

DRAFT RATHDRUM LOCAL AREA PLAN 2017



Wicklow County Council
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RATHDRUM LOCAL AREA PLAN 2017

This is the draft Rathdrum Local Area Plan 2017 prepared pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The purpose of this plan is to put in place a structure that will guide the future sustainable development of Rathdrum. This plan, in conjunction with the County Development Plan, 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 Rathdrum, 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.

Rathdrum is a 'Level 5' settlement in the County Settlement Hierarchy – a 'Small Growth Town'. Level 5 settlements in County Wicklow are the smaller towns of the County that provide important economic and social services to their populations and immediate hinterland. Such towns normally have a good range of infrastructural services and are suited to accommodating urban generated housing demand.

In the past, Local Area Plans would have been adopted for most Level 5 towns. However, changes to the Planning Act in 2010 allowed the Planning Authority to incorporate development plans for towns with a population of less 5,000 into the County Development Plan. The 2016 County Development Plan therefore includes the development plans for **Ashford, Aughrim, Baltinglass, Carnew, Dunlavin, Enniskerry and Tinahely**, while Local Area Plans are being maintained for **Kilcoole** (the plan for Kilcoole having been combined with the Greystones – Delgany LAP in 2013) and **Rathdrum**, given their planned population targets and / or their acknowledged higher order function in the settlement hierarchy.

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

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

SECTION 1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1.1 Core Strategy

Level 5 plans exist in a hierarchy of plans flowing from national level (National Spatial Strategy) to regional level (Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area) to County level (Wicklow County Development Plan). It is through the County Development Plan that these higher order strategies, as well as other national and regional policies (e.g. relating to transportation and the environment) are translated to a 'local level'. The County Development Plan includes a 'Core Strategy' which sets out the 'direction' for the future growth of the County, in accordance with these higher level strategies, and in particular sets out the settlement and population growth strategy up to 2028, evaluates the demand for housing and adequacy of zoned lands to meet those needs, as well as providing strategies for infrastructure, environmental protection and retail development.

Table 1 below sets out the key elements of the Wicklow County Development Plan 'Core Strategy', as they apply to Rathdrum.

Table 1 Wicklow Core Strategy for Level 5 towns

Core Strategy of the CDP	Application to Rathdrum
Settlement, Population & Housing Strategies	Level 5 settlements are designated 'Small Growth Towns' and generally have population targets in the range 1,500 – 5,000. Rathdrum has a target of 3,500 in 2028.
Economic Development Strategy	The economic function of 'Small Growth Towns' is to be attractors for local investment and to target investment in the form of 'product' and some 'people' intensive industries.
Retail Strategy	<p>Level 5 settlements are identified as either 'Level 3' or 'Level 4' in the County retail hierarchy, the majority being in 'Level 4'.</p> <p>Rathdrum is designated a Level 3 retail centre which are defined as 'sub County town centres'. Such centres will vary both in the scale of provision and the size of catchment, due to proximity to a Major Town / County Town centre. Generally where the centre has a large catchment (e.g. market town in a rural area) and is not close to a larger centre, there will be a good range of comparison shopping though no large department stores or centres, with a mix of retail types, leisure and cultural facilities and a range of cafes and restaurants. At least one supermarket and smaller scale department store are required to meet local needs. Such towns / centres would generally range in size from 10-25,000sqm of lettable retail space catering for a population catchment of 10,000- 40,000.</p>
Community Development Strategy	In accordance with the County community facilities hierarchy, Level 5 settlements generally fall into the 2,000-7,000 population range and should be ideally should be serviced by the following community infrastructure: community/parish hall, multi-purpose community space and / or meeting rooms, local town park and open spaces/nature areas, outdoor multi-use games areas, playgrounds, playing pitches and a library.

Infrastructure Strategy	In accordance with the County Development Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient wastewater treatment capacity is required to cater for the projected population within the plan area - Sufficient water supply is required capable of meeting the demands of projected population within the plan area. - Measures to improve the capacity and efficiency of local roads and connections to national routes in close proximity to the plan area are required.
Environmental Strategy	To ensure the objectives of the plan are consistent with the conservation and protection of the environment.

1.2 Population and Housing

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

While this plan will have a duration of 6 years initially (2017-2023), the provisions of the Planning Act allow in certain circumstances for the duration of local area plans to be extended to 10 years i.e. up to 2027. In this context, it is considered appropriate at this stage that the plan shall put in place a structure to meet the 2025 population target, with 3 years additional zoning 'headroom' to ensure that there will be no lack of zoned housing land (i.e. the 2028 target will be utilised). "Headroom" or "market factor" which is 'extra' land that is zoned over and above the minimum amount needed to accommodate the 2025 population target. Headroom is provided so as to allow for greater location choice and deal with any land supply inflexibility which may arise.

The 2011 population and housing unit figures used in the 2016 County Development Plan are derived from the 2011 Census, as the full results of the 2016 Census were not available at the time of the making of the County Development Plan. As the Census 'town boundaries' do not always necessarily match our plan boundaries, the Census figures have been amended where required, using additional data sources such as the CSO 'Small Area Population Statistics' and the An Post GeoDirectory. The housing stock requirement is based on these population targets, a decreasing numbers of occupants of each house and built in assumptions about the level of vacancy / second homes¹.

Table 2 Rathdrum population and housing targets

	Existing Population / Population Target	Existing Housing Stock / Housing Stock Requirement	Housing Unit Growth Requirement
2011	1,638	657	
2022	2,843	1,256	+599
2025	3,171	1,469	+812
2028	3,500	1,702	+1045

This LAP provides adequate zoned land to yield a potential housing supply of c. 1,040 units.

¹ For more information, see Wicklow County Development Plan, Chapter 2

Population and Housing Objectives

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

This plan includes details regarding the capacity of zoned lands for housing. The estimated potential number of additional units indicated for each piece of land is indicative only. The actual amount of units that may be permitted on a site will be determined having regard to all normal planning considerations, such as access, site services, topography, flooding, heritage issues etc. However, in accordance with Objective HD5 of the County Development Plan, in order to make best use of land resources and services, unless there are cogent reasons to the contrary, new residential development shall be expected to aim for the highest density indicated for the lands.

1.3 Economic Development and Employment

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

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

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

For Rathdrum, it is an objective to increase the 2011 jobs ratio by 50% by 2028, which equates to an increase in the number of jobs in the town to c. 1,200 (from c. 440 in 2011).

Economic Development and Employment Objectives

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

1.4 Town Centre and Retail

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

The retail function of Rathdrum is as set out in the County Retail Strategy, and it is considered to fulfil the role of a 'sub County' town centre, serving a wide district. Retail is a key function of Rathdrum and a thriving retail sector is essential to main vitality and vibrancy in the core areas of the town and to maintain the town as the focal point for the wider rural area in which it is located. The retail provision in Rathdrum would be expected to include one / two supermarkets and a range of convenience and comparison shops. The County Retail Strategy allocates a growth in convenience floor space of 1,500sqm and comparison floor space of 1,500-2,000sqm in Rathdrum up to 2031.

Town centre 'opportunity sites' are identified in this Local Area Plan, which would if developed, contribute to the enhancement of both the environment and the retail / services offer in the town. Such sites are identified in the plan and the Council's objectives for such sites are clearly set out. Where necessary, an indicative sketch plan, representing these objectives, will also be included; however these should not be rigidly interpreted as there may be a number of options for achieving the optimal layouts in accordance with the objectives set out.

Town Centre and Retail Objectives

- Encourage the redevelopment and regeneration of vacant, underutilised and derelict sites.
- To protect features that contributes to the town's overall appearance and heritage value.
- To encourage higher residential densities in the town centre / village centre zones and the concept of 'living over the shop'.
- To allow a relaxation in certain development standards in the town centre / village centre zones in the interest of achieving the best development possible, both visually and functionally.
- Provide for an expansion in the variety of retail and retail services facilities so that the town includes a range

of retail outlets that provide for the day to day needs of the local population and the needs of other businesses and tourists, in accordance with the provisions of the "Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DOEHLG 2012), and any subsequent Ministerial Guidelines or directives and the Wicklow County Retail Strategy.

- The redevelopment of lands within the town / village core areas, particularly those sites with frontage onto the main streets and squares of the town, shall provide for a street fronting building of a high quality design or for a high quality urban space, including hard and soft landscaping, and appropriate street fixtures and furniture, in order to enhance and create a more attractive streetscape.

