

SECTION THREE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 5

ENTERPRISE & EMPLOYMENT

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will set out the strategy and objectives of the Council for enterprise and employment that are relevant to and implementable through a land-use plan. The strategies and objectives of this plan aim to complement and enhance the strategies of the County Development Board (CDB) and County Enterprise Board / Enterprise Ireland and the IDA, all of which have a wider remit than this town and environs development plan in the area of economic development.

5.1 Context

National Context

Improving Ireland's economy is a recognised priority at national level and this has been reflected in "Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal" (2008). This sets out Government policy on the restructuring of the economy with the primary objective of returning Ireland to sustainable growth in the medium-term. The framework focuses on building a smart economy with thriving enterprises, a high quality business environment, secure energy supplies, and an attractive environment.

Regional Context

The Greater Dublin Area is seen as the power house of the national economy accommodating over 40% of the population of Ireland. The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), (2010-2022) set out a strategy for the continuing economic development of the region. The RPG strategy identifies key areas of enterprise development potential in the GDA and focuses on enhancing strategically important aspects of the business environment so as to create the conditions for attracting investment by both foreign and indigenous companies, stimulating entrepreneurship and enabling companies to grow and target international markets. The RPGs state that targeted investment in physical, green and social infrastructure provides the most efficient and effective long-term use of resources.

Local Context

The promotion of sustainable economic development is a priority of this plan. The future economic development of Wicklow-Rathnew is linked to that of the County and the key message is that Wicklow has to compete internationally in order to attract and retain investment and skills. There is recognition of the need to develop and attract more strategic activities in the manufacturing sectors and re-orientate the County towards high value-added traded services. At a strategic level the County Development Plan advocates the importance of identifying locations that have the highest potential for the attraction of high-tech, high value-added and research intensive activities and that these sites be identified specifically for those developments.

Economic Profile of Wicklow - Rathnew

The 2006 Census showed a resident labour force¹ in the settlement of 5,738 persons, of which 563 were either unemployed or looking for their first job (9.8%). This rate of unemployment was slightly higher than that for the State as whole (8.5%). It should also be noted that the number of people resident in Rathnew who were unemployed was 16.8% compared to 8.4% for Wicklow Town.

Of the 5,175 persons who were employed at that time, 4,993 of these gave information in the Census regarding their place of work. Only 1,293 (or 25% of those at work) of these identified their 'place of

¹ The labour force is defined as the total number of people aged 15 and over who are employed, unemployed and seeking a new job or first time job seekers.

work' as Wicklow – Rathnew. Clearly the settlement experiences a very high degree of out bound commuting.

The 2006 Census does however reveal that 2,607 persons indicated that their place of work was Wicklow – Rathnew and therefore it is clear that there is a significant inflow of workers from outside the settlement, which is to be expected given the employment catchment of the town.

Table 1 to follow shows the breakdown of the jobs located in the settlement by industrial sectors in 2006.

Table 5.1: Principal industrial sectors of jobs located in Wicklow – Rathnew 2006

Industrial group	No. of jobs	% of total
Not stated	6	0.2%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	12	0.5%
Manufacturing industries, mining, quarrying and turf production, electricity, gas and water supply	136	5%
Construction	101	4%
Commerce	874	34%
Transport, storage and communications	104	4%
Public administration and defence	451	17%
Education, health and social work	634	24%
Other	289	11%
Total	2,607	

Source: CSO Census of Population 2006 POWCAR

The largest group is clearly those employed in public services, with the 'public administration and defence' and 'education, health and social work' group combining to account for 40% of all jobs. This is clearly due to Wicklow town's position as the County Town thereby being the HQ for many County services such as the County Council, the Health Board and the VEC, and a hub in the sub region for health services, secondary schools etc.

5.2 Strategy

As set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016, depending on their degree of accessibility and their economic function, the hinterland towns (i.e. those outside the metropolitan area, of which Wicklow – Rathnew is one) have varying roles to play in acting as attractors for foreign and local investment. The towns of Arklow and Wicklow/Rathnew constitute higher order towns which are most likely to be successful in attracting a concentration of major employment generating investment from foreign as well as local investment. Having regard to their County level of economic importance, these towns should target a variety of investment types, ranging from 'product' to 'people' intensive industries; including foreign owned high technology manufacturing and services sector, local enterprise and general industrial processes.

Furthermore, settlements along the main transportation corridors of the N11 and N81 are strategically located so as to take advantage of their accessibility to the main transportation routes of the County and as such, settlements along these routes should be specifically targeted for growth in 'product' based intensive industries. These industries, by reason of the product based nature of the traded commodity, require ease of access to the main transportation networks, for efficient and rapid transportation of goods from the source of manufacture to markets, including the GDA, other regions of the Country, and other settlements within the County.

Strategic Objectives:

To promote the successful economic development and growth in employment of the town and environs by:

- Providing the infrastructure and zoned land necessary to attract inward investment and growth in indigenous industry;
- Supporting the development of new employment opportunities in the right locations in the plan area;
- Fostering entrepreneurial activity by promoting and supporting opportunities for training and education, and business start-up and incubator facilities;
- Supporting and facilitating to the highest degree possible (subject to environmental and other relevant planning considerations) all forms of employment generation.
- Exploitation and development of existing assets - regions, counties and towns are now in completion with each other to draw in new investment and employment creating opportunities. Wicklow town, Rathnew and their environs have many characteristics and assets which could act as a catalyst for major employment growth in the region. It is therefore the strategy of this plan to ensure that the appropriate framework and services are in place to allow these assets to be developed to their full employment potential.

Employment growth strategy

County Wicklow residents are currently highly dependent on jobs located elsewhere in the region and therefore in order to make the County more self-sufficient and improve the quality of life of Wicklow residents by making their employment locations closer to where they live, it will be necessary to increase the number of jobs available in the County.

A measure often used to determine what a sustainable target for job creation would be is the 'jobs ratio'. This is the ratio of the number of jobs in any given geographical area compared to the number of people in the labour force living in that same area. In 2006 (a time of high national levels of employment), the jobs ratio in County Wicklow was 46% and in Wicklow – Rathnew was 45%.

The RPGs indicate that a healthy jobs ratio would be around 70% and this is the target set out for job creation for the County in Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016. A 70% jobs ratio in the County would equate to a need for there to be c. 60,650 jobs in the County by 2022, compared to 28,778 jobs which were located in the County in 2006².

Clearly in order to achieve a jobs ratio of 70% overall in the County, some areas would need to have a higher jobs ratio than 70% as some areas will always be much lower (such as rural areas and small towns).

Given the 45% jobs ratio that existed in Wicklow-Rathnew in 2006, it is considered reasonable to aim to increase this to 80% for the target year of 2022. This will require the number of jobs in the settlement to grow from c. 2,600 in 2006 to c. 9,400 in 2022.

5.3 Factors influencing future economic development

5.3.1 Employment Creation Agencies / Employment Initiatives

Agencies including IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Forfas, FAS and Wicklow County Enterprise Board (and their successors) have an important role to play in the creation of employment and enterprise initiatives within the County. Wicklow County Development Board (CDB) acts as an agency co-ordinator in the implementation of the economic, social and cultural Strategy for the County ('Outlook 2002-2012'). Wicklow County Council, through the County Development Board, provides a co-ordinating role for all development agencies and is a facilitator for local employment initiatives.

5.3.2 Economic Development & Enterprise Trends

Particular regard should be paid to the fact that while foreign direct investment has been a major growth engine of the Irish economy in recent times and will continue to be an important driver in the future, there

² Source: Derived from CSO POWCAR data

is general agreement that the indigenous enterprise sector must assume greater importance in sustaining and driving growth going forward. In this regard, it should be noted that, in general, foreign owned companies display a preference for locations in or near large urban areas that provide labour force, skills, infrastructure and business and social networks. In contrast the existing base of Irish owned firms is distributed more widely.

5.3.3 Availability of Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure is vital for the facilitation of future economic development activity in the town. This includes water services, effective road and public transport networks, energy, telecommunications, waste management, education facilities etc.

While Chapter 10 of this plan addresses all of these areas in detail, there has been substantial investment in all necessary infrastructure in this settlement and it is not considered that employment creation will be hindered by any lack of facilities during the lifetime of this plan.

5.3.4 Quality of life

The importance of quality of life is a key component to facilitate future economic development. Factors that make a town attractive for both firms and their employees are the key to a successful economic development strategy. Specific actions to improve quality of life include:

- Providing high quality residential development with supporting social and community facilities;
- Ensuring a vibrant town centre with a high quality public realm;
- Creating an attractive urban environment to facilitate residency of the projected labour force;
- Ensuring the appearance of development complements existing environments and is of the highest quality;
- Increasing and improving the range of quality of recreational, amenity and cultural facilities.

