

**VARIATION NO. 1(i)
TO THE WICKLOW COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2016**

AVOCA SETTLEMENT PLAN



5 September 2011

**Forward Planning Section
Wicklow County Council
County Buildings
Wicklow**



CONTEXT

Purpose and Status of Plan

The purpose of this plan is to put in place a structure that will guide the future sustainable development of Avoca. The plan, in conjunction with the County Development Plan (CDP) 2010-2016 will inform and manage the future development of the town.

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

In addition to the objectives set out in the County Development Plan, that are relevant to the development of Avoca, it is an objective of this plan, to identify the special characteristics of Avoca and accordingly craft objectives to meet the specific needs of the town. As this plan will be part of and form a subset of the County Development Plan, it is not proposed to include a repetition of the objectives or strategies as set out in the County Development Plan. Unless standards or objectives for a particular development are included in this plan, the provisions of the County Development Plan shall apply. The Plan will however seek to formulate appropriate Avoca specific development objectives and guidance, compatible with those of the County Development Plan, to assist the Development Management process in managing sustainable progress for the town.

Settlement Profile

Avoca is a rural town that is located in the south east part of County Wicklow, within a particularly scenic rural setting along the Avoca River. The town is located approximately 10 kilometres from the higher order towns of Arklow and Rathdrum, which provide higher order employment and service functions for the town's population. The town currently serves the day-to-day needs of the local population, and is the main service centre for surrounding rural areas including Conary, The Meetings and Woodenbridge.

The town provides a variety of retail and social services, including a number of shops and local services, a public house, a Fish and Chip takeaway, Avoca Café, a betting office, a primary school, community hall, post office, credit union, IT centre/library, health centre, Garda station and Catholic church. Rooster Park provides the main recreational facility for the town.

The town is laid out in a linear fashion with a core consisting of the bridge, Roman Catholic Church, a former courthouse, former church, school and cemetery, a mill, a number of attractive nineteenth century houses and the riverside park. The setting of the town, along a steep hill and next to the river crossing contributes greatly to its character, as does its wooded backdrop. This charm is diminished somewhat by traffic congestion, plus a degree of dereliction and vacancy at prime sites.

The origins of the town owe much to the legacy of mining in the area, which was carried out over the years in varying intensities, reaching a peak in the nineteenth century when the Avoca mines became one of the biggest sources of copper and sulphur for a period. The town serves as a hub for tourist related activities related to the former mining landscape. The town is also a tourist destination for visitors to attractions such as the Vale of Avoca, which became famous through the verse of Thomas Moore, and the Avoca Handweavers woollen mills, which is reputedly the oldest in Ireland. In more recent times, the town became famous as the fictional home of BBC TV's 'Ballykissangel'. The town provides a number of services for the tourist trade, including tourist accommodation and tourist related shops.

The town has developed mainly along the east of the Avoca River in a linear manner. The promotion of a more concentric settlement pattern is constrained by several matters, including geographical constraints, a wide floodplain, and accessibility constraints between the town and lands west of the R752 due to infrastructural shortfalls including the absence of a safe pedestrian link across the R752, the limited capacity of the bridge, poor road alignment and the limited capacity of the junction between the bridge and Main Street/L2180. These factors have resulted in the growth of the town in a southerly direction towards Kilmagig. The dispersed spatial development of the town has resulted in a lack of confluence between the main housing and school areas in Kilmagig, and the town centre.

There are a number of facilities located outside the plan boundary, located along the Rathdrum to Arklow road that serve the town, including a recycling facility, playing pitches, tourist facilities, graveyard, and Church of Ireland church and associated buildings.

Growth Parameters

Under the Wicklow County Settlement Hierarchy, Avoca is designated a Level 6 'rural town'. The Rural Settlement Hierarchy, includes targets for the future population growth of Avoca. The targets indicate that the population of Avoca can grow to a maximum population of 800 people by 2016 and a maximum population of 900 people by 2022. Based on the calculations and assumptions set out in the Appendix attached hereto, the settlement can grow by a maximum of an additional 44 residential units up to 2016 and 127 units (inclusive of 44 aforementioned) up to 2022.

Waste Water Treatment

Avoca is served by the Avoca Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is located in Ballanagh. The plant is currently overloaded and has no extra capacity. The plant provides primary treatment only with no preliminary or secondary treatment. Treated effluent is of a poor quality and discharges to the Avoca River. The plant is currently the subject of an application for a Waste Water Discharge Licence.

Water

Water supply to Avoca is sourced from a treated surface water supply at Ballard, Ballinaclash. Water is fed by gravity down the Vale of Avoca and then pumped to a reservoir at Ballymurtagh. Water from the Ballymurtagh Reservoir is then fed to the Avoca Reservoir. The reservoir has sufficient storage capacity to provide for current projected levels of future growth.

