

## LEVEL 5 TOWN PLANS

### Ashford, Aughrim, Baltinglass, Carnew, Dunlavin, Tinahely

This volume of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016 comprises land use plans for Level 5 towns in the County.

The purpose of these plans is to put in place a structure that will guide the future sustainable development of each settlement. These plans, in conjunction with the County Development Plan will inform and manage the future development of the town.

The aim of these plans is to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of each settlement, and to enhance and facilitate the balancing of economic, social and environmental infrastructure in order to maintain and develop a high quality of life without compromising the protection of the environment and the needs of future generations.

Level 5 settlements in County Wicklow are the smaller towns of the County that provide important economic and social services to their populations and immediate hinterland. Such towns normally have a good range of infrastructural services and are suited to accommodating urban generated housing demand.

In the past, Local Area Plans would have been adopted for most Level 5 towns. However, changes to the Planning Act in 2010 allow the Planning Authority to incorporate development plans for towns with a population of less 5,000 into the County Development Plan. This County Development Plan therefore includes the development plans for **Ashford, Aughrim, Baltinglass, Carnew, Dunlavin, and Tinahely**, while Local Area Plans are being maintained for **Kilcoole** (the plan for Kilcoole having been combined with the Greystones – Delgany LAP in 2013) and **Rathdrum**, given their planned population targets and / or their acknowledged higher order function in the settlement hierarchy. The development plan for the town of Enniskerry previously formed part of the County Development Plan but has been subsumed into the Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan.

All efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in Town Plans, unless it is considered necessary to emphasise assets or restate objectives that have particular relevance and importance to that town. Development standards, retail strategies etc that are included in the County Development Plan shall not be repeated. Any specific policies / objectives or development standards required for a particular town will be stated as precisely that, and in all cases will be consistent with the County Development Plan. Thus development standards will be the same across the entire County, and any differences for specific settlements would be clear and transparent, to both those adopting the plans, and the general public alike.

Furthermore, Town Plans shall only include objectives that are settlement specific and achievable, and avoid those that are aspirational or are best dealt with in the annual budget, road works programme, etc. The role of land use plan is to put in place framework within which development can occur, but does not decide what works actually get done by either private individuals or public bodies. The delivery of objectives will be

determined by the initiation of private development or by the allocation of public funding through the annual budgetary process, which is a separate process to any land use plan.

Therefore this volume shall take the following format:

**Section 1:** Sets out the high level strategies and objectives that are common to all Level 5 towns

**Section 2:** Sets out the common zoning objectives for all Level 5 towns

**Section 3:** Sets out detailed plans for Level 5 settlements (including a land use map, a heritage map and any other maps considered necessary for that town).

## SECTION 1

### 1.1 Core Strategy

Level 5 plans exist in a hierarchy of plans flowing from national level (National Spatial Strategy) to regional level (Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area) to County level (Wicklow County Development Plan). It is through the County Development Plan that these higher order strategies, as well as other national and regional policies (e.g. relating to transportation and the environment) are translated to a 'local level'. The County Development Plan includes a 'Core Strategy' which sets out the 'direction' for the future growth of the County, in accordance with these higher level strategies, and in particular sets out the settlement and population growth strategy up to 2022, evaluates the demand for housing and adequacy of zoned lands to meet those needs, as well as providing strategies for infrastructure, environmental protection and retail development.

Table 1 below sets out the key elements of the Wicklow County Development Plan 'Core Strategy', as it applies to Level 5 settlements.

