

CHAPTER 6

RURAL HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter of the plan deals with development strategies, objectives and standards for rural development and housing, that is, development located in Levels 6-10 of the County Settlement Hierarchy. One in three of the County's residents reside in such areas (approximately 35,500 people) and it is expected that the number of people living in these areas will continue to rise. While Wicklow has a good network of rural towns and villages, that provide infrastructure and support services to the wider rural area, such settlements only accommodate approximately 5,200 of this 35,500 rural population and have not in the last 10 years absorbed significant levels of rural growth. Therefore in accordance with the principles of the National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020, it is a goal of this plan to attract growth in rural settlements to both support local economies and to accommodate rural housing needs.

Strategic Objective To support appropriate and sustainable development in rural areas and to direct new development into existing rural settlements, while recognising the social and economic needs of those living outside of settlements.

6.2 Sustainable rural housing

Wicklow's proximity to Dublin, which allows for easy access to the main commercial and employment centres of the Metropolitan area, coupled with its beautiful landscape and amenities, has lead to considerable pressure for housing in the open countryside. The Wicklow County Development Plan has since 1999 included measures to control rural housing, with a presumption against unnecessary rural dwelling and urban generated rural housing. This approach is supported the '*Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*'¹ which provide that:

- People who are part of the rural community should be facilitated by the planning system in all rural areas, including those under strong urban-based pressures;
- Anyone wishing to build a house in rural areas suffering persistent and substantial population decline will be accommodated;
- The development of the rural environs of major urban areas, including the gateways and hubs identified in the NSS and County and other larger towns over 5,000 in population needs to be carefully managed in order to ensure their orderly development and successful functioning into the future.

In accordance with these guidelines, planning authorities should aim to support the following overarching policy objectives in their policies, practices and actions:

- The importance of encouraging development needed to sustain and renew established rural communities in both smaller rural towns and villages and wider countryside areas;
- The need to ensure that the planning system guides residential and other development to the right locations in rural areas in the interest of protecting natural and man-made assets in those areas;
- The need to analyse the different types of economic, social and physical circumstances of different types of rural areas and to tailor planning policies to respond to these differing local circumstances.

¹ These guidelines constitute Ministerial guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). Section 28 provides that Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanala shall have regard to Ministerial guidelines in the performance of their functions.

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines stress the importance of research and analysis being carried out into population and development trends in rural areas before Planning Authorities draft their rural development policies and objectives. In particular, an analysis of rural area 'types' as set out in Section 5.3.2 of the National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020 should be carried out.

The rural area types identified by the NSS are:-

- (1) **Rural areas under strong urban influence.** These areas will exhibit characteristics such as proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of large cities and towns, rapidly rising population, evidence of considerable pressure for development of housing due to proximity to such urban areas, or to major transport corridors with ready access to the urban area, and pressures on infrastructure such as the local road network.
- (2) **Stronger rural areas.** In these areas population levels are generally stable within a well-developed town and village structure and in the wider rural areas around them. This stability is supported by a traditionally strong agricultural economic base and the level of individual housing development activity in these areas tends to be relatively low and confined to certain areas.
- (3) **Structurally weaker rural areas.** These areas will exhibit characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline as well as a weaker economic structure based on indices of income, employment and economic growth.
- (4) **Areas with clustered settlement patterns.** As set out in the NSS, areas exhibiting these characteristics are generally associated with the western seaboard of counties such as Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Clare and some parts of Kerry and many parts of the Gaeltacht where there are comparatively fewer village or smaller town type settlements compared with other rural areas; instead there tends in those areas to be a prevalence of housing clusters, groups of clusters and occasionally linear development.

For the review of the County Development Plan, the Planning Authority carried out an assessment in accordance with the approach outlined in the Guidelines, which involved an evaluation of population trends in the County between 1996-2006 in order to ascertain the pattern of population increase and decline in the County and an evaluation of rural housing trends since the adoption of the previous development plan.

This assessment revealed:

- no evidence of persistent or significant population decline in any part of the County, with only 4 DEs experiencing any population decline – Imael north (the Glen of Imaal), Cronelea (north of Shillelagh) and Rathmichael & Bray No. 3 districts in the Bray urban area, with most significant population increase occurring along the eastern seaboard, around the western towns of Blessington and Baltinglass and along the Aughrim-Ballinacash-Rathdrum-Laragh-Roundwood corridor;
- pressure for rural housing across the entire County, with the highest concentrations of applications on the fringes of major towns.

