

Chapter 3

Settlement and Housing Strategy

3.1 Introduction

The 2006 Census revealed a total of 4,270 households in Arklow 'town', equating to an average household size of 2.75, which was below the County average of 2.89. It is estimated that (as of June 2010) there are 5,250 housing units in the entire settlement, the additional number being made up of:

- (a) additional units completed post 2006, and
- (b) units in the 'environs' area, which would not have been considered part of the 'town' in the Census, but are included in the new development plan area.

It is estimated that by 2017 average household size in Wicklow will have declined to 2.52 (in accordance with the Regional Planning Guidelines). Assuming this same household size for Arklow and its environs, there would be a need for 7,800 dwellings units in the settlement by 2017.

Further declines to 2020 will necessitate a total housing stock in the region of 9,000 units to meet the 2020 population target (a household size of 2.4 is projected for 2020, in accordance with the RPGs).

There are currently extant permission for c. 980 residential units in Arklow and its environs, that are either under construction or yet to commence. While some of these units may not be delivered, for the purposes of determining how much land requires to be designated for future residential development, it is assumed that these permissions will be delivered, or development of a similar quantum on the same sites should permissions expire.

Therefore the new development plan requires to make provision for c. **2,770** new housing units up to 2020.

'Excess' & 'market' factor

While it has been calculated that c. 2,770 new residential units will be required up to 2020 to meet the needs of a total population of 21,670, the plan must make provision for more than this minimum number to allow for housing that becomes obsolete during the lifetime of the plan, homes that are used as second homes in plan area and for normal market friction which means that some houses will be vacant due to market factors. This is known as the 'excess factor'. For the purposes of this plan an 'excess factor' of 7% will be utilised in accordance with the provision of the RPGs and the Wicklow County Development Plan.

Therefore this plan must ensure a framework for the delivery of c. 2,960 residential units up to 2020.

Headroom or 'market factor' is the amount of extra land that should be zoned over and above the minimum amount needed to accommodate population targets and is intended to allow for that element of zoned land that may not be released to the market for housing purposes during the Plan period. While it could be argued that by making provision for zoning for 3 years beyond the lifetime of that plan allows for this 'headroom' it is considered prudent given the current blockages in the release of zoned land in Arklow, additional headroom of 30% will be allowed for in this plan³. In this context, the plan must ensure sufficient land is designated for c. **3,850** new residential units.

3.2 Capacity of undeveloped existing zoned land (*with no planning permission*)

Town Centre

While the town centre of Arklow (i.e. that area zoned TC), is densely developed, there are numerous opportunities for redevelopment and infill development, particularly backlands of Main Street properties. Having regard to the high density of development that could be considered on such sites, it is estimated that there is capacity for up to 200 new residential units in the town centre.

Waterfront Development Zone

Within the waterfront area of Arklow there are a number of under-utilised or derelict sites which have the capacity for significant and high density development. The ground floors of development on these sites may be suitable for an element of commercial or community facilities, it is likely that residential will be the primary use

³ This is at the lower end of the range for headroom suggested in the (draft) RPG'S 2010-2022.

of any development in this area, particularly given its attractive location proximate to the town centre and to water amenities.

In total, there is c. 8.25ha that may be available for redevelopment and assuming a plot ratio of 2.5, this area may have capacity for up to 2,000 units (of 100sqm each). However for the purposes of this plan, and given the amenity/leisure potential of some of these lands, this will be reduced to 1,000 units.

It is noted that parts of the waterfront area may be susceptible to flooding, particularly the area around the former Qualceram site on the south side of the river and the area north of the river (see Chapter 8 in relation to flooding). However, the Flood Justification Test carried out as part of this plan justifies the designation of this land for future residential development and leisure facilities (subject to certain design controls) having regard to the close proximity to the town centre zone.

Existing developed residential areas (RE)

Within the existing developed residential areas potential development sites range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, side gardens of existing houses, up to larger vacant sites within established residential areas. While it is considered that higher residential densities are appropriate in the town core, an appropriate balance is required in the protection of the amenities and privacy of adjoining properties, the protection of established character and the requirement for residential infill developments. Proposals for such infill development will generally be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal respects the existing character of the area and would not have an adverse impact on the amenity value of properties in the area. It is estimated that there is capacity on such sites for up to 50 units.

New Residential Zones (R1)

There is a limited quantum of existing zoned residential land in the plan area, without extant permission. These lands are dotted around the settlement, the largest blocks being located at Knockmore and Ballyraine. These lands total 15ha and an average density of 20/ha is assumed given the edge of settlement location.

Action Areas

There are three Action Areas identified in the plan area – two at Tinahask and one at Kilbride, which were included in the previous development plans for the town and environs respectively. These areas are suitable for a high proportion of the new residential development required in the plan area.