Core Strategy of the CDP	Application to Level 5 Settlements
Settlement, Population & Housing Strategies	Level 5 settlements are designated 'Small Growth Towns' and generally have population targets in the range 1,500 – 5,000
Economic Development Strategy	The economic function of 'Small Growth Towns' is to be attractors for local investment and to target investment in the form of product and some 'people' intensive industries.
Retail Strategy	<p>Level 5 settlements are identified as either 'Level 3' or 'Level 4' in the County retail hierarchy, the majority being in 'Level 4'.</p> <p>Level 3 retail centres (Baltinglass, Rathdrum) are defined as 'sub County town centres'. Such centres will vary both in the scale of provision and the size of catchment, due to proximity to a Major Town / County Town centre. Generally where the centre has a large catchment (e.g. market town in a rural area) and is not close to a larger centre, there will be a good range of comparison shopping though no large department stores or centres, with a mix of retail types, leisure and cultural facilities and a range of cafes and restaurants. At least one supermarket and smaller scale department store are required to meet local needs. Such towns / centres would generally range in size from 10-25,000sqm of lettable retail space catering for a population of 10,000- 40,000.</p> <p>Level 4 retail centres are defined as 'local centres / small towns' where the retail needs would be expected to include one supermarket / two medium sized convenience stores (up to 1,000sqm aggregate) and c. 10-20 smaller shops.</p>
Community Development Strategy	In accordance with the County community facilities hierarchy, Level 5 settlements generally fall into the 2,000-7,000 population range and should be ideally should be serviced by the following community infrastructure: community/parish hall, multi purpose community space and / or meeting rooms, local town park and open spaces/nature areas, outdoor multi-use games areas, playgrounds, playing pitches and a library.
Infrastructure Strategy	<p>In accordance with the County Development Plan:</p> <p>Sufficient wastewater treatment capacity is required to cater for the projected population within the plan area</p> <p>Sufficient water supply is required capable of meeting the demands of projected population within the plan area.</p> <p>Measures to improve the capacity and efficiency of local roads and connections to national routes in close proximity to the plan area are required.</p>
Environmental Strategy	To ensure the objectives of the plan are consistent with the conservation and protection of the environment.

## 1.2 Population and Housing

The 2022, 2025 and 2028 population targets for Level 5 towns are provided in the Core Strategy of this County Development Plan.

The duration of those Level 5 plans included in this County Development Plan is 2016-2022<sup>1</sup>. Therefore housing needs are on the basis of facilitating the achievement of the 2022 target.

In their zoning provisions, these plans also provide for "headroom" or "market factor" which is 'extra' land that is zoned over and above the minimum amount needed to accommodate the 2022 population target. Headroom is provided so as to allow for greater location choice and deal with any land supply inflexibility which may arise. The basis for calculating the necessary 'headroom' for the plan period i.e. up to 2022, has been the housing unit requirement over the period 2022-2025 i.e. plus 3 years.

The 2011 population and housing unit figures are derived from the 2011 Census. As the Census 'town boundaries' do not always necessarily match our plan boundaries, the Census figures have been amended where required, using additional data sources such as the CSO 'Small Area Population Statistics' and the An Post GeoDirectory.

The number of housing units required in 2022 is based on an assumed average household size of 2.41 in 2022 and the 'excess factor' of 6.5% as set out in the 'Core Strategy' of the County Development Plan.

Plan Type	Settlement	Population 2011	Housing Stock 2011	Core Strategy Population Target 2022	Total Housing Unit Requirement 2022	Housing Unit Growth Requirement 2011-2022	Housing Unit Growth Requirement + headroom
Level 5 Town Plan	Ashford	1,484	531	2,675	1,182	651	858
	Aughrim	1,315	592	1,758	777	185	278
	Baltinglass	1,786	769	2,572	1,136	367	521
	Carnew	1,145	491	1,698	750	259	365
	Dunlavin	793	313	2,134	943	630	840
	Tinahely	956	419	1,308	578	159	231

<sup>1</sup> As the Local Area Plans for Kilcoole and Rathdrum will not be adopted until the 2017-2019 period, the duration of these future plans will be up to 2025.

## Population and Housing Objectives

- To adhere to the objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan in regard to population and housing as are applicable to Level 5 towns
- Notwithstanding the zoning of land for residential purposes, the Planning Authority shall monitor and implement the population targets as set out in the County Development Plan and shall phase and restrict, where necessary, the granting of residential planning permissions to ensure these targets are not exceeded.
- **Housing occupancy controls:** As 'small growth towns', these settlements should provide for the housing demands generated from people from across the County and region. As such, there should be no restriction on the occupancy of housing within these settlements.

The plans for these towns include details regarding the capacity of zoned lands for housing. The estimated potential number of additional units indicated for each piece of land is indicative only. The actual amount of units that may be permitted on a site will be determined having regard to all normal planning considerations, such as access, site services, topography, flooding, heritage issues etc.

### 1.3 Economic Development and Employment

Depending on their degree of accessibility and their economic function, the hinterland towns (i.e. those outside the metropolitan area) have varying roles to play in acting as attractors for foreign and local investment. Level 5 and 6 settlements generally perform a lesser function in terms of attracting investment than Level 1-4 settlements, however these settlements perform an important role in attracting local investment and should aim to target investment in the form of local services, 'product intensive' industries, particularly those linked to rural resources, such as food processing, agricultural services and tourist facilities / accommodation.