It is therefore concluded that there are effectively no 'structurally weak' areas in the County. Furthermore, when the 'zone of influence' of urban areas is considered (which includes the influence of Dublin as well as major towns in the County, namely the Bray–Greystones cluster, Rathdrum, Wicklow-Rathnew, Arklow, Blessington and Baltinglass), it is evident that the entire County can be considered an area under strong urban influence. This would be consistent with the preliminary analysis carried out as part of the National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020. This conclusion forms the basis for the rural housing objectives set out in this chapter.

6.3 General rural development objectives

The preceding section has identified that the entire County can be considered to be under varying degrees of urban influence. In rural areas under strong urban influences, the NSS stresses that development driven by cities and larger towns should generally take place within their built up areas or in areas identified for new development through the planning process.

- RH1** Urban generated development, including housing, shall not be permitted in the rural areas of the County, other than in rural settlements that have been deemed suitable to absorb an element of urban generated development.
- RH2** To strengthen the established structure of villages and smaller settlements both to support local economies and to accommodate additional population in a way that supports the viability of local infrastructure, businesses and services, such as schools and water services.
- RH3** To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and the natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.
- RH4** To accommodate necessary rural development, including rural housing, where the need for same can be demonstrated and justified, subject to the highest standards of siting and design.

Table 6.1 Rural Settlement Hierarchy
MAP 6.01 (VOLUME 2) SHOWS THE BOUNDARIES OF EACH SETTLEMENT

Level	Settlement type	Settlement name		
6	Rural Towns	Avoca Donard Dunlavin	Kilmacanogue Newcastle	Roundwood Shillelagh
7	Large Villages	Barndarrig Ballinaclesh Coolboy Glenealy Hollywood	Johnstown/ Thomastown Kilpedder / Willowgrove Kiltegan Knockananna	Laragh - Glendalough Manor Kilbride Redcross Stratford
8	Small Villages	Annacurragh Annamoe Askanagap Ballyconnell Ballycoog Ballyknockan	Ballynacarrig (Brittas Bay) Connary Coolafancy Coolkenno Donaghmore Grangecon	Greenan Kirikee Knockanarrigan Lackan Moneystown Rathdangan Valleymount
9	Rural Clusters	Ballinglen Ballyduff Ballyfolan Ballynultagh Baltyboys Boleynass Barraniskey Carrigacurra Crab Lane Coolattin Croneyhorn	Crossbridge Davidstown Glenmalure Goldenhill Gorteen Kilamoat Kilcarra Killiskey Kilmurray (NMKY) Kilmurray (Kilmacanogue) Kilquiggan	Kingston Macreddin Moyne Mullinaccluff Oldcourt Park Bridge Rathmoon Redwells Stranakelly Talbotstown Tomacork Tomriland
10	Rural Areas i.e. any location outside the development boundary of any settlement listed above			

6.3.1 Rural settlements (Levels 6-9 in the County settlement hierarchy)

Given the likely future development patterns in major towns, improvements in accessibility and the attractiveness in quality of life and affordability terms, rural towns and villages face increasing development pressures from those wishing to move from large urban and city areas. This can in turn have knock-on repercussions for the affordability of housing and housing land in rural settlements for rural dwellers. There is therefore a major development challenge in harnessing the development potential of these centres on the one hand, while protecting these resources for essentially local or rurally derived housing needs on the other.

RH5 The following criteria will apply to new housing developments in rural settlements:-

- where no mains sewerage is available, permission for housing (both single and multi-house developments) will only be considered on the basis of individual on-site effluent disposal systems – shared private wastewater treatment plants will not be allowed;
- the scale of the development proposed shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of the settlement. In particular, no single application shall increase the existing housing stock in the settlement by more than 15% and the maximum size of development that will be considered will be 25% of the number of houses permissible over the life of the plan for that settlement;
- the design of the development shall accord with that settlement's prevailing character and style (in particular with regard to building lines, set backs, building heights and local materials), an analysis of which shall be included with any application for permission²;
- where permission is sought for multi-house developments in rural settlements, planning permission will only be considered where the applicant / developer can show that the size and design of dwellings are suited to the needs of those eligible to occupy the dwellings.

