

## CHAPTER 8

### THE RURAL ECONOMY

#### 8.1 Introduction

In recent years, the rural economy of Wicklow has been undergoing rapid change. While traditionally agriculture, forestry and fishing sustained much of the rural economy, today with the re-structuring of agriculture, both the number of farms and agricultural employment are declining. In order to account for the ongoing demographic and economic changes being experienced by rural communities, this plan will set out a strategy and series of objectives that will focus attention on the challenges and opportunities that face the County's rural economy. The strategy and objectives will aim to support existing resource based industries, including agriculture, forestry, tourism, fishing and the extractive industry, while also promoting the diversification of the rural economy.

#### 8.2 Context

##### 8.2.1 National Context

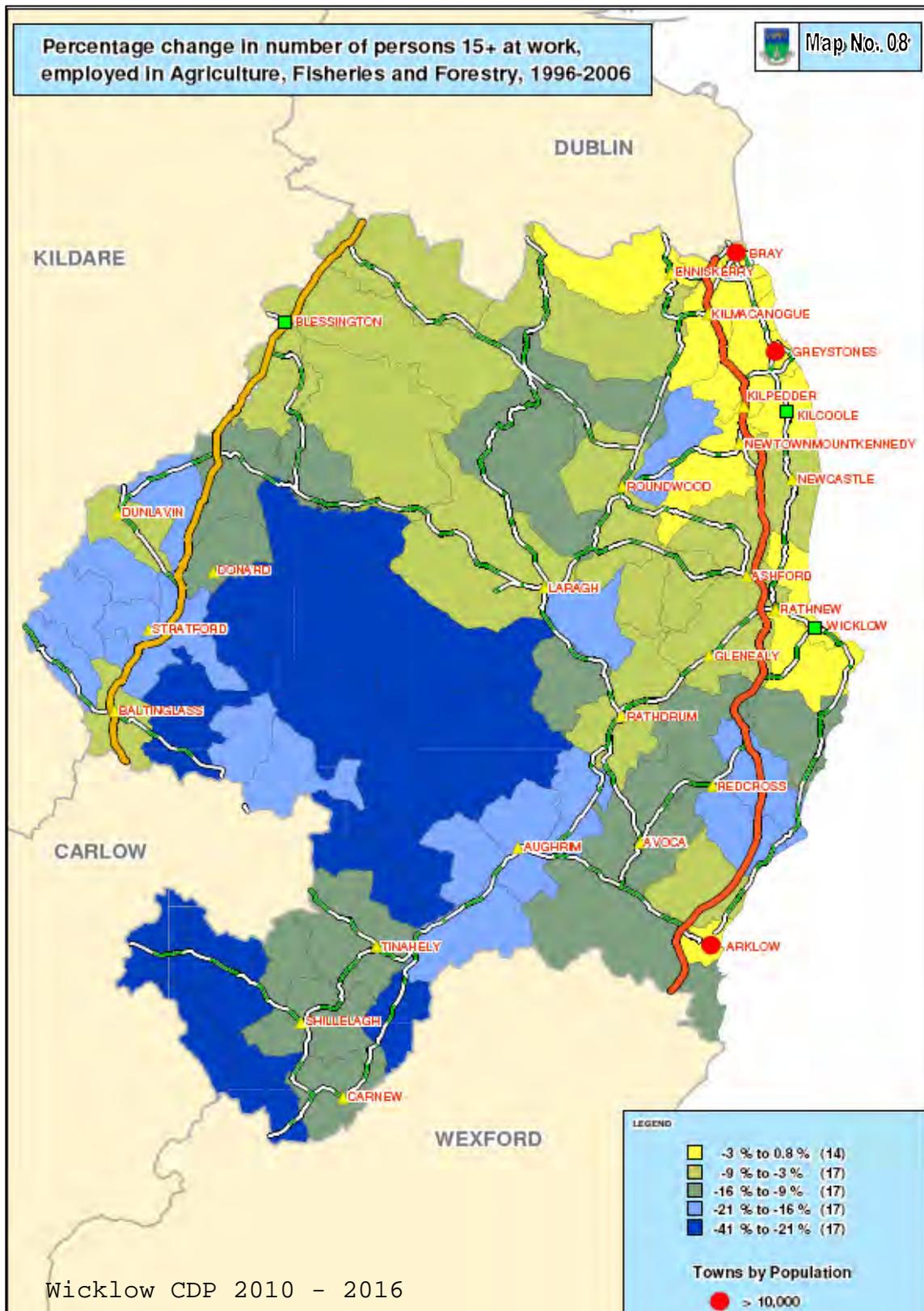
The objectives of the County Development Plan must be prepared in line with national objectives as set out in the 'National Spatial Strategy (NSS)' and 'National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) 2007-2013'. These documents state that efficient agricultural, marine and natural resource sectors, together with significant and developing sectors such as tourism, enterprise, local services and other sources of off-farm employment, will be the mainstays of a strong rural economy, and that in order to strengthen the rural economy, it will be necessary to:

- secure agriculture and improve the competitiveness of the sector, where it has the capacity to remain strong and viable.
- diversify rural employment options and stabilise population through:
  - resource based development in sectors such as forestry, marine and natural resources, enterprise and local services;
  - tourism development; and
  - protecting landscape, water resources and habitats.