5.3.5 Availability of land for employment purposes

While a land-use plan has no direct role in creating jobs or bringing new employers to the County, the plan can ensure that sufficient zoned land is available for employment uses and can set out objectives to facilitate this aim.

As set out above, the employment target for the settlement in 2022 is c. 9,400 jobs.

In order to calculate how much 'greenfield' land should therefore be designated for new employment development, a number of assumptions are required to be made:

1. It is assumed that 50% of all future jobs (4,700) will be located on already developed land / sites through intensification or infilling in existing employment areas or through change of use of existing non-employment generating buildings to employment uses in the town / village centre or mixed use areas
2. The remaining new jobs required (4,700) would be provided on 'greenfield' sites.

The amount of zoned employment land must be appropriate to the growth level required. There has been a tendency in the past to zone an abundance of lands for employment uses in the hope that this will bring so many options to prospective employers that jobs would flow rapidly into the town. However, there is no evidence that this has been the case, even during the boom years and indeed the spread out nature of employment zoned lands has also lead to a number of new employment developments being located at the very edges of the settlement. This has obvious negative impacts such as:

- inefficient use of limited resources in bringing services to such sites;
- the need to rely on the private car to access such sites given their distance away from residential areas;
- the haphazard growth of the settlement, at the edges first, rather than from the centre out.

In order to ensure that the potential is there to allow up to 4,700 new jobs to be created, this plan will zone sufficient 'employment' land for the potential creation of c. 9,400 new jobs.

In this regard, this plan makes provision for the zoning of the following greenfield sites for employment development:

Table 5.2: 'Greenfield' lands zoned for employment

Location	Zoning	Undeveloped land (ha)	Floor area potential (sqm) ³	Employment type	Employee density (sqm per employee)	Potential number of employees
Rosanna Lower 1	E1	9.74	116,880	Business Park / Manufacturing	50	2,338
Newrath	E1	13.91	166,872	Business Park / Manufacturing	50	3,338
Rosanna Lower 2	E3	2.97	8,901	Retail warehousing	75	119
Milltown North	E1	10.67	42,680	Business Park / Manufacturing	50	854
Merrymeeting 1	E3	1.46	4,392	Retail warehousing	75	59
Merrymeeting 2	E1	5.42	65,040	Business Park / Manufacturing	50	1,301
Ballynabarny 1	E1	12.63	50,520	Business Park / Manufacturing	50	1,010
Ballynabarny 2	E2	4.36	13,083	Warehousing	100	131
Ballybeg	E2	4.12	12,357	Warehousing	100	124
Ballynerrin Lower	E3	7.88	23,664	Retail warehousing	75	316
Along PAR	E2	10.5	31,500	Warehousing	100	315
Along PAR (CZ zone)	E2	2.64	7,920	Warehousing	100	79
Total		86.3				9,984

It should be noted that while the lands zoned 'Clermont Campus' also have the potential to generate employment, they are not include in this table for the following reasons:

- the key concept behind the development of these lands is to develop them as a 'Centre of Excellence in Enterprise, Education and Innovation' which will in time create an environment that will attract 'Knowledge Based Industry and Enterprise'. As this is a long term project, it is not clear what final manifestation the project will take, how many jobs it might generate or when these jobs will be created;
- this is considered a potential 'Regional' employment hub rather than a local employment development site.

5.4 Objectives for enterprise and employment development

General objectives

EMP1 To support all forms of employment creation, especially where this can mitigate long distance commuting, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with all other objectives of this plan.

EMP2 To promote and support the development of employment zoned land and to protect employment zoned land from inappropriate development that would undermine future economic activity or the sustainable development of such areas.

EMP3 To encourage the redevelopment of already developed or brownfield employment / mixed use lands for enterprise and employment creation throughout the settlement, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with all other objectives of this plan.

³ This is based on the following assumptions:

- 60% site coverage for business parks, 40% for manufacturing and 30% for warehousing / retail warehousing
- 2-storey development for business parks and single storey for manufacturing / warehousing / retail warehousing

- EMP4** To promote the development of employment generating uses at locations which comply with sustainable transportation objectives, i.e.
- Promoting the development of 'product' intensive industries (typically manufacturing and logistics based uses) at locations that are accessible to strategic roads infrastructure;
 - Promoting the development of 'people' intensive industries (typically office, services and start-up entrepreneur based uses) at locations that are accessible by public transport networks;
 - Promoting the intensification of existing employment land uses that are in proximity to good public transport facilities;
 - Where appropriate, promoting the integration of employment uses with other land uses, including residential, tourism and retail uses, in an effort to provide mixed use developments, which can reduce the need to travel.

EMP5 To encourage and facilitate the provision of office developments and small-scale service industries at appropriate locations. The most suitable location for local or small-scale office developments and small-scale service industries is in above ground floor commercial premises at appropriate locations in town / village centres and neighbourhood centres⁴. The development of these types of uses in neighbourhood centres can reinforce the existing service function of these centres, as well as create new opportunities for local employment in locations that are accessible to residential areas. The Council will permit office development in appropriate employment zoned locations that are deemed suitable with regard to sustainable traffic and land use considerations.

- EMP6** To encourage, where appropriate, home-based economic activity⁵ including the provision of small-scale individual enterprises. Proposals which involve the change of use and/or new development for purposes of home-based employment will generally be considered favourably where it can be clearly demonstrated that:
- the nature of the proposed process or activity to be carried out shall be appropriate to and compatible with the character and amenity of the adjoining area;
 - the proposed development is of an appropriate scale for its location;
 - there is no adverse environmental, health and safety impacts;
 - the development is not detrimental to residential amenity.

Objectives for specific locations

EMP7 Wicklow town centre

For Wicklow Town Centre to remain the hub of activity in the wider settlement and wider region, where people come together to work, shop, recreate and interact, high levels of employment must be maintained in the town centre. It is the objective of the Council to support and facilitate all forms of employment development in Wicklow Town Centre, particularly retail and retail services uses, in accordance the objectives and standards set out in Chapter 6.

EMP8 Rathnew

While employment in retail, retail services and other village centre type commercial uses in Rathnew will be somewhat limited having regard to the higher range and order of services that are / will be available in Wicklow Town, Rathnew is the location of two existing / planned major employment nodes in the settlement, namely the existing Rathnew Business Park and the planned R&D hub at Clermont Campus. It is the objective of the Council to:

⁴ This objective does not relate to the use as an office, as set out in Class 2 of 'Part 4, Exempted Development-Classses of Use' of the 2001 Planning and Development Regulations.

⁵ Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial activity carried out by residents of a house which is subordinate or ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a place of residence.

- support the continued operation of Rathnew Business Park as a manufacturing and warehousing area
- support the development of lands zoned 'Clermont Campus' (see objectives EMP9) and adjacent employment zoned lands on the east side of the R772 for higher order employment types such as science / ICT / green technology uses.

EMP9 Clermont Campus

The Clermont Campus is considered a unique site in the County with the potential to re-invigorate employment in the whole County, by combining third level education with a research and development hub with associate spin off businesses. It is considered a 'County' facility, with a regional draw. It is the objective of the Council to develop Clermont Campus in conjunction with the Carlow Institute of Technology and other stakeholders as a third level education facility and as a centre of excellence for enterprise development, education, training, research and development.

EMP10 Wicklow Port

The existence of a commercial and leisure port in the town provides opportunities for increased economic activity in the port and harbour area and combined with new road access which removes port bound traffic from the town centre, the opportunity for significant redevelopment arises. It is the objective of the Council to facilitate the development of the port and harbour area in accordance with the objectives and standards as detailed in the **Port and Harbour Strategy** (Chapter 4)

EMP11 Murrough North

For the purposes of this plan, the Murrough is divided into two distinct areas – that area north of the Port Access Road ('Murrough North') and that area between the port access road and the harbour ('Murrough Opportunity Area'). Chapter 12 sets out the objectives and standards for the 'Murrough Opportunity Area'.

In 'Murrough North', it is the objective of the Council to:

- Facilitate the continued operation of established / permitted existing business / commercial activities and the development of new employment facilities in this area.
- To encourage business to develop in a manner which is respectful of the local environment, use environmentally friendly / innovative technologies and improve the visual amenity of the area.
- To ensure that no development is permitted which would give rise to significant adverse impacts upon the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites. In accordance with EU Habitats Directive, any development with the potential to give rise to significant adverse impacts upon a Natura 2000 site shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment.
- To encourage site operators to improve the overall visual amenity of the area including the provision of additional landscaping using native species appropriate to this natural coastal setting
- To restrict any new development within 20m of the high water mark and to cooperate with landowners to manage commercial, recreational and employment related uses in the area subject to the protection of the conservation interests of nearby Natura sites

EMP12 Wicklow Port Access Route & Town Relief Road

The completion of the PARTRR provides opportunities to develop the lands along the route for employment creation activities, which are relatively close to the town centres and residential areas, while benefitting from good access to radial routes out of the town to the N11. It is the objective of the Council to support employment creation on identified sites along this route subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with all other objectives of this plan.

