

Chapter 9

Social & Community Infrastructure, Recreation and Amenity.

9.1 Introduction

The provision of accessible social and community infrastructure contributes to the quality of life for all and it is important that such facilities also be provided in tandem with the development of new dwellings and neighbourhoods. The increased emphasis on the provision of social and community infrastructure has been emphasised by the DoEHLG through the production of guidance documents relating to childcare, school provision and urban design, which have in turn been further expanded upon, through publications and work carried out by the Planning and Community & Enterprise Sections of Wicklow County Council.

9.2 Community Development

The term “community development” refers to a complex and broad range of actions and measures involving a wide range of practitioners and bodies with the common aim of improving various aspects of local communities. There are however two key strands to the development of “sustainable communities”;

- (1) Facilitating communities in developing the skills, capacities and projects needed to enable them to have a greater say in the management of their own futures;
- (2) Facilitating access to the goods, services and power structure within society for all, and particularly for those that are marginalised and powerless (social inclusion).

Land use planning plays the following roles in delivering these aims:-

- (1) Facilitating the delivery of community projects, through
 - the reservation of land for community uses in the plan area;
 - managing the expansion of residential development commensurate with the community facilities available;
 - requiring the delivery of new community facilities as part of development proposals;
 - co-operating with other services providers in the delivery of new facilities.
- (2) Facilitating improved physical access to goods and services through
 - directing new facilities to suitable locations and in particular, to the locations where people live or locations that are easily accessible by public transport, cycle or foot;
 - requiring all new facilities to be accessible and useable by all.
- (3) Facilitating an overall improvement in the quality of the built environment, which contributes substantially to our perception of places and communities.

9.2.1 Community Development Objectives

- CD1** To ensure sufficient zoned land is available to meet the community needs of the projected population of the plan area over the plan period.
- CD2** The Council will promote and facilitate the delivery of community facilities in accordance with the Hierarchy Model of community facilities prepared under Strand 3 of the Development Levy Scheme (under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts).
- CD3** Unless otherwise specified by the Planning Authority, new significant residential developments¹⁸ will be required to carry out a social infrastructure audit, to determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services.

9.3 Social infrastructure

The provision of ‘social infrastructure’, in the form of buildings, facilities, clubs and the means of accessing and using services, is necessary for the development of sustainable communities. The purpose of such infrastructure is both to provide a service and also to promote community cohesion and community identity and in doing so combat social isolation and alienation. A wide variety of facilities are required in order to have a functioning and developing society, and one’s use of facilities will dependant on a range of factors including age, family structure and physical ability. Essentially there are four broad categories of facilities:-

¹⁸ This is determined to be any application that would increase the housing stock in a settlement by more than 10%

- (1) Those providing education and development, including primary, secondary and third level schools and colleges and vocational or training centres (Montessori's and pre-schools are addressed under 'childcare');
- (2) Those providing physical and mental care and development, such as health services, nursing homes, childcare and pre-schools;
- (3) Leisure and recreational facilities including community / youth centres, indoor halls, dance / gymnastic studios, playing pitches, courts etc;
- (4) Cultural facilities, such as arts centres, theatres, libraries and places of public worship and burial grounds etc.

9.3.1 Education & Development

Education and training have a key role to play in all three dimensions of 'sustainable development' - environmental, economic and social. It is widely recognised as a key component of a competitive economy and a vibrant society.

The Council seeks to create an environment in which everyone can develop to their full potential to enable them to participate in and contribute to all aspects of social, economic and cultural life.

Primary education

The projected population in Arklow by 2022 is approximately 23,000 persons. There are currently six primary schools in Arklow. The Department of Education advises that 12% of the population at any time is of primary school going age. The existing primary schools have approximately 68 classrooms and while some schools have temporary classrooms on their permanent sites, it is necessary to note that the Gaelscoil is on a temporary site. For the purpose of this analysis, it is therefore taken that there are only 59 'permanent' classrooms in the settlement. In accordance with the Department of Education's methodology, a population of 23,000 persons will generate a demand for 98 primary classrooms. Therefore there will be a shortfall of 39 classrooms in the settlement as the population grows up to 2022.

