planning applications for residential

development must also be accompanied by a detailed landscaping plan, prepared by a suitably qualified landscape professional, which specifies all proposed landscaping (both hard and soft). The maintenance of open spaces will be dealt with by condition of the planning permission.

## Location and Layout of Open Spaces

The location and layout of open spaces should be among the first consideration in the design of a scheme. Open spaces should be located so that they are accessible by the largest possible number of people in the scheme. The space should be considered first, in particular how the buildings will be used to define it. There should be a positive and defined relationship between the buildings and spaces and opportunities to create interesting urban form such as squares and crescents should be taken where appropriate. Such positive relationships create a sense of enclosure and comfort, a sense ownership by the residents and increase the place value and quality of the scheme.

## Use of Existing Features

The design of the scheme should optimise the existing features and topography of the site. Features such as rivers, streams, rock outcrops, trees and hedgerows should be retained for their biodiversity value but also because they add to the sense of place in a way that designed features cannot. Spaces should be orientated so as they maximise solar gain and extend time of use. Public spaces should be fully usable and the Planning Authority will not accept sites which are too sloped or otherwise unusable in fulfilment of the quantitative space requirements.

## Biodiversity in Open Spaces

Our open spaces offer the opportunity to increase biodiversity in our towns and villages. Biodiversity must in the first instance be considered at the neighbourhood scale. The designer must try and link the open spaces and landscape features and planting to existing features in the wider neighbourhood. Such linking allows for the spread of plant and animal diversity throughout our towns and villages, and these corridors and stepping stones are vital for wildlife.

The next step is to consider the biodiversity within the site and what opportunities there are to retain and enhance the existing features. Opportunities to retain existing

features should be optimised. Such features include rivers, streams, wetlands, trees, rock outcrops and stone walls. The retention of and appropriate treatment of such features may in some instances be offset against quantitative standards for open space.

Biodiversity must also be considered in the design of the scheme. The importance of connectivity for urban wildlife cannot be underestimated. The design should ensure that there are green corridors linking the spaces in the scheme through the provision of new hedgerows, planting and street trees.

Primarily native tree species should be used in the planting of the scheme. The exception to this will be street trees where other varieties may be more important due to potential for interference with buildings or for dramatic aesthetic effect. The scheme should also integrate pollinators of different flowering times throughout the scheme. The Planning Authority will encourage the development of ecotones<sup>6</sup> and the appropriate grading of habitats. Locations close to edges and hedges should be allowed a level of growth which will facilitate the movement and shelter of small mammals.

The Planning Authority will also encourage the use of measures specifically designed to enhance wildlife in residential schemes such as holes left in boundary walls to allow for passage of hedgehogs between gardens, bat and swift boxes.

## **Sustainable Drainage Systems, Flood Attenuation and Riparian Zones in Open Spaces**

The planning and design of schemes needs to consider the integration of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), flood attenuation and the protection of watercourses and their associated riparian zones.

The Planning Authority will consider the integration of SuDS where possible and appropriate in public open spaces, and only where it contributes to the design and quality of the open space.

Where there is a watercourse within or adjoining the site, flood attenuation and the importance of the riparian zone for both this and biodiversity needs to be considered and protected. In this regard, designers will be required to have regard to the 'Planning for Watercourse in the Urban Environment Guidelines (Inland Fisheries

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<sup>6</sup> An ecotone is an area that acts as a boundary or a transition between two ecosystems.



Ireland, 2020) and ensure that the guidance with regard to the function, width, vegetative target and allowable uses for each sub-zone (streamside zone, middle zone and outer zone) is adhered to.

## Allotments and Community Gardens as Open Spaces

Allotments and community gardens offer the opportunity to provide education in horticulture as well as on the sustainable value of home food production. Working in an allotment or a community garden is a healthy physical recreation for all age groups and gives people the opportunity for social contact and interaction with other members of the community. Facilities required may include the provision of a water supply, parking area, on-site storage, composting and toilet facilities.

The Planning Authority will also consider the provision of allotments/community gardens as part of the open space provision in a residential scheme. The facility should be appropriately located within the scheme, allowing for ease of access by residents, whilst also ensuring that the amenities of residents and visual amenities of the scheme are protected.

## Open Space Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

### Objective ROS08

To support investment in the on-going maintenance and enhancement of existing public open space facilities, and support the provision of new public parks, green space corridors, pollinator projects, native planting and wild areas and rewilding projects and other public open spaces in tandem with planned population growth to create green, biodiversity rich and healthy settlements throughout the county.

### Objective ROS09

To ensure a range of accessible open spaces are provided in towns and villages so that all residents have reasonable access to different types of open space and to ensure that new open spaces are integrated with good pedestrian and cyclist links and provide access for all people regardless of their age or abilities.

### Objective ROS10

To ensure that future local area plans apply the hierarchy of public open spaces set out in Section 14.4.3 where relevant and appropriate and outline the mechanism for the delivery for each level of open space. The Planning Authority will also carry out an audit of underutilised lands during the preparation of local area plans to identify underutilised lands that could be zoned for sporting, community and leisure uses and activities to increase the availability of same for local communities.

### Objective ROS11

To require the provision of good quality, accessible, well located and functional open spaces in new residential developments in accordance with the guidance in this chapter, the standards in Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009), and where applicable, the standards in Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2020) and any future version of these guidelines documents and save as otherwise required by the objectives and development management standards in this Plan.

### Objective ROS12

To require public open spaces to create positive and defined relationships between buildings and spaces and interesting urban forms such as squares and crescents, contributing to a sense of enclosure and comfort, place value and quality and ownership by the residents.

### Objective ROS13

To facilitate the development of allotments, community gardens and pollinator projects, native planting, wild areas and rewilding projects at appropriate locations and on suitable sites which are accessible from the built-up areas of the county taking into consideration the demand for such facilities and subject to normal planning and

environmental criteria including potential impacts on residential and visual amenities. The Planning Authority will identify land for use as allotments, community gardens and linked networks of green infrastructure in larger towns and villages during the preparation of local area plans. The Planning Authority will also consider the provision of allotments, community gardens and wild areas/nature pockets as part of the public open space provision in new residential schemes subject to appropriate siting, design and layout, protection of residential and visual amenities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### **Objective ROS14**

To facilitate, through community consultation and involvement, the merging and linking of existing open spaces with new open spaces as a mechanism for providing larger more useful public open spaces, improving permeability and promoting social cohesion.

#### **Objective ROS15**

To avoid the loss of public and private recreational open space and facilities unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.

#### **Objective ROS16**

To ensure a detailed landscaping plan, for both hard and soft landscaping, prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect, accompanies all major planning applications for residential schemes of ten or more houses and significant industrial and commercial developments of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> gross floor space or more.

#### **Objective ROS17**

To require the provision of public open space to comply with the quantitative standards set out in Section 14.5.4. Where this is not possible for reasons including density and site topography, the Planning Authority will consider a deviation from those quantitative standards in favour of increases in the quality of the open space that comply with the measures also set out in Section 14.5.4. The Planning Authority

will not accept open space lands which are too sloped or otherwise unusable in fulfilment of either quantitative or qualitative space requirements.

#### **Objective ROS18**

To support the development of skate parks and outdoor gyms in public open spaces and parks at appropriate locations in the County.

#### **Objective ROS19**

To ensure that the design of residential schemes, including open spaces, optimises the existing features and topography of the site such as rivers, streams, rock outcrops, trees and hedgerows, and to ensure that biodiversity and green infrastructure are fully considered and integrated into schemes.