The factors that make a town economically viable and attractive to investors and visitors are numerous and often hard to predict and influence, but for the purpose of this land use plan, the strategy for economic development will be based around (a) providing a land-use framework for each town, which makes the Council's requirements and expectations with respect to the location and type of new development abundantly clear, (a) supporting and facilitating, to the highest degree possible (subject to environmental and other relevant planning considerations) all forms of employment generation appropriate to such small towns, (c) protecting and enhancing the heritage and environment of the town, including historic street pattern and buildings / features of heritage and environmental value and (d) encouraging a varied mix of uses in the core area.

An established measure of the employment 'health' of a settlement is a measure called the 'jobs ratio'. This is the relationship between the number of people in the labour force and the number of jobs in any defined area. A healthy area is considered to be one where the jobs ratio is around 70%. The County Development Plan sets out an objective to increase the average 'jobs ratio' in the County to c. 60% in 2028 (from a 2011 rate of 42%). Not all towns / areas will of course be able to reach this level and it is considered reasonable that the plan should aim to increase the jobs ratio proportionately in each area according to its characteristics and level in the County settlement / employment hierarchy.

For Level 5 towns, it is an objective to increase the 2011 jobs ratio by 50% by 2028.

Settlement	Population 2011	Labour Force 2011	Jobs in that settlement 2011	Jobs ratio 2011	Increase JR by 50%	Labour Force 2028	Jobs required 2028	Growth 2011-2028
Ashford	1484	712	245	34%	52%	1250	645	400
Aughrim	1315	631	165	26%	39%	833	327	162
Baltinglass	1786	857	596	70%	104%	1250	1304	708
Carnew	1145	550	318	58%	87%	833	723	405
Dunlavin	793	381	240	63%	95%	1042	985	745
Enniskerry	1940	931	206	22%	33%	1250	415	209
Kilcoole	4063	1950	836	43%	64%	2083	1340	504
Rathdrum	1638	786	438	56%	84%	1458	1219	781
Tinahely	956	459	270	59%	88%	625	552	282

### Economic Development and Employment Objectives

- Increase the quality and range of employment opportunities by facilitating developments that involve local investment in a variety of forms, including 'people' and 'product' intensive industries. The Council will allow for the development of 'people' intensive employment generating developments that provide for the local convenience and social service needs of the area and that provide for the needs of tourists and visitors. The Council will allow for the development of a limited amount of small scale 'product' intensive industries, and will particularly support developments based on the use of a local rural resource.
- Promote tourist developments at suitable locations that are of an appropriate scale and design, particularly developments that are associated with the tourism products or themes associated with that settlement and maximise each town's location as a destination and gateway between the tourism assets.
- To facilitate home-working and innovative forms of working which reduce the need to travel but are subordinate to the main residential use of the dwelling and do not result in a disamenity in an area.
- To ensure sufficient zoned land is available in appropriate locations capable of facilitating the development of appropriate employment opportunities in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan.

### 1.4 Town Centre and Retail

While the settlements in Level 5 are the smallest of the 'growth towns' they are nonetheless key towns in the rural hinterlands that most of them serve. To ensure the continued vibrancy and life of these towns, the provision of a mix of residential, business, retail, leisure, entertainment and cultural uses will be encouraged. The priority shall be for the regeneration of under-utilised or derelict sites in the town core, followed by the development of new streets and squares, visually and functionally linked to the historic centre

The retail function of the Level 5 settlement is as set out in the County Retail Strategy (which is set out in Section 1.1 above). Retail is a key function of these towns, most of which provide retail and retail services to a wide rural hinterland, and a thriving retail sector is essential to main vitality and vibrancy in the core areas of these towns and to maintain the town as the focal point for the wider rural area in which it is located. The retail provision in these small towns would be expected to include one supermarket / two medium sized convenience stores (up to 1,000sqm aggregate) and perhaps 10-20 smaller shops.

A number of town plans identify key 'town centre' opportunity sites, which would if developed, contribute to the enhancement of both the environment and the retail / services offer in each location. Such sites are identified where relevant in each plan and the Council's objectives for such sites will be clearly set out. Where

necessary, an indicative sketch plan, representing these objectives, will also be included; however these should not be rigidly interpreted as there may be a number of options for achieving the optimal layouts in accordance with the objectives set out.

