



# Ashford Local Area Plan 2008 - 2014



Planning Department  
Wicklow County Council  
County Buildings  
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## **ASHFORD SMALL GROWTH TOWN I LOCAL AREA PLAN**

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## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN**

The Ashford Local Area Plan (LAP) sets out the development strategy for the development of the town of Ashford.

The aim of this Plan is to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Ashford, and to enhance and facilitate the balancing of economic, social and environmental infrastructure in the interests of the community.

The Plan is being prepared under Part II, Sections 18-20 of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000 (as amended).

The Plan will be in place until 2014. However, all objectives have been prepared so as to account for the needs of the town up until 2016. The plan will replace the 2001 LAP for the town of Ashford and shall have effect within the development boundary set out in Map 1. Unless otherwise stated within this document the policies and standards of the County Development Plan shall apply”.

Wicklow County Council is committed as a priority to encouraging more sustainable development through energy end use efficiency, and increasing the use of renewable energy, in all new building projects in the designated area within the Ashford Local Area Plan in accordance with Part L of the Building Regulations.

## **2. LOCATION, POPULATION AND CONTEXT**

Ashford is situated in County Wicklow on the R772, which was formally the Dublin/Wexford National Primary Route (N11). The new dual carriageway bypasses Ashford on its eastern side. It is situated approx 2.5kms northwest of Rathnew, 12kms south of Newtownmountkennedy and 6kms northwest of Wicklow Town.

Ashford is classified as a ‘Small Growth Town I’ in the County Development Plan (CDP) and has a Census population of 1,349 (2006). The CDP envisages a population of 2,295 by 2010, increasing to 3,000 by 2016.

Ashford contains a Catholic Church, a Church of Ireland Church, three pubs, a GAA facility, two Primary Schools, a Post Office, a Garda Station, a filling station, local shops and a number of small businesses.

The topography of Ashford varies, as it is located in the valley of the Vartry River. Lands to the east of the town are predominantly flat with a gradual rise towards the new N11 bypass. To the west of the town there is a steep slope centred around the woodlands of Ballymachara. The valley of the Vartry is steepest on the southern bank, while on the northern bank there is a lesser gradient, which rises towards Ballinahinch.

There are several medium density housing estates in Ashford. A number of new developments have been granted permission in the recent past but have been delayed because the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant is at capacity.

A new pumping station will be constructed on the site of the existing treatment plant, which will pump sewerage to Wicklow Town for secondary treatment before being discharged into the sea. Water supply has also reached capacity and will restrict future development.

There are 8 Protected Structures in the town and the landscape is designated a **Corridor Area** in the County Development Plan. Devil's Glen is the only conservation area in the immediate area of Ashford. It is a proposed Natural Heritage Area.

### **Historical Context**

Ashford (Ath na Fuineoige) is an English name dating back to 1740. It was formerly part of the townland of Ballymachara and joined the sister village of Ballinalea. The earliest recorded trace of human activity in the area is a large stone axe, which was found close to the Vartry River at Ashford in 1938 and is believed to be Neolithic. There is strong evidence of a Bronze Age settlement represented by burial sites and a Fulachta Fiadh in the townlands of Rossana and Mount Usher. Enclosures from the Early Christian period can be found in the surrounding hinterland of Ashford, the closest being a recorded monument in the Ballycurry Demesne. The Early Christian period is also represented by two significant ecclesiastical sites, a church and graveyard in Ballymaghroe and a church, graveyard and font in Inchanappa South. There is a moated site in the townland of Ballinapark from the Anglo-Norman period.

Anglo-Irish families constructed the many Country Houses and Demesnes, which dominate the landscape of the Ashford area, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rosanna House was built sometime between 1710 and 1730 while other such houses followed during the nineteenth century. Ashford became an important coaching stop and the present village began to develop around the bridge over the River Vartry. By the early twentieth century the increased use of motorcars and rail transport led to a decline in the importance of coaching villages. In 1837 Sam Lewis visited the area and recorded a population of 476 and 80 houses in Ballinalea. The nearby Devil's Glen was a popular tourist destination throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mount Usher House was built in the early 1920s and the associated informal Robinsonian style gardens have since been recognised as being of national significance.

### **Urban Form**

The town centre of Ashford is concentrated in a linear form along both sides of the R772. The majority of housing is clustered in the Ballinalea area to the south and the Nun's Cross area to the west. To the east and southeast the N11 encloses the hinterland of the town. To the southwest, Ballymachara's steep topography and woodland only facilitates low-density one-off housing. The Vartry River corridor provides a west to east visual and natural amenity linking the river valley to the west and Mount Usher Gardens to the east and south-east of the R772. A number of Demesnes exist in the locality including Ballycurry, Cronroe (Bel-Air) and Rossana.

Map 1 defines the development boundary in orange. Map 2 defines the wider hinterland/ agricultural greenbelt, and identifies the location of all protected structures recorded monuments and proposed protected views.

### **3. SETTLEMENT FUNCTION AND ROLE**

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (RPGs) put in place a broad planning framework for the development of the Greater Dublin Area of which Wicklow forms a part. The Guidelines are informed by and flow from the National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020. The RPG’s provide an overall strategic context for the Development Plans of each Local Authority.

The RPG’s make a distinction between the existing built up area and its environs where the built up area is the Metropolitan and the remainder the Hinterland with a range of settlement sizes that have the potential to attain an enhanced level of sustainability. Northeast Wicklow including Bray and Greystones/Delgany, and their environs, are within the Metropolitan area while the remainder of the County is Hinterland.

The County Development Plan settlement strategy seeks to locate population growth and channel development in line with the principles of the RPGs. It promotes a hierarchy of settlements in recognition that settlement role and function is a product of scale and spatial distribution and designates Ashford a ‘Small Growth Town I’.

The CDP describes ‘Small Growth Town’ by saying that: *“the settlements in this level represent the more rural small towns in the County, which provide a range of employment, retail and social/community services to a mainly rural hinterland”*.

The closest settlements to Ashford are Rathnew and Wicklow Town to the southeast. They have been designated together by the CDP as ‘Large Growth Town I’ because of their close proximity and their complementary nature in terms of services. Wicklow & Rathnew are collectively given an indicative population of 17,481 by 2010 and a maximum indicative population of 22,500 by 2016.

To fulfil its remit this plan shall not make provision for development of a scale that is commensurate with and appropriate for higher order settlements. Rather Ashford’s role is to provide a good range of employment, retail and social/community services for the town and its hinterland.

### **4. TRANSPORTATION, TRAFFIC AND PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Ashford is located primarily on what was the old N11 and is now the R772. The N11 bypass has led to a significant decrease in the towns through traffic and has increased the attractiveness of the town. The town centre extends (on the R772) from the junction of the L5070 (Ballymanus road) to the roundabout at the junction of the

R763. The R772 is well capable of accommodating existing traffic volumes as they have decreased since the bypass was constructed. The R763 and R764 are narrow in places and while the R763 has a footpath, it is substandard in width.

The parking is an issue in the town in the area of Mount Usher Gardens, south of the junction of the R772 and the L-1096. The R763/R764 junction is already at capacity and is incapable of safely serving further development. An alternative route, to be developed as part of AA7 and AA8 will enable this road to absorb the increased traffic movements generated as a result of this Plan, and relieve the volume using the aforementioned junction.

There are three Bus Eireann routes servicing Ashford:

- 2 (Dublin – Rosslare Harbour)
- 5 (Dublin – Waterford)
- 133 (Dublin – Wicklow Town)

## **Objectives**

### **ROA1**

It is an objective of the Council that all new road developments shall provide for traffic calming as design dynamic in all new residential areas.

### **ROA2**

It is an objective of the Council to investigate the provision of additional parking for the town on the western side of the R772 opposite Mount Usher.

### **ROA3**

Access shall be reserved to AA1 from the Mill Road. Access shall also be reserved to AA2 lands from the L-1096 (Mont Alto) and from the R763 as shown on Map 1.

### **ROA4**

Roads developed, as part of the development of AA6 shall allow for access to both Ashford Rovers football pitch and Woodview, Ballinalea from the L-1096 as indicated on Map 1. The reservations shown are diagrammatic only and subject to further investigation and due process. Cycleways shall be provided as part of these indicative new roads.

### **ROA5**

The development of AA6, AA7 and AA8 lands shall be contingent upon the provision of the indicative new roads shown on Map 1. Cycleways shall be provided as part of these indicative new roads.

### **ROA6**

This main street of Ashford (R722) is a key and critical piece of infrastructure in achieving the permeability connection between North & South of Ashford. Moreover it is a key component in the urban design strategy for the expanding town. The road needs to be attractively designed throughout (Boulevard style). Presenting an attractive public place and urban space where traffic is calmed and speeds reduced and promotes walking and cycling.