#### **Objective ROS20**

To encourage the use of measures specifically designed to enhance wildlife in residential schemes such as holes left in boundary walls to allow for the passage of hedgehogs between gardens, the installation of bat and swift boxes and pollinator projects, native planting and wild areas and rewilding projects. The incorporation of wildlife information signage will be encouraged.

## **14.6 Play Facilities**

The Council's Playground Strategy 2017-2022 is based on a vision that "all children will be given the opportunity to play together in challenging and fun environments, irrespective of their social backgrounds or level of ability". The Strategy provides a hierarchy of playgrounds and guidance on their location and scale. This is set out in Table 14-3.

**Table 14-3 Wexford County Council Hierarchy of Playgrounds**

Playground Type	Characteristics
Destination	This is a large Municipal playground located in a centre of population with access to toilets and accessible car parking. It will serve a population radius of 20km. It is a larger space or facility within which children or young people can enjoy informal recreation with their peers and access a wide range of play experiences. There are Destination Playgrounds in Gorey Town Park, New Ross Town Park, The Promenade, Enniscorthy Town, and Redmond Park, Wexford. It is also proposed to develop a Destination playground at the Min Ryan Park in Wexford Town.
Community	This is a community/village playground and will serve a population radius of 10km. These are larger spaces for children beginning to travel independently or with friends and with pathways for adults with young children to walk with ease.
Neighbourhood	This is a local playground and will serve populations within a 1km radius. It is a local space where young children accompanied by an adult can play safely.

The Council will provide Destination Playgrounds and will assist community groups to develop Community and Neighbourhood playgrounds by providing funding through the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy. All new playgrounds and retrofits will be disability proofed at the design stage. The Strategy also sets out the general design and play value objectives that new playgrounds/retrofits should strive to meet.

### Play Facilities in Residential Schemes

The Council will require the provision of suitably designed and landscaped play areas in new residential schemes that families are likely to occupy. Play areas should be located where they can be overlooked by dwellings but will not cause unreasonable nuisance problems for residents. Such facilities should be inclusive and accessible to all children. The play needs of children must be considered as part of the communal amenity space within apartment schemes. The Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities set out standards for children's play areas.

Objectives ROS23 relates to play facilities in residential schemes (either houses or a mixture of houses and apartments) while Objective ROS24 relates to play facilities in apartment only residential schemes.

## Play Facilities Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

### Objective ROS21

To ensure that a range of play opportunities will be available for all children, particularly children who are marginalised, disadvantaged or who have special needs.

### Objective ROS22

To implement the Wexford County Council Playground Strategy 2017-2022 and any updated version of this strategy prepared during the lifetime of the Plan.

### Objective ROS23

To require high quality landscaped and play facilities to form part of new residential schemes in towns and villages. For residential schemes of 99 dwellings or less landscaped areas shall be provided to encourage creative play and games. The Planning Authority will consider either or a combination of the following options for residential schemes<sup>7</sup> which comprise only houses or a mix of houses and apartments and which propose 100+ units (in phased development schemes of less than 50 units the following will apply once the 50+ unit threshold is met).

- The developer may propose to provide a playground facility as part of the scheme at a rate of 4m<sup>2</sup> per residential unit. A minimum of one piece of play equipment shall be provided for every 50m<sup>2</sup> of playground up to a maximum of eight pieces. In larger residential schemes or phased schemes (>100 residential units) play facilities should incorporate proposals for larger play areas (playing pitches, courts, MUGAs etc.).
- Where the residential scheme includes apartments, the developer will be required

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<sup>7</sup> Objective ROS24 sets out the standards for play facilities that will apply to residential schemes that only propose apartments.

to allocate a proportionate amount of the overall total requirement to provide a dedicated play area for the apartment element with a particular focus on the play needs of smaller children (< 6 years of age). The play area will be provided at a rate of 4m<sup>2</sup> for every apartment with two or more bedrooms. This element should be designed in accordance with the Apartment Guidelines.

- The developer may propose to provide an innovative high quality and safe landscape proposal with an integrated active play facility/natural play areas of equivalent play value in lieu of static fixed play equipment.

### Objective ROS24

To require children's play needs in apartment only developments to be provided in accordance with the provisions of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2020) save for the following deviations:

- Schemes providing 50 or more 2 bedroom units shall also provide play areas for older children (>6 years old and young teenagers) at a rate of 4m<sup>2</sup> per unit.

The Planning Authority may consider reduced play facility requirements where the site is located adjacent to or within a short and safe walking distance of a public playground or a public park with a playground. The Planning Authority may also consider a special development contribution in lieu which shall be of equivalent monetary value to the required play facilities. The developer shall submit the costings of the required play facilities, prepared by a quantity surveyor to inform the monetary value of the special contribution.

## 14.7 Sports and Leisure Facilities

The Council recognises that sport is an essential component of everyday life, playing a valuable social, cultural and economic role, providing enjoyment for people, a livelihood for some and promoting a healthy lifestyle. The Council is committed to enhancing a range and quality of accessible sports facilities in the county facilitating

the development of the range of facilities from GAA, rugby, soccer and hockey playing fields to boxing clubs, walking tracks, athletics tracks, indoor sports facilities, sailing and diving and ensuring that there is reasonable public access to sport. Outdoor recreational activity is dealt with in Chapter 7 Tourism Development.

Sport facilities should be located at accessible locations which are easy to get to, contribute to the local community's identity and are socially inclusive, providing opportunities for meeting up. The development of sports facilities shall be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure including car parking, bicycle parking and changing rooms.

Commercial leisure facilities are those run on a profit basis and include cinemas, family entertainment centres such as bowling, indoor children's play centres, fitness centres, gyms, swimming pools etc. These facilities should be located in the main towns and tourist centres in order to attract the critical mass to make them viable. Horse racing courses and equine sports facilities along with field sports such as GAA, rugby, soccer and other field sports are considered appropriate in rural locations subject to traffic generation and safety and normal planning criteria.

## Sports and Leisure Facilities Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

### Objective ROS25

To facilitate a vibrant and active sports sector with increased participation levels, good quality sustainable facilities which are appropriate in scale and location and which provide opportunities for people to play an active role in sport.

### Objective ROS26

To support the vision and objectives of national sport policies including working with local sports partnerships, clubs, communities and partnerships within and beyond sport to increase sport and physical activity participation levels.



**Objective ROS27**

To support investment in the sustainable development of larger sports projects under the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive, normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS28**

To support local community and sports groups in developing sports facilities and to consider the development of such facilities at appropriate locations in the county. These facilities, if possible, should be clustered with other community facilities such as community centres and open spaces to create multi user community hubs. The Planning Authority will ensure that sufficient land is zoned in local area plans to facilitate sports clubs and community organisations. The Council will ensure that land is available to accommodate proposals to future proof the expansion of clubs in urban settings and in areas where there is zoned land. Where a site is located away from the centre of a town or village, this will be considered on its merits and how the site would be accessible by walking and cycling. The development must also be appropriate to its location and is subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS29**

To ensure that the development of new sports facilities are universally accessible and accompanied by appropriate infrastructure including car parking, bicycle parking and changing rooms.

**Objective ROS30**

To encourage the development of Multi-User Games Areas (MUGAS) at appropriate locations in the county and ensure that new community facilities and public open spaces are designed to allow flexibility in their use.