Design / layout objectives

EMP13 To only permit proposals for employment generating development where it can be demonstrated that the development complies with the relevant development standards and is not detrimental to residential amenity or to environmental quality, and is acceptable with regard to its impact on the character of the area.

EMP14 To require the development of childcare facilities at places of employment, and in particular at 'people' intensive places of employment (see Chapter 8).

EMP15 To require employment based developments to be of the highest standard of architectural design and layout, (in accordance with the standards set out in Section 5.5 of this chapter).

5.5 Design standards for Business Parks, Warehousing, Retail Warehousing & Industrial Developments

All employment developments are required to be of the highest quality design. By developing a physically attractive and harmonious business environment, the Planning Authority seeks to create a quality business environment that encourages existing businesses to expand and that attracts new industrial development to the County. Existing businesses, which propose to develop existing facilities, will be encouraged to design their projects in accordance with the following design standards, to the greatest extent possible.

5.5.1 Building Form & Materials

A high quality design, finish and layout is required for all developments. The following standards should be applied:

- Variation in building form is recommended to reduce the mass of building walls. Overly long rectangular buildings will not generally be acceptable – the impact of these structures will be expected to be softened by breaking up the mass into appropriately stepped sections;
- Accented entry ways are recommended to create an architecturally pleasing entrance feature;
- The sides of each building on a site, particularly buildings visible from multiple street frontages, shall be consistent in design and should be compatible with other developments in the immediate vicinity;
- All external elevations should be suitably clad or fully rendered and painted, save for where brick or other similar finished material, such as fairfaced blockwork, acceptable to the Planning Authority, is proposed;
- Architecturally enhanced metal clad buildings may be permitted, however corrugated metal buildings will generally not be permitted;
- In the case of developments of two or more industrial or warehouse buildings, a uniform design, including architectural treatment, roof profiles, boundary fences and building lines is essential.

5.5.2 Intensity of development

The Council will require all employment developments to be of an appropriate intensity, measured by plot ratio and site coverage. Table 5.3 below details the standards that will normally apply.

The Council will not permit an employment development where it is considered that there is an unacceptable over development of the site.

Table 5.3: Employment site coverage

	Site coverage		Plot ratio
	Maximum initial	Maximum final	
Offices	60%	75%	1.5
Manufacturing	40%	60%	1
Distribution / Warehousing	30%	50%	1
Retail warehousing	30%	50%	1

5.5.3 Colours

Colour schemes that promote a sense of a unified planned business park are encouraged. Painting of buildings in repetitive bold colours, corporate liveries, or painting buildings to serve as signs will not be permitted. All rendered buildings should be painted an appropriate colour.

5.5.4 Building Lines

Generally, development should not be carried out in front of established building lines or in a position where it would be in conflict with the building lines determined by the Council to be appropriate for that area. The Planning Authority, in determining an appropriate building line, will examine each application on its merits and will have regard to the needs of the area in terms of maintaining a good townscape, protecting from traffic and preserving the character and amenity of the area (see also Chapter 6).

5.5.5 Building Heights

Building heights should be appropriate to the design and scale of development proposed and to that of the adjoining area. Developments that result in a significant degree of visual obtrusion or overshadowing, which is detrimental to the character of the area or to the amenity of adjoining residential properties will not be permitted. The height of buildings should be no more than is necessary for the operation of the business. Regard will be paid to the following matters in making an assessment on the suitable height of a building:

- the size and configuration of a site, and whether it is large enough to provide a visual transition from the scale of surrounding developments;
- the quality of the design;
- the requirements of the activities undertaken therein;
- any detrimental impact to residential amenity, including overlooking or overshadowing;
- detraction from structures or spaces of architectural or historic importance, and important landmarks.

5.5.6 Boundary Treatment

In order to soften the visual appearance of buildings and to screen adjoining properties and views from roads, all new development proposals shall be accompanied by proposals for suitable boundary treatment, including walls, fencing or landscaping.

- The design, materials, finishes and colours of walls or fencing along road frontages shall be compatible with the main building and adjoining properties in the vicinity;
- Inordinately long walls or fences should be broken up by landscaping, pilasters, offsets in the alignment of the wall or fence, and/or changes in materials and colours;
- No steel security fencing with sharpened spears/pickets should be installed forward of the front building line of any industrial or warehouse facility;
- Priority should be given to the preservation of existing trees and hedgerows along site boundaries and to enhancing biodiversity through the planting of appropriate native species;
- Landscaped strips along public roads will normally be required.

5.5.7 Landscaping

Landscaping proposals should accompany all applications. Landscaping plans should be prepared by a qualified landscape architect, and shall be in accordance with the following:

- A minimum of 10% of the total site area shall be for soft landscaping. The landscaped areas should generally be provided along the front of the property;
- Existing trees and hedgerows should be protected, where possible;
- Landscaping proposals should provide for planting of trees and shrubs in an informal pattern with a preference for the use native species to enhance biodiversity;
- Trees should be planted within the landscaped area along public road frontages in order to provide screening.

5.5.8 Developments adjoining existing residential areas, or adjoining land that is planned or zoned for residential use

The following particular standards shall apply to all developments, which are visible from a public road or from a residential area:

- All exterior elevation walls and boundary walls shall have a material, finish and colour that is compatible with adjoining properties. Metal clad buildings will generally not be permitted;
- Trees shall be planted within the landscaped area along public road frontages in order to provide screening;
- Particular regard shall be paid to ensuring that the height and setback of a building is acceptable, and in accordance with the standards set out above;
- The building height proposed shall provide a suitable transition between residential and employment areas.

5.5.9 Access and Roads (also see Chapter 9)

- Developments that result in a significant increase in traffic congestion or a hazard to road safety will not be permitted;
- Roads and facilities should be provided in accordance with the 'Traffic Management Guidelines', the 'NRA DMRB (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) Manual' and the 'National Manual for Urban Areas: Provision of Cycle Facilities';
- Generally only one vehicular access point will be permitted to serve the development;
- Pedestrian, cyclist and public transport access should be considered in the layout of new employment areas. Where there are high volumes of HGV movements, cyclists and pedestrians should be protected from general traffic by segregated facilities;
- Adequate turning areas must be provided within the curtilage of the site unless satisfactory alternative arrangements are agreed with the planning authority. Turning space should be provided for 15 metre articulated vehicles and 9 metre fixed axle vehicles. In this regard, the Planning Authority may require the submission of an 'auto-track' analysis.

5.5.10 Car Parking & Loading (also see Chapter 9)

Functional parking provision (car parking for staff/visitors, loading/unloading area etc) shall be in accordance with the Planning Authority's vehicle parking standards (see Table 9.2, Chapter 9).

- Parking should be provided in proximity to the main access points of the building;
- Adequate soft landscaping should be provided to soften the appearance of parking areas that are in the view of the general public;
- Parking areas that are visible from public roads should be screened from view by landscaping or walls;
- It is essential that each industrial / warehousing unit be provided with adequate space for loading and unloading goods, including fuels, in an area clear of the public road and preferably behind the building line.

The following minimum car parking standards shall apply:

Table 5.4: Employment car parking requirements

Use	Car parking requirement
Offices	4-5 car spaces per 100m ² gross floor area
Manufacturing (including science & technology based)	3 car spaces per 100m ² gross floor area
Distribution Warehousing	1 car space per 100m ² gross floor space
Retail warehousing	2 car spaces per 100m ² gross floor area

5.5.11 Cycle Facilities (also see Chapter 9)

An appropriate amount of cycle parking facilities should be provided. Cycle parking facilities should be covered and should be located so as to maximise convenience to main entrances, and positioned so as to ensure safety, security and supervision.

5.5.12 Services (also see Chapter 10)

There shall be adequate availability of services to serve the development – water, sewerage, surface water drainage, waste, lighting, communications etc. All electricity and service lines should be laid underground.

5.5.13 Lighting, Noise and Air emissions (also see Chapter 10)

Impacts resulting from lighting and noise from sites should be minimised. A detailed study may be required prior to the commencement of development in sensitive locations (e.g. adjacent to dwellings, nursing homes etc) to outline probable impacts and mitigation measures.

Noise arising from any industrial/employment development should not exceed 55dB(A) Leq (1 hour) with a maximum peak of 65 dB(A) between 0800 to 1800 hours, Monday to Saturday inclusive, but excluding public holidays, when measured along any point along the site boundary. At all other times the noise level should not exceed 45 dB(A) Leq (1 hour) when measured at the same locations. No pure tones should be audible at any time. All noise should be measured from the point of the nearest sensitive receptor.