It should be noted that the NSS and NRDP have classified Wicklow as an 'area that is strong', where agriculture will remain strong, but where pressure for development is high, and some rural settlements are under stress.

##### 8.2.2 Wicklow's Rural Economy

Traditionally, Wicklow has been heavily dependent on agriculture and forestry, whilst fishing has a smaller role in the County's economic wellbeing. The percentage of people employed in the County's primary sector of agriculture, forestry and fishery industries has fallen substantially from 7.45% in 1996 to 3.22% in 2006. It should also be noted that the amount of people employed in this sector is below the national average of 4.19%. As identified on the map set out below, the greatest decline in the number of people employed in the primary sector has been experienced in the uplands, southern and western parts of the County, corresponding with the areas of the County that are traditionally more dependent on primary sector employment. The sharpest decline in employment has been within the upland areas, which is of particularly low agricultural productivity due to the presence of blanket bog, steep slopes, shallow soil depth and poor drainage.



## Agriculture

In Wicklow approximately half of all land is dedicated to agriculture, with 101,707 hectares, out of a total County land area of 202,662 hectares dedicated to agricultural land uses. While agriculture is now providing less employment, it still remains important as a significant source of income and employment in rural areas. Data from the Census of Agriculture (CSO, 2000) and the 'Farm Structure Survey' (CSO, 2007) indicates the following characteristics and trends:

- Average farm size in Wicklow is large compared to other counties;
- There has been an increase in the average age of farm workers. The percentage of farmers that are older (aged >55) has increased substantially to over half of all farmers;
- There has been a significant decline in the number of farmers who classify farming as their sole occupation, from 73% in 1991 to approximately 50% in 2007;
- The majority of farms in the County are for mixed grazing livestock and specialist sheep, whilst the minority of farms are for tillage, and mixed crop and livestock farming.

A particularly significant trend relates to the reduction in the amount of people employed in full time farming. Considering the modest income derived from farming, this trend is not surprising. In 2007 the average Family Farm Income (FFI) was €19,687, while approximately 39% of all farms had an income from farming of less than €6,500. Not surprisingly, the number of farm households in Ireland participating in the off-farm labour market has increased significantly in the last decade. According to the National Farm Survey (NFS, Teagasc, 2008), the number of farm households where the farmer and/or spouse is working off-farm has increased from 37% in 1995 to 58% in 2007.

Another important factor influencing the future direction of the agricultural sector relates to the changing nature of the sector, resulting from the effect of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms, and the marked shift away from direct supports and towards environmental improvements and rural development. It is likely that this will exacerbate the reduction in the level of full time farming.

With a reduction in full time employment in agriculture, farm diversification through Alternative Farm Enterprises (AFE) has been identified as a means of diversifying the rural economy. The main alternative enterprises covered under the Rural Development Advisory Programme (Teagasc) include a range of schemes for the purposes of diversification including organic farming, equine husbandry, deer and goat farming, rural tourism, artisan food, and commercial and free range poultry, renewable energy production and forestry.

## Forestry

County Wicklow has a very strong tradition of forestry. The County has the highest percentage of land area under forest in the Country. In 2007, a total of 36,270 hectares, or 17.9% of the total land area of the County was categorised as forest cover. This degree of forest cover is above the national objective set out in the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forestry Sector in Ireland 'Growing for the Future' (1996), which sets a target of 17% of the Country's total land area to be under forest cover by 2030. Although this degree of forest cover is very favourable, considering that nationally, only 10% of the Country is forested, it should be noted that the percentage of land under forest in the County has decreased from 42,545 hectares, or 21% of land in 2001.

In 2007 approximately 68% of forest lands were public owned with the remaining 32% in private ownership (of which approximately half is grant aided). The forest cover is made up of 72% conifer and 23% broadleaf species<sup>1</sup>. These figures are in line with national percentage breakdowns.

The NSS states that with effective management, based on coherent policy guidelines, the development of forestry can be a positive force by:

- Harnessing the national potential for producing forestry products, including the use of under-utilised agricultural lands;
- Promoting forestry to address concerns regarding greenhouse gas emissions;

<sup>1</sup> 5% are temporarily unstocked, i.e. no trees present on the date of assessment but are included in the land use category 'forest'. These areas include areas which have been clearfelled and not yet replanted.