**Objective ROS31**

To encourage the use of school grounds and associated recreational facilities outside of school hours by all members of the community provided that this does not conflict with the delivery of the education service.

**Objective ROS32**

To ensure that all major commercial leisure developments are located in the main towns and the site selection is based on the sequential approach with the priority being the town centre. Such facilities will not be permitted on land zoned for employment related uses where the development would undermine the ability to cater for employment intensive activities such as manufacturing, industry, office and enterprise. Commercial leisure facilities generate a high level of movement and are best located in places that offer the highest level of accessibility to a range of transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport.

**Objective ROS33**

To encourage the development of equine sports including the further development of horse racing courses throughout the County which also provide alternative community and sporting uses.

**Objective ROS34**

To protect existing sport facilities such as standing handball alleys which should be retained. Their demolition will only be facilitated if alternative provision is made.

## 14.8 Walking and Cycling Routes

There are many walking trails and cycling routes throughout the county that provide recreational and amenity opportunities for residents and visitors and there are opportunities to further expand this network of trails and routes. Walking and cycling are discussed in this chapter, Chapter 7 Tourism Development and Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy.

Walking trails include established forest trails, scenic mountain passes, coastal paths and heritage walks. Wexford's Coastal Pathway (Slí Charman), which was established in 1993, extends for 221km from Kilmichael Point in the North East corner of the county to Ballyhack in the South-West and is a significant recreational and tourism asset for the county.

The National Trail Offices maintains a National Trails Register which lists all waymarked trails in Ireland including accredited trails which meet certain management standards, new trails which are under development and existing trails which are being extensively redeveloped. There are currently 41 accredited walking/hiking trails in the county - there are 21 locations some of which have multiple trail route options<sup>8</sup>. There are seven Slí na Slainte routes in the county.

Wexford Walking Trails (WWT) is part of the Wexford Trail Brand<sup>9</sup>. It is network of walking trails throughout the county, which was established under a Wexford Local Development training programme, in collaboration with the Council, Local Sports Partnerships, Fáilte Ireland, Waterford Institute of Technology, National Parks and Wildlife Services, National Trails Office and Coillte. Further development of this trails network will focus on enhancing the visitor experience and raising awareness of the quality, diversity and location of our trails. Only those trails which have National Trails Office approval and registration can become members. The walking routes are available to view at [www.wexfordwalkingtrails.ie](http://www.wexfordwalkingtrails.ie)

The National Cycle Framework (2009) aims to provide designated rural cycle networks for visitors and recreational cycling. Fáilte Ireland notes that cycling tourism represents a growing and valuable market segment for rural areas as it offers opportunities for the development of cycle hire and cycling holiday operations. There are three Fáilte Ireland approved looped cycling routes in the county: Route 1 Slaney (53km), Route 2 Coastal (35km) and Route 3 South Wexford (78km).

Wexford Cycling Trails has two approved cycling trails. The Eurovelo 1 route has been developed in the south of the county. The route, which is 120km in distance, starts at Rosslare Europort and follows quiet, scenic coastal country roads and villages finishing at Ballyhack Ferry (to County Waterford). The Nine Stones Loop is the second trail in the north of the County. The trail traverses County Wexford for the most part, but also enters parts of County Carlow and County Wicklow. The cycle loop is a total of 118km of sign-posted cycle route.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.irishtrails.ie](http://www.irishtrails.ie) (March 2020)

<sup>9</sup> Other Wexford Trails include Wexford Craft Trail, Wexford Garden Trail, Wexford Heritage Trail and Wexford Cycling Trail.

The proposed greenways in the county will also add to the selection of cycling routes. These greenways are discussed in Chapter 7 Tourism Development and Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy with objectives to support the development of greenways subject to a number of provisos including compliance with the Habitats Directive and the use should not preclude the reopening of railway lines in the future.

Off-road cycling in the form of mountain biking is also growing in popularity. Coillte's Off-Road Cycling Strategy (2012) recognises that the development of a high-quality, off-road cycle trail network would support rural tourism, increase active participation in sport for citizens and potentially develop a revenue stream to fund management and maintenance of trails. The Strategy identifies potential locations for development of off-road cycle trails over the next ten years on lands which are in the ownership of Coillte. In County Wexford, Forth Mountain is identified as a potential location for an off-road cycling centre of regional scale<sup>10</sup> while Bree Hill and Deerpark/Kilbrannish are identified as potential club trails<sup>11</sup>. The Strategy also recognises the potential for community or family trails, which could be developed in partnership with local development companies, community groups or local authorities, to provide for local and community recreation.

The Council will prepare strategies for walking and cycling in the county to inform and co-ordinated the development of the necessary accessible infrastructure to facilitate and encourage more walking and cycling for both everyday transport and leisure purposes.

## Walking and Cycling Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

### Objective ROS35

To prepare a Walking Strategy for the county to inform the development and co-ordination of the necessary accessible infrastructure to facilitate and encourage more walking for both everyday transport and leisure purposes.

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<sup>10</sup> An off road cycling centre is generally 20-30km of waymarked trails with a minimum of two independent waymarked loops. These centres are primarily day-visit destinations for domestic markets with basic visitor facilities and the possibility for add-on developments such as bike hire and provision of light refreshments as part of the centre.

<sup>11</sup> Club trails are areas where some level of user built trails have been constructed or where local clubs actively use the forests for activities or events.

**Objective ROS36**

To prepare a Cycling Strategy for the county to inform the development and co-ordination of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate and encourage more cycling for both everyday transport and leisure purposes.

**Objective ROS37**

To facilitate sustainable outdoor recreation in the form of walking and cycling at appropriate locations in the county and maximise the recreational and tourist potential of walking and cycling routes subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive, the protection of natural heritage, the character of rural areas, the amenities of host communities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS38**

To seek to promote and support access to rural areas including upland areas, forestry, coastal areas and the development of existing walking routes, pilgrim paths, mountain trails and nature trails in conjunction with other public bodies, representative agencies and community groups subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive, the protection of natural heritage, the character of rural areas and the amenities of host communities. This will include identifying and protecting existing paths, walkways and public rights of way.

**Objective ROS39**

To engage with representative bodies, local groups, landowners and where relevant adjoining local authorities in order to support the sustainable development of walking and cycling routes.

**Objective ROS40**

To support the Wexford Walking Trails brand and promote and facilitate the expansion of the walking trail network subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive, protection of natural heritage, the character of rural areas and the amenities of host communities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS41**

To facilitate the development and use of the Wexford Coastal Pathway (Slí Charman) as a recreation and tourist facility subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive, the protection of natural heritage, the character of rural areas, the amenities of host communities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS42**

To provide and maintain new/improved coastal access points and right-of-ways subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS43**

To facilitate the development of riverside walking routes whilst protecting areas of ecological value and ensuring that any development takes cognisance of the aims and objectives of the Water Framework Directive and ensuring that all development is undertaken in compliance with the Habitats Directive, the protection of natural heritage, the character of rural areas and the amenities of host communities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS44**

To facilitate the development of disused railways for amenity purposes, including the development of walkways, cycleways or bridleways, provided that the use does not conflict with or prejudice the re-opening of railway lines in the future and subject to compliance with relevant objectives in Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, the Habitats Directive, protection of natural heritage, the character of rural areas and the amenities of host communities, normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

### Objective ROS45

To support investment in the development of universally accessible (including by mobility scooters) walking and cycling facilities and greenways and to explore the potential to develop greenway corridor linkages between settlements to create interregional greenways subject to complying with the relevant objectives in Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, the Habitats Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective ROS46

To support the Wexford Cycling Trails brand and facilitate the development of the National Cycle Network in the county, improve cycle routes with better signposting, better road surfaces and greater safety for the cyclist and to ensure that new urban road infrastructure and traffic management measures are designed to be cyclist friendly.