Summary of residential zonings

In order to meet the housing needs of the plan area up to 2020, the plan will make provision for new residential development at the following locations and densities:

Table 3.1 Location of residentially zoned land

Location	Proposed Zoning	Units
Infill	TC / RE	250
Waterfront zone	WZ	1,000
Kilbride action area	AA	1,500
Tinahask action area	AA	800
Various	R1	300
Total		3,850

In addition an area of 5.6ha at Seabank is designated for low density, local need housing (R2).

Table 3.2 Summary of zoning objectives

Zoning Objectives	Housing
TC: Town Centre	To protect and provide for the development and improvement of the town centre.
RE: Existing Residential	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities.
R1: New Residential	To provide for new residential development
R2 New Residential	To provide for low density housing (maximum 4 acre) for those living permanently for a period of at least 3 years in the area within 10km of the site prior to seeking of permission / purchase of a house in this zone.
Water Development Zones	To provide for the development and improvement of the waterfront zone including residential, commercial, leisure and amenity use.
Action Area Plans	To provide mixed-use development in accordance with the objectives set out in Action Areas 1,2 and 3.

3.2.1 Settlement Objectives

- H1** To ensure sufficient zoned land is available in appropriate locations capable of meeting the housing needs of the projected population of the plan area over the plan period in a sustainable manner.
- H2** Notwithstanding the zoning of land for residential purposes, the Development Management process shall monitor and implement the population targets and shall phase and restrict, where necessary, the granting of residential planning permissions to ensure these targets are not exceeded.
- H3** Housing development shall be managed and phased to ensure that infrastructure and in particular, community infrastructure, is provided to match the need of new residents.
- H4** Encourage in-fill housing developments, the use of under-utilised and vacant sites and vacant upper floors for accommodation purposes and facilitate higher residential densities at appropriate locations, subject to a high standard of design, layout and finish.

3.3 Town Centre (TC)

The core of urban activity is the town centre, which is zoned (TC) in the plan. The town centre is concentrated around Main Street and adjacent streets, which need to be consolidated and reinforced as the primary centre of development in Arklow. A strategy for the re-development of the main street is set out in Chapter 4 to follow.

3.3.1 Town Centre Objectives

- TC1** To promote the vitality and viability of the town centre area so that it becomes a high quality environment able to accommodate a mix of residential, commercial, retail and tourism uses.
- TC2** To reinforce the centre of Arklow as the priority location for new development with quality of design and integration /linkage with the existing street patterns.
- TC3** To encourage a greater usage of backland areas and to promote the redevelopment of sites in the town centre where development will positively contribute to the commercial and residential vitality of the town centre.
- TC4** All new residential developments shall comply with the development standards set out in this plan, unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority.

3.4 Waterfront Zone (WZ)

The 'waterfront zone' is that area zoned WZ along the north and south quays. This zone is made up of two distinct areas north and south of the river but sharing the common characteristics of frontage onto the river and/or the coast and former industrial use, largely abandoned.

This area has significant potential for development given the large blocks of land available, the proximity to the town centre and town amenities, the open aspect of the land with water on at least one side of most sites and the overall attractiveness of the area for a range of uses including residential, hotel, leisure and other commercial uses.

It is however important that this area is developed in such a way that maintains the river and coast as an attractive amenity area to which there is public access.

3.4.1 Waterfront Zone Objectives

WZ1 To support in-depth development of the waterfront zone, for a mix of residential, commercial, leisure and tourism uses. Applications for the development of such lands shall include a detailed survey of the existing site conditions, proposals for demolition and remediation of previous site activities and a management plan for the disposal of such materials.

WZ2 To support existing and proposed water related and maritime activities in the area including sailing, fishing, other water sports and commercial shipping activities, including the development of jetties, marinas and other support infrastructure.

WZ3 Further retail development in the waterfront zone shall be restricted to that required to meet the every day convenience needs of future residents or niche comparison uses such as those related to tourism and the maritime function of the area.

WZ4 To require any new developments to be suitably set back from the water's edge and to provide public routes and places along waterfronts; to support the development of a footbridge across the entrance to south dock.

WZ5 To ensure that access to the water, such as steps / slipways / river beaches etc are maintained and improved.

WZ6 To allow high-density development (up to a plot ratio of (2.5:1) up to 4 storeys in height along water frontages and 3 storeys elsewhere.

WZ7 All new residential developments shall comply with the development standards set out in this plan, unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority.

3.5 New Residential Development

While a core aim of the plan is to utilise opportunities in the existing town core for new residential development, these areas are not sufficient in size and scope to accommodate the required growth of Arklow up to 2020. In this regard, new residential development is also provided for on lands zoned R1 and in Action Areas.

Action Areas are blocks of land that are to be the subject of comprehensive (not piecemeal) integrated schemes of development that allow for the sustainable, phased and managed development of the action area during the plan period. Specific use zones are not identified for each action area in this plan as the final location of any use will be determined following more detailed master planning and agreed with the Planning Authority. This plan does however set out exactly what quantum of each use type of zoning is to be provided in each area, indicative locations for new roads and other necessary infrastructure.