- Fostering rural tourism development through forests as attractions;
- Promoting the positive dimensions of the rural landscape by encouraging diversity of species and sensitive landscaping;
- Contributing positively to the forestry and forestry products sector through the county development plan process by identifying areas suitable for and sensitive to afforestation;
- Recognising the potential for forestry to contribute to integrated development by complementing other land uses, e.g. by providing leisure amenities.

## Fishing

Fishing remains as an important natural resource for the county, which has potential for development in its own right and as a resource for tourism development. Commercial fishing in County Wicklow takes place from the ports at Arklow and Wicklow. In addition to their role as bases for fishing activities, both ports are important for other commercial activities and are important components of the physical infrastructure resources of the County.

In recognition of the important role that fishing can make to the economy, the National Development Plan 2007-2013, through the Fisheries Operational Programme, aims to deliver maximum integrated development in the sector through an investment programme focused on the fishing fleet, aquaculture, processing, marine research, fishery harbours and training.

## Extractive Industry

Wicklow contains a rich bank of natural geological resources, which have the potential to underpin construction output and to provide employment and economic growth in the local and regional economy. The nature of the extractive industry is such that the industry is required to be developed on the site at which the aggregates occur. The heavy nature of the industry is such that it can give rise to detrimental environmental and residential amenity affects including traffic generation, vibration, dust, noise, water pollution, visual intrusion and loss of ground water supplies.

### 8.3 Strategy for the development of Wicklow's rural economy

The Council recognises the fact that agriculture will continue to be an important component of the economy and that the most effective means of ensuring the protection of the rural way of life and landscape is to encourage and support the continued operation of agricultural farm holdings. However, the agricultural sector is facing many challenges including modernisation, restructuring, market development and the increased importance of environmental issues. In the future, advancing technology and farm consolidation will result in increased output but will also continue to reduce agriculturally based employment.

Taking this into account, it is considered that no one economic sector offers all of the solutions to the challenges facing rural areas. The response lies in different packages of measures to tap the potential that individual rural areas possess. Diversification of uses on rural landholdings will be necessary in order to ensure the continued viability of the rural way of life. An economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, exploitation of natural resources and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, will be essential components of the development of the future rural economy of the County.

The objectives in this chapter are focused on the forms of rural development that are employment and wealth generating. Improving the rural economy is only one strand that needs to be addressed in order to result in a strong rural community that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The issues of social wealth and environmental protection are addressed in Chapter 15, 16 and 17 of this plan, and therefore these objectives should be considered dually with the objectives set out in this chapter.

The objectives set out in this section shall be applied to all forms of development, including proposals pertaining to new and existing developments.

### 8.3.1 Commercial & Industrial Development in a Rural Area

The objectives set out in this section shall be applied to all forms of commercial and industrial development proposals that are located in a rural area, and where relevant, shall be considered jointly with the objectives set out below that specifically relate to agriculture, forestry, fishing and the extractive industry, with the following exceptions:

- Applications pertaining to proposals for commercial waste facilities shall be assessed on the basis of objectives set out in 'Chapter 13: Waste & Environmental Emissions';
- Applications pertaining to proposals for commercial tourist related developments shall be assessed on the basis of objectives set out in 'Chapter 9: Tourism'.

**Strategic Objective** To preserve the amenity, character and scenic value of rural areas, and to generally require employment-generating development to locate on zoned land within existing settlements. Notwithstanding this, it is the objective of the Council to support the diversification of the rural economy through the development of appropriate rural based enterprises, which are not detrimental to the character, amenity, scenic value, heritage value and environmental quality of a rural area.

#### Objectives

**RUR1** No commercial / industrial development will be permitted in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, except in the case of extractive industries, where it complies with the requirements of Section 8.4 of this plan.

**RUR2** No commercial/ industrial development will be permitted to locate on a national route except where appropriately located on suitably zoned lands within a growth centre.

**RUR3** To permit the development of commercial / industrial developments in rural areas, where it is proven that the proposed development requires to be located in the rural area and will have a positive impact on the location.

**RUR4** It is the objective of the Council to permit the development of small-scale commercial/ industrial developments in rural areas that are not dependent on an existing local resource, subject to compliance with all of the following criteria:

- The proposed development shall be a small-scale industrial / commercial scheme or service and the number employed shall be appropriate in scale to the location and its characteristics, including proximity to the workforce and customers;
- The proposed development shall be located on the site of a redundant farm building / yard or similar agricultural brownfield site;
- The nature and scale of the proposed development and the proposed process or activity to be carried out, shall be appropriate to and compatible with, the character of the rural environment of the site at which the development is proposed, and shall not be detrimental to the rural amenity of the surrounding area. In the assessment of planning applications, cognisance shall be taken of the location site vis-à-vis the proximity of the site to the national and regional road network.