### Objective ROS47

To engage with Coillte in the investigation of the suitability of developing off-road cycling trails at Forth Mountain, Bree Hill and Deerpark/Kilbrannish in accordance with Coillte's Off-Road Cycling Strategy (2012), provided that they do not negatively impact on residential amenity, landscape, heritage or the environment and subject to compliance normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 14.9 Public Rights of Way

Public rights of way constitute an important amenity and are an economic asset. They enable enjoyment of the county's high quality landscapes and cultural heritage and are important for tourism development and recreation. A public right of way is a person's right of passage along a road or path, even if the road or path is not in public ownership. They can be created by use from time immemorial (the distant past beyond memory or record), by statute or by dedication by the full owner of the land.

The formal process for designating rights of way is dealt with in Section 14 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced a new mandatory requirement for Development Plans to include an objective for the preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility. These public rights of way must be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the Development Plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the Development Plan. The Council will endeavour to list and map public rights of way during the life of this Plan.

Wexford County Council recognises the legal rights of all landowners and that rights of access to their lands may only be obtained with their permission where an existing right of way does not exist. The Council also commends the 'open access' policy of Coillte and recognises that this policy does not equate to a public right of way.

## Public Rights of Way Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

### Objective ROS48

To preserve public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational activity. These public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the Development Plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the Development Plan during the life of the Plan and the County Development Plan will be varied accordingly.

### Objective ROS49

To identify the existing public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational activity using the following methodology:

- Place an advert in local papers seeking submissions from the public to identify public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility.



- Identify existing rights of ways, paths, and access points to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational activity.
- Identify access points to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational activity which the Council have maintained or repaired with a view to identifying public rights of way.
- Carry out a desktop analysis of public records, maps, aerial photographs and newspaper accounts to identify reputations of public rights of way.
- Once the list is compiled, advertise and put on display the proposed list of public rights of way. The public will be invited to make submissions on the validity of the public rights of way.
- Endeavour to verify and list the public rights of way and begin the formal process for designating rights of way under Section 14 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- Vary the Plan to include the list and map showing the public rights of way.

### Objective ROS50

To ensure that development does not impinge on public walking routes and public rights of way, particularly those at the seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational activity.

## 14.10 Natural Amenities

County Wexford has a range of natural amenities which can be enjoyed for leisure or recreation purposes. With its extensive coastline, mountains and river valleys there is potential to develop outdoor activities and maximise the use of our natural surroundings while at the same time ensuring the protection of the environment. The Council will seek to sustain the quality of these natural amenities such as beaches, dunes and mountainsides for their recreational qualities.

It is an objective of the Council:

**Objective ROS51**

To facilitate the use of natural amenity areas in the county for recreational purposes while ensuring the protection of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas including, but not limited to, Natura 2000 sites.

**Objective ROS52**

To facilitate the provision of access to amenity areas such as beaches, inland waterways, forests and heritage sites in co-operation with landowners and continue to maintain and improve existing accesses, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive, the protection of natural heritage, the character of rural areas and the amenities of host communities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS53**

To facilitate Coillte in the protection of existing and the development of additional forest amenity sites and walks subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective ROS54**

To support the development of the amenities and recreation potential of the River Slaney and River Barrow in co-operation with National Parks and Wildlife Service, Inland Waterways, adjoining Local Authorities, Harbour Masters and all other relevant authorities. All such development should be undertaken in compliance with Articles 6 and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

**Objective ROS55**

To identify beaches within the county which can best service the needs of persons with disabilities and to improve accessibility and universally designed facilities at these beaches in association with disability representative groups and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

CHAPTER 15

# Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Strategy



## 15.1 Introduction

The development of sustainable communities in the county's urban and rural areas lies at the heart of the vision for the county. Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all<sup>1</sup>.

The Council, as a planning authority, has a significant role to play in facilitating the development of sustainable communities. Spatial planning ensures that physical environments are high quality, well-planned, accessible to all and safe. The Planning Authority can also ensure that employment, retail, recreation, social and community facilities are developed in the right places which all contribute to the development of sustainable, inclusive communities.

This role complements and supports the Council's enhanced responsibilities in promoting local and community development. Community development, through its core values of social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity, helps to build strong, healthy sustainable and inclusive communities.

This chapter sets out the spatial planning strategy and objectives to achieve the development of sustainable communities and to guide community facilities to appropriate locations in the county, either directly by the Council or by the relevant State agencies or local community development groups.

## 15.2 Climate Action and Sustainable Communities

The spatial planning of our communities can play a significant role in climate action. In this regard, the planning authority will, inter alia:

- Ensure childcare, education, health care, specialist residential and community facilities are developed in settlements so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by allowing people to travel to these facilities by sustainable transport modes where possible e.g. public transport, walking and cycling.

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<sup>1</sup> Manual for Local Area Plans - A companion document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2013, page i).

- Avoid locating these vulnerable developments in areas at risk of river or coastal flooding and/or coastal erosion.
- Require the roll out the EV charging network to new developments and promote the retrofitting of existing developments.
- Ensure these new developments are NZEB standard and ensure the design and layout of sites and buildings have regard to climate change impacts.
- Encourage the retention and expansion of green infrastructure in these developments.
- Through the Public Participation Network (PPN), raise awareness and assist our communities to become climate resilient.

### 15.3 Policy Context

The preparation of this chapter had regard to a suite of national, regional and local policy and guidance.

The NPF, through NSO 10, seeks to ensure access to quality childcare, education and health services. Good access to a range of quality education and health services, relative to the scale of a town, neighbourhood or community is a defining characteristic of attractive, successful and competitive places. Compact, smart growth in urban areas and strong and stable rural communities will enable the enhanced and effective provision of a range of accessible services.

This is reinforced in the RSES in which it is a key objective (No. 10) to achieve improved education, health and public services and facilities for all citizens and communities. This will be enabled by investment in public services to tackle legacies, support planned population and employment growth, provide education, health, transport, community and social services and infrastructure.

With regard to tackling legacies the RSES highlights the persistent nature of social deprivation in locations across the region, where low educational attainment, high levels of unemployment, poor health and housing, addiction and elevated crime rates result in high levels of people living in persistent poverty, often in a poor physical environment. The RSES is committed to improving quality of life for all and places a

high priority on tackling these legacies through targeted policies including RPO 175 which supports targeted investment in social infrastructure provision and job growth.

The RSES also advocates for universal health services with RPO 178 seeking the delivery of better universal health services including mental health, at all levels of service delivery. RPO 179 supports a diverse and socially inclusive region, recognising the positive contribution of migrants and asylum seekers to multi-cultural communities and the economic life of an area. This policy also prioritises parity of opportunity and improved well-being and quality of life for all citizens in the region.

RPO 181 promotes equal access for all through universal design for public transport access, housing, social, cultural and recreational facilities and the public realm to improve quality of life equally for abled and disabled citizens.