3.5.1 New Residential Development Objectives

RE1 In the RE zone, house improvements, alterations and extensions and appropriate infill residential development in accordance with principles of good design and protection of existing residential amenity will be permitted. While new developments shall have regard to the protection of the residential and architectural amenities of houses in the immediate environs, alternative and contemporary designs shall be encouraged (including alternative materials, heights and building forms), to provide for visual diversity).

RE2 Lands at Tinahask (Action Areas 1 & 2) and Kilbride (Action Area 3) shall be developed as comprehensive (not piecemeal) integrated schemes that allow for the sustainable phased and managed development of each action area during the plan period.

RE3 All new residential developments shall comply with the development standards set out in this plan, unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority.

3.6 Social and Affordable Housing

The Local Authority has two principal functions with regard to housing supply – (a) to put in place a land-use planning framework to facilitate the delivery of appropriate housing in its functional area through the zoning of land, the provision of necessary services and appropriate control of the location and design of new housing and (b) to ensure the provision of social and affordable housing, either by direct construction or through Part V of the Planning Act.

The Planning Act requires that each Planning Authority shall include in any development plan it makes a strategy for the purpose of ensuring that the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area in the manner set out in the strategy. The Housing Strategy must include an analysis of demand and supply for the different sectors of the housing market, forecasting future needs and shortfalls and propose objectives to balance demand with supply in a sustainable manner.

In accordance with Section 94(1)(e) of the Act, a Housing Strategy has been prepared as a joint strategy between Wicklow County Council, Bray Town Council, Wicklow Town Council and Arklow Town Council, and this strategy is included in Appendix 3 of this plan.

The procedures for the preparation of a Housing Strategy are set down in the Act. In particular, the Act specifies that the Housing Strategy will:-

- Estimate the existing and likely future need for housing in the area, and ensure that sufficient zoned and serviced land is made available to meet such needs;
- Ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income;
- Ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of the different categories of households, including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities;
- Counteract undue segregation between persons of different social backgrounds;
- Provide that as a general policy a specific % (not exceeding 20%) of the land zoned in the Development Plan for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for those in need of social or affordable housing in the area.

The strategy found that while sufficient zoned and serviced land is available across the County to meet the overall County housing demand, this is not the case in Arklow, where the lack of waste water services will present a serious barrier to meeting the housing needs generated in the settlement.

The Council must continue to utilise all policy avenues open to it and any new schemes that become available to ensure the greatest delivery of social and affordable housing possible and to ensure a regionally equitable balance of housing delivery.

3.6.1 Social & Affordable Housing Objectives

SH1 To implement the Wicklow Local Authorities Housing Strategy 2010-2016.

SH2 To require that 20% of all zoned land developed for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be devoted to social and affordable housing, in the following manner:

- (a) Twenty per cent of the land of the site, or
- (b) Housing units where the total value of the planning gain of the un-serviced site(s) of such units is equivalent in monetary value to the planning gain to the Council on the transfer of 20 per cent of the land of the site, or
- (c) Fully or partially serviced housing sites where the total planning gain for the un-serviced element of such sites are equivalent in monetary value to the planning gain on 20% of the land of the site, or
- (d) A payment of such an amount, which is equivalent to the monetary value of the amount accruing to the Planning Authority, under the provisions of a, b or c above, (ie equal in monetary value to the planning gain to the Council on the transfer of 20% of the land of the site);or
- (e) The provision of (a), (b), (c) or (d) above at another area within the jurisdiction of the relevant Local Authority. .

Planning gain means the difference between the open market value and the existing use value.

- SH3** To require all new social and / or affordable housing development schemes (whether Local Authority / Voluntary or Part V schemes) to provide a mixture of residential unit sizes in accordance with the County Housing Strategy, which will be agreed with the Local Authority.
- SH4** To require the highest standard of design in all new social / affordable developments or development containing an element of social / affordable housing, in accordance with the development standards set out in this Town and Environs Development Plan and the DoEHLG social housing guidelines.
- SH5** To encourage proposals from developers to satisfy Part V obligations which are directed toward special need categories – namely, elderly accommodation, traveller accommodation, specialised accommodation for the homeless and specially adapted accommodation for persons with disabilities – where the proposal is related to an identified local need and is consistent with other policies of the Town and Environs Development Plan.

3.7 Housing & Urban Development Standards

Urban design considers the relationship of buildings to one another and to the spaces around them. This section sets out the principal standards that the Planning Authority will apply to all new developments in the plan area, but with particular emphasis on the standards applicable to developments that include residential use⁴. There have been a number of guidance documents published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on urban design and all applicants for permission in urban areas are advised to consult these documents, as they will also be utilised as a tool in the assessment of planning applications⁵.

