



# RATHDRUM LOCAL AREA PLAN 2006-2012

**Volume I**

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**VOLUME II CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

## 1.0 PREAMBLE

### 1.1 Purpose of the Draft Plan

The aim of this Draft Local Area Plan is to set out a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Town of Rathdrum. The Rathdrum Local Area Plan in conjunction with the County Wicklow Development Plan is the main instrument to guide and control development in the area and thus has major implications on the future growth and development of the town.

With the adoption of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 sustainability has become a key principle of planning policy in Ireland. It envisages the balancing of economic, social and environmental aspects in order to maintain and develop a high quality of life for everybody without compromising the protection of the environment and the needs of future generations. The Local Area Plan and the future growth of Rathdrum will be guided by these principles.

### 1.2 Plan Status and Plan Area

This Draft Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. It replaces the 1999 Development Plan for the Scheduled Town of Rathdrum. The Plan shall have effect within the development boundary set out in Map I.

In late 2005 and early 2006 pre-Draft public consultation took place and now the Draft Plan has been made available to the public and to various statutory bodies for consideration. Written submissions and observations can be made during a six-week period.

Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, states that a Local Area Plan may be prepared for any area, which the planning authority considers suitable, in particular, for those areas likely to be subject of large scale development within the lifetime of the Plan. The Rathdrum Local Area Plan is

for a period of six years from the date of adoption in 2006 to 2012. The Plan is subject to regular reviews to allow for changing circumstances; however, it is intended that the long-term vision set out will give a degree of continuity and certainty to the future development of Rathdrum.

### 1.3 Requirements of a Local Area Plan

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002 states that in a Local Area Plan consideration can only be given to matters that relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Further, the Plan must be consistent with the objectives of the Development Plan and must consist of a written statement and a plan or plans, which may include:

- Objectives for the zoning of land, or
- Other objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area including details on community facilities and amenities and on standards for the design of developments and structures.

### 1.4 Draft Local Area Plan Structure

The Plan consists of a written statement and maps and it is essential that the written statement and appropriate map(s) be referred to in considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The written statement contains the following sections:

- Preamble
- Strategic Context
- Overall Vision and Strategy
- Policies and Objectives
- Zoning Provision and Objectives
- Development Control
- Appendices

The section on the Strategic Context of Rathdrum sets the town into the national and regional policy context as well as surveying and analysing the existing situation in terms of population, employment, social service provision, utilities etc. Forecasts are also provided where appropriate.

The Overall Vision and Strategy section outlines the vision and the strategic development principles for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

The section on Policies and Objectives sets out the policies and detailed objectives, which the Council wishes to achieve in the six years of the Plan. They are complementary to the policies and objectives in the County Wicklow Development Plan 2004-2010. Should a conflict arise between policies and objectives as stated in this Plan with those of the County Development Plan (including variations), the latter shall take precedence.

The section on Land Use Zoning Provisions and Objectives sets out the use classes generally permitted or open for consideration in each zone.

The Development Control section deals with the standards that will be applied to development proposals in the town, in addition to those set out in the County Development Plan. Their purpose is to regulate the impact of development on the environment in pursuance of the declared policies.

The maps give a graphic representation of the proposals of the Plan, indicating land use and other development standards together with various objectives of the County Council. In particular, the maps contain the details of local objectives and it is essential therefore that particular attention is given to the maps when considering the local objectives.

Should any conflict arise between the written statement and the maps, the written statement shall prevail.

### **1.5 Development Control**

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

### **1.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment provides that Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is mandatory for Local Area Plans for areas with a population of 10,000 or more. Where the population involved is less than 10,000, the EU Directive requires screening of the Plan, in order to establish if development resulting from policies and objectives of the Plan will cause significant environmental effects. The Plan area has a current population of approximately 1,500 people. Consequently, SEA is not mandatory, however, screening is required.

The screening process, in consultation with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, and the Environmental Protection Agency, resulted in the following conclusions:

- Policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan are unlikely to have significant effects on the architectural, archaeological or natural heritage of the Plan area. Environmental effects are expected to be of a positive nature in particular regarding: the improvement of the services infrastructure; the integration of land use and transportation; the protection of the architectural heritage as a result of the designation of an Architectural Conservation Zone and associated

policies and objectives; and as a result of the designation of Local Biodiversity Areas and Habitat Networks and associated policies and objectives.

- Development Control provisions in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 and this Local Area Plan allow for the appropriate assessment of proposed developments on a case-by-case basis.

The County Council has concluded, in accordance with the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 that, in their totality, the policies and objectives to be contained within the Plan and the development that will result there from is unlikely to give rise to significant effects on the environment (see Appendix 4). The development control process and the Part XI process will allow for detailed input from the Environmental Authorities at project design and decision stages. An SEA is, therefore, not required.

of regular review. Policies and objectives may be modified or deleted and new works not anticipated at present may be initiated depending on the availability of funding and the sanctioning of the works.

## 1.7 Implementation

The Council is obliged to monitor and review the operation and implementation of the Plan.

The successful implementation of the provisions of this Plan will require the combined involvement of the community, local business interests, statutory service providers as well as the County Council.

The achievement of the objectives of the Plan will be dependent on the availability of appropriate levels of finance. The County Council will actively and innovatively strive to identify and secure resources from both the public and private sectors to implement the provisions of this Plan and actively promote a climate conducive to private investment in the town in accordance with the Local Area Plan.

As it is not possible to predict the allocation or level of public funding that will be available over the period of this Plan, the policies and objectives put forward will have to be subject



## 2.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT OF RATHDRUM

### 2.1 National and Regional Context

#### National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) adds a spatial dimension to social and economic planning in Ireland. It provides a national framework for regional, county and town plans in relation to policy guidance for the long-term development of Ireland.

Rathdrum is classified as an Urban Centre in the context of the NSS, located in an area with strategic rural assets within a metropolitan hinterland. Rathdrum is approximately equidistant between Wicklow town, a designated Primary Development Centre in the NSS, and Arklow, a town with a population of over 5,000 with Urban Strengthening Opportunity.

The NSS provides that the strengths of the smaller towns and villages lie in their capacity to accommodate employment, residential and other functions on the basis of their comparative advantage in terms of lower costs and a quality of life which is attractive to many people.

Rathdrum is located within a Strategic Radial Corridor to Wexford and Rosslare, with the railway being of particular relevance. The physical network of infrastructure has, according to the NSS, a spatial impact and also influences the location, timing and extent of development. The NSS further provides that decisions on land use and development must take account of existing public transport networks or support the emergence and development of new or augmented networks.

#### Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) provide a sustainable planning framework for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) within the context of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS). They provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of the Greater Dublin Area up to 2016 in line with the recommendations set out in the National Spatial Strategy for 2020. A key element of the RPGs is an increased emphasis on the concentration of future development into the Metropolitan Area and into the designated development centres in the Hinterland Area.

Rathdrum has been identified as a Small Growth Town within the Hinterland Area by the Guidelines, having regard to its strategic function. The RPGs determine a population range of 1,500 to 5,000 people for such towns. The Guidelines provide that relatively small and locally financed businesses and other economic activities are appropriately located within Small Growth Towns. Retailing would be mainly in the convenience category, serving the town and its local rural catchment area only. Small Growth Towns are also likely to contain facilities such as primary and/or post-primary schools, and a health clinic.

It is the objective of the Guidelines to ensure that small growth towns are developed in a more sustainable manner, with a higher proportion of residents of the towns employed locally and the development of a sustainable rural economy. The Guidelines also seek a clear definition of the boundaries of urban centres to ensure a division between rural and urban areas.

#### County Wicklow Development Plan 2004-2010

In the settlement hierarchy of County Wicklow, Rathdrum is designated as Primary Local Growth Centre within the Hinterland Area. Such centres serve as hubs for the

development of social, cultural and economic services which are necessary for quality of life and sustainable communities. It is an objective of the County Council to limit growth in these centres to strictly local as opposed to regional needs, i.e. the level of commuting from these centres must not be significant. The County Development Plan provides that 50 per cent of any residential development within Primary Local Growth Centres must be for local growth. Residential development, in order to create more self-sufficient centres, has to be accompanied by an appropriate level of employment, retail, social and community facilities within the settlement.

The Council will ensure in the preparation of Local Area Plans that sufficient lands are zoned for residential uses to accommodate the projected population and the housing demand as illustrated in the County Housing Strategy. Also, sufficient lands must be zoned for employment, social, community and town centre development to sustain the projected resident population. The designation of Local Area Plan boundaries will prevent urban sprawl, ribbon development and the coalescence of settlements. Outside of designated Local Area Plan boundaries, only rural development is permitted.

The County Development Plan defines an indicative population for Rathdrum of 3,166 in 2010 and a maximum population of 4,500 in 2016. It is essential, therefore, to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to cater for the future needs of the town.

#### **Rathdrum Town Development Plan 1999**

The Rathdrum Town Development Plan 1999 was adopted on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1999. It seeks to encourage the orderly development and growth of the town, to maintain its attractive character, to support the tourist development of the area and to maintain the distinction between the urban and rural area.

The Development Plan identifies the Avonmore River, the existing network of pedestrian paths, the proximity to the N11 and the

scheduled rail and bus service as the main opportunities in the town.

The 1999 Plan identifies the potential for a significant increase in the number of households in Rathdrum between 1996 and 2016. The Plan zones sufficient land to allow for more than a doubling in the number of households since 1996. However, the development of these lands has so far been impeded by deficiencies in the drainage infrastructure in the town.

Similarly, the demand for employment lands is strong, according to the 1999 Plan, but the availability of such lands is limited due to infrastructural constraints.

The 1999 Plan also identifies the local road system as a constraint to development in the town.

#### ***Review of Objectives of the Rathdrum Town Development Plan 1999***

It is an objective of the 1999 Plan to replace the existing sewerage treatment plant to provide waste water treatment for an initial population equivalent of 3,000 and to further upgrade this facility to accommodate a population equivalent of 4,500 people. This plant is due to open in 2007 (see Section 2.4 below).

The 1999 Plan further provides for remedial works to the existing sewerage network and the development of new northern and southern trunk sewers and branch sewers. This is by and large complete.

Section 3.3 provides for the reservation of sufficient land at Corballis for the realignment and improvement of the regional road R757-125. This road is nearing completion.

The following objectives as contained within the 1999 Plan shall be maintained or will be subject to review in this Plan:

- To augment the existing public water supply and provide ancillary storage capacity.

- To reserve sufficient land to facilitate the development of a road linking the R755-0 with Local Road L6123.
- To develop a link road between the realigned Main Street/Laragh Road junction and the R752-125 close to the entrance to the railway station.
- To develop additional off-street car parking behind the eastern side of Main Street with a pedestrian link to Main Street.
- To define carriageway, provide soft landscaping and formal laying out of parking along the northern side of the Fair Green.
- To widen the carriageway of Local Road L6123 between the Community School and the Fair Green and provision of public footpath.
- To facilitate the development of an access and relief road to the east of Main Street between the realigned Main Street/Laragh Road junction and the area between the Church of Ireland and Parnell Memorial Park. In particular, a detailed Action Plan will be drawn up which shall indicate the preferred option for access onto the southern end of Main Street having regard to the intrinsic integrity of the Parnell Memorial Park, providing for pedestrian priority on the relief route and providing for traffic safety.
- To preserve vehicular access points for future development to lands at the west of Main Street at Back Lane and at the north eastern end of the Fair Green.
- To widen the existing carriageway at Ballygannon between Local Roads L6123 and L2127 and to provide a footpath along its entire length.
- To protect and improve the view across and along the Avonmore River from the R755-0 at Rathdrum Catholic Church.
- To protect and improve the view across the Avonmore River valley towards the town of Rathdrum from the R752-90 above Rathdrum Mills.
- To preserve existing hedgerows and groups of trees within the town which add to the aesthetic quality of the town

and to ensure that the layout of new developments will, as far as practicable, integrate and preserve existing field patterns, hedgerows and trees. In particular, it is an objective of the Council to protect and preserve the trees identified in Table 5 of the 1999 Plan.

- To encourage in-depth commercial development on either side of Main Street through the development of vehicular access points and the provision of services.
- To secure the greater convenience and safety of pedestrians through the protection and preservation of the footpaths and pedestrian access listed in Table 6 of the 1999 Plan.
- To protect and upgrade the quality of the town's built environment.
- To protect and preserve those items of architectural, historical and townscape interest listed in Table 4 of the 1999 Plan.

## 2.2 Socio-Economic Context

### Population

#### *Total Population*

The results of the Census of Population 2002 illustrate a period of rapid population growth between 1996 and 2002 in Ireland based on historically high net inward migration and an accelerated natural increase, at 8 per cent. The increase in the Leinster region was the most marked at 9.4 per cent in this period. Within Leinster the growth in the Mid-East Region (Counties Kildare, Meath and Wicklow) at 18.8 per cent greatly exceeded the national and provincial growth rates. The population of Rathdrum town grew by 12.4 per cent.

Table 2.1 illustrates the growth figures of County Wicklow, Rathdrum town, the rural area of Rathdrum Electoral Division (ED) and the whole of Rathdrum ED between 1996 and 2002. Rathdrum Town in its entirety is contained within the Rathdrum ED.

It becomes evident that the growth in Rathdrum town surpassed the rates in County Wicklow, but was below the growth rate in the rural area of the Rathdrum ED and the Mid-East Region.

The population in the rural hinterland of Rathdrum town grew by approximately 5 percentage points more than the town itself, illustrating the increasing development pressure on rural areas.

The 2002 Census identified 411 private households in Rathdrum town, with an average household size of 2.94. This is reflected in the increase in the number of households in the town of 22.3 per cent between 1996 and 2002. In comparison, the population of the town increased by only 12.4 per cent as illustrated in Table 2.1.

The drop in the average household size in Rathdrum is substantial from the average in 1996 of 3.12 persons per household, and is on

**Table 2.1** Population of County Wicklow, Rathdrum Town, Rural Area and Rathdrum ED, 1996 and 2002

	1996	2002	Change 1996–2002	
			Total	Percentage
<b>County Wicklow</b>	102,683	114,676	11,993	11.7
<b>Rathdrum Town<sup>1</sup></b>	1,234	1,387	153	12.4
<b>Rathdrum Rural Area</b>	626	736	110	17.6
<b>Rathdrum ED</b>	1,860	2,123	263	14.1

Source: Central Statistical Office (CSO); 1996, 2002 Census

### Population Projections

In the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 Rathdrum is targeted to grow to 3,166 people by 2010, and to a maximum of 4,500 people by 2016. This Plan seeks to provide for 3,560 people by 2012, which would constitute an increase of approximately 2,200 people on the 2002 population.

### Households and Household Sizes

Population trends indicate that the average household size in Ireland is experiencing a gradual decline. Between 1986 and 2002, the national average household size fell from 3.6 to 2.95 persons per household. The National Spatial Strategy indicates a convergence to the EU average of 2.63 in 2011.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the development boundary of the town is slightly larger than the boundary as defined by the Central Statistics Office for Census purposes. Thus, the actual population of the town will be slightly larger than recorded by the Census.

a par with the national average, but below the county average. It illustrates a significant change in the living patterns in the town. Table 2.2 compares the average household sizes on State, County and local level.

**Table 2.2** Average Household Sizes, 1996 and 2002

	1996	2002
<b>State</b>	3.14	2.95
<b>County Wicklow</b>	3.23	3.07
<b>Aggregate Town Area</b>	3.18	3.03
<b>Aggregate Rural Area</b>	3.31	3.14
<b>Rathdrum Town</b>	3.12	2.94
<b>Rathdrum Rural Area</b>	3.18	2.98
<b>Rathdrum ED</b>	3.14	2.95

Source: CSO; 1996, 2002 Census

The household sizes will, in all likelihood, continue to decrease. This will result in an increased demand for additional residential units, which are better suited to the needs of

smaller households. Based on the assumption that the average household size in Rathdrum will be in the region of 2.7<sup>2</sup> in 2012, the population growth of 2,200 (see above) will require approximately 820 additional residential units in the town.

There have been a number of development proposals for residential use since 2002, which by now are completed, under construction, or have received planning permission but have not yet commenced. These proposals amount to approximately 320 residential units. In addition there are further c.290 units before the Council or An Bord Pleanála, awaiting decision<sup>3</sup>, leading to a total of c.610 units.