1.5 Social and Community Development

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

Community Infrastructure and Open Space Objectives

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

1.6 Service Infrastructure

The provision of transport and services infrastructure is essential to the development of any town, providing ease of movement within towns, connecting towns to surrounding areas and providing sufficient service infrastructure capable of meeting the demands of the resident, commercial and employment populations. The County Development Plan, and various programmes of the Council's Roads and Environmental Services Departments, as well as outside agencies such as Irish Water and the National Transport Authority, provide detailed strategies and objectives for a whole range of service infrastructure. As these provisions apply directly to towns in Level 5 it is not considered necessary to restate all of these objectives; however, this plan also includes specific local infrastructural objectives.

Service Infrastructure Objectives

- Promote the development of a safe and accessible pedestrian, cycling and traffic routes.
- Facilitate and promote the delivery of reliable and effective water, drainage, energy, waste management and communications infrastructure to service the existing and future development needs of the settlement

1.7 Built Heritage and Natural Environment

The protection and enhancement of heritage and environmental assets through this plan will help to safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of the town and its surroundings, providing local economic, social and environmental benefits. The maps included in this plan include a heritage map indicating the key natural and built heritage features.

Heritage Objective

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

1.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The purpose is to *"provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development"*, (European Directive 2001/42/EC).

In accordance with Article 14A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended), the Planning Authority makes a determination of need for the environmental assessment of a local area plan. Article 14A applies to a local area plan for an area the population or the target population of which is less than 5000 persons or where the area covered by the local area plan is less than 50 square kilometres (5000ha). The Rathdrum Local Area Plan 2017 has a total plan area of c.197ha and total target population of 3,500 in 2028. As such, Article 14A applies to the Rathdrum Local Area Plan 2017.

Where a Planning Authority proposes to make a local area plan under Section 20 of the Planning Act, it shall, before giving notice under Section 20 (3) of the Planning Act, consider whether or not the proposed local area plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking into account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations.

Where the Planning Authority, following this consideration, determines that the proposed local area plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, the proposed local area plan shall be accompanied by an Environmental Report which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed local area plan.

However, where the Planning Authority considers that the proposed local area plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, the Planning Authority shall give notice to the environmental authorities and shall allow the environmental authorities 4 weeks within which to make a submission or observation in relation to whether or not, in their opinion, the proposed local area plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Following receipt of any submission or observation, the Planning Authority shall make a determination regarding whether or not the proposed local area plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A and any submission or observation received from the environmental authorities.

Having fulfilled these steps and consulted with the environmental authorities, it has been concluded that the draft LAP, including all mitigation measures contained therein as well as in the County Development Plan to address any potential environmental impacts, is not likely to have new significant adverse effects on the environment and therefore Strategic Environmental Assessment is not warranted for the draft LAP.

Appendix A to this plan sets out the assessment carried out in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 2A, as well as the advice / observations of the environmental authorities.

1.9 Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment

This LAP has been prepared in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment requirements under EU Habitats Directive (43/92/EEC) and the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and Section 177 of the Act. These Directives form the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy, built around the Natura 2000 network of nature protection areas made up of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)² and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)³.

The Planning Authority is required to ensure that any plan or programme and any projects that arise therefrom, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan / project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to a full Appropriate Assessment. The plan / project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan / project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest - all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.

In accordance with legislation and methodological guidance, the first stage of the Appropriate Assessment process is 'screening' - screening determines whether Appropriate Assessment is necessary by examining:

- i. whether a plan or project can be excluded from Appropriate Assessment requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site and
- ii. the potential effects of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives and considering whether these effects will be significant.

Screening involves the following:

- 1) Description of the plan or project, and local site or plan area characteristics
- 2) Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites and compilation of their qualifying interests and conservation objectives
- 3) Assessment of likely effects - direct, indirect, or cumulative, undertaken on the basis of available information as a desk study or field survey or primary research as necessary
- 4) Screening statement with conclusions.

Appendix B to this plan sets out the findings of the Stage 1 screening carried out of this draft LAP, wherein it is concluded that no further stages of Appropriate Assessment are required.

1.10 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

To comply with the EU Floods Directive and in line with the guidelines for Planning Authorities '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*', an assessment of flood risk has been formally taken into account in the preparation of this plan. The objective of '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*' guidelines is to integrate flood risk

² Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are sites designated under European Communities Directive 92/43/EEC known as the 'Habitats Directive'. This requires the conservation of important, rare or threatened habitats and species (not birds) across Europe.

³ Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are sites designated under the European Communities Directive 79/409/EEC, known as the 'Birds Directive', to conserve the habitats of certain migratory or rare birds.

management into the planning process, thereby assisting in the delivery of sustainable development. For this to be achieved, flood risk must be assessed as early as possible in the planning process. The guidelines states that the core objectives are to:

- avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface run-off;
- ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains;
- avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
- improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders; and
- ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management.

The flood risk assessment carried out for Rathdrum is set out in **Appendix C**. In accordance with the guidelines, the level of risk identified has been broken into 3 zones:

Flood Zone A High probability of flooding. Most types of development would be considered inappropriate in this zone. Development in this zone should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances, such as in city and town centres, or in the case of essential infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere, and where the Justification Test has been applied. Only water-compatible development, such as docks and marinas, dockside activities that require a waterside location, amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation, would be considered appropriate in this zone.

Flood Zone B Moderate probability of flooding. Highly vulnerable development, such as hospitals, residential care homes, Garda, fire and ambulance stations, dwelling houses and primary strategic transport and utilities infrastructure, would generally be considered inappropriate in this zone, unless the requirements of the Justification Test can be met. Less vulnerable development, such as retail, commercial and industrial uses, sites used for short-let for caravans and camping and secondary strategic transport and utilities infrastructure, and water-compatible development might be considered appropriate in this zone. In general however, less vulnerable development should only be considered in this zone if adequate lands or sites are not available in Zone C and subject to a flood risk assessment to the appropriate level of detail to demonstrate that flood risk to and from the development can or will adequately be managed.

Flood Zone C Low probability of flooding. Development in this zone is appropriate from a flood risk perspective (subject to assessment of flood hazard from sources other than rivers and the coast) but would need to meet the normal range of other proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

This LAP has been crafted to ensure that (a) flood risk is avoided where possible, (b) where avoidance is not possible, less vulnerable uses have been substituted for more vulnerable ones, (c) risk is mitigated and managed where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

SECTION 2 ZONING AND LAND USE

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

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

Land use zoning objectives and the associated vision for each zone are as follows:

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
RE: Existing Residential	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities of existing residential areas	To provide for house improvements, alterations and extensions and appropriate infill residential development in accordance with principles of good design and protection of existing residential amenity. In existing residential areas, the areas of open space permitted, designated or dedicated solely to the use of the residents will normally be zoned 'RE' as they form an intrinsic part of the overall residential development; however new housing or other non-community related uses will not normally be permitted.
R20: New residential	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities at a density up to 20 units/ha.	To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential developments at appropriate densities with excellent layout and design, well linked to the town centre and community facilities. To provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities.
R10: New residential Rural Fringe	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities at a lower density not exceeding 10 units/ha.	To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential environments with excellent layout and design, reflecting the low-medium density character of the surrounding area.
TC: Town Centre	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including retail, commercial, office and civic use, and to provide for 'Living Over the Shop' residential accommodation, or other ancillary residential accommodation.	To develop and consolidate the existing town centre to improve its vibrancy and vitality with the densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, residential uses, and urban streets, while delivering a quality urban environment which will enhance the quality of life of resident, visitor and workers alike. The zone will strengthen retail provision in accordance with the County Retail Strategy, emphasise town