Roads and Transportation

Access to Avoca is by two main approach routes - the R752 regional road, which is a key transportation link between Rathdrum to Arklow, and the R754 regional road linking Redcross to Woodenbridge. Access from the R752 to the town is across a narrow bridge which links to the town centre on Main Street and to local road L2180 which serves the majority of the town's residential and community facilities at Kilmagig. The town centre suffers from traffic congestion that reduces the amenity and safety of the area. The Roads Section are currently in the process of preparing a scheme to enhance pedestrian accessibility and to improve safety in the town.

AVOCA SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

Settlement Vision

In 2022 Avoca shall be a strong, vibrant and attractive rural town, that provides a good range of the essential day to day service and community needs of the local town population and the population of its hinterland, including the areas of Conary and Woodenbridge and their rural hinterlands. The settlement shall have a good range of housing options that provide for both local and urban generated demand, and shall provide employment opportunities for at least twenty-five percent of the local labour force, in a range of employment options, including local services, tourism and small scale industry.

Settlement Objectives

Unless standards or objectives for a particular development are included in this plan, the provisions of the County Development Plan 2010-2016 shall apply. All development proposals shall comply with the qualitative and quantitative development standards set out in the County Development Plan.

The objectives included herein shall apply to all lands that are located within the settlement boundary, as shown on the map.

It is an objective of the Council to:

- AV1** Facilitate the population growth of the settlement up to a maximum of 800 people by 2016 and 900 people by 2022. No permission shall be granted that would increase the population of the settlement (i.e. the area within the settlement boundary) above 800 people or 333 residential units (which ever is reached first) by 2016, and above 900 people or 416 houses (which ever is reached first) by 2022. The Council will control the development of residential units in accordance with these growth targets and the occupancy objectives as set out in the settlement strategy.
- AV2** Increase the quality and range of employment opportunities by facilitating developments that involve local investment in a variety of forms, including 'people' and 'product' intensive industries. The Council will allow for the development of 'people' intensive employment generating developments that provide for the local convenience and social service needs of the area and that provide for the needs of tourists and visitors. The Council will allow for the development of a limited amount of small scale 'product' intensive industries, and will particularly support developments based on the use of a local rural resource.
- AV3** Provide for an expansion in the variety of retail facilities so that the town includes a range of retail outlets that provide for the day to day needs of the local population and the needs of tourists.
- AV4** Facilitate the development of a range of high quality community and recreational facilities that meet the needs of the local population, and in particular to allow for the development of youth-related developments, including an equipped play space.
- AV5** Promote tourist developments at suitable locations, that are of an appropriate scale and design. It is an objective of the Council to particularly promote tourist developments that are associated with the following tourism products or themes: (i) the area's mining heritage, (ii) walking as a recreational activity, (iii) the 'Ballykissangel' tourist draw, (iv) history pertaining to the theme of hand weaving / cloth manufacturing, (iv) Thomas Moore.
- AV6** Protect and improve public and private open space and recreation provision.
- AV7** Protect and enhance the character, setting and environmental quality of natural, architectural and archaeological heritage, and in particular those features of the natural landscape and built structures that contribute to its special interest.
- AV8** Encourage the appropriate redevelopment and regeneration of vacant, underutilised and derelict sites.
- AV9** Promote the development of safe and accessible pedestrian and traffic routes.
- AV10** It is the objective of the Council to restrict the types of development permitted in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B to the uses that are 'appropriate' to each flood zone, as set out in Table 3.2 of the Guidelines for Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG, 2009) .
Developments that are not an 'appropriate' use for a flood zone area, as set out in Table 3.2 of the Guidelines, will not be permitted, except where a proposal complies with criteria (i) and (ii) below:
(i) The development of lands for the particular use is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the settlement, and complies with at least one of the following:
o The development is located within the 'Primary Development Zone' and is essential for the achievement of the 'Zoning Objective' or for the achievement of a specific objective for these lands.
o The development comprises previously developed and/or under-utilised lands/sites,
o There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use, in areas at lower risk of flooding.
(ii) The planning authority is satisfied that all of the criteria set out in the justification test as it applies to development management (Box 5.1 of the Guidelines) are complied with.
- AV11** Ensure that a reliable and effective water services, drainage, energy, waste management and communications infrastructure is put in place to service the existing and future development needs of the settlement, in a manner that protects the quality of the environment, and to allow for the improvement of

public services and public utility installations. It is a particular objective of the planning authority to ensure that the Waste Water Treatment Plant and water supply infrastructure is upgraded to meet the requirements of the future population.

- AV12** Appropriately control advertising and signage in the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the area and ensuring the safety of the public.
- AV13** Ensure that the density, design, scale and use of developments shall reflect the scale and context of the area.
- AV14** Protect the amenity of existing residential properties.

Zoning Objectives

The following tables indicate the Zoning Objectives for each of the different areas that are within the settlement, as identified on the map.