According to the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, more houses are usually constructed than needed to cater for the increase in households, called the Excess Factor. The Guidelines state that there has been an excess factor of 16.8 per cent in the Mid-East Region in the period 1996 to 2002, and predict that the excess factor will be approximately 13 per cent by 2020.

Applying an excess factor of currently 16 per cent (extrapolated from projections in the Regional Planning Guidelines), approximately 510 residential units of these granted and proposed will result in an increase in households. Thus, the population of Rathdrum would increase to approximately 2,900 people<sup>4</sup>.

To meet the 2012 target population of 3,560 people, an additional 660 people have to be accommodated within the town. At a

household size of 2.7, this translates to c.250 additional residential units.

Assuming an excess factor of 14.6 per cent in 2012, an additional 37 units have to be provided, resulting in a total of 290 dwellings, which have to be provided by 2012 to meet the target population, above and beyond those units already granted or within the planning system.

## Employment Profile

### Total Employment

In the last intercensal period between 1996 and 2002 the national labour force grew by 17.4 per cent. (The "Labour Force" is defined as the sum of those people aged 15 and over who are at work and those who are unemployed.) This growth can be mainly attributed to the growth in population aged 15 and over, increased in-migration as well as to an increasing female labour force.

The total labour force participation rate increased from 55.4 per cent in 1996 to 58.3 per cent in 2002. (The "Participation Rate" is the proportion of persons in the labour force aged 15 and over expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group.) The unemployment rate decreased on a national level substantially since 1996 from 14.8 per cent to 8.8 per cent in 2002. (The "Unemployment Rate" is the proportion of all people unemployed expressed as a percentage of all persons in the labour force.)

Table 2.3 below illustrates the employment data on State, county and local level for 1996 and 2002. The Census data distinguish between "unemployed" and "those seeking regular work for the first time". In Table 2.3 both figures are combined into one group called "unemployed".

The 2002 Census data illustrate that the decrease of unemployment in Rathdrum has been significant in the intercensal period between 1996 and 2002. However, while this decrease was much more pronounced than on a national or county level, unemployment

<sup>2</sup> The Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 projects an average household size for the County of 2.93 in 2010. This is considered too high for Rathdrum, as the town has reached this household size already. A household size of 2.63 as projected in the NSS is, on the other hand considered too low, as this is a national estimate, which takes into account large urban areas (where household sizes are generally lower than rural towns). A household size of 2.7 is thus considered a reasonable assumption.

<sup>3</sup> Status March 2006.

<sup>4</sup> At a household size of 2.94, the current household size in Rathdrum Town.

**Table 2.3** Employment Data for Wicklow, Rathdrum, Rural Area and ED, 1996 and 2002

	Persons aged 15+		At work		Unemployed		Labour Force		Participation Rate		Unemployment Rate	
	1996	2002	1996	2002	1996	2002	1996	2002	1996	2002	1996	2002
<b>Ireland</b>	2,766,663	3,089,775	1,307,236	1,641,587	226,728	159,346	1,533,964	1,800,933	55.4%	58.3%	14.8%	8.8%
<b>Wicklow</b>	77,098	88,850	36,423	47,790	6,177	4,226	42,600	52,016	55.3%	58.5%	14.5%	8.1%
<b>Rathdrum Town</b>	956	1,096	360	501	106	83	466	584	48.7%	53.3%	22.7%	14.2%
<b>Rathdrum Rural Area</b>	492	566	242	306	30	25	272	331	55.3%	58.5%	11.0%	7.6%
<b>Rathdrum ED</b>	1448	1662	602	807	136	108	738	915	51.0%	55.1%	18.4%	11.8%

Source: CSO, 1996, 2002 Census

levels in Rathdrum are much higher than on a national and county level. Also, the labour force participation rate in the town is significantly lower than on a national and county level.

### **Employment Projections**

The CSO<sup>5</sup> projects labour force participation rates using two scenarios, M1 and M2. The M1<sup>6</sup> scenario is based on a continuation of the level of net inward migration, whereas M2 takes a more pessimistic view on Irish economic growth rates and net migration.

Taking the more optimistic view of scenario M1, the participation rate will be at 49.5 per cent of the total population in 2011 and at 49 per cent in 2016.<sup>7</sup> With a population of 3,560 people in 2012 Rathdrum would have a labour force of c.1,750 people.

<sup>5</sup> CSO, Population and Labour Force Projections 2006-2036, December 2004.

<sup>6</sup> 'M' stands for Migration.

<sup>7</sup> At present the participation rate of the total population is 42 per cent.

## **2.3 Land Use Context**

### **Housing**

Rathdrum has grown historically in a western direction, due to the physical constraints of the River and railway line. Residential development is concentrated to the west of Main Street and Low Street. Generally, developments are of low density consisting of terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings.

Wicklow County Council owns 206 residential units in Rathdrum and is building a further 18 houses under the 2005 programme.

The 1999 Plan has zoned significant lands for residential purposes. Of these, approximately 17 hectares are still available, discounting those lands dedicated for development or which have pending planning applications pertaining to them. In addition, lands zoned for Town Centre uses can accommodate further residential units.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area recommend zoning additional lands to allow for land that might

not be made available for development because of servicing or other difficulties. The Guidelines recommend that this allowance ("headroom") should be one third to one half of the land necessary to accommodate the anticipated growth.

In the case of Rathdrum, it is considered that no additional lands above and beyond the lands zoned under the 1999 Plan have to be zoned for residential purposes to accommodate the target population for 2012, even taking into account a "headroom" of 50 per cent.

### Employment

Rathdrum operates as a local service centre and as a market town for its surrounding rural hinterland.

There are number of employers within and around the town of which the following are the most significant: Rathdrum Enterprise Units (which accommodates, inter alia, Arro, Avon Motors and Abhaile Furniture); Glanbia; Schering Plough (Avondale) Company; Laurence Pierce (Wool Merchants) Ltd; Wood Industries (Rathdrum) Ltd; and St Colman's Hospital.

The demand for additional employment in the town is significant, but due to infrastructural constraints could not be satisfied to date.

With the new sewage treatment plant being constructed shortly and general improvements in the sewerage and road network this Plan zones 20 hectares of employment lands (lands zoned "General Employment" and "Commercial"), not including the Town Centre. It is envisaged that these lands would provide sufficient employment for the entire labour force of the town (discounting those already in employment), once the target population is achieved (see above), as well as the wider catchment.

### Retailing and Tourism

Retailing, mainly convenience and low order comparison shopping, and retail services are concentrated on Main Street and its side streets, and Low Street.

Rathdrum is identified as a Hinterland Level 4 Local Centre in the Greater Dublin Retail Hierarchy. Such centres play an important role in servicing their rural hinterland, particularly in respect of convenience shopping.

Centra and Gala in the town centre are the main convenience outlets in Rathdrum, which meet the daily shopping needs.

In recent years, the retail offer of the town has declined, with the closure of a number of outlets. However, the Wicklow Draft County Retail Strategy identifies the continued need for improving the retail offer of the town, in particular with the development of further small scale convenience floorspace.

At present, there is an application before the Council for the development of 2,900 sq m commercial/office use and 55 no. residential units, for the area west of The Square between Brewery Lane and Back Lane. This will significantly contribute to meeting the retail needs of the town and its hinterland. (This site has a current permission pertaining to it under 02/7274.)

In addition to being an important local centre for its rural hinterland, Rathdrum has a number of tourist attractions nearby, including Avondale House and Forest Park. The Wicklow Draft County Retail Strategy concedes that the town is not harnessing the potential of this asset due to the lack of available tourist accommodation.

There is a small development of holiday homes located in Ballygannon, with capacity to accommodate additional units at this location. A caravan and camping park including log cabins is located on the Avonmore River north of Rathdrum Bridge.

### Community

Rathdrum has an active and vibrant community life with a wide range of sporting, social inclusion, parenting and local development groups. There are a number of health care services in the town. St Colman’s Hospital, a community based hospital for the elderly, is the most prominent facility, which serves not only the town but the entire region.

The Health Service Executive is seeking to provide a new Health Centre in Rathdrum.

### Education

There are three primary schools and one post-primary school in Rathdrum. Table 2.7 shows the enrolment figures for each school for the last academic year 2004/2005.

The total number of primary school students has increased by 6.8 per cent between 1999 and 2004, while the number of secondary school students has increased by 14.4 per cent between 1999 and 2005.

**Table 2.7** School Enrolment 2004/2005

School	No. of Students
St Saviour’s Primary School	57
Our Lady’s School	134
Boys National School	137
Avondale Community College	420 <sup>8</sup>

Source: Department of Education and Science

To forecast the future needs for school facilities the CSO projections under the M1F2 Scenario<sup>9</sup>, which is considered the most likely future scenario, were applied. The CSO projects that school going population for the State in 2016 would be as follows:

- Primary school going age groups (5-12): 11.3 per cent
- Secondary school going age groups (13-18): 7.6 per cent

<sup>8</sup> This is the number of students in the current academic year, 2005/2006.

<sup>9</sup> CSO, Population and Labour Force Projections 2006-2036, December 2004.

All schools in Rathdrum have little capacity to absorb any increase in pupil numbers. To cater for the target population of 4,500 people in 2016, a new primary school will be required. In the long term, the Department of Education and Science also sees the need for an additional secondary school.

It is considered that there are sufficient, suitably zoned lands available within the town, to accommodate potential extensions to the Avondale Community College. However, there is a need to identify potential locations for an additional primary and an additional secondary school.

### Built and Natural Environment

The town is divided between two distinct urban areas: Low Town, situated beside the Avonmore Bridge and the town proper which is focused on Main Street and the Fair Green.

The lands to the east of Main Street are generally open in character, sloping down to the Avonmore River. The river and the open spaces along it represent a significant amenity for the town. The Parnell Memorial Park is also an important amenity resource for the town. An important feature within the overall townscape is the presence of mature woodlands, hedgerows and trees which give Rathdrum its distinctive character.

As part of the preparation of this Local Area Plan a study of local biodiversity areas and habitat networks in and around Rathdrum was undertaken by NATURA, Environmental Consultants. This study has informed the policies and objectives in this LAP. The full report can be found in Appendix 3 and Map II illustrates the identified biodiversity areas and habitat networks of Rathdrum.

Main Street and Low Street contain the majority of Rathdrum’s protected structures, which are listed in Appendix 2. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage identifies 35 additional structures within Rathdrum. The Council will consider including these structures

and others into the Record of Protected Structures.

The visual quality of Main Street and Low Street derives predominantly from a number of integrated and complementary ensembles of buildings, the historic character of which has been largely preserved. There are number of individual buildings in the town centre which require redevelopment and renovation. The obsolete area to the west of Market Square, between Brewery Lane and Back Lane is subject to a current application for a mixed use development (see above).

The Square forms the focal point within the urban fabric of the town.

As part of the preparation of this Local Area Plan, Rob Goodbody, Historic Building Consultants, prepared a Conservation Area Appraisal (see Volume II of this Plan), which examines the architectural heritage of Rathdrum and makes recommendations with regard to the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas. The appraisal also looks at buildings of special interest, views and prospects, landmarks, important urban and green spaces as well as key trees and groups of trees of significance with regard to the townscape of Rathdrum.

The proposed Architectural Conservation Areas are illustrated on Map II.

## 2.4 Infrastructural Context

### Piped Infrastructure

Sewage from the town of Rathdrum is collected at the existing treatment plant, situated to the north east of the town, before discharging into the Avonmore River. Due to insufficient capacity, the existing treatment plant is incapable of effectively treating the existing volume of sewage. As a result, effluent is currently being discharged into the Avonmore River without receiving an adequate level of treatment.

A new sewage treatment plant, the construction of which is scheduled to commence in April 2006, is due to open in 2007. The new treatment plant will initially have a capacity for a population equivalent (PE) of 3,500 but has the potential to be upgraded to provide for a capacity of 4,500 PE. The new treatment plant will be located to the east of the railway station and a new pumping station will be provided adjacent to the existing treatment plant. This pumping station will largely serve domestic housing to the northeast of the town which would not be able to gravitate to the new treatment plant. New trunk sewers and new collector mains have been laid throughout the town to serve the new treatment plant and development lands. This represents a significant improvement in infrastructure with the spare capacity to accommodate the planned future growth in residential and commercial activities projected within this Plan.

The current water supply for Rathdrum is derived from a number of springs in the area, with the supply being augmented by a well during prolonged dry periods. Certain areas of the town, in particular to the west, suffer intermittent problems with water pressure. Wicklow County Council is currently undertaking a study to identify possible measures to address this issue.

### Roads Network

The continual improvements of the M11/N11 and indeed the completion of the South Eastern Motorway have significantly reduced the journey times to Rathdrum.

The R752 Regional Road links Rathdrum to Rathnew/Wicklow and Avoca and also provides access to the N11 and the national road network. The existing alignment of the R752 forms a bypass around the eastern side of the town centre, which removes a portion of through traffic from the town centre. This road is currently being realigned at Corballis to improve the safety for road users and the general public. The R755, which terminates in the town centre, links Rathdrum to Laragh,

Annamoe, Roundwood and eventually the N11 at Kilmacanogue.

Within Rathdrum, the existing road network is primarily centred on the town centre, with all of the road links from the west of the town connecting directly into Main Street. This arrangement forces a significant proportion of all local traffic to pass through Main Street of the town.

### **Parking Provision**

The existing on-street car parking and loading / delivery arrangements within the town centre function on an informal basis. Presently, Main Street operates with a two-way traffic flow and at certain locations the presence of on-street car parking restricts traffic flow to the passage of one vehicle only. In general, car parking occurs along the length of Main Street and at The Square, whilst the two off-street public car parks at either end of the town centre are currently under utilised. The on-street car parking spaces along the Main Street are occupied by a mixture of short and long-term car parking.

### **Provision for Pedestrian and Cyclists**

Pedestrian access within the town largely follows the prevailing road network, however a separate walkway has been developed linking the town centre via the Parnell Memorial Park to the regional road R752-125.

At many locations throughout the town the existing footpath provision is poor, due to inadequate widths, lighting, condition and continuity. No formal cycle routes or cycle parking facilities have been provided within the town.

### **Public Transport**

Public transport within Rathdrum is provided by rail and bus services. Bus Éireann operates a return service from Dublin to Rathdrum four times daily. Arklow and Wicklow are also serviced by this route. The Iarnród Éireann

Intercity Dublin-Rosslare Europort service and the Gorey/Arklow commuter service stop at Rathdrum, resulting in a total of 10 departures/arrivals at Rathdrum station per day. The existing car park at the train station has a capacity for approximately 20 vehicles and experiences a high occupancy throughout the day.

Under Iarnród Éireann's investment plan and the recently published "Transport 21" government strategy, Iarnród Éireann is undertaking fleet and infrastructure improvements throughout their entire network. These improvements will be focused upon faster speeds and more competitive journey times. As part of these plans, Iarnród Éireann has noted that additional commuter services will be provided on the Gorey/Arklow line.

The Wicklow Rural Transport Initiative operates a community focused bus service within southwest County Wicklow. The Initiative operates a door to door service facilitating the needs of senior citizens, mobility impaired and those with inadequate access to transport. A weekly service is operated from Ballinaclesh to Rathdrum/Arklow via Greenan and Glenmalure. The "Transport 21" Strategy has outlined significant future investments in this programme.

## 3.0 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 Overall Strategy

National and regional policy documents are consistent in their view of Rathdrum – a local growth centre with important service functions for its population and the rural hinterland. Rathdrum has been identified as having growth potential, in particular with regard to population and employment opportunities. The overall strategy for Rathdrum, based on regional and national policy, is to:

- Develop Rathdrum into a town, which is as self-sufficient as possible in terms of employment opportunities, social and community facilities.
- Regulate pressures from both urban and rural development, in particular sporadic development in rural areas, by providing a sustainable settlement and growth strategy to create a compact urban form and to enhance the physical, economic and social profile of Rathdrum.
- Facilitate the provision of infrastructure to meet the demand for development and future population needs in a sustainable manner.
- Ensure the protection of natural habitats, cultural heritage, ecological resources and quality landscapes and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

All guidelines, policies and objectives set out in the County Wicklow Development Plan also apply to this Local Area Plan. As far as possible, specific objectives contained within this Plan are illustrated on Map II and Map III.

### 3.2 Integrating Land Use and Transportation

Key to the sustainable development of urban centres is the integration between land use and transportation in order to ensure that, in the future, travel to and within towns is carried out using the most appropriate mode of travel. This can only be achieved by planning for future provision of homes, jobs, education and social activities hand in hand with transport planning.