This plan will therefore designate lands for the future development of three additional primary schools (two 16-classroom schools and one 8-classroom school) at Tinahask (AA1), Kilbride (AA3) and on the Coolgreeney Road. These locations are all proximate to existing and future residential development and would allow for a geographical spread of schools through the town.

Secondary education

There are currently four post primary schools in Arklow, with a 2009/2010 with an attendance of 1,388 students. The Department of Education estimates that 8% of the population at any time is of secondary school going age and it is clear given the current population of Arklow and its immediate environs of c. 14,000 that these schools serve a wider area than the town itself, serving an approximate population of 17,500 persons. This would correlate to the catchment of Arklow secondary schools that would include the south Wicklow area up to Aughrim, Annacurragh and parts of Tinahely and also parts of Avoca.

Assuming this trend continues into the future, provision should be made for secondary school places for a catchment area of c. 28,000 up to 2022, which is c. 2,250 school places.

In this regard, this plan will make provision for the reservation of lands for two new secondary schools, at Tinahask (AA1) and Kilbride (AA2).

Third level education

There are no third level institutes operating in Arklow although adult education services are provided by the VEC. While it is intended that the established third level institute in Wicklow Town will develop at the principle third level institute in the County, this plan will give specific encouragement to the development of third level/higher training in conjunction with high technology development, particularly in Action Area 2.

9.3.2 Education objectives

- ED1** To co-operate with the Department of Education & Skills, the Vocational Education Committee for Co.Wicklow and school management Boards in the provision of school places.
- ED2** Where lands are zoned for educational use, to promote and facilitate the development of facilities that provide for linkages between schools types. For example, particular encouragement will be given to primary and secondary school campuses, the linking of pre-school services with primary schools and the linking of secondary schools with vocational training facilities.
- ED3** Where lands are zoned for employment use, to promote and facilitate the development of employment training facilities (privately and/or publicly funded).

- ED4** Where practicable, education, community, recreational and open space facilities shall be clustered. However schools shall continue to make provision for their own recreational facilities as appropriate.
- ED5** To promote the provision of dedicated facilities for adult and community education in recognition of the growing demand for life-long learning opportunities and the perceived shortage of such facilities at present.
- ED6** To promote the use of education facilities after school hours / weekends for other community and non-school purposes, where possible.

9.4 Health, Care & Development facilities

9.4.1 Health

A number of public, voluntary and private agencies are responsible for the provision of healthcare facilities within the plan area, with the Health Services Executive being the primary agency responsible for delivering health and personal social services.

9.4.2 Health Objectives

HC1 To facilitate the development of healthcare uses at suitable locations, in liaison with the appropriate health authorities. Health facilities will be considered on appropriately zoned lands subject to:

- The location is readily accessible to those availing of the service, with a particular presumption for facilities close to services. Locations distant of services will not generally be considered except where it can be shown that the nature of the facility is such that it demands such a location;
- The location is generally accessible by means other than private car, in particular by public transport services, or by walking / cycling;
- The location is accessible to those with disabilities.

HC2 To support the establishment of centres of medical excellence, hospices, respite care facilities or facilities for those with long term illness.

HC3 To allow for the change of use of all or part of an existing dwelling in a residential zone to health care usage, subject to normal planning considerations, paying particular regard to car parking availability, impacts on traffic flow and obstruction and impacts on residential amenities.

9.5 Residential & Day Care facilities

Having regard to the 'ageing' of the Irish population, in addition to health care facilities, there is a growing need for the provision of specific residential and day care facilities for the elderly. The Council recognises that the provision of residential / day care and nursing homes is an essential community requirement within the plan area.

A number of agencies are active in the plan area providing residential and day care services to those with physical or intellectual disabilities. The Council recognises the special services provided by these bodies and aims to facilitate them wherever possible.

Residential and day care facilities can take many forms, ranging from day time activities / services to care / nursing homes, to assisted living units to independent (but supervised) living units and it is not therefore always possible to craft policies that will address all development types. All applications for development will be considered on their merits with particular regard to their location and the type of service being provided.

9.5.1 Residential & Day Care Objectives

NH1 To encourage the development and improvement of new and existing residential and day care facilities in appropriate locations located close to shops and other community facilities required by the occupants and easily accessible to visitors, staff and servicing traffic.