Primary Development Zone – Town Centre	
Zoning Objective:	
To create a consolidated and vibrant mixed use settlement centre that is the focal point for the delivery of the retail, commercial, social service and activity needs of the local population and its hinterland, and to promote this area for tourist uses and for supervisory residential use, with an animated and high quality streetscape, whilst ensuring the protection of the special character and heritage of this area.	
Objectives:	
AV15	To support existing uses and facilitate the development of new uses that add to the vitality and vibrancy of the primary core.
AV16	Development in this area shall have a maximum plot ratio of 1.0
AV17	To promote the development of a range of retail outlets, including a variety of small scale outlets, one mini-supermarket (c. 200 – 300m ² gross floor area) and shops to provide for the tourist market (i.e. 'tourist retail').
AV18	To allow residential development at a suitable density (subject to compliance with AV16), and not to provide residential density limits, but to assess proposals on the basis of qualitative standards such as layout, design, amenity and impacts on adjacent properties, transportation infrastructure and environmental quality.
AV19	To promote these lands for the development of 'people' intensive employment generating developments, including retail, tertiary services, commercial developments, office, civic, institutional and tourist uses.
AV20	To allow for the development of small scale light industrial or manufacturing developments at sites that are located at the edge of these lands.
AV21	Mixed use applications which comprise a housing element will be accepted, although loss of active commercial or retail floorspace to residential use will be not be permitted.
AV22	To promote the use of upper floors for 'Living over the Shop' and office accommodation.
AV23	All shopfronts should complement the traditional character of the town in terms of design, scale and materials used. There shall be strict adherence to the use of traditional materials only.
AV24	Facilitate the redevelopment of derelict and underused structures at Nagles property for a mixed use development. Any proposed development shall be of an exceptionally high quality design and shall include uses that reflect it's landmark location within the settlement. Any proposed development shall include proposals for improving pedestrian safety at the intersection.

- AV25** Promote the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians in and around this area, with particular emphasis on (i) improving the safety of turning movements between the bridge and town centre, (ii) improving pedestrian safety, (iii) reducing traffic congestion on the main street, (iv) improving the provision of footpaths, (v) facilitating the development of additional car parking facilities by extending the existing Church car park or by providing facilities at an alternative appropriate location, (vi) provision of pedestrian link between Avoca Handweavers and the town centre.
- AV26** To allow for the extension or redevelopment of the Old School Community Centre for community uses.
- AV27** Protect the public open space area located within the town, north of Delaney's property.
- AV28** Protect and improve the traditional character and natural setting/backdrop of the town centre.
- AV29** To allow for the development of a public toilet at a suitable location.
- AV30** To facilitate the appropriate development of the railway station.
- AV31** To allow for the development of an ATM facility at a suitable location

Secondary Development Zone – Mixed Use Area

Zoning Objective:

To provide for the sustainable development of a mix of uses including residential, employment, community and recreational uses that provide for the needs of the existing settlement and that allows for the future growth of the settlement.

Objectives:

- AV32** Allow for the limited extension or 'spill-over' of the use types allowed in the Primary Development Zone onto the Secondary Development Zone lands which immediately adjoin the boundary of the Primary Development Zone. New development of this type should be compatible with or reinforce the function of the Primary Development Zone and shall be visually and physically linked with the Primary Development Zone. No development will be permitted that prejudices the viability and function of the Primary Development Zone.
- AV33** Retail developments will not be permitted at any location within the Secondary Development Zone (save for that allowed under AV32).
- AV34** In existing residential areas, it shall be an objective of the Council to protect existing residential amenity and to provide for infill residential development at a density and design that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located.
- AV35** Allow for new residential developments, including a mix of residential options within an attractive and accessible setting, at appropriate locations which have safe access to the public road network, which have pedestrian links to the Primary Development Zone, and which are served by appropriate water services infrastructure, and which, if possible, are in proximity to community and public services.
- AV36** Promote densities in the order of 15 dwelling units per hectare. A higher or lower density may be considered appropriate, having regard to the context of the site and the prevailing density in the vicinity of the site.
- AV37** Promote these lands for employment generating developments including 'product' intensive industrial developments, small scale enterprise units, tourist developments, general business uses and home based economic activity.
- AV38** Allow for the development of new and improved community services, for health, welfare, community, education, civic and institutional uses including schools, childcare, nursing homes, community buildings, churches etc. in close proximity to existing and planned residential communities as well as other ancillary services such as public services and recycling facilities.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| AV39 | Preserve the use of Rooster Park (identified AV39 on the plan map) for recreational and open space use. |
| AV40 | Any proposal for development on lands identified AV40 located at Kilmagig Upper shall include proposals for the upgrade of access from the public road and shall include proposals for the provision of adequate sightlines, in accordance with the relevant standards. In the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the area, any future development proposal shall include proposals for (i) the landscaping of any retaining works that are required for sightlines, and (ii) the retention of a line of existing trees along the southern perimeter of the site adjoining the existing public road and existing access laneway. |
| AV41 | Any proposal for development on lands identified AV41 at Knockanree Lower shall include proposals for the appropriate upgrade and widening of the existing access way that adjoins the northern boundary of the Community Centre. In the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the area, any future development proposal shall ensure the design, materials, layout, landscaping and screening proposals integrate the development, as far as is possible, with the natural features and landscape of the site. In this regard, particular attention shall be paid to ensuring that the amenity of views of the site from L-9167-19 at Knockanree are protected, as far as possible. |

Land uses not referred to in the above table will be considered on the merits of the individual planning application, the general objectives and policies for the area and considerations relating to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. All areas should be considered as mixed development areas with primary uses, but not necessarily excluding all other types of development. Development proposals should be compatible with the objectives and policies set out, however consideration may be given to proposals that, in the opinion of the Council are necessary for the vitality and proper development of the settlement, which benefit the local community and which are in the interest of the proper planning and development of the area.

