

# CHAPTER 10

## RETAIL

### 10.0 Introduction

Retailing is a fundamental element of town and village centre activity and it is important that town and village centres retain retailing as a core function. Apart from direct and indirect employment, retailing plays an important role in attracting people to town centres thus contributing to overall vitality.

Retail is a key element of the economy in terms of economic activity, employment, and the success of our towns and villages. The retail sector is the largest private sector employer in the country, employing over 13% of the workforce and indirectly supporting jobs in other areas such as logistics and distribution. The retail sector is facing many challenges including the increase in online retail and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Development Plan must outline the level and form of retail activity appropriate to the various level of settlement and define by way of a map the boundaries of the core shopping areas. The plan must include appropriate objectives to allow for the expansion of the retail sector in a manner which protects and improves the vitality and viability of the town and village centres.

With reference to the **National, Regional and County Objectives** set out in Chapter 2 of this plan, the enhancement of the retail sector will contribute to numerous goals across the three pillars of 'sustainable healthy communities', 'climate action' and 'economic opportunity' by:

- Supporting the role of town and village centres as the heart of communities, where people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities can avail of services and interact within their communities;
- Enhancing the built environment by maintaining activity and driving regeneration in our town and village centres; this will promote sustainable re-use of underutilised and brownfield sites, reduce demand for greenfield development and will generate economic confidence and make settlements more attractive for employers and a skilled workforce;
- Supporting and facilitating sustainable mobility by ensuring that retail services are available locally, and can be accessible by means other than private car;
- Supporting local employment growth.

### 10.1 Retail Policy Context

#### 10.1.1 Retail Planning Guidelines (DoECLG, 2012)

The Retail Planning Guidelines aim to ensure that the planning system continues to play a key role in supporting competitiveness and choice in the retail sector commensurate with promoting the vitality and viability of town centres. The Guidelines note the major role that shopping plays in attracting people to cities, towns and villages, emphasising that it is therefore important that these centres retain retailing as a core function and provide a diversity of shopping choice, and high quality services and amenities, for residents and visitors alike, thereby supporting their ongoing role as the focus of their regions and rural hinterlands.

These Guidelines identify five key policy objectives:

- Ensuring that retail development is plan-led;
- Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development;
- Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations;

- Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking;
- Delivering quality urban design outcomes.

The objectives set out in this Plan have been prepared having regard to the guidance set out in the 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012).

### 10.1.2 Retail Design Manual (DoECLG, 2012)

The Retail Design Manual notes that achieving a high quality of architecture and urban design in new retail development can be a key ingredient in delivering sustainable development in urban places: generating direct and indirect employment, stimulating investment and economic activity, enhancing social vibrancy and vitality, increasing consumer choice and value, reducing car dependency for everyday trips, and stimulating spin-off development including service functions and housing. The manual sets out 10 key principles of urban design to inform new retail development and to promote a step-change in the quality of new retail development. The Guidelines and the Manual stress that design that is inappropriate for its context, or that fails to realise the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area or a site, should not be accepted.

### 10.1.3 EMRA Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES recognises that the retail sector is a significant employer and economic contributor in the Region and plays a key role in placemaking. The Strategy also acknowledges that as a significant attractor it enables the creation of strong mixed-use commercial cores and can play a key role in the regeneration of areas. The RSES outlines the retail hierarchy for the region.

Relevant Regional Policy Objectives	
<b>RPO 6.10</b>	EMRA will support the preparation of a Retail Strategy / Strategies for the Region in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, or any subsequent update, to update the retail hierarchy and apply floorspace requirements for the Region.
<b>RPO 6.11</b>	Future provisions of significant retail development within the Region shall be consistent with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, or any subsequent update, and the retail hierarchy for the Region, expressed in the RSES, until such time as this hierarchy is updated.

The RSES provides the basis for the integration of land use and transport planning in the Region. In conjunction with the NTA and other agencies the RSES identifies Guiding Principles for the Integration of Land Use and Transportation. With regard to retail the following principle applies: *'larger scale, trip intensive developments, such as high employee dense offices and retail, should in the first instance be focused into central urban locations'*.

### 10.1.4 Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA)

The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) for the period from 2008 to 2016, which Wicklow forms part, has not been updated. With regard to the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, the RSES states *'it is recognised that the floorspace thresholds detailed in the GDA strategy were prepared in a different economic climate and in many cases are still to be reached. In this regard, EMRA will support and drive the preparation of a new retail strategy for the Region under the requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, or any subsequent update, to update this hierarchy and apply floorspace requirements for the Region'*.

Section 3.7 of the Retail Planning Guidelines indicates that for development plans which are outside joint or multi-authority retail strategies, it is sufficient to state the general retail function appropriate to each settlement and a general statement of additional retail development requirements. In the absence of a new Retail Strategy for the GDA, this approach has been taken for the Wicklow County Development Plan.

## 10.2 Retail Hierarchy & Strategy

The RSES outlines the retail hierarchy for the region and the County Development Plan must be consistent with this. Wicklow's retail hierarchy expands upon the hierarchy set out in the RSES to include Wicklow's towns, villages and neighbourhood centres. New retail provision should be made in line with the retail hierarchy set out in Table 10.1. Retail development should be appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement it is located in.

New retail development should support the high order retail function of **Bray** and **Wicklow Town**. Where an application is made within the town centres of Bray and Wicklow Town (as defined by the zoning), it will not always be necessary to demonstrate the quantitative need for retail proposals in assessing such proposed developments. In setting out and evaluating the retail impact of any development in Bray and Wicklow Town the assessment should primarily focus on how the scheme will add/detract from the quality of the town centre - both in relation to improving retail, urban design, integration with the built fabric and quality of life in the town/centre. Quantitative and qualitative need must, however, be examined as part of any proposed application which would be in an edge or out of centre location and/or not in accordance with retail strategy hierarchy alongside a full sequential test of the proposed location.

### 10.2.1 Analysis of Retail in the County since the last Development Plan

A review of planning applications carried out in November 2020 indicated that since November 2016, permission has been granted for c. 4,500 square metres retail floor space gross.

As part of the review it was also noted that 13 permissions have been granted for changes of use from retail to other uses including residential, offices and restaurants. This results in an incremental reduction in the extent of retail within our town centres. The challenge remains for planning authorities to protect the retail core of our town centres while simultaneously allowing development that will ensure the continued vitality and vibrancy of town and village centres.

### 10.2.2 Future Retail Requirements

The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2008) found that the Mid East is a net exporter of consumer retail expenditure and thus there is scope for clawing back retail expenditure, both in comparison and convenience goods shopping. Given the limited amount of new retail development which has been permitted in County Wicklow, it is considered reasonable to assume that Wicklow is still a net exporter of retail expenditure and it will continue to be the policy of the Planning Authority to address this and reduce leakage to other counties.

In the absence of an up-to-date Retail Strategy for the GDA, regard is had to Section 3.7 of the Retail Planning Guidelines which requires the development plan to include a general statement of additional retail development requirements.

There is a high level of uncertainty with regard to future retail requirements having regard to the changing nature of retail and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The CSO retail sales index<sup>1</sup> indicated that the volume of retail sales decreased by 35% in April 2020 when compared to March 2020 as a result of the pandemic. This was the largest monthly decrease since January 2009. The exception to this decrease was the Food, Beverages and Tobacco sector which showed a volume increase of 1.6% (non specialised stores including supermarkets). As was to be expected, online sales increased. The volume of retail sales increased by 1.5% in September 2020 when compared to August 2020 on a seasonally adjusted basis<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Retail Sales Index (RSI) is the official short-term indicator of changes in the level of consumer spending on retail goods. It measures the trend in the level of average weekly sales for each month, after allowances are made for calendar composition. The RSI is compiled and published every month by the Central Statistics Office.

(CSO).<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/rsi/retailsalesindexapril2020/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/rsi/retailsalesindexseptember2020/>

The continual rise in online shopping combined with the impact of Covid-19 on shopping patterns makes it difficult to determine with accuracy what the County's retail requirements will be. Notwithstanding this, retail is a key function of town centres and essential for their vitality and vibrancy in conjunction with other uses. It is therefore essential that new retail development should be facilitated and encouraged in town centres.

As a County, Wicklow needs to improve the quality of its retail offer to maintain market share and competitiveness and to ensure that good quality retail is provided in locations that are local, accessible by foot and/or can be served by public transport. The movement restrictions introduced as part of the Government's response to Covid-19 highlighted the importance of having a good quality retail offer within the County and within each neighbourhood, and not being dependent on retail facilities located outside the County.

The limited new retail development would suggest that there is scope for all settlements in Wicklow to facilitate additional retail development. This should be directed into the town and village centres where it can have the greatest impact in terms of town and village vitality.

### 10.2.3 Retail Strategy Strategic Objectives

Wicklow's retail strategy is informed by the following key objectives:

- to reduce leakage of retail expenditure from County Wicklow to other counties;
- to expand the level of convenience floorspace within the County, to meet the convenience shopping needs of existing and future residents up to 2031;
- to expand the amount and range of comparison floorspace within the County, which will provide for a significant amount of the comparison shopping needs of existing and future residents up to 2031;
- to enable each centre to perform in accordance with its role and function as identified in the Retail Hierarchy and to allow a healthy level of competition between centres whilst ensuring that the role and function of each centre is not undermined;
- to promote and encourage the major enhancement of retail floorspace, primarily comparison goods and town centre functions in Bray and Wicklow Town, to sustain their competitiveness and importance as Key Towns / Major Town Centres;
- to strengthen the retail core areas by addressing vacancy and capitalising on the opportunities presented by derelict sites and underutilised sites;
- to promote the expansion of retail floorspace first and foremost within the core retail areas / existing town and village centre areas and thereafter in accordance with the sequential approach to retail development;
- to ensure that town and village centres are attractive places to live in, to work in and to visit, easy to get to, easy to walk and cycle within and are competitive places to conduct business; and
- to promote a high quality of design in all centres.



Table 10.1 Retail Hierarchy &amp; Strategy for County Wicklow

Level 1 Metropolitan Centre	
Dublin City Centre	As per the RSES
Level 2 Major Town Centres & County Town Centres	
Bray	<p>Bray is a key town and Wicklow's largest settlement. Bray should provide for a high level retail function serving a wide catchment. It is therefore envisaged that Bray will provide a full range of all types of retail from newsagents to specialist shops and boutiques, large department stores, foodstores of all types, shopping centres and high levels of mixed uses including the arts and culture to create a vibrant living place. The town will be a focus for medium and higher quality comparison goods.</p> <p>The centre should be well connected and served by high quality public transport. Bray should provide for the 'big shop' convenience needs of its residents and other settlements in the vicinity including Enniskerry, Kilmacanogue and Shankill. The centre has the opportunity to provide for the comparison shopping needs of a much wider catchment beyond its more immediate environs, particularly extending south and north to other settlements along the N11. Residents and visitors should have access to a range of quality leisure and cultural activities.</p> <p>Having regard to the above, it is the priority of the Planning Authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ promote and encourage the major enhancement of retail floorspace, primarily comparison goods and town centre functions in Bray to sustain its competitiveness and importance as a Major Town Centre;</li> <li>▪ facilitate the significant expansion in the amount and range of comparison floorspace, particularly floorspace for middle and higher order comparison goods;</li> <li>▪ facilitate the delivery of a large scale retail development within the core retail area on the 'Bray Town Centre' (formerly known as 'Florentine') development site;</li> <li>▪ facilitate the delivery of a large scale retail development on the former Golf Club lands; and</li> <li>▪ facilitate the extension of the Luas to Bray.</li> </ul> <p>Bray seafront area shall be a vibrant and attractive seafront area, which functions as the primary tourist, recreational and leisure centre of the town. It is a priority to rejuvenate the seafront area through the expansion of retail and non-retail services, particularly targeted at the visitor market and tourism products. The town centre is located some distance from the seafront area and does not benefit from spin-off associated with the uptake of leisure activities on the seafront. Taking account of this, it is of major importance that the centre carves out a significant role for itself in the provision of quality shopping facilities which act as a draw for people into the centre.</p> <p>Bray is well connected by a high quality public transport system, centred at the Bray DART Station. The town suffers severe traffic congestion at times. While improvements have been made to make the central area more pedestrian friendly, the town would benefit from further improvements. It is a priority of the Planning Authority to facilitate development that contributes to the improvement of the overall appearance of the area around Bray Railway Station, to increase the density and mix of uses in this area and to provide clear pedestrian/cyclist links between this area and the town centre and seafront area. This area is the gateway and transportation hub of this major town and the general appearance, aesthetic appeal and range of uses promoted in this area should be reflective of this significant role.</p> <p>The quality of shopfronts within Bray Main Street and surrounding side streets is relatively poor. In addition, some parts of the centre have suffered from high degrees of vacancy. It is a priority of the Planning Authority to facilitate development that would contribute to the improvement of the overall appearance and aesthetic appeal of the streetscape, including for example shopfront improvements, regeneration of vacant sites and public realm</p>

	<p>improvement schemes.</p> <p>Within the expansion area of Fassaroe, the Planning Authority will facilitate the provision for the development of appropriately scaled retail provision, which provides for the immediate needs of residents and employees of the area but does not undermine the role of Bray town centre as the principal shopping destination in the settlement. While the target population and retail catchment of Fassaroe is more akin to a Level 3 centre (5,000-15,000 people), it is envisaged that Fassaroe will provide the function more akin to a Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre. This is in order to ensure that the area does not undermine the role of Bray town centre as the principal shopping destination in the settlement.</p>
<b>Level 2 Major Town Centres &amp; County Town Centres</b>	
<p><b>Wicklow Town</b></p>	<p>Wicklow Town should provide for a high level retail function serving a wide catchment reflecting its status as a Core Region Key Town in the settlement hierarchy. Wicklow Town provides for the 'big shop' convenience and comparison needs of a wide catchment including Rathnew, Ashford, Glenealy, Roundwood, Rathdrum and a significant rural population.</p> <p>It is therefore envisaged that Wicklow Town will provide a full range of all types of retail from newsagents to specialist shops and boutiques, large department stores, foodstores of all types, shopping centres and high levels of mixed uses including the arts and culture to create a vibrant living place. The town will be a focus for medium and higher quality comparison goods</p> <p>There is a need for significant enhancement and expansion of retail floorspace and town centre activities to provide for the needs of the substantial resident and working population in the town and surrounding catchment.</p> <p>While the town is located along the train route and benefits from a bus service, generally speaking, most trips to the town are made by car, with the exception of local residents within walking distance. Notwithstanding this, traffic congestion is generally not a significant issue and there is good provision of public parking facilities. In addition, the town is a relatively comfortable centre to walk around and benefits from a large number of pedestrian crossings. That said, it is a priority of the Council to facilitate improvements in public transport infrastructure.</p> <p>The town centre has a strong, defined and attractive streetscape of heritage value. It is a priority to further improve the quality of the streetscape to ensure that it is sustained as an attractive centre.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Planning Authority to develop the retail role of Rathnew at a 'local centre' scale, commensurate with its local catchment and its development as an employment and education hub (having regard to its role vis-à-vis Clermont Campus).</p>
<b>Level 3 Town and/or District Centres &amp; Sub-County Town Centres (Key Service Centres)</b>	
<p><b>Greystones</b> <b>Arklow</b> <b>Blessington</b> <b>Baltinglass</b> <b>Rathdrum</b> <b>Newtownmountkennedy</b></p>	<p>These centres will vary both in the scale of provision and the size of catchment, due to proximity to a Major or County Town Centre, i.e. Bray or Wicklow Town. Generally where the centre has a large catchment (e.g. market town in a rural area) and is not close to a larger centre, there will be a good range of comparison shopping, though no large department stores or shopping centres, with a mix of retail types benefiting from lower rents away from larger urban sites, leisure / cultural facilities and a range of cafes and restaurants.</p> <p>Addressing vacancy on Main Streets, increasing vibrancy and footfall is a key concern for many of these towns. There is potential to increase the range of independent retailers within the retail core areas. Supermarkets and smaller scale department stores are required to meet local needs. It would be expected that financial and other services (banks and building societies) would be located alongside other retail services creating an active and busy centre. They should have high quality access from public transport where the centres are</p>

within the built up area; and also strong links to the built fabric so that walking and cycling to the centre from the immediate catchment is an attractive option. Where the centre is close to an existing major centre (as is the case with Greystones), the scale of retail and mixed provision is lower, with the town / centre range of shops meeting more basic day to day needs and only small scale range of comparison units trading.

Such towns / centres would generally range in size from 10-25,000sqm of lettable retail space catering for a population of 10,000- 40,000.

This level is broken into two tiers for the purpose of this strategy, as the five towns in this level are not uniform in their size or function, but yet all are appropriately located in Level 3. Arklow, Blessington, Baltinglass and Rathdrum, while being very different in size, are all similar in the sense that they serve a wide catchment and are sufficiently distant from Bray or Wicklow Town, so as to make them the principal shopping destination in their areas. These towns are somewhat different from Greystones and Newtownmountkennedy, which are both within reasonable distance of Bray and which serve more localised catchments, but due to their planned growth, require a high level of retail provision.

### **Arklow**

Arklow is the main centre located in the south of the County. The centre provides for the service needs of its residents and a large geographical catchment extending to Avoca, Auhgrim, Redcross, a significant rural population, and to some extent to Tinahely/Shillelagh/Carnew area (although some expenditure is lost from these centres to Gorey and Carlow). It is the vision that Arklow will be the principal shopping and service destination for this wide catchment area. This traditional status as a strong market town has been reinforced by the development of the Bridgewater Centre. Under the 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DECLG, 2012), Arklow is identified amongst the sub-regional settlements which perform important sub-regional retailing functions including the major national retailing chains.

It is a priority of the Planning Authority to facilitate new mixed use/retail developments particularly within the 'old' town centre / traditional Main Street area, which has suffered decline since the development of the Bridgewater Centre and concentration of convenience based supermarkets on the Wexford Road. The regeneration of vacant town centre sites is likely to improve the vitality and viability of the traditional town centre. In particular, the regeneration of the 'Alps' site and the strip including 'Kitty's Pub', 'Morgan Doyle' and 'Marine Hotel' sites, provide particular opportunities to improve the vitality of the main street.

### **Greystones**

The catchment of Greystones extends to Kilcoole, Newcastle and Newtownmountkennedy. While there is scope for expansion of comparison space into the future, the level of provision should be mainly for more local needs, in order to ensure that the roles of Bray or Wicklow Town as Level 2 centres are not compromised. Due to its proximity to Bray, the scale of retail and mixed provision is likely to be lower than other Level 3 towns, for example Arklow.

The scale of retail comparison in Greystones is relatively limited as a result of the town's proximity to Bray. Greystones has a number of boutiques and small independent shops. There is potential to capitalise on the town's unique characteristics, enhance the diversity of uses and develop its retail experience and appeal.

There is particular scope for the centre to provide services for residents and visitors that tap into the leisure and recreation market, based on its coastal location and facilities including the harbour, beaches, coastal paths such as Cliff Walk and complementary service outlets including shops, restaurants, coffee shops etc. The opportunity exists to expand retail uses

	<p>onto lands earmarked for development in the South Beach Action Plan (Greystones-Delgany and Kilcoole LAP).</p> <p><b>Blessington</b></p> <p>This town provides retail services to a wide rural catchment. The town is relatively well served by convenience shops including Supervalu, Aldi and Dunnes Stores. The comparison offer is more limited and provided by small independent shops on the Main Street, a small number of new shops in the new town centre development and the comparison element of the Dunnes Stores unit. It is the vision that Blessington will be the principal shopping and service destination for its wide catchment area.</p> <p><b>Baltinglass</b></p> <p>Baltinglass is a strong rural market town with a large rural hinterland. It is the vision that Baltinglass will be the principal shopping and service destination for this wide catchment area. Baltinglass has a relatively good retail offer in the town centre, but does suffer from high levels of vacancy. There is potential for an additional convenience retail store in the town centre and additional independent retail units along the Main Street. The town has a strong, distinctive urban structure and attractive historic streetscape which should be protected and enhanced.</p> <p><b>Rathdrum</b></p> <p>Rathdrum is located some distance from Wicklow and Arklow and therefore serves a relatively wide rural catchment. The town requires a level of retail provision to meet the needs of this rural population in addition to the needs of the current and future local population. It is considered that the town is underprovided for in terms of retail facilities. There is scope to increase convenience and comparison retail. The town benefits from an attractive, historic town core and this should be retained and enhanced. The town has the potential to expand its tourism retail offer having regard to its location adjacent to the Wicklow Mountains National Park and Avondale Forest Park.</p> <p><b>Newtownmountkennedy</b></p> <p>Newtownmountkennedy has a reasonable level of retail relative to its size and taking into account its proximity to Bray and Wicklow. However, taking into account the increasing population in the settlement, there is scope to strengthen the town centre, increase the retail offer and to provide additional retail units along the Main Street. The focus of any new development needs to be on strengthening the urban structure of the town centre and creating a vibrant Main Street.</p>
--	--

<b>Level 4 Neighbourhood Centres, Local Centres – Small Towns</b>	
<p><b>Small Towns</b> Ashford, Aughrim, Avoca, Carnew, Donard, Dunlavin, Enniskerry, Kilcoole, Kilmacanogue, Newcastle, Rathnew, Roundwood, Shillelagh, Tinahely.</p> <p><b>Neighbourhood Centres:</b> As identified in the Local Area Plans for the larger settlements of Bray, Wicklow Town, Greystones – Delgany, Arklow</p> <p>The designation of neighbourhood centres within</p>	<p>These towns and villages provide basic convenience shopping, either in small supermarkets or convenience shops and in some cases provide small scale comparison shopping, for example local hardware shops, retail pharmacies and clothes shops.</p> <p>While the GDA Retail Strategy generally considers that these centres will normally provide for one supermarket ranging in size from 1,000-2,500sqm with a limited range of supporting shops (one or two low range clothes shops with grocery, chemist etc) and retail services (hairdressers, dry cleaners), cafes and possibly other services such as post offices, community facilities or health clinics, it is considered necessary to make a distinction in Wicklow between the type and quantum of retail envisaged in neighbourhood centres in the larger settlements and that envisaged for small towns.</p> <p>A neighbourhood centre comprises a small group of shops, typically comprising newsagent, small supermarket / general grocery store, sub-post office and other small shops of a local nature serving a small, localised catchment population. The function of a Neighbourhood</p>



<p>other towns is a matter for the relevant local plan.</p>	<p>Centre is to provide a range of convenient and easily accessible retail outlets and services within walking distance for the local catchment population. Neighbourhood centres generally only occur in the larger settlements of the County, e.g. Bray, Wicklow, Arklow and Greystones, at a location within the settlement boundary but remote from the core retail area.</p> <p>The retail provision in small towns would be expected to be more extensive, including one supermarket / two medium sized convenience stores (up to 1,000sqm aggregate) and perhaps 10-20 smaller shops. These towns can be expected to provide a similar function in terms of providing for the day to day shopping and service needs of the local population. Small towns should be the main service centre in the rural area, providing a range of facilities, shops and services, at a scale appropriate to the needs and size of their catchment. Encouragement shall be given to uses which support the community and help solidify the role of the centre as an important local centre such as medical clinics, social services, pharmacies, cafes and post offices. They should where possible provide a focus for economic development and rural-based industries, including markets for locally-produced food and other products.</p> <p>Established Neighbourhood Centres in Greystones and Bray include full-scale supermarkets at Bellevue Road and Vevay Road respectively, with a new neighbourhood centre of Bray Southern Cross opened in 2021. In addition in Greystones there are smaller supermarkets at Blacklion, Mill Road and Charlesland in the 800m<sup>2</sup> to 1,200m<sup>2</sup> range. While such sites seem larger than neighbourhood centres, they do not fit into the definition of District Centres (the next category in the hierarchy), which are defined in the Retail Planning Guidelines as 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or 20,000m<sup>2</sup> in the Dublin Metropolitan Area. Accordingly, in a limited number of sub town core sites in Bray, Greystones, Arklow and Wicklow-Rathnew larger foodstores may be considered, based on the need to service considerable tranches of new housing. The scale of the convenience outlet will be dictated by the overall size of the town, the catchment of the neighbourhood centre and its distance to the town core.</p> <p>Lands identified for new neighbourhood centres will generally be identified in local plans which may include policies on the scale and nature of floorspace to be provided. New/expanded neighbourhood centres shall generally only be considered where the following requirements are satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the scale of development allowed within a neighbourhood centres should not undermine the retail hierarchy and the designated role of town centres as the principal shopping areas;</li> <li>▪ the location of the development is sufficiently separated from the core retail area of the settlement as to warrant new retail facilities;</li> <li>▪ the scale of the existing/new residential development is such to sustain a neighbourhood centre;</li> <li>▪ the range of retail and non-retail services to be provided is appropriate to the needs of the area; and</li> <li>▪ all efforts have been made to integrate the neighbourhood centre with any existing / new community facilities due to be provided as part of the scheme e.g. schools, childcare facilities, sports fields etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 5 Corner Shops / Villages</b></p>	
<p>Glenealy Grangecon Hollywood Kiltegan Knockananna Laragh Redcross Stratford-on-Slaney</p>	<p>These centres serve an immediate catchment. The shops in these settlements meet the basic day to day needs of surrounding residents, whether as rural foci points close to other community facilities such as the local primary schools, post office and GAA club or as a terrace of shops within a suburb.</p> <p>It is important to protect existing facilities which provide for people’s day to day shopping needs and seek to remedy deficiencies to avoid social exclusion and isolation. Encouragement will therefore be given to uses which support the community and help solidify the role of the village as an important local centre such as medical clinics, social services, pharmacies, cafes and post offices.</p>

	<p>Retail uses expected include one or two small convenience stores, newsagents and potentially other tertiary services such as butcher/vegetable shops, public house, hairdressers and other similar basic retail services; with the retail element in total ranging approximately from 500sqm – 1,500sqm of lettable space.</p> <p>Within urban areas these centres vary in scale from one corner shop to small local centres that provide a small number of retail/retail service units. The size of units within small local centres shall generally be limited to a maximum of c.150m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area. These centres are not appropriate for the provision of a supermarket.</p>
--	--

It is important where large areas of new housing are planned that new retail centres are provided in tandem with the housing at a scale appropriate to meeting the regular convenience and lower order comparison shopping needs of these new communities. The scale of such retail facilities should be sufficient to cater for the needs of the new residential community but should not be of a scale that it will detract from the town centre.

#### 10.2.4 Retail Formats

Table 10.2 outlines the retail formats expected in each level of the retail hierarchy and provides an indication of the scale and level of retail provision within the different settlements.

**Table 10.2 Retail Formats**

	HIGHER ORDER COMPARISON	MIDDLE ORDER COMPARISON	LOWER ORDER COMPARISON	SUPER-STORE	SUPER-MARKET
<b>METROPOLITAN CENTRE</b>	√	√	√	√	√
<b>MAJOR TOWN CENTRES &amp; COUNTY TOWN CENTRES</b>	√	√	√	√	√
<b>TOWN &amp; SUB COUNTY TOWN CENTRES</b>		√	√	√	√
<b>LOCAL CENTRES – SMALL TOWNS &amp; VILLAGES</b>			√		√

Retail warehousing should be directed into the key towns of Bray and Wicklow Town. Arklow may also be considered suitable for retail warehousing. However, any such development should not be permitted where there are concerns it would undermine the viability and vitality of the town centre. Having regard to the proximity of Blessington and Greystones to major town centres (Naas and Bray respectively), these settlements are not considered an appropriate location for retail warehousing. Baltinglass, Rathdrum and Newtownmountkennedy in addition to settlements that are on lower tiers of the retail hierarchy are not considered suitable for retail warehousing.

#### 10.2.5 Sequential Approach

It is the policy of Wicklow County Council to apply the sequential approach to the location of retail development. This is required to ensure the retention of activity within the main retail centres or core areas at the expense of more peripheral edge of centre or out of centre locations. There is a presumption against out of town retail centres that could impact on the viability and vitality of town centres and which could generate unsustainable travel patterns. Core areas are the most suitable locations for high-order and comparison goods as they are generally the

most accessible for the catchment population and can also provide a compact and sustainable critical mass of commercial activity and public amenities, thereby reducing the need to travel.

Retailers should be flexible in appraising potential sites and buildings and standard retail formats should be adapted to accommodate retail schemes on sites and in buildings that are well located in the context of the sequential approach to retail development. Only in cases where it is not possible, having examined in detail all the options available within the town centre, should consideration be given to a site on the edge of the town.

The sequential approach is also applicable to proposals for extensions or material change of use of existing development where the proposed use could have a significant impact on the role and function of the town centre.

### 10.2.6 Edge of Centre Retailing

Where, following the application of the sequential approach, the consideration of an edge of centre site becomes necessary, it is necessary to ensure that the site is within walking distance of the town centre, i.e. generally no further than 400 metres. The local context must be given due consideration particularly in terms of any potential barriers to connectivity, for example a railway line or river. A site that is physically separated from the centre and that is not easily accessible will not be considered appropriate for retail development. The connection between the proposed site and the town centre should be safe, attractive to pedestrians and generally appealing to ensure that it becomes a natural extension to the town centre. In addition to the physical linkage, the degree of functionality between the site and the town centre will also form part of the assessment. As outlined in the Retail Planning Guidelines, people may be more willing to walk between an edge of centre site and the town centre if there are strong complementary attractions and the route itself provides focus and interest. The ability of the proposed development to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre will be a key determinant in the assessment of any edge of centre retail proposal.

### 10.2.7 Quality of Design

New retail development will be required to demonstrate compliance with Retail Planning Guidelines (DoECLG 2012) and the 10 design principles set out in the Retail Design Manual.

Key Principles of Urban Design	
<b>Design Quality</b>	Design quality contributing to making places that are attractive, inclusive, durable and adaptable places to live, work, shop and visit.
<b>Site &amp; Location</b>	Healthy city and town centres contributing to the proper planning and sustainable development of their locations.
<b>Context &amp; Character</b>	Regard for the character and the physical, social and economic contexts of the site and its location.
<b>Vitality &amp; Viability</b>	Vitality and viability in city and town centres that are attractive and competitive places to live, work, shop and visit.
<b>Access &amp; Connectivity</b>	City and town centres that are accessible and well-connected, easy to get to and convenient to move about.
<b>Density &amp; Mixed use</b>	Higher density and mixed use development creating compact urban areas and the efficient use of land.
<b>Public Realm</b>	Well-designed and well-used open spaces contributing to a high quality public realm in the location.
<b>Built Form</b>	Built form, scale and mass contributing to a high standard of urban design and quality in the built environment.
<b>Environmental Responsibility</b>	Environmentally responsible use of energy resources to lower fuel consumption and carbon emissions.
<b>Sustainable Construction</b>	Construction materials and technologies that have regard to the circular economy and the environmental impacts of their production, transportation, use and disposal.

In accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines and the Design Manual, new retail development that is inappropriate for its context in terms of design, or that fails to realise the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area or a site, will not be accepted.

### 10.3 Retail Objectives

#### Town & Village Centres

- CPO 10.1** To ensure the continued vibrancy and vitality of town and village centres, to direct new development and investment into towns and villages in the first instance and to particularly prioritise actions that enhance business, retail, leisure, entertainment and cultural uses, as well as making town and villages centres an attractive place to live.
- CPO 10.2** To facilitate measures to improve the accessibility of centres by developing a pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment, which improves safety and limits traffic congestion where possible. It is the objective of the Council to promote accessibility to public transport. Development with a high potential for public transport utilisation by employees and visitors should be sited with ease of access to public transport facilities.

#### Retail – General

- CPO 10.3** Support the vitality and viability of existing town and village centres and facilitate a competitive and healthy retail environment by ensuring that future growth in retail floorspace responds to the identified retail hierarchy and the guidance set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG, 2012).
- CPO 10.4** To promote and facilitate the development of retail in a sustainable manner. Retail related development shall be located on suitably zoned land within settlement boundaries. There shall be a general presumption against the development of retail uses within the rural area, except as otherwise provided for by a particular objective of this plan.
- CPO 10.5** To assess all planning applications having regard to the 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' and Retail Design Manual (DoECLG 2012) unless otherwise stated herewith.
- CPO 10.6** To permit the nature and scale of retail development appropriate to enable each centre to perform its role and function as defined within the County Retail Strategy. The nature and scale of a development proposed (either by themselves or cumulatively in conjunction with other developments) in a centre shall not compromise the role or function of any other centre within the hierarchy, in particular the role and function of a centre that is of a higher level in the hierarchy above that which is being considered.
- CPO 10.7** To require the submission of a Retail Impact Assessment and Traffic and Transport Assessment in any circumstance where the information is required to enable the proper assessment of a development proposal vis-à-vis the objectives of the development plan. In particular, these assessments are likely to be required for significant retail development which, due to their nature, scale and location, may impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. Retail Impact Assessments / Traffic and Transport Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set

out in the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2012 and relevant Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines<sup>3</sup>.

## Retail – Town Centres

**CPO 10.8** To vigorously protect and promote the vitality and viability of town centres. Development proposals not according with the fundamental objective to support the vitality and viability of town centre sites must demonstrate compliance with the ‘sequential approach’ before they can be approved. The ‘sequential approach’ shall be applied and assessed in accordance with the ‘Retail Planning Guidelines, (DoECLG, 2012)’<sup>4</sup>. The Planning Authority will discourage new retail development if they would either by themselves or cumulatively in conjunction with other developments seriously damage the vitality and viability of existing retail centres within the County. In the application of the ‘sequential approach’ due regard shall be paid to **CPO 10.9** below which prioritises the ‘core retail area’ for new retail development.

**CPO 10.9** To promote developments which reinforce the role and function of the ‘core retail area’ as the prime shopping area of town centres. The ‘core retail area’ shall be promoted as the area of first priority for new retail development. Where an application is made for a new development with street frontage within the defined retail core area of a town centre, retail or commercial use will normally be required at street level. In settlements where no ‘core retail area’ is defined<sup>5</sup>, new retail development shall be directed into the ‘town or village centre’ area, the location of the traditional/historical centre and the location of other retail units. Outside of the ‘core retail area’ of larger settlements and in smaller settlements where no ‘core retail area’ is defined, other uses including residential will be permitted including at street level; any such development should provide a strong street frontage and respect the traditional structure of town and village centres.

**CPO 10.10** New retail developments in town centres will be required to provide proximate and easily accessible car and cycle parking or to make a financial contribution towards car parking where it has been or will be provided by the Local Authority. Large scale retail developments should include a Mobility Management Plans which prioritise sustainable mobility options and inform the layout of the development to create a pedestrian and cyclist friendly urban environment.

## Retail – Uses

**CPO 10.11** To promote the revitalisation of vacant / derelict properties / shop units. Where no viable retail use can be sustained, alternative uses will be assessed on their own merits against the requirements of the proper planning and sustainable development of the areas within which they are located. This objective will be used to ensure that all proposals for the reuse of existing retail floorspace can be evaluated against the proportion of overall vacancy and to reduce the possibility of dereliction.

**CPO 10.12** To manage the provision of non retail uses at ground floor level within the retail core area of town centres in order to protect the retail viability of centres and to maintain the visual character of streets. This objective aims to prevent the proliferation of ‘dead frontages’ on key streets. In particular, active use of corner sites, particularly within larger centres, is considered pivotal in creating a sense of vibrancy.

<sup>3</sup> Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2014) and Planning Guidelines on Spatial Planning and National Roads (DECLG, 2012)

<sup>4</sup> In short, the order of priority for the sequential approach is to locate retail development in the city/town centre and only to allow retail development in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations where all other options have been exhausted. Refer to guidelines for full description.

<sup>5</sup> A retail core area is not identified in the Level 5, 6 and 7 settlements as per the settlement hierarchy.

**CPO 10.13** To promote an appropriate mix and balance of different types and styles of retail within centres and to control the number of bookmakers, off-licences (including off-licences in convenience stores), take-aways, 'cash for gold' and 'Pound' type shops, and other uses that can adversely affect the character of a centre. The mix and balance of different type of retail (including retail services) is important to attract people to centres, and to ensure centres remain the main meeting point for the community. Too many of certain types of outlet can destroy the balance of a centre.

**CPO 10.14** Conscious of the fact that planning has an important role to play in promoting and facilitating active and healthy living patterns for local communities, the following criteria will be taken into account in the assessment of development proposals for fast food/takeaway outlets<sup>6</sup>, including those with a drive through facility:

- Exclude any new fast-food / takeaway outlets from being built or from operating within 400m of the gates or site boundary of schools or playgrounds, excluding premises zoned town centre / village / neighbourhood centre;
- Fast food outlets/takeaways with proposed drive through facilities will generally only be acceptable within Major Town Centres or District Centres and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis;
- Location of vents and other external services and their impact on adjoining amenities in terms of noise/smell/visual impact.

### Retail – Opportunity Sites

**CPO 10.15** To facilitate the identification, promotion and development of key town centre opportunity sites.

- Opportunity sites are prime sites within a town, which are under-utilised in terms of their development potential, and as such they should be revitalised.
- The sites can be located at critical gateways or entry points to the town, and as such can be highly visible and may be suitable for 'landmark' type buildings. As the development of these sites will help set the tone for the town and influence the public perception of it, a high quality of urban design and innovation will be required at these locations.
- Opportunity sites are to be the subject of comprehensive (not piecemeal) integrated schemes of development that allow for sustainable, phased and managed development.
- Opportunity sites are identified within local area/town/settlement plans.

### Retail - Design

**CPO 10.16** To promote quality design in all retail development, in accordance with the design principles set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 and companion document 'Retail Design Manual' (DoAHG, 2012), including the guidance set out in the 'Development and Design Standards' appended to this plan.

**CPO 10.17** To give positive consideration to the re-configuration of existing retail provision in Levels 2, 3 and 4 in order to accommodate the demands of modern retailing.

**CPO 10.18** In certain circumstances, the Planning Authority may allow for a relaxation in certain development standards within centres, in the interest of achieving the best development possible, both visually and functionally.

**CPO 10.19** To promote quality design and materials in the development of shopfronts.

<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of CPO 10.14, "fast food/takeaway outlet" shall mean any outlet whose business will primarily be the sale of hot or otherwise prepared food that is high in fat, salt or sugar (such food being heated or prepared on the premises comprising of the outlet) for consumption on or off the premises comprising of the outlet.

## Retail – ‘Out of Town’ Centres

**CPO 10.20** There shall be a general presumption against large out-of-town retail centres in particular those located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads/motorways.

## Retail Warehousing<sup>7</sup>

**CPO 10.21** To strictly control and limit additional new retail warehousing / retail park floorspace in the County. Retail warehouse developments shall be required to locate on suitably zoned lands and where determined acceptable may be considered in the following settlements only: Bray, Wicklow Town and Arklow. The Planning Authority will adopt a precautionary approach in the determination of proposals for retail warehousing. Any application for retail warehousing will be carefully assessed in view of the significant levels of recent provision across the region and will only be permitted where it is proven that the proposal will not impact adversely on the vitality and viability of established town centres. All applications shall be determined having regard to the ‘Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DoECLG, 2012).

The Planning Authority will strictly control the size of units and type of goods sold in Retail Warehouses in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2012). This may be controlled through the application of conditions. The Guidelines apply a cap of 6,000m<sup>2</sup> gross (including any ancillary garden centre) on large-scale single retail warehouse units, except in exceptional circumstances. Conditions may be attached restricting internal expansion by the construction of 1<sup>st</sup> floors or mezzanines. Conditions may be attached preventing the subdivision of retail warehouse units, e.g. preventing the subdivision of retail warehouse units into stores less than 700m<sup>2</sup> in out of centre locations, or coalescence of two or more stores.

Retail warehouses shall generally only be considered as part of planned retail warehouse parks, which combine access arrangements and car parking. Single retail warehouse units may be considered on infill sites in built up areas and flexibility with regard to the type of goods sold may be considered where the location is easily accessible by foot from the core retail area.

## Retail – Large Convenience Goods Stores

**CPO 10.22** To allow for the development of large convenience goods stores on suitably zoned land and to determine proposals having regard to the ‘Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DoECLG, 2012).

Convenience retail floorspace caps shall be applied in accordance with ‘*Section 2.4.1 Convenience retail floorspace caps*’ of the Retail Planning Guidelines (DoECLG, 2012). The guidelines indicate a cap of 3,000m<sup>2</sup> net for County Wicklow.

The planning application drawings should clearly delineate the floorspace to be devoted primarily for the sale of convenience goods. To prevent any adverse impact on town centres, the Planning Authority will generally limit the proportion of comparison goods floorspace within large convenience goods stores that are located outside of Core Retail Areas, to a maximum of 20% of the retail floor area. Any proposal in excess of the 20% limit shall be considered on its merits and in

<sup>7</sup> A retail warehouse is a large single level store specializing in the sale of bulky household goods such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods, and bulky DIY items, catering mainly for car-borne customers. A retail park is a single development of at least three retail warehouses with associated car parking.

particular having careful regard to the impact of a proposal on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

### **Retail – Neighbourhood Centres**

**CPO 10.23** Within neighbourhood centres, it is the objective of the Planning Authority to protect, provide for, and improve the mix of neighbourhood centre services and facilities, which provide for the day-to-day needs of the local community, to a degree that is akin to their role and function as outlined in the Retail Strategy. Development which would undermine the role of the town centre will not be permitted.

### **Retail – Local Convenience Shops**

**CPO 10.24** To facilitate the provision of local retail units in residential areas where there is a clear deficiency of retail provision, subject to protecting residential amenity.

### **Retail – Small Towns and Villages**

**CPO 10.25** Small scale retail development appropriate to the scale and needs of the settlement and its catchment will be positively considered subject to the following control criteria:

- there shall be a clear presumption in favour of central or edge of centre locations for new development, i.e. the traditional historical centre;
- out of centre locations will not be considered suitable for new retail;
- new development shall be designed with the utmost regard to the historical pattern of development in the centre and the prevailing character, with particular regard to building form, height and materials and shall generally be required to incorporate a traditional shop front.

### **Retail – Rural (outside settlements)**

**CPO 10.26** Rural shops, not connected (either functionally or spatially) to any settlement shall not be considered other than:

- a retail unit which is ancillary to activities arising from farm diversification;
- a retail unit designed to serve tourist or recreational facilities, and secondary to the main use;
- a small scale retail unit attached to an existing or approved craft workshop retailing the product direct to the public; and/or
- a small scale retail unit designed to serve a dispersed rural community.

### **Retail – Tourism**

**CPO 10.27** Tourism retail<sup>8</sup> shall be facilitated at appropriate and established tourist locations, subject to the following criteria:

- the applicant must show that the tourism attraction concerned is well established and has a suitable existing flow of visitors sufficient to make a retail facility viable;
- the retail facility shall be sufficiently proximate to the tourism facility but shall be suitably located so as to not detract from the feature;
- in order to ensure that the retail unit in itself does not supersede the existing tourist attraction as the main tourism feature of an area, any application for tourism retail in excess of 200sqm shall be required to justify the need for a larger retail unit and to include proposals (to be fully implemented by the retail developer) to effectively link the retail facility

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



to the tourist attraction (both in terms of physical links<sup>9</sup> and linkage to the tourism identity / product<sup>10</sup>);

- the retail facility shall include significant links with the local tourism community in terms of providing a tourist office or tourism information and space for the sale of locally produced goods / crafts.

### Garden Centres / Nurseries

**CPO 10.28** Garden centres (i.e. the use of land, including buildings, for the cultivation, storage and/or the display and sale of horticultural products and the display and sale of related goods and equipment) shall generally be required to locate on zoned land in settlements. Garden centres shall only be considered outside settlements where it can be shown that the principal activity is the cultivation of plants and the retail activity is purely ancillary to the main use. In such cases, retail space shall not be expected to exceed 500sqm (indoor and outdoor retail sales area) and car parking shall be restricted to that strictly required to serve the permitted retail area.

### Outlet Centres

**CPO 10.29** There shall be a general presumption against out-of-town regional shopping facilities, in particular those located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads/motorways; however, specialist outlet centres may be considered where the following criteria are met:

- due regard shall be paid to the Retail Strategy and Retail Planning Guidelines;
- the developer can show through rigorous retail impact assessment that the proposed centre will not divert trade from either the City centre or major / County towns and that the centre will not absorb such a quantum of retail floorspace in the County so as to undermine the continued growth and viability of existing County settlements;
- the site is located contiguous to a higher order town (i.e. Levels 1-3) and is not located in an isolated rural area, distant from major centres of population;
- the site is located where existing frequent public transport is available or where a short shuttle type connection can be made to rail or light rail system (to be funded by the developer);
- the retail facility shall be designed, developed and managed to provide opportunities for commercial synergy between an outlet centre and urban centre which would lead to economic benefits for the overall area.

### Factory Shops

**CPO10.30** Proposals for factory shops shall be considered in accordance with the *'Retail Planning Guidelines for planning authorities'* (DoECLG, 2012).

### Retailing & Motor Fuel Stations