		centre conservation, ensure priority for public transport where applicable, pedestrians and cyclists while minimising the impact of private car based traffic and enhance and develop the existing centre's fabric.
VC: Village Centre Low Town	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate village centre uses in the Low Town areas, including retail, commercial, office and civic use, and to provide for 'Living Over the Shop' residential accommodation, or other ancillary residential accommodation.	To develop and consolidate the Low Town area in an appropriate manner and to an appropriate scale given its role as a secondary or subsidiary area to the main town centre.
E: Employment	To provide for the development of enterprise and employment	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing employment areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality employment and enterprise developments in a good quality physical environment.
CE: Community & Education	To provide for civic, community and educational facilities	To facilitate the development of necessary community, health, religious, educational, social and civic infrastructure.
AOS: Active Open Space	To protect and enhance existing and provide for new active open space	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing active open spaces, formal exercise areas, sports grounds, playing pitches, courts and other games areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality active recreational areas
OS1: Open Space	To protect and enhance existing and provide for recreational open space	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing parks and casual play areas, to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality amenity open areas and to restrict developments / activities (such as the use or development of such lands for formal sports grounds for organisations that are not available for a broad range of the public) that would reduce the opportunities for use by the wider public.
OS2: Open Space	To protect and enhance existing open, undeveloped lands	To protect, enhance and manage existing open, undeveloped lands that comprise flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, steep banks, green breaks between built up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity.
PU: Public Utility	To maintain lands providing services infrastructure	To allow for lands to be designated for public utilities such as waste water treatment plants, large ESB substations, gasworks etc
T: Tourism	To provide for tourism related development	To provide for the sustainable development of tourism related structures, uses and infrastructure. To provide for the development of tourism facilities including

		accommodation of an excellent sustainable design and aesthetic quality. Tourism related office, civic and cultural and commercial development will be facilitated.
MU: Mixed Use	To provide for mixed use development	The nature of the mixed use development envisaged for any particular site is set out in the text of the plan.

The box below gives typical appropriate uses for each zone type. The planning authority shall determine each proposal on its merits, and shall only permit the development of uses that enhance, complement, are ancillary to, or neutral to the zoning objective. Uses that are materially inconsistent with and detrimental to the zoning objective shall not be permitted.

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

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

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

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

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

Uses appropriate for **open space (OS1)** zoned land are formal / informal landscaped parks with off-road walking / cycling paths, as well as playgrounds, skate parks, Mixed Use Games Areas and outdoor gyms.

Uses appropriate for **open space (OS2)** zoned land are uses that protect and enhance the function of these areas as flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, green breaks between built up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity. As these open lands are not identified or deemed necessary for development for recreational purposes, other uses that are deemed compatible with proper planning and sustainable development may be open for consideration where they do not undermine the purpose of this zoning.

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

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

Uses generally appropriate for any **mixed use** area will be specified in the plan.

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

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

Phasing

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

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

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

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

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

Action Area Plans

Action Areas have been identified in the plan where necessary. Action Areas are to be the subject of comprehensive (not piecemeal) integrated schemes of development that allow for the sustainable, phased and managed development of the Action Area during the plan period. Separate applications for sections of each Action Area will not be considered until an overall Action Area Plan has been agreed in writing with the Planning Authority unless it can be shown that any application will not undermine the achievement of the overall objectives for that Action Area. The position, location and size of the land use zonings shown on plan map are indicative only and may be altered in light of eventual road and service layouts, detailed design and topography, subject to compliance with the criteria set out

for the Action Areas.

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

SECTION 3 RATHDRUM SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 Context

Location & physical context

Rathdrum is located c. 60km south of Dublin City Centre and approximately 15km west of Wicklow Town and the coast, on the eastern foothills of the Wicklow Mountains. It is a highly accessible town, being a 15 minute drive from the M11 (Euroroute 1), along a major regional road and is served by the Dublin to Rosslare railway line. Rathdrum is linked by major routes to many other well known towns and villages in central Wicklow such as Laragh – Glendalough, Avoca and Greenane. As such it acts as a main gateway to these well known tourism locations, as well as the wider Wicklow Mountains area. Rathdrum is the principal service town in this area and would have a shopping, education and sports 'catchment' of over 5,000 persons.

Rathdrum is located in an area abundant in natural and built heritage; the town is accessed over a beautiful stone bridge over the Avonmore River which passes along the east side of the town; from there the town rises sharply onto a high bank, thereby allowing beautiful views down to and across the river valley from many parts of the town. Turning north out of town brings one into the Vale of Clara, a protected Natura 2000 site and one of the most scenic valleys in Wicklow. The historical core of the town is very much intact, with traditional 2-storey townhouses lining the main street, with a market square in the centre, and as a result has been used for a number of film and TV productions to represent an early 20th century Irish town. The town is a short distance from Avondale House, the famed home of Charles Stuart Parnell.

Development patterns

The town developed beyond the traditional main street initially in the 18th and 19th centuries with the construction of the flannel hall and fair green to the west of the Market Square. The development of the town occurred in this western direction in the main because of the steep lands to the east, as well as the Avonmore River, limiting development possibilities. In the mid 20th century, development continued in this direction through the construction of new housing developments; the first major housing development 'Ballygannon' occurred c. 1km to the west of the town centre and for decades was somewhat separated from the town proper. The general development strategy in the last 30 years has been to bridge the gap between Ballygannon and the town centre, and there are now five housing developments in this area, totaling approximately 250 housing units. The development pattern, while allowing for essential housing on easily developed lands, has led to increased traffic flows and at times congestion at Market Square and Main Street as this is the main access/agress route to all lands to the west of the town centre.

In more recent years, development has occurred on the Laragh Road, which has allowed for the construction a new road linking the Laragh Road to Union Lane, thereby providing an alternative route down to the Main Street and the regional roads. The development strategy of this plan seeks to support the development of additional links, to improve the movement of residents throughout the town, particularly to the town centre, to the key community facilities such as local schools, and to the main routes in and out of the town. In the identification of new lands for development and setting out development objectives, this plan will hope to address this issue.

It has long been an objective to redevelop the Market Square and the lands directly to the west of same, leading up the Fair Green and permission has been granted for a substantial mixed use development on these lands. This project

stalled during the recession but it will be a key aim of this plan to encourage and facilitate the development of these lands.

A key objective will also be the development of lands to the east of the Main Street, which similarly have been earmarked for some time for mixed use new development. It is desired that such a development will also be able to contribute to addressing traffic congestion and parking issues on the Main Street, as well as providing for much needed expansion of town centre uses, particularly retail and retail / community services.

3.2 Overall Vision & Development Strategy

A key aim of a Local Area Plan is to set out the vision and development strategy for the future development of a settlement and from this vision, all policies and objectives can be developed and implemented with the overall aim of achieving this vision. The vision and development strategy must be consistent with the 'Core Strategy' of this County Development Plan and reflect the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of Rathdrum.

The vision for Rathdrum is:

- To ensure a high quality living environment for existing and future residents;
- To provide a framework for the growth of the town, in order to provide housing for current and future generations, to revitalise the economy of the town and to allow improvements of social and community facilities;
- Sustain a revitalised core town centre with commercial, residential and community developments being consolidated and promoted within this area;
- Create increased connectivity between a revitalised town core and the existing and proposed residential areas within the town;
- Promote and foster economic development;
- Develop the tourism potential of the area as a visitor / tourist destination in itself and in its role as a 'gateway' to surrounding attraction such as Avondale House and the Wicklow Mountains;
- Protect the built and natural heritage of the area.

In recognition of the historical pattern of development, the profile of the settlement, the demands of higher order strategies and the vision for the town set out above, the development strategy is as follows:

- To reinforce and improve the visual appearance of the central area of the town and encourage development that will enhance the town's vitality and vibrancy;
- To identify key sites suitable for development in the town centre and set out design criteria capable of meeting the overall vision for the town core area;
- To support and encourage actions to address congestion on the Main Street; in particular the development of alternative car parking arrangements around the town core and the development of alternative routes through the town, particularly from existing or planned new residential areas that avoid the need to use the Main Street to access essential services and to enter / exit the town;
- To encourage the regeneration of the Low Town area, to reduce the number of derelict and underutilised buildings and to protect and enhance the architectural character of this area;
- To plan for and encourage the provision of high quality housing, concentrated principally around Rathdrum town centre and lands within 1km of the town centre;
- To improve linkages between Rathdrum core town centre/existing community infrastructure and lands earmarked for future housing development;

- To plan for and encourage the development of new employment opportunities, in the form of both new mixed use developments at the old Mill and old Railway Hotel sites, and the development of new employment lands on the R752 (Avoca Road);
- To identify tourism assets and opportunities for the town and put in place a framework that supports and facilitates the development of tourism and tourism infrastructure, such as visitor attractions, accommodation and linkages to established tourism sites;
- To identify and address deficits in social, community and recreational services; to require developers to provide such facilities in tandem with new housing development where appropriate and to require the payment of development levies for the provision of such facilities by the local authority;
- To ensure that only appropriate land uses are provided on lands identified as being at risk of flooding;
- To create functional public spaces and pedestrian routes linked to new development that maximise the natural features of the area;
- To ensure the protection and enhancement of natural habitats, cultural heritage, ecological resources and biodiversity and in particular, to safeguard the integrity of the Avonmore River.