It is an objective of the Council that development is undertaken in an orderly and sustainable manner. Although it is recognised that it may be unduly restrictive to insist that development takes place in a rigidly phased manner, the Council may, in certain cases phase development where this is considered necessary for the following:

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

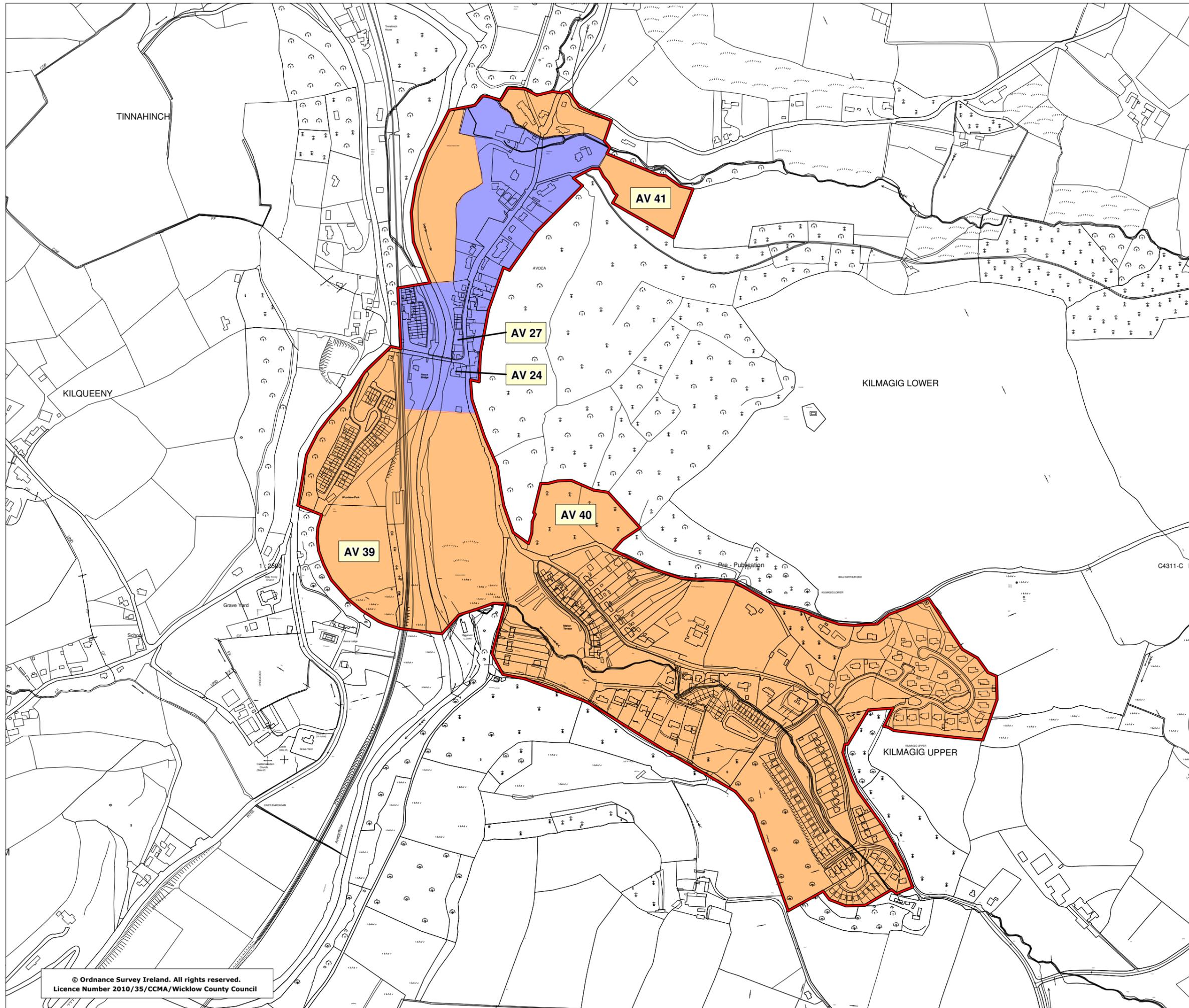
Notwithstanding the fact that all areas are designated for mixed use development, at locations where different types of land uses adjoin, the Council shall ensure that the amenity and visual integrity of these areas are protected. At these locations, developments shall be designed in order to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use, through incorporating design solutions including landscaping, screening and appropriate layout of site, that provide buffer areas between different land uses. This is particularly important where there are adjoining residential and employment uses.