**RUR5** To require any proposed commercial / industrial developments in a rural area to comply with the following criteria (in addition to any other relevant objectives of the plan being complied with):

- It shall be of a scale in terms of the number of employees, site area and building size, which is suitable for the location and which is visually sympathetic to the rural surroundings;
- It shall not give rise to any significant adverse environmental impact, in terms of impact on the scenic value, heritage value and/ or environmental/ ecological/ conservation

quality of the area. It shall not have a negative impact on the surrounding area in terms of nuisance, noise, odours or other pollutants;

- The development shall not result in the creation of a significant traffic hazard and the road network shall be suitable and shall have the capacity for anticipated traffic levels;
- The development shall not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby properties, and in particular, to the amenity of nearby residential properties;
- There shall be acceptable proposals for the safe storage and disposal of waste, in a manner that is visually and environmentally acceptable;
- The site shall be suitable in size such that any housing and commercial activity can be separated, serviced and landscaped accordingly.

Notwithstanding any other objectives set out in this section of the plan, the Planning Authority will refuse permission for any form of development that fails to comply with the above criteria. 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.

**RUR6** To encourage, where appropriate, home-based economic activity<sup>2</sup> in rural areas 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 demonstrated that the proposal complies with the following:

- Requirements set out in RUR5;
- The nature and scale of the proposed development and the proposed process or activity to be carried out, shall be appropriate to and compatible with the character of the rural environment.

**RUR7** The Council will promote improved broadband in rural areas to help the rural economy.

### 8.3.2 Agriculture

**Strategic Objective** To encourage the continued operation of farming and its associated uses where it already exists, and to facilitate the diversification of the agricultural economy through the support of appropriate alternative farm enterprise sources.

#### Objectives

**AGR1** To facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural activities, whereby watercourses, wildlife habitats, areas of ecological importance and other environmental assets are protected from the threat of pollution, and where development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside. Developments shall not be detrimental to archaeological and heritage features of importance.

**AGR2** To encourage and facilitate agricultural diversification into suitable agri-businesses. Subject to all other objectives being complied with, the Council will support the alternative use of agricultural land for the following alternative farm enterprises:

- Specialist farming practices, e.g. organic farming, horticulture, specialised animal breeding, deer and goat farming, poultry, flower growing, forestry, equine facilities, allotments, bio-energy production of crops and forestry, organic and speciality foods;
- Suitable rural enterprises.

<sup>2</sup> Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial/industrial activity carried out by the residents of a house which is subordinate or ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a place of residence.

- AGR3** To protect agricultural or agri-business uses from incompatible uses, which are more suited to being located within an urban settlement.
- AGR4** To ensure that agricultural developments do not cause increased pollution to watercourses. Developments will be required to adhere to the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC), and the EC (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009, with regard to storage facilities, concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources. Developments will be required to comply with relevant measures, which operate to protect water quality from pollution by agricultural sources. The disposal and storage of agricultural waste shall comply with the standards required by Council.
- AGR5** To permit the development of new, appropriately located and designed agricultural buildings, which are necessary for the efficient and environmentally sound use of the agricultural practice. New buildings will only be permitted in cases where there are no suitable redundant buildings on the farm holding which would accommodate the development and where the Council is satisfied that the proposal is necessary for the efficient operation of the farm. Developments shall be compatible with the protection of rural amenities, and should not create a visual intrusion in the landscape or be the cause of an environmental nuisance.
- AGR6** To encourage proposals for farm shops<sup>3</sup> where it can be clearly demonstrated that:
- The products to be sold are primarily produce grown on the farm holding;
  - The scale and scope of the retailing proposed will not harm the viability or retail facilities in any nearby town or village;
  - The proposed shop is operated by the owner of the farm and is ancillary to the main use of the property for agricultural activities.

### 8.3.3 Forestry

Wicklow County Council recognises that, if properly planned and managed, forestry has the potential to provide a significant contribution to the social, environmental and economic enhancement of the county.

Wicklow County Council aims to promote the use of forests and forest lands in a way that complies with the principle of 'sustainable forest management', so that forests and forest lands are used at a rate that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration, capacity, vitality, and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future relevant ecological, economic and social functions that do not cause damage to other ecosystems. In simple terms, the concept can be described as the attainment of balance - balance between society's increasing demands for forest products and benefits, and the preservation of forest health and diversity. This balance is critical to the survival of forests and to the prosperity of forest-dependent communities.