3.7.1 Appropriate consideration of local setting and context

Any proposed development must consider both its site and its surroundings and respond to them in a positive way. Arklow still has at its core a traditional two - three storey 'main street' where most economic activity is concentrated, accompanied by 'satellite' development areas, often with their own retail and community services separated from the town core.

3.7.2 Core town centre area

The core town centre area, which is zoned TC allows for a wide range and mix of uses. New development in this zone will normally comprise infill or brownfield sites, or redevelopment opportunity sites put together through acquisition of a number of underperforming or derelict sites. Regardless of the type of site, new development shall generally follow the pattern of development in that area, with regard to building form, massing, height and design features,

In particular:-

- New developments will require to be 'integrated' with the existing built fabric, in the sense that it will knit together, both physically and visually with the surrounding buildings;
- New developments will be required to form new street frontage or to bridge existing gaps in the streetscape. Where an access point is required, this should be in the form of a tunnel or arch. Where appropriate or necessary, buildings may however be stepped backwards or forwards, to add visual interest and variety to the town, subject always to this not undermining or interfering with an established streetscape;
- The development of new streets and squares will be encouraged, as well as the opening up of new links between sites or from backlands to the street front;
- Where the plot width of the site is considerably wider than the prevailing plot width along the street, the new building's facade will be required to be broken into visually distinguishable elements, to allow for a more seamless transition between existing and new;
- While intensification of development in town centres is encouraged, excessive height shall not be utilised as the principal mechanism for achieving this. Heights more than 1-storey above adjoining buildings will not normally be accepted. Any application for heights in excess of this shall submit detailed justification and visual assessment of the proposal, including rendered drawings / photomontages and day and sunlight analysis;
- As internal ceiling height in older buildings may not meet modern needs, necessary deviations from the prevailing 'storey line' shall be mitigated by design for example, through the use of fenestration.

3.7.3 Greenfield developments

New developments on greenfield sites may need to establish their own identity, as some may be of such a scale and distance from the core town centre area as to render analysis of existing 'context' meaningless. In this regard, it is considered appropriate to consider two forms of greenfield development – the large-scale planned expansion area and small to medium scaled housing developments.

Large-scale expansion areas (such as an Action Area)

In large scale expansion areas (i.e. developments of 200 units or more) such as the action areas of this plan, the following shall apply:-

- At the outset, a vision for the area shall be established and agreed with the Planning Authority. This shall set out the 'type' of place that is envisaged, the design ethos and the influences on form and design emerging;

⁴ For development standards relating to employment generating development, namely industry, office, small-medium sized business etc please refer to Chapter 6; for shopfront design standards refer to section 6.12.2 Chapter 6

⁵ 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Area's (DoEHLG 2008), Urban Design Manual, 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments' (DoEHLG 2007), 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities' (DoEHLG 2007), Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas (DoEHLG 1998)

- An evaluation of the existing surroundings of the site, as well as future proposals / zoning for lands in proximity, shall be carried out to determine how the new development will integrate with the area and allow for maximum connectivity and permeability;
- The development shall include distinctive and / or landmark type buildings and a series of new spaces that allow for the development of a sense of place and identity;
- New roads / streets shall be laid out in a legible hierarchy from distributor to local roads;
- The retail, employment and community needs of the new area shall be met at a scale appropriate to the development, having regard to the availability of such facilities in the settlement and their proximity to the site in question.

Small-medium scale housing developments

These developments would not normally be of scale that warrants the establishment of a new neighbourhood 'identity', but rather are intended to 'fit' into the existing built fabric of the settlement. These developments will normally be within or adjacent to existing developed areas or at the very edge of the settlement. At such locations, the following shall apply:-

- Visual integration and physical connectivity with the area surrounding the site will be required to be at the fore of any design model;
- While the format and design should complement the prevailing pattern of development in the area and should not degrade the residential or visual amenities already enjoyed in the area, new developments shall meet the highest standards of modern layout and design even if this means a development that is very different from its surroundings;
- Where such a small to medium scale development is to form part of a future larger development, the developer will be required to show possible future development zones / layouts in the area and compliance with the principle set out for large scale developments (above);
- Where such a small to medium scale development is adjoining future development lands or provides the only possible access route to other lands, new roads will be required to be designed to ensure that future access to other lands can be facilitated.