NH2 'Retirement villages', made up of a number of independent housing units, with limited / no on site care facilities will be required to locate on residentially zoned lands.

NH3 Edge of centre locations at the fringe of plan area (eg AG zone) will only be considered for residential or day care facilities where:

- There are good vehicle and pedestrian linkages available to town facilities;
- The site is within the built 'envelope' of the settlement and would not comprise of an isolated, stand alone development;

- The design and scale of the facility is reflective of the semi rural location.

9.6 Childcare and preschool facilities

The provision of childcare and preschool facilities is recognised by the Council as a key piece of social infrastructure enabling people to play a more active role in society, particularly in accessing employment and education. Childcare services range from childminding a small number of children in a private home, to pre-schools and crèches. A large number of childcare facilities now provide a full range of services from caring for newborns to pre-school and Montessori type education. The DoEHLG guidelines, on childcare require the provision of 20 childcare places for every new 75 housing units granted permission.

9.6.1 Childcare Objectives

CC1 To facilitate the provision of childcare in a manner, which is compatible with land-use and transportation objectives and adheres to the principles of sustainable development.

CC2 To require the provision of childcare facilities in all residential developments comprising 75 houses or more (including local authority and social housing schemes). In accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government guidelines, childcare places shall be provided at a ratio of 20 places per 75 residential units, having regard to cumulative effects of permitted development, (unless it can be demonstrated that having regard to the existing geographic distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area that this level of childcare facilities is not required). Without substantial cause, it is the policy of the Council not to allow a change of use of these premises within five years.

9.7 Leisure & Recreational Facilities

The types of leisure and recreational facilities provided/required vary greatly from person to person ranging from active to passive activities. The Council recognises this fact and aims to provide for adequate leisure and recreational facilities throughout the plan area, which are capable of meeting the requirements of the resident population.

9.7.1 Children's Play Facilities

In addition to childcare facilities, pre-schools and after school services (dealt with previously) children also require opportunities to socialise, play and exercise. Wicklow County Council through the Office of Community & Enterprise has responded to this need by preparing a Play Policy for County Wicklow. The purpose of the Play Policy is to change the culture of thinking on play and provide more opportunities for children to play. The policy makes a clear commitment to play as a right and to ensuring that children and their needs are considered when it comes to policy making and that provision is made to meet their needs. In the plan area there are a number of play-grounds which have been developed in recent years by the Town Council, there is a large playground at Peters Place, and a smaller playground at the South Green (illustrated on map 9.01).

9.7.2 Objectives

- CP1** To facilitate opportunities for play and support the implementation of the County Council Play Policy and its objectives, including the collection of development levies.
- CP2** In all new residential development in excess of 75 units, the developer shall provide, in the residential public open space area, a dedicated children's play zone, of a type and with such features to be determined following consultation the Local Authority.
- CP3** All new estates, streets, open spaces/parks and community facilities shall be designed with the needs and safety of children as a priority.
- CP4** Subject to safety considerations, natural features (trees, streams etc) shall be retained in new developments.

9.7.3 Facilities for Teenagers & Young Adults

Many teenagers and young adults feel disenfranchised in society, particularly with regard to the lack of facilities provided specifically to meet their needs. These youths are too old for playgrounds and while many are active in sports clubs, there is still a lack of facilities for socialising and relaxation. Depending on the age, there are a number of facilities that are considered attractive to teenagers and young adults including Mixed Use Games Areas (MUGAs), which would typically provide a hard surfaced area allowing for basketball and other hard court sports, skate parks, youth clubs and Internet cafes. Arklow Town

Council has developed a skateboard/bmx park in the Seaview area which is conveniently located beside existing recreational facilities.

9.7.3.1 Objectives

- TY1** In accordance with Objective CD3, where a deficiency in facilities for teenagers / young adults is identified in an area, the developer of any significant new residential estate shall submit proposals to address the deficiency.
- TY2** All new neighbourhood parks or active open space zones shall include a MUGA of a size and nature to be following consultation with the Local Authority.
- TY3** New community buildings / facilities shall be designed to facilitate the operation of youth clubs and youth services (see Objective CC2 to follow).