**Strategic Objective** To promote state and private afforestation, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the county's economic and social well being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment.

#### Objectives

**FTY1** To facilitate afforestation in appropriate locations, in accordance with the 'Wicklow Indicative Forestry Strategy' (Wicklow County Council, 2002), and in co-operation with forestry operators and the Forest Service.

The Wicklow Indicative Forestry Strategy was produced by the Council in 2002, in consultation with the Forest Service. The strategy is intended to be a tool of assistance to

<sup>3</sup> Farm shops refer to premises primarily for the sale of produce originating from the farm holding or the local area.

planners in dealing with proposals for forestry applications. The strategy includes a list of areas that are preferred for afforestation and a list of areas where afforestation would be inappropriate by virtue of landscape, soil type, settlement or environmental grounds. The strategy also includes a series of objectives which are intended to guide planning decisions. The Council will have particular regard to developments that are located in the areas included in 'Table 3: Areas Sensitive to Afforestation', and as per the Strategy, should be consulted on all forestry grant applications in these areas.

- FTY2** To promote afforestation in co-operation with relevant agencies, including the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) and forestry operators and to ensure that afforestation is undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the principle of 'sustainable forest management'. The Council will only permit development that complies with the following:
- The development is compatible with the protection of the environment, and does not cause pollution or degradation of wildlife habitats, natural waters or areas of ecological importance;
  - The development does not have a negative visual impact on the scenic quality of the countryside, and is of an appropriate nature and scale to the surrounding area;
  - The development is not detrimental to archaeological or other historic/heritage features;
  - The Council will permit forestry development where it is considered that the roads infrastructure (in terms of design, width, surfacing etc.), which is to serve the development, can accommodate the proposed development. No development will be permitted that will result in damage to roads infrastructure or undue nuisance to other road users. The Council may apply a special financial levy to certain developments for works that are required to be undertaken to the road network.
- FTY3** To promote the use of forests for appropriate recreation purposes and to facilitate the development of appropriate recreation facilities at suitable locations. The recreational use of forests will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the recreational use is compatible with the other forest objectives, functions and values of the forest, such as timber production, sensitive habitats and important archaeology. Developments will only be permitted that are acceptable in terms of other planning considerations, including the provision of acceptable infrastructure such as roads, carparking, water and sewerage infrastructure.
- FTY4** To promote County Wicklow as a 'centre of excellence' in the forestry research and management field. The Council will facilitate the development of forestry research/interpretative centres, at appropriate locations.
- FTY5** To promote the use of native hardwood species using seed of native provenance where possible in afforestation schemes. The use of native species or a broadleaf / conifer mixture and age class diversity can enhance the visual impact and biodiversity of forests.
- FTY6** To encourage the development of farm forestry as a means of promoting rural diversity and strengthening the rural economy.
- FTY7** To encourage the development of forestry for timber biomass which can be used as a renewable energy source.

### 8.3.4 Fishing

- Strategic Objective** To promote the development of the County's sea and river fishing industry, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the county's economic and social well-being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment.

## Objectives

- FSH1** To support the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture industry in co-operation with the Department of the Marine and the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board. The Council will not permit development that has a detrimental impact on the environment. In particular, development that has a detrimental impact on the environmental/ ecological/ water quality of seas, rivers and streams, will not be permitted.
- FSH2** To facilitate the provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing and aquaculture industry. Infrastructure and buildings in coastal or riverbank locations should be located in proximity to existing landing facilities and shall be of a design that is compatible with the area. Any development, which by reason of its nature or scale is detrimental to the character or amenity of an area, will not be permitted. Any development in the coastal zone shall comply with the objectives of this plan, as set out in Chapter 18.

### 8.3.5 Extractive Industry

- Strategic Objective** To facilitate the exploitation of County Wicklow's natural aggregate resources in a manner, which does not unduly impinge on the environmental quality, and the visual and residential amenity of an area.

## Objectives

- EX1** To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of minerals in the County in a manner, which is consistent with the principle of sustainability and protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities.
- EX2** To encourage the use, development and diversification of the County's indigenous natural rock industry, particularly where it can be shown to benefit processing, craft or other related industries.
- EX3** To support and facilitate the development of related and spin-off industries of the extractive industry such as craft and monumental stone industries and the development of the mining and industrial tourism heritage. Consideration will be given to the development of such related industries within or in association with existing operations of worked out mines or quarries where this does not conflict with other objectives and objectives of the plan.
- EX4** To have regard to the following guidance documents (as may be amended, replaced or supplemented) in the assessment of planning applications for quarries and ancillary facilities:
- 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2004, DoEHLG);
  - 'Environmental Management Guidelines – Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non Scheduled Minerals)', EPA 2006;
  - 'Archaeological Code of Practice between the DoEHLG and the Irish Concrete Federation' 2009;
  - 'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry', 2008;
  - 'Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry – Guidelines for the protection of biodiversity within the extractive industry', NPWS 2009.