The RSES supports the development of age-friendly communities including independent living and community facilities. RPO 182 supports our ageing population, in particular, Smart Ageing and ensuring that local planning, housing, transport/accessibility and leisure policies meet the needs and opportunities of an ageing population. The RSES, through RPO 183, also highlights the importance of local authority Digital Strategies and developing new technologies that address the challenges faced by older people and allowing greater access to services for all citizens regardless of their age and technological competency.

There is also an important focus on education in the RSES, acknowledging the significant role it plays in promoting social inclusion, a healthy, sustainable society, economic growth and public safety. There is a focus on developing new schools across the region (RPO 185), developing new third level facilities including the development of the South East Technological University (SETU) with a specific mention of the campus at Wexford (RPO 184), the importance of lifelong learning (RPO 186) and further education and training (RPO 187, 188 and 189).

The RSES also introduces the concept of Smart Cities and Towns which deploy digital technologies. It recognises that Enniscorthy Town has taken the initial steps towards the achievement of Smart Town Status with the establishment of the FAB LAB in 2017, the development of a Technology Park for smart business and the establishment of the NZEB training centre.

The Council's enhanced role in economic and community development is articulated in its Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The Wexford LECP 2016-2022 addresses a wide range of community development issues which arose from the socio-economic analysis carried out during the preparation of the Plan. These issues include educational attainment, training and skills, unemployment, disadvantage and social exclusion. High Level Goal 2 in the LECP is to *“support and promote the development of socially inclusive, sustainable communities and ensure that all citizens enjoy optimal health and well-being”*.

There are specific objectives and actions related to the role of the Council as a planning authority to help achieve this goal, including auditing of social and community facilities during the preparation of local area plans and reserving lands for these uses and development management standards relating to the provision of these facilities, open spaces and play facilities.

The Healthy Wexford County Plan 2020-2022 includes six key priority areas and a number of actions to improve the health and wellbeing of all citizens in County Wexford. These include rejuvenating town and village spaces for the enjoyment of the community, providing safe spaces for young people to meet, achieving a culture of educational attainment and lifelong learning and promoting health and physical wellbeing.

The strategy and objectives in this chapter do not duplicate those set out in the Wexford LECP or Healthy Wexford County Plan. This chapter provides the spatial planning framework to support the achievement of those plans.

## 15.4 Tackling Deprivation in County Wexford

County Wexford suffers significantly from deprivation, ranking the fourth most disadvantaged local authority in the country in 2016 (an improvement of one position in 2011). The majority of Wexford's population live in areas classed as 'Marginally Below Average' (56% or 84,039), this is followed by areas 'Marginally Above Average' (21.2% or 31,703), 'Disadvantaged' (16.4% or 24,612), 'Very Disadvantaged' (4.4% or 6,651) and finally 'Affluent' (1.8% or 2,717).

There is a clear spatial pattern with two affluent areas in close proximity to Wexford

Town and Gorey. Areas recording 'Marginally Above Average' scores tend to be located in and around major urban settlements, extending into rural parts. Areas recording scores classed as 'Very Disadvantaged' are limited to parts of some large urban settlements and smaller settlements distributed throughout rural Wexford.

As discussed previously, the Council and the LECP is focused on tackling deprivation. Spatial planning and this Plan will play an important part in this, in particular, by facilitating social and community developments including health services and education, and facilitating employment and enterprise developments in disadvantaged areas/unemployment blackspots.

## 15.5 Strategy

The strategy provides a spatial planning framework that places social inclusion, universal design and equality at the heart of all future developments in the county. The strategy will guide the future development of social and community facilities, supporting the delivery of the local and community development elements of the Wexford LECP and the Healthy Wexford County Plan.

### 15.5.1 Goal

It is the goal of the Council to ensure that County Wexford has a strong network of healthy, socially inclusive sustainable communities, where all residents and visitors enjoy equal opportunities to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the county.

### 15.5.2 Strategy

The strategic aims to achieve this goal are:

- To ensure that County Wexford is an attractive place to live and work, with a network of strong inclusive communities with accessible social, community and cultural facilities.
- To ensure that all areas in our county, both urban and rural, can be used and



enjoyed to the greatest extent possible, by all people, regardless of age, ability or disability.

- To ensure that the principles of accessibility, age friendly, inclusive and sustainable community development are central to spatial planning and the design of developments in the county.
- To tackle regional disparities and address areas within the county which are affected by higher levels of deprivation where low educational attainment, high levels of unemployment, poor health and housing, addiction and elevated crime rates and often a poor physical environment are evident.
- To work with key service providers to promote healthy communities and to facilitate equal access to health services for all our citizens.
- To facilitate the delivery of social and community infrastructure to meet the needs of the existing and future population of the county.
- To work with key State agencies and local stakeholders including the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the PPN and community development groups to develop a shared responsibility for social, community and cultural development in the county.

## Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SC01

To facilitate the development of healthy sustainable communities where people can live, work and enjoy access to a wide range of community, health and educational facilities suitable for all ages, needs and abilities.

### Objective SC02

To plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all our citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.

### Objective SC03

To facilitate the implementation of the Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021, the Healthy Wexford County Plan 2020-2022 and any updated version of these Plans.

### Objective SC04

To tackle regional disparities and address areas within the county which are affected by higher levels of deprivation. This will be achieved through a number of approaches including providing social and community infrastructure, facilitating jobs growth and providing economic assistance, working with other service providers to target education and training programmes, the provision of necessary social supports such as childcare to facilitate participation in education and employment and the promotion of healthcare and well-being.

### Objective SC05

To ensure the balanced and equitable provision of social and community facilities including education and health services throughout the county and ensure that these facilities are located in areas that are easy to get to by either public or private transport, and are universally accessible.

## 15.6 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is about ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to, community life regardless of their age, ability, nationality, religion or any other of the many characteristics that contribute to diversity in our communities and society and plays an important part in tackling legacies and deprivation. As a planning authority, the Council has a significant role to play in creating built environments that promote and facilitate social inclusion, in particular, in the areas of housing, employment, public transport, tourism and social and community facilities.

## 15.6.1 Groups with Specific Design/Planning Needs

There are a number of groups with specific design and planning needs that must be considered in the planning and design of the built environment and in the location of social and community facilities. These groups include children and young people, people with disabilities, older people, ethnic minorities and the Traveller community.

### Children and Young People

Census 2016 indicates that the county has a relatively young people with 27.5% of the population under the age of 18. This increased by 6.1% (2,364 persons) on the number recorded in Census 2011. A young population requires childcare facilities, schools, play areas for children, recreational places for young people, sports facilities and safe walking and cycling routes.

### Older People

The population of the county is growing older. In 2016, 21,985 people were 65 years or older (14.7% of the county's population). This increased from 11.6% in Census 2011. The quality of life of older people can be improved through planning and design of the built environment, particularly, housing, community and care facilities, accessible transportation including public transport and footpaths.

The first County Wexford Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2021 aims to ensure that the county is a great place in which to grow old. The Strategy is based around nine themes: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and socialisation, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services and safety and security.

The strategy and objectives in this chapter provide the spatial planning framework to support the implementation of the Age Friendly Strategy.

### People with Disabilities

In 2016, 22,650 people in the county (15.1% of the population) had a disability. This was the second highest rate in the State and much higher than the State average

of 13.5%. The planning related issues relevant to people with a disability include the need to facilitate independent living, access and mobility. As many people with a disability are of working age, there is a need to ensure access and proximity to employment opportunities.