9.8 Community centres

Community centres provide an important function for all groups in society, by providing for an indoor space for active recreation and for meetings / club use. While many 'outdoor' sports clubs also have indoor spaces, these may not be suitable for non-sport activities such as support group meetings, bridge clubs, mother-and-baby groups etc. In Ireland there is a particular dependence on the use of function rooms in hotels and public houses for club or meeting use, which are similarly not often ideal in design or size.

9.8.1 Objectives

- CC1** In accordance with Objective CD3, where a deficiency in indoor community space is identified in an area, the developer of any significant new residential estate shall submit proposals to address the deficiency.
- CC2** New community buildings / facilities shall be designed to facilitate a wide range of uses including active uses (e.g. basketball, badminton, gymnastics / dance, martial arts etc) and meeting / club use.

9.9 Sport facilities

In addition to the Play Policy, Wicklow County Council has also developed a Sports & Recreation Policy. This policy recognises the importance that sport and recreation contributes to the quality of life of individuals, communities and the County as a whole. It provides a strategic approach, which includes the identification of deficiencies, needs and priorities and the inclusion of underpinning principles of social inclusion and sustainable development framework. Its implementation will be carried out in partnership and co-operation, to enable all residents of the plan area to have equal access to sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for participating in the sport or recreation of their choice.

9.9.1 Objectives

- SR1** To contribute to the improvement of the health and well being of the inhabitants of the plan area and to facilitate participation in sport and recreation.
- SR2** To be guided by the Sports & Recreation Policy in the provision and expansion of sport and recreation opportunities in the plan area. In addition the policy will inform the development levy scheme for community facilities, in particular the provision of sport and recreation facilities.
- SR3** Facilities for sports shall normally be located close to large populations, on designated Active Open Space land. All efforts will be required to be made to locate new sports facilities close to existing community facilities, schools or areas of dense residential development. The Council may consider providing sites for these purposes or may be prepared to make financial or other assistance available, subject to reasonable access being made available to the public and to reasonable safeguards for the continued use of the land as open space.
- SR4** The redevelopment for alternative uses of open space and recreational lands whether owned by private recreational clubs or publicly owned, will normally be resisted by the Council unless suitable alternative recreational facilities can be provided in a convenient location.
- SR5** The development of new sports or active open space zones shall be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure including car parking and changing rooms.

9.10 Cultural Facilities

Cultural facilities are places for the creation, production and dissemination of culture and include buildings and cultural sites.

9.10.1 Arts

The Arts create opportunities for the cultural development of all the community. In addition it offers all the community, young, old and minority groups, a creative outlet and an alternative to sport and active recreation.

In order to provide for the existing and future development of the Arts in County Wicklow the Council has developed the Wicklow County Arts Plan. A number of objectives and actions have been identified in the Arts Development Plan and these will be reflected in increased resources and support to the arts community from Wicklow Local Authorities, Statutory Agencies, Local Development Agencies, the private sector and the wider community.

9.10.2 Libraries

The purpose of the public library is to support the community's needs for education, information, recreation, arts and culture. The public library is a publicly funded resource providing a cost-effective means to equity of access. The library is regarded as a service that promotes social inclusion in providing public access to the Information Society. The library is a means to ensure support for literacy, independent learning and distance education.

9.10.3 Places of worship and burial

In many communities, churches, burial grounds and other places of worship form a focal point for the local population and often provide not only a religious service, but also meeting places and other cultural services.

9.10.4 Objectives

- CA1** To maximise the opportunities for the Arts and support the implementation of the Wicklow County Arts Plan and its policies.
- CA2** To encourage and support the creation and display of works of art in public areas, including appropriate locations within the streetscape, provided no unacceptable environmental, amenity; traffic or other problems are created.
- CA3** To support the implementation of the Wicklow Library Development Plan.
- CA4** To facilitate the development of new, improved or expanded places of worship and burial grounds at appropriate locations in the plan area, where the demand for the facility has been demonstrated.

9.11 Parks and Public Open Spaces-Green networks

Open Spaces are vital part of the urban environment. Open space amenities create benefits not only for the enhancement of the quality of life of residential areas but also provide opportunities for recreational activities, ecological and environmental preservation. The Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of a number of open spaces and amenity areas in Arklow. The planning process plays a vital role in ensuring that existing parks and open spaces are protected and enhanced. In addition it is key to the provision of appropriate, high quality additional parks and open spaces to cater for increased demand as new residential areas are created and the population increases. Map 9.01 indicates the public open spaces and green networks that indicate the natural amenity of the town.