## **Cycling and Walking**

A key element of the development strategy for the Plan is the delivery of interconnecting pedestrian /cycle routes. The Plan provides for a network of cycle ways and pedestrian linkages throughout the LAP lands to the Town Centre, existing residential areas and community facilities. The precise routings will be identified at a later stage. These routes shall be provided as part of the proposed development of the Action Area Lands at the developers' expense.

Cycle parking shall be provided at the local service areas, at schools and at community facilities

## **New Residential Area**

That the detailed planning for the new residential developments must make provision for a high degree of permeability, specifically cycling, and pedestrian permeability both between and within those areas connecting to the existing town centre and community areas. Permeability must be of the highest design standards and address crime prevention concerns of the local community

# **5. WATER SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE**

## **Water Supply**

The existing water supply has reached capacity and as a result development shall be restricted in the immediate future. At present the town is supplied with water from the Vartry Reservoir in Roundwood, which also serves Rathnew and Wicklow Town, and Devil's Glen.

The existing combined output is 4.5 MI per day. It is proposed to augment additional supply from wells in the Ashford area. This will produce an extra 3.5MI per day by the year 2010. Distribution and storage will also be in place by 2010.

After 2010 additional water supply from Avonmore River of 3-4MI per day will be available. It is envisaged that output from Phase 1 will be 3.5 MI per day and have a PE of approximately 17,500.

## **Waste Water**

The existing Wastewater Treatment Plant is hydraulically and biologically overloaded. A contract for the development of a pumping station on the site of the existing plant to allow connection to a secondary treatment plant in Wicklow Town was signed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2007. This new plant will serve the towns of Ashford, Rathnew and Wicklow, catering for a population equivalent of 34,000. Work on the plant is imminent and is expected to take at least two years to complete.

**No new significant development can take place until this infrastructure is in place.**

### **Surface Water**

The area is drained by the Vartry River, which flows via Devil's Glen, through Ashford and on to Broadlough. The ornamental gardens at Mount Usher are located on the Vartry riverbank at Ashford, and the river is a designated salmonid river. The rise in normal water level in the Vartry during times of severe flood is significant, and has been estimated at approximately 2.4 metres.

## **5. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

The quality of life in a community depends not only on the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure support but also on access to social, community and cultural facilities which are fundamental to social cohesion and personal enhancement. Community infrastructure must be progressed in tandem with residential development, and the latter will only be permitted on the basis of satisfactory provision of land for the former.

### **Community**

Ashford's community facilities are comprised of: a Catholic Church, Church of Ireland Church, GAA pitch, soccer pitch (both with associated dressing rooms), and there are four equestrian centres located within or in close proximity to the town.

#### **CE1**

The developer(s) of AA7 land shall provide the following on that part of the AA lands zoned Community/ Educational/ Institutional:

- Community Centre on 0.6ha of land
- The remaining 1.4ha of land shall be reserved for the expansion of Scoil na Coroine Muire

#### **CE2**

The amount of Community/ Educational/ Institutional zoned land remaining adjoining Nun's Cross-school after the 0.63ha for school expansion is 0.42ha. This land shall be reserved for community needs.

#### **CE3**

The amount of Community/ Educational/ Institutional zoned land remaining beside Scoil na Coroine Muire after school has been accommodated is 0.74ha. This land shall be reserved for community needs including the provision of land for a community centre.

### **Education**

There are two primary schools and three pre-schools in Ashford. Both the primary schools have reached capacity and require expansion to accommodate current and projected demand.



Scoil na Coroine Muire has 325 pupils, an increase of 55 from the previous school year. The school, which has 11 classrooms, currently uses an additional 3 temporary prefabricated classrooms giving it a total of 14. The school applied to the Department of Education for funding an extension to the existing building, which would result in 5 extra permanent classrooms and accommodate 465 pupils.

Nun's Cross School has 89 pupils. The school currently has 3 classrooms and uses 1 temporary prefabricated classroom. The school has applied to the Department of Education for funding an extension to the existing building, which would result in 1 extra permanent classroom.

The Department of Education has recommended that it would be prudent to reserve 2.02 hectares (5 acres) for the expansion of the primary schools. Sufficient land (2.03ha) adjacent to both Scoil na Coroine Muire and Nun's Cross School has therefore been reserved for this purpose relative to the size of each school. This amount of land has been calculated sufficient to accommodate the school going population generated by the existing population, the projected population expansion of the town (at 11.3% of total population) and the hinterland attending the schools plus 5% of that hinterland population.

#### **ED1**

An area of 1.4ha adjacent to Scoil na Coroine Muire shall be reserved for the future expansion of the school.

#### **ED2**

An area of 0.63ha adjacent to Nun's Cross National School shall be reserved for the future expansion of the school

#### **Formal Active Open Space**

To cater for the planned increased population of 1651 at least 3.96ha will be designated for active open space. The Community and Enterprise section of Wicklow County Council undertook a survey of Community facilities in Ashford. It recommended that the following additional facilities would be needed in the town to accommodate a population of 3,000 by 2016:

1. A playground,
2. An Outdoor Multi-Use Games Area (Synthetic/Hardcore),
3. Two additional playing pitches,
4. A Community Centre

The GAA pitch occupies a pivotal location on the streetscape in the centre of the town. It is walled off from the street and offers no interaction with the street. As a result it breaks up the town centre and gives the impression of being a void in the middle of the village. It is thus proposed to designate this land for 'town centre' uses. However, before any development can be considered, an alternative site for these existing facilities must be developed prior to the change of use of AA3. This shall be preferably within the town boundary but may be acceptable within the Greenbelt area surrounding the town. These facilities shall be provided in lieu of the existing facilities.

## **Objective**

### **AOS1**

All open space shall be well lit and, where possible, overlooked by adjoining development, in order to minimise anti-social behaviour.

### **AOS2**

The GAA facility shall be re-located on suitable lands within the town boundary or greenbelt. A suitable site shall have good access and adequate parking facilities.

### **AOS3**

The following shall be provided by the developer(s) of Action Areas:

- Playground of at least 0.05ha in AA3.
- A community centre of at least 500m<sup>2</sup> (0.05ha) in AA7.
- A small MUGA of at least 0.03ha in AA5 (e.g tennis court and youth shelter).
- A Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) of at least 0.07ha in AA6.
- The open space located between the Employment lands and the school shall be developed as a floodlit pitch.

## **Public Open Space, Parks & Green Amenity**

As part of AA1 (3.11 of LAP 2001), developments in the Inchanappa area must provide for “public amenity areas adjoining Ashford town centre and at the northern approach to the town.” As such a town park provided within this Action Area will be deemed a public park, and therefore accessible to all members of the community.

## **Objectives**

### **OS1**

Informal public open space and childcare facilities shall be provided in all new residential areas in accordance with the CDP.

### **OS2**

A well-lit linear park overlooked by development shall be provided and managed by the developer of AA3. A bridge facilitating pedestrian permeability must also be constructed to link residential areas across the Vartry facilitating a walking and cycling route.

## **Private Open Space**

## **Objectives**

### **POS1**

The Council shall not permit residential development on open green spaces that are formally identified as open space as part of a planning permission (including open space dedicated as part of a condition of planning permission).

## **POS2**

To protect and improve the visual and botanical character of Mount Usher Gardens and to provide for the protection and expansion of related tourist/visitor facilities on the site, subject to standards set out in the County Development Plan.

### **Proposed Facilities**

The following is a breakdown of the services and facilities provided in this Local Area Plan, and the age groups they cater for:

Age Group	Playground	MUGA	Community Centre	Playing Fields	Town Park/ Linear Park
0-5	✓		✓		✓
5-12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12-18		✓	✓	✓	✓
18-55			✓	✓	✓
55+			✓		✓
			✓		✓

## **7. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

To cater for the 2016 population of 1500, to allow for the anticipated decrease in household sizes, provide for 30% 'headroom', and adopting an 'excess factor' of 6%, a total of **23.6ha** of land has been designated for residential development, at medium density. The lands to be zoned will ensure that future demand for housing is nucleated within the town in a sustainable manner. In addition to these lands the Town Centre can accommodate further residential units.

### **Objectives**

#### **RES1**

No development that will result in raising the population of Ashford beyond 2295 people can be commenced before 2010, and conditions requiring this shall be attached to any planning permissions granted before that date

#### **RES2**

Residential development shall be phased to ensure that infrastructure, and in particular land for community infrastructure, is provided to match the needs of new residents.

#### **RES3**

The Council shall encourage more sustainable development through energy end use efficiency, increasing the use of renewable energy and improved energy performance in all new building developments throughout the Plan.