### **Town Centre and Retail Objectives**

- Encourage the redevelopment and regeneration of vacant, underutilised and derelict sites.
- To protect features that contribute to the towns' overall appearance and heritage value.
- To encourage higher residential densities in the towns' centres and the concept of 'living over the shop'.
- To allow a relaxation in certain development standards in the town centres in the interest of achieving the best development possible, both visually and functionally.
- Provide for an expansion in the variety of retail and retail services facilities so that the town includes a range of retail outlets that provide for the day to day needs of the local population and the needs of other businesses and tourists, in accordance with the provisions of the "Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DOEHLG 2012), and any subsequent Ministerial Guidelines or directives and the Wicklow County Retail Strategy.
- The redevelopment of lands within the town core areas, particularly those sites with frontage onto the main streets and squares of the town, shall provide for a street fronting building of a high quality design or for a high quality urban space, including hard and soft landscaping, and appropriate street fixtures and furniture, in order to enhance and create a more attractive streetscape.

## **1.5 Social and Community Development**

The provision of accessible social and community infrastructure, including open space and leisure / recreational facilities, contributes to the quality of life for all and it is important that existing and future residents of the town and its catchment are provided with such facilities. High quality social and community services in an area can also make a place more attractive for the establishment of new businesses and to encourage long stay visitors. In particular, new community facilities will be required to be provided in tandem with the development of significant new residential developments and new neighbourhoods.

### **Community Infrastructure and Open Space Objectives**

- To facilitate the development of a range of high quality community and recreational facilities that meet the needs of the local population, and in particular to require that new community and recreational facilities are developed in tandem with new housing, through the implementation of the objectives of Chapter 8 of Volume 1 of this County Development Plan.

## **1.6 Service Infrastructure**

The provision of transport and services infrastructure is essential to the development of any town, providing ease of movement within towns, connecting towns to surrounding areas and providing sufficient services infrastructure capable of meeting the demands of the resident, commercial and employment populations. The County Development Plan, and various programmes of the Council's Roads and Environmental Services Departments, provide detailed strategies and objectives for a whole range of service infrastructure. As these provisions apply directly to towns in Level 5 it is not considered necessary to restate all of these objectives; however, each plan will address specific local infrastructural issues where deficiencies are identified.

### **Service Infrastructure Objectives**

- Promote the development of a safe and accessible pedestrian, cycling and traffic routes.
- Facilitate and promote the delivery of reliable and effective water, drainage, energy, waste

management and communications infrastructure to service the existing and future development needs of the settlement

## **1.7 Built Heritage and Natural Environment**

The protection and enhancement of heritage and environmental assets through these plans will help to safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of each town and its surroundings, providing local economic, social and environmental benefits. Each settlement is provided with a heritage map in this volume to indicate the key natural and built heritage features.

### **Heritage Objective**

- To protect the natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of each town, in accordance with the objectives set out in Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan, as are applicable to each town.

## **1.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Each plan, in conjunction with the overall County Development Plan, has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The 'Environmental Report' accompanying the overall County Development Plan sets out the environmental consequences of making the plan, including the town plans and provides measures to address any potential adverse impacts.

## **1.9 Appropriate Assessment**

Each plan, in conjunction with the overall County Development Plan, has been screened for the need to carry out an 'Appropriate Assessment' under the Habitats Directive. Where Appropriate Assessment cannot be screened out, each plan is accompanied by a 'Habitats Directive Assessment'.

## **1.10 Flood Risk Assessment**

As part of each plan, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been carried out. A flood risk map is provided for each settlement with the exception of Carnew and Dunlavin as both of these settlements are identified as being within Flood Zone C. The assessment is presented as part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment appendix of the County Plan and the flood risk map is provided along with the individual plan documents. All applications shall be assessed in accordance with the provisions of *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management'* Guidelines (DoEHLG 2009) and the flood management objectives of the County Development Plan.

## SECTION 2 ZONING AND LAND USE

Each plan map indicates the boundary of the settlement plan. All lands located outside the settlement boundary are considered to be within the rural area. Within these areas planning applications shall be assessed having regard to the objectives and standards for the rural area, as set out in Volume 1 of this Wicklow County Development Plan.

The purpose of land use zoning objectives is to indicate the Council's intentions for land uses in the town.