Integrated planning of this nature ensures that people are offered the opportunity to travel to and from these land uses by the most appropriate mode of transport, whether by foot, bicycle, bus, car or train. Such planning fundamentally addresses the future quality of life and social inclusion of the people of Rathdrum as it seeks to build upon the opportunities in the town to make it an attractive place to live, work, play and socialise.

The guiding principles of this Local Area Plan with regard to the integration of land use and transportation are to:

- Reduce uncontrolled urban expansion,
- Ensure the efficient use of existing infrastructure, and
- Strengthen sustainable means of transport.

### 3.3 Residential Development

#### Strategy

This Plan seeks to provide for a target population of 3,560 by 2012. As detailed in Section 2.2 and 2.3 above, it is not considered necessary to zone additional lands.

In the interest of sustainable land use management new residential developments should be preferably located within walking distance of the town centre and the railway station. This will contribute to the reduction in the use of the private car as the primary mode

of transport, encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport, and will contribute to social inclusion.

### Residential Policies

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

**LAP Policy PR-1:** Seek the integrated and balanced growth of the town to a population of 3,560 people by 2012, and to a maximum of 4,500 people by 2016.

**LAP Policy PR-2:** Provide for the expansion of Rathdrum on lands close to the town centre, which may be developed with least infrastructural expenditure and which provide good access to the range of social, educational and economic facilities available in the town.

**LAP Policy PR-3:** Encourage in-fill housing developments, the use of under-utilised and vacant sites and vacant upper floors for accommodation purposes and facilitate higher residential densities at appropriate locations, subject to a high standard of design, layout and finish.

**LAP Policy PR-4:** Seek a balance and mix in the provision of social, affordable and private housing and in the type and size of units in order to promote a social and demographic balance within the town and to respond to the increasing trend towards smaller household sizes.

**LAP Policy PR-5:** Ensure that road infrastructure and other infrastructural improvements, community and recreational facilities match the needs of new residents. Housing development will be phased to correspond to the provision of these facilities.

**LAP Policy PR-6:** Promote increased use of alternative modes of transport by ensuring that planning for public transport needs is included in the design of new housing estates.

**LAP Policy PR-7:** Provide safe and high quality pedestrian and bicycle links between residential areas and retail, recreational and educational facilities in the town.

**LAP Policy PR-8:** All new developments should aim to achieve low energy performance i.e. a 40% reduction in energy use (to below 75kWh/m<sup>2</sup> /year). Low energy performance can be described as a reduction of 40% in thermal energy demand and associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as per provisions of Technical Guidance Document L (TGD L) of the Building Regulations 2002.

All new developments shall meet the minimum low energy performance as a pre-requisite to receiving planning approval (a calculation report is to be submitted with the planning application). Each buildings energy performance calculation will be demonstrated on the basis of a simple approved method carried out by a qualified or accredited expert.

### Residential Objectives

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

**LAP Objective OR-1:** Require that any proposal for the lands zoned for "Riverside Action Area" to the west of Low Town Bridge, south of the R752 are developed on the basis of an agreed Action Area Plan which shall have regard to the sensitive riverside location at one of the gateways into Rathdrum, to the proposed Architectural Conservation Area of Low Town and to protected views. A quality design finished to a high architectural standard of layout and building design will be essential at this location. Any proposal must take regard to the specific objectives in relation to Local Biodiversity Areas contained within this Plan as well as to Sections 5.7 "Development in Flood Prone Areas" and 5.8 "Development in the Vicinity of Watercourses" of this Plan.

### 3.4 Town Centre

#### Strategy

The town centre in Rathdrum is the core of urban activity, where residential, commercial and employment functions take place side by side. It provides the key focus of identification for residents and visitors alike.

While the Action Area to the east of Main Street and the lands to the west of The Square provide the opportunity for larger scale development, additional facilities in the town centre will mainly consist of infill development compatible with the fine grain of the town centre's urban structure. Future development in the town centre should take place in full appreciation of and respect to the heritage of the town centre and its historic street pattern. The development of the Action Area will encourage the creation of a compact urban form, which will make most efficient use of land, and the existing infrastructure. The Council will seek to provide a vibrant mix of uses, including retail, commercial, community and residential.

The town centre expansion will also offer the opportunity to address the traffic congestion on Main Street. (Issues such as traffic management and car parking will be addressed in other policies and objectives sections below.)

While it is necessary to consolidate and reinforce the town centre as the primary commercial and retail core, a high quality public realm plays a significant role in enhancing the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre, providing identification and helping everyone to move around easily and safely, particularly those with mobility impairment.

The preservation and enhancement of the visual quality and architectural heritage of the town centre will be promoted by designating two Architectural Conservation Areas as detailed in Section 5.5.

#### Town Centre Policies

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

**LAP Policy PTC-1:** Encourage the development and maintenance of a thriving mixed use town centre in Rathdrum, with a balance of retailing, commercial uses, housing, and community facilities.

**LAP Policy PTC-2:** Strengthen existing commercial and retail development in the town centre and encourage additional facilities to consolidate the town centre as the primary commercial and retail core of Rathdrum.

**LAP Policy PTC-3:** Encourage the use of first floors for active uses, including retail, office and residential. The use upper floors for storage only will be discouraged.

**LAP Policy PTC-4:** Encourage tourism related retail and commercial facilities to increase the attractiveness of Rathdrum for visitors.

**LAP Policy PTC-5:** Improve the public realm of the town centre to increase visual cohesion and improve orientation and movement around the town centre.

#### Town Centre Objectives

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

**LAP Objective OTC-1:** Have regard to the Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by Historic Building Consultants when assessing proposals in the town centre in order to protect the character of the town centre in general and identified character areas in particular, the streetscape, as well as individual features of conservation value identified in the report.

**LAP Objective OTC-2:** Draw up a detailed Action Area Plan (AA) for lands east of Main Street (see Map I), to provide for high quality

mixed town centre, residential, education, open space and infrastructure development, in accordance with an action area plan, which shall be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the consideration of any application for permission. These lands must be developed on the basis of comprehensive development proposals that allow for the sustainable, phased and managed development during the plan period and beyond.

This action plan shall provide for

- (a) Mixed-use development to a high standard of design and layout on lands designated TC including retail, commercial, community and residential uses. Development shall comply with the design and layout standards of the County Development Plan 2004-2010.
- (b) A public park and walks, to be provided (including the provision of landscaping, walking / cycling routes, furniture etc) and maintained by the developer until such a time as it is taken in charge by Wicklow County Council
- (c) Reservation of lands to meet community and educational requirements
- (d) The provision of new public road OT-2 and the reservation of lands for the provision of new public road OT-1, as set out indicatively on Map III
- (e) Necessary support infrastructure, including public wastewater infrastructure, if so required by Wicklow County Council
- (f) Public car parking, which shall be located and designed to minimise visual intrusion on the landscape."

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 Act, 2000 to effect this control.

**LAP Objective OTC-3:** Maintain separate access to the upper floors of buildings. They should not be removed as part of any proposal

to extend the ground floor use or install a new shopfront.

**LAP Objective OTC-4:** Facilitate the purposeful re-use of the old V.E.C. on Main Street.

**LAP Objective OTC-5:** Develop a comprehensive and coherent public realm strategy for the town centre of Rathdrum, which shall address issues such as signage, lighting, street furniture, soft and hard landscaping, artwork and sculpture. Market Square shall be reinstated as the focal point of the town centre. The strategy shall take regard to the Conservation Area Appraisal by Historic Building Consultants. Undertake a number of civic improvement schemes for the following areas within the lifetime of this Plan:

- Rathdrum Bridge / Low Town.
- Laragh Road / VEC area.
- Fair Green.
- Market Square.
- St Saviour's Church Precinct, Main Street, including Poundbrook Lane.
- Saville's Cross.

**LAP Objective OTC-6:** Improve the safety and accessibility of the town centre through footpath improvements, provision of dished kerbs and improved grading of surfaces on a phased basis.

### 3.5 Retail

#### Strategy

Rathdrum is an important service centre for its wider rural hinterland. To provide for the growing population of Rathdrum additional retail facilities have to be provided. Both the offer of convenience and comparison goods has to be improved.

Retail developments outside of the town centre will not be acceptable if they detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre and its function as the primary retail and commercial core of Rathdrum.

### Retail Policies

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

**LAP Policy PRT-1:** Have regard to the Retail Planning Guidelines and the Wicklow County Retail Strategy when assessing proposals for new retail developments.

**LAP Policy PRT-2:** Discourage uses that detract from the essential character of the town centre, displace retail uses or displace uses that contribute to its vitality and viability.

**LAP Policy PRT-3:** Have regard to the following considerations in the assessment of applications for change of use in the town centre:

- The number and proximity of similar uses already operating in the immediate area;
- The scale of the proposed outlet;
- The quality of the shopfront design and associated signage.

**LAP Policy PRT-4:** Retail developments outside the town centre must detail potential trade diversion from the town centre and satisfy the sequential assessment and other criteria contained in the Retail Planning Guidelines and the County Wicklow Retail Strategy. Comparison shopping will be permitted only where it is demonstrated that it does not detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre.

### Retail Objectives

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

**LAP Objective ORT-1:** Encourage retail, retail services and other commercial uses as the principle use at ground floor level in Main Street and Low Street. A change of use from retail to residential will be discouraged.

**LAP Objective ORT-2:** Locate retail warehouse developments, which attract large volumes of car bound traffic, to the south of the town in the new employment zone at Corballis.

## 3.6 Employment

### Strategy

It is the aim of the Council to assist the provision of a sufficient number of additional jobs as outlined in Section 2.2 above to match the increasing population. Thus, commuting to other centres, in particular Dublin and Wicklow can be reduced, which will not only reduce trips by car but will also contribute to the vitality of the town. This Draft Plan zones additional 20 hectares for employment purposes.

The Council will protect and further support existing businesses while seeking to diversify the economic profile of the town.

### Employment Policies

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

**LAP Policy PE-1:** Strengthen Rathdrum as a service and business centre and facilitate a range of small and medium manufacturing and other enterprises.

**LAP Policy PE-2:** Ensure sufficient zoning of suitable land for the development of commercial and industrial development to match the growing population.

**LAP Policy PE-3:** Ensure the continued support and promotion of existing industries.

**LAP Policy PE-4:** Promote the location of high-density employment uses, such as offices, in locations within or close to the town centre and close to public transport nodes.

**LAP Policy PE-5:** Promote the orderly phasing of development to ensure essential infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of businesses and their employees.

### Employment Objectives

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

**LAP Objective OE-1:** Encourage a wide range of employment uses on lands zoned for "General Employment" south of the town at Corballis. Access to the lands is to be provided from the R752 only.

**LAP Objective OE-2:** Require that development on lands zoned for "General Employment" to the east of the railway station shall have particular regard to the location adjacent to the Avonmore River as the most important Local Biodiversity Area in the town. Any proposal shall have regard to the specific objectives in relation to Local Biodiversity Areas contained within this Plan as well as to Section 5.8 "Development in the Vicinity of Watercourses" of this Plan.

**LAP Objective OE-3:** Require that any proposals for the lands zoned for "Commercial" at the Mill in Low Town shall have regard to the sensitive location at this gateway into Rathdrum, to the protected structures on the site, to protected views, and to the location adjacent to the Avonmore River. A high quality design finished to a high architectural standard of layout and building design will be essential at this location, and proposals addressing the river and the R752 successfully will be given preferential consideration. Preferred uses for these lands are retail, office, tourism related uses, light industrial, enterprise and residential uses. Any proposal shall have regard to the specific objectives in relation to Local Biodiversity Areas contained within this Plan as well as to Section 5.8 "Development in the Vicinity of Watercourses" of this Plan.

**LAP Objective OE-4:** Encourage office, enterprise, residential and tourism related uses

as preferred uses on lands zoned for "Commercial" to the west of the railway station. Any residential development shall be strictly secondary to the primary use of the site for commercial purposes and shall consist of no more than 20 apartments / duplex units, suitably located on the site and designed to the highest architectural standard. It is also an objective to provide a frontage to the regional road R752-125; with a controlled crossing over the road; and an extension to the railway car park.

## 3.7 Tourism

### Strategy

The Council will encourage tourism in and around Rathdrum as an important economic sector.

Section 2.3 has outlined that Rathdrum is not capitalising on its full tourism potential due to the lack of adequate tourist accommodation. It is thus one of the main aims of the Council with regard to tourism to encourage a wide range of high quality tourist accommodation in the town.

The Council will further seek to improve the signage and linkage to and interpretation of local tourist attractions.

### Tourism Policies

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

**LAP Policy PTO-1:** Promote Rathdrum as a tourist destination and promote tourism as an important employment sector for Rathdrum.

**LAP Policy PTO-2:** Support proposals which seek the development of the tourism industry by encouraging the provision of additional tourist accommodation and facilitating the proper signposting and marketing of local tourist attractions.

**LAP Policy PTO-3:** Have regard to the Tourist Accommodation Standards contained within the County Development Plan and to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines with regard to Holiday and Second Home Developments.

### Tourism Objectives

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

**LAP Objective OTO-1:** Support the function of the tourism office in Rathdrum and encourage the implementation of a signage, interpretation and linkage strategy with regard to tourist destinations and local heritage for the purpose of establishing Rathdrum as a tourism base, in co-ordination with the public realm strategy as provided in LAP Objective OTC-5.

**LAP Objective OTO-2:** Encourage a wide variety of types of high quality tourist accommodation in Rathdrum, including hotel, bed & breakfast, self-catering accommodation, holiday homes and caravan and camping.

**LAP Objective OTO-3:** Require that all holiday home developments shall remain in single ownership, shall not be sold individually or leased out for long term periods and that they shall be available for short term holiday use only. Single, one-off holiday homes will not be permitted. Applications for permanent holiday homes must not adversely dominate the existing scale, character, vitality and size of the town.

**LAP Objective OTO-4:** Support the successful operation of the caravan and camping park in the town, while having regard to the sensitivity of the location adjacent to the Avonmore River. Any proposal shall have regard to the specific objectives in relation to Local Biodiversity Areas contained within this Plan as well as to Section 5.8 "Development in the Vicinity of Watercourses" of this Plan.

**LAP Objective OTO-5:** Support proposals to improve and upgrade the tourist and commercial facilities and attractions at Avondale House in a manner that is sensitive to the existing natural and built heritage in the area.

**LAP Objective OTO-6:** Support proposals to extend and upgrade the railway hotel for tourism purposes.

## 3.8 Transportation

### Strategy

The transport vision for Rathdrum is to optimise accessibility to the town centre for all modes of transport, whilst minimising the impacts of through traffic.

In order to achieve this vision it is the aim of the Plan to promote pedestrian and cyclist access through the provision of safe and continuous links from the outlying residential areas to the town centre and railway station.

Within the town centre it is the aim of the Plan to create a high quality environment for all road users through the adoption of a number of coordinated initiatives, including the creation of a new road link, a parking strategy and the enhancement of facilities to meet the mobility needs of all people.

As far as possible, specific transport objectives have been illustrated on Map III of this Draft Plan.

### Transport Policies

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

**LAP Policy PT-1:** Enhance the permeability of the town through the preservation of traditional footpaths and pedestrian access routes, and the identification and promotion of opportunities for further safe pedestrian linkages to and within the town centre,

employment areas, schools and public transport nodes that will maximise travel by sustainable means.

**LAP Policy PT-2:** Alleviate town centre congestion through the creation of a parking strategy reducing the requirement for on-street parking in favour of off-street parking at strategic locations throughout the town.

**LAP Policy PT-3:** Introduce traffic calming measures within the town centre and residential areas to reduce vehicular speeds and improve road safety.

**LAP Policy PT-4:** Facilitate access to, and the use of public transport for travel within the town and to external destinations.

**LAP Policy PT-5:** Improve accessibility and facilities for people with mobility and sensory disabilities.

### Transport Objectives

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

#### Roads

**LAP Objective OT-1:** Develop a link road between the realigned Main Street/Laragh Road Junction and the R752-125 close to the entrance of the railway station.

**LAP Objective OT-2:** Develop a new street to the east of Main Street between the realigned Main Street/Laragh Road junction and the area between the Church of Ireland and Parnell Memorial Park. Pedestrian access onto Main Street will be provided from the Main Street/Laragh Road junction, the Parnell Memorial Park and a number of direct pedestrian linkages between the two streets. The new street shall provide vehicular access to the potential new car park (see LAP Objective OT-12) and rear access to the properties on Main street. Function, shape and use of the street will be addressed as part of a detailed Action Area Plan as specified in LAP Objective OTC-2.