Regard will also be paid to the recommendations/requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The proposed development shall be capable of dealing satisfactorily with any emission or effluent, with particular caution being applied where industrial / commercial developments are located in proximity to vulnerable receptors, such as rivers.

5.5.14 Storage Requirements (also see Chapter 10)

All external storage including bin storage, oil tanks etc. shall be visually screened from the public areas with adequate screening by fencing or walls.

Proposals for and location of safe storage on site and disposal of waste is required. A storage area of sufficient size for all recyclable materials generated from the development to the requirements of the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 2003 to 2006, as amended, should be provided. All overground oil chemical storage tanks should be adequately bunded to protect against spillage.

5.5.15 Signage

A co-ordinated signage system throughout industrial estates / business parks will be required. Within the curtilage of industrial estates, signage should be restricted to a single sign identifying all occupiers of the site at the entrance and to fingerpost signs at junctions throughout the estate where such are considered necessary by the Council.

5.5.16 Use

Details should be submitted of the nature and scale of operations, including full details of proposed use, including industrial processes involved, any toxic materials, chemicals or solvents used.

Details should be submitted on the hours of operation, particularly where the proposed development is located in proximity to residential areas.

5.5.17 Mobility Management Plans (also see Chapter 9)

The Council shall require all planning applications for large employment based developments, where the Council considers that a significant peak and/ or off peak travel will be generated, to include a Mobility Management Plan. Developments for which mobility management could be applied include:

- People intensive employment developments, including office (including office based industrial) and high technology and services based developments;
- Retail (e.g. large one-off stores), including retail warehousing and distribution;
- Health, education and community based institutions.

A Mobility Management Plan is an integrated strategy designed with the common aim of addressing the total mobility requirements of the development in a sustainable way. Its aim is to shift the emphasis from car borne commuting to increased use of sustainable transportation modes. The Plan should include aims and specific works objectives which minimise the impact on traffic of a development through:

- Providing appropriate parking spaces;
- Optimising links with the public transport system;
- Providing facilities for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Meeting the needs of people whose mobility is impaired;
- Respecting existing public rights of way;
- Encouraging modes of transport other than personal travel by private car.

5.5.18 Home based economic activities

In dealing with applications for such developments, the planning authority will have regard to the following:

- the nature and extent of the work;
- the effects on the amenities of adjoining properties particularly as regards hours of operation, noise and general disturbance;
- the anticipated level of traffic generation,
- the generation, storage and collection of waste.

Permissions for change of use shall be temporary for a period of five years, to enable the Planning Authority to monitor the impact of the development. Permission will not normally be granted for such changes of uses in apartments.

The Planning Authority will determine the appropriate number of employees that will be permitted at a development. In certain cases, it may be appropriate that a development is restricted to owner-operator use only, and no other employees will be permitted. In any case, no more than three people, including the owner-operator will be permitted to be employed at such a development.

Chapter 6

Retail

6.1 Introduction

The Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012 issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, require Local Authorities to prepare retail strategies and policies to guide and manage retail development, particularly having regard to the protection of the retail function of town centres.

The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin area (GDA) 2008-2016 is to guide the activities and policies for retail planning across the seven local authorities in the GDA, including Wicklow. The strategy aims to set out a co-ordinated, sustainable approach to the assessment and provision of retail development within the GDA so that:

- Adequate and suitable provision is made to meet the needs of the growing and changing population, both overall and locally, and provide for healthy competition and consumer choice;
- Retail developments are provided in suitable locations, integrated within existing growth areas and public transport investment;
- There is not significant overprovision, which would place more marginal locations under severe pressure and undermine sustainability driven policies aimed at revitalising town centres.

The Greater Dublin Area strategy sets out a strategic vision and guidance for retail planning in the GDA, and sets out a series of principles and recommendations for each council to consider as part of their individual retail strategy.

6.2 Wicklow County Retail Strategy

The County Retail Strategy is drawn from the higher-order Regional Retail Strategy and is fully consistent with the aim and objectives of same.

The purpose of the Retail Strategy for County Wicklow 2010-2016 is to:

- Confirm the retail hierarchy for the County, the role of centres and the size of the main town centres;
- Define the boundaries of the core shopping area of town centres;
- Provide a broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floorspace;
- Provide guidance on the location and scale of retail development;
- Include policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres;
- Set out criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

Wicklow Town is located in Level 2 of the retail hierarchy, which is classified as “Major Town Centres and County Town Centres” while Rathnew is located in Level 4 “Local Centres / Small Towns”. This category is also synonymous with “neighbourhood centres” in larger towns.

6.2.1 Strategy for Wicklow - Rathnew

It is envisaged that the role of Wicklow as a County town is to have a full range of all types of retail services from newsagents to specialist shops and boutiques, department stores, foodstores of all types, shopping centres and high level of mixed uses including the arts and culture to create a vibrant, living place.

The strategy also identifies Rathnew village as part of the settlement, with retail provision in the village being on par with the scale of retail envisaged for ‘local centres / small towns’ in the County Retail Strategy.

The County Retail Strategy allocates Wicklow-Rathnew 7,000-15,000sqm growth in comparison floor space and 3,000-5,000sqm of convenience floorspace between 2006 and 2016. While this plan has a lifespan up to 2019, it is considered prudent to comply for the time being with the 2010-2016 strategy, and

to update the plan at a later date should the growth allocations change or a new regional or County retail strategy be adopted.

The growth allocations are based on a baseline for a survey date in 2007. Since then the following retail space has been granted permission / constructed as follows:-

- c. 350sqm of extension / conversion to retail uses in Wicklow town centre at Abbey Street and Fitzwilliam Court (all convenience space)
- neighbourhood centre in Broomhall of c. 400sqm (convenience space)
- new Tesco development which would entail an increase in convenience floor space by c. 1,250sqm and comparison by c. 425sqm⁶
- c. 13,000sqm of retail warehousing floor space (i.e. bulky comparison goods) has been granted permission on Marlton Road (Lusra Teoranta)

The Lusra Teoranta development has not commenced to date (March 2012) and in the event that this permission is initiated, there will be limited scope for additional comparison space in the town. The residual growth allowed by this strategy will be required to be reserved for non bulky good floorspace in the centre or edge of the core retail area.

Therefore the retail strategy for Wicklow - Rathnew is:

1. To promote and encourage enhancement and expansion of retail floorspace and town centre activities in Wicklow to enhance its role and importance as a County Town Centre in the GDA;
2. To strictly control the growth of convenience floorspace to that set out in this strategy;
3. To direct new retail development in the first instance into the retail cores of Wicklow Town and Rathnew as shown on Maps 6.1 and 6.2 and in particular to derelict or under-utilised sites;
4. Only when retail core sites have been discounted shall significant retail provision be considered at edge of core locations.
5. In the event of the delivery of the Lusra Teoranta retail warehousing development within the plan period, no further significant retail warehousing permission will be granted other than
 - i. conversion of non-retail premises in the core area to retail warehousing use,
 - ii. renovation and expansion of existing retail warehouse premises in the core retail area,
 - iii. redevelopment of derelict or brownfield sites in the core and
 - iv. replacement of existing facilities within the town;
6. To develop the retail role of Rathnew at a 'local centre' scale, commensurate with its local catchment and its development as an employment and education hub (having regard to its role vis-à-vis Clermont Campus);
7. To allow for only one further (small scale) neighbourhood centre in the plan area, that is in proximity to the Rocky Road / Town Relief Road junction, on the grounds that this will allow all existing / planned residential areas to be within 10 minutes walk of either a core retail area or a neighbourhood centre⁷.