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



11/04/2011



AVOCA SETTLEMENT PLAN
VARIATION TO WICKLOW COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010 - 2016

LEGEND

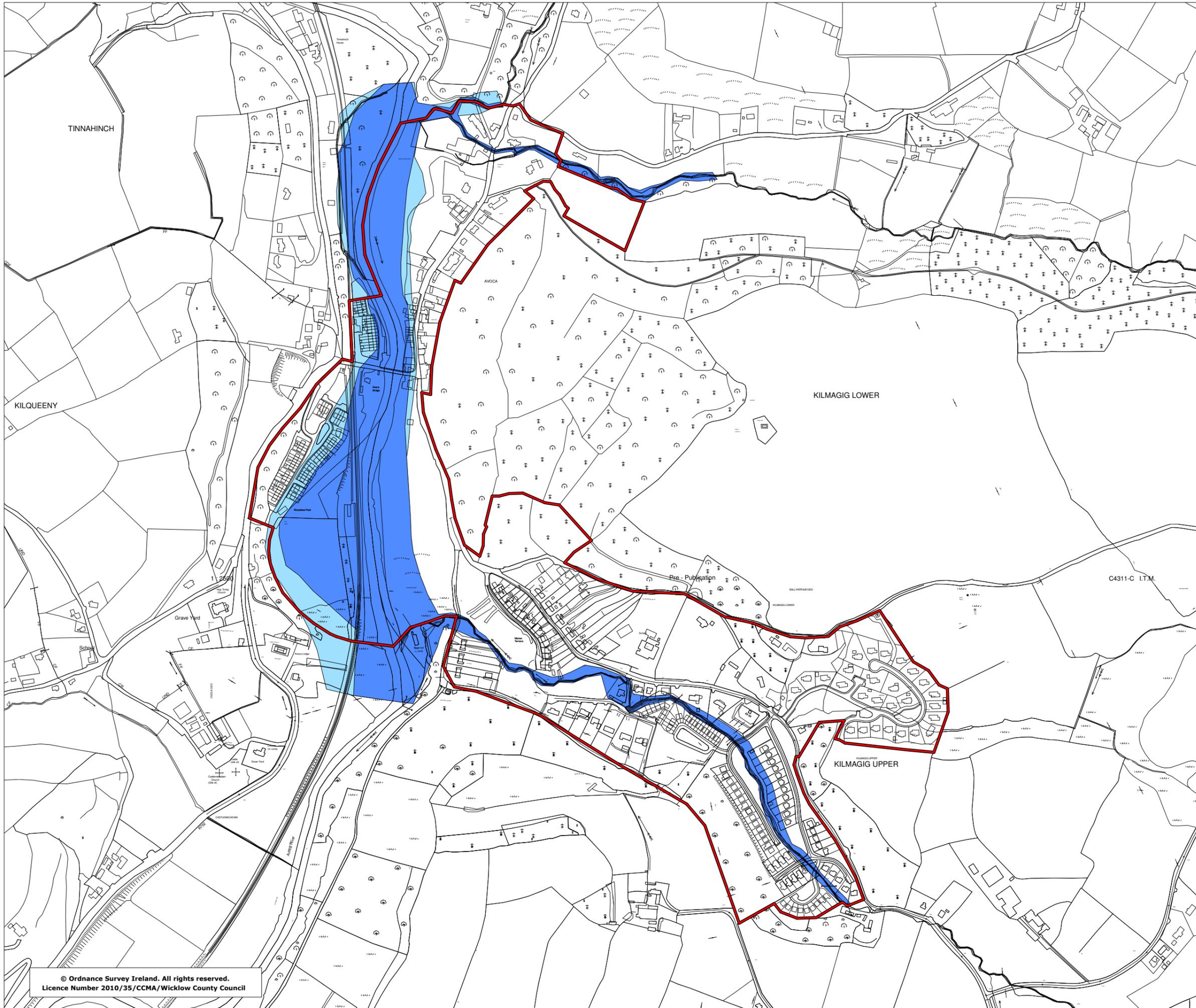
-  Primary Development Zone
-  Secondary Development Zone
-  Settlement Boundary