### Ethnic Minority Groups

County Wexford is becoming more culturally diverse. Certain areas of the county have a more ethnic or culturally diverse population than others and service provision and community facilities in these areas should reflect the varying needs of the community.

### The Traveller Community

In Census 2016, 1,508 of the county's population were from the Traveller Community. This accounted for 1% of the overall population, which is above the State average of 0.7%. There are distinct spatial patterns across the county. In Clonroche, 20.5% of the local population is from the Traveller community. In Taghmon, 14.1% of the local population are Travellers and in Bunclody, the Traveller community make up 11.1% of the local population. In New Ross Town and Enniscorthy Town the Traveller community is much smaller and comprises 3.5% and 2.5% respectively of the local population. Service provision and community facilities in these areas should reflect and respect the varying needs of the Traveller community.

## 15.6.2 Universal Access and Design

It is important that our built environment is designed to create an accessible environment for everyone in the community, ensuring ease of access and use by all, especially groups with specific planning/design needs. This can be achieved through the removal/designing out of potential physical barriers to access and movement and creating a safe environment.

In this regard, the Council will require the application of universal design in all developments. Universal design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the

needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. Everyone benefits if an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use.

All components of a development must therefore be considered in the design process including:

- Access for people with disabilities, older people and others who may be temporarily impaired, must be incorporated into the design of buildings, public spaces, car parking, footpaths and general facilities and services.
- 'End to end' travel, that is, from the door of the accessible dwelling through to parking, street, public realm and the destination building. Access to services such as childcare, community facilities and public transport is also essential and the design of buildings must incorporate measures to ensure accessibility.
- The provision of 'Changing Places Facilities'. Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. Some people often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by Changing Places facilities<sup>2</sup>. The provision of these facilities will be required in any new build large building development where the public have access in numbers and/ or where the public might be expected to spend longer periods of time, for example, educational establishments, health facilities, civic centres, public libraries, cultural buildings, motorway services, sport and leisure facilities, including large hotels.
- Baby changing and feeding facilities are also important and should be incorporated into the design of buildings and the layout of developments that people with young children could be expected to have frequent access.
- Unisex family toilets which allow children the right to be accompanied to the toilet by a parent/guardian of a different gender in the interests of the child's dignity and safety<sup>3</sup>.

All development proposals will be required to have regard to:

- The provisions of the National Disability's Authority document 'Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach' (2012).

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<sup>2</sup> Changing Places facilities are different to standard accessible toilets (or "disabled toilets") and should be provided in addition to accessible toilets. Volume 2 Development Management Manual provides further details on the type of buildings in which Changing Place facilities are to be provided in and design details.

<sup>3</sup> Similar to Changing Place facilities, baby changing/feeding facilities and unisex family toilets should be provided where the public have access in numbers and/ or where the public might be expected to spend longer periods of time. Further design details and the type of buildings in which these facilities should be provided are included Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

- Part M of the Building Regulations and the requirement for Disability Access Certificates (DACs).
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DECLG and DAHG, 2009).
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2019).
- Any such revisions or new versions of the aforementioned guidance which may become available in the lifetime of this Plan.

Applications for significant development should also be accompanied by an Access Statement carried out in accordance with Appendix 6 of Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012).

## Social Inclusion Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SC06

To support the entitlement of all members of the community to enjoy a high quality living environment and to support local communities, the Health Authorities and other bodies involved in the provision of facilities for groups with specific design/ planning needs.

### Objective SC07

To facilitate the implementation of the Wexford Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2022 and any updated version of this Plan.

### Objective SC08

To require Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in accordance with best practice and the policies and principles contained in Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012) and Sustainable Residential

Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009).

### Objective SC09

To require an Access Statement to be submitted with planning applications for significant developments in accordance with Appendix 6 of Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012), demonstrating how access for all has been considered within the proposed development.<sup>4</sup>

### Objective SC10

To continue to carry out improvements to the public realm to create a safe and barrier free environment that can be accessed by all members of the community.

### Objective SC11

To facilitate the provision of care facilities for groups with specific planning and design needs, including older people, people with disabilities both physical and intellectual. These care facilities include independent living options, sheltered housing, day-care facilities, nursing homes and specialised care units. The preferred location for this type of development is within, or in close proximity to, towns and villages and is subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective SC12

To facilitate the provision of community facilities for people with specific planning and design needs, such as family resource centres, Traveller resource centres, youth centres and youth cafés at appropriate locations in towns and villages and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective SC13

To facilitate the design needs of older people and people with disabilities in community facilities, public open spaces and recreational areas.

<sup>4</sup> As set out in Section 4.5.1 Housing for All of Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing an Access Statement is also required to be submitted with planning applications for residential schemes of five units or more.

### Objective SC14

To facilitate the design needs of children and young people including those with disabilities, in community facilities, public open spaces and recreational areas.

### Objective SC15

To require 'Changing Places facilities' to be provided in any large building development where the public have access in numbers, and/or where the public might be expected to spend longer periods of time, in accordance with the criteria and design standards set out in Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

## 15.7 Community Developments

Local services such as schools, childcare, healthcare and community centres are important, not just in terms of the services they provide but also they can be important for social interaction and activity in the community, in particular, for those living in rural areas. The availability of public services and community facilities at a local level is an important factor in supporting quality of life. Furthermore, as outlined in the NPF, strategic planning and investment in the provision of childcare, education and training are central to reinforcing the delivery of sustainable communities, promoting inclusion and offering choice and accessibility to a high standard of education and employment. In this regard, there is a need to align the targeted and planned population and employment growth with educational investment<sup>4</sup>.

### 15.7.1 Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities enables parents to participate in the workforce and also make a significant contribution to a child's emotional and educational development in the early years of their life. Childcare is taken to mean full day care, sessional facilities and services, both for pre-school and after school. There are a wide range of childcare facilities in the plan area, both private and community operated.

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<sup>4</sup> National Planning Framework, page 90



The Council will continue to ensure that sufficient childcare facilities are provided alongside new residential schemes and that any new facilities are suitably located, are of a high quality and are inclusive of all children, including children with special needs. Planning applications for such facilities will be assessed in accordance with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment 2001) and any future updates of these guidelines.

The Council will continue to support the Wexford County Childcare Committee in responding to the changing needs of society in terms of childcare demand and services. It is particularly important to ensure that vulnerable or disadvantaged members of the community can access childcare services in order to support social integration and to enable parents to access education or employment opportunities.

### Childcare Facilities Objectives

It is the objective of the Council;

#### Objective SC16

To require the provision of purpose-built childcare facilities in new residential developments in accordance with Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001) and 'We Like This Place: Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities' (National Children's Nurseries Association, 2002) and any future update of these guidelines. The indicative standard is one childcare facility, accommodating 20 children, for approximately 75 dwellings. This standard may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so. Criteria that may be taken into account in such an assessment include the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

#### Objective SC17

To facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in accordance with Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001) and any future update of these guidelines.