6.3 Retail Objectives

General

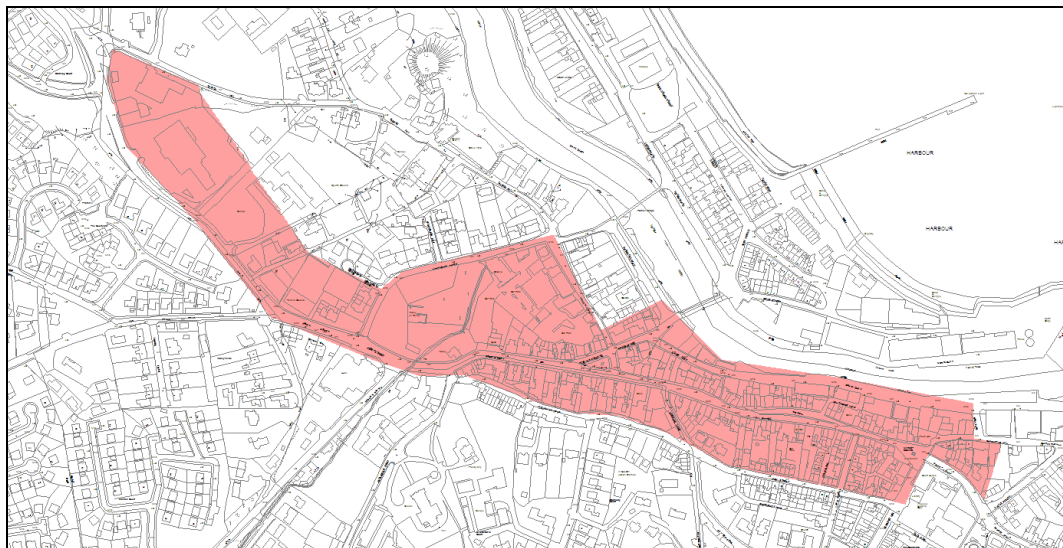
RT1 Applications for new retail development shall accord with "Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities", (DOEHLG 2005) and any subsequent Ministerial Guidelines or directives.

⁶ While the Tesco application is currently on appeal, it is considered prudent to take cognisance of this decision and in the event that permission is not granted, this strategy can be updated as may be required.

⁷ The Marlton Action Area objectives, set out in Section 6 of this plan, set out the specific requirements for this neighbourhood centre.

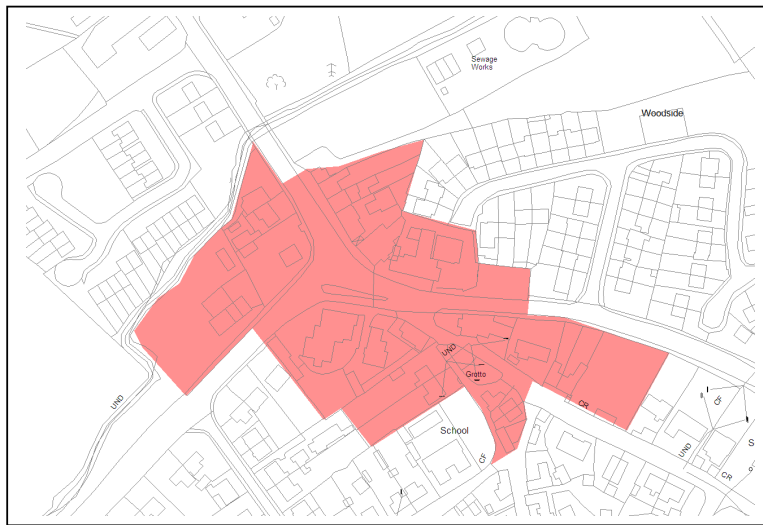
- RT2** Applications for new retail development shall accord with the County Retail Strategy and where appropriate shall be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment.
- RT3** The preferred location for new retail development where practicable and viable, is within the retail core of the town / village centre zones. Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a site within the core, then consideration can be given to a site on the edge of the core, but still within the town / village centre zone.
- RT4** There will be a presumption against large retail centres located adjacent, close to, or on a high-speed route directly to existing, new or planned national roads/motorways. Such centres can lead to an inefficient use of costly and valuable infrastructure and may have the potential to undermine the regional/national transport role of the roads concerned.
- RT5** The 'sequential approach' to the location of new retail development will be applied i.e. having assessed the size, availability, accessibility, and feasibility of developing both new sites and existing premises, firstly within the retail core and secondly on the edge of the retail core, alternative out of centre sites should be considered only where it can be demonstrated that there are no retail core or other zoned town / village centre sites which are suitable, viable and available.
- RT6** Where an application for new retail development is made within the defined core retail area it will not always be necessary to demonstrate the quantitative need for retail proposals in assessing such proposed developments. In setting out the retail impact of the development the report should focus on how the scheme will add/detract from the vitality of the town centre - both in relation to improving retail, urban design, integration with the built fabric and quality of life in the town/centre.

Map 6.1 Wicklow Town Core Retail Area



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Map 6.2 Rathnew Village Core Retail Area



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Town / village centres

- TR1** Shopping provision is a key component of town / village centres, and makes a major contribution to their vitality and viability. It is important therefore that they retain retailing as a core function. Where an application is made for a new development with street frontage either in the defined retail core, retail or commercial use will normally be required at street level.
- TR2** The mix and balance of different type of retail (including retail services) is important to attract people to these centres, and to ensure town / village centres remain the main meeting point for the community. Too many of certain types of outlet can destroy the balance of the town / village centre, and accordingly the Planning Authority will control the number of bookmakers, off-licences (including off-licences in convenience stores), financial institutions, and other uses that can adversely affect the character of a town / village centre.
- TR3** In order to sustain and enhance the vitality of town centres, active 1st floor uses will be required in all new developments and particular encouragement will be given to 'living over the shop'. Where such use is proposed, a relaxation in density, car parking and open space standards will be considered, where the development meets very high quality of design and accommodation.
- TR4** New retail developments in town / village centres will be required to provide proximate and easily accessible car parking or to make a financial contribution towards car parking where it has been or will be provided by the Local Authority. Access to public transport services (where available) shall be provided which may include the provision of new bus stops with the agreement of service providers and shelters / waiting areas
- TR5** Applications for new retail developments in town / village centres shall make every effort to integrate successfully new retail development, much of which will be of a scale larger than the existing urban grain, into the townscape of existing centres. Attention shall be given to the location of service yards and treatment of car parking areas so as to avoid unsightly views and special consideration shall be given to the detailing of extensive frontages and flank walls.
- TR6** Where new retail development is considered 'large scale' in relation to the existing town / village centre, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the development plan and that there will not be a material adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any existing town / village centre. In submitting evidence in relation to retail impact the applicant shall address the following criteria and demonstrate whether or not the proposal would:

- support the overall strategy for the town / village centre as set out in the development plan and not materially diminish the prospect of attracting private sector investment into one or more town centres;
- cause an adverse impact on one or more town / village centres, either singly or cumulatively with recent developments or other outstanding planning permissions, sufficient to undermine the quality of the centre or its role in the economic and social life of the community;
- diminish the range of activities and services that a town / village centre can support;
- cause an increase in the number of vacant properties in the primary retail area that is likely to persist in the long term;
- ensure a high standard of access both by public transport, foot and private car so that the proposal is easily accessible by all sections of society;
- link effectively with an existing town / village centre so that there is likely to be commercial synergy.

TR7 Positive consideration shall be given to the re-configuration of existing retail provision to accommodate large modern retail units, subject to compliance with all other planning criteria, in particular those relating to architectural heritage. Where the merging of two or more buildings is proposed, regard should be had to the established streetscape and the need to preserve traditional shopfronts.

Large foodstores

Large foodstores comprising supermarkets, superstores or hypermarkets are an accepted component of the retail hierarchy. They serve mainly the large weekly convenience goods shopping requirements of families. They require large clear areas of floorspace together with adjacent car parking as the majority (but not all) of families undertake their weekly bulk convenience shopping by car.

LF1 Large foodstores shall generally be required to be located on lands zoned 'town centre' or 'village centre'

LF2 Where a proposal for foodstore development involves the sale of a significant amount of non-food goods (as is common in hypermarkets) the application drawings accompanying a planning application shall delineate clearly the area to be devoted primarily for the sale of convenience goods. Floorspace caps set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines* will apply to the total net retail sales space of superstores and the convenience goods net retail sales space of hypermarkets delineated on application drawings. To prevent any adverse impact on town centres, the proportion of comparison goods floorspace shall be limited to a maximum of 20% of retail floor area.

Neighbourhood centres

C1 New / expanded neighbourhood centres shall generally be required to be located on lands zoned / identified for such usage. All efforts should be made to integrate neighbourhood centres with any existing / new community facilities due to be provided in the area e.g. schools, childcare facilities, sports fields etc.

Tourism retail

RT1 Tourism retail⁸ shall be encouraged at appropriate and established tourist locations, subject to the following criteria:

- the applicant must show that the tourism attraction concerned is well established and has a suitable existing flow of visitors sufficient to make a retail facility viable;

⁸ Tourism retail is defined in this plan as retail space to be utilised principally for the sale of goods to visitors and tourists to an area, mainly craft or luxury items and which would not offer goods associated with normal convenience and comparison shopping and would not be expected to have a large draw / attraction from the local population.

- the retail facility shall be sufficiently proximate to the tourism facility but shall be suitably located so as to not detract from the feature;
- in order to ensure that the retail unit in itself does not supersede the existing tourist attraction as the main tourism feature of an area, any application for tourism retail in excess of 200sqm shall be required to justify the need for a larger retail unit and to include proposals (to be fully implemented by the retail developer) to effectively link the retail facility to the tourist attraction (both in terms of physical links⁹ and linkage of the tourism identity / product¹⁰);
- the retail facility shall include significant links with the local tourism community in terms of providing a tourist office or tourism information and space for the sale of locally produced goods / crafts.