**LAP Objective OT-3:** Reserve sufficient lands to facilitate the development of a road linking Local Roads L6123 (Union Lane) and L2127 (Ballinderry Road). The reservation shown is indicative only and subject to further investigation.

**LAP Objective OT-4:** Re-design existing junctions to improve vehicular flows and safe access for all road users at the following locations:

- Railway Station / R752 junction
- Back Lane/Main Street
- Market Square/Brewery Place
- Saville's Cross
- Low Street/Main Street

**LAP Objective OT-5:** On completion of the proposed road link between the realigned Main Street/Laragh Road junction and the R752-125 (see LAP Objective OT-1), implement a one-way traffic flow system along Main Street to aid traffic flow and improve facilities for pedestrians.

**LAP Objective OT-6:** Following the opening of the one-way traffic flow system on Main Street, undertake a modelling study to determine the benefits of a one-way gyratory system on Back Lane and Brewery Lane. Implement findings of the report.

**LAP Objective OT-7:** Widen the carriageway of Local Road L6123 between the Avondale Community College and the Fair Green to facilitate the provision of a public footpath.

**LAP Objective OT-8:** Widen the existing carriageway at Ballygannon between Local Roads L6123 and L2127 to facilitate the provision of a public footpath.

**LAP Objective OT-9:** To enable the development of lands zoned R2, to the east of Laragh Road and the west of the Avonmore River, the Council shall facilitate the development of access roads from the Laragh Road and the Caravan Park access road as indicated on LAP Map III. The access points shown are indicative only and subject to further investigation.

### Town Centre Parking

**LAP Objective OT-10:** Rationalise the town centre on-street parking and loading arrangements to optimise the free movement of traffic and to promote the safety of all road users. Measures to consider include:

- Parking on one side of street only.
- Physical measures to prevent parking on the footpath.
- Formalised loading areas.
- Enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities.
- Maintain access to private entrances/exits.

**LAP Objective OT-11:** Maintain market square car parking as traditionally used and allow resurfacing of the square with high quality granite paving/cobbles and removable bollards in order to allow from time to time, dual usage as civic space and focal point for the town centre, including reinstatement of traditional lions head water feature and associated sculpture.

**LAP Objective OT-12:** Identify a suitable location for an off-street public car park on the western side of Main Street with a pedestrian link to Main Street.

**LAP Objective OT-13:** Identify a suitable location for an off-street public car park on the eastern side of Main Street with a pedestrian link to Main Street. The car park is to be developed in tandem with the proposal to develop a new street to the east of Main Street (OT-2).

**LAP Objective OT-14:** Review and formalise the on-street parking and school set-down facilities in the vicinity of Fair Green. Measures to consider include:

- Provision of inset parking areas for set down traffic.
- Turning facilities.
- Off street coach parking facilities.
- Continuous footpath links from parking areas to school entrance.
- Crossing facilities.
- Traffic calming.
- School signage.

**LAP Objective OT-15:** Provide designated parking spaces for people with disabilities in key town centre locations.

### Pedestrian and Cyclists

**LAP Objective OT-16:** Construct new footpath links and upgrade existing pedestrian accesses along the following routes, as indicated on Map III. Upgrade of routes to include appropriate signage, lighting and litter bins:

- Sections of Back Lane
- Sections of Brewery Lane
- Sections of Fair Green
- Sections of Union Lane
- Sections of Main Street
- Poundbrook at Brewery
- Saville's Cross to Corballis Drive Estate
- Saville's Cross to Corballis Demesne (consider continuation to Avondale House)
- Hospital to Ballygannon
- R752 to Railway Station
- Railway Station to Parnell Park
- Eastern edge of the Parnell Park estate linking the R752-125 at Corballis with Brewery Lane
- Pound lane from St Saviours Church of Ireland to the R752-125 at Corballis
- Laragh Road Primary school and Catholic church to the Youth Hostel on Union Lane
- County Home to famine Graveyard at Ballygannon
- Railway goods yard to the footbridge over the Avonmore River at Balleese
- Laragh Road Primary school and Catholic Church to Low Road.

**LAP Objective OT-17:** Upgrade existing pedestrian links along the following routes:

- Brewery Lane
- Back Lane
- Sections of Main Street

**LAP Objective OT-18:** Provide cycle parking facilities along Main Street in the vicinity of the following locations:

- Market Square
- Parnell Memorial Park
- Car Park at old V.E.C.

**LAP Objective OT-19:** Provide formal pedestrian crossings on Main Street that are suitable for the mobility and sensory impaired.

**LAP Objective OT-20:** Review vehicular speeds and volumes on the following roads to determine the need and form of traffic calming measures:

- Greenan Road
- Ballinderry Road
- Glenmalure Road
- Brewery Lane
- Back Lane

### **Public Transport**

**LAP Objective OT-21:** Facilitate the expansion of the railway station car park in co-operation with existing landowners in order to improve accessibility to rail services.

**LAP Objective OT-22:** Coordinate with Bus Éireann and other bus service providers to provide quality bus shelters at the existing bus stop locations.

**LAP Objective OT-23:** Investigate the provision of a Hackney/Taxi parking area in the vicinity of Market Square.

**LAP Objective OT-24:** Provide designated coach parking areas at the following locations:

- Fair Green
- Car Park at old V.E.C.
- Parnell Memorial Park Car Park

## **3.9 Service Infrastructure**

### **Strategy**

It is the aim of the Council to provide a potable water supply and adequate wastewater treatment facilities to cater for the existing population and the projected demand.

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

### **Water Supply**

**LAP Policy PSI-1:** Improve the standard of waters in the rivers, streams and ground water through the provision of appropriate waste water facilities.

**LAP Policy PSI-2:** Provide sufficient storage, supply and pressure of potable water to serve all lands zoned for development.

**LAP Policy PSI-3:** Have regard to the Wicklow Groundwater Protection Scheme 2003 when assessing applications for new private and public developments.

### **Waste Water**

**LAP Policy PSI-4:** Collect foul water sewerage from within the town and its environs and discharge it after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner.

**LAP Policy PSI-5:** Ensure the separation of foul and surface water effluent through the provision of separate sewerage networks.

**LAP Policy PSI-6:** Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).

### **Service Infrastructure Objectives**

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

### **Water Supply**

**LAP Objective OSI-1:** Augment the existing public water supply and provide ancillary storage capacity.

**LAP Objective OSI-2:** Investigate the development of the Avonmore River as a source of future water supply.

**LAP Objective OSI-3:** Source a location for a new water storage reservoir to cater for all

future domestic and non domestic needs arising from Rathdrum.

### **Waste Water**

**LAP Objective OSI-4:** Complete the replacement of the existing sewage treatment plant to provide waste water treatment for an initial population equivalent of 3,500 and reserve sufficient lands for the further upgrade of this facility to accommodate a population equivalent of 4,500 persons.

### **Flooding**

**LAP Objective OSI-5:** In areas along the Avonmore River which the Council considers may be susceptible to flooding, developers shall be required to have particular regard to measures outlined in Section 5.7 "Development in Flood Prone Areas" of this Plan.

### **Recycling**

**LAP Objective OSI-6:** Continue to facilitate the provision of "Bring Banks" at suitable locations in the town.

### **Telecommunications**

**LAP Objective OSI-7:** Where feasible encourage the under-grounding of cables to help minimise the visual impact of overhead cables.

**LAP Objective OSI-8:** Facilitate the infrastructural renewal and development of electricity networks in the region, including the overhead lines necessary to provide the required networks.

## **3.10 Community and Recreation**

### **Strategy**

The sufficient provision and appropriate location of recreational and community facilities will contribute to a vibrant town with a high degree of quality of life, social integration and attractiveness for residents

and visitors. The Council will continue to support and encourage a wide range of community facilities with a high standard and quality.

### **Community and Recreation Policies**

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the policy of the County Council to:

**LAP Policy PCR-1:** Protect existing areas of public open space from inappropriate development and maintain these areas for public enjoyment and use.

**LAP Policy PCR-2:** Make provision for land use requirements for the community, social and recreational needs of the town and to ensure that adequate provision is made for such facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the town and hinterland.

**LAP Policy PCR-3:** Promote social inclusion through the provision of linkages between community facilities and existing and future residential areas.

**LAP Policy PCR-3:** Promote social inclusion by providing strong linkages between the local authority and disadvantaged groups in the area. This work can be enhanced through the provision of needs-based community facilities in existing and future residential areas, decided on through public consultation.

**LAP Policy PCR-4:** Ensure that community, cultural and recreational facilities are accessible by all modes of transport with safe and high quality pedestrian and cycle links from residential areas to these facilities. Ensure that any new recreational facilities and any renovations carried out on existing facilities, guarantee accessibility from a disability perspective.

**LAP Policy PCR-5:** Facilitate the development of playgrounds within existing and proposed residential developments.

**LAP Policy PCR-6:** Encourage the provision of crèche and play-school facilities.

### Community and Recreation Objectives

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan it is the objective of the County Council to:

**LAP Objective OCR-1:** Co-operate with relevant organisations in the provision of an integrated sports complex and active recreational space at an appropriate location, e.g. at Corballis.

**LAP Objective OCR-2:** Co-operate with the Department of Education and Science to facilitate a new primary school at an appropriate location within the town within the lifetime of this Plan.

**LAP Objective OCR-3:** Facilitate the future expansion of the Avondale Community College on appropriate lands.

**LAP Objective OCR-4:** Co-operate with the Department of Education and Science to identify a suitable site for a new post-primary school within the lifetime of this Plan.

**LAP Objective OCR-5:** Encourage the establishment of a multi-purpose Civic Centre in Rathdrum in co-operation with local community groups and other stakeholders.

**LAP Objective OCR-6:** Facilitate the provision of a new Health Centre in Rathdrum in co-operation with the Health Service Executive.

**LAP Objective OCR-7:** Ensure the protection, preservation and further improvement of the Parnell Memorial Park.

**LAP Objective OCR-8:** Provide a playground at an appropriate location in co-operation with local community groups.

**LAP Objective OCR-9:** Cooperate with the Department of Education and Science to facilitate an extension to the Our Lady's School, Rathdrum including the provision of safe access and dropping off facilities for school traffic and the replacement of

temporary buildings with permanent accommodation.

### 3.11 Heritage and Landscape Conservation

#### Strategy

Of paramount importance to the natural heritage of Rathdrum is the Avonmore River. The preservation of the habitat of the river and the minimisation of pollution is a key aim of this Draft Plan.

This Draft Plan also seeks to preserve and improve the visual and architectural identity and quality of the town by addressing issues such as views of special amenity; the protection of open spaces, which contribute to the character and setting of the town; and the protection of the architectural heritage by designating two Architectural Conservation Areas.

#### Heritage and Landscape Policies

The policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan with regard to the natural and built heritage as well as landscape also apply to this Local Area Plan. It is the policy of the Council to:

**LAP Policy PHL-1:** Safeguard the character and identity of Rathdrum through the control of inappropriate development.

**LAP Policy PHL-2:** Ensure the protection of all Protected Structures as listed in Appendix 2.

**LAP Policy PHL-3:** Protect all buildings and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and technical interest which help define and enhance the character of Rathdrum. In particular protect the quality of proposed Architectural Character Areas as described in Section 5.5 of this Plan.

**LAP Policy PHL-4:** Make appropriate additions to the Record of Protected Structures

(RPS) in the lifetime of the Plan, having regard to the structures listed in the National Inventory of the Architectural Heritage and the Conservation Areas Appraisal Study (Volume II).

**LAP Policy PHL-5:** Respect and maintain the historic street pattern of Rathdrum, which enhances its visual character, through the control of inappropriate development.

**LAP Policy PHL-6:** Encourage and promote access to, and enjoyment and interpretation of the heritage of Rathdrum and surrounding environs.

**LAP Policy PHL-7:** Protect the setting of structures of architectural merit present on land rezoned for development, and to encourage the use of such structures as focal or nucleus points in the layout of new development.

**LAP Policy PHL-8:** Have regard to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 in order to protect the quality of existing shopfronts and when assessing proposals for new shopfronts.

**LAP Policy PHL-9:** Protect the natural heritage of Rathdrum, in particular the Local Biodiversity Areas and Habitat Networks identified in Appendix 3 and Map II.

**LAP Policy PHL-10:** Consider designating significant mature trees or groups of trees, which are of either landscape or ecological value, under statutory Tree Preservation Orders.

**LAP Policy PHL-11:** Encourage developers to incorporate features of the natural environment, such as rivers, streams, existing flora and fauna and significant tree groups, within open space layouts and in the planning of future developments.

**LAP Policy PHL-12:** Ensure that all large scale development proposals include landscaping and other measures to actively enhance biodiversity capacity and ensure integration with the surrounding landscape.

### Heritage and Landscape Objectives

The policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan with regard to the natural and built heritage as well as landscape also apply to this Local Area Plan. It is the objective of the Council to:

**LAP Objective OHL-1:** Protect the special character of the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) of Main Street and Low Town as identified on Map II of this Draft Plan<sup>10</sup>, and ensure that future development will enhance this character and contribute to the creation of a distinctive sense of place. In accordance with section 82 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, all works to the exterior of buildings in ACAs are exempt only if the character is not affected. It is further the objective of the Council to:

- To conserve, restore and rehabilitate the existing building stock in the area.
- Ensure that all proposed developments are carried out in a manner sympathetic to the special character of the area.
- To ensure a high standard of urban design within Architectural Conservation Areas.

**LAP Objective OHL-2:** Discourage the stripping of render from façades to expose stonework and the removal of red granite kerbstones and red granite carved gutter channels which are unique to the town.

**LAP Objective OHL-3:** Protect and preserve the following prospects and views of special amenity (Schedules 10.6, 10.7, 10.8 of the Development Plan):

- R752 at Rathdrum Bridge, Parnell Drive: View of Avonmore River valley from bridge.
- R752 north of Rathdrum, Parnell Drive: View of Avonmore River valley towards Rathdrum.
- R755 Vale of Clara Laragh to Rathdrum: Wooded valley prospect of Clara Vale on both sides of valley.

<sup>10</sup> For more detail refer to Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by Rob Goodbody, Historic Building Consultants (Volume II of this Plan).

- Across and along the Avonmore River from the R755-0 at Rathdrum Catholic Church.
- Across the Avonmore River valley towards the town of Rathdrum, and in particular towards Rathdrum Catholic Church, from the R752-90 above Rathdrum Mills.

**LAP Objective OHL-4:** Protect the Rathdrum Railway Cutting as an area of Geological and Geomorphological Interest (Schedule 10.9 of the County Development Plan).

**LAP Objective OHL-5:** Protect and preserve the following trees and groups of trees:

- Woodland and trees along the R752-125 between Low Town and St Saviour's Primary School.
- Woodland and trees along the R755-0 between its junction with Main Street and the town centre.
- Trees along Local Road L97544-0 between Low Town and the junction of the R755 and Main Street.
- Trees and woodland along the banks of the Avonmore River.
- Trees within Parnell Memorial Park and trees immediately outside of and to the north of the Park.

**LAP Objective OHL-6:** Protect the nature conservation value of any area identified as a Local Biodiversity Area in Appendix 3 and on Map II of this Draft Plan through ensuring that planning conditions attached to future developments are compatible with nature conservation.

**LAP Objective OHL-7:** Maintain a buffer zone/linear park of at least 10 metres for all new developments from the water's edge along both banks of the Avonmore River to protect the fisheries and ecological interests of this important watercourse and to retain the link between woodlands in the Vale of Clara and Avondale House.

**LAP Objective OHL-8:** Protect the nature conservation value of key treelines and hedgerows linking small areas of woodland identified as Habitat Networks in Appendix 3

and on Map II of this Draft Plan through planning conditions attached to future developments.

**LAP Objective OHL-9:** Maintain good water quality in the Avonmore River and its tributaries as an essential prerequisite to enhancing the fisheries and biodiversity value of this important natural resource. Co-operate with statutory bodies and voluntary groups to reduce the littering and pollution of the river.

**LAP Objective OHL-10:** Facilitate the partial removal of the weir at Rathdrum or installation of a fish pass to allow free passage of salmonid fish and lamprey to the upper catchment of the Avonmore River.

**LAP Objective OHL-11:** Seek the establishment of a way-marked walking route along the river corridor to link the existing footpaths in the Vale of Clara and Avondale, in cooperation with existing landowners.