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



11/04/2011



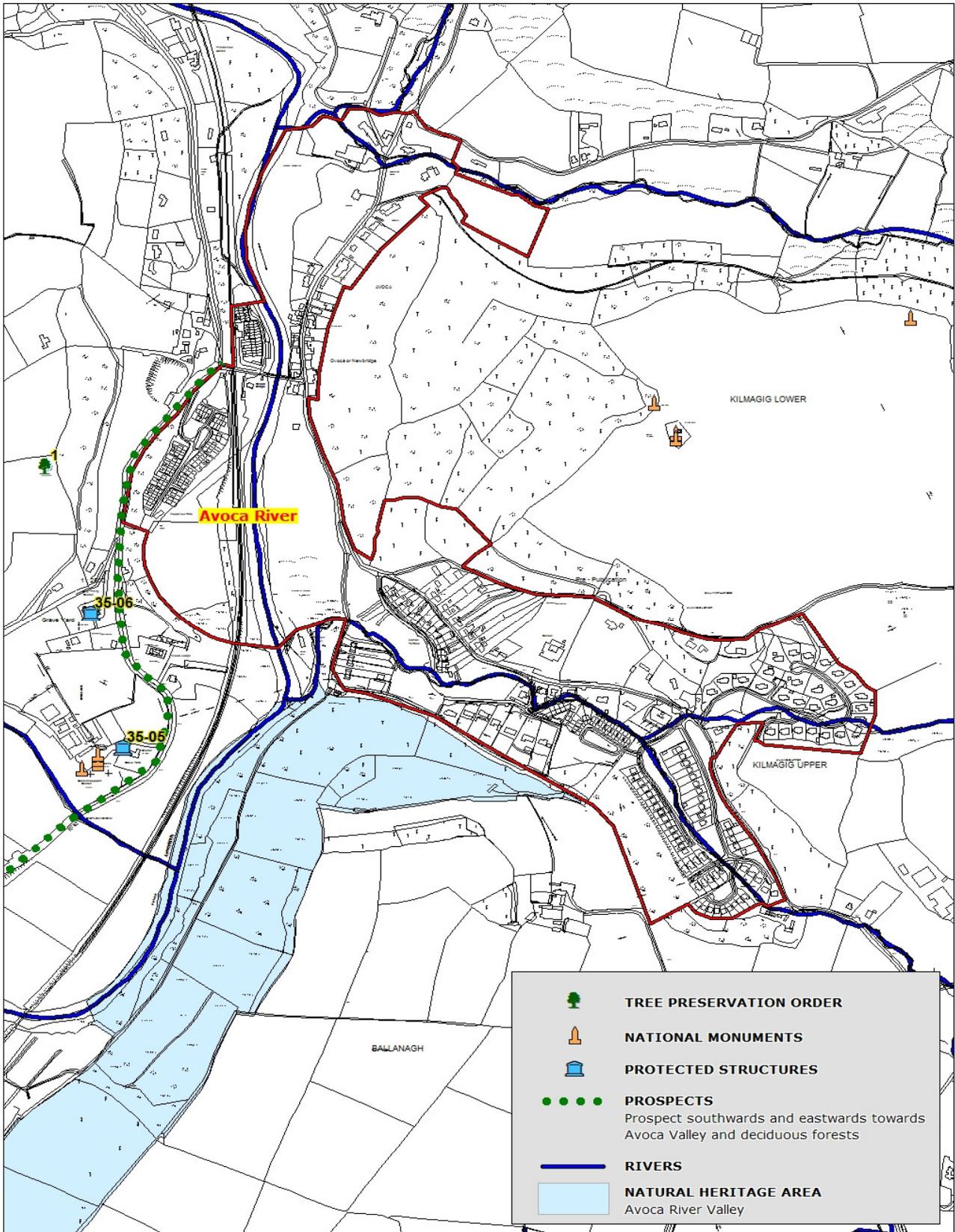
INDICATIVE FLOOD ZONE MAP
AVOCA SETTLEMENT PLAN
VARIATION TO WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010 - 2016

LEGEND

-  Flood Zone A
-  Flood Zone B

 Settlement Boundary

Heritage and Environmental Features



CALCULATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This appendix forms part of the Avoca Plan. It includes the background analysis for the designation of lands and the formulation of objectives within the plan boundary.

The settlement of Avoca is designated a Level 6 'rural town' under the Wicklow County Settlement Hierarchy. The plan will aim to facilitate the development of the settlement so that it performs the housing, economic, and service functions of a 'rural town, as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy, Economic Strategy and Retail Hierarchy of the County Development Plan.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The Rural Settlement Hierarchy, as set out in Chapter 6 of the CDP includes targets for the future population growth of Avoca. Based on the figures set out in this Settlement Hierarchy, the tables below provide an analysis of the housing and population targets up to 2022, for the plan area.

Population targets (Source: Wicklow County Development Plan)

Year	2006	2016	2022
Population	622	800	900

Household Size

The average household size has been steadily falling in Co. Wicklow, from 3.23 in 1996 to 2.89 in 2006, a fall of 0.033 per annum over the 10 year period. 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 and 2.3 persons per household in 2022. The average household size in 2010 can be assumed to be 2.76.

Based on the Census enumerate population of 622 in 2006 and an average household size of 2.89, there were 215 households in 2006 in Avoca. Using the 2016 and 2022 household sizes as per the RPGs, Avoca is required to accommodate 313 households in 2016 and 391 households in 2022.

The number of households in the town in 2010 can be calculated from the An Post GeoDirectory which shows all addresses receiving post, and includes a breakdown for buildings with multiple units. The difference between the 2006 and 2010 figures as shown in the table below does not arise because of the new house construction, but because the town boundaries from the Census were not as extensive as the town boundaries in the Wicklow County Development Plan.

Household targets

Year	2006	2010	2016	2022
No. of housing units	215	281	313	391

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.