RH6 Where permission is sought by an individual applicant for a dwelling in any of the settlements in Levels 6-9, the applicant will be required to show compliance with objectives for that settlement set out in this chapter. Where permission is granted for a single house in any settlement in Levels 6-9, the applicant will be required to lodge with the Land Registry a burden on the property, in the form of a Section 47 agreement, restricting the use of the dwelling for a period of 7 years in accordance with these objectives.

RH7 Where an application is made for a multi-house development, the developer will be required by condition to lodge with the Land Registry a burden on each property, restricting its use and sale for a period of 7 years in accordance with objectives for that settlement. The developer shall be responsible for ensuring that first purchasers fulfil the requirements of the burden and shall provide evidence of same from a legal professional upon request.

RH8 Subsequent sales within 7 years of first construction / purchase will be bound by the same burden and the vendor and purchaser will be responsible for providing evidence of compliance with same to the Planning Authority upon sale of any dwelling.

² This requirement does not prejudice innovative and contemporary design; on the contrary, in principle, designs of a contemporary style will be allowed provided they do not detract from the character of the area.

Definitions of terms used in this chapter

Regional Growth

Housing demand generated from inside or outside County Wicklow ('open market')

County Growth

Housing demand generated by those persons that have been permanently living and/or working in County Wicklow for at least 3 years prior to the application for planning permission / purchase of the house

Local Growth

Housing demand generated by those persons who are permanent native residents of any location from Level 6 – 10 in the County settlement hierarchy

Proven Need

This is defined as those in need of new housing, in particular:-

- first time home owners;
- someone that previously owned a home in County and is no longer in possession of that home by reason of transfer/sale of the home following legal separation / divorce, the transfer of a home attached to a farm to a family member or the past sale of a home following emigration.

Permanent Native Resident

A person is considered a permanent native resident of a given location if they were born and reared in the family home at that location, or resided at that location for at least 10 consecutive years prior to the application for planning permission / purchase of the house.

Rural Towns (Level 6)

These are strong rural towns, with a good range of infrastructural services and are suited to accommodating a significant element of urban generated housing demand, with necessary controls in place to ensure that local demand can also be met. These towns are differentiated in this plan from Small Growth Towns having regard to their more rural character and the rural nature of their catchments. Such rural centres are considered to contain the potential to consolidate rural development needs and support the maintenance of essential rural social and community infrastructure such as schools, shops, public houses, post offices and local sporting organisations.

Table 6.2 Historical and projected population for rural towns 1996-2022

Settlement Level	Settlement	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016	2022
Rural Towns	Avoca	490	564	622	700	800	900
	Donard	162	201	182	200	300	400
	Dunlavin	693	914	897	1,000	2,000	2,500
	Kilmacanogue	818	834	839	915	1,000	1,100
	Newcastle	763	851	938	1,000	1,500	1,750
	Roundwood	446	518	571	700	1,100	1,300
	Shillelagh	324	278	311	450	600	750

Objectives

RH9 The settlements in Level 6 shall be prioritised for moderate growth and investment and shall absorb demand for new housing from inside and outside the County subject to the following controls:-

Multi-house development	50% Regional Growth 50% County Growth
Single house development	County Growth

RH10 To have up to date local plans (either Local Area Plans or Town Plans) in place for all settlements in Level 6 of the settlement hierarchy and in particular, to prepare local plans for Avoca, Donard and Kilmacanogue during the lifetime of this plan.

Large Villages (Level 7)

These are the settlements that have a moderate level of existing infrastructural services, both physical and social and that are of such a size as to accommodate a limited amount of urban generated housing demand. Such large villages generally have a population of less than 500, with many considerably smaller.

Table 6.3 Indicative growth targets for large villages (number of houses) up to 2016

Settlement Level	Settlement	2006	2016	Increase
Large villages	Barndarrig	80	120	+40
	Ballinaclesh	100	140	+40
	Coolboy	56	76	+20
	Glenealy ³	89	119	+30
	Hollywood	25	45	+20
	Johnstown/ Thomastown	50	70	+20
	Kilpedder / Willowgrove	166	196	+30
	Kiltegan	54	74	+20
	Knockananna	42	62	+20
	Laragh - Glendalough	130	180	+50
	Manor Kilbride	74	84	+10
	Redcross	68	88	+20
	Stratford	56	96	+40
Total growth				360

Note: The increase shown is the increase between 2006 and 2016. Therefore any growth in house numbers occurring between 2006 and 2010 must be considered in the evaluation of further proposals for housing during the life of this plan 2010-2016.