- (a) The development of new purpose built childcare facilities will be facilitated on well- located sites within or close to existing built up areas including within new or existing places of work, residential areas, educational establishments, town centres, rural villages and adjacent to public transport nodes. Where these childcare facilities are proposed to be located within established residential areas, applications for such uses will be assessed having regard to the likely effect on the amenities of adjoining properties, the availability of space for off-street parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points and outdoor playspace.
- (b) In the case of a change of use of an existing dwelling within a housing estate to a childcare facility, the proposal will only be considered where the dwelling house is detached, where there is adequate separation distances between the dwelling house and other dwelling houses in the vicinity, where the use as a childcare facility will not detract from the residential amenities of the estate, where the development will not give rise to a traffic hazard and where the car parking requirements for the childcare facility are provided in addition to the car parking requirements of the housing estate. This will not apply to the use of an existing dwelling for child minding<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the exempted development provisions of Article 10(5) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).
- (c) The development of small-scale rural appropriate childcare facilities associated with an existing residence (where the primary use is retained as the residence of the operator) at locations outside of rural villages will be considered on a case-by case basis having regard to the location of the site, the nature of the road serving the site and traffic safety, residential amenity and environmental considerations.

## 15.7.2 Education

The provision of high quality education facilities lies at the heart of sustainable communities. It enhances the attractiveness of an area to families and it can encourage businesses and employment to locate in a place.

The preparation of the Wexford LECP highlighted that the county has below average education attainments for primary, post primary and third level education. There were distinct spatial patterns with peripheral, rural areas and all of the main urban

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<sup>5</sup> Childminding means the activity of minding no more than six children, including the children, if any, of the person minding, in the house of that person, for profit or gain.

centres presenting with lower levels of attainment and 'areas of concern'. As a result, High Level Goal 1 in the LECP is to *foster the culture of educational attainment and lifelong learning in County Wexford and provide opportunities to develop educational and workforce skills, to improve work readiness and access to employment*. There is a suite of objectives and actions around this goal and a number of stakeholders and partners involved. The role of education in tackling legacies due to deprivation is also recognised as a key intervention in the RSES.

As a Planning Authority, the Council's role is to facilitate the development of education facilities at appropriate locations and ensure that these facilities are accessible to all to achieve social inclusion.

### Third Level, Further Education and Adult Education

One of the areas of concern highlighted in the Wexford LECP was the low level of third level attainment in the county. The absence of a University in the South-East region and a lack of suitable job opportunities was considered a primary factor and resulted in Wexford graduates residing elsewhere in the State. The RSES (RPO 184) fully supports the establishment of the South East Technological University (SETU) including the development of the Wexford Campus and other future collaborations between third level institutions to greatly enhance the quality of regional education and enhance the ability of higher education provision to drive regional development.

The Wexford Campus of Carlow IT offers a range of full and part time courses from Higher Certificate to Masters Level. Carlow IT has made a substantial investment in the student facilities in its Wexford Campus, and the Council supports its further development.

The availability of further education and adult education centres are important as a tool to encourage and facilitate adults to re-engage with learning, to learn life skills and new skills to either enter the workforce for the first time or to re-enter the workforce. This is an important part of creating a Learning Region, as envisaged in the RSES, and will assist in providing high quality and timely education and training responses to evolving enterprise and skills needs. This is discussed further in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy. There are number of these centres across the county which offer a range of further education and training courses.

Apprenticeships offer an alternative to full time education and give apprentices the opportunity to earn while they learn and build valuable work ready skills in their chosen occupation. SOLAS, the further education and training authority, are the lead agency for apprenticeships and they work with industry-led groups to design and develop apprenticeship schemes. Apprenticeships are available across a range of skills including construction, electrical, engineering, finance, motor and hospitality, and are delivered through a range of collaborative providers including Education and Training Boards and Institutes of Technology.

The Council recognises the importance of third level education in contributing to the delivery of a highly-skilled and innovation-based population and laying the foundation stones for well-being and a good quality of life. The Council will therefore continue to facilitate the development of accessible third level, further education and adult education facilities at appropriate locations in the county. These facilities need to be located along sustainable transport corridors in locations that are easy to get to by public transport, walking and cycling. There is also a need to ensure that inter-county public transport systems are developed to allow third level students to easily commute to third level facilities in other counties.

The provision of good quality student accommodation is also an important component of third level education. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

### Primary and Post Primary Schools

There is a network of over one hundred primary schools across the county ranging from large schools in the main towns to very small schools in rural villages and settlements. Each of these schools plays an invaluable role in their local community/ neighbourhood and the Council will continue to facilitate these schools in the improvement and/or extension of the existing school and ancillary facilities.

There are twenty three post primary schools in the county. The majority of these are located in the main towns: Wexford Town (5), Enniscorthy Town (4), Gorey Town (3), New Ross Town (5) and Bunclody (2). The remaining schools are located in Adamstown, Kilmuckridge, Bridgetown and Ramsgrange and each serves a large rural catchment.

The county has, and continues to benefit from, significant investment in education infrastructure with a range of new and extended primary and post primary schools

delivered across the county. The Department of Education has identified the need for a new primary school in Wexford Town and a new post primary school in Enniscorthy Town and has acquired sites for these schools. A new post primary school in Gorey Town opened in temporary accommodation in September 2021. The Council will work with the Department to find a suitable site for this school and any additional schools required during the lifetime of this Plan.

There is however an oversubscription for post primary school places in Wexford Town and Gorey Town with waiting lists in all schools. It has resulted in a scenario where many pupils from the towns and catchment areas are travelling to other towns to avail of school places. This is unsustainable and is contributing to unnecessary stress on parents and students. It is a priority of the Council that this situation be addressed.

The Council will carefully consider planning applications for significant residential developments to identify the demand for school places likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools in the area to cater for this demand. If necessary, these developments will be required to be phased in line with the availability of school places.

## Location of New Schools

In line with NPO 31 of the NPF the provision of new and refurbished schools should be on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas. The RSES, in RPO 185, requires both proposed school locations and existing schools to be accessible by cycling/walking from the main catchment areas and accessible by public transport.

In line with the Sustainable Development Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009), RPO 185 also requires a robust site selection process in the selection of new school locations taking into account proximity to such as community centres, playing fields and libraries so that the possibility of sharing facilities can be maximised. Multi-campus school arrangements, e.g. two or three primary schools side by side, or a primary and a post primary school sharing a site, is sustainable and a good use of resources and infrastructure and will be encouraged by the Council. The Department of Education also have technical guidance documents for site selection and development. The Council will have regard to these guidelines and documents when zoning lands for Education use in future local area plans.

In the interests of achieving compact growth in line with the NPF and the “10 minute town” concept in the RSES, consideration will be given to the intensification of existing school sites (e.g., higher buildings), where appropriate, subject to adequate amenity and sports facilities being maintained.

### Multi-Use of Schools Buildings

The multi-use of school buildings and facilities outside of school hours and during the school holidays will continue to be encouraged where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service. The Council will encourage the design of new schools and community facilities to facilitate dual usage from the onset.

### Education Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective SC18

To support the development of a Learning Region as envisaged in the RSES and further strengthen the higher education and further education and training sector, and support the initiatives of the Regional Skills Fora to ensure that knowledge and skills are spread to all citizens to help address skills shortages and lifelong learning challenges.

#### Objective SC19

To have regard to the ‘Provision of Schools and the Planning System-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Department of Education, 2008) and any future update of these guidelines published during the lifetime of the Plan.

#### Objective SC20

To facilitate all education providers, including the Department of Education, the Higher Education Authority, Wexford and Waterford Education and Training Board, SOLAS, TÚS and Wexford Local Development in the delivery of high quality, appropriately located education and training facilities and services throughout the county.

**Objective SC21**

To ensure that sufficient and suitable lands are zoned for Education use in future local area plans.