3.3 Residential Development

This plan provides for sufficient zoned land and residential development objectives in order to achieve the population and housing objectives set out in the 'Core Strategy' of the County Development Plan and as detailed in Section 1 of this plan.

Table 3.1 below sets out the land zoned for residential development in this plan, while Table 3.2 sets out details of lands zoned for other uses where residential development may be allowed.

Table 3.1 Residential zoning provisions

Location/Description	Area (ha)	Zoning	Potential No. of Units
Between Laragh Road and Avonmore River	5.25	R10	53
Between Union Lane and Laragh Road	4.7	R20	94
Between Union Lane and Ballinderry Road	7.4	R20	148
Between Ballinderry Road and Greenane Road	2.5	R20	50
South of Greenane Road (Viewmount)	5	R20	100
South of Greenane Road (west of Parnell Park)	3	R20	60
North of Brewery Bend, east of Parnell Park	0.63	R20	13
North of Corballis Drive	0.57	R20	12
West of Brewery Bend (Action Area 1)	6.6	R20	132
East of Corballis Drive	1.5	R20	30
South-west of Corballis Drive	1.4	R20	28
Total			720

Residential development is particularly encouraged on lands zoned 'town centre', 'village centre' and 'existing residential' (where infill opportunities arise) and to a lesser extent lands zoned 'Mixed Use'⁴.

Table 3.2 Other lands with residential potential

Location/Description	Zoning	Potential No. of Units
Market Square – OP1	TC	50
Town Centre – AA1	TC	80
Town Centre - infill	TC	60
Village Centre - infill	VC	30
Mixed Use – MU1	MU	30
Mixed Use – MU2	MU	30
RE - infill	RE	40
Total		320

3.4 Economic Development and Employment

As set out in Section 1, it is an objective to increase the 2011 jobs ratio by 50% by 2028, which equates to an increase in the number of jobs in the town to c. 1,200 (from c. 440 in 2011). In order to accommodate this jobs growth by c. 800, this plan provides for 'employment' zoning of c. 10ha, which could have the potential to provide 500+ jobs, in addition to two 'mixed use' employment and residential sites, which could have the potential for 100+ jobs. The remainder of the jobs growth required is targeted for the town and village centres, tourism and community zoned lands, in the areas of retail, general business and community services, tourism and education / health.

The strategy of this plan is to take advantage of the existing economic assets in order to stimulate employment within the area. The key assets the plan area has to offer are:

- a large hinterland population offering a market for goods and services and a wide variety of skills;
- an attractive and accessible town centre, with numerous properties and sites suitable for retail and commercial uses;
- proximity to the N11 and Dublin – Rosslare rail line;
- gateway location to numerous tourist attractions, with significant potential to build on link to Avondale House in particular;
- a number of existing major employment sites, that may have the potential for expansion;
- the availability of Local Authority lands earmarked for employment and enterprise.

Given the town's location, situated in close proximity to the major east coast settlements of Wicklow, it is unlikely that the town can act as an attractor for a large scale employer to locate over the lifetime of the plan. Therefore it is considered likely that most new employment creation will be generated by smaller and medium sized local enterprises / service providers.

With respect to tourism, Rathdrum has a lot to offer the visitor, particularly those interested in built heritage,

⁴ As set out to follow, a limited residential development may be considered in the MU zones subject to such use being secondary and supporting to any principal commercial / tourism / community use proposed.

vernacular architecture and the Famine. The Hidden Valley caravan park also draws significant visitors to the town. However, work still needs to be done to define and publicise the overall product on offer and provide support tourist infrastructure such as parking, signage, walks etc in order that the full benefit can be felt around the town and visitors can be attracted to stay longer in the area. Furthermore, the proximity of Rathdrum to the Wicklow Mountains and the key tourist destinations of Avondale House (see more information to follow), Avoca, the Meeting of the Waters, and Laragh – Glendalough mean that Rathdrum could act as the principal tourism ‘gateway’ in this region, and capitalise on spin offs associated with this role such as providing hotel and other accommodation services and as a starting point for tours of the area (with potential link up to rail services). In these regards, it is an objective of this plan that a major hotel development will be supported, as well as the provision of tourist infrastructure such as car / coach parks and walking routes through the town.

Avondale Forest Park is a 200ha estate owned by Coillte and situated just 1.5km south of Rathdrum. Situated right in the heart of Ireland’s Ancient East, the estate comprises Avondale House (currently housing the Parnell museum), numerous outbuildings associated with the former forestry school located at the site, many trails and walks and an extensive forestry plantation.

Avondale is synonymous with a number of very special and distinctive stories, which set it apart from the other ‘big houses’ in Ireland. Firstly it is known as the birthplace of Irish forestry in 1794 and secondly as the birth place of Charles Stewart Parnell, one of Ireland’s most prominent historical figures. The State purchased Avondale in 1904 and it was here that the first experimental continental forest garden was laid out with a collection of tree species and shrubs from around the world, including the tallest collection of trees in Ireland. Ireland’s first ever school of forestry was also established. The 200ha site still contains many features which can be traced back to the one of the many stories associated with the history of the vast estate.

Avondale is currently not a significant attraction for international visitors but is very popular with domestic visitors welcoming over 25,000 visitors per annum. Numerous events such as operas and classical music evenings are held at Avondale but there is significant further tourism potential at the site and to provide a world class tourism experience.

The plan will therefore make provision for lands to be reserved which will be capable of accommodating both local employment in the form of light industry / small start up units alongside the provision of a number of employment / tourism objectives aimed at maximising the potential of this industry in Rathdrum. Section 3.5 to follow addresses the development strategy for the town centre and retail.

Economic Development and Employment Objectives

- RT1** To facilitate and support the growth of the town centre of Rathdrum in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 3.5 of this plan and to encourage the development of new retail / retail services and business support services (such as solicitors, accountants, architects etc) within the TC zone.
- RT2** To facilitate and support the development of the tourism industry in Rathdrum and maximise the town’s location as a gateway between the tourism assets within Co. Wicklow.
- RT3** To support and promote the development of employment lands within Rathdrum, to resist development types on employment lands that would be more suited to the town centre and to ensure employment lands are developed to the highest employment density and design quality as possible.
- RT4** To improve, as funding allows, the principal access routes and junctions linking Rathdrum town centre to

strategic transport corridors and surrounding tourist attractions.

- RT5** To support and facilitate in co-operation with relevant bodies and landowners, the provision of tourism amenity routes around the town.