## 4.0 LAND-USE ZONING – PROVISIONS AND OBJECTIVES

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of land-use zoning is two-fold:

- It indicates the objectives of the County Council for all lands within Rathdrum, including the uses that are acceptable or unacceptable in a particular area, and
- It reduces the potential for conflict between uses in particular areas.

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 County Development Plan and this Draft Local Area 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.

### 4.2 Land Use Zones

The Rathdrum Town Development Plan 1999 and the County Development Plan inform the zoning of lands in Rathdrum.

There are 9 land-use zones indicated in this Draft Plan as listed in Table 4.1 below. All zoning objectives are identified by letter on the zoning matrix below (Table 4.2), and by letter and colour on the Zoning Map (Map I).

The zoning matrix (Table 4.2) lists the land use activities most commonly encountered in Rathdrum and each is defined in Appendix 1. They are intended as a general guideline and the uses listed are not exhaustive.

**Table 4.1** Zoning Objectives and Visions

<b>R1</b>	<p><b>Existing Residential/Infill:</b> To preserve existing residential uses and provide for infill residential development.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> This zoning objective seeks to protect existing residential areas from unsuitable development, which will affect the residential amenity of such areas. New developments should be compatible with or reinforce the residential function of the area. A range of uses is permitted in principle in this zone. These uses have the potential to create a strong sense of community due to a close interrelationship between residential uses and community uses, open space, schools, recreation and amenity uses.</p>
<b>R2</b>	<p><b>New Residential:</b> To provide for new residential development.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> The purpose of this zone is to provide for high quality new residential environments with good layout and design and a strong sense of place, with high quality walking and cycling links to community facilities, local services and employment zones. Similarly to the "Existing Residential" zone the uses permitted have the potential to create a strong sense of community due to a close interrelationship between residential uses and community uses, open space, schools, recreation and amenity uses. It is the objective to provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet different household needs and to promote balanced communities.</p>

R3	<p><b>Town Centre Residential:</b> To provide for new residential development within walking distance of the town centre at a plot ratio of 1:0.35 to 1:0.5.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> The objectives of this zone are equivalent to those for the “New Residential” zone, however, the preferred plot ratio is 1:0.35 to 1:0.5.</p>
R4	<p><b>New residential (Phase 2):</b> To provide for new residential development.”</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> To provide for residential development when all available lands in Phase 1 have generally been developed.</p>
RIV	<p><b>Riverside:</b> To provide for high quality mixed residential, open space and infrastructure development, in accordance with an action area plan, which shall be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the consideration of any application for permission. These lands must be developed on the basis of comprehensive development proposals that allow for the sustainable, phased and managed development during the plan period and beyond.</p> <p>This action plan shall provide for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Residential development, up to a maximum gross floor area of 4,000 sq m. Building height shall not exceed 3-storeys and shall be designed and finished to a high architectural standard, in order to protect the riverside character of Low Town. Residential development shall comply with the standards of the County Development Plan 2004-2010 with regard to residential public and private open space, car parking and site layout standards and shall successfully address the river. Development shall not obscure any views / prospects listed for preservation in this Plan.</li> <li>(b) A public riverside park and walk, to be provided (including the provision of landscaping, walking / cycling routes, furniture and riverbank habitat protection works) and maintained by the developer until such a time as it is taken in charge by Wicklow County Council</li> <li>(c) No development, other than open space or necessary support infrastructure (roads, water &amp; wastewater services) above the 90m contour or below the 88m contour</li> <li>(d) Public wastewater infrastructure, if so required by Wicklow County Council</li> <li>(e) The provision of or improvements to footpaths along the roadside site boundary</li> </ul> <p><i>Vision:</i> The Council’s vision for this zone is the provision of a high quality new residential development, similarly as for lands zoned ‘new residential’. However, the visual and environmental sensitivity of this zone requires particular attention to the quality of layout and building design, as well as to the Avonmore River.</p>
TC	<p><b>Town Centre:</b> To preserve, improve and provide for town centre uses.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> The primary purpose of this zone is to sustain a vibrant mix of uses in the town centre and to create a sense of community and identity. Preferred uses are retail, retail services, commercial, residential, office use etc. Retail and retail services are the preferred uses at ground floor level.</p>
C	<p><b>Commercial:</b> To provide for commercial development.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> The main purpose of this zone is to facilitate employment generating uses, however, the location of such lands is visually more sensitive and thus are not zoned for general employment. Preferred uses include office, enterprise, retail, tourism related uses etc. Residential is open for consideration, however, should not be the primary use in the zone. Developments will be required to be of high architectural standard in layout and building design.</p>

<b>E</b>	<p><b>General Employment:</b> To provide for appropriate industrial, light industrial, transport, distribution, warehouse, office or retail warehouse development of good architectural design, layout and landscaping. The provision of retail facilities will not be at the expense of facilities in the town centre.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> The zoning objective seeks to provide for a wide range of employment uses, which would not be acceptable in other areas of the town, due to impacts on visual and residential amenity, noise, smells, heavy goods traffic etc. Activities include industry, light industry, warehousing, local services, offices etc. Non-employment uses are limited to prevent land use conflicts and to preserve land for employment.</p>
<b>CEI</b>	<p><b>Community/Educational/Institutional:</b> To provide for and improve community, educational and institutional facilities.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> These areas are reserved for existing and future community, educational and institutional uses. The present uses on such lands include schools, the hospital and churches.</p>
<b>H</b>	<p><b>Holiday Homes:</b> To provide for holiday home and caravan park development.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> This zoning objective seeks to provide for appropriately scaled holiday home and caravan park developments as contributors to a more diversified rural economy. The zoning objective also seeks to ensure the protection of the environmental qualities which attract visitors in the first place.</p>
<b>AG</b>	<p><b>Agriculture:</b> To provide for continued agricultural development and associated uses and to provide a clear break between urban land uses and the rural area.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> This zoning objective seeks the protection of the role and operational needs of agriculture as an important economic sector. The zoning objective also seeks to provide for a clear break between urban and rural areas. Agricultural areas within the town contribute to defining the distinctive character of Rathdrum and are to be maintained. New developments in this zone should functionally relate to agriculture and should fit sensitively into the landscape and natural features such as hedgerows and tree lines should be protected to preserve the rural amenity.</p>
<b>OS</b>	<p><b>Open Space:</b> to preserve, improve and provide for recreational public and private open space.</p> <p><i>Vision:</i> The zoning objective seeks to provide recreational and amenity resources subject to strict development controls. Only community facilities and other recreational uses will be considered and encouraged by the Planning Authority.</p>

#### 4.2.1 Permitted in Principle

Land uses designated under each zoning objective as “Permitted in Principle” are deemed to be generally acceptable, subject to compliance with the relevant policies, standards and requirements set out in this Plan.

#### 4.2.2 Open for Consideration

Land uses designated as “Open for Consideration” are uses that may be permitted where the Planning Authority is satisfied that

the proposed development would be compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone, would not have undesirable effects, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

#### 4.2.3 Not Permitted

Uses that are not indicated, as either “Permitted in Principle” or “Open for Consideration” will not be permitted.

#### 4.2.4 Other Uses

Uses that are not included in the zoning matrix will be considered in relation to the general policies of the Plan and the zoning objectives for the area in question.

#### 4.3 Non-Conforming Uses

In Rathdrum there are uses that do not conform to the zoning objective for the area. All such uses that were authorised or were in existence longer than seven years shall not be the subject of proceeding in respect of continuing use. When extensions to and / or improvements to premises accommodating such uses are proposed, each shall be considered on its merits, and permission may be granted where the proposed development does not adversely affect the amenities of premises/uses in the vicinity, does not prejudice the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and does not conflict with the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan and this Local Area Plan.

#### 4.4 Transitional Zonal Areas

The Zoning Map (Map I) shows the boundaries between various land use zones. While the zoning objectives and control standards in this Local Area Plan indicate the different uses and densities etc., permitted in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use in the boundary areas of adjoining land use zones. In dealing with development proposals in these contiguous transitional zonal areas, it is necessary to avoid developments that would be detrimental to the amenities of the more environmentally sensitive zone. For instance, in zones abutting “residential areas”, particular attention must be paid to the use, scale and density of development proposals in order to protect the amenities of these residential properties.

#### 4.5 Phasing

“In the interest of the planned, orderly and sustainable development of the area, the phased development of lands will be necessary. The initial phase suitable for development within the plan period will include all lands having the following land-use zoning designations:

##### Phase 1:

**R1, R2, R3, RIV, TC, C, E, CEI, H, OS**

The second phasing period, when all available lands in Phase 1 have generally been developed, comprises all lands having the following land-use zoning designation:-

##### Phase 2:

**R4**

Any application for permission for residential development in Phase 2 must show conclusively, based on available population data for the plan area and an assessment of outstanding residential permissions, that the proposed development will not result in the population of the plan area exceeding that target set out for the town in the prevailing County Development Plan

Once planning permission has been granted for any residential development in Phase 2, any application for residential development, whether in Phase 1 or Phase 2, must show conclusively, based on available population data for the plan area and an assessment of outstanding residential permissions, that the proposed development will not result in the population of the plan area exceeding that target set out for the town in the prevailing County Development Plan.

**Table 4.2** Zoning Matrix<sup>11</sup>

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Use	R1	R2	R3	R4	RIV	TC	C	E	CEI	H	AG	OS
Advertisements/ Advertising Structures	X	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Buildings	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	P	O
Bed & Breakfast	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	O	O	O	X
Betting Shop	O	O	O	O	P	P	O	O	X	X	X	X
Boarding Kennels	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Car Park	X	X	X	X	O	P	P	P	X	X	X	O
Caravan Park (Holiday)	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	P	O	O
Cash & Carry Outlet	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	P	X	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	P	X	P	X	X	X	X	P	X	P	O
Church/ Religious Building	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	P	O	X	X
Community Facility	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	X	O
Crèche/ Childcare Facility	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	X	X
Cultural Use	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	X	O
Disco/Nightclub	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	O	X	X	X	X
Discount Food Store	X	X	X	X	X	P	O	O	X	X	X	X
Doctor/Dentist etc.	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	X	O
Education	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	X	O
Extractive Industry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Enterprise Centre	X	X	X	X	O	P	P	P	P	X	X	X
Funeral Home	O	O	O	O	O	P	P	O	X	X	X	X
Garden Centre	O	O	O	O	X	P	P	P	X	X	X	X
Guesthouse	O	O	O	O	O	P	P	X	X	X	X	X

## Section 4 Land Use Zoning – Provisions and Objectives

Use	R1	R2	R3	R4	RIV	TC	C	E	CEI	H	AG	OS
Health Centre	P	P	P	P	O	P	P	P	P	O	X	X
Heavy Vehicle Park	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Holiday Homes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X
Home Based Economic Activity	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	O	X	O	X
Hospital	O	O	O	O	O	P	P	P	P	X	X	X
Hotel/ Motel	O	O	O	O	O	P	P	X	X	X	X	X
Industry (General)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X
Industry (Light)	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	P	X	X	X	X
Motor Sales Outlet	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	P	X	X	X	X
Office Based Industry	X	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	X
Offices less than 200 sq m	O	O	O	O	P	P	P	P	O	X	X	X
Offices over 200 sq m	X	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	X
Open Space	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Petrol Station	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	P	X	X	X	X
Public House	O	O	O	O	O	P	P	P	O	X	X	X
Public Services	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	O	O
Recreational Buildings (Commercial)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	O	O
Recreational Facility/ Sports Club	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	O	X	O	O
Residential	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	X	X	X
Residential Institution	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X
Restaurant	O	O	O	O	O	P	P	P	O	X	X	X
Retail Warehouse	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X
Science & Technology Based Industry	X	X	X	X	O	P	P	P	X	X	X	X
Scrap Yard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X

Use	R1	R2	R3	R4	RIV	TC	C	E	CEI	H	AG	OS
Service Garage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Shop-Local	P	P	P	P	O	P	P	P	P	X	X	X
Shop-Major Sales Outlet	X	X	X	X	O	P	O	O	X	X	X	X
Shop-Neighbourhood	O	O	O	O	O	P	O	O	O	X	X	X
Take Away	X	X	X	X	X	P	O	O	X	X	X	X
Travellers Accommodation	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X	X	X
Warehouse	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	P	X	X	X	X

**Key:** P Permitted in Principle  
O Open for Consideration  
X Not Permitted

## 5.0 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL - STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

### 5.1 Introduction

There is an obligation on the Council to ensure that permissions granted under the Planning Acts are consistent with the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan, and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Generally, the guidelines and development control standards in the County Development Plan apply also to Rathdrum. This Local Area Plan sets out some additional standards to account for local circumstances. They are complimentary to the overall strategy and individual objectives of this Local Area Plan as set out in Sections 3.0 and 4.0. Some sections of the County Development Plan which are of particular relevance to Rathdrum have been extracted. In instances where the standards in this Plan differ from the standards in the County Development Plan, the standards set out in the County Plan shall prevail.

The granting of planning permission does not in itself enable development to commence. There are other legal and procedural requirements to be considered. In this context, attention is drawn in particular to the need to comply with relevant statutory provisions such as those contained in the Building Regulations, Public Health Acts, Fire Regulations, Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, Childcare Acts etc. and legislation dealing with environmental, conservation, heritage and other related issues.

### 5.2 Residential Development

All residential development will be assessed against the guidelines and qualitative and

quantitative criteria set out in the County Development Plan. This Local Area Plan makes specific provisions regarding residential density.

#### 5.2.1 Density of Development

The careful use of higher residential density is a key factor in producing more sustainable patterns of development. The Council will have regard to the Residential Density Guidelines, DoEHLG, 1999. The Council will encourage good quality housing at densities capable of maximising the use of scarce land resources while at the same time providing sufficient open space and amenities to support such development. The Planning Authority may refuse applications where it is believed that the density is too low or too high for a particular location.

In this regard, the Council will not apply a density limit on lands zoned "TC - Town Centre" in this Plan. The quantum of development that will be considered on such lands will be guided by plot ratio, site coverage and standards with regard to car parking, open space and height as set out in the County Development Plan 2004-2010. On lands zoned "R2 - New Residential" density standards of the County Development Plan 2004-2010 shall apply.

### 5.3 Major Accident Directive (Seveso II)

The Major Accidents Directive (Seveso II)<sup>12</sup> currently applies to one site in Environs of Rathdrum.

The Schering Plough (Avondale) Company, Copse has a consultation distance or radius of 1000 metres from its site boundaries, as illustrated in Map I of this Plan. The Planning Authority is obliged to seek technical advice from the Health & Safety Authority with respect to proposed developments as covered by Regulation 137 of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 and Tables 1

& 2 of Schedule 8 of these Regulations. Such advice will be taken into account by the County Council in the assessment of all future planning applications within this area.

## 5.4 Roads

The standards for carriageways, gradients, footpaths, junctions, road drainage, sight lines, boundary walls, vehicular accesses, service roads, lay-bys, pedestrian ways, screen walls, open space treatments, public lighting, water supply, drainage and underground services, street furniture, etc. may be ascertained by referring to the "Design Manual for Roads and Bridges" by the National Roads Authority, to the DoEHLG's "Site Development Works for Housing Areas" and to the County Development Plan.

## 5.5 Architectural Conservation Area

The legislation relating to Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) is contained in Sections 81 to 83 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

Section 81 of the Act requires that a planning authority shall include in its development plan objectives to establish architectural conservation areas where necessary to ensure the preservation of the character of the place which:

- (a) Is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or
- (b) Contributes to the appreciation of protected structures.

The principal control over the character of an ACA is set down in Section 82 of the Act, which states that works to the exterior of a structure in an ACA would only be exempted development if they would not materially affect the character of the area.

Section 83 gives a planning authority the power of compulsory acquisition of property, other than a dwelling, to assist in the preservation or enhancement of the character of an ACA.

Guidance in the establishment of ACAs is given in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

The guidelines suggest that an ACA may be used for a number of purposes, including the protection of groups of structures of distinctiveness or visual richness or historical importance. It also suggests that "*the physical expression of the significance of an area may consist of building lines and heights, patterns of materials, construction systems, or architectural elements that are repeated within the area and give it a sense of harmony*". This can refer to the protection of a streetscape, as would be appropriate in the case of Rathdrum.

An ACA can also be designated to protect the setting and exterior appearance of structures that are of special interest, but the interiors of which do not merit protection. In this instance the nature of the interiors of the buildings in Rathdrum is not known, in the absence of any inventory or survey carried out. The protection of the exteriors on their own may be warranted where the significance of the interiors is not known.