## 8.4 Rural Employment Design Standards

### 8.4.1 General <sup>4</sup>

The following standards shall be applied to all new developments in a rural area:

- All structures located in a rural area shall be required to satisfy the highest standards of location, siting and design, including scale, massing, orientation, choice of materials and landscaping so that they are satisfactorily integrated into their rural setting. The Council will encourage traditional building styles and avoid substandard or unsuitable building designs. Building finishes should be of the highest quality and exterior colours should be sedate and unobtrusive. Building height should be restricted to that required for the normal operation of the premises. Buildings of excessive height will not be permitted;
- Detailed landscaping proposals will be required as part of any application, with particular attention to berming, landscaping and screening on greenfield sites proposed for development. The Council will require the maintenance, where possible, of hedgerows and traditional field boundary characteristics;
- There shall be an available and adequate water and wastewater facilities to serve the development;
- There shall be an availability of adequate sight lines and safe road access for anticipated levels of traffic to be generated by the proposed development. Generally, only one vehicular access point will be permitted (see also Chapter 11);
- Adequate parking (as per development plan standards) and circulation areas shall be provided by the applicant within the site unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority (see also Chapter 11);
- Advertising signage will generally not be permitted (Refer to Chapter 11 of this plan for objectives and standards for signage);
- There shall be proposals for the safe storage and disposal of waste, in a manner that is visually and environmentally acceptable. Dry storage should generally be confined to the rear of the premises – height should be such that the materials stored are adequately screened either by the building unit or alternative screening method (see also Chapter 13);
- Lighting shall be unobtrusive and shall not adversely affect traffic safety on adjacent roads or residential properties (see also Chapter 13);
- Noise shall conform to the requirements of the development plan (see also Chapter 13).

### 8.4.2 Re-Use of Redundant Vernacular Rural Buildings

In order to preserve the rural built heritage of the County, it is the objective of the Council to promote and facilitate the suitable re-use and sensitive restoration of abandoned farm buildings, particularly those of vernacular or heritage value (see Chapter 16). The Council will therefore support proposals for the renovation and re-use of such structures for economic activity subject to the following controls:-

- The development complies with the objectives and control measures set out in this chapter;
- The scale and nature of the development and the architectural treatment of proposed works are sympathetic to the character of the original structure.

### 8.4.3 Commercial / industrial development in rural area

Where permission is sought for a commercial / industrial development in a rural area, the application shall be required to submit the following information:

- Details of the ownership of the site / buildings and the intended operator of the business;
- Full details of the activity proposed to be carried out, the materials and processes involved, information of plant and machinery and any emissions / wastes arising therefrom;
- Details of staff (full / part time) required to operate the business and the proposed hours of business;

<sup>4</sup> Design standards for residential structures in rural areas are dealt with in Chapter 6

- Details of transportation requirements, the types of vehicles to be used, the estimated number of vehicle movements per day, likely routes of vehicles to major transport routes / the market for the product and evaluation of ability of existing road network to accommodate the development;
- Where a new building is proposed, evidence that the location and design of the structure is optimal having considered both the needs of the business and the environmental sensitivities of the location and where applicable, measures that have been taken to minimise visual impact on the landscape;
- Evaluation of the proposals in terms of likely impacts on scenic value (including listed views and prospects and sensitive landscapes), heritage, local ecology / biodiversity and nearby residences;
- Detailed landscaping proposals;
- In order to verify the viability of a proposed business, the planning authority may require the submission of a business plan with any application for permission.

## 8.4.4 Agriculture

### Location & design of agricultural buildings

In assessing planning applications, the Planning Authority will have regard to the recommendations set out in An Foras Taluntais handbook 'Farm Buildings and the Environment' (1987). In particular, developments shall be in accordance with the following criteria:

- A building shall be sited and shall be of a height so as to ensure that it is as unobtrusive as possible. Particular attention shall be paid to developments in sensitive landscapes as identified in this plan;
- In so far as is practical, buildings should be of unifying design and should be clustered to form a distinct and unified feature in the landscape;
- Buildings shall utilise suitable materials and colours, which are compatible with the rural area. Stone and traditional building materials will be particularly encouraged. Where cladding is used on the exterior of farm buildings, dark colours (preferably dark green, red or grey) with matt finishes will normally be required. Roof areas should be coloured the same or in darker shade of the colour used on the side panels;
- In order to integrate development into the landscape, buildings shall be screened or shelter belted with principally native species of planting.