Retail warehousing

A retail warehouse is defined as a large, usually single-level store specialising in the sale of bulky household goods such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods, and bulky DIY items, catering mainly for carborne customers and often in out-of-centre locations. Retail parks comprise a single development of a least three retail warehouses with associated car parking.

RW1 New retail warehouse developments and retail parks shall be required to be located on suitably zoned lands. Where no such zoned lands are provided and a need can be shown for this form of retailing, the applicant must show through the application of the sequential approach that the site selected is suitable and optimal.

RW2 A recent trend in a number of parks has been a blurring of the division between bulky and non-bulky goods retailers, with some parks now containing major clothing chains and food retailers. Continuing to allow this mixing of uses such as fashion chains into retail parks is likely to result in a negative impact on adjoining town centres as the large size units readily available in retail parks are easily accessible by car, but not public transport, and divert trade away from the town core. Therefore where permission is granted for new retail warehouse development, the planning authority shall apply strict conditions on floor size (including restricting internal expansion by the construction of 1st floors or mezzanines), the type of goods to be sold or restricting the subdivision into smaller units.

RW3 Single retail warehouse units may be considered on infill sites in built up areas and flexibility with regard to the type of goods sold may be considered where the location is easily accessible by foot from the core retail area, the form of development is in keeping with good urban design and the development would not detract from local plan aspirations for the area.

Discount foodstores

Discount food store generally comprise a single level, self service store normally of between 1,000sqm – 1,500sqm of gross floorspace selling a limited range of goods at competitive prices, often with adjacent car parking.

DF1 Discount foodstores shall be required to locate on suitably zoned lands. Where no such zoned lands are provided and a need can be shown for this form of retailing, the applicant must show through the application of the sequential approach that the site selected is suitable and optimal. To prevent any adverse impact on town centres, the proportion of comparison goods floorspace shall be limited to a maximum of 20% of retail floor area.

⁹ For example footpaths / cycleways or shuttle bus / jaunting car connections from the retail facility to the tourism feature

¹⁰ For example joint marketing strategies, co-ordinated signage etc

Factory shops

FS1 Factory shops (i.e. as a shop adjacent to the production unit and specialising in the sale of manufacturers' products direct to the public) shall be positively considered where the following criteria are met:

- the shop is strictly ancillary to the main production activity on the site;
- additional car parking (over and above that required by the manufacturing facility alone) is available or can be provided for shoppers.

Garden centres / nurseries

GC1 Garden centres (i.e. 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) shall generally be required to locate on suitably zoned lands. Garden centres shall only be considered on unzoned / agricultural lands within the plan boundary where it can be shown that the principal activity is the cultivation of plants and the retail activity is purely ancillary to the main use. In such cases, retail space shall not be expected to exceed 500sqm (indoor and outdoor retail sales area) and car parking shall be restricted to that strictly required to serve the permitted retail area.

Petrol filling stations

PF1 Notwithstanding the sequential approach, a shop of up to 100sqm of net retail sales area may be allowed when associated with a petrol filling station. Where retail space in excess of 100sqm of net retail sales area associated with petrol filling facilities is sought the sequential approach to retail development will apply, i.e. the retail element of the development shall be assessed by the planning authority in the same way as would an application for retail development (without petrol filling facilities) in the same location.

Vacant retail units

VR1 Vacant properties have a very negative impact on our town centres - visitors and shoppers can be discouraged from return visits, the look and feel of the town centre is one of decline, the retail offer is weakened and investment stagnates. In this regard, it will be condition of the grant of permission for any new or extended / refurbished units that at all times that the retail unit is not in active use, the street front display area will be required to be provided with an attractive temporary display or professionally designed artwork affixed to the glass frontage. The temporary use of the retail space during such times for creative, cultural or community purposes will be encouraged; however, such change of use may require planning permission, and advice will be provided by the Council on a case by case basis in this regard.

6.4 Criteria for the assessment of retail developments

Retail developments shall be assessed for:

- the need for the development
- compliance with the 'sequential approach'
- impact on existing centres
- availability of transport and
- qualitative aspects of the proposal, including scale

All in accordance with the standards set out in the County Retail Strategy

6.5 Development Management Standards

Retail Development

All retail proposals shall meet the design standards set out in the County Retail Strategy, however the following standards pertain to shopfronts.

Shopfront Design Standards

These shopfront design standards are drawn from the County Development Plan and from “Wicklow Town – A Gallery of Shopfronts” (inventory and guidance for the repair and renewal of Town Centre Shopfronts November 2010) and reference should be made to this document in the designing of any new shopfronts. The function of the shopfront is two-fold; to identify a retail premises within a street by way of name, signage and window display and to express the architectural character of a building at ground floor level.

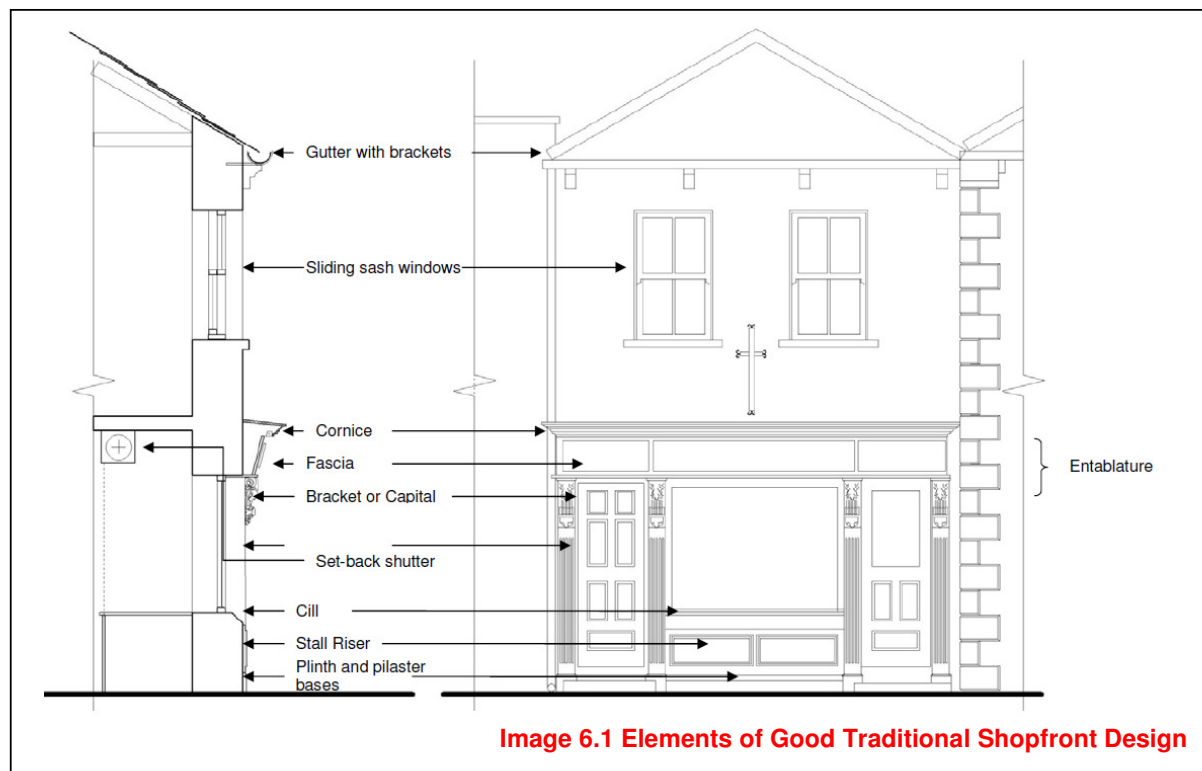


Image 6.1 Elements of Good Traditional Shopfront Design

Shopfront Style

- The shopfront is part of the building and the building is part of the street. Where a shopfront is to be installed, it should normally be of materials or finishes appropriate to the age, style and character of the building and its surrounding area. While contemporary design is generally encouraged, in the town/village cores with traditional shopfront formats, a traditional style shopfront may be the most appropriate solution. The typical wall finish in Wicklow Town is a painted lime plaster render on a rubble stone masonry wall. Untypical materials include brick and polished tile or stone finishes and should generally be avoided. However, at locations where there are a range of shop front styles, and no common vernacular, a modern solution is preferred over inaccurate historical representations

Fascia

- The primary function of the fascia is to advertise the name of the shop. The fascia also gives visual support to the upper floors and helps frame the shop window. The fascia should be of an appropriate height, in scale with the overall height of the shopfront and other elements of the

building. The fascia should not encroach on or above first floor level or extend uninterrupted across a number of buildings.