#### **RES4**

It is the objective of the Council to phase development so that new development will evolve from the fringes of existing developed areas, and where infrastructure and community facilities exist or are planned.

### **RES5**

In existing residential areas only infill development that reflects the prevailing density and character of its immediate surroundings will be permitted and no development shall be permitted that compromises the amenity of existing properties in the vicinity of proposals. No development shall be permitted that compromises the value and form of existing streetscapes that are considered worthy of protection. No development will be permitted that compromises the character and setting of heritage assets that are considered worthy of protection.

### **RES6**

It is the objective of the Council to acquire lands within the plan area where necessary to provide for housing and community facilities, including local housing needs.

### **RES7**

Disproportionately large developments will not be permitted; the maximum size of any one development will be limited (by phasing) to 80 units, reflecting the character and size of the town. All residential schemes of 10 units or more shall provide a variety of house types and sizes.

### **Density**

The maximum density acceptable on residentially zoned land will be 28 to the hectare.

## **8. EMPLOYMENT/INDUSTRY**

To cater for the development of employment facilities up to 2016, a total of 17.7ha has been zoned for employment purposes.

It is the policy of the Council to provide for enterprise, economic development, industry and warehousing/distribution on employment (E) zoned lands. Development on these lands shall not be detrimental to the residential amenity of adjoining residential properties.

### **EMP1**

Development on these lands shall be designed to ensure the development shall not be detrimental to the residential amenity of adjoining residential properties or residentially zoned land.

### **EMP2**

It is the objective of the Council to specifically promote the development of employment opportunities on E zoned land, in accordance with the provisions set out in Chapter 6 of the County Development Plan

### **EMP3**

Retailing shall not be permitted on E zoned land other than small-scale factory/enterprise outlets.

#### **EMP4**

The planning and development of lands zoned for enterprise activity shall be on the basis of an overall site masterplan that will have a coherent, overall design incorporating details such as phasing, planting, landscaping, the use and the visual impact of development.

#### **EMP5**

Any planning application in relation to these lands must include detailed landscaping and tree planting proposals including screen planting proposals and site boundary treatment. Site boundary treatment adjoining the R772 shall include a green buffer zone, landscaped and tree planted with a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees.

### **9. COMMERCIAL/ TOWN CENTRE**

It is important that town centres are inhabited and provide a mix of uses and exhibit a high standard of urban design to ensure vitality and viability, and accordingly the concept of “Living over the Shop” will be encouraged generally, and required in new developments.

Considering the fact that Ashford is a ‘Small Growth Town I’, as well as its proximity to Wicklow and Rathnew, major retail development is not considered appropriate for the town.

#### **TC1**

The Council will seek to enhance the streetscape of Ashford and to ensure that all infill development reflects established building styles and formats. All commercial and residential development within Ashford village should reflect established building lines and promote the development of high quality frontages. Contemporary design shall be encouraged in AA3.

#### **TC2**

The Council will seek to encourage the development of retail spaces within the TC zoned area to cater for retail demands. The consolidation and expansion of existing facilities should be encouraged to meet additional retail requirements. Within the TC zone, retail and commercial uses shall be the principle use at ground floor level. A ground floor change of use from retail or commercial to residential will not generally be permitted. The amenity of existing residential units within the TC zone shall not be compromised.

The provision of residential uses within the backland locations of the town centre only, will be Open for Consideration. Applications for residential uses at these locations shall be accompanied by a detailed report, which demonstrates why the provision of retail/commercial uses is not viable at this location. Applications for this type of development will be dealt with by the Development Management section on a case-by-case basis.

## **10. NATURAL, ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE**

Ashford benefits significantly from its setting in a mature landscape. The town, with its surrounding upland areas, mature stands of trees, water courses such as the Vartry and Mount Usher Gardens has a range of amenities that are fundamental to its character. Demesne type houses set in attractive parkland include Inchanappa House and Rossana House. These are important aspects of local heritage, also contributing to the wooded landscape that characterises much of Ashford.

### **HER1**

It is an objective of the Council to protect the natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the town, in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan. The following tables include a description of the village's heritage assets:

### **HER2**

All new landscaping proposals shall have an emphasis on native planting and biodiversity enhancement.

### **HER3**

Development proposals shall incorporate and preserve existing items of heritage interest such as hedgerows, stone walls, vernacular gate pillars and associated features.

### **HER4**

All new landscaping proposals shall have an emphasis on native planting and biodiversity enhancement.

### **HER5**

It is council policy to:

- Protect and conserve, in cooperation with the relevant statutory authorities and other groups/habitats of local and regional importance not otherwise protected by legislation.
  
- Protect and enhance where possible wildlife habitats such as rivers, streams, scrub and woodland, field boundaries, which occur outside designated areas. Taken as a whole such features form an important network of habitats and corridors, which allow wildlife to exist and flourish.
  
- Ensure that the impact of new development on biodiversity is minimised and will ensure that measures for the enhancement of biodiversity are included in all proposals for large developments.

## ***HER 6***

“Mount Usher Garden, located within the town and bisected by the Vartry River is of considerable historical and ecological interest and is of National importance. It is an objective of the council to protect the character and setting of the gardens, house and associated curtilage”. “This will include a 25m buffer zone along the Mill Road to the east of Mt Usher gardens and a 25m buffer zone to the south of Mt Usher gardens at Rossana Upper”.

### ***Recorded Monuments***

There are four Recorded Monuments within the boundary of Ashford and two within the immediate environs.

#### ***Recorded Monuments within Town Boundary and in Greenbelt area (DoEHLG)***

<b>Monument No.</b>	<b>Site Type</b>	<b>Townland</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>WI025-00101-</b>	Ecclesiastical Enclosure	Ballymaghroe	Ecclesiastical Enclosure
<b>WI025-003---</b>	Moated Site	Ballinapark	Moated Site
<b>WI025-007---</b>	Mound	Rossana Upper	A tumulus, Neolithic-Bronze Age burial mound, overlooking the Vartry river with an adjacent ring ditch (WI025-037---). The mound is circular, steep-sided (diam. 21m; H 3.7m) with a level summit.
<b>WI025-02601-</b>	Church and Graveyard	Inchanappa South	The partial remains of the nave and chancel of a church (dims. c. 9m x 5.5m) with a small graveyard containing headstones. There is a font (WI025-02602-) recorded in the graveyard.
<b>WI025-02602-</b>	Font	Inchanappa South	A broken rectangular font recorded in the church graveyard (WI025-02601-).
<b>WI025-036---</b>	Ring-Barrow	Rossana Upper	A ring-ditch, which consists of a level circular area (diam. 11.5m) defined by a shallow fosse, adjacent to a tumulus (WI025-007--).

### ***Protected Structures***

There are eight Recorded Monuments within the boundary of Ashford and two within the immediate environs. In addition to the vernacular houses, street furniture and the

Church of Ireland Church, these structures include five county houses, which are significant to the heritage of the Ashford area.

Country houses were constructed by roughly between 1670 and 1850, and are often found near to or on the sites of older ruined castles or tower houses, churches or defunct administrative centres. In many instances these houses are often situated within embellished and ornamental demesne lands ringed by high walls, as found in Ashford. In other instances the original house has been ruined or altered and the vestigial remains in the landscape consist of demesne woodland, gate lodges or follies.

Within Wicklow County Councils Record of Protected Structures, it is worth noting that, in relation to a protected structure, the meaning of the term 'structure' includes the interior of the structure; the land lying within the curtilage of the structure; any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of the above structures.

It is the policy of the Council to preserve these protected structures in order to protect the built and natural heritage of the County.

***Protected Structures (CDP, Chapter 10 - Section 6.2.2.1)***

<b><i>CDP Ref No.</i></b>	<b><i>Building Address</i></b>	<b><i>Townland</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>
<b>18-05</b>	Nun's Cross Church of Ireland Church, Ashford	Clora	Simple, two-bay, First Fruits Church with lime-rendered walls, pointed windows with elaborate tracery and a three-stage, west tower with pinnacles and crockets. The church is associated with the Synge family.
<b>19-01</b>	Ballinahinch Dawn Cottage Ashford	Ballinahinch	White-washed, five-bay, single-storey cottage with a heavy batter and buttresses at the ends of the façade. Thick thatch on the roof.
<b>19-02</b>	Ballinahinch Ashford	Ballinahinch	Thatched cottage.
<b>19-03</b>	Nun's Cross Former National School Ashford	Ballinahinch	Small, early-19th Century, gable-ended school-house of three bays and a single storey with painted, lime-rendered walls, drip-labels over double-sash windows, high-pitched roof and pierced bargeboarding. The dates on the sign board are later than the building itself.