### Environmental control

The suitability of a given proposal will also be determined by the following environmental factors:

- The comprehensiveness of information in relation to waste management, with particular emphasis on developments within existing farm complexes, having regard to the potential cumulative effects;
- The availability of an effective means of farm waste management to ensure nutrient balancing between application of farm wastes to land and the balanced uptake by agricultural use of land;
- The availability of measures to ensure good supervision in relation to the management of farm wastes including ownership of spread lands or control of same through agreements capable of effective enforcement;
- Whilst the Planning Authority recognises the primacy of agriculture in rural areas and that the presence of individual housing should not impinge unduly on legitimate and necessary rural activity, regard should be had to the unnecessary proximity of major new farm complexes to existing residential development.

### Large-scale agricultural developments

In considering large-scale agricultural proposals, the Planning Authority will have regard to the design standards set out under Section 8.4.1 above.

### 8.4.5 Forestry

In undertaking an assessment of proposals for afforestation development the Council will have regard to environmental matters, including water quality, designated habitats, archaeology, heritage, landscape and size of area. In this regard, the Council will have regard to the Forest Service Guidelines<sup>5</sup> and the Forest Service 'Code of Best Forest Practice', published by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food' (2000).

### 8.4.6 Extractive Industry

#### General

The Council will facilitate the development of the extractive industry and permit such workings where it has been shown that the following criteria can be met, having taken into account the reduced demand for aggregates that will come about through improved recycling of construction and demolition waste:-

- The environment and the landscape will be safeguarded to the greatest possible extent;
- Such operations have good access to, or are within reasonable distance of, the national or regional road network and do not adversely affect the residential or tourism amenity of the area;
- Satisfactory provision will be made for a beneficial after use of the land that does not conflict with other planning objectives for the area;
- The working, landscaping, restoration and after care of the site will be carried out to the highest standards in accordance with the approved scheme.

#### Extractive Industry in the Zone of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Where proposals for the working out of minerals and aggregates are submitted in the Zone of Outstanding Natural Beauty as indicated in Map 17.09 (Volume 2), existing landscape quality shall remain the **overriding priority** and such proposals must illustrate that the benefits of the development will outweigh any adverse environmental consequences. The Council shall evaluate the need to conserve the environment, character and natural beauty of AONBs and the extent to which the proposed development would materially damage these qualities. It shall also examine the national need for that specific mineral or aggregate substance to be worked and the availability of the resource in less sensitive locations.

#### Application Requirements for Extractive Developments

##### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Planning Act and associated Regulations (as may be amended) set out the thresholds for EIAs. All applications for new extraction, or expansion of existing permitted and licensed sites, shall in the first instance have regard to this legislation to determine the requirement for an EIA. Where any application is sub-threshold, the applicant, in conjunction with the Local Authority, shall determine the need for an EIA with reference to 'Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development' DoEHLG 2003.

Where an EIA is required, the applicant shall liaise with the Council to scope the contents, concerns and issues to be addressed.

##### Content of applications

All application shall as a minimum include the following information, regardless of information required to be included in any EIA.

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<sup>5</sup> Guidelines are available on the following: Forestry and Water Quality, Forestry and the Landscape, Forestry and Archaeology, Forestry and Biodiversity, Forestry and Aerial Fertilisation, Forest Harvesting and the Environment, Forest Protection, Forest Recreation, Forestry and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

### Land & Mineral Interest

Particulars of applicant's interest in the site and in adjoining lands and of those of other interested parties in the application site.

### Nature of Development

A full description is to be given as to the nature of the proposed development. The description must state whether the proposed development is on a new site, is an extension of existing workings or the reopening of a disused working and does the development constitute a contravention of a planning condition or permission.

### Nature of Deposit

- The mineral or aggregate to be extracted;
- Results of any exploration or prospecting work carried out, e.g. boreholes, trial pits, etc;
- The nature, thickness and quantities of topsoil, subsoil and overburden (including reference to soil making materials as appropriate) minerals to be extracted, waste or non-saleable material;
- Results of tests undertaken to indicate quality of deposit, e.g. special physical or chemical properties;
- Geology and topography of the site, identifying where relevant, land stability, water table, ground conditions, including surface water drainage characteristics, etc;
- Details of the proposed site and the reason for its selection over possible alternatives.

### Proposed Method of Extraction

- Total quantity of material to be extracted (tonnes). (State amount of saleable mineral or aggregate waste and overburden separately);
- Rate of production in tonnes per annum (mineral or aggregate and extracted waste to be separately identified);
- Proposed method and depth of working, including details of direction of work, phasing, duration of each of the site development works, tipping and extractive operation and restoration;
- Details of plans of plant and machinery for mineral or aggregate extraction;
- Method of transporting material to processing or disposal point (e.g. roadway, conveyor, tramway, etc);
- State the length of time the operation will last from inception to final restoration.