- The typical material for shopfronts is painted timber.

Signage

- Signage shall generally be limited to the fascia, but may also be considered on or behind glazing and on columns or doorways;
- Lettering is to be in proper proportion to the size of the fascia and to the scale of the building. As a general rule, the lettering should be restricted to half the fascia width, taking care to leave sufficient space at top, bottom and sides. Shop lettering should convey the essential message of the retailer. The shop name alone will generally have most effect;
- The illumination of shopfronts and signage is generally considered unnecessary. In certain circumstances, for example where the business is open in the evening, modest levels of discreet lighting (the purpose of which is to light the lettering and not bathe the whole façade and pavement in a pool of light) may be permitted.

Doors and Windows

- Shop windows should be set in the same plane as the building front with any recessed areas being confined to the entrance door;
- Windows are typically vertical sliding sash painted timber windows recessed from the façade. Projecting windows or outward opening sash windows are not typical. Materials which cannot be readily painted should be avoided.
- Frosted glazing rather than solid signage should be used where the use requires a degree of privacy (e.g. non-retail services such as solicitors, surgeries etc) or where the layout of the shop requires functional elements or shelves to be located directly behind the window;
- Access should be made easy for everybody including those in wheelchairs or with other aids to mobility; the visually impaired; parents with pushchairs and young children; the elderly and those carrying heavy bags. Shopfronts should be designed with level access at pavement level. Where this is impossible, a ramp rather than steps must be provided.

Fixtures and fittings

The building façade needs to accommodate many practical items.

- Brackets for hanging baskets should be made of wrought iron to a consistent style and should not be made of simple box section steel.
- Rainwater gutters and down pipes should be well maintained and consideration should be given to diverting rainwater below the pavement level to discharge to the kerbside gutters.
- Where canopies are used, they should be placed on the south side of the street only and they should be incorporated into the design of the shopfront. The use of canopies as advertisement should be secondary to the primary purpose.

Materials

- Materials used in shopfront construction should be of good quality, durable, and should respect the age and character of the building and adjoining street;
- Timber is an appropriate material for shopfront construction, it is versatile, durable, easily and cheaply maintained or altered. Modern materials such as aluminium and plastic may be considered for contemporary shopfronts. Other high quality materials such as marble, terrazzo, bronze or chrome might also be suitable for use in such locations;
- The number of different materials shall be minimised, as too wide a range can result in a confused or chaotic appearance.

Colour

- When considering the colour of new or replacement shopfronts it is important that the selected colour scheme complements the character and style of the building, rather than conflicting with it. Shopfronts are traditionally painted in strong colours, which are slow to fade. The use of rich colours, such as dark shades of green, blue, red and black is recommended;
- Corporate colours should be restricted to the main signage of the shopfront and not the entire shopfront.

Security

- Solid external shutters which completely cover the shopfront when closed have a major impact on the street scene and therefore will not be permitted;
- Where there is an obvious need for enhanced security, the use of alternative methods of protection should be considered, such as toughened / laminated glass, additional glazing bars reduce glazing size or internal open-mesh window grilles;
- Appropriate use of lighting may reduce the likelihood of a break in. The lighting should generally not be so strong as to illuminate the area outside the shop, as this might affect the character of the area;
- The use of upper floor for residential use is an effective way of improving security. Having a constant presence over the premises is one of the most efficient ways of reducing crime and vandalism and often involves little alteration which might affect the character of the building.

Chapter 7

Tourism and Recreation

7.1 Introduction

Wicklow Town and its environs is an attractive seaside resort on the lower slopes of Ballyguile Hill about 26 kilometres south of Bray. A pebble beach runs for 19 kilometres north of the town. The street pattern is complemented by a number of well maintained attractive structures at key points throughout the Town Centre. The richness of the Town Centre is further enhanced by a broad range of retail, commercial and professional outlets providing a good range of goods and services. Tourism has been a major industry for County Wicklow for many years. Wicklow Town has developed its own tourism and visitor economy capitalising on its qualities as a cultural destination and area of local distinctiveness.

The tourism industry affords significant potential for economic development and employment opportunities in Wicklow and Rathnew and in County Wicklow as a whole. The settlement has a number of characteristics and assets and activities that it can capitalise on, such as:

1. The proximity of the settlement to a wide range of tourism and recreation attractions in the region, such as Brittas Bay, Glendalough, the Vale of Avoca, Avondale;
2. The well developed tourism 'infrastructure' in the settlement including tourist office / tourist retail / services / accommodation etc
3. The well developed 'recreation' infrastructure in the form of numerous sports clubs and opportunities to engage in outdoor pursuits (e.g. walking routes, golf, angling, sea fishing, sea swimming, tennis, Gaelic games, soccer, rugby, hockey)
4. Its social and cultural assets such as
 - Seasonal festivals (Wicklow Regatta, Round Ireland Yacht Race and Sailfest, Arts Festival, St Patrick's Day Parade, etc);
 - Wicklow Gaol, (museum, ghost tours, craft shop);
 - Its historic town centre and harbour area and the events and products that have been developed therefrom;
 - Captain Robert Halpin historical trail (born in The Bridge Tavern, educated in Leitrim House in Leitrim Place and built and died in Tinakelly House; with a granite obelisk monument in Fitzwilliam Sq);
 - A good representative selection of historic buildings as well as archaeological sites;
 - Well established artistic and crafts community;
 - Well established evening culture with many restaurants and bars.
5. Its natural assets, such as the Leitrim River and existing riverside walk, beach, the Murrough, amenity trees and the proximate countryside.

7.2 Strategy for tourism and recreation

This chapter will aim to promote and facilitate the development of a sustainable tourism and recreation and will set out objectives to deal with land use matters pertaining to the planning and development of the tourism and recreation sectors, including general matters, tourism related developments including tourist accommodation, facilities and services, tourist / recreational infrastructure and the promotion of specific tourist themes and products.

Strategic Objectives

- To secure the tourism and recreation sectors as key economic drivers which will contribute to balanced economic development within the county and within the settlement of Wicklow - Rathnew;
- To increase the number of tourists visiting the settlement;

- To increase the length of stay of tourists, and in particular, encourage day-trippers to stay overnight in Wicklow - Rathnew;
- To protect the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, ensuring that any development with the potential to cause adverse impacts on these, either directly, indirectly or cumulatively, is subject to an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive;
- To preserve the character and distinctiveness of scenic landscapes that are of high amenity value;
- To protect Wicklow – Rathnew’s principal strengths and capitalise on the distinct tourism and recreational attractions that are on offer – scenic beauty, woodlands and waterways, coastal areas and beaches, and built and natural heritage;
- To ensure a focus on high quality tourism and recreation products;
- Improve tourism and recreation infrastructure;
- Promote tourism and recreation development in co-operation with relevant tourist agencies, including Fáilte Ireland and the Wicklow County Tourism.

Subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of an area, and subject to compliance with all other objectives of this plan, it is the objective of the Council to favourably consider development proposals that contribute towards the achievement of these strategic objectives.

7.3 Tourism & recreation objectives

7.3.1 General Objectives

- TR1** To support opportunities to improve the tourist product in Wicklow-Rathnew and to co-operate with the appropriate statutory agencies, private tourism sector and community groups.
- TR2** To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism and recreation sectors in a sustainable manner. This means that the Council will permit the development and maintenance of tourism and recreation developments which help generate income and employment for locals, so long as the development is in a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the natural and built environment or the local culture in which it exists.
- TR3** To support the development of new / improved tourist facilities, including accommodation and attractions, particularly those taking advantage of the existing assets of the settlement, subject to such assets being protected from any adverse impacts arising from new development.
- TR4** To ensure that all tourism and recreation developments are designed to the highest quality and standards.

7.3.2 Accommodation Objectives

- TA1** To facilitate the development of a variety of quality accommodation types, at various locations, throughout the settlement of Wicklow - Rathnew.
- TA2** To positively consider the development of
- a) new hotels in Wicklow – Rathnew
 - b) the (part) conversion of existing dwellings to Bed & Breakfasts (B&Bs) and Guesthouses
 - c) the development of touring caravan and camping sites (not static mobile home parks) having due regard to surrounding land uses and proper planning and development of the area
 - d) the development of purpose built holidays homes
 - e) the development of hostels along established walking / hiking routes and adjacent to existing tourism / recreation facilities
 - f) the improvement of, and extension to, existing tourist accommodation related developments, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and subject to compliance with design criteria and standards as set out in Section 7.4.

