



ASHFORD SMALL GROWTH TOWN I DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION B WRITTEN STATEMENT

1. PURPOSE OF PLAN.....	1
2. LOCATION, POPULATION AND CONTEXT.....	1
3. SETTLEMENT FUNCTION AND ROLE.....	2
4. TRANSPORTATION, TRAFFIC AND PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE.....	3
5. WATER SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE.....	4
6. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE.....	5
7. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.....	7
8. EMPLOYMENT.....	9
9. COMMERCIAL/TOWN CENTRE.....	10
10. HERITAGE.....	10
ACTION AREAS.....	16
13. ZONING.....	21
14. IMPLEMENTATION.....	23
15. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.....	23

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.

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.

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.

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 Ml per day. It is proposed to augment additional supply from wells in the Ashford area. This will produce an extra 3.5Ml 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 24th 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 of 0.05ha 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 0.87ha. This land shall be reserved for community needs including the provision of land for sheltered housing

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 500m² (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.

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:

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)

Monument No.	Site Type	Townland	Description
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WI025-00101-	Ecclesiastical Enclosure	Ballymaghroe	Ecclesiastical Enclosure
WI025-003---	Moated Site	Ballinapark	Moated Site
WI025-007---	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.
WI025-02601-	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.
WI025-02602-	Font	Inchanappa South	A broken rectangular font recorded in the church graveyard (WI025-02601-).
WI025-036---	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)

CDP Ref No.	Building Address	Townland	Description
18-05	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.
19-01	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.
19-02	Ballinahinch Ashford	Ballinahinch	Thatched cottage.
19-03	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.

19-04	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.
25-02	Ballinalea Ashford	Ballymacahara	Post box with V R initials.

25-06	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.
25-10	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.
25-11	Mount Usher Ashford	Mount Usher	Detached multiple-bay two-storey house, built 1922, set within landscaped demesne.
25-14	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
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22	View of River Vartry and riverside trees, looking westwards from bridge in Ashford
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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
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38	Trees on the eastern side of the (old) N11 at Inchanappa South, Inchanappa House, Ashford
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39	Riverside trees associated with proposed preserved view immediately north of and including part of GAA lands, Ashford
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40	Line of conifers on northern boundary of Church Grounds in Ashford
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41	Roadside mature trees western side of Inchanappa lands referred to in Action Plan 1, excluding area zoned for town centre uses, Ashford
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42	Line of trees at Inchanappa at Western side of Inchanappa lands south of Garda Station
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43	Mature trees lining avenue Eastern side of access road to Inchanappa
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44	Line of trees alongside stream Lands at Inchanappa, close to Inchanappa House
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45	Line of trees stretching northwest to southeast, except where future road developments require removal North of Vartry River near Mill Road
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55	Lands at Rossana Lower, line of trees stretching northeast to southwest, except where future road developments require removal
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56	North of Vartry River near Mill Road, line of trees stretching northwest to southeast, except where future road developments require removal
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Trees and Groups of Trees considered for preservation under this Local Area Plan

No.	Description
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TP1	Trees at Mount Usher, in the grounds of Mount Usher House
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TP2	'Duke of Richmonds tree' within Rossana House demense
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The felling of mature trees of amenity value or special interest, even though they may not be listed in this plan, will be discouraged as part of development works.

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 west and the R772 and Mount Usher Gardens to the east. Development shall be in accordance with the approved Action Area Plan, dated 4th April 2005. In summary, the main objectives of the approved Action Area Plan are as follows:

- The overall area of AA2 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.

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 50 residential units at a Max Density of 10 houses per Hectare including infill development along the road frontage at Mount Alto. Key areas for residential development would be adjacent to existing houses beside the Ashford – Nun’s Cross Road
- Provide a riverwalk on both sides of the Vartry
- Provide a playing field
- 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 to determine whether they are suitable for development or not.

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.
- The developer shall undertake a flood risk study to determine if the lands are suitable for development.
- Provide a linear park along the Vartry of at least 1.7ha as indicated on the map. A bridge facilitating pedestrian permeability must also be constructed to link residential areas across the Vartry facilitating a walking and cycling route.
- Provide a riverwalk (with cyclelanes) and associated landscaping. The park must be floodlit and 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.
- 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.
- Contemporary design shall be encouraged in the development of AA3.

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
- A 10m wide buffer along the eastern boundary of AA3 shall be included to minimise the impact of the development on Mount Usher Gardens.
- Contemporary design shall be encouraged in the development of AA4.

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.
- 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 front the main street with parking to the rear. Access from the existing roundabout.
- Pedestrian and cycling access shall be reserved from the main street to the future parkland of AA1.

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.
- A Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) of at least 0.07ha in AA6 shall be provided by the developer.
- 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 of at least 500m² (e.g. min.18x10m hall with ancillary rooms, 25% storage space, changing rooms, toilets, foyer, office, kitchen and community meeting room).

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.

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 Authorities¹. 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.

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