3.7.4 Intensity of development (density)

In urban settlements and particularly in the core area of urban settlements, measures such as 'units per hectare' are problematic as they do not allow meaningful measurement of the quantum of development permissible on mixed-use sites and do not reflect the range in unit sizes that may be proposed. Therefore plot ratio, which is the ratio of development floor area to site area, will apply in such areas. The following standards will apply in this plan:-

Location	Maximum plot ratio
TC / WZ	2.5 (25,000sqm of development per ha)
Action Areas	0.5 (equivalent of 40 units of 125sqm per ha)
R1	0.25 (equivalent of 20 units of 125sqm per ha)

- All planning applications shall provide a table of data showing site area, development area, building footprint, total building floor area and a calculation of plot ratio;
- 'Density' will only be allowed to be generated from land that is capable of being built upon; land which is ultimately unsuitable for such purposes (e.g. due to excessive slope) will not be considered to be part of the density equation even if it forms part of the overall site. Any such areas should be clearly shown on planning applications drawings;
- The density that can be achieved on any site will ultimately depend on compliance with 'qualitative' standards such as fit with surroundings, height, open space provision, adequate privacy, car parking etc and the density ultimately proposed should be the outcome of the design process rather than the starting point;
- In certain circumstances, such as brownfield sites in urban areas or sites in very close proximity to a high quality, reliable public transport network, departures from the maximum density standards specified may be considered, subject to the highest quality of design;
- Where a new 'neighbourhood' centre forms part of a large-scale greenfield expansion area, plot ratio in the neighbourhood hub (i.e. only that area forming an integrated part of the shopping / community facilities provided) may be allowed to increase to 1:1;
- A plot ratio of 0.5:1 or 5,000sqm per hectare would be the equivalent of 40 houses of 125sqm to the hectare or 16 houses to the acre. Expressing the density allowable in terms of sqm per hectare allows

for density to be adjusted where houses are larger or smaller than 125sqm (for example, if all houses were 100sqm, 50/ha would be allowable whereas only 25/ha would be possible if all houses were 200sqm);

- A plot ratio of 0.25:1 or 2,500sqm per hectare would be the equivalent of 20 houses of 125sqm to the hectare or 8 houses to the acre.

3.7.5 Suitability of the proposed use at that location

The uses allowable in any zone are set out in the land use matrix of this plan. However, while a particular use may be allowable, it does not imply that it is desirable or acceptable at all locations;

- In particular, in core town centre areas, active uses will normally be required at ground floor level i.e. retail, commercial, community or leisure uses. All non-residential floors will be required to be designed to be suitable to a range of users. The mix and balance of different type of uses (including retail and retail services) is important to attract people to core town centre areas and to ensure town centres remain the main meeting point for the community. Too many of certain types of outlet can destroy the balance of the town centre, and accordingly the Planning Authority will control the number of bookmakers, off-licences (including off-licences in convenience stores), financial institutions, amusement centres and other uses that can adversely affect the character of a town centre;
- 'Living over the shop' i.e. residential use over ground or first level commercial use will be specifically encouraged by allowing a relaxation in development standards such as car parking and open space;
- At edge of centre locations, even where the plan allows for commercial or mixed uses, these will only be considered where there are either no better sites available in the town centre core or there is some impediment to the development of available town centre core sites and it can be shown that trade or activity will not be drawn away from the core;
- At greenfield locations separated from the town core any significant new residential developments will be required to be accompanied by that quantum of retail, commercial and social / community development necessary to meet the needs of that community.

3.7.6 Transport Accessibility

Departures from the maximum density standards specified may be considered where the site is in very close proximity to a high quality, reliable public transport network (subject to the highest quality of design). New development may also be required to include services and formats that facilitate penetration of public transport into the development / site.

New entry / exit points off the 'main street' will be strictly controlled in order to maintain free movement of vehicles and pedestrians along the street. Where no other option is available, new / expanded entry / exit points will be allowed subject to no adverse traffic congestion or pedestrian safety problems being created. Where new entrances are allowed, they may be required to be so located and designed to allow for access to other sites.

At edge of centre or greenfield locations, good connectivity to the town centre area will be required and where access roads or pedestrian / cycle links do not exist, these will be required to be provided or financed by the developer.

New developments will be required to place a high emphasis on *permeability* and *legibility* of access routes. A permeable layout is one that is well connected and offers a choice of direct routes to all local destinations, thereby encouraging walking and cycling, facilitating public transport penetration and generating higher levels of pedestrian activity, casual social interaction, informal supervision and thus security. A legible development is one that is structured in a way that creates distinctive places and spaces that may be easily 'read' and that are easy to find one's way around. A legible layout is based on designing at a human scale in response to the positive features of a site and how it relates to the wider area, rather than technical demands of traffic or the internal logic of the individual site.

Relaxation in car parking standards in town centres may be considered where

- Good public transport is available;
- The applicant can provide a robust model of car parking usage to show that dual usage will occur and that peak car parking demand at any time of the day / week will always be met;
- The site is located within a parking enforcement zone - in such cases, only the needs of long-term users (e.g. employees, residents) will have to be addressed by the developer.