3.5 Town Centre and Retail

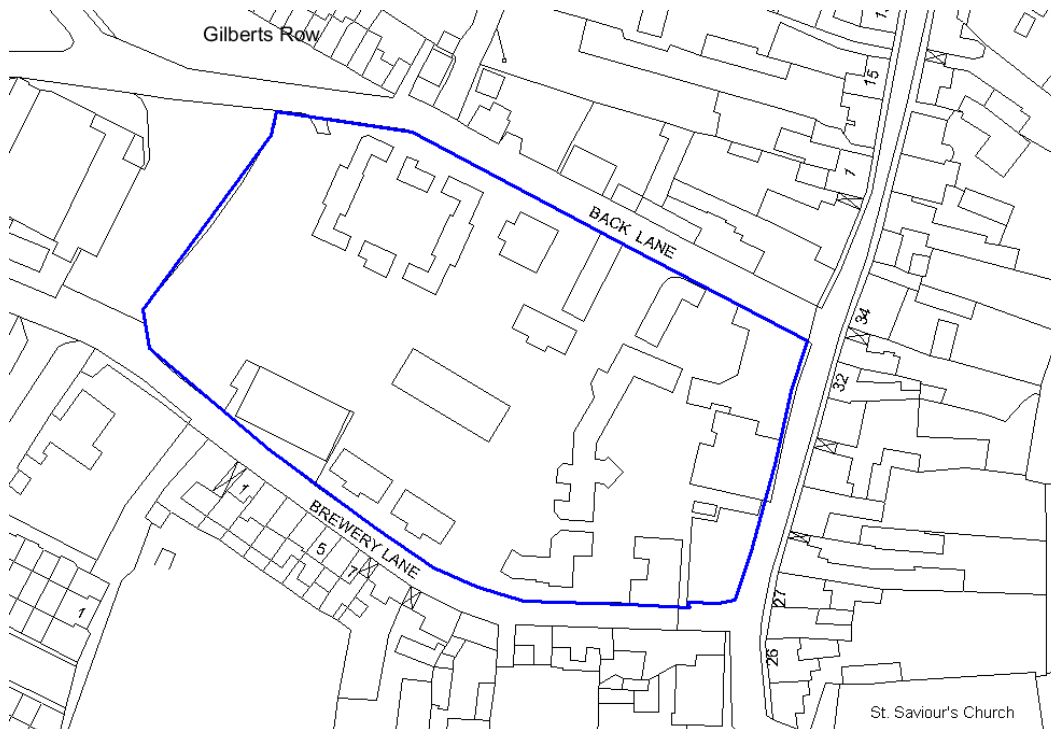
The commercial core of Rathdrum is focused along the Main Street, with some additional commercial uses at Low Town, on Back Lane and Brewery Lane. Within the town centre, commercial uses are mixed with residential structures, and as a result a number of commercial units are confined in their scale due to inability to expand; there have been limited opportunities for site assembly to create larger plots to cater for larger, modern scale retailing for example.

The key opportunity that has presented itself has been the redevelopment of Market Square, which was originally envisaged as a commercial extension to the square, with mixed commercial and retail space and apartments / townhouses. However, plans are now underway to change the main blocks already constructed to a surgery / health centre and library / tourist office, accompanied by conversion of one older building (former 'Teach an Cheoil' pub) to a pharmacy. While these are needed facilities / services, this revised project has significantly reduced the possibilities for providing a mixed use commercial / retail development on this site, unless plans change for the previously permitted residential area.

The town is lacking in commercial services and retail, with only one small supermarket, and as a result, many residents do their main shopping in Wicklow Town or Arklow. Therefore it is critical that other opportunities to expand the commercial and retail offer are exploited. This plan identifies lands to the east of Main Street as the critical location in this regard, and these lands are designated as 'Action Area 1'.

Opportunity Sites

OP1 Market Square



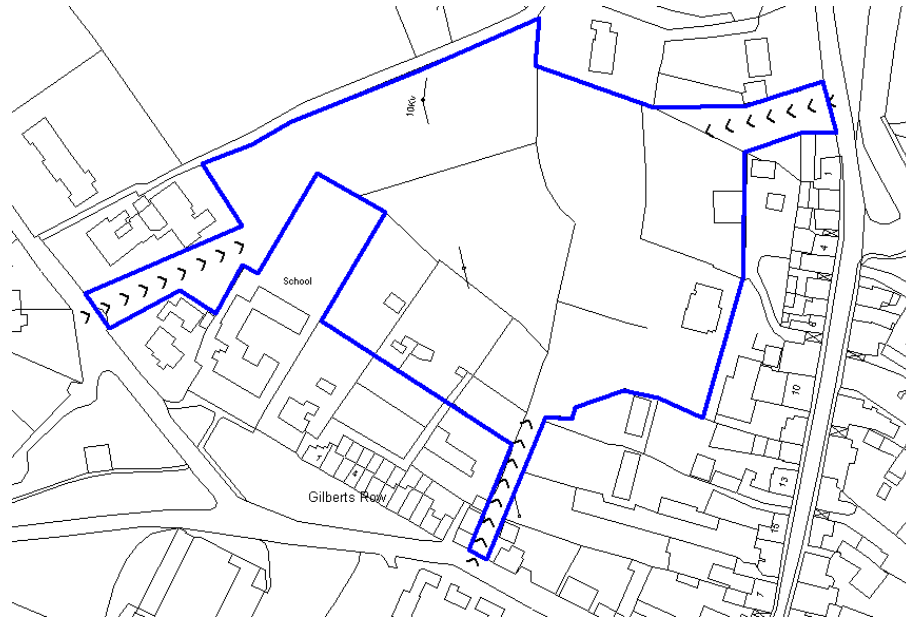
These 'town centre' zoned lands measure c. 1.5ha (including all existing buildings thereon) and are bounded by Main Street, Back Lane, Brewery Lane and the RDA Hall. Market Square itself is located in the SE corner, which is bounded on its northern and west sides by fine 2-storey buildings (former pubs) that are unoccupied at the time of the crafting of this plan, having been permitted for redevelopment as part of the overall Market Square permission.

The NE corner of OP1 is occupied the town's only supermarket. The remainder of the site is characterised by either unoccupied structures (previously permitted to be removed or renovated) or the footprint of incomplete structures.

The site is suitable for additional commercial and retail development as well as higher density townhouse type development.

Objectives OP1

- To provide for a mix of uses capable of accommodating retail/commercial/residential/community development;
- A 'town centre' type density will be required to be achieved across the site; a site coverage of at least 50% and a plot ratio of at least 1:1 will be expected;
- Those parts of any proposed development that adjoin existing streets shall provide for an active street frontage, that is in keeping with the existing character of the town; existing buildings of substance or of streetscape / historical character shall be retained and sympathetically redeveloped.

OP2 West of Main Street, north of Gilberts Row

These lands measure c. 1.8ha and comprise the backlands behind Gilberts Row, the primary school and Rectory on the southern side and to the rear of properties along Main Street to the eastern side. These lands have been zoned for town centre mixed uses for some time but have remained generally undeveloped.

There are a number of possible access points into these lands – two possible points from Back Lane / Union Lane and one onto Main Street at its northern end, with additional pedestrian linkages possible via archways / entrances on Main Street.

These lands are likely to have a multiplicity of owners and therefore the possibility of a comprehensive single development coming forward seems unlikely. Therefore the key aim of setting out development objectives for these lands is encourage development in the interest of:

- Encouraging re-use of town centre lands, in order to provide for a more compact and sustainable town centre, where services are in walking distance and thereby reducing the need to extend development further out in the countryside;
- Improving the overall appearance of the area, as previous development has occurred in a somewhat haphazard and uncoordinated manner;
- Ensuring the design and layout of any development that might be proposed would not impede access or otherwise compromise the development of other lands in the block.

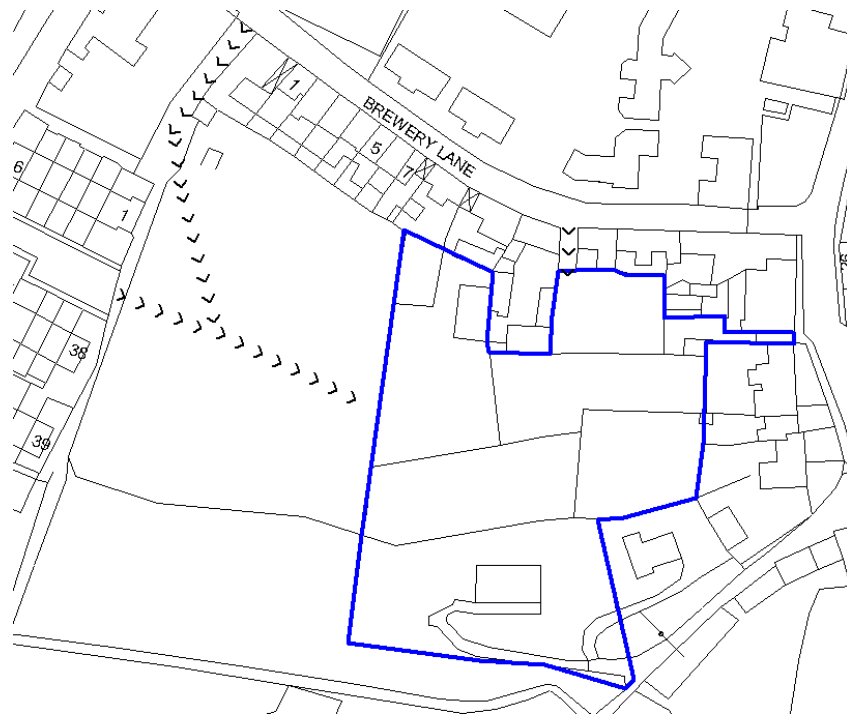
The site may be suitable for the development of a series of new traditional scaled streets and squares, with residential as the predominant use, but there may be potential for new commercial development.