<b>19-04</b>	Ballycurry House Ashford	Ballycurry Demesne	Important country house by Francis Johnston, circa 1820 with a six-bay, two-storey façade, shallow bow on the rear façade, tetrastyle doric porch/portico of granite and a two-bay wing on the right-hand side.
<b>25-02</b>	Ballinalea Ashford	Ballymacahara	Post box with V R initials.

<b>25-06</b>	Bel Air Hotel Formerly Cronroe House. Ashford	Cronroe	A large, Italianate-gothic house of circa 1870 with an asymmetrical façade, three-storey 'campanile', cement-rendered walls, large, segmental-headed windows with plate glass, full-height bows and a hipped roof.
<b>25-10</b>	Inchinappa House Ashford	Inchanappa South	Long, two-storey house with painted, lined rendering being the rebuilding of a mid-18th Century house. The main feature is a colonnade of full-height, fluted doric columns in granite.
<b>25-11</b>	Mount Usher Ashford	Mount Usher	Detached multiple-bay two-storey house, built 1922, set within landscaped demesne.
<b>25-14</b>	Rossana Ashford	Rossana	Important, early-18th Century, brick house remodelled in the early 19th Century. The façade is of five bays and three storeys with tall, round-headed, ground-floor windows, a Greek-key string course and heavy cornice. The rear façade has a full-height half-hexagon bow and a shallow bow. All sash windows have Georgian glazing-bars.

*View of Special Amenity Value or Special Interest (CDP, Chapter 10 – Schedule 10.8)*

**No. Description**

22 View of River Vartry and riverside trees, looking westwards from bridge in Ashford

It is the policy of the Council to preserve the above view in order to protect the natural beauty of the County.

*Trees and Groups of Trees considered for preservation (CDP, Chapter 10 – Section 6.1.12)*

**No. Description**

38 Trees on the eastern side of the (old) N11 at Inchanappa South, Inchanappa House, Ashford

39 Riverside trees associated with proposed preserved view immediately north of and including part of GAA lands, Ashford

40 Line of conifers on northern boundary of Church Grounds in Ashford

41 Roadside mature trees western side of Inchanappa lands referred to in Action Plan 1, excluding area zoned for town centre uses, Ashford

42 Line of trees at Inchanappa at Western side of Inchanappa lands south of Garda Station

43 Mature trees lining avenue Eastern side of access road to Inchanappa

44 Line of trees alongside stream Lands at Inchanappa, close to Inchanappa House

45 Line of trees stretching northwest to southeast, except where future road developments require removal North of Vartry River near Mill Road

55 Lands at Rossana Lower, line of trees stretching northeast to southwest, except where future road developments require removal

56 North of Vartry River near Mill Road, line of trees stretching northwest to southeast, except where future road developments require removal

*Trees and Groups of Trees considered for preservation under this Local Area Plan*

**No. Description**

TP1 Trees at Mount Usher, in the grounds of Mount Usher House

TP2 ‘Duke of Richmonds tree’ within Rossana House demense

TP3 Riparian trees and ancient woodland along the banks of the Vartry in AA2 and AA3

TP4 The ancient tree in Ballymachara

“All proposals for development which impact upon trees (even though they may not be listed in this plan) will be required to submit a tree impact assessment which will include a mitigation plan (identifying root and canopy protection areas, felling proposals and method statement). The felling of mature trees to facilitate development works will be discouraged”. Where it is deemed necessary to remove any existing trees as part of a development, the development works shall include the replanting of trees of the same species as those removed at a ratio of two trees for every one removed.

## 11. ACTION AREAS

A number of Action Areas have been identified in the Local Area Plan. These lands must be developed on the basis of comprehensive development proposals that allow for the sustainable, phased and managed development of the Action Area during the forthcoming plan period. Any development on these lands must be on the basis of a comprehensive plan. The precise locations of each land use zone in these Action Area is illustrative only, and subject to a proper planning study, and conformance within proper planning and development. The location of any land use may be shifted within and Action Area. Subject to agreement at Development Management Stage.

### ACTION AREA 1

This is located around the lands of Inchanappa House that adjoin the N11 to the East and the R772 and Mount Usher Gardens to the West. Development shall be in accordance with the approved Action Area Plan, dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005. In summary, the main objectives of the approved Action Area Plan are as follows:

- The overall area of AA1 is c. 60.18ha, of which 22.36ha is zoned ‘residential’, 17.53ha is zoned ‘greenbelt’, 20ha is zoned ‘open space’ and 0.348ha is zoned ‘community & educational’.
- The development shall be phased as follows:  
Phase 1: 2007-2008, 24 months duration, 150 units  
(only 138 granted on appeal)  
Phase 2: 2009-2010, 24 months duration, 150 units  
Phase 3: 2011-2015, 60 months duration, 200 units
- No development may commence in Phase 1 until it is confirmed by the Sanitary Authority of Wicklow County Council that contract documents for the Ashford Sewage Pumping Station have been signed by Wicklow County Council. No units shall be occupied until it is confirmed that by the Sanitary Authority of Wicklow County Council that the Ashford Sewerage Pumping Station has been completed and commissioned.
- A park must be provided on a phased basis as a proportion of the residentially zoned land for which permission is being sought.
- All building lines shall be set back a minimum of 100m from the roadway edge of the N11.
- All trees on these lands identified as trees of amenity value, shall be preserved.
- Significant improvements to the Mill road must be complete prior to development.
- Cyclelanes must be provided on all spine routes through the development and along the public road frontage of the site.
- Any development located in close proximity to the N11 route shall have regard to the provisions of the Environmental Noise Regulations.

It is considered that the Development of Action Area 1 should include an additional objective having regard the provisions of the Environmental Noise Regulations. The Description of Action Area 1 on page 17 has been amended.

## **ACTION AREA 2**

This is located on each side of the Vartry River. Its area is circa 27.83ha. Any action area plan prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following:

- A maximum of 100 residential units at a Max Density of 10 houses per Hectare may be provided. A fully lit environmentally friendly low energy pedestrian walkway and cycle lane shall be developed within the first phase of development in Action Area 2. This route shall be linked to the linear park to be provided within AA3.
- The roadway providing access to Action Area 2 shall also accommodate the possible future bypassing of Nuns Cross Bridge. In the interest of providing the residents of that residential area a safer environment and to continue to promote a walking and cycling culture.
- The development of the subject lands shall provide for usable open space which is fully landscaped and which compliments the existing open space located within Bramble Glade.
- Provide a playing field
- Any proposed development on the subject land must protect the ancient woodlands and riparian trees along the banks of the river.
- Allow a generous set back of development from riverbank areas to ensure protection of the amenities of the River Vartry.
- Any planning application on these lands must include a flood risk study, which takes into consideration the cumulative effect of the development of both Action Area 2 and 3 to their full potential as set out in the objectives, in order to determine whether they are suitable for development or not.
- The area to the south of Bramble Glade shall be designated as open space

## **ACTION AREA 3**

This is located on the lands currently owned by the County Board of the GAA in Wicklow and occupied by Ashford GAA club. Its area is circa 4ha. Any action area plan prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following:

- Ensure that all development is of the appropriate scale and density and that it reflects the existing character of the village centre. Maximum elevation for new structures shall generally be 2 storeys with any third storey set back from the elevation of the main structure(s) to minimise visual mass.
- Any planning application on these lands must include a flood risk study, which takes into consideration the cumulative effect of the development of both Action Area 2 and 3 to their full potential as set out in the objectives, in order to determine whether they are suitable for development or not.
- Provide a linear park along the Vartry of at least 1.0ha as indicated on the map. A bridge facilitating pedestrian permeability must also be constructed beyond the back gardens of the existing properties on the north bank to link residential areas across the Vartry facilitating a walking and cycling route in daylight hours.
- Provide a Low Energy Environmentally Friendly riverwalk (with cyclelanes) of material appropriate to a semi rural walk (not tarmac) and associated landscaping. The park must be overlooked in the interests of safety and proper planning. The

developer shall undertake the management of this park in conjunction with the management of AA3 built structures.

- The ancient woodland and riparian trees along the banks of the Vartry shall be protected as a wildlife corridor in accordance with biodiversity policy.
- Provide a playground of at least 0.05ha on land zoned for a linear park adjoining and overlooked by the Town Centre development.
- The development of AA3 shall be designed to maximise passive surveillance of the adjoining park.
- The development of Action Areas 3 and 4 shall be subject to pre-planning application consultation relating to design concepts.