Open space can take a number of forms, with some use types overlapping

- (1) Private open space – open space owned and / or dedicated to use of single individuals or small groups for example private gardens, terraces, yards, balconies or shared private spaces in apartment developments;

- (2) Residential open space – space generally provided in housing developments, that is public in the sense that there are no barriers to access, but its function is to provide for passive and active use by the residents of that development;
- (3) Public open space – space that is open to general public use, which can be further divided into active and passive public open space:
Passive POS – squares and civic spaces, picnic areas, walkways, parks etc
Active POS – playing fields, hard surfaced courts, MUGAs;
- (4) An emerging new form of open space is the use of land for allotments. Allotment gardens allow a number of people to cultivate their own vegetables in individual plots/land parcels on lands owned by another private individual or body. The individual size of a plot/parcel ranges between 200-400sqm and often the plots include a shed for tools and shelter. The individual gardeners are usually organised in an allotment association which leases the land from the owner who may be a public, private or ecclesiastical entity, provided that it is only used for gardening (i.e. growing vegetables, fruits and flowers), but not for residential purposes.

As the town expands, there will be a clear need for additional open space, particularly for sports facilities. These needs will be provided for in the action areas set out in this plan, as these are the areas of planned residential expansion and are conveniently located to the existing population. In accordance with the County play policy a town of 23,000 persons would require 55.0 ha of public open space, of which 41 ha is needed for active sports uses. In this regard there is approximately 26ha of active open space in the town¹⁹ and this plan shall make provision to increase this by a minimum of 15ha. Additional areas of passive open space are provided throughout the plan area.