Objectives OP2

- The layout and design of any new development adjacent to the existing identified or potential future access points into the remainder of the lands shall ensure that access is not impeded;

- New streets into and throughout this area shall be narrow with priority to pedestrians and structures shall generally be located directly on the street.
- In the event that a comprehensive development encompassing the entire or a significant part of these lands can be brought forward, the lands should be developed as an extension to the traditional town centre, and shall comprise of a series of new streets and squares, opening up linkages between the Main Street and Back Lane / Union Lane;
- New development on lands immediately adjoining Rathdrum NS will only be considered where it can be shown that such development would not constrain possible future expansion of the school.

OP3 Between Brewery Lane and Poundbrook Lane



These 'town centre' zoned lands measure c. 0.75ha and generally comprise the backlands of properties along Brewery Lane and Main Street, south of the square, as well as a derelict dwelling accessed off Poundbrook Lane. Access points onto the public roads are limited to narrow gaps between buildings or onto the narrow Poundbrook Lane and therefore the principal route into these lands will be from zoned residential lands to the west (see access objectives below in Section 3.7). The site may be suitable for the development of a series of new traditional scaled streets and squares, with residential as the predominant use, but there may be potential for new commercial development.

Objectives OP3

- The layout and design of any new development adjacent to the existing identified or potential future access points into the remainder of the lands shall ensure that access is not impeded;
- New roads / streets into and throughout this area shall be narrow with priority to pedestrians and structures shall generally be located directly on the street.

- In the event that a comprehensive development encompassing the entire or a significant part of these lands can be brought forward, the lands should be developed as an extension to the traditional town centre, and shall comprise of a series of new streets and squares, opening up linkages between the Main Street, Brewery lane and Poundbrook Lane.

3.6 Social and Community Development

The town of Rathdrum is currently serviced by a reasonable amount of community facilities, including a GAA grounds, a soccer pitch, a public park, children's playground and outdoor gym, a small library and a community hall (RDA). In order to meet the needs of the existing and future residents of Rathdrum and its hinterland, there is a need to enhance community facilities in the town.

In terms of open space, in accordance with the Council's 'Play' and 'Sports & Recreation' strategies, a minimum of 8.4ha of open space in various formats (organised sports grounds, passive parks, playgrounds and mixed use games areas) would be required for a town population of 3,500. This plan provides for over 10ha of sports grounds (existing GAA and soccer clubs plus an additional 6ha in AA2) as well as in excess of 2ha of parks and playgrounds. The plan also includes a significant amount of land zoned 'OS2' which is intended to be maintained in its current undeveloped natural state in the interest of visual and natural amenity.

With respect to education, the Department of Education is satisfied that there is adequate capacity in both the primary and secondary schools in the town to cater for the targeted population expansion. In order to ensure that school extension can be facilitated if required, lands adjacent to Avondale Community College and Rathdrum National School have been zoned for community use and the objectives of Action Area 1 require lands to be reserved for expansion of St. Saviour's National School if found necessary.

Within the plan area, the following lands are zoned for new social and community infrastructure:

Table 3.3 Provision of new Community and Recreation Infrastructure

Use Group	Specific use	Zoning	Location	Area (ha)
Education / Community Use	Potential school expansion	CE	Avondale Community College	1.16
	Potential school expansion	TC – OP2	Adjacent to Rathdrum Boys NS	n/a
	Potential school expansion	TC – AA1	Adjacent to St. Saviour's NS	n/a
	Potential school expansion	CE	Adjacent to Rathdrum Girls NS	n/a
	Community centre	TC - AA1	Action Area 1	n/a
	To be determined (Council owned lands)	CE	Corballis Upper	6.24
Open space	Sports pitches	AOS- AA2	Knockadosan	6
	Open Space 2	OS2	Action Area 1	2
	Open Space 2	OS2	Various	n/a

3.7 Service Infrastructure

To ensure that Rathdrum can fulfil its role within the Wicklow Core Strategy, the adequate provision of services infrastructure is essential in order for the town to grow.

Water Services

Wastewater: Rathdrum is served by a wastewater treatment plant that has a design capacity of 3,500pe (population equivalent). EPA data from 2015 indicates that the current flows into the plant are in the order of 2,600pe. While spare capacity is therefore available at the time of preparing this plan, additional capacity will be required in order accommodate the full growth targets set out in the County Development Plan for Rathdrum.

Water Supply: Rathdrum is served by a spring water supply located in the Ballinderry area to the west of Rathdrum. Water is stored in a reservoir at Ballinderry initially and thereafter at a reservoir in Ballygannon closer to Rathdrum. While this source appears to be adequately serving the town at present, the total yield of the spring is unknown and therefore it is not possible to determine if additional capacity would be available for the targeted growth. Irish Water has however prepared plans for a new water supply to Rathdrum from the Vartry Scheme subject to an upgrade to the Vartry waterworks. If this plan is implemented, there would be sufficient treated water available to serve the population target and all associated community, employment and commercial demands.

Transportation and Movement

Public transport: Rathdrum is served by the Dublin to Rosslare rail line. While the service is somewhat limited, there are 3 morning departures northwards to Dublin before 9am (serving all the main towns in north Wicklow and main hubs in south Dublin) and 3 departures from Dublin between 4:30pm and 7.00pm serving the return journey, thereby making a train-based commute to Dublin feasible for Rathdrum residents. The existing car parking arrangements at the station are severely restricted and may militate against increased usage of the rail service. Bus Eireann route 133 travels through Rathdrum also (Dublin Airport – Arklow); however there are only two services per day in each direction.

Walking and cycling: While the majority of the main routes in the town have footpaths, many are narrow and in need of enhancement to width and overall quality. This is particularly the case along the Main Street, where the lack of adequate footpaths causes both hazard to pedestrians and vulnerable road users, but also results in a diminished experience in the town centre for both residents and visitors and does not allow for urban realm improvements such a seating, planting or street art. A number of peripheral locations do not have complete footpath routes to the town centre. The vast majority of the town's roads are dedicated to the needs of motorists, in terms of width dedicated to the road carriageway and car parking. There is scope to carry out footpath widening and to provide cycleways in some locations where there is adequate road width, but in others a trade off would be required between cars and pedestrians / cyclists.

Vehicular movement: The main street in Rathdrum is narrow, with unregulated on street car parking. The number of cars parked on street is routinely high, in the main due to the fact that many of the buildings on the main street are homes with no on site car parking. While a number of off street public parking areas are close to the main street, residents generally park outside their own properties or close by, as they have always done in the past. With increased population in the town and increased car ownership, traffic flows are steadily increasing and coupled with the lack of width on the main street due to on street car parking, congestion is common, particularly at busy times such as at school pick up time.

Service Infrastructure Objectives

- RT6** To cater for the increased traffic generated by new development lands, the roads layout of new developments shall have the dual function of opening up zoned land and serving the occupants of the development and ensuring traffic can circulate between existing public roads adjoining the development site. This shall be particularly relevant for lands zoned R20 between Union Lane and Ballinderry Road and in Action Area 2.
- RT7** To provide for a new street to the east of Main Street linking the northern and southern ends of the town centre, as described in Action Area 1.
- RT8** To require development proposals for lands zoned R20 to the east of Parnell Park to include access to lands zoned TC (OP3) to the east
- RT9** To ensure that development along the northern end of Union Lane is designed so as to facilitate a possible long term future connecting road from Union Lane to the Laragh Road
- RT10** To require development proposals for lands zoned MU2 at the Railway Hotel to make provision for car and coach parking that would be accessible to the train station.
- RT11** To improve and provide footpaths and cycleways where required and at the following locations:
- Along Main Street
 - From the bridge to the Main Street via Low Town
 - On Back Lane from Main Street to the Fair Green
 - From Fair Green to Avondale Community College
 - On Brewery Lane from Main Street to the Fair Green
 - Along Union Lane as far as Ballygannon Wood
 - Between the R752 and Avondale House
 - From Railway Station to Saville's Cross on south side of R752
- RT12** To preserve and enhance amenity / walking routes at the following locations:
- Route from Parnell Park to Brewery Bend
 - Route from Poundbrook Lane to Brewery Bend
 - Route from St. Mary's and Michael's Church to Union Lane
 - Route from Union Lane to the famine graveyard
 - Route from Railway Business Park to Avondale House via forest

3.8 Built and Natural Heritage

Built / archaeological heritage: There are 9 buildings within the LAP area of Rathdrum recorded for heritage value and listed on the Wicklow Record of Protected Structures. There are two Architectural Conservation Areas in the settlement – the main town centre and 'Low Town'. Within the town, there is one national monument recorded – a graveslab at St. Saviour's Church. Surrounding the plan area there are a number of additional recorded monuments such as an enclosure at Knockadosan, and raths at Glasnarget and Balleese. The '**Conservation Area Appraisal**' prepared in 2006 for the previous LAP is still considered relevant and a resource to be utilised in the assessment of development proposals. This report forms part of this draft as Appendix D.