#### **ACTION AREA 4**

This is located on the site of the former Mart and extends from the edge of the apartment block to the north as far as the residentially zoned land to the south of the site. Its area is circa 1.32ha. Any action area prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following:

- Ensure that all development is of the appropriate scale and density and that it reflects the existing character of the village centre. Maximum elevation for new structures shall be 2 storeys.
- The development must include provision for a civic square in a central location, adjoining the street. The square shall be in a central location, cover an area of at least 0.07ha, be hard and soft landscaped and exclude car parking
- The Design of any proposed development shall be sympathetic to that of the existing buildings in the area.
- A 10m wide buffer along the eastern boundary of AA4 shall be included to minimise the impact of the development on Mount Usher Gardens. No construction works shall take place within this buffer and all proposals for development in AA4 shall be required to submit a method statement prior to the commencement of construction to show proposed mitigation measures. This space shall not be included in the calculations for providing adequate public open space in accordance with the standards of the County Development Plan.
- Any application for Development on lands within AA4 must be accompanied by a comprehensive Landscaping Plan, which clearly demonstrates how any proposed development will be adequately screened from the east and south east thereby mitigating against any adverse visual impact from the Gardens.
- The development of this Action Area shall be subject to pre-planning application consultation relating to design concepts.

#### **ACTION AREA 5**

This is located on the eastern side of the main street between the Garda Station and the Roundabout. Its area is circa 0.32ha. Any action area prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following:

- Ensure that all development is of an appropriate scale and density and that it reflects the existing character of the village centre. Maximum elevation for new structures shall be 2 storeys.

- Mixed-use development comprising of commercial/retail on ground floor and office/residential on upper floor shall be located on lands measuring c. 0.32ha to the north of the Old Garda Station
- Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) of at least 0.03ha (e.g. youth shelter, small skate park, mini-tennis/basketball court or playground) at a prominent and safe location overlooked from the R772 adjacent to the old Garda Station.
- Retail units shall be of dual frontage design capable of fronting onto the main street while also passively supervising the parklands to the rear. The Design and layout of these units shall provide ease of access within the centre of any proposed development to the proposed public park to the rear
- Pedestrian and cycling access shall be reserved from the main street to the future parkland of AA1. A pedestrian access shall also be provided off the roundabout to the proposed public park.
- Provide a new purpose built, high quality Garda Station to service the local community
- Provide recycling facilities
- Provide a civic centre
- No development will take place until Action Areas 3 and 4 have been completed.

### **ACTION AREA 6**

This is located in Ballinalea between the Grangelea and Woodview estates and fronting the L-1096. Its area is circa 2.6ha. Any action area prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following:

- As part of the development of AA6 must allow for access to both Ashford Rovers football pitch and Woodview from the L-1096 as indicated on the map. The reservations shown are diagrammatic only and subject to further investigation and due process.
- Lands adjacent to the proposed access road and soccer pitch measuring a minimum of 0.15ha, shall be provided to cater for new changing rooms and/or the provision of an all weather training area. These development(s) shall be provided at the expense of the developer of Action Area 6.
- Overlooked pedestrian/cycling linkages must be included that link the Woodview estate to any new development in the interests of pedestrian permeability.

### **ACTION AREA 7**

This is located on residential and community-zoned lands between the R763 and R764 as indicated. Its area is circa 23ha. Any action area prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following:

- Development of these lands must provide a road (with associated footpath and cycleway) linking the R764 to the proposed road in AA8, which will service the development of these lands.
- Provide a community centre and ancillary facilities, which addresses the needs of the schools and the community. This development shall be fully completed prior to the commencement of the second phase of development within AA7.

- A phasing proposal shall be submitted at planning application stage for the development of these lands

### **ACTION AREA 8**

This is located on the lands zoned for Employment and Open Space to the north of the town. Its area is circa 20ha. Any action area prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following:

- Development of these lands must provide a road linking the R764 to the R772, which will service development on the employment-zoned lands, and servicing of the adjoining lands. This road must also link to the proposed road in AA7 (See Map1).
- A full sized floodlit pitch with associated dressing rooms and parking facilities shall be developed on the OS lands located in this action area in conjunction with the development of the remaining employment lands.
- Maintenance and use shall be agreed between local interest groups in conjunction with the Community and Enterprise section of Wicklow County Council.

### **ACTION AREA 9**

This Action Area is located to the north west of the town centre in close proximity to the Nun's Cross Roads. Community and Educational lands measuring a minimum of 1.05ha should be provided of which .63ha shall be reserved for educational purposes and the remaining .42ha shall reserved for community purposes on lands immediately adjoining the existing school with the remaining lands being zoned for residential purposes. Any action area prepared or development proposed for these lands shall adhere to the following

- Ensure that all development is of an appropriate height, scale and density and that it reflects the existing character of the village centre.
- Parking Facilities and Bus turning facilities shall be provided on site to cater for the existing school. A Multi Use Games Area, small playing field and associated changing facilities shall also be provided on the Community and Educational Lands. These Developments shall be provided at the expense of the Developer.
- Only 50% of the Residential element of the Action Area Plan shall be constructed with the remaining 50% only being allowed to take place once the facilities provided for above on the Community and Educational lands have been constructed.
- A comprehensive Landscaping Plan shall be submitted for the Development of the overall Action Area land, which shall be carried out by the Developer of these lands.

### **Opportunity Sites**

It is the policy of the Council to promote the development, or re-development, and intensification of use of the opportunity sites. The Council considers that there is one prime site zoned town centre and adjoining a residential area, which is under-utilised in terms of its development potential, and as such should be upgraded and revitalised.

This site is capable of being marked by the presence of business or residential development with a notable architectural input and of a scale befitting its location.

The development of this site will help to set the tone for the immediate area and influence public perception of it. A high quality of urban design and innovative architectural design solutions will be required for its development. It is in a prime location at the entrance to the Ballinalea estate.

Site	Location	Zoning	Acceptable Use
Corner	Ballinalea	Town Centre	Mixed-use development comprising of retail or commercial development on ground floor and office/residential on upper floor.

### **Phasing of Development**

In the interests of the planned, orderly and sustainable development of the area, the phased development of lands will be necessary.

Action Area Plans shall include objectives for the phasing of lands within Action Areas. The Council will require developers to provide community, open space, recreation and play facilities concurrent with new residential developments. The provision of this infrastructure must be progressed in tandem with residential development, and the latter will only be permitted on the basis of satisfactory provision of the former.

## **12. ZONING**

The purpose of land use zoning objectives is to indicate the Council’s intentions for all lands in the town and within the Agricultural/Greenbelt. The various land use zones and their objectives are identified on the Maps of this Local Area Plan. Zoning aspires to promote the orderly development of the town by eliminating potential conflicts between incompatible land uses, and to establishing an efficient basis for investment in public infrastructure and facilities.

The basis for the zoning in this Plan is to develop the town in a compact form so that housing and facilities are within easy reach of each other, encouraging sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling.

Land use zoning objectives, vision and uses are listed in the following:

### **Existing Residential (RE)**

**Objective:** *To protect, provide and improve existing residential amenities of adjoining properties and areas while allowing for infill residential development that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located.*

**Vision:** To ensure that any new development conforms to County Development Plan standards and that development in existing areas (e.g. extensions, infill development, childcare facility etc) reflects the prevailing density and character of its immediate surroundings, and shall have a minimal impact on existing residential amenity.



**Such Residential Uses include:** housing, open space, community facilities, home based economic activity, utility installations and ancillary development and other residential uses in accordance with the County Development Plan.

### **Residential (R)**

**Objective:** *To protect, provide and improve residential amenities.*

**Vision:** To ensure that any new development conforms to County Development Plan standards and the provisions of this Local Area Plan.

**Such Residential Uses include:** housing, open space, community facilities, home based economic activity, utility installations and ancillary development and other residential uses in accordance with the County Development Plan.

### **Town Centre (TC)**

**Objective:** *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 and/or other ancillary residential accommodation. To consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and promote urban design concepts and linkages between town centre activity areas.*

**Vision:** This zoning objective seeks to consolidate the existing Town centre. The aim is to further develop the centre by extension of the area and provision of open space, parking, appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring an opportunity mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, residential uses, and urban streets while delivering a quality rural town environment which will enhance the quality of life of resident, visitor and workers alike. The zone will strengthen retail provision, emphasise urban conservation, ensure priority for pedestrians and cyclists, and enhance and develop the existing town fabric.

**Such Town Centre uses include:** retail, shops, health, restaurants, sufficient residential development to ensure the passive security of the zone, commercial, office, community, some tourism and recreational uses, community, utility installations and ancillary developments for town centre uses in accordance with the County Development Plan.

### **Employment (E)**

**Objective:** *To provide for economic development, enterprise and employment.*

**Vision:** Employment areas are intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas containing a range of employment uses within a well-designed and attractive setting that would supply employment opportunities for the settlement and its hinterland. It is also envisaged that indigenous and local enterprise is facilitated in this zoning.