Objectives

RH11 The settlements in Level 7 shall be considered suitable for limited growth and investment and shall absorb demand for new housing from inside and outside the County subject to the following controls:-

Multi-house development	25% Regional Growth 50% County Growth 25% Local Growth
Single house development	Local Growth

³ The land shown hatched within the large village boundary of Glenealy shown on Map 06.02A shall be restricted to the development of one dwelling only.

Small Villages (Level 8)

Small villages are generally existing smaller scale settlements with very limited infrastructure that can accommodate lesser levels of growth. These settlements tend to have populations of less than 100 and for the most part have few facilities, other than perhaps a public house, a primary school and a church.

Table 6.4 Indicative growth targets for small villages (number of houses) up to 2016

Settlement Level	Settlement	2006	2016	Increase
Small villages	Annacurragh	11	21	+10
	Annamoe	38	48	+10
	Askanagap	14	19	+5
	Ballyconnell	17	27	+10
	Ballycoog	13	33	+20
	Ballyknockan	37	47	+10
	Ballynacarrig (Brittas Bay)	32	52	+20
	Connary	18	28	+10
	Coolafancy	15	25	+10
	Coolkenno	17	27	+10
	Donaghmore	10	15	+5
	Grangecon	50	65	+15
	Greenan	4	9	+5
	Kirikee	12	17	+5
	Knockanarrigan	13	23	+10
	Lackan	19	24	+5
	Moneystown	3	13	+10
Rathdangan	33	48	+15	
Valleymount	24	34	+10	
Total growth				195

Note: The increase shown is the increase between 2006 and 2016. Therefore any growth in house numbers occurring between 2006 and 2010 must be considered in the evaluation of further proposals for housing during the life of this plan 2010-2016.

Objectives

RH12 The settlements in Level 8 shall be considered suitable for restricted growth and investment and shall absorb only local or rural generated housing demand subject to the following controls:-

Multi-house development	Proven Need for new housing, and 50% County Growth 50% Local Growth
Single house development	Proven Need for new housing and compliance with Local Growth criteria

Rural Clusters (Level 9)

These are 'unstructured' settlements considered suitable for very limited new rural development, with the main purpose of the designation being to direct rural generated housing into clusters rather than the open countryside. The population projections for the County allocate limited growth to these clusters, in the order of 80 houses between 2006 and 2016. Given the controls that apply for these clusters, some flexibility in this target may be applied where the number of bona fide applicants exceeds the target⁴.

Objectives

RH13 The settlements in Level 9 shall be considered suitable for limited growth and shall absorb only local or rural generated housing demand subject to the following controls:-

Multi-house development	Not permissible
Single house development	Proven Need for new housing, and Residents of Levels 1-8 will only be eligible for permission in Level 9 if the applicant is a son/daughter of a parent that was born and raised and resided for a period of not less than 10 years in that rural cluster or its surrounding rural area

6.3.2 Houses in the open countryside (Level 10)

One off rural housing refers to the development of single houses in the countryside outside of any settlement. The need for residential development to house those who are indigenous to and/or have a bona fide necessity to live in the rural area is recognised.

Given Wicklow's location and proximity to Dublin, the rural areas outside of the towns and villages are subject to development pressure from urban generated housing. The principles of sustainability support the development of sites in urban areas, with greater opportunity to redevelop sites which are accessible and already serviced, in preference to the development of greenfield sites in rural areas and the loss of valuable agricultural land and land or sites of ecological or landscape value.

The principles of the National Spatial Strategy promote rural living in particular, the regeneration of declining marginal rural areas, with the aim of sustaining and strengthening existing rural villages and settlements. The objectives of the NSS allow for the development of rural housing within established rural communities, subject to good planning practice. In line with these principles, the Development Plan has identified Large / Small Villages and rural clusters in County Wicklow. These settlements allow for rural living in an environmentally sustainable manner.

All applications for one off housing development in rural areas will be subject to all normal planning considerations including: traffic safety; sanitation; heritage, design and siting.