(Car parking standards are set out in Chapter 5)

3.7.7 Design Quality

Layout

- New urban developments shall be so laid out to have a 'relationship' with the public realm, with windows / balconies overlooking existing or proposed streets / open spaces. Buildings backing onto public areas, whether they are streets or public open spaces, will not be permitted;
- A variety in set backs and building lines shall be provided to provide for visual interest and to create interesting spaces;
- Notwithstanding established separation 'rules' that may be applied to maximise privacy for dwellings (see below), traditional back-to-back rows of 2-storey houses, exactly 22m apart should be avoided and more imaginative layouts and building forms provided, subject always to adequate privacy being provided;
- Layouts shall ensure adequate sunlight and daylight, in accordance with "*Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to best practice*", (BRE 1991);
- Roads should be designed in a hierarchical manner, so that the bulk of traffic moves around distributor roads, with the majority of residences located on lightly trafficked routes (this of course should be balanced with the need to maximise permeability within the development). Roads, footpaths and car parking areas shall be located and designed so that obstructive on street parking or parking on kerbs is not necessary;
- Greenfield developments shall be so laid out as to maximise retention and integration of natural features, such as mature trees, hedgerows, water courses etc into the site layout;
- The maximum size of any greenfield housing development shall not be greater than 100 units where only traditional houses are proposed or 200 units where there is a mix of houses and apartments. Any development exceeding this number shall be broken up into a number of distinct 'estates', even if accessed from a shared road, with materially different architectural styles.

Building design

- New buildings shall be attractive, safe and secure and provide a high quality living environment. In particular, the design of new buildings shall accord with the following requirements:

External appearance

- Good modern architecture with a building language that is varied and forward-looking rather than repetitive and retrospective will be required; however, reference and 'clues' must be drawn from surroundings, particularly in the town centre area;
- Variation in external materials will be expected, again subject to 'fit' with surrounding buildings. Care shall be taken in excessive use of contrasting materials and generally no more than two contrasting materials shall be utilised on any façade;
- The possibility of providing roof mounted communal satellite dishes in town centre commercial and apartment developments will be required to be considered, to avoid demands for numerous individual dishes;
- Where a development takes the form of more than one structure (i.e. a number of apartment blocks or a multitude of individual houses), adequate variety in form, height, materials etc shall be employed, within an overall unified theme, to provide for visual diversity.

Unit sizes & formats

- All planning applications shall be accompanied by a data table setting out number and floor area of all commercial and residential units;
- New apartment developments⁶ will be required to include a range of unit sizes to cater for different housing needs, while new greenfield housing areas shall also include a range of unit types including apartments, duplexes, townhouses, semi – detached and detached houses, including single storey dwellings;
- The minimum size apartment allowed will be 45sqm⁷. No more than 20% of the units in any single development shall be under 50sqm. At least 50% of the units in any development shall be 73sqm or larger;
- The minimum room size and storage space standards set out in *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*' (DoEHLG 2007) shall be adhered to;

⁶ Apartments are residential units in a multi-unit building with grouped or common access and single-storey own door units that form part of a 'duplex' unit

⁷ Measurements are internal wall-to-wall dimensions and apply to units on one floor.

- Single aspect residential units will only be permitted where the main living rooms face south, west or east;
- In the design of new residences, cognisance shall be had of the changing space demand of households over time. For example, apartment formats should allow for either the future subdivision of larger units or the merging of two or more smaller units (either horizontally or vertically) and houses should have attics capable of conversion to habitable rooms;
- In 'edge of centre' or 'out of centre' new residential development, the quantum of apartments allowable will be regulated, as this dense format of development is more suited to urban core locations, where direct access to services is available. In this regard the maximum quantum of floor space that may be devoted to apartments in 'edge-of-centre' locations shall be 40% of the development and 20% in 'out-of-centre' locations.

Privacy

- Residential developments shall be so designed and constructed to ensure maximum privacy for residents;
- Windows and balconies shall be positioned and designed such that direct intrusion into private living areas from other dwelling units or from the public realm is avoided. In this regard, the design of ground levels units with little or no separation from footpaths or other public areas shall be carefully considered and mitigation measures applied;
- A separation of 22m will normally be required at first floor level and above between opposing windows serving private living areas (particularly bedrooms and living rooms). However, this rule shall be applied flexibly: the careful positioning and detailed design of opposing windows can prevent invasion of privacy even with short back-to-back distances. Windows serving halls and landings do not require the same degree of privacy as say balconies and living rooms;
- The degree of 'overlooking' afforded by different windows types shall be considered appropriately; for example, an angled roof light will not have the same impact as a traditional 'flat' window on the same elevation;
- In 'traditional' housing developments, with side-to-side and back-to-back housing, the following standards will be applied for boundary walls;
 - all walls bounding the private (usually rear) garden shall be 2m in height;
 - side boundaries between houses shall be provided at a height of 2m and shall extend from the front façade of the house to the rear wall of the house;
 - All boundaries shall be of solid construction i.e. they form a complete screen barrier with no gaps;
 - Walls bounding any public areas shall be rendered and capped on the outside;
 - If timber boundaries are utilised, they must be bonded and supported by concrete posts. Concrete post and plank walls will not be permitted for any boundary visible from the public domain.