Natural heritage: The key feature in the settlement is the Avonmore River. This river represents a significant salmonid catchment with significant populations of salmon, sea-trout, brown-trout and lamprey. Although not designated a candidate SAC for freshwater pearl mussel, the system does contain populations of the mussel. Other than the existing sports ground, caravan park and wastewater treatment plant further south, all lands along the river are zoned 'open space' (OS2) where the objective is *'to protect, enhance and manage existing open, undeveloped lands that comprise flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, steep banks, green breaks between built up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity'*.

There are no designated natural heritage sites within the plan area. The settlement boundary directly adjoins the Vale of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) SAC and pNHA, a protected oak woodland habitat. The Vale of Clara nature reserve is located within the SAC. Rathdrum adjoins the Avonmore River which flows through the SAC, downstream of same. There are no further Natura 2000 sites downstream of the settlement. While this plan allows for the development of uses such as housing, tourism, employment, community and town centre etc, none of these uses threaten the characteristics of the Vale of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) SAC.

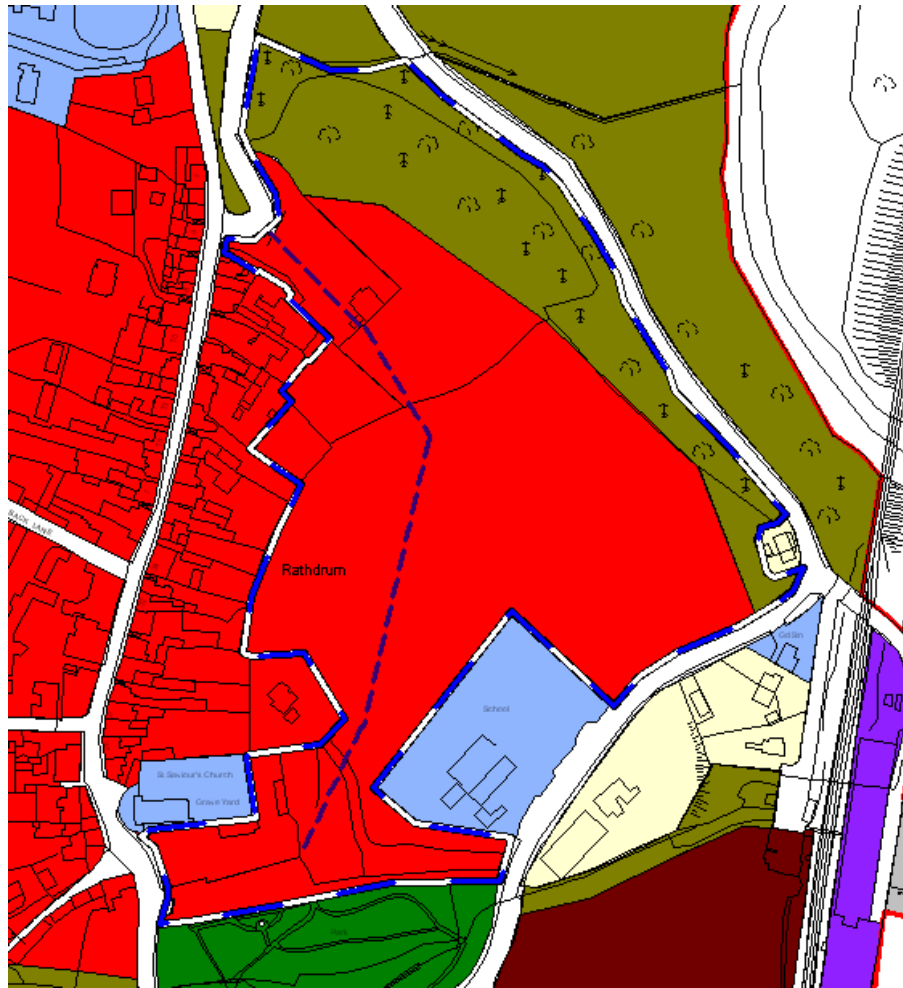
The **'Local Biodiversity and Habitats Networks'** report prepared in 2006 for the previous LAP is still considered relevant and informed the preparation of this plan. This report forms part of this draft as Appendix E.

The protection and enhancement of heritage assets through the plan will help to safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of Rathdrum and its surroundings, providing local economic, social and environmental benefits.

- RT13** 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. The natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the area shall be protected in accordance with the objectives set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan.
- RT14** To have regard to the Rathdrum **'Conservation Area Appraisal'** when assessing development proposals in order to ensure ongoing protection of the buildings and items of value that contribute to the heritage and character of the town.

3.9 Action Area Plans & Mixed Use Zones

Action Area 1 Lands to the east of Main Street



These lands measures c. 7.2ha and are located to the east of Main Street. There are no access routes into these lands at present, with access possible from (a) the road frontage on the NW boundary (old VEC site), (b) through the car park to the south; while the lands have frontage onto the regional road to the east and south, access at these locations would not be feasible due to the steep slope of the bank between the site and the road to the east and the alignment of the road to the south.

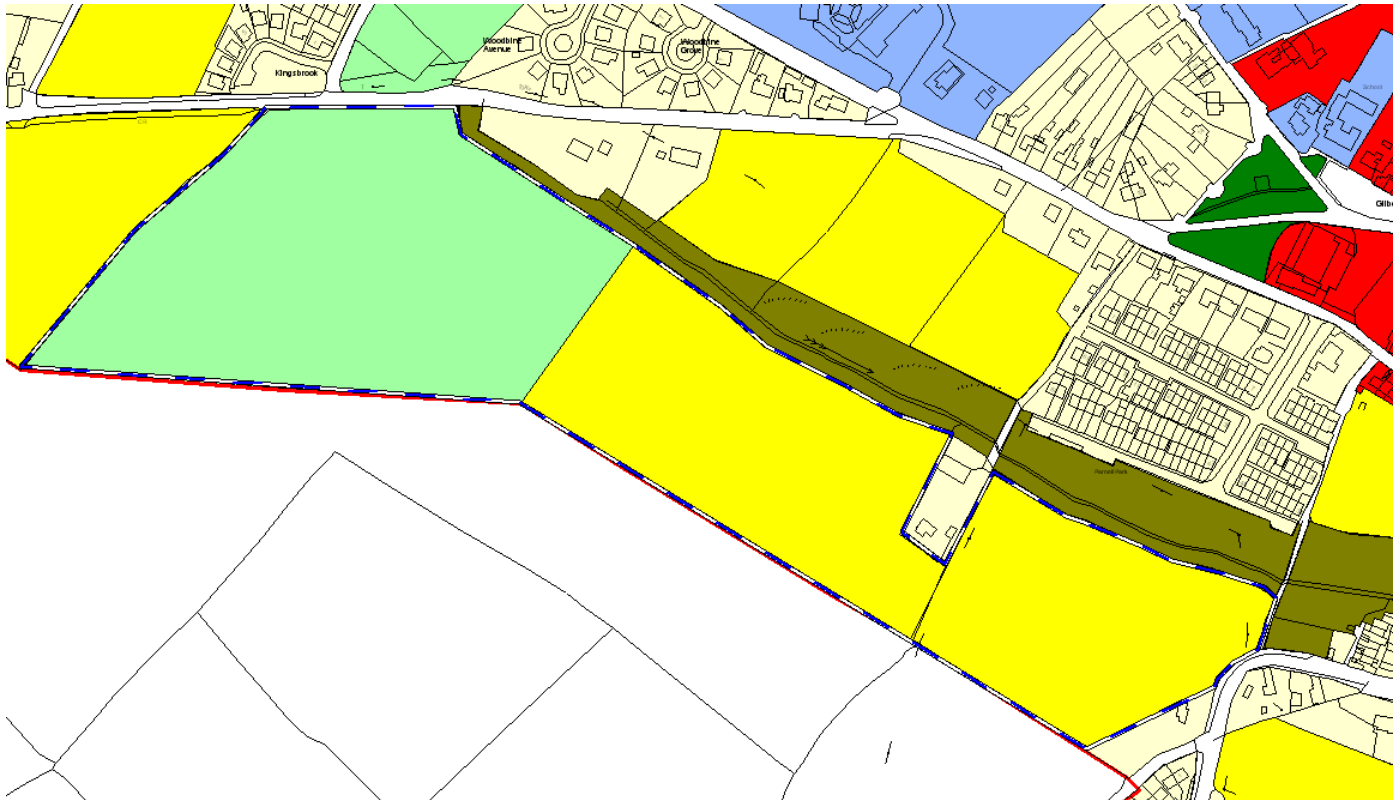
This site is suitable for a mix of development types, including residential use but along with OP1, it is only 1 of 2 locations where any new significant commercial / retail development could be accommodated in the town centre. Within this 7.2ha block, approximately 2ha is zoned 'open space' while the remainder is zoned 'town centre'.

The development of these lands provide an opportunity to provide a new 'street' to the east of Main Street, fronted by a mix of shops and residences; this street should form a complete loop from each of the Main Street and should incorporate a new town car park. This is the preferred location in the town for any larger scale retailing, such as a new supermarket. Any development proposals shall include a reservation of land along the rear boundaries of properties

on Main Street to ensure future access could be provided; all of these measures could contribute to the reduction of cars and car parking from the Main Street, thereby improving its overall character and level of amenity.

Objectives AA1

- To provide for a mix of uses capable of accommodating retail/commercial/residential/community development;
- A 'town centre' type density will be required to be achieved across the TC zone of the site; a site coverage of at least 50% and a plot ratio of at least 1:0.5 will be expected;
- A new street shall be provided linking the northern and southern ends of Main Street and new uses should form active frontage along same;
- The lands to the west of the new street shall generally be reserved for commercial / retail / community uses; the Planning Authority may phase and/or restrict residential development to ensure this element is delivered;
- A new town car park shall be provided as part of any development proposals;
- Any development located to the immediately east of existing properties of Main Street should be so laid out as to facilitate the future development of these backlands and the possibility of the creation of new pedestrian links through to Main Street;
- All existing mature trees, particular those on the eastern side of the lands and on the embankment shall be maintained and enhanced with new planting.
- New development on lands immediately adjoining the national school will only be considered where it can be shown that such development would not constrain possible future expansion of the school.

Action Area 2 Knockadosan

These lands located at Knockadosan, measure c. 12.5ha and are zoned for residential use (c. 6.5ha) and active open space use (6ha). The development of these lands provides an opportunity to deliver a new sports area to the west of the town (where the majority of existing / planned housing is located) and for the construction of the new street incorporating frontage from the Greenane Road to the Avoca Road via Brewery Bend that would enhance accessibility of community and commercial facilities for the residents of the development and the town.

This action area shall be developed as a residential and active open space zone in accordance with the following criteria:

- A minimum area of 6ha shall be provided by the developer as an active open space / sports facility. The location, layout, design and future management structure of this facility shall be agreed with Wicklow County Council in advance of the occupation of any residential units;
- A maximum of 6.5ha may be developed for residential use, including all services, open spaces, childcare facilities etc required for that quantum of development;
- The road layout provided within the lands shall be so designed to allow for through access from the Greenane Road to Brewery Bend.

Mixed Use Zones

MU1 Old Mill



These lands measure c. 1.4ha and are occupied by the historical, listed mill structures, as well as modern industrial, storage and retail buildings and yards / car parks operated by Glanbia.

The old Mill structures occupy a prominent location on the bridge at the river and are buildings of significant local historical and cultural value in the town. The old Mill buildings are largely derelict and it is considered that redevelopment would greatly enhance the heritage of the town and improve this gateway to the settlement. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage describes the Mill as:

“Detached multiple-bay part two, part three and part four-storey (all over basement) former corn mill complex, built c.1860 and now largely derelict. The complex is laid out roughly in an L-shaped formation with a two-storey gable-ended section to the west, (which was at one point much longer but which was largely demolished some time in the mid to later 1900s), and a four-storey gable-ended section to the east with a taller four-storey tower-like section with a pyramidal roof attached to its north-west corner. The various sections are all constructed in rubble with granite quoins and brick dressings to the openings, whilst the pitched (and pyramidal) roofs are slated. The entrances are now blocked up and the uniform flat-headed windows are now largely devoid of frames. The complex is set directly onto a roadside with a large open yard to the rear. Though derelict and partly demolished this large mid to later 19th-century corn mill remains one of Rathdrum’s most impressive structures; it is also the town’s only industrial building of note”.

It is the objective of this plan to promote the redevelopment and regeneration of Rathdrum Mill and associated lands for mixed use development based around the old Mill including commercial, employment, residential, tourism and cultural uses in accordance with the following criteria:

- Any redevelopment proposals, that include a material change of use from the current activities on site, shall include restoration of the Mill and associated structures/items of heritage value as well as removal of the industrial / storage buildings from the river frontage;
- Tourism / visitor uses, tourism related retail, dining and food production, local arts and crafts and cultural uses shall be particularly encouraged in any renovated buildings;
- A maximum of 30 residential units may be provided as part of any overall redevelopment of the site but strictly only on the basis that residential development forms a subsidiary element to an overall commercial / tourist / cultural project; residential units shall be in the format of either units within the renovated old mill

structures or new build apartments, of a style and format that complements and enhances the historical structures.

MU2 Railway Hotel



These lands measure c. 2.25ha and are occupied by the old railway station / hotel at the lower end, but with the majority of the lands in a greenfield undeveloped condition. The lands are accessed from the regional road opposite the Parnell Memorial Park.

The former station / hotel building is not a protected structure, but is a building of considerable local historical and social value. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage describes the building as:

Detached five-bay three-storey railway station and hotel, built c.1875 and now solely in use as a railway station. The building is roughly square in plan with a conservatory-like gabled porch projection to the north, and a recessed open arcaded area to the east. To the south side of the arcade is a relatively shallow full-height projecting bay. The façade is finished in largely unpainted lined render with string and eaves courses and moulded archivolt to the elliptical and semi-circular headed arches of the arcade. The slated hipped roof has a slight overhang and tall rendered chimneystacks. The building is entered from the north via the gabled porch, and from the east via a timber and glazed double door with semi-circular fanlight, set within the arcaded area. The windows are flat-headed and have mainly one over one timber sash frames. Cast-iron rainwater goods. The building is set in a commanding position overlooking the railway cutting, with a flight of stone steps leading from the platform directly to the arcaded area. Large railway station hotel / stations of this type are now relatively rare, especially those still serving (in some capacity) in a railway context. Thus this building possesses a certain rarity value, a value made all the greater by its seemingly, largely original condition.

It is the objective of this plan to promote the redevelopment and regeneration of Railway Hotel and associated lands for mixed use development based around the old Hotel including commercial, employment, residential, tourism and cultural uses in accordance with the following criteria:

- Any redevelopment proposals, that include a material change of use from the current activities on site, shall include restoration of the Railway Hotel building and associated structures/items of heritage value;
- Tourism / visitor uses, tourism related retail, dining and food production, local arts and crafts and cultural uses shall be particularly encouraged in the renovated hotel building;

- A maximum of 30 residential units may be provided as part of any overall redevelopment of the site but strictly only on the basis that residential development forms a subsidiary element to an overall commercial / tourist / cultural project;
- Any redevelopment shall make provision for a car park for rail users as well as coach parking, so that the site may develop as a tourism gateway into Rathdrum and surrounding areas.