With regard to the preservation of views and prospects, due consideration shall be given to those listed within the area of the National Park; and with respect to all other areas, to generally regard the amenity matters, but not to the exclusion of social and economic matters.

In the event of conflict of any other settlement strategy objective or Landscape Zones and Categories (as defined in Schedule 17.09), or conformity to Design and Development (as set out Section 6.4.3),

⁴ The land shown hatched within the Kilmurray (Kilmacanogue) rural cluster development boundary, shown on Map 06.04F shall be restricted to the development of one dwelling only.

Objective RH14 shall be supreme, except where the proposed development would be a likely traffic hazard or public health hazard.

Objectives

Objective RH14

Residential development will be considered in the countryside only when it is for the provision of a necessary dwelling in the following circumstances:

1. A permanent native resident seeking to build a house for his/her own family and not as speculation. A permanent native resident shall be a person who was either born and reared in the family home in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site (including permanent native residents of levels 8 and 9 i.e. small villages and rural clusters), or resided in the immediate environs of the proposed site for at least 10 consecutive years prior to the application for planning permission.
2. A son or daughter, or niece/nephew considered to merit the same position as a son/daughter within the law (i.e. when the uncle/aunt has no children of his/her own), of a permanent native resident of a rural area, who can demonstrate a definable social or economic need to live in the area in which the proposal relates and not as speculation.
3. A son or daughter, or niece/nephew considered to merit the same position as a son/daughter within the law (i.e. when the uncle/aunt has no children of his/her own), of a permanent native resident of a rural area, whose place of employment is outside of the immediate environs of the local rural area to which the application relates and who can demonstrate a definable social or economic need to live in the area to which the proposal relates and not as speculation.
4. Replacing a farm dwelling for the needs of a farming family, not as speculation. If suitable the old dwelling may be let for short term tourist letting and this shall be tied to the existing owner of the new farm dwelling were it is considered appropriate and subject to the proper planning and development of the area.
5. A person whose principle occupation is in agriculture and who owns and farms substantial lands in the immediate vicinity of the site.
6. An immediate family member (i.e. son or daughter) of a person described in 5, who is occupied in agriculture in the immediate vicinity.
7. A person whose principle occupation is in a rural resource based activity (i.e.: agriculture, forestry, mariculture, agri-tourism etc.) and who can demonstrate a need to live in the immediate vicinity of this activity.
8. Renovation or conversion of existing dilapidated buildings of substance, in a scale, density and manner appropriate to the rural area and its scenic amenities. Any such developments shall be in accordance with the Rural Design Standards set out in Section 6.4).
9. A close relative who has inherited, either as a gift or on death, an agricultural holding or site for his/her own purposes and not for speculation and who can demonstrate a definable social and or economic need to live in the area to which the proposal relates.
10. The son or daughter of a landowner who has inherited a site for the purpose of building a one off rural house and where the land has been in family ownership as at 11th October 2004 for at least 10 years prior to the application for planning permission and not as speculation.
11. An emigrant, returning to their local area, seeking to build a house for his/her own use not as speculation.
12. Persons whose work is intrinsically linked to the rural area and who can prove a definable

social and economic need to live in the rural area and who has resided in the immediate area for at least 10 consecutive years prior to the application.

13. A permanent native resident who has to dispose of their dwelling, following divorce or a legal separation.
14. Permanent native residents of moderate and small growth towns, seeking to build a house in their native town or village within the 50kmph / 30 mph speed limit on the non national radial roads, for their own use and not as speculation as of 11th October 2004.
15. A person whose business requires them to reside in the rural area and who can demonstrate the adequacy of the business proposals and the capacity of the business to support them full time.
16. Permanent native residents of the rural area who require a new purpose built specially adapted house due to a verified medical condition and who can show that their existing home cannot be adapted to meet their particular needs

Consideration for rural housing will also be given to those persons who were permanent native residents of a rural area but due to the expansion of an adjacent town / village, the family homeplace is now located within the development boundary of the town / village. A person whose lands have been zoned or designated as development lands in the extension of the development boundary shall not benefit from such consideration in this regard. This shall relate to lands subsumed within individual development boundaries of settlements adopted in the previous 12 years.

Where a permanent native resident cannot secure an appropriate site in their native rural area, consideration will be given to permission for a rural house in an alternative rural area, so long as the proposed development site is not located in a landscape zone higher up in the landscape hierarchy than the applicant's homeplace.