**Such Employment uses include:** general and light industry, office uses, warehousing/distribution, recycling centre, enterprise units, appropriate warehousing, utility installations and ancillary developments for employment and industry uses in accordance with the County Development Plan.

### **Community and Educational (CE)**

**Objective:** *To provide for civic, community and educational facilities.*

**Vision:** The zoning objective seeks to provide and enhance the existing social infrastructure for the town.

**Such Community/Educational and Social Infrastructure uses include:** burial grounds, places of worship, schools, training facilities, community hall, sports and

recreational facilities, utility installations and ancillary developments for community, educational and institutional uses in accordance with the County Development Plan.

### **Open Space (OS)**

**Objective:** *To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space.*

**Vision:** This zoning objective seeks to provide recreational and amenity resources for urban and rural populations subject to strict development controls. Only community facilities, recreational buildings ancillary to use of land and other recreational uses will be considered and encouraged by the Planning Authority.

**Such Open Space uses include:** tourism and recreational uses, community facilities, open space, sports grounds, utility installations and ancillary developments for open space uses in accordance with the County Development Plan.

### **Greenbelt (GB)**

**Objective:** *To protect and provide for agricultural greenbelt to demarcate the urban and rural area and provide for agriculture and amenity in a manner that protects the physical and visual amenity of the area.*

**Vision:** The zoning objective seeks to create a rural/urban fringe that is attractive, accessible, diverse and multi-functional. It will serve the needs of both urban and rural communities, strengthen the links between town and country and contribute fully towards sustainable development. The role of the agricultural greenbelt is to retain the open and rural character of lands between and adjacent to urban areas, and an area of step down management from the town development boundary to the greater rural hinterland. Social residential development will be permitted provided it is located in accordance with firm planning principles especially with respect to proximity to services and connectivity to the town.

Development within this zoning is controlled under the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan. Residential development shall be subject to the provisions of policy SS9 of The County Development Plan.

## **13. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Council is obliged to monitor the operation and implementation of the Plan. The successful implementation of the provisions of this Plan will require the combined involvement of the community, local business, statutory service providers as well as Wicklow County Council.

The achievement of the objectives of the Plan will be dependent on the availability of appropriate levels of finance. The Council will actively and innovatively strive to identify and secure resources from both public and private sectors, to implement the provisions of this Plan and facilitate private investment in the town, in accordance with this Town Plan.

To facilitate the implementation of roads and transportation, water and drainage, and community facilities infrastructure, the Council will require contributions from benefiting developers. Contributions shall be made in accordance with Wicklow County Council's Development Contribution Scheme 2005-2007, prepared under Section 48(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

In addition, Wicklow County Council will continue the practice of granting planning permission with the inclusion of conditions requiring levies and bonds to be paid, or works undertaken, to facilitate developments in the interests of the common good.

#### **14. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (Strategic Environmental Assessment) – (SEA) are given effect by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument Number (SI No. 435 of 2004) and by the Planning & Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).

The SEA Directive requires that an environmental assessment must be carried out for all plans and programmes that fall within the parameters as set out in the Directive. As the Ashford Plan is being prepared under part II, Sections 18-20 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act, 2000 it will be adopted as a Local Area Plan and will have affect over a six-year period (2008-2014). Screening of the exercise is required in accordance with the SEA Directive.

The key in deciding if SEA will apply is whether the variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. As advised by the Regulations, a screening exercise was undertaken having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations 2004, and subsequently notice was given to the three Environmental Authorities<sup>1</sup>. Of the three the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources responded while no submissions or observations were received from either the DoEHLG or the EPA

The conclusion of the County Council's consideration of the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning & Development SEA Regulations is that, the policies and objectives contained within the variation, and the development that will result there from, are unlikely to give rise to any significant effects on the environment. It is therefore concluded that an SEA is not required for this Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The Environmental Protection Agency. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.



**ASHFORD SMALL GROWTH TOWN I  
LOCAL AREA PLAN**

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## 1. LOCAL AREA PLAN STATUS AND PROCESS

Part II, Chapter I, Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (the Act), as amended, provides that an LAP may be prepared in respect of any area which a planning authority considers suitable; and in particular for areas which require economic, physical and social renewal and for areas likely to be the subject of large-scale development within the lifetime of the Development Plan.

An LAP shall be made in respect of an area which is designated as a town in the most recent census of population and other than a town designated as a suburb or environs in that census, which has a population in excess of 2,000 and is situated within a functional area of a planning authority which is a County Council.

The 2002 Amendment to the Planning and Development Act (2000) indicates that an LAP can include specific objectives pertaining to the zoning of the land, however these objectives must be consistent with the CDP. Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002, Section 8).

Once the Draft Plan is prepared, notice of the intention to make the proposed Local Area Plan will be advertised in one or more newspapers circulating in the area. Information will also be disseminated through public counter, website, and by phone. The statutory time frame as set out in the Planning and Development Acts, commences upon public display of the Draft Local Area Plan.

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Progress of statutory LAP process</b>
Week 1	Draft Local Area Plan on display - submissions invited 6 weeks
Week 6	Preparation of Manager's Report on submissions received 6 weeks
Week 12	Manager's Report given to Members for consideration 6 weeks
Week 18	Plan made unless Members decide to amend 3 weeks
Week 21	Notice of alterations published & submissions invited 4 weeks
Week 25	Preparation of Manager's Report on submissions (alterations only) 4 weeks
Week 29	Manager's Report given to Members for consideration 6 weeks
Week 35	Plan made as per Manager's recommendation (or) Members make Plan contrary to the Manager's recommendations

## 2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A Public Consultation Meeting was held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2007 from 4pm-9pm at Chester Beatty's pub in Ashford. A Background Issues Paper and a submission form were made available to each attendee upon arrival at the meeting.

The Public Consultation Meeting was held in a clinic format, where each individual/stakeholder had an opportunity to speak to a planner(s) individually. Written submissions were invited from the public from the 30<sup>th</sup> of August up to the closing date of the 27<sup>th</sup> September at 5.00 pm.

***List of those who made Pre-Plan Submissions:***

1. Coordination Unit DCENR C/o Francis Heaslip
2. Charles & Geoffrey Tottenham C/o Frank O’Gallachoir
3. Patrick Fahey & Peter Crossan C/o Frank O’Gallachoir
4. Vincent Doyle C/o Alphaplan Design
5. Ronald Phillips & Michelle Hender Phillips C/o Alphaplan Design
6. Stephen Miley
7. Stephen Miley
8. Killiskey COI Parish C/o PD Lane
9. Ashford Rovers FC C/o Jim King
10. Aisling MacGrath
11. Ashford Development Association
12. Ashford Development Committee C/o Martin Kelly
13. Scoil Na Coroine Mhuire C/o Edward Barry
14. Jane Dignam
15. Martin Kelly
16. Oona McKiernan
17. Marie & Tony Behan
18. Ashford GAA Club C/o Myles Manning
19. Eleanor Mayes
20. Olive Moroney
21. Maurice & Olive Ramsey
22. Madeline Jay & Simon Pratt C/o Frank O’Gallachoir
23. Derek Connolly
24. Ashford Community Group C/o Fiona O’Rourke
25. Bayberry Properties C/o PD Lane
26. Arrell Properties C/o PD Lane
27. Michael Ryan C/o Theo Phelan Design
28. Charles O’Reilly Hyland C/o Theo Phelan Design
29. James & Rosemary Farrelly
30. James Farrelly
31. Devil’s Glen Holiday & Equestrian Village C/o Stephen Miley
32. McCarthy and Kelly Partnership C/o Tiros Resource Ltd
33. Donal Kavanagh C/o Pat O’ Connor & Assoc.
34. Gerry Daly C/o Pat O’ Connor & Assoc.
35. Emmett Hedigan C/o Pat O’ Connor & Assoc.
36. Ashford Rovers FC C/o Pat O’ Connor & Assoc.
37. Sharon Hughes C/o Pat O’ Connor & Assoc.
38. James & Rose Farrelly C/o Pat O’ Connor & Assoc.
39. Brian Stokes C/o Cunnane Stratton Reynolds
40. Brian Stokes C/o Cunnane Stratton Reynolds
41. Ashford Tidy Town Group
42. McCarthy and Kelly Partnership C/o Tiros Resource Ltd
43. Emmett Hedigan
44. Glenkerrin Homes C/o McGill Planning
45. *Vincent Doyle C/o Pat O’ Connor & Assoc. (Late Submission)*
46. *Gerry Fortune C/o Kim Dreyer. (Late Submission)*

### *Headline Issues*

A summary of the main issues raised in Public Submissions and during Public Consultation meeting included:

#### ***Population and Residential***

- Projected population figures for Ashford too low
- Need to provide affordable housing for local people
- Provision of Part V of Planning & Development Act 2000

#### ***Retailing and Town Centre***

- Supermarket not suitable in Ashford
- The development re-location of the GAA and development of the site as a park and town centre is necessary
- Some form of sporting activity or play should be retained on the GAA site

#### ***Community and Education***

- Reserve land zoned for both schools to allow for their expansion
- Need for facilities for the youth
- Community centre needed in a central location
- Anti-social behaviour prevalent in some areas, alternatives need to be provided for young people
- Sewerage to be extended to Devil's Glen
- Need for a playground and facilities for the youth etc

#### ***Natural/Built Heritage and Tourism***

- Trees of amenity should be specified and should continue to be protected
- Tourism attractions such as Avoca Handweavers to be encouraged
- Bridle track along riverbank in conjunction with walking route
- Development must reflect local character of the village – important that this character is retained

#### ***Zoning***

- Traveller accommodation to be considered.
- Clarification on proposed densities for R1 zoned lands
- Clarification on the permitted uses in the 'Greenbelt' zone
- Timescale for the commissioning of the new Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Where would a landfill be permitted

#### ***Employment***

- Need for a business park
- No objection to existing zoning of Industrial/Employment lands
- Industrial/Employment site should be relocated out to Kellystown

## ***Transport***

- Road Objective through AA2 lands as an alternative to the Nun's Cross Bridge
- The footpath on the R763 is insufficient in width
- The parking at Mount Usher needs to be looked at

### **3. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**

The development management standards with which developments have to comply are both set out in the relevant chapters of the Wicklow County Development Plan and in this Local Area Plan. Where appropriate standards for particular development do not exist in this Plan, the development management standards in the County Development Plan shall apply.

#### **3.1 Development Contributions**

Having regard to the capital expenditure required to adequately provide for Roads and Transportation, Environmental and Community Facilities Infrastructure, the Council will require contributions from benefiting developers. Contributions shall be made in accordance with Wicklow County Council's development contribution scheme, adopted December 2005, and crafted by virtue of its powers enacted under Section 48 (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

In addition Wicklow County Council will continue the practice of granting Planning permissions with the inclusion of conditions requiring levies and or bonds to be paid and/or works undertaken to facilitate developments in the interests of the common good.

### **4. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a Plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the Plan or programme. It informs Plans of the environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into Plan making.

#### **4.1 Legal Framework**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2004, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) was transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004). Relevant 'Guidelines for Planning and Regional Authorities' were subsequently issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in November 2004.

SEA is mandatory for Plans for areas with a population of 10,000 or more. Where the population involved is less than 10,000 and in the case of Variations of Development Plans, the EU Directive nevertheless requires screening of the Plan or Variation, in order to establish if development resulting from policies and objectives will cause significant environmental effects.



## 4.2 The Screening Process

Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular Plan, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant an SEA. The key indicator that will determine if an SEA is required of particular non-mandatory Plans, is if they are likely to have *significant environmental effects* on the environment or not.

Where the Planning Authority is uncertain that there is a prima facie case for an SEA, the Plan must be screened for its possible significant effects and the designated environmental authorities should then be formerly consulted during, and as part of, the screening exercise.

The designated authorities are the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government, and the Department of Communications, Marine, and Natural Resources. While the EPA must be consulted in all cases, consultation with the two Departments is conditional on the Plan having significant effects within the remit of those departments.

## 4.3 Consultation with Environmental Authorities

### *Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources*

- The implementation of this LAP should not compromise the status objectives as set out in the Water Framework Directive. The Plan will have regard to the Water Framework Directive.
- Development on foot of this LAP should be considered premature until suitable Sanitary Services infrastructure is in place to take and treat satisfactorily the anticipated increased loadings. Development shall be dependant upon the availability of sanitary services infrastructure.

### *Eastern Regional Fisheries Board*

NO RESPONSE RECEIVED

### *DoEHLG and EPA*

NO RESPONSE RECEIVED

The conclusion of the County Council's consideration of the criteria set-out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development SEA Regulations is that the development proposals and the policies and objectives contained within the variation are unlikely to give rise to any significant effects on the environment.

## 5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 5.1 The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The NSS is a twenty-year national planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. Under the NSS the cities and towns of Ireland were designated a status to reflect their role as drivers of development in their relevant region. The population of Ashford would indicate that it falls under the category of ‘Urban Centre’ (circa 1,000) however because of its proximity to Wicklow Town (Primary Development Centre) and Rathnew (Urban Centre) it was not awarded this status. It can therefore be concluded that Ashford should develop with strong links to Wicklow Town/Rathnew without competing for industrial, commercial or retail development and thus primarily accommodate the needs of Ashford and its immediate environs.

### 5.2 The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004 – 2016

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) put in place a broad Planning framework for the development of the Greater Dublin Area of which Wicklow forms a part. The Guidelines are informed by and flow from the National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020. The RPG’s provide an overall strategic context for the Development Plans of each Local Authority.

The RPG’s make a distinction between the existing built up area and its environs where the built up area is the Metropolitan and the remainder the Hinterland with a range of settlement sizes that have the potential to attain an enhanced level of sustainability. Northeast Wicklow including Bray and Greystones/Delgany and their environs are within the Metropolitan area while the remainder of the County is the Hinterland.

The Settlement strategy in the Hinterland is essentially based around a clearly articulated hierarchy of settlements. This strategy seeks to promote development into a series of tiers, with the Large Growth Towns I and II and the Moderate Growth Towns at the urban end of the strategy with the other towns located in the tiers below. Ashford’s population means that under the RPGs, its settlement type is ‘Small Growth Town’ (1,000-5,000).

This settlement type fulfils the following role:

Settlement Type	Population Range	Accessibility	Typical Distance from higher level settlement	Economic Function
Small Growth Town	1,000-5,000	On national primary or secondary road. Good bus links to Railway and larger settlements	10km from Large Town	Attractor for investment

### 5.3 Wicklow County Development Plan 2004 – 2010

Wicklow is one of the most rapidly growing counties in Ireland. This is a result of population retention, growth, and in-migration. In-migration and natural population increase has resulted from Wicklow’s location within the Greater Dublin Area and the influence of Dublin’s Urban Shadow, together with the amenities it offers, including its coastline, mountains and scenic rural areas.

The County Development Plan settlement strategy seeks to locate population growth and channel development in line with the principles of the RPG's. The application of such a strategy includes the promotion of growth within the Metropolitan area settlements of Bray and Greystones/Delgany, the Hinterland Large Growth Towns of Wicklow/Rathnew and Arklow, and the Moderate Growth Towns of Blessington and Newtownmountkennedy. It also seeks to facilitate local growth, where in-migration is restricted, in Small Growth towns, Villages and other Rural Areas.

The CDP promotes a hierarchy of settlements in recognition that settlement role and function is a product of scale and spatial distribution.

The County Development Plan provides a settlement strategy which is configured in accordance with the Regional Planning Guidelines and recognises the reality that larger settlements have critical mass and are thus more successful at providing a wide range of environmental, economic and social facilities, in generating indigenous employment growth, and attracting inward investment.

Ashford is designated as a 'Small Growth Town I' in the County Development Plan (CDP). As provided in the CDP, the indicative population for Ashford in 2010 is 2,295 and the target population for 2016 is 3,000. It is intended that the necessary infrastructure will be in place to provide for this growth.

Such settlements represent the 'stronger small towns in the County, which provide a good range of employment, retail and social/community services to their hinterland'. These towns will serve as hubs for the development of social, cultural and economic services which are necessary for quality of life and sustainable communities.

Policy SS3 of the settlement strategy contains the criteria for local growth for multi-house and single house developments for Ashford (see Population and Settlement Strategy Variation No. 3 of 2007, SS3 at Section 4.1.5, Page 5 and definitions at Page 3). In short this policy restricts single house development to those living and/or working in the County for 1 year. For multihouse developments, 50% of residential units are available for regional growth, and there are no restrictions as to who can purchase these. The remaining 50% are restricted to those who have resided in Co Wicklow for at least one year.

All lands within the Development Boundary fall under the Landscape Zone 'Corridor Area' due to its proximity to the N11.

## 6. POPULATION

As provided in the County Development Plan, the indicative population for Ashford for 2010 and 2016 is 2,295 and 3,000 respectively. The table below gives the context of population growth since 1996.

Year	Population	Change	Change (%)	Source
1996	1215			Census
2002	1356	141	10.4	Census
2006	1349	-7	-0.5	Census
2010	2295	946	70.13	CDP Indicative Population
2016	3000	705	30.72	CDP Indicative Population

The role of the LAP is to cater for an increase in population in Ashford to 2,295 in 2010 and 3,000 in 2016. There are sufficient lands zoned 'residential' in Ashford at present to accommodate for the projected 2016 population of 3,000.