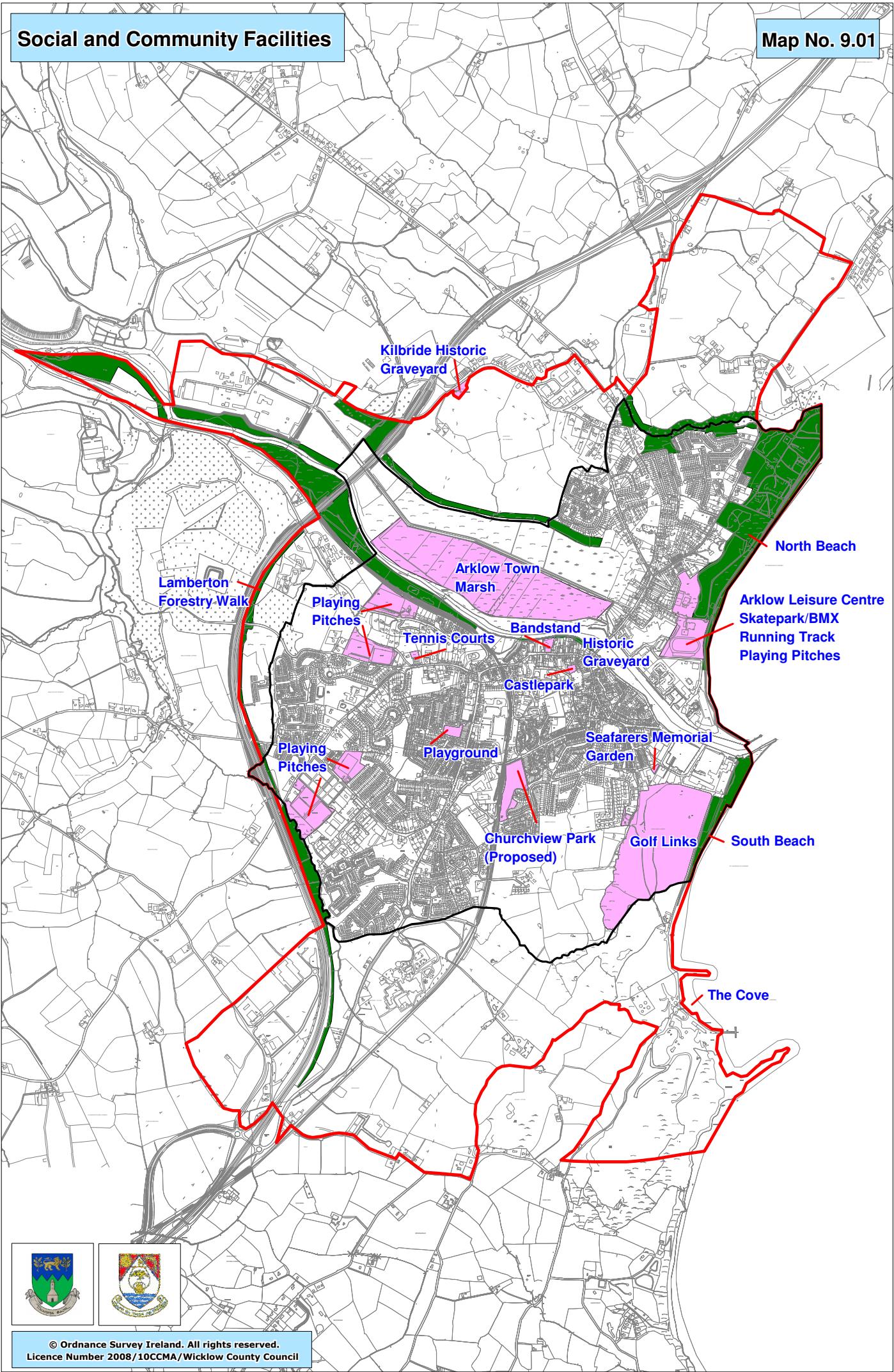
9.11.1 Open space objectives

- OS1** To encourage the provision of open space for both passive and recreation to serve the needs of the plan area's existing and future population concurrent with new residential development.
- OS2** To develop and facilitate the provision of public open space generally in accordance with "Sustainable Residential development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DOEHLG 2009).
- OS3** Prohibit non-community uses on areas of lands permitted or designated as public open space in existing residential developments.
- OS4** To facilitate and encourage a series of high quality open spaces throughout the town, preferably as part of a larger linked network that is available to all ages and accessible to everyone, including people with mobility impairments.
- OS5** To retain open space lands with established recreational uses.
- OS6** To preserve, manage and maintain to a high standard the existing parks and open spaces in the town.
- OS7** To facilitate the development of allotments of an appropriate scale on lands which meet the following criteria:-
 - Lands situated within or adjacent to the edge of plan area;
 - Lands that are easily accessible to the residents of the plan area;
 - Where an adequate water supply can be provided;
 - Where adequate parking facilities can be provided.
- OS8** To reserve lands at Churchview (c. 3ha) for a town park, which will include areas for both sports and activities (such as a MUGA) and passive enjoyment.

¹⁹ This does not include the 31.39 ha of land which are operated by Arklow Golf Club.

Social and Community Facilities

Map No. 9.01



9.12 Development Management standards

9.12.1 Community Facilities

- New community facilities shall be conveniently located and accessible by both residents of the development and others that have reason to use the facility. They should be well integrated with pedestrian and cycle routes and where they serve a wider community, located on or close to a quality public transport route;
- Community facilities must be accessible to all members of society, including those with disabilities.

9.12.2 Childcare

- The location and design of new childcare facilities shall generally in accordance with the guidance set out the 'Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG) and the 'Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996 & 1997' and any other relevant statutory guidelines which may issue during the life of this Plan;
- As a general rule 20 childcare spaces shall be provided for every 75 dwelling units. A childcare facility within a residential development shall be sited at or near the entrance/exit to the proposed development so as to allow for ease of access, drop off/pick up points;
- Where a large development (or a development in conjunction with other developments in an Action Plan area) comprises more than 75 units, a single large childcare facility capable of serving all proposed units (and future units) may be permissible, subject to a ceiling of 100 places (full and part time);
- The internal layout and design of proposed childcare facilities should allow, where possible, for the dual usage of the proposed facility e.g. night time community uses;
- All applications for a childcare facility shall be accompanied by the following information in addition to those set out in the policies set out for childcare developments:
 - The need for the proposed development;
 - The nature of the facility e.g. full day care, sessional care, after school care;
 - Number and ages of children to be catered for;
 - Compliance with standards for parking, traffic impacts and turning areas;
 - Proximity to public transport/areas of employment;
 - Hours of operation;
 - Open space provision and measures for management of same;
 - Impact on residential amenity.
- Childcare facilities will be required to be provided in large-scale employment zones developments. Any application for employment development with in excess of 100 employees shall include a childcare facility unless it can be shown, with regard to the demographic of the workforce or the availability of existing facilities in the immediate area that no such service is necessary.