Green issues

- To require all new buildings during the design process to incorporate sustainable technologies capable of achieving a Building Energy Rating in accordance with the provisions S.I. No. 666 of 2006 European Communities (Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulations 2006;
- All new buildings will be required to incorporate water saving measures, as set out in Chapter 8. This may include rain water harvesting for internal service uses. In particular, all new dwellings with individual surface water collection systems will be required to be provided with water butts;
- All buildings will be required to be provided with a suitable area on site for the keeping of waste storage receptacles for mixed dry recyclables, organic waste (composters) and residual waste. In apartment developments, this may be in the form of grouped individual bins in car parking areas or a designated waste building; for individual houses with no side or rear lane from the garden to the public road (e.g. mid terrace houses), this may entail a designated, appropriately designed / screened / enclosed area to the front of the house;
- Consideration should be given in the design of new buildings to the provision of green roofs or walls (i.e. roof gardens / planted balconies etc), to aid in both water absorption but also to contribute positively to the environment and visual amenity.

3.7.8 Open space

- Open space shall be provided in all new developments, the scale of which shall be dependent of the use of the building/site. In commercial developments, this may be limited to a small area utilised by employees for passive use, such as small courtyard area or roof garden. While the provision of such space may not always be possible in built up urban locations, new developments shall endeavour to provide a minimum area equivalent to 5% of the building gross floor area;

- All residential units shall be provided with private open space, either in the form of private balconies, terraces or rear / side gardens. Where necessary to make up for a shortfall in private open space, communal private space, for example, in the form of internal courtyards or roof gardens, shall be provided. Care shall be taken to ensure such spaces receive adequate sunlight and meet the highest safety standards;
- All apartments shall be provided with a minimum area of 30sqm private open space, which shall be at least partially made up of a private balcony or terrace. The front wall of balconies should be made from an opaque material and be at least 1m in height. The minimum balcony / terrace sizes shall be:

Apartment size	Minimum balcony / terrace size
One bedroom	5sqm
Two bedrooms	7sqm
Three bedrooms	9sqm

- Dwellings (including own door duplexes) shall be provided with private open space at a rate of 0.64sqm per 1sqm house floor area (for the first 150sqm), with the minimum garden size allowable being 48sqm;
- Public open space shall be provided in accordance with the standards set out in Chapter 9. In particular,
 - Public open space will normally be required at a rate of 15% of the site area – areas within the site that are not suitable for development or for recreational use must be excluded before the calculation is made;
 - The need to provide public open space in town centre developments may be waived if the development specifically achieves other overriding aims of this Plan, particularly where public amenity space such as a town park or beach is in close proximity;
 - In greenfield developments, a hierarchy of open spaces shall be provided to provide for the different play needs of different age groups and all efforts shall be taken to ensure that all houses are in visual range of one open area;
 - Spaces less than 10m in width or 200sqm in area will not be counted as useable public open space; nor will space that is excessively sloping or otherwise unsuitable for usage.
- New organised sports areas shall be located in proximity to existing or planned community or neighbourhood facilities such as neighbourhood retail centres, schools etc.

3.7.9 Car parking

- 2 off street car parking spaces shall normally be required for all dwelling units over 2 bedrooms in size. For every 5 residential units provided with only 1 space, 1 visitor space shall be provided. Parking for non-residential uses shall be provided in accordance with the standards set out in Chapter 5 except where a deviation from the standard has been justified (in accordance with Chapter 5);
- Communal car parking areas shall be conveniently located for residents and suitably lit at night-time;
- Adequate provision shall be made for visitor and disabled car parking;
- Designated sheltered and secure bicycle parking will be required in apartment developments.

3.7.10 Social & community facilities

In accordance with the Objective CD 3 (Chapter 9), all applications for large-scale residential expansion areas shall include a community facilities audit and where facilities are found to be inadequate, proposals to address these deficiencies will be required.

3.7.11 Infill / backland development in existing housing areas

Many older housing areas were built at densities and in such formats that resulted in particularly large plot sizes. Where opportunities arise for infill or backland type development, the following standards shall apply:

- House improvements, alterations and extensions and appropriate infill residential development in accordance with principles of good design and protection of existing residential amenity will be permitted. While new developments shall have regard to the protection of the residential and architectural amenities of houses in the immediate environs, alternative and contemporary designs shall be encouraged (including alternative materials, heights and building forms), to provide for visual diversity;
- The design of a new house should complement the area. Where an area has an established unique or valuable character worthy of preservation, particular care should be taken to match the style and

materials of the area; however, where an area is a 'mixed-bag' of styles and periods, more flexibility can be applied;