Where permission is granted for a single rural house, the applicant will be required to lodge with the Land Registry a burden on the property, in the form of a Section 47 agreement, restricting the use of the dwelling for a period of 7 years to the applicant, or to those persons who fulfill the criteria set out in Objective RH14 or to other such persons as the Planning Authority may agree to in writing.

Section 6.3.3 Rural Housing Zoning

Objectives

- RZ1** To provide for rural residential development, with no restrictions on purchasing and occupation at the following location:
- Grounds of Delgany Golf Club (as shown on Map 06.05A) – for a maximum of 4 units

6.4 Rural development design standards

This section will set out the general design standards that will apply to rural housing developments. For town centre type / mixed use development in rural towns and larger villages, regard shall also be taken of the standards set out in Chapter 5 'Urban Development'.

6.4.1 Rural Towns / Large Villages

In the past, 'urban' development standards have been applied to new developments in rural towns and villages, often with the result of new developments appearing out of scale, excessively dense and out of character with their location. In this regard, it is considered necessary to have separate design standards for developments in the smaller rural settlements of the County.

Scale of development

The scale of any development proposed shall be in proportion to the location. In accordance with Objective RH5, no single application shall increase the existing housing stock in the settlement by more than 15% and the maximum size of development that will be considered will be 25% of the number of houses permissible over the life of the plan for that settlement. For the larger of the rural towns (Level 6), this will generally mean a limit of 20-30 houses in any single development (for the smaller towns, this reduces to 5-10). For the large villages (Level 7), this will usually mean a maximum size of around 5 units.

Density

The key design rule for new multi house development in rural towns and large villages will be consistency with the existing pattern and grain of development. Therefore the density allowable will depend on both the location of the site within the settlement and the character and prevailing density of the settlement itself. Where there is an established town core with a distinctive character and pattern, new development shall 'infill' this existing pattern with regard to plot size and width, building height, building line and set backs etc. On greenfield type sites at the edge of the core (or where the core is undefined), a suitable transitional density will be required between the built up part of the town and its more rural hinterland. Normally housing density in such cases will be in the order of 10-20 units per hectare – in the larger rural settlements the applicable local area or town plan will specify the density allowable at such locations. Clearly if the site is dependent on individual on-site effluent disposal systems, a much lower density will be required to meet environmental and public health standards.

Layout

Again, the layout proposed should reflect the character and pattern of the area and suburban type layouts shall be avoided e.g. back-to-back semi-detached layout with 11m garden to rear and on-site car parking to front. Consideration shall be given to 'rural cluster' type formats, with houses grouped closely together, other in courtyard formats, surrounded by gardens / open spaces. Where sites have sufficient road frontage, new developments will be expected to address the road and create a new streetscape where possible, paying due regard to traffic safety and possible future road widening needs.

Car parking / open space etc

Given the lack of public transport available in most of these small settlements, it must be acknowledged that the private car will be the primary mode of transport. Therefore 2 car parking spaces will be required per dwelling, with suitable provision made for either a small visitor parking area or somewhere safe for visitors to park without causing obstruction.

Private gardens and public open spaces will be required to be provided at the same rates applicable for more urban developments⁵ but it is expected that this minimum standard will normally be exceeded given the scale and density controls that will be applied. For infill type development in defined town / village cores, a relaxation in public open space required will be considered if this is required to fit in with the existing layout and prevailing density of that area or in the interests of high quality layout and design. In such cases, it must be clearly shown that the level and design of *private* open space provided is sufficient.

House design

While high quality contemporary design is encouraged, particular regard shall be taken in rural towns to the traditional building form and design in that settlement, with particular regard to height, roof style, materials and detailing. A good variety in design even in small developments will be required, including a range of sizes to meet the different needs of all in society.

Services

Roads & footpaths: In order to avoid excessive urbanisation, it will not always be necessary for new housing developments in small settlements to be provided with wide roads with cycle and footpaths on both sides. Given the rural location and the size controls that will be applied to new housing developments, consideration shall be given to shared road spaces, with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists. Due consideration must also be given to the needs of refuse and emergency vehicles and a turning area will usually be required on site.