9.12.3 Education

Primary & secondary schools

While the location, layout and design of new public primary and secondary schools shall generally be determined by the Department of Education, new schools shall be required to comply with the following criteria:

- Sites shall be well serviced by road infrastructure and in particular, shall be on or adjacent to a road network capable of accommodating existing or future public transport facilities;
- Complete foot and cycleways shall be available to the site from the residential areas that are located in the school catchment;
- Pedestrian crossings of the existing / new road network serving the site shall be provided as may be required;
- Adequate car, bicycle and bus parking shall be provided on site, including convenient short term set down area;
- Building design shall meet the highest standard possible with regard to architectural quality, visual integration with the area and minimisation of impacts on adjoining properties or residences;
- The layout and design of the school shall facilitate possible out of school hours use by other bodies / the community.

Temporary school structures

- While certain exemptions apply for temporary classrooms at school sites, where the exemptions are not applicable, positive consideration will be given for temporary structure subject to the following controls:
 - permission shall be granted on a temporary basis for a period of a maximum of 5 years;
 - the development of temporary classroom developments shall not impede traffic movements and circulation within the school premises or significantly reduce open space;
 - the structures shall be of a high design quality and shall be painted or coloured to integrate with any existing school structure.

9.12.4 Nursing home developments

- Nursing home developments and facilities for the elderly shall be located close to local amenities and where adequate pedestrian infrastructure has been or is capable of being provided;
- Individual/independent housing units proposed as part of a nursing home / retirement village shall generally be held in single ownership with the overall site, with lease agreements to the occupants. Where for the viability of the project the sale of units required, this shall be strictly only on the basis of a legal agreement specifying that the units shall at all times be utilised only for accommodation for the elderly / those in need of nursing home care;
- Developments comprising of a number of independent dwellings shall comply with the housing layout and design standards set out in this plan. Deviations from the density, car parking and open space may be considered where this can be suitably justified having regard to the needs of the future residents;
- Facilities shall be so laid and designed to meet standards and obligations specified in Nursing Homes (Care and Welfare) Regulations, (1993) and the Building Regulations, in particular Part M.

9.12.5 Care Facilities

- In accordance with the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, change of use from residential to a care facility for more than six persons with an intellectual or physical disability or mental illness requires planning permission;
- Applications for permission for change of use to care facility or a new care facility shall be evaluated against the following criteria:
 - care facilities shall be located close to local amenities and where adequate pedestrian infrastructure has been or is capable of being provided;
 - adequate provision shall be made for car parking and open space facilities.

9.12.6 Accessibility

- In considering access for those with a disability, the Council will adhere to the criteria set out in the Building Regulations, 1997, (or as subsequently amended), and the documents "Access for the Disabled" (Nos. 1 to 3) published by the National Rehabilitation Board;
- New dwellings should be designed in order to ensure that they are visitable and accessible by people with disabilities or mobility impairments. Design considerations shall include:-
 - the provision of a level gently sloped or ramp approach access to the dwelling from the entrance point to the site or from a suitable parking spot.
 - a level access at one entry point to the dwelling.
 - a front door and living room door wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.
 - circulation space for a wheel chair at entry storey.
 - a ground floor toilet located so as to be usable by wheelchair users and other people with disabilities or mobility impairments.

9.12.7 Open Space

These standards will apply to all new residential developments and should be read in conjunction with Chapters 3 of this plan.

Active open spaces

- In accordance with the Council's Active Open Space Policy, active open space shall be required as a rate of 2.4ha per 1,000 population divided into
 - 1.6ha outdoor play space (pitches, courts, sports grounds)
 - 0.6ha casual play spaces (parks)
 - 0.2ha equipped play space (playgrounds and MUGAs)

Any application or Action Area Plan, which would result in a resident population of 1,000 or more, compliance with this standard will be required.