### Additional information relating to underground operations

Details of the extent and impact of any subsidence or instability likely to be caused on the surface by the proposed development.

### Processing of Materials

- Type and dimensions of plant, machinery (including capacity) and details of buildings to be used in processing;
- Tonnage of materials to be processed per annum;
- Details including quantities of any other materials brought onto site for processing or storage (including hazardous materials);
- A description of the nature and quantities of process waste and proposed method of disposal;
- Amount and source of water used.

### Ancillary Operations and Development

Details and plans of any other buildings, plant and structures to be erected.

### Transport

- Details of the vehicles that would remove the minerals or aggregate from the site including the anticipated daily number of vehicle movements generated by the operation of the site, including weight and type of vehicle;
- Proposed route of vehicle with mineral or aggregate.

### Environmental effects of the proposal

- Details of blasting, including times and predicted air and ground vibration effects and predicted noise to be recorded at the site boundaries to the nearest critical properties;
- A description of the proposed method of treatment and disposal of any water encountered during the works (including ground and surface water) both on and off the site. If the working is

- to take place below the natural water table level, state whether the workings are to be wet or dry;
- Details of any measures proposed for the suppression of noise and dust from the mining and quarrying operations and from the processing operation, including the treatment of any topsoil and subsoil storage heaps (background data to be included);
  - Indications of the anticipated hours of mineral or aggregate working, processing and vehicular movements, experienced separately;
  - Details of the measures proposed to clean vehicle wheels;
  - Details of the measures of phasing of the berming and landscaping works and the proposed screening of the site;
  - Visual impact assessment;
  - Details of existing landscape features such as contours, trees, hedgerows, boundary walls and other items existing on site and within a quarter of a mile of the outer boundaries of the site;
  - Details of all items of archaeological, historical, ecological and scientific interest present on the site or which would be affected by the proposed development;
  - Details of the effects on the water table and wells in this area and proposals for mitigation;
  - Where relevant, details with respect to the disposal of mine waste and its effects on surface and ground water.

### Restoration, After Care and After Use

- Intended after use or uses with appropriate detail on the nature, type and ownership;
- Contours of existing and intended final levels of sites;
- Use of soil materials in restoration, together with intended phasing and timescale;
- Amount, type and sources of filling materials where the reclamation envisages partial or complete filling on site;
- Details of proposed drainage of the restored land, creation of any permanent water areas;
- After-care proposals, including intended timescale to commencement and the progressive phasing of restoration and aftercare. Where it will not take place for several years, a summary of the principle items to be included in an aftercare scheme, which will be agreed at a later date or dates. For short-term workings, full details will be required including an agreement to maintain the site for an appropriate number of years until the desired use has been established. If it is intended to landfill the excavated area, this should be detailed in the application.

### Plans and Drawings

In addition to location and site plans, plans may be requested to show the following:

- Existing contour level over the area of extraction and the land in the immediate vicinity;
- General method of working, including details and direction of phasing, both of the extraction and the restoration;
- Proposed level of the worked out areas;
- Proposed surface area, height and location of stockpiles, topsoil and overburden mounds;
- The levels and extent of screening berms.

### Conditions attached to permission

Where planning permission is granted for the development of a quarry, the following matters may be addressed through application of conditions:

1. Permissions may be limited to a specified number of years, in order to enable the planning authority to monitor the impact of the development.
2. Conditions to control the extent of development on the site.
3. The Council will require the lodgement of cash deposits for satisfactory restoration, rehabilitation and site aftercare, including monitoring of the worked out pit area, maintenance, repair, strengthening and upgrading of the affected road network, and landscaping and screening of the site during works.
4. Conditions attached to the operation, restoration, rehabilitation and aftercare including monitoring, maintenance, repair, strengthening and upgrading of the affected road network, and landscaping and screening of the site. In particular, the Council will require the annual submission of an 'environmental audit' setting out a summary of all of the environmental monitoring results for the year, a record of movement of heavy vehicles outside the approved opening hours, a full record of any breaches over the previous year for noise, dust, and water quality and a written record of all complaints, including actions taken on each complaint. The

Council will require the lodgement of a cash deposit for the satisfactory undertaking of these activities.

5. Conditions pertaining to the following:

- Financial matters;
- Measures to prevent environmental pollution and to protect the amenity of areas in respect of surface water / ground water, gaseous emissions, dust, noise, subsidence, blasting, traffic and roads, transportation impact; archaeological/historical heritage, geological / geomorphological heritage, rights of way;
- Measures to protect residential and visual amenity;
- Measures to protect public health and safety.