Water services: As permission for multi-house developments will generally only be considered on the basis of connection to the town water supply and wastewater treatment plant, it will be necessary to ensure that the development can be connected to these systems and these systems have adequate capacity for the development. Alternatively, where compliance with relevant EPA and EU standards can be achieved, individual on-site effluent disposal systems and well water supplies may be permissible.

Social & affordable housing

Social and affordable housing will be required to be provided in accordance with the County Housing Strategy. Where the agreement drawn up entails the construction of social and / or affordable houses on the site, the design, scale, density etc of these houses shall fully accord with the above design criteria.

6.4.2 Small Villages / Rural Clusters

These small settlements for the most part do not have a structured or identifiable village centre and all new development will therefore in essence be greenfield type developments. This will essentially mean that in most cases there will be little existing development from which to draw inspiration or reference for new developments.

This will in effect therefore place a higher responsibility on the designer to come up with a design that fits with its surroundings and complements any existing development in the settlement. Particular consideration should be given to

- Set back from the public road. Excessive set back can dislocate the new development from the existing settlement, even where the structure of the settlement is weak or undefined. The new structure should be part of the settlement and the set back proposed shall reflect this relationship. For example, in the small villages of Annamoe and Valleymount, there is a village core and existing buildings are tight to the road. New dwellings here should replicate this trend. However, in Moneystown, where there is no established village fabric, new dwellings should be sufficiently close to the road frontage to create a connection with the 'street' but would not necessarily be required to create new street frontage.

⁵ Private open space - 0.64sqm private garden per 1sqm house floor area
Public open space – 15% of the site area

- The character of the settlement. Where a settlement has features that are common throughout or some aspect that makes it distinctive, these should be identified and integrated in the new house design. For example, the use of stone is prevalent in Ballyknockan and the use of stone finishes or features in new houses would allow better integration into the settlement.

For multi-house development in small villages, the guidelines set out above for larger villages with regard to density, layout, clustering and design should be followed, while taking into account the larger sites that are likely to be required to accommodate on-site effluent disposal systems.

6.4.3 Houses in the Open Countryside

Introduction

The Rural Design Development Guidelines aim to assist those planning on building a house in rural County Wicklow, placing emphasis on the need for sensitive development in rural areas, in the siting and design of one off housing. The guidelines relate to new build one-off rural houses, proposed extensions or conversions to existing properties in the countryside.

“One Off Housing” refers to houses, which are to be built outside of any town or village boundary. Development in these rural areas must be properly planned, sited and designed, and yet retain local character, in order to protect and enhance the rural landscape.

New build

Design may either be in keeping with traditional design and construction techniques or may utilise new design, materials and techniques. It is Council policy to promote and encourage the use of indigenous stone products for all new residential and commercial developments.

Location

The location of a rural dwelling should be considered taking into account the following:

Landscape categorisations

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Area of Special Amenity
- Rural Area
- Corridor Zone

Designations

- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
- Nature Reserves
- Special Protection Areas
- Proposed and Candidate Special Areas of Conservation
- Areas of Geological and Geomorphological Interest
- Views and Prospects of Special Amenity Value or Interest
- Amenity Trees and Woodlands
- Trees, Groups of Trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders
- Record of Protected Structures
- Vulnerable Aquifers

Road Access

The proposed site should be located taking account of an appropriate and safe access, the design of which shall be in accordance with Section 11.7 of this plan.

Energy

A determinant of location should be energy savings that are naturally inherent to the site. Using such on site features as the slope of the land, existing walls and vegetation for shelter from the prevailing winds. When cutting into a hillside, grade the excavated material gently and carefully, to blend in with contours. (See also Section 14.5 of this plan)

Orientation

Houses should be positioned to collect the maximum amount of light throughout the day. (See also Section 14.5 of this plan)

Siting of the dwelling

- Buildings should be nestled into the landscape and not be located above a ridgeline or in an elevated position on a site. New houses should be located sympathetically within their surroundings;
- Make use of local contours, avoid skylines where development interrupts the flow of the landform. Avoid open field or exposed locations that prevent the development being integrated within its surroundings;
- The type of landscape should be identified e.g. hilly, coastal, flat, inland, to determine the final location of the house;
- It is important to respect the existing landscape zones;
- Houses should be set back from the road and be staggered from surrounding dwellings to appear closer to traditional development;
- Avoid sites directly along the main roads where this would result in problems of public safety;
- Houses should complement local traditional building styles within close proximity including ridge orientation and pitch of roofs door and porch styles and the use of materials where appropriate.