With respect to **Level 5** plans, land use zoning objectives and the associated vision for each zone are as follows:

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
<b>RE: Existing Residential</b>	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities of existing residential areas	To provide for house improvements, alterations and extensions and appropriate infill residential development in accordance with principles of good design and protection of existing residential amenity. In existing residential areas, the areas of open space permitted, designated or dedicated solely to the use of the residents will normally be zoned 'RE' as they form an intrinsic part of the overall residential development; however new housing or other non-community related uses will not normally be permitted.
<b>R20: New residential</b>	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities at a density up to 20 units/ha.	To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential developments at appropriate densities with excellent layout and design, well linked to the town centre and community facilities. To provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities.
<b>R15: New residential Low Density</b>	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities at a lower density not exceeding 15 units/ha.	To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential environments with excellent layout and design, reflecting the low-medium density character of the surrounding area.
<b>R10: New residential Rural Fringe</b>	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities at a lower density not exceeding 10 units/ha.	
<b>R Special: Special Residential</b>	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities in a format and a density specified in the relevant plan.	To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential environments with excellent layout and design, reflecting the density and character of the surrounding area.
<b>CE: Community &amp; Education</b>	To provide for civic, community and educational facilities	To facilitate the development of necessary community, health, religious, educational, social and civic infrastructure.

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
<b>TC: Town Centre</b>	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including retail, commercial, office and civic use, and to provide for 'Living Over the Shop' residential accommodation, or other ancillary residential accommodation.	To develop and consolidate the existing town centre to improve its vibrancy and vitality with the densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, residential uses, and urban streets, while delivering a quality urban environment which will enhance the quality of life of resident, visitor and workers alike. The zone will strengthen retail provision in accordance with the County Retail Strategy, emphasise town centre conservation, ensure priority for public transport where applicable, pedestrians and cyclists while minimising the impact of private car based traffic and enhance and develop the existing centres fabric.
<b>LSS – Local Shops &amp; Services</b>	To provide for small scale local neighbourhood shops and services	To facilitate the limited development of small scale local neighbourhood shops and retail services and other local service uses that meet only the retail or service needs of residents in the immediate catchment and are not of such a scale or type that would detract or draw trade from lands designated town centre.
<b>MU – Mixed Use</b>	To provide for mixed use development	The nature of the mixed use development envisaged for any particular site will be set out in each individual town plan.
<b>E: Employment</b>	To provide for the development of enterprise and employment	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing employment areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality employment and enterprise developments in a good quality physical environment.
<b>T: Tourism</b>	To provide for tourism related development	To provide for the sustainable development of tourism related structures, uses and infrastructure. To provide for the development of tourism facilities including accommodation of an excellent sustainable design and aesthetic quality. Tourism related office, civic and cultural and commercial development will be facilitated.

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
<b>AOS: Active Open Space</b>	To protect and enhance existing and provide for new active open space	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing active open spaces, formal exercise areas, sports grounds, playing pitches, courts and other games areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality active recreational areas
<b>OS: Open Space</b>	To protect and enhance existing and provide for recreational open space	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing parks and casual play areas, to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality amenity open areas and to restrict developments / activities (such as the use or development of such lands for formal sports grounds for organisations that are not available for a broad range of the public) that would reduce the opportunities for use by the wider public.
<b>POS: Passive Open Space</b>	To protect existing open, undeveloped lands	To protect, enhance and manage existing open, undeveloped lands that comprise flood plains, buffer zones along rivers and EU protected sites, green and ecological corridors and areas of natural biodiversity
<b>PU: Public Utility</b>	To maintain lands providing services infrastructure	To allow for lands to be designated for public utilities such as waste water treatment plants, large ESB sub-stations, gasworks etc
<b>SLB: Strategic Land Reserve</b>	To provide a land bank for future development of the settlement after the lifetime of this plan, if and when the need arises.	These are lands that are identified as being within the potential built envelope of the settlement with regard to proximity and accessibility to infrastructure. However, these lands are not suitable or necessary for development during the lifetime of this plan and may only be considered for detailed zoning and development after 2022. Any development proposals within the lifetime of the plan will be considered under the County Development Plan rural objectives

A zoning use table is not included in these plans. The planning authority shall determine each proposal on its merits, and shall only permit the development of uses that enhance, complement, are ancillary to, or neutral to the zoning objective. Uses that are materially inconsistent with and detrimental to the zoning objective shall not be permitted.