This essentially means that not all new houses in the town will result in the formation of a new "household" as (a) the new occupants may have previously resided in the town, in now obsolete housing (b) the house may be vacant or (c) the house may be a second home for someone who resides permanently elsewhere.

The excess factor can vary over time, between regions, within counties, and between urban and rural areas. The population targets for Avoca are derived from the total County population allocated to Wicklow in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022, wherein an 'excess factor' of 6.5% is utilised. This is the figure that will be used in this plan.

Due to the excess factor, a small proportion of additional houses are required in a settlement above the number of permanently occupied houses; therefore in order to have 313 permanently occupied houses in Avoca in 2016,

333 units should be available. Similarly, in order to have 391 permanently occupied houses in 2022, 416 units should be available.

This plan must make provision therefore for 52 additional units up to 2016 and 135 units up to 2022.

There are 8 units currently under construction at Ballanagh which will be completed before 2016. There are no other units under construction at present (March 2011). **Therefore the plan must make provision for 44 units up to 2016 and 127 units up to 2022.**

Headroom

This is the amount of extra land that should be designated for development 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 designated land that may not be released to the market for housing purposes during the plan period. While ‘headroom’ is usually calculated as a percentage increase on the minimum amount required, in the case of Avoca, ‘headroom’ will be provided by designating sufficient land for 127 units (i.e. the 2022 target), which will all be considered as suitable for development, subject to a limit of 44 units being developed before 2016.

Amount of new housing land required

The Primary Development Zone comprise the existing town centre and lands immediately adjoining it that would be suitable for a variety of town centre type uses. While retail, retail services and commercial uses will be favoured in this area, it is estimated that there are sufficient undeveloped lands within this area and on infill sites in the Secondary Development Zone to accommodate 20 new residential units.

Sufficient lands must therefore accommodate the remaining 107 units required. Assuming an average density of 15 units to the hectare across the entire settlement, this would require 7.15ha to be available for housing.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

The employment objectives set out in the Avoca Settlement Plan have been prepared having regard to the Economic Development Hierarchy as set out in Chapter 7 of the County Development Plan.

Having regard to the objectives of the Strategy and the context of the settlement, it is considered unrealistic that all Avoca residents would be able to live and work in the town. However, it is assumed that in the right conditions, up to 25% of people in the labour force in the Avoca ‘catchment’ could potentially work in the town. For the most part, job opportunities would be probably in retail, services and tourism but it is considered that Avoca is well placed in a rural hinterland to develop a small scale manufacturing sector, particular one that could be based on locally sourced rural products.

By 2022, it is estimated that Avoca and its ‘catchment’ would be in the order of 1,917 persons. Assuming the same Labour Force Participation Rates that exist currently continue into the future, this population would generate c. 1,022 people in the Labour Force, given a jobs requirement in the town of 256.

It is considered that the Primary Development Zone can provide for up to 100 of these jobs, in a range of existing and future retail, services and tourism activities. Provision should be made therefore in this plan for development lands that could create up to 156 additional jobs.

Based on the type of employment envisaged for the town (small scale crafty / manufacturing) it is considered that employment density would not exceed 3 employees per 100sqm floor area and site development densities would not exceed a plot ratio of 0.4. In this regard, a total area of 1.3ha would need to be designated for employment development.

While ‘headroom’ is also required to be added to employment designated land, in the case of Avoca, ‘headroom’ will be provided by designating sufficient land for 256 potential jobs (i.e. the 2022 target), which will all be considered a suitable for development before 2016.

RETAIL

The retail objectives set out in the Avoca Settlement Plan have been prepared having regard to the Retail Hierarchy as set out in Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan.

Avoca is included as a 'Small Town' in Level 4 of the 'Retail Hierarchy for County Wicklow'. Retail provision in a 'small town' is expected to include one supermarket / two medium sized convenience stores (up to 1000m² aggregate) and perhaps 10-20 smaller shops and would not generally be considered suitable for discount foodstores.

The day to day service needs of the settlement and the needs of visitors is currently provided by the following retail / retail services:

Retail

Hendleys shop
Ballykissavers
Pharmacy
Butchers
Mini Market
Shop beside credit union
Avoca Shop/ Café

Retail Services

Post Office
Bridal Shop
Hairdressers
Beauticians
Hendleys Fish and Chip Shop
Betting Office
Credit Union
Fitzgerald's Pub

The town is well served by town centre type services, however it is considered that one mini supermarket could be accommodated in the town, having regard to the fact that the closest main supermarket facility is located c. 10 km away in Arklow.

COMMUNITY

Community facilities within Avoca serve both the community of the settlement and it's hinterland. Avoca is well served by community infrastructure and social services, including the following:

Avoca National School
HSE Health Centre
Garda Station
Post Office
IT centre/ Library
Credit Union
Montessori
Community Hall
Catholic Church
Church of Ireland Church and parish buildings (outside settlement boundary)
Castlemacadam Graveyard (outside settlement boundary)
Recycling centre (outside settlement boundary)

It is noted that there are a lack of facilities for young adults/teenagers, and as such the settlement would benefit from the introduction of a youth centre or MUGA facility.