Since the last Local Area Plan for Ashford in 2001 and up to July 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, permissions for 187 housing units inside the development boundary were granted. Of these only 24 had been completed due to infrastructural restrictions. Since July 2006, two significant permissions have been granted, permission for 142 residential units in Ballinalea and permission for 20 Social & Affordable residential units in Ballinahinch (with a further 34 pending a flood study). These two developments are pending the upgrading of sanitary services infrastructure.

What is proposed in this Plan is an increase in the designated population to **2,295 by 2010** (this would accommodate an additional 357 houses) and an increase to **3,000 by 2016**, which will allow for a further 266 houses.

## **7. QUANTITY OF ZONED LAND**

It is intended to enhance the physical and social infrastructure and accommodate the needs of the town, in accordance with its 'Small Growth Town I' status as set out in the County Development Plan Settlement Strategy to accommodate the needs of existing and the Planned increase in population. This will require land to be designated for community and employment infrastructure, in addition to residential development.

### **7.1 Housing**

Though this Plan will cover the period of six years until 2014, zoning will be in the context of the proposed population projections up to 2016, that is for an extra **1651** persons. The quantum of development until 2010 will of course be controlled through the development management process on the basis of the 2010 figures catering for an extra 946 people of which 837 are from extant Planning permissions (327 units). This will ensure that only the land necessary to accommodate the target population may be developed.

While the amount of land to be zoned is based on the number of people to be accommodated, Household Size, 'Excess Factor', 'Headroom', and Housing Density are all factors in this equation.

#### *Household Size*

As was stated above the average household size has been steadily falling in Co Wicklow, from 3.23 in 1996 to 2.9 in 2006, a fall of 0.033 per annum over the 10 year period, that accelerated to over 0.04 over the past 4 years. The Regional Planning Guidelines review group for the Greater Dublin Area estimates that the average household size by 2016 will be in the region of **2.56 persons per household**.

### *Excess Factor*

This term describes the fact that demand for housing will exceed actual household formation due to:

- Some of the additional units being required to replace obsolete housing;
- Some units being vacant at any one time due to market frictional factors;
- Some units being second homes or pieds à terre.

The Excess Factor can vary over time, between regions, between counties and between urban and rural areas. The Regional Planning Guidelines have assumed that by 2010 the Excess Factor will be 20% for the Greater Dublin Area, and in the Mid-East region it will be circa 13%. Given that the Excess Factor is greater in urban than in rural areas, that Ashford is in the 'Hinterland' and that a considerable proportion of households in the town are commuter households, ***an Excess Factor of 6% will be used in this Plan.***

### *Headroom*

This is the amount of extra land that should be zoned over and above the minimum amount needed to accommodate population targets. It is also known as market factor 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. Headroom is normally in the 30% - 50% range, and a figure of 30% *will be applied in this Plan* given the proximity of the town to the N11 and Dublin, and the resulting greater likelihood that development will take place.

### *Housing Density*

The density in the County Development Plan shall apply to *lands within the town boundary and for calculation purposes an average figure of 20 houses per hectare* will apply to such land.

### *Amount of New Zoned Housing Land*

The number of houses to be catered for is based the current population (1349) divided by the current 2006 Household size (2.9), which yields 465. Then the current population (1349) is divided by predicted 2016 Household size (2.56), which yields 527 units. By subtracting the 465 from 527 the resulting figure of 62 reflects falling occupancy rates. The town is expected to increase by 1651 to reach 3,000 by 2016. Of this increase, 921 can be subtracted as pending planning permissions resulting in a need to accommodate 730 people. By applying the 2016 Household size this gives a requirement of 285 units, which is then added to 62 (falling occupancy rates) and resulting in a total requirement of 347 units by 2016.

The recommended density is medium density (20 units/ha). The amount of land required is found by dividing this figure of 347 by the density giving a net land requirement of ***17.35ha***. These figures are then adjusted by adding in the 'Excess Factor' and 'Headroom' giving a total allowance for zoned residential land of ***23.60 ha at medium density.***

## 7.2 Social and Community Infrastructure

Ashford has the following assets under this heading:

- Catholic Church;
- Church of Ireland Church;
- 2 Primary schools;
- GAA pitch and dressing rooms (in ownership of County Board);
- Soccer pitch and dressing rooms (leased from WCC);
- 3 Pre-Schools

### *Education*

The Department of Education require sites located close to the new areas of housing, existing community facilities and the town centre. The two existing schools have requested that land currently designated to facilitate the extension of the existing schools be retained.

There is a population of 1,349 in Ashford, which has two primary schools: Nun's Cross National School and Scoil na Coroine Muire Mixed National School. Ashford's projected population for 2016 is 3,000. According to the Department 11.3% of the population is of primary school age. This gives a total requirement of 187 extra primary school places or 8 additional mainstream classrooms. The Department of Education has recommended that it would be prudent to reserve 2.02 hectares (5 acres) for the expansion of the primary schools.

Considering current population of Ashford, primary pupil numbers attending schools in the town and an estimate of primary pupil numbers generated from the town's hinterland, the town's primary schools provide education for, in excess of, double the existing towns population. For this reason the Ashford LAP shall retain 2.03ha for the expansion of the primary schools. Of this, 1.4ha shall be adjacent to Scoil na Coroine Muire, while 0.63ha shall be adjacent to Nun's Cross National School giving the existing schools the option of extending their facilities.

As the estimated number of second level students is based on 8.5% of the population, this indicates 77 students would need to be catered for. This is too small a number to sustain a second level school and thus no allowance will be made for this.

### *Community and Play*

This Plan will allow for 2.4ha of land per 1000 added population to be designated for these purposes, and thus at least 3.96ha extra land will be designated for active open space, to cater for the increased population of 1651 people.

### 7.3 Employment and Enterprise

The appropriate scale of employment to be provided for such a 'Small Growth Town I' as Ashford is guided principally by the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, and the County Development Plan.

2006 estimates<sup>1</sup> for the GDA indicate the following employment trends: In terms of the future of the Irish Economy, the services sector is seen as the sustainable growth promoter for the economy. Manufacturing will continue to move to high-end technology operations, and overall, research and development and science, technology and innovation will become more integral. It is anticipated that there will be no major changes to employment rates. 2006 estimates indicate that 1.75% people work in Agriculture, 22.4% work in Industry and 75.85% work in Services.

The policies set out in 'Chapter 7: Employment' of the Plan are based on the above objectives.

This Plan will allow for 'employment' land to cater for the equivalent increase in population. Allowing for the following assumptions:

- 65% labour force participation rate
- a low density plot ratio of 0.4 to reflect the area and the preferred quality of service based employment or small enterprise units;
- a gross employment density of 25m<sup>2</sup> per employee;
- headroom 45%

#### Existing Population

$(1349 \times 65\% = 877 @ 25\text{m}^2 = 2.19\text{ha} / 0.4)$

$5.48\text{ha} + 45\% \text{ headroom } (2.32) = 7.9\text{ha}$

#### Projected Population

$(1651 \times 65\% = 1,073 @ 25\text{m}^2 = 2.68\text{ha} / 0.4)$

$6.70\text{ha} + 45\% \text{ headroom } (3.02) = 9.7\text{ha}$

These calculations give a requirement for employment land of **17.6ha** up to 2016. This amount of land was zoned in the previous Local Area Plan for Ashford however because of sewerage restrictions and limited access no development has taken place on the lands to date.

### 7.4 Retail

Ashford is currently served by a reasonable choice of convenience retailing (including petrol station, butcher, solicitor, chemist, hardware store and convenience food-stores). Only retail infrastructure, which corresponds to the towns' status in the Draft County Retail Hierarchy, is envisaged for Ashford.

This County Retail Strategy<sup>1</sup> has identified Ashford as a ‘Local Centre: Tier 2: Village Centre’. With a strategic policy to, “*facilitate the local provision of shops and services in Tier 2 level 4 Village Centres to meet the needs of existing and expanding populations*”.

The Strategy identifies a limited existing floorspace in Ashford: 389sqm of convenience, 564sqm comparison and 432sqm retail warehousing. Given the size of Ashford, retail expansion to the extent of self-sufficiency, particularly in the area of comparison provision, is unlikely and undesirable considering the role of the town in the County retail hierarchy. Significant increases in retail floorspace are not expected, however both the CDP and Ashford Local Area Plan will provide the policy framework to ensure that local shopping proposals (of suitable size and nature) are encouraged.

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016: Update on Regional Planning Guidelines – Economic Update, November 2006