Locating driveways

- Off street car parking must be provided;
- The entrance gate should announce the building suitably; entrances shall be visibly unobtrusive;
- Gateways should be constructed using local materials and styles indigenous to the area;
- Access roads should cut across contours gently;
- The entrance to the road should provide safe access without having to remove large amounts of hedgerow or existing stone wall;
- An adequate surface water runoff system must be provided.

Design

- Include safe, less formal and unobtrusive forms of access and kerbing;
- Good, modern and innovative house design is encouraged provided it is in sympathy with the surrounding landscape and does not dominate nor clash with surrounding buildings. House designs more suitable to suburban areas are not acceptable in rural areas;
- Ensure outbuildings, garages, liquid gas tanks are designed or appropriately located or screened so as not to detract from the overall appearance of the development;
- Incorporate boundary treatments integral to the development and its setting, with preference given to stonewalling, and the use of hedging plants which are indigenous or characteristic of the area, and the avoidance of ranch or palisade fencing, concrete block walls and fast growing conifers.

Extension design

Extensions and conversions shall be designed in such a way as to be sensitive to the structures existing character and scale.

Conversion

Proposals for the conversion or re-use of existing buildings of substance in the countryside that are deemed worthy of retention by the Council will be considered favourably, providing they satisfy the following criteria:

- The original walls must be substantially intact. Buildings of a ruinous nature will not be appropriate;
- Buildings should be of local, visual or historical interest and be constructed in traditional materials to justify retention and conservation;
- Buildings must be physically capable of undergoing conversion and their original appearance must be substantially retained. A structural survey by a qualified engineer must be submitted as part of a planning application;
- Access must be appropriate in scale and height to a rural context;
- Works must be executed in a sensitive manner and retain architecturally important features whenever possible and make use of existing buildings and traditional and complementary building materials, techniques and specifications;
- There is a specific locational need for the use and that there are no available and more suitable alternative and less sensitive sites.

Extensions

Extensions to existing dwellings should be unobtrusive, for example an extension to a single storey cottage would be best designed to incorporate a single storey extension in such a way which does not distort the existing scale and mass of the development.

Extensions to conversion schemes will only be accepted when deemed necessary to secure the restoration of the existing building(s) and where they would not alter the character of the building(s).

If the existing house is served by an on-site wastewater disposal system it will be necessary to show that this system is adequate to accept any additional wastewater generated by the proposed extension (in addition to any previous extensions that may have been constructed after the installation of the original effluent disposal system). Generally, if the extension will increase the number of bedrooms by more than 50% and / or entails an increase in the size of the house by 33% or more, the Planning Authority is likely to require the applicant to submit full details of the existing system. If it is clear that the existing system will not meet the needs of the enlarged house, it will be necessary to submit detailed proposals to upgrade the system, in accordance with current EPA standards.

Planting and landscaping

Planting and landscaping can be used to harmonise new buildings with their surroundings and provide privacy between dwellings. New planting should consist of local plant types indigenous to the area and be incorporated in an organic pattern throughout the entire site. Under no circumstances are Leylandii to be planted.

Wastewater Treatment Systems

Where it is proposed to build a new house in an area that is not served by a public sewer, but is otherwise acceptable, the Council will require an effluent treatment system that is in compliance with the current EPA Wastewater Treatment Manual and the Wicklow Groundwater Protection Scheme 2003, and the system chosen shall:

- Protect public health
- Protect the environment
- Be economical
- Operate without minimal maintenance from the owner; and
- Have a life span of over 20 years.

Light pollution

Developments can have a negative impact upon the quality of rural areas at night-time through excessive lighting, leading to light pollution. The Council shall discourage such excessive and unsustainable use of lighting.

The Council may request submission of details of external lighting scheme as part of the development control process where developments are likely to cause light pollution. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the lighting scheme proposed is the minimum required for security, safety and working purposes.

With regard to:

- independent living units ('granny-flats');
- temporary residential units;
- taking in charge;
- naming of developments;
- flood routing;
- open space;
- 'green issues';
- social & affordable housing;
- privacy;

the objectives and standards set out in Chapter 5 will also apply in rural settlements and areas.