Uses generally appropriate for **residential** zoned areas include houses, apartments, residential open space, education, community facilities, retirement homes, nursing homes, childcare, health centres, guest house, bed and breakfast, places of public worship, home based economic activity, utility installations and ancillary development and other residential uses in accordance with the CDP.

Uses generally appropriate for **town centres** include retail, retail services, health, restaurants, public house, public buildings, hotels, guest houses, nursing/care homes, parking, residential development, commercial, office, tourism and recreational uses, community, including provision for religious use, utility installations and ancillary developments for town centre uses in accordance with the CDP.

Uses generally appropriate for **employment** zoned land include general and light industry, office uses, enterprise units, appropriate warehousing, petrol filling stations (as deemed appropriate), public transport depots, open space, community facilities, utility installations and ancillary developments for employment and industry uses in accordance with the CDP.

Uses generally appropriate for **community and educational** zoned land include community, educational and institutional uses include burial grounds, places of worship, schools, training facilities, community hall, nursing homes, health related developments, sports and recreational facilities, utility installations and ancillary developments for community, educational and institutional uses in accordance with the CDP.

Uses appropriate for **active open space** zoned land are sport and active recreational uses including infrastructure and buildings associated with same.

Uses appropriate for **open space** zoned land are formal / informal landscaped parks with off-road walking / cycling paths, as well as playgrounds, skate parks, Mixed Use Games Areas and outdoor gyms.

Uses appropriate for **passive open space** zoned land are uses that enhance the function of these areas as flood plains, buffer zones and ecological corridors.

Uses generally appropriate for **public utility** zoned land are for the provision of necessary infrastructure and services such as water and waste water treatment plants, large ESB sub-stations, gasworks.

Any development proposals on land within the **strategic land reserve**, within the lifetime of the plan, will be considered under the County Development Plan rural objectives.

Uses generally appropriate for **tourism** zoned land are tourism accommodation and tourism / recreational uses such as Bed & Breakfast, cultural uses, holiday homes, hotels, recreational facilities.

Many uses exist where they do not conform to the designated zoning objective. When extensions to, or improvements of premises accommodating such uses are proposed, each shall be considered on its merits and permission may be granted where the development does not adversely affect the amenities of properties in the vicinity and does not prejudice the proper planning and development of the area.

Whilst the land-use zoning will give an indication of the acceptability or otherwise of particular uses in particular areas, proposed development will also be assessed in terms of compatibility with the development control guidelines and standards outlined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and the relevant town plan. Factors such as density, height, massing, traffic generation, public health regulations, design criteria, visual amenity, availability of services and potential nuisance by way of noise, odour and air pollution are also of importance in establishing whether or not a development proposal conforms to the proper planning and sustainable development of an area.

## Phasing

It is an objective of the Council that development is undertaken in an orderly and sustainable manner. The development of zoned land should generally be phased in accordance with the sequential approach:

- Development should extend outwards from centres with undeveloped land closest to the centres and public transport routes (if available) being given preference, i.e. 'leapfrogging' to peripheral areas should be avoided;
- A strong emphasis should be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and better use of under-utilised lands; and
- Areas to be developed should be contiguous to existing developed areas.

Only in exceptional circumstances should the above principles be contravened, for example, where a barrier to development is involved. Any exceptions must be clearly justified by local circumstances and such justification must be set out in any planning application proposal.

The Council may, in certain cases, phase permitted development where this is considered necessary for the following:

- (i) the promotion of an appropriate balance of employment, residential and service facilities (schools, shopping, community facilities etc.) and other uses that are required to increase the self sufficiency of the settlement, or
- (ii) ensuring the delivery of infrastructural services in tandem with development, including water, sewerage and road infrastructure, that is required to safeguard the environmental quality and public safety of the area.

## Action Area Plans and Specific Local Objectives

Action Areas have been identified in each plan where necessary. Action Areas 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. Separate applications for sections of each Action Area will not be considered until an overall Action Area Plan has been agreed in writing with the Planning Authority unless it can be shown that any application will not undermine the achievement of the overall objectives for that Action Area.

The position, location and size of the land use zonings shown on plan maps are indicative only and may be altered in light of eventual road and service layouts, detailed design and topography, subject to compliance with the criteria set out for the Action Areas.