In light of the assessment of the character areas of Rathdrum, Historic Building Consultants, recommend that the following two areas be designated as an ACA: St Saviour's Precinct - Market Square - Main Street forming one group with a strongly unifying character through the styles of buildings fronting the streets; and Low Town. The extent of these areas is illustrated on Map II of this Draft Plan.

The character of these areas is purely based on the frontage presented to the street - in some cases this being two frontages at street corners. While there are many buildings at the rear of the houses in Rathdrum that are of

great character, they do not read with the street, nor may one building at the rear generally be seen with others as the walls bounding the properties tend to enclose the areas at the back of buildings and preclude a general vista. It is not considered, therefore, that the boundary of the ACA should extend to the rear of the buildings as this would impose burdens on the occupiers of the properties without creating any improvement to the character, and without giving protection to any overall scene that is available to the general public.

#### **Main Street ACA**

The boundaries for this ACA include the facades of the buildings, as explained above. The ACA includes the wall and gateway to the front of the former Glebe House to the south of St Saviour's Church and also includes the dilapidated building at the eastern end of Poundbrook Lane. At street corners, notably at the junctions of Brewery Lane and Back Lane, the sides of the buildings that front onto Main Street are included.

The buildings facing onto Market Square are incorporated in this ACA, with the open land between Mackey's and the Woolpack.

Northwards along Main Street the facades of the buildings are included, and this definition includes any granite steps, cut granite rainwater channels and surviving kerbstones. At the northern end, the area is extended to include the façade of Ardavon Lodge as this has the potential to form a closer to the view leading up the hill from Low Town, although blocked by a line of trees at present. The space between Ardavon Lodge and Main Street is also important in the vista up from Low Town, and the opportunity has been taken to include the planted island in the middle of the road.

#### **Low Town ACA**

As with Main Street, it is proposed that only the facades of the buildings and the areas to the front are included. The rear of the

buildings and any other structures at the rear are excluded. The projecting steps and boot scrapers are included in this area. The boundary includes the Bridge House in Low Town. It also includes the wall on the opposite side of the road. Any proposed development on that side of the street will need to be considered carefully so as not to take from the ACA.

### **5.6 Utilities and Services Provision**

The local authority will provide sanitary services to facilitate the development of appropriate zoned lands. It should not be assumed that because an area is indicated for development that applicants will automatically receive permission because they apparently comply with zoning objectives. The introduction of drainage to new areas will be on a strictly phased basis, and until such time as services are available in an area, the Planning Authority may refuse permission on prematurity grounds. Applicants are advised to consult the Council in advance with regard to the availability of services, particularly in areas where there is doubt in the possibility of providing separate surface water drains and storm drains, and where separate systems of sewerage are available or intended to be made available in the future.

Developers shall be required to provide efficient and economical systems of attenuation and drainage with separate foul and surface water drain. Sewers shall preferably be laid along roads and through open spaces. All infrastructural services shall be provided underground in the interest of visual amenity. All utilities and services shall be provided in accordance with the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) Guidelines.

### **5.7 Development in Flood Prone Areas**

In relation to development in flood prone areas the County Development Plan provides that within the variety of watercourses that the

Council considers may be susceptible to flooding, developers shall be required to provide hydraulic and flood information in support of their planning application. In such cases, developers shall show the measures they will take to minimise flood risk, including attenuation in situ and downstream of their development to the satisfaction of the Council. The Council will also, at the planning stage, consider the cumulative impact the development may have on other sites within the flood plain.

### 5.8 Development in the Vicinity of Watercourses

Development in the vicinity of watercourses, and in particular the Avonmore River, must ensure the following:

- Maintain all watercourses in their original, open and natural channel. There should be no interference with or widening of watercourses without prior consultation with the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board.
- Any watercourse crossings or other works in the vicinity of these watercourses must adhere to the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board's "Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries during Construction and Development Works at River Sites".
- Maintain a buffer zone of at least 5 metres (10 metres in case of the Avonmore River) from the riverbank along the length of the watercourse.
- There must be no infilling within the buffer zone.
- Before commencement of works, fence off area 5 metres (10 metres in case of the Avonmore River) from the riverbank to protect riparian habitat. Topsoil and clay should not be stored within this area.
- Conserve bankside vegetation.
- Developments in the vicinity of watercourses should not alter the existing line of the watercourse.
- There shall be no discharge of suspended solids or any other deleterious matter to watercourses during the construction phase

and during any landscaping works. Particular care should be taken when using concrete or cement near watercourses.

- Fuels, oils, greases and hydraulic fluids must be stored in bunded compounds, well away from the watercourse. Refuelling of machinery must be carried out in bunded areas.
- Adequate grease traps should be installed.
- All surface waters from sites and access roads should be channelled through adequately sized petrol/oil interceptors and be subject to attenuation prior to discharge to the watercourse.
- All fuel and oil tanks must be adequately bunded.



## APPENDIX 1 DEFINITION OF USE CLASSES

### **Advertisements and Advertisement Structures**

Any work, letter, model, balloon, kite, poster, notice, device or representation employed for the purpose of advertisement, announcement, or direction and any structure such as a hoarding, scaffold, framework, pole, standard, device or sign (whether illuminated or not) and which is used or intended for use for exhibiting advertisements.

### **Agricultural Buildings**

A building or part thereof used for the purpose of agriculture as set out in the Planning Acts.

### **Betting Shop**

A building / premises or part thereof registered in the register of bookmaking offices under the Betting Act, 1931.

### **Bed & Breakfast**

A building or part thereof where sleeping accommodation and breakfast are available on a commercial basis.

### **Boarding Kennels**

A building or part thereof or land used for the temporary accommodation of dogs/cats for reward.

### **Car Park**

A building or part thereof or land (not being part of a public road) used for the parking of mechanically propelled vehicles, excluding heavy commercial vehicles.

### **Caravan Park (Holiday)**

The use of land for the accommodation of vehicle caravans or temporary chalets during the period from 1st March to 31st October each year.

### **Cash and Carry Outlet**

A building or part thereof or land used for the sale of goods in bulk to traders on a cash-and-carry basis.

### **Cemetery**

Land used as a burial ground.

### **Church / Religious Building**

Any structure habitually used as a place of public worship or for religious instruction. Where a building or part of a building, on the same site as a place of public worship or on an adjoining site, is used in connection with that place of public worship, such a use shall be deemed to be a related use.

### **Community Facility**

A building or part thereof used for (community) activities organised primarily by the local community and to which the public may be admitted on payment of a charge or free of charge.

### **Crèche or Nursery School**

Use of a building or part of a building for the provision of day care facilities for the minding and training of children below primary school entry age.

**Cultural Use**

Use of a building or part thereof or land for cultural purposes to which the public may be admitted on payment of a charge or free of charge.

**Disco or Nightclub**

A building or part thereof where the primary function is the provision of dancing facilities.

**Discount Food Store**

Single level, self service store normally between 1000 –1500 square metres of gross floorspace selling a limited range of goods at competitive prices.

**Doctor/Dentist, etc.**

Use of part of the dwelling house in which the practitioner resides for the provision of medical or professional services. Group practices are excluded from this definition.

**Education**

The use of a building or part thereof or land as a school, college, technical institute, academy, lecture hall or other educational centre. Where a building or part of a building on the same site as an educational building or on an adjoining site is designed for use or used as a residence for the staff or the pupils of that educational building such a use shall be deemed to be educational.

**Enterprise Centre**

Use of a building or part of a building or land for small scale ("Starter-type") industries and/or services usually sharing grouped service facilities.

**Extractive Industry**

The winning of all minerals and substances in or under land of a kind ordinarily worked by underground or open cast mining.

**Funeral Home**

A building or part of a building used for the storage, preparation and layout of human remains, the holding of burial services and the assembling of funerals. An undertakers premises where the functions of a funeral home are not carried out is regarded as a shop.

**Garden Centre**

The use of land, including buildings, for the cultivation, storage and/or the display and sale of horticultural products and the display and sale of related goods and equipment.

**Guest House**

A building or part thereof where sleeping accommodation and meal services are generally available to residents only.

**Health Centre**

A building or part thereof or land used for the provision of local medical, dental, prophylactic or social assistance services for the local community and including group practices and clinics.

**Heavy Vehicle Park**

A building or part thereof or land (not being part of a public road) used for the parking of heavy goods vehicles.

**Holiday Homes**

The use of a building or part thereof for short term accommodation for holiday purposes.

**Home Based Economic Activity**

Service type activities carried on for profit by the occupier of a dwelling, such use being subordinate to the use of the dwelling as a residence.

**Hospital**

A building or part thereof or land used for general medical treatment. This includes specialised hospitals and nursing homes.

**Hotel/Motel**

A building or part thereof where sleeping accommodation, meal services and other refreshments are available to residents and non-residents. Function rooms may also be incorporated as part of the use.

**Industry (General)**

The use of a building or part thereof or land for any industry other than a light industry or a special industry and includes a service garage but not a petrol station.

**Industry (Light)**

The use of a building or part thereof or land for industry (not being a special industry) in which the processes carried on or the machinery installed are such as could be carried on or installed in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit and may include a service garage but not a petrol station.

**Motor Sales Outlet**

A building or part thereof or land used for the display and sale of motor vehicles, agricultural machinery and implements.

**Office-Based Industry**

Office-based activities concerned with the output of a specified product or service, including: data processing, software development, information technology, technical consultancy, commercial laboratories/healthcare, research and development, media recording and general media associated uses, publishing, telemarketing. Other related uses not specified above may be included in the future at the discretion of the Planning Authority.

**Office**

A building in which the sole or principal use is the undertaking of professional administrative financial marketing or clerical work including services provided principally to visiting members of the public.

**Open Space**

Means any land, whether enclosed or not, on which there are no buildings or of which not more than one-twentieth part is covered with buildings and the whole of the remainder of which is laid out as a garden or is used for purposes of recreation or lies waste and unoccupied.

**Petrol Station**

A structure or land used for the purpose of the selling by retail of petrol, fuel oils, lubricating oils and liquefied petroleum gas generally for use in motor vehicles. It does not include a service garage or motor sales outlet. Petrol filling stations can provide a wide range of retail goods in an associated shop. In general these shops should remain secondary to the use as a petrol filling station.

**Public House**

A building or part thereof or land licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor to the public for consumption on the premises.

### **Public Services**

A building or part thereof or land used for the provision of "Public Services". "Public Services" include all service installations necessarily required by electricity, gas, telephone, radio, television, drainage and other statutory undertakers; it includes public lavatories, public telephone boxes, bus shelters, bring centres, green waste composting facilities, etc.

### **Recreational Building (Commercial)**

A building or part thereof that is available for use by the public on payment of a charge.

### **Recreational Facility/Sports Club**

A building or part of a building which may be available to the public on payment of a charge or free of charge in the use of which no excessive noise is produced and which may contain a theatre, a cinema, an art gallery or exhibition hall (other than for trading purposes), an assembly hall, a social centre, a community centre, a swimming pool, a bowling alley or a squash centre but may or shall exclude dance halls, band halls, discotheques or similar uses. It may also include facilities for other physical activities in the form of structured games or play for the purpose of recreation or amusement.

### **Residential**

The use of a building or part thereof including houses, flats, bed-sitters, residential caravans, etc., designed for human habitation.

### **Residential Institution**

A building or part thereof or land used as a residential institution and includes a monastery, convent, hostel, old peoples' home, nursing home and isolation hospital.

### **Restaurant**

A building or part thereof where the primary function is the sale of meals and refreshments for consumption on the premises.

### **Retail Warehouse**

A large single-level store specialising in bulky household goods such as carpets, furniture, and electrical goods, and bulky DIY items catering mainly for car-borne customers. Food and other convenience goods are not considered suitable in a retail warehouse.

### **Science & Technology Based Industry**

Knowledge based processes and industrial activities (including ancillary offices) in which research, innovation and development play a significant part and which lead to and accommodate the commercial production of a high technology output.

### **Scrap Yard**

Land used for the reception, dismantling, packing and storing of scrap metal before transport for processing and recycling elsewhere.

### **Service Garage**

A building or part thereof or land used for the maintenance and repair of mechanically propelled vehicles, excluding heavy commercial vehicles.

### **Shop - Local**

Local shops located in local centres or neighbourhood centres perform an important function in urban area. They can provide a valued service, catering daily or particularly for the casual needs of nearby residents or for those passing by. Local shops encompassing both foodstores and important non-food

outlets such as pharmacies have significant social and economic functions; they offer a particularly important service for those less mobile, especially elderly and disabled people, families with small children and those without access to a car.

**Shop - Major Sales Outlet**

Shops, which are larger in scale than neighbourhood shops or are very specialised and therefore serve a wider area.

**Shop - Neighbourhood**

This category includes smaller shops giving a localised service in a range of retail trades or businesses such as sweets, groceries, tobacconist, newspapers, hairdresser, undertaker, ticket agency, dry cleaning and laundry depots and mini markets and designed to cater for normal "neighbourhood requirements". A neighbourhood shop / centre primarily serves a local community and does not generally attract business from outside the community.

**Take Away**

The use of a building or part thereof for the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.

**Travellers Accommodation**

All accommodation specifically provided by the Council for occupation by members of the Travelling Community including group housing schemes, halting sites and residential caravan parks.

**Warehouse**

A building or part thereof where goods are stored or bonded prior to distribution and sale elsewhere. It may include the storage of commercial vehicles where this is ancillary to the warehousing function.



## APPENDIX 2 RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES

Ref. No. in County Development Plan	Building Address	Townland	Structure	Description
30-08	Lowtown Mills	Glasnarget North Td	Mill Buildings	Extensive mill buildings of coursed-rubble stone with brick dressings, a large four-storey range with a tall, four-storey tower and lower two-storey block gives this complex interesting massing.
30-10	Lowtown Bridge	Rathdrum/Glasnarget North Td	Bridge	Four-arch bridge with cut waters probably dating from the 18 <sup>th</sup> Century.
30-11	Rathdrum Catholic Church	Rathdrum Td	Church	Large, mid-19 <sup>th</sup> Century church of granite ashlar with high nave and rectangular chancel, pointed windows and high-pitched roof, turret belicote at the west end. On the road is an arched entrance gate with granite roof.
30-12	Main Street, Former Market House	Rathdrum Td	Market House	A three-bay, two-storey building with advanced central bay.
30-13	Main Street	Rathdrum Td	House	Three-bay, two-storey, early-19th Century house with painted, rendered walls, late-19th Century sashes, hipped roof, round-headed doorcase with Doric pilasters and leaded fanlight.
30-14	Main Street	Rathdrum Td	House	Three-bay, two-storey, early-19th Century house with painted rendering, tripartite windows and round-headed doorcase with leaded fanlight.
30-15	Bridge at Railway Station	Rathdrum Td	Bridge	Very high, single arch road bridge over the railway track.
30-16	Low Street	Rathdrum Td	Post Box	Post Box
30-17	St Saviour's Church of Ireland	Rathdrum Td	Church	Dated 1830 but looks earlier the church has a fourbay nave with pointed windows, three-stage west tower with pointed doorcase with switch-track glazing in the fanlight, pinnacles and crenellations and flanking wings with stepped crenellations.



## APPENDIX 3 LOCAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS AND HABITAT NETWORKS

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background and Aims

This report was commissioned by Wicklow County Council to assist with the preparation of the Local Area Plan for the town and environs of Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow. The aims of the study were:

- To identify sites within the study area which are of local value for their natural heritage (termed Local Biodiversity Areas - LBAs).
- To integrate this information into local planning policy as part of the Local Area Plan (LAP) process.
- To map this information and make it available on the Local Authority Geographic Information System (GIS).
- To identify where potential exists for habitat networks which link these LBAs with nearby designated sites, in this way enhancing their overall biodiversity value.

#### 1.2 Definitions

**Local Biodiversity Area** is a non-statutory term which simply indicates that the site has some local value for nature conservation. It does not imply any legal or other restrictions to use of the site.

**Biodiversity** is a shortened form of the words "biological diversity". This means the variety of life forms, both plant and animal.

#### 1.3 Methodology

A desktop study was undertaken by examining colour aerial photographs (flown in 2000) of the study area to determine the distribution of semi-natural habitat which is potentially of local biodiversity value. Consultations were undertaken with several agencies to gather records of flora and fauna. The National Parks & Wildlife Service supplied data on designated areas, rare plants and bat species. The Eastern Regional Fisheries Board was consulted in relation to fisheries value of watercourses in the area.