7.3.3 Tourism & recreation infrastructure

- TF1** To promote and facilitate improvements to tourism and recreation infrastructure within the settlement. The Councils will favourably consider proposals for developments that place a particular emphasis on improving traffic flow, sign posting, car parking facilities, service/rest facilities etc., subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and the objectives of this plan.
- TF2** To cooperate with Wicklow County Tourism, Fáilte Ireland and other appropriate bodies in facilitating the development and erection of standardised and branded signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions.

7.3.4 Tourism & Recreation Themes & Products

- TTP1** To encourage and facilitate tourism and leisure related uses in the harbour area including hotel / accommodation facilities and leisure uses to complement the marina and associated boating uses and activities.
- TTP2** To encourage and facilitate developments related to 'cultural tourism', that is, tourist and recreation facilities / activities that improve access to and develop products / attractions around the themes of: maritime heritage, historical trails, architectural heritage, genealogical heritage, arts and crafts, museums, galleries.
- TTP3** To promote and encourage the sustainable recreational use of coastline, rivers and lakes for eco tourism activities. Where such recreational uses involve the development of structures or facilities, the Council will ensure that the proposals will respect the natural amenity and scenic character of the area. No developments will be allowed that individually or in combination with other developments, may have a significant adverse impact on the integrity of the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites
- TTP4** To support initiatives in association with landowners, recreational users and other stakeholders to improve the management of existing walking trails and amenity areas along the coast in order to alleviate the impact from existing recreational pressures on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and ensure a more long term sustainable tourism product.
- TTP5** To promote the development of new walking and cycle trails, including facilities ancillary to trails (such as car parks), ensuring that all such facilities are designed to the highest standards and ensuring that no developments are permitted that would have an adverse impact (directly, indirectly or cumulatively) on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.
- TTP6** To support the development of linkages to connect Wicklow-Rathnew with adjoining towns / villages via cycle and walking trails, ensuring that no developments are permitted that would have adverse impacts (directly, indirectly or cumulatively) on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.

7.4 Tourist Development Standards

7.4.1 General Criteria for Tourism and Recreation Developments

1. Tourism and recreation developments shall generally be assessed against the following criteria
 - The nature, scale and use of a development shall be appropriate to the character of the area in which it is to be located and shall be visually sympathetic to its surroundings. This shall apply to matters such as the type of use, number of employees, hours of operation, amount of expected visitors, site area, building size, design, layout etc, as well as to the particular land use, and the economic and social requirements of the area and its surroundings;

- The development shall not give rise to any significant adverse impact on the scenic value, heritage value qualities of the area and shall not have a negative impact on the surrounding area in terms of nuisance, noise, odours or other pollutants;
 - No development will be allowed, that directly, indirectly, individually or in combination with other developments, may have a significant adverse impact on the integrity of the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites
 - The development shall not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby properties, and in particular, to the amenity of nearby residential properties;
 - Any proposal shall be acceptable in terms of the following traffic and parking issues:
 - Car parking is required to be in accordance with the standards of the plan. Car parking shall be provided within the boundary of the site, unless the Planning Authority agrees other suitable arrangements;
 - There shall be safe vehicular access to and from the road network;
 - The capacity of access roads shall be adequate for the likely levels of traffic generated by the proposal;
 - There is adequate provision for pedestrians and public transport providers.
 - The proposal shall be acceptable in terms of water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage;
 - Developments should generate economic and social benefits for local people and enhance the wellbeing of host communities.
2. It is the objective of the Council to ensure that tourism and recreation related developments do not destroy the qualities which visitors come to the plan area to enjoy.
3. All planning applications should include details of the nature and scale of the proposed operation, and include opening hours and anticipated traffic levels. A business plan should also be submitted, where appropriate.
4. Applications for tourism and recreation developments in agricultural zones within the plan area shall be accompanied by the following information, in addition to that required to be submitted under the Planning Regulations:-
- Comprehensive justification of need for the development;
 - Overall master plan for the development;
 - Evaluation of compliance of the proposed development with the rural development requirements of the Wicklow County Development Plan
 - Evidence that, where feasible, existing ruinous or disused buildings have been re-used to maximum potential.

7.4.2 Overnight Accommodation

TOA1 Applications will be considered on the basis of the particular characteristics of the proposed scheme. Proposals that have a detrimental impact on the amenity, character and environmental quality of the area will not be permitted. In this regard, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following matters in the determination of planning applications, in addition to those set out above:

- The size, scale, design and nature of the accommodation;
- The availability of existing accommodation facilities in the vicinity;
- The standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises (including indoor and outdoor space and amenity requirements, noise insulation, parking provision, access, etc.)

- TOA2** The scale of overnight accommodation allowable on any site may be restricted according to the amenities proposed to be provided for guests and the impact of the facility on the amenities of the area.
- TOA3** Adequate information will be required to be submitted to satisfy the Planning Authority that the design, size and nature of a proposed facility is such that no doubt exists regarding the intended use of the facility as tourist accommodation. In particular, the Planning Authority shall be satisfied that the development is to be retained for visitor accommodation use and will not be used for long term, permanent residential use or other non-tourist use.
- TOA4** The Council will only permit the development of touring caravans and camping sites in areas where the local environment can absorb such development. Sites should have significant existing natural screening. All proposals should be accompanied by comprehensive planting schemes. In particular, the Council will discourage touring caravans from locating on the actual amenity which attracted them to the area in the first instance in order to protect the interpretation and tourist value of the site in question.

7.4.3 Holiday Homes

Where the principle of holiday homes has been accepted at a particular location the layout and design of the development shall accord with the following standards:-

- The design of holiday homes should be of a high standard, incorporating imaginative layouts, well laid out communal open spaces, significant and appropriate landscaping, sufficient private space and parking facilities for both occupants and visitors;
- The design of units themselves should be imaginative, of a high quality and respect the character of the area in which they are located. Favourable consideration will generally not be given to detached suburban type developments - courtyard type developments will be particularly encouraged;
- Site features such as hedgerows, trees, etc. shall be maintained wherever possible;
- A management company will be required to maintain and manage the upkeep of holiday home developments in particular with respect to landscaping and the maintenance of communal buildings / services and letting / occupancy. A management company will also be required to maintain and repair any private effluent treatment plant or water supply.
- The developers / owners of new holiday homes / self catering developments will be required to enter strict legal agreement (under Section 47 of the Planning & Development Act) with the Planning Authority specifying that
 - the units may only be used for tourism purposes and shall not be allowed to be used as a permanent residences;
 - in the case of small-scale developments ¹¹, the entire development, including all buildings, land and any on-site tourist facility, shall be held in single ownership and shall not be subdivided. All units shall be available for short term letting only of a maximum duration of 4 weeks;
 - in the case of larger scale developments ¹²:
 - (a) all lands, including any on-site tourist facility shall be held under the management of a single Estate Company (including all lands included in the site boundary and land which adjoins, abuts or is adjacent to the land to be developed and which is under the control of the applicant or the person who owns the land which is the subject of the application) and
 - (b) in the event that any unit is sold or leased, the owner/lessee shall enter a legal agreement with the Estate Company stipulating that the purchaser, lessee and any successors in title be, and remain, members of the Estate Company, and stipulating that the unit may only be used by the owner/lessee for holiday use for a maximum of 3 months in any year and shall at all other times be used/leased/ marketed by the Estate Company for short term (maximum 4 weeks) tourism use.

¹¹ Small-scale holiday home / self-catering developments are generally those associated with on-farm accommodation and small-scale tourist attractions or developments, and would not normally be in excess of 10 units.

¹² Large-scale holiday home / self-catering developments are generally those associated with significant tourism / recreation complexes such as hotels, golf courses, adventure centres etc.

7.4.4 Caravan and Camping Developments

Where the principle of touring caravans or camp sites has been accepted at a particular location, the layout and design of the development shall accord with the following standards:-

- Design and layout should be of a high standard ensuring adequate safety, separation between plots and well located communal areas such as shower blocks and common open spaces;
- A grant of permission for a caravan park will not imply, unless otherwise stated in the permission, a grant of permission for additional facilities such as a shop, café, restaurant or the building of other commercial purposes;
- Sites should normally be accessible to existing local services and public utilities, but should not adversely affect them;
- The overall level of development in any one area should not detract from the amenity currently enjoyed by local residents. No such sites should be located immediately adjacent to existing residential properties or be overlooked by same;
- High quality and extensive landscaping and tree planting will be required around all boundaries and throughout the site. Any new planting should only be necessary to reinforce existing substantial tree cover and not to compensate for a lack of existing cover. New planting should normally comprise indigenous species and a comprehensive and detailed landscaping scheme, prepared by an appropriately qualified professional, should be submitted with any application;
- Public lighting should be on low level posts and of low intensity;
- Compliance with the Regulations for Caravan and Camping Parks, (Bord Failte 2009).