**Objective SC22**

To require planning applications for significant residential developments to include an assessment of existing schools in the area and their capacity in accordance with Objective SC37. The assessment shall identify the demand for school places likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools in the area to cater for this demand. If required, the applicant shall include proposals for provision of new school facilities in tandem with the residential development or make a special contribution for the provision of such facilities.

**Objective SC23**

To encourage multi-campus school arrangements where appropriate and to restrict new developments adjacent to existing schools where the proposed development would conflict with the education use or restrict the future expansion of that school.

**Objective SC24**

To support the intensification of development on existing school sites, where appropriate, to accommodate additional educational requirements which may emerge over the lifetime of the Plan, subject to the schools maintaining adequate sporting and amenity provision and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective SC25**

To encourage the multi-use of school buildings and facilities provided that this does not conflict with the delivery of the education service.

**Objective SC26**

To facilitate the development of Third Level education facilities at appropriate locations in the county, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria. As these facilities must be easy to get to by students these facilities should generally be located in towns and along or close to public transport corridors.

**Objective SC27**

To support the further development of the Wexford Campus of Carlow IT subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective SC28**

To identify a location for the Wexford Campus of the South East Technological University.

**Objective SC29**

To support the development of a Sustainable Construction education campus alongside the planned Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Construction in Enniscorthy Town, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and all normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective SC30**

To facilitate the development of suitably located and well-designed student accommodation which will enable and encourage students to attend third level institutions in the county. These facilities should be located along public transport routes, where possible, and in close proximity to the third level facility.



### 15.7.3 Healthcare Facilities

Healthcare facilities are essential to ensure that the residents of the county have access to the care that they need. Healthcare is provided by a range of State, private, community and charitable service providers. The Health Service Executive's policy approach reflects a shift away from traditional hospital-based care towards more community-based care with increased emphasis on meeting people's needs at local level within primary care teams. Healthcare services enable older people, in particular, to continue to live in their communities, through the range of primary and social care supports.

The Council will facilitate the provision and expansion of facilities to ensure accessible healthcare services are integrated into communities throughout the county. These facilities should ideally be provided within towns and villages and should be easy to get to by a range of transport options. Medical centres/surgeries and local health centres which meet the needs of, and are easy to get to by local service users, will be considered in existing built up areas and neighbourhood centres provided they do not impact on residential amenity and have adequate parking availability. One-stop primary care medical centres and GP practices will be encouraged at locations which are easy to travel to by all members of the wider community including by public transport.

The Council will also facilitate the development of high quality care facilities such as nursing homes, day-care and specialist care units for older people and people with disabilities at appropriate locations in the county. These facilities are well suited to towns and villages as these locations are generally easy to get to by car and, in some cases, public transport, there are existing or planned pedestrian linkages to the town or village, proximity to complementary services including shops, post office and the local church and opportunities to socialise with the local community. Independent living, sheltered housing/nursing homes/retirement villages are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

#### Healthcare Facilities Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective SC31

To facilitate the development of new and expanded accessible health and medical care facilities at appropriate locations in the county. These facilities must be easy to get to by the persons availing of the service and therefore should generally be located within towns and villages and areas of significant residential development. Isolated rural locations will not generally be considered, except where it is demonstrated that the nature of the facility requires such a location and in the interests of protecting the amenity of the host community.

### Objective SC32

To facilitate the development of new or extended hospitals, nursing homes, day care facilities for older people or people with disabilities, hospices, respite care facilities or facilities for those with long term illness at appropriate locations in the county subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. These facilities should generally be located within towns and villages and areas of significant residential development.

### Objective SC33

To facilitate the development of extensions to existing authorised hospitals, nursing homes, day care facilities for older people or people with disabilities, hospices, respite care facilities or facilities for those with long term illness in towns, villages and rural areas subject to compliance with normal planning and environment criteria.

## 15.7.4 Community Facilities

Community facilities provide opportunities for activities, sports and recreational events, social interaction and meeting spaces, all of which benefit the local community and assist with social inclusion. Community centres in particular perform an important function providing opportunities for indoor active recreation such as bowls, dance, gymnastics and pilates, meetings spaces for various community groups including Active Retirement, ICA and youth groups.

The design of the facilities should provide for multi-users so as to maximise the financial investment and extend the benefits to everyone in the community.

The Council will facilitate the delivery of community facilities through various mechanisms including:

- Zoning land for community use in local area plans to facilitate the development of new or extended facilities. These lands will be identified having carried out an audit of existing facilities in the plan area, the identified need for additional facilities and the location of planned neighbourhoods.
- Require developers to contribute to the cost of providing community facilities through the implementation of the applicable Development Contribution Scheme.
- Facilitate key stakeholders and service providers in the delivery of new community facilities.

## Social Infrastructure Assessments

Having regard to the planned future population targets, it is essential that sufficient and suitable community facilities are provided in tandem with new development, where possible. In this regard, it is a requirement of the Council that planning applications for multiple developments (i.e. 100 residential units or greater) be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) undertaken by the developer, to determine if facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents (of all age cohorts) and where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency (through direct provision or development contributions) or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services. The assessment should identify membership and non-membership facilities which allow access for all groups. Where facilities are deemed to be required, the means of meeting this requirement shall be determined by the Planning Authority through the Development Management process.

## Community Facilities Objectives

It is the objective of the Council;

**Objective SC34**

To develop, or support the development of, community facilities at appropriate locations throughout the county and require all new community facilities to be accessible to all and designed to facilitate a wide range of uses/users.

**Objective SC35**

To facilitate the development of new or expanded community facilities of a suitable scale and appropriate location within towns, villages and rural settlements, ensuring that these facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the communities they serve, are physically integrated with residential and employment areas and are provided in tandem, where possible, with new residential development and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective SC36**

To consult with local community groups and key stakeholders during the preparation of local area plans for towns and villages to determine if there are any existing deficiencies in the provision of community facilities and needs and to address, where possible and appropriate, in the relevant local area plan.

**Objective SC37**

To require that all new residential development applications of 100 units or more on zoned lands are accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) to determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents (of all age cohorts). This should include details regarding the following essential facilities: Playgrounds, parks and other green spaces, education, childcare, health and others such as shops, banks, post offices, community meeting rooms/centres and recreational facilities. The assessment should identify membership and non-membership facilities which allow access for all groups. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to accompany the planning application to address the deficiency.

### 15.7.5 Arts, Culture and Library Services

Arts services, library services and cultural facilities all play an important role in aiding local communities to become better places to live, where people feel connected and a part of the broader community. The Council supports the development of the Arts, as expressed in the Council's Arts Plan 2018-2022, and is committed to providing opportunities for all who live in, work in and visit the county. There is a wide range of Arts and cultural services and facilities across the county including the National Opera House and Wexford Arts Centre in Wexford Town, St Michael's Theatre in New Ross Town, Gorey Little Theatre and the Athenaeum in Enniscorthy Town. All of the Council's public libraries serve as key arts and cultural outlets within the county.

#### Arts, Culture and Library Services Objectives

It is the objective of the Council;

##### Objective SC38

To facilitate the development of the county's arts services, library services and cultural facilities and to facilitate the objectives set out in Wexford County Council's Arts Plan 2018-2022 and any updated versions.

##### Objective SC39

To take a lead role in the development of cultural facilities in the county, for example, the redevelopment of Gorey Market House and Wexford Arts Centre.