A field survey was carried out in January 2006 to 'ground truth' the habitats identified on aerial photographs and to classify these according to the Heritage Council scheme (Fossitt 2000). Dominant plant species were recorded and evidence of fauna was noted where relevant. While winter is not the optimum period for ecological field survey it is possible to infer the presence of certain species from the habitats present. Thus the likely presence of certain fauna was listed.

Based on this information, a number of areas, which contained habitats of local wildlife value, were selected and delineated as Local Biodiversity Areas (LBAs). In addition a number of linear features were identified as Habitat Networks. These have the potential to act as corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving between the LBAs or between designated areas.

### 1.4 Site Evaluation

The evaluation of each site is based on a field assessment of the diversity and rarity of the habitats and species which it contains. The study used a five-point scale of evaluation for Local Biodiversity Areas based on the site evaluation table (See Appendix 3.1) prepared by NATURA for other studies. The ratings are as follows:

- A: International value
- B: National value
- C: High local value
- D: Moderate local value
- E: Low local value.

All designated areas fall into the categories A and B (international and national importance) while remaining sites are generally rated C, D, or E (local value from high to low).

## 2.0 SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

### 2.1 General Description of Study Area

Rathdrum is located in the central section of the valley of the Avonmore River. The majority of the town is on the western slopes of the valley between 80m and 200m above sea level. The geology of the town area comprises ancient Cambrian and Lower Ordovician rocks such as slate, phyllite and schist with complex faulting against rhyolitic volcanic rocks and slates of Upper Ordovician age in the river valley area (McConnell 1994).

### 2.2 Designated Areas

Designated areas are those areas of land which have been designated under national or international legislation. These include Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). In some areas, more than one designation applies.

There are two designated areas within the general district of Rathdrum although neither is within the town boundaries. These are as follows:

**Vale of Clara** (site code 000733): This area is designated as proposed NHA, candidate SAC and is also covered by a statutory Nature Reserve Order. It is managed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. The principal habitats of interest here are the oak-dominated woodlands and the Avonmore River. There are also records of several rare plant species (see Appendix 3.2). The southern boundary of the designated area is coincident with the town boundary of Rathdrum.

**Avondale House** (site code 002093): The house is a proposed NHA as it contains a significant roost of bats of at least six species. The house is located approximately 1km south of the town boundary of Rathdrum but it is linked by woodland habitats occurring along the Avonmore River.

The Avonmore River downstream of Rathdrum is undesignated for a distance of approximately 9km but the lower reaches of the river valley are included in the following pNHA.

**Avoca River Valley** (site code 001748): The entire pNHA is a large area of mixed woodland located in the valleys of the Avoca and Aughrim rivers. The best examples of relatively pure deciduous woods are found around Shelton Abbey. Oak is the dominant tree species with ash, beech and birch locally abundant. Some of the woodlands have been impacted in the past by air pollution from the fertiliser factory at Arklow.

### 2.3 Habitats

The main habitat types of biodiversity value which occur within the town boundary of Rathdrum are listed below. The classification (and codes in parenthesis) follows that of Fossitt (2000).

Depositing lowland rivers (FW2)  
Artificial ponds and lakes (FL8)  
Dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1)  
Amenity grassland (GA2)  
Mixed broadleaved woodland (WD1)  
Mixed broadleaved/conifer woodland (WD2)  
Conifer plantation (WD4)  
Scattered trees and parkland (WD5)  
Hedgerows (WL1)  
Treelines (WL2)

### 2.4 Key Species

#### **Rare plants**

There are two rare plant records from the NPWS rare plant database which are known from the study area. Neither species is protected but both are listed in the *Irish Red Data Book* (Curtis & McGough 1988). The species are as follows:

Greater broomrape (*Orobancha rapum-genistae*) is recorded from Rathdrum, Ballygannon Forest, in 2000. The location is approximately 500m north of the town boundary.

Shepherds needle (*Scandix pecten-veneris*) is a species which is now thought to be extinct in Ireland. It was recorded from the Rathdrum area (grid square T18) in 1950 and has not been recorded since.

#### **Mammals**

The mammal species which occur in the town area of Rathdrum are similar to those in the surrounding area, which includes the Vale of Clara and Avondale Woods. Deer (mainly sika/red deer hybrids) are common in the area and are likely to use the woodland in the river valley as a corridor for movement. Badger is also a common mammal in these woodlands and is likely to use agricultural grassland in the Rathdrum Town area for foraging. Otter has been recorded on the Avonmore River and is also likely to use the minor tributary at the southern end of the town and the pond at the northern end of the town.

A number of bat species have been recorded in the Rathdrum area. Avondale House (1km south of the town boundary) holds a significant roost of at least six bat species: soprano pipistrelle, Leisler's, brown long-eared, natterers, Daubentons and whiskered bats. There is a smaller known bat roost

close to St. Colmans Hospital which contained pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. It is also possible that the railway tunnel at the south-eastern perimeter of the town may hold bat roosts. Two species, Daubenton's and pipistrelle bats have been recorded feeding over the Avonmore River at the road bridge and within Parnell Memorial Park over the ponds. Given the abundance of woodland in the area it is likely that most species of bats known in Ireland (with the exception of lesser horseshoe bats) may occur at some time in the Rathdrum area.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Birds***

The woodlands in the Vale of Clara contain a typical breeding bird community of old woodlands. This includes a number of less common species such as jay, long-eared owl, treecreeper, woodcock and blackcap. The wood warbler and crossbill have also been recorded in the Clara area while kingfisher, dipper and grey wagtail occur on the Avonmore River. All of these species may occur at some times within the town boundary of Rathdrum, especially in the woodlands and along the river corridor.

The goosander has recently been recorded as a newly established breeding species on the Avonmore River and is likely to use the Rathdrum stretch of the river for feeding at certain times of year. The buzzard is a bird of prey which has recently re-established breeding territories in Co. Wicklow. It is very likely to breed in some of the older, less disturbed woodlands at the south-east of the town.

### ***Invertebrates***

Less common butterflies which are known from the Vale of Clara include the holly blue and the silver-washed fritillary. Both of these species could also occur in the woodlands in the Rathdrum area where their foodplants are also found. The freshwater pearl mussel occurred historically in the Avonmore River and may still survive in places

### ***Water Quality and Fisheries***

The stretch of the Avonmore River within Rathdrum town boundary is important for spawning of both salmon and trout and sea lamprey have been recorded here by electrofishing (information from Eastern Regional Fisheries Board). The most recent water quality sampling data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicate unpolluted water with a Q value of 4 at Rathdrum Bridge in 2000 ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)).

Despite the poor water quality downstream of Avoca, significant numbers of salmon and sea trout run upriver to spawn in clean, uncontaminated waters in the upper reaches of the catchment. An extensive fish stock survey was carried out by the Central and Eastern Regional Fisheries Boards in 2001 and 2002, which showed that juvenile salmon were widely distributed at 74% of all sites throughout the upper part of the catchment, while brown trout are widely distributed in the upper main channel and its tributaries. Sea lamprey and eels also pass upstream, presumably under spate conditions when dilution of pollutants in the water would be greatest.<sup>14</sup>

## **2.5 Local Biodiversity Areas**

Based on the desktop study and field survey a number of Local Biodiversity Areas were selected and delineated in the study area. These are described briefly below and tabulated in Appendix 3.3.

### ***LBA 1. Avonmore River and banks***

The entire river within the town boundary is included because it contains a significant amount of semi-natural habitat including river channel with the full sequence of riffle, glide and pool with marginal gravel banks on the meanders. In many parts, the banks are overhung with trees, including oak, ash, willow, alder and birch. It is an important salmonid river with spawning salmon, trout and sea lamprey in the main channel and tributaries. The river is also a vital passage for salmon and trout

migrating to the upper reaches of the Avonmore catchment. The river is used by otter, feeding bats and a range of typical riparian bird species including kingfisher, dipper and grey wagtail. Goosander is one of the rarer breeding birds which uses the river for feeding. The presence of significant populations of salmon and sea lamprey (Annex II species in the EU Habitats Directive) makes this stretch of the river of national importance for biodiversity.

***LBA 2. Woodland south of the railway station***

This area contains some significant stands of mixed broadleaved/conifer woodland especially on the slopes leading down the Avonmore River. Oak and ash are dominant in places while sweet chestnut, larch and Scots pine also occur. There is a large plantation of western hemlock to the west of the railway line. This woodland is contiguous with the woodlands around Avondale House and is probably an important feeding area for the bats which roost at the house. There is evidence of deer movement along the river corridor within the woodland. Badger activity was noted in the fields immediately west of this woodland and it is likely that the area contains at least one badger set. Typical woodland breeding birds are present and the area is a potential nesting site for buzzard and long-eared owl. This area is of high local value for biodiversity.

***LBA 3. Woodland north of the railway station***

This area contains two conifer plantations dominated by western hemlock. One of these is east of the railway line and the other to the north of the old vocational school building. The southern edge of the eastern plantation is bordered by a tributary of the Avonmore River which is fast flowing with riffles and cascades. On the eastern side of the road, north of the railway embankment is a band of deciduous woodland dominated by beech, ash, sycamore and oak, with an understorey of hazel and holly. This area contains a typical community of woodland breeding birds. This is bordered by an area of grassland on the river bank. West of the road the woodland is dominated by young sycamore and sweet chestnut. Laurel is present in this section of the woodland and threatens future regeneration of trees through shading. Between the bend of the road and the primary school there is a significant treeline of mature beech trees on the northern side of the road. These trees are all potential bat roosts. This area is of high local value for biodiversity.

***LBA 4. Parnell Memorial Park***

While the bulk of this area is amenity grassland, it contains a number of mature trees and is bisected by a small stream which has been impounded to form an artificial pond. There is a line of very large mature trees in private land along the north-east boundary of the park. The main mature trees are beech, sycamore, Scots pine, horse chestnut, ash, larch and a variety of conifers. Young trees of birch and rowan have been planted in the park. The flowing stream and pond surrounded by mature trees, makes this a valuable feeding area for bats and small birds. This area is of moderate local value for biodiversity.

***LBA 5. Riverside ponds at holiday park***

Two artificial ponds have been created with water supply from the Avonmore River which borders the site to the north, east and south. The ponds contain a variety of floating and submerged aquatic plants including pondweeds. There is relatively little marginal vegetation due to the steep sides of the ponds. An island in the larger southern pond is a valuable feature for nesting birds. Small numbers of water birds such as mallard and moorhen are likely to breed here and the habitat has potential for feeding by grey heron around the margins. The area is also likely to be used by feeding bats in the summer months and by otters which move along the river corridor. This area is of moderate local value for biodiversity.

**2.6 Habitat Networks**

One of the aims of this study was to identify where potential exists for habitat networks which link these Local Biodiversity Areas with nearby designated sites, in this way enhancing their overall biodiversity value. By definition such networks are linear features which may provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range. They are particularly important for mammals (including bats) and small birds. A table of such habitat networks is given in Appendix 3.4 and these are described briefly below.

- A. **Avonmore River and banks:** The river is the most important habitat network in the study area, providing a link between the upper and lower parts of the catchment and an important corridor for movement of salmon, trout, lamprey, birds, bats and otter. It links the important woodland habitats in the Vale of Clara and at Avondale. The Eastern Regional Fisheries Board (ERFB) has serious concerns about the weir at Rathdrum which has no fish pass and may inhibit the upstream movement of fish, especially sea and river lamprey.
- B. **Tributary stream south of the town:** This stream has a small catchment area which is confined to the southern part of the town. It is also slightly polluted. It may have potential as a salmonid spawning area (this is to be confirmed by the ERFB). The stream flows through a stone culvert under the railway, which is a potentially suitable roost site for bats. The stream forms a link, between the Parnell Memorial Park, the woodland north of the station and the Avonmore River, which is probably used by birds, bats and otter.
- C. **Treelines south of the town:** These treelines form corridors of mature cover which link the Parnell Memorial Park with the countryside around Avondale House. They are probably used by bats from the roost in Avondale and by small birds and mammals.
- D. **Treeline south-east of the town:** This treeline forms a corridor of mature trees, including ash and oak, which links the Parnell Memorial Park with the woodland south of the railway station. It is probably used by small birds, bats and other mammals.
- E. **Treelines north of the town:** This network of hedgerows and treelines contains a mixture of deciduous trees including ash and oak. They link Ballygannon Wood (part of the Vale of Clara SAC) to the north of the town with the Avonmore River. They are probably used by small birds, bats and other mammals.

### 3.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 Conclusions

This study has identified a number of Local Biodiversity Areas within the town of Rathdrum which are not already protected under national or international legislation. It has also identified where potential exists for habitat networks which link these LBAs with each other and with nearby designated sites. The vulnerability of these areas and networks varies depending on the types of threat to the habitats concerned.

Rivers, streams and ponds are vulnerable to water pollution from both agricultural and domestic sources. Clearance of bankside vegetation and development along the banks can reduce the corridor value of the watercourses. Barriers, such as unsuitable culverts on streams or the weir on the Avonmore River, may inhibit the movement of fish. The pond in Parnell Park is subject to frequent herbicide treatment with potentially severe consequences for plant and animal communities within the pond and stream.

Woodlands are vulnerable to timber felling, to grazing by stock and to the invasion of non-native plants, such as laurel, which may prevent regeneration. Dumping of refuse is a localised problem close to roads.

Treelines and hedgerows are vulnerable to removal of mature trees and shrubs, thus reducing the corridor value which they have for wildlife. Significant treelines should be retained within future developments and afforded adequate protection during construction.

The Local Area Plan should contain a series of objectives to protect the nature conservation value of these areas and networks.

### 3.2 Proposed Natural Heritage Objectives

1. Protect the nature conservation value of any area identified as a Local Biodiversity Area or Habitat Network through planning conditions attached to future developments.
2. Maintain a buffer zone/linear park, of at least 10 metres from the water's edge along both banks of the Avonmore River to protect the fisheries and ecological interests of this important watercourse and to retain the link between woodlands in the Vale of Clara and Avondale House.
3. Maintain good water quality in the Avonmore River and its tributaries as an essential prerequisite to enhancing the fisheries and biodiversity value of this important natural resource.
4. Facilitate partial removal of the weir at Rathdrum or installation of a fish pass to allow free passage of salmonid fish and lamprey to the upper catchment of the Avonmore River.
5. Protect key treelines and hedgerows to the north and south of the town as habitat networks linking small areas of woodland.
6. Consider designating significant mature trees or groups of trees, which are of either landscape or ecological value, under statutory Tree Preservation Orders.
7. Encourage developers to incorporate and enhance features of the natural environment such as streams, riverbanks, treelines and hedgerows within open space layouts and in the planning of future developments.
8. Consider the establishment of a way-marked walking route along the river corridor to link the existing footpaths in the Vale of Clara and Avondale, in cooperation with existing landowners.

### 4.0 REFERENCES

- Curtis, T.G.F. & McGough, H.N. (1988) *The Irish Red Data Book: 1 Vascular Plants*. Stationery Office. Dublin.
- Fossitt, J.A. (2000) *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*. Heritage Council. Kilkenny.
- McConnell, B. (1994) *Geology of Kildare-Wicklow*. Geological Survey of Ireland. Dublin.