Sports grounds

- New organised sports areas shall be located in proximity to existing or planned community or neighbourhood facilities such as neighbourhood retail centres, schools etc and opportunities for the sharing of facilities, including changing rooms shall be explored and exploited;
- Where shared indoor facilities are not available, new sports facilities shall be accompanied by a building of scale commensurate with the size and nature of the sports facility for indoor changing and administration;
- Sports areas should be located such that a suitable separation from residential properties is provided, in order to limit disturbance from noise and light
- Sports facilities shall be provided with access to suitable roads and car parking facilities shall be required on site;
- Proposals for the development floodlighting for playing fields/pitches shall be accompanied by details of external lighting schemes. All lighting shall comply or be so altered to comply with the *Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution* (Institute of Lighting Engineers, 2000).

Neighbourhood Parks

- Neighbourhood parks should be ideally located within 800 metres of the population served;
- While not specifically for the purpose of sport or organised recreation, all parks shall be so laid out, contoured and landscaped to allow for walking, jogging, cycling and casual play;
- Neighbourhood parks may be provided as part of a number of housing developments, in part delivery of residential open space requirements (see below).

Equipped play spaces

- The siting and location of playgrounds / mixed use games areas (MUGAs) shall take account of the surrounding environment and be sited in order to ensure passive surveillance by neighbouring residential properties;
- The layout and positioning of apparatus shall exploit existing landscape features to provide adequate shade and shelter from wind for users and create visual harmony with the surrounding area;
- Play equipment shall generally be located in accordance with the following standards:
 - metres from the edge of a building or major structure;
 - 20 metres from adjoining residential property lines, the edge of any local road or car park pavement area;
 - 30 metres from distributor road pavements (if proposed to be closer, a perimeter fence will be required);
 - 20 metres from hazards such storm water drains, bike tracks and playing fields.

Allotments

Proposals for the development of allotments shall be evaluated against the following criteria:

- the suitability of the site location vis-à-vis the location of the population served – sites in or at the edge of the plan area will be preferred;
- the adequacy of the public road serving the site;
- the adequacy of car parking;
- the adequacy of water supplies;
- the suitability of the land to absorb the somewhat haphazard appearance of allotments, which often include randomly positioned sheds, tunnels and greenhouses.

Residential public open space

- Public open space in residential developments shall be provided in accordance with the following standards:-
 - 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;
 - Where a public park is being provided by the same developer (or by a group of developers in a combined Action Area) in close proximity to the residential development site, the public open space provided on site may be reduced to 7.5% of the residential site area, with the remainder being made up in the park;
 - The need to provide public open space in town centre developments may be waived, particularly where public amenity space such as a town park or beach is in close proximity;
 - Open spaces shall be attractively landscaped through the use of both hard and soft landscaping where appropriate. Open spaces should incorporate existing features and encourage pedestrian use by suitable paving;

- in greenfield developments, subject to the size of the site, a hierarchy of open spaces shall be provided to provide for the different play needs of different age groups. In this regard, all developments shall aim to include:
 - at least one, flat space with dimensions on not less than 20m x 40m, suitable for ball games (trees should only be planted around the perimeter)
 - a number of smaller spaces immediately adjacent to dwellings, with interesting contours and natural features, suitable for play activities of younger children.
- The layout and orientation of residential developments should maximize the potential for passive surveillance of open spaces - all efforts shall be taken to ensure that all houses are in visual range of one open area.

Private open spaces - gardens, terraces, balconies

- 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 shortfall in genuinely private 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 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, with the minimum garden size allowable being 48sqm;
- In certain development circumstances, the open space requirements, as set out above are not appropriate to special housing needs categories, including the special needs requirements of certain social and affordable housing categories, such as the elderly and disabled. The open space requirements to be provided for certain special needs housing developments, (including social and affordable housing) shall have regard and be appropriate to, the special needs of those to be accommodated in any development.

Landscaping

Tree planting can be used to complement hard-landscapes in high-density / urban developments and reinforce and enhance existing natural features and integrate development with surrounding landscape. A landscaping plan shall be designed as an integral part of all new residential estates and shall be submitted with the planning application. This plan shall highlight existing landscape features to be retained and detail new landscaping including species, number, size and location. The plan should put an emphasis on the use of native species where possible.