Plans may also include 'Specific Local Objectives' (SLO) - the purpose of the SLO is to guide developers as to the aspirations of the plan regarding the development of certain lands where more than one land use is proposed, in a manner similar to Action Areas, but with the exception that no masterplan will be required to be agreed prior to the submission of a planning application.

By time related conditions, agreements or otherwise, the Council will regulate the building programme to ensure that the needs of the population do not exceed the provision of essential support systems and the Council will use its powers under the Planning & Development Acts to effect this control.

## Strategic Land Reserve

Some previous plans for Level 5 settlements provided for a surplus of zoned housing land, having regard to the population and housing targets set out in this County Development Plan 2016-2022. In order to be consistent with the provisions of the County Development Plan 'Core Strategy' and Ministerial guidelines with regard to the zoning of land, the plans herewith provided shall only provide for sufficient zoned land to meet the growth targets as set out in the 'Core Strategy' for 2022 plus 3 years 'headroom'. In accordance with the 'Core Strategy' guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, where a surplus of zoned land is identified, it will be necessary to select the most appropriate land to zone in the plan and then implement one of the following options:

1. Designate the surplus land as a 'strategic land reserve' for the future that will not be allowed to develop within the plan period, or
2. Change the zoning of the surplus residential land to some other land use that is required during the lifetime of the plan, or
3. Remove the zoning from the surplus land.

For the most part, 'Option 1' above has been utilised in these Level 5 plans as the preferred alternative.

### Strategic Land Reserve Objective

These are lands that are identified as being within the potential built envelope of the settlement with regard to proximity and accessibility to infrastructure. However these lands are not necessary for development during the lifetime of this plan and may only be considered for detailed zoning and development after 2022, if the need arises. Any development proposals within the lifetime of the plan will be considered under the Wicklow County Development Plan rural objectives.

## Conservation Areas

There are a number of Natura 2000 sites located in or in close proximity to the settlements in Level 5. The sites themselves are protected from inappropriate development through the legal provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives, as well as the Planning Act. Such sites, where they are located within the plan boundary of a Level 5 settlement, are shown on the heritage map associated with the plan as 'Natura 2000' site and on the land use map as a 'conservation area', which is not a land-use 'zoning' but an objective to signify that these are areas where the goal is to conserve and enhance habitats and attributes for which the site was selected for EU protection.

In a number of locations, there are lands adjoining Natura 2000 sites, which while not being included in the legally designated site, are linked to the site in terms of similar or supporting habitats, water flows or other characteristics which render them important to protect from inappropriate development which may have a direct or indirect affect on the designated site itself<sup>2</sup>. The extent of any such 'buffer zone' has been determined through both desktop and field assessment by the plan team and a professional ecologist, as well as consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This 'buffer zone' has similarly been identified as being within the 'conservation area'.

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the aim is to protect and maintain linear landscape features which act as ecological corridors, such as watercourses (rivers, streams, canals, ponds, drainage channels, etc), woodlands, hedgerows and road and railway margins, and features which act as stepping stones, such as marshes and woodlands, which taken as a whole help to improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network

The approach to zoning in the 'conservation area' has been as follows:

1. No lands within the actual Natura 2000 site have been zoned;
2. Where the Conservation Area coincides with existing developed areas, the lands have been zoned for their existing use, which will essentially allow for the continuation of the existing use and its enhancement. Where permission is sought for development in such zones, the purpose of the Conservation Area objective is to flag at the earliest possible stage (which is the adoption of the development plan) that development on such lands may have the potential to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site. In accordance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and the Planning & Development Act, any proposed development with potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment;
3. Where the Conservation Area coincides with existing undeveloped lands, the lands will only be zoned for new development where it can be justified that such zoning and development arising therefrom is essential for the town to achieve its development vision and strategic objectives. In accordance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and the Planning & Development Act, any proposed development with potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment;
4. Where the Conservation Area coincides with existing undeveloped lands, and the development of these lands is not essential for the achievement of the development vision and strategic objectives for the town, the land will be zoned 'OS' – **passive open space**. The only developments that will be considered in such area are those which contribute to the objective of the Passive Open Space zone (detailed in this plan) and that can be shown to not diminish the role and function of such areas, will not result in significant adverse impacts on any EU protected site and will not diminish the biodiversity value of the lands or the ability of plants and animals to thrive and move through the area.

#### **Conservation Area Objective**

To protect Natura 2000 sites and a suitable buffer area from inappropriate development.