EDUCATION

Scoil Náisiúnta Phádraig Naofa is the only primary school in Avoca. The school has 201 pupils enrolled for the current year.

Based on the assumption that 12% of the population at any given time is of primary school going age, the school serves a total catchment population of approximately 1,675 people.

	2010	2022	Growth
Population within settlement boundary	775 people	900 people	125
Population within Hinterland	900 people	1017 people ¹	117
Total	1675	1917	242

The plan should provide for a total growth in the school catchment of 242 people including people within the hinterland of the settlement. Assuming that 12% of this population will be primary school going age, it is anticipated that the school will grow by approximately 29 pupils up to 2022. This would require one additional classrooms. Given the substantial site occupied by the school, it is likely that it would be possible to add this level of accommodation onto the existing primary school.

ACTIVE OPEN SPACE

It is an objective of the Council to ensure the provision of Active Open Space (AOS) at a rate of 2.4ha of land per 1,000 population. It is considered that AOS in Avoca serves a wider catchment than the town itself, and therefore it is considered appropriate to ensure enough AOS for the catchment of up to 1,917 (assuming the same catchment for the settlement and hinterland as that of the school – see ‘Education’ above).

This population would require 4.6ha of AOS. In accordance with the adopted Active Open Space objectives of the Council, AOS should be divided into:

- 66.6% for outdoor play space (3ha)
- 8.3% for equipped play spaces (0.4ha)
- 25% for casual play spaces (1.2ha)

Outdoor Sport areas: Rooster Park has a playing pitch that is approximately 2.3ha. There are additional playing pitches (c.1ha) provided at Moore’s pub, outside the settlement boundary.

It is considered that there is sufficient space dedicated to outdoor play space, to provide for the future needs of the population of Avoca and it’s hinterland up to 2022.

Equipped play spaces: There are currently no public equipped play spaces in Avoca. It is considered that there is insufficient equipped play space to provide for the future needs of the population of Avoca and it’s hinterland up to 2022. There is a need for an equipped play space within the town.

Casual Play spaces: There are a number of informal open space areas that provide for casual play, located within the residential areas of Woodview, Brookmeadow and Avoca Wood, amounting to over 1 ha. In addition there is a small casual open space area within the town of c. 430m² and a number of recreational outdoor trails that provide for casual recreational use of children and adults.

It is considered that there is sufficient casual play space to provide for the needs of the settlement up to 2022. Informal ‘kick-about’ areas or open space will continue to be provided in new housing developments, in accordance with the normal public open space requirements for housing developments.

CHANGES TO SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Taking into account the above analyses, a total of 8.4ha of undeveloped land is required to be provided within the settlement boundary to account for future development needs up to 2022 (i.e. 7.15ha for residential purposes and 1.3ha for employment / enterprise purposes)

It is estimated that there is approximately 5ha of undeveloped land that is available within the current boundary that is suitable for development. There is therefore insufficient undeveloped land within the current settlement boundary to provide for future growth. It is therefore required that the boundary of the settlement be extended to include at least 3.4ha of extra land. Taking account of the existing pattern of development and the development constraints of the area, it is proposed to include a total of 3.5ha of extra usable land to provide for the future growth of the settlement. This land is indicated AV40 and AV41 on the map.

¹ Allowing for a 13% increase in the number of ‘rural’ dwellers, based on an estimate population of 38,002 in 2010 and a population of 43,002 in 2022.

Land included in the allocation for growth includes the following:

Location	Area (ha)
South of Nagle's	2.3
Marian terrace	1.09
Ballanagh	0.4
East of school	1.2
Coillte lands	2.17
East of community centre	1.3
Total	8.5

The settlement boundary has also been extended to include Rooster Park. However, development at this location will be restricted to recreational use only.

Proposals for the extension of the settlement boundary to accommodate lands that are to provide for the growth of the settlement are based on a consideration of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, including the spatial organisation of the settlement and the functionality of lands, including an examination of constraints.

Lands located to the west of the R752 regional road are not considered suitable for development, having regard to accessibility and safety matters, including the following: (i) the absence of a safe pedestrian link across the R752 between lands to the west and the town, (ii) access to the town centre and school would be across a narrow substandard bridge that would not be able to accommodate the increase in traffic movements, (iii) the junction between the bridge and Main Street/L2180 is unsafe and safety would be further compromised by increased traffic movements.

Lands to the south of Kilmagig have been considered and are not considered suitable for development having regard to the following: (i) further extension of the town in a linear pattern reduces connectivity between these lands and the town centre, (ii) lands to the south of Avoca Wood are not suitable considering the height of these lands and their high visibility across the entire area.

In order to improve the connectivity between the town and residential areas, the planning authority aimed to maintain the current boundaries to the north and south of the settlement, and as such considered lands that would contribute to the achievement of a more compact urban form. A survey was undertaken of all suitable lands and it was considered that the lands identified AV40 and AV41 are most suitable locations for the extension of the boundary in order to provide for the future of the town.