- Particular attention will be required to be paid to the design and location of new windows, in order to ensure that the privacy of either the existing house on the plot or adjacent houses is not diminished;
- Gable walls abutting public areas (e.g. footpaths, car parking areas and open spaces) will not be permitted and a minimum separation of 0.9m will be required between the house gable and the side wall of the plot;
- Where the access route to a proposed development site is proposed to run alongside the external walls of the existing dwelling on the development plot or the external walls of a dwelling on an adjoining plot, there must be adequate separation available to facilitate the required driveway (normally 3m) and allow a 0.5m 'buffer' area alongside any existing dwelling. Any deviation from this standard must be evaluated on traffic safety and residential amenity grounds;
- The re-design of access and car parking arrangements for the existing dwelling on the plot must be clearly detailed, and permission included for same where required; developments accessed from a long narrow driveway must provide for the turning of vehicles within the site;
- Cognisance will be required to be taken of the potential of adjacent rear / side plots to be developed in a similar manner and separation between site boundaries, location of windows etc must not prejudice development options on the adjacent plot;
- New apartment developments dependent on access through existing established areas of predominantly single family homes, will not be permitted.

3.7.12 Sub-division of dwellings

In established areas of predominantly single family homes, the subdivision of a dwelling into apartments or bedsits will generally not be permitted, except in exceptional circumstances. Where sub-division is permissible, normal qualitative standards with regard to internal space, private open space, privacy and car parking will be required to be complied with.

3.7.13 House extensions

The construction of extensions to existing houses will be encouraged generally as it usually provides a less resource intensive method of expanding living space than building a new structure. Given the range of site layouts prevailing, it is not possible to set out a set of 'rules' that can be applied to all extensions, but the following basic principles shall be applied:

- The extension should be sensitive to the existing dwelling and should not adversely distort the scale or mass of the structure;
- The extension shall not provide for new overlooking of the private area of an adjacent residence where no such overlooking previously existed;
- In an existing developed area, where a degree of overlooking is already present, the new extension must not significantly increase overlooking possibilities. If for example a two-storey dwelling already directly overlooks a neighbour's rear garden, a third storey extension with the same view will normally be considered acceptable;
- New extensions should not overshadow adjacent dwellings to the degree that a significant decrease in day or sunlight entering into the house comes about. In this regard, extensions directly abutting property boundaries should be avoided;
- While the form, size and appearance of an extension should complement the area, unless the area has an established unique or valuable character worthy of preservation, a flexible approach will be taken to the assessment of alternative design concepts.

3.7.14 Independent living units ('Granny-flats')

A 'granny flat' or 'independent living unit' is a separate living unit on an existing house site, used to accommodate a member of the immediate family, often an elderly parent, for a temporary period. The construction or conversion of part of an existing dwelling into a 'family flat' will only be permitted where the development complies with the following requirements:

- The need for the unit has been justified and is for the use of a close family member;
- The unit forms an integrated part of the structure of the main house – in exceptional circumstances, the conversion of an existing detached garage / store etc may be considered subject to the structure being in very close proximity to the main house;
- The unit is modest in size and in particular, it shall not exceed 45sqm and shall not have more than 1 bedroom;
- The unit shall not be sold or let as an independent living unit and the existing garden shall not be sub-divided;
- The structure must be capable of being functionally re-integrated into the main house when its usefulness has ceased. Permission for such units shall be restricted to a period of 7 years, after

which it must revert to a use ancillary to the main house (e.g. garage, store, hobby room) unless permission has been secured for its continuation as an independent unit for another period.

3.7.15 Temporary residential structures

Temporary residential structures (e.g. mobile homes, caravans, portacabins etc) form a haphazard and substandard form of residential accommodation and generally have poor aesthetic value and can detract from the overall appearance of an area. Therefore permission will generally not be granted for such structures.

3.7.16 Naming of developments

It shall be a condition of a planning permission for new housing schemes that the developer will submit a scheme for the naming and numbering of the estate prior to the commencement of the development. The naming of housing estates shall reflect in as far as possible the local context in which it is located. The names of new estates in as far as possible should be in bilingual format or in Irish alone. On approval of the naming of the scheme, the developer will be required to provide nameplates and numbers, as required by the Council.

3.7.17 Taking in charge

New developments shall be taken in charge in accordance with the 'Taking in Charge Policy' of Wicklow County Council (2010), as may be varied over the life of the plan.

3.7.18 Entrances to developments

The name of the development shall be clearly identified at the entrance. Measures shall be put in place to ensure parking is restricted for sufficient distance at the start of the development to eliminate potential traffic hazard on the public road. Gated developments will not be permitted, except in exceptional circumstances.

3.7.19 Flood routing

Chapter 8 of this plan specifically deals with the assessment of flood risk and the techniques to be applied to avoid or minimise flood risk. One of these methods is the manipulation of the layout and design of a development to provide flood 'routes' i.e. in the event of surface water sewers, or a nearby culverted stream failing, the development shall be so laid out that the resultant flood waters can take a natural route through the site without having to flow through people's homes.