**APPENDIX 3.1: SITE EVALUATION SCHEME**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Qualifying Criteria</b>
A	<p><b>Internationally important</b>  <b>Sites designated (or qualifying for designation) as SAC* or SPA* under the EU Habitats or Birds Directives.</b>                      Undesignated sites containing good examples of Annex I <u>priority</u> habitats under the EU Habitats Directive.  <b>Major salmon river fisheries.</b>                      Major salmonid (salmon, trout or char) lake fisheries.</p>
B	<p><b>Nationally important</b>                      Sites or waters designated or proposed as an NHA* or statutory Nature Reserves.                      Undesignated sites containing good examples of Annex I habitats (under EU Habitats Directive).                      Undesignated sites containing <u>significant numbers</u> of resident or regularly occurring populations of Annex II species under the EU Habitats Directive or Annex I species under the EU Birds Directive or species protected under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.  <b>Major trout river fisheries.</b>                      Water bodies with major amenity fishery value.                      Commercially important coarse fisheries.</p>
C	<p><b>High value, locally important</b>  <b>Sites containing semi-natural habitat types with high biodiversity in a local context and a high degree of naturalness, or significant populations of locally rare species.</b>  <b>Small water bodies with known salmonid populations or with good potential salmonid habitat.</b>  <b>Sites containing <u>any</u> resident or regularly occurring populations of Annex II species under the EU Habitats Directive or Annex I species under the EU Birds Directive.</b>  <b>Large water bodies with some coarse fisheries value.</b></p>
D	<p><b>Moderate value, locally important</b>                      Sites containing some semi-natural habitat or locally important for wildlife.                      Small water bodies with some coarse fisheries value or some potential salmonid habitat.                      Any water body with unpolluted water (Q-value rating 4-5).</p>
E	<p><b>Low value, locally important</b>                      Artificial or highly modified habitats with low species diversity and low wildlife value.                      Water bodies with no current fisheries value and no significant potential fisheries value.</p>

\*SAC = Special Area of Conservation

SPA= Special Protection Area

NHA= Natural Heritage Area

## APPENDIX 3.2: SITE SYNOPSIS FOR DESIGNATED AREA

### SITE NAME: Vale of Clara

SITE CODE: 000733

The Vale of Clara woodland, situated mostly on the east side of the Avonmore River, immediately north of Rathdrum, between 107 and 244 m above sea level, forms an integral part of one of the most scenic valleys in Wicklow. This wood is a remnant of the once extensive forests of east Wicklow, which may have occupied this site since the end of the last Ice Age. Unfortunately, the hardwoods have been replaced or underplanted with conifers since the 1940s, but now that most of the site is within the Vale of Clara Nature Reserve the future of the existing hardwoods is secure.

The woods are a mosaic of relatively pure Oak wood, mixed woodland and commercial plantations, growing on an acidic orange-brown, sandy loam over a schist bedrock. A distinct mor humus, often several centimetres thick, overlies the mineral soil.

The Oak woods are good examples of the species-poor Blechno-Quercetum vegetation community, a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, and are best developed in the Cronybyrne area. The understorey is mostly of Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*). The ground flora includes Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and Violets (*Viola* spp.).

The areas of mixed woodland contain a variety of underplanted conifers, as well as Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and other introduced deciduous species. The planted conifer compartments are of a wide range of conifer species. An area of wet woodland is well developed near Ballyhad Bridge. The Avonmore River, which flows through the site, creates further habitat diversity.

Narrow-leaved Helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*), a rare plant species which is listed in the Irish Red Data Book has been recorded from the locality, as has the scarce, Ivy-leaved Bellflower (*Wahlenbergia hederacea*). Several rare species of Myxomycete fungus have also been recorded from the site, namely *Cribraria rufa*, *Diderma floriforme*, *Stemonitis smithii* (only known Irish site) and *Trichia verrucosa* (in its only known Republic of Ireland site).

The woodland bird community includes the Jay, Long-eared Owl, Treecreeper, Woodcock and Blackcap. The Wood Warbler and Crossbill have also been recorded, while the Dipper and Grey Wagtail occur on the Avonmore River.

The Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*) butterfly has been seen within the woods.

This site is a good example of what remains of the once extensive forests of east Wicklow, and is representative of the relatively dry, acid Oak woods of eastern Ireland. The woodlands are of considerable conservation significance as they conform to a type listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. The historical record of landuse within the woods adds to the interest of the site.

1.2.1999

**Note:** No site synopsis is available for Avondale House pNHA.

**APPENDIX 3.3: SCHEDULE OF LOCAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS IN RATHDRUM AND ENVIRONS**

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Habitats present (Codes as in Fossitt 2000)</b>	<b>Species present or likely</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Vulnerability (threats)</b>
1	Avonmore River and banks	FW2: Depositing lowland river WD2: Mixed broadleaved/conifer woodland	Birds including dipper, kingfisher and goosander. Bat species including Daubentons and pipistrelle Otter likely Salmon and trout passage Lamprey spawning area	B National	High: Water pollution Clearance of bankside vegetation Weir inhibits upstream movement of fish
2	Woodland south of railway station	WD2: Mixed broadleaved/conifer woodland WD4: Conifer plantation	Dominant trees ash, oak, sweet chestnut, Scots pine. Larch Western hemlock plantation Badger activity around western perimeter Potential bat roosts in older trees Possible deer activity along river corridor	C High local	Moderate: Dumping Grazing of stock
3	Woodland north of railway station	WD4: Conifer plantation WD2: Mixed broadleaved woodland FW2: Depositing lowland stream WL2: Treeline	Western hemlock in two plantations Dominant trees on east of road are beech, ash, sycamore, oak. West of road mainly young sycamore and sweet chestnut.. Treeline of mature beech on roadside leading up to primary school. Fringe of mature sycamore, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut and beech at northern end. Stream at southern	C High local	Moderate: Introduced laurel will shade out regenerating trees. Felling of trees for road widening. Harvesting of conifers may reduce wildlife value of area

			<p>end. Possible deer activity along river corridor Potential bat roosts in older trees. Culvert under railway may contain bat roost.</p>		
4	Parnell Memorial Park	<p>GA2: Amenity Grassland WD5: Scattered trees and parkland FW2: Depositing lowland stream WL2: Treelines</p>	<p>Mature trees: beech, sycamore, Scots pine, horse chestnut, ash, larch. Feeding area for bats. Likely breeding habitat for grey wagtail May contain trout.</p>	D Moderate local	<p>Moderate Water pollution in stream. Felling of mature trees on boundary Herbicide use close to watercourse is potentially toxic to freshwater life.</p>
5	Riverside ponds at holiday park	<p>FL8: Artificial ponds and lakes GS1: Dry neutral grassland</p>	<p>Two ponds with water supply from Avonmore River. Artificial island in larger pond. Floating and submerged aquatic plants. Some marginal vegetation. Feeding area for bats and otter. Breeding area for water birds such as moorhen and mallard.</p>	D Moderate local	<p>Moderate Water pollution from adjacent developments</p>

## APPENDIX 3.4: SCHEDULE OF HABITAT NETWORKS IN RATHDRUM AND ENVIRONS

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Habitats present (Codes as in Fossitt 2000)</b>	<b>Species likely to use habitat networks</b>	<b>Linkages</b>	<b>Vulnerability (threats)</b>
A	Avonmore River and banks	FW2: Depositing lowland river	Typical riparian birds. Bat species Otter Salmon and trout passage	Major corridor for wild fauna and flora. Links upper river catchment with lower more mature river valley. Links woodlands at Vale of Clara with Avondale House woodlands.	High: Water pollution Clearance of bankside vegetation Weir inhibits upstream movement of fish
B	Tributary stream south of town	FW2: Depositing lowland stream	Typical riparian birds. Bat species Otter Salmon and trout passage	Links Parnell Memorial Park (LBA 4) and small area of gorse scrub to woodland north of railway station (LBA 3) and Avonmore River (LBA 1).	High: Water pollution Clearance of bankside vegetation
C	Treelines south of town	WL2: Treelines	Treelines with predominantly mature Scots pine. Likely to be used by bats and small birds	Links Parnell Memorial Park (LBA 4) to Avondale House and surrounding countryside	Moderate: Partly within area zoned for industrial and commercial use. Treelines should be retained within future development.
D	Treeline south-east of town	WL2: Treeline	Treeline with a mixture of deciduous trees including ash and oak. Likely to be used by bats, badgers and small birds	Links Parnell Memorial Park (LBA 4) to Woodland south of railway station (LBA 2)	Low: Currently agricultural. Treelines should be retained within future development.
E	Treelines north of town	WL2: Treelines	Network of treelines with a mixture of deciduous trees including ash and oak. Likely to be used by bats, badgers and small birds.	Link Ballygannon Wood (part of Vale of Clara SAC) to north of town with Avonmore river east of town.	Low: Currently agricultural. Treelines should be retained within future development.

## APPENDIX 4 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (Strategic Environmental Assessment- SEA) are given effect by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).

The requirement of SEA applies to all plans or programmes, the preparation of which commences on or after the 21 July 2004. The Directive provides that SEA is mandatory for Local Area Plans for areas with a population of 10,000 or more. The 2002 population of Rathdrum was 1,387 and the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 provides a maximum target population for Rathdrum of 4,500 people. Consequently, SEA is not mandatory. However, where the population involved is less than 10,000, the EU Directive requires Screening of the Plan. This was conducted prior to the review of the Rathdrum Local Area Plan.

The conclusion of the County Council's consideration of the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations is that, in their totality, the policies and objectives contained within the Plan, and the development that will result there from, are unlikely to give rise to significant effects on the environment.

### 2.0 CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Schedule 2A of the above Regulations sets out the main criteria for determining whether a plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects. They are set out below and examined in the case of Rathdrum.

#### 2.1 Characteristics of the Plan

**(i) The degree, to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.**

The Rathdrum LAP's purpose is to provide a framework to deliver development projects within the town including location, nature, size and operating conditions and allocating the necessary resources. It is a land use plan within the terms of the Planning Act 2000.

**(ii) The degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy.**

This Plan is set within the context of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010. The Rathdrum LAP has to be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan.

**(iii) The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.**

The LAP is being prepared under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and therefore must confine itself to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. All policies and objectives of the LAP must be informed by the principles of sustainable development.

The preparation of the LAP is also guided by the overall objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan which seek:

- *To provide for sustainable growth and regulate pressures from both urban and rural development.*
- *To develop a high quality, sustainable and integrated transport system embracing the road and rail transport sectors with an increased emphasis on improving and expanding public transport, cycling and walking, to achieve a more balanced and sustainable pattern of mobility.*
- *To develop social, cultural and community facilities in appropriate locations and scale that are accessible to all members of the community.*
- *To encourage and facilitate the provision of infrastructure services to meet the demand for development and future population needs in a sustainable manner.*
- *To promote the sustainable development of the built and natural environment in County Wicklow.*
- *To secure an economic and employment base in Wicklow that will attract high quality investment and provide a range of job opportunities thereby maximise social inclusion.*

**(iv) Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.**

The underlying environmental issues of the LAP relate to the provision of zoned areas to accommodate a target population of 3,560 by 2012, the provision of zoned areas for employment purposes, the provision of a new sewage treatment plant, and traffic management, car parking and linkages. As has been demonstrated above in Section 2 of this Plan, no lands need to be additionally zoned for residential purposes above and beyond what has been zoned under the 1999 Rathdrum Development Plan to cater for the target population of 2012. At this point in time, no strategically significant environmental problems can be identified in relation to the above issues. On the contrary, substantial environmental improvements are expected as a result of the proposed LAP framework, in particular the new sewage treatment plant and the traffic management, car parking and linkage strategy.

**(v) The relevance of the Plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection).**

These plans and programmes are considered under the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 and will not be specifically addressed in this LAP.

**2.2 Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area Likely to be Affected.**

**(i) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.**

In the case of the Rathdrum LAP the effects may be considered to include various land uses. The following table summarises the probable effect according to the different land uses.

<b>Land Uses</b>	<b>Policies/Objectives Proposed</b>	<b>Effect on Environment</b>
Residential	No additional lands have to be zoned for residential purposes.	No effects.
Employment	Zone additional 20 hectares for employment use (lands zoned "General Employment" and "Commercial").	No significant effects; individual development proposals could be dealt

		with by means of Environmental Impact Assessments.
Community	Provide for additional primary school; Facilitate community groups.	Positive and durable effects; no additional zoning required for community purposes.
Infrastructure	New street parallel to the existing Main Street with pedestrian and cycle links to the railway station; Parking and Linkage Strategy; Improve access to public transport facilities and support improvement of public transport services; Improve road widths and define pedestrian footpaths on roads linking the town centre to outlying residential developments; New sewage treatment plant and pumping station; Improvements and extensions to the sewerage network; Augment the existing public water supply and provide ancillary storage.	Alleviation of traffic congestion on Main Street and introduction of improved pedestrian facilities on Main Street; Facilitation of sustainable modes of transport and reduction in the need to travel; Improve safety capacity of road network; Sewage treatment plant will cater for the future population increase and will stop unsatisfactorily treated sewage being discharged into the Avonmore River; Improved water supply will cater for the future population increase.
Architectural and Natural Heritage	Designation of an Architectural Conservation Area; Designation of Local Biodiversity Areas and Habitat Networks.	Positive and durable effects.

**(ii) The cumulative nature of the effects.**

The Plan will result in a population increase of 157% on the 2002 population. However, there is no zoning of additional lands required to accommodate the target population above and beyond what has been zoned under the 1999 Plan. The cumulative effect of the Plan is thus unlikely to be significant.

**(iii) The transboundary nature of the effects.**

Wicklow County Council is preparing this Plan. The Plan has no national, regional or inter-county transboundary effects.

**(iv) The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).**

There are no designated SEVESO sites within the Plan area. However, an industry operated by Schering Plough Company, to which the EU Major Accidents Directive (SEVESO II) applies, is located outside the Plan area. A 1,000 metres consultation distance from the site boundary of Schering Plough straddles the Plan area. The planning authority is obliged to liaise with the Health and Safety Authority with regard to proposed developments as covered by Regulation 137 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and Tables 1 and 2 of Schedule 8 of these Regulations.

**(v) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effect (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).**

The Plan area comprises approximately 200 hectares and 1,387 people (2002 Census) live in the area. The total maximum population of the town as provided by the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 is 4,500.

**(vi) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:**

**- Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,**

This Local Area Plan and the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 identify the following protected areas/ elements of the natural and cultural heritage within the town:

- 9 no. protected structures (see Appendix 2 of this Plan).
- 2 no. Architectural Conservation Areas (see Section 5.5 and Map II of this Plan).
- Following trees and groups of trees (see Map I of this Plan):
  - Woodland and trees along the R752-125 between Low Town and St. Saviour's Primary School
  - Woodland and trees along the R755-0 between its junction with Main Street and the town centre.
  - Trees along Local Road L 97544-0 between Low Town and the Junction of the R755 and Main Street.
  - Trees and Woodland along the banks of the Avonmore River.
  - Trees within Parnell Memorial Park and trees immediately outside of and to the north of the Park.
- Local Biodiversity Areas and Habitat Networks (see Appendix 3 and Map II of this Plan)
- The County Development lists the following Views and Prospects of Special Amenity (Schedule 10.6, 10.7, 10.8) in relation to Rathdrum:
  - R752 at Rathdrum Bridge, Parnell Drive: View of Avonmore river valley from bridge (No. 20)
  - R752 north of Rathdrum Parnell Drive: View of Avonmore river valley towards Rathdrum (No. 21)
  - R755 Vale of Clara Laragh to Rathdrum: Wooded valley prospect of Clara Vale on both sides of Valley (No. 40)
  - Across and along the Avonmore river from the R755-0 at Rathdrum Catholic Church (No. 19)
  - Across the Avonmore river valley towards the town of Rathdrum from the R752-90 above Rathdrum Mills (No. 20)
- The County Development Plan lists the following area of Geological and Geomorphological Interest (Schedule 10.9) in relation the Rathdrum:
  - Rathdrum railway cutting (No. 28)
- To the north of the town the Vale of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) is located, a candidate Special Area of Conservation, a proposed Natural Heritage Area and a Nature Reserve. The Vale of Clara does not extend into the town of Rathdrum.

- **Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,**

It is not expected that certain environmental quality standards will be exceeded or that the value of vulnerable areas limited as a result of this LAP.

- **Intensive land use.**

It is not expected that existing land uses in the Plan area will be intensified such that vulnerable areas will be significantly affected.

**(vii) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, European Union or international protection status.**

The items listed under 4.2(vi) above are of regional rather than national or international importance. The Vale of Clara does not extend into the town of Rathdrum.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

SEA is not mandatory for this Plan as its current and proposed population is less than 10,000.

The Plan will result in a population increase of 157% on the 2002 population. However, no additional lands have to be zoned for residential purposes to accommodate the target population. The new sewage treatment plant will cater for the future population increase and will stop unsatisfactorily treated sewage being discharged into the Avonmore River. The road network will facilitate local access to new development lands; however improvements to pedestrian linkages and public transport services will help limit potential growth in vehicular traffic. Congestion on Main Street will be alleviated and the linkage and parking strategy will encourage sustainable modes of transport and reduce the need to travel. The designation of Architectural Conservation Areas, Local Biodiversity Areas and Habitat Networks will significantly enhance the protection of the built and natural heritage of the town.

It is thus concluded that negative environmental effects are unlikely to be significant. On the contrary, substantial environmental improvements are expected as a result of the Plan.



## **MAPS**

Map I: Zoning Map

Map II: Specific Objectives

Map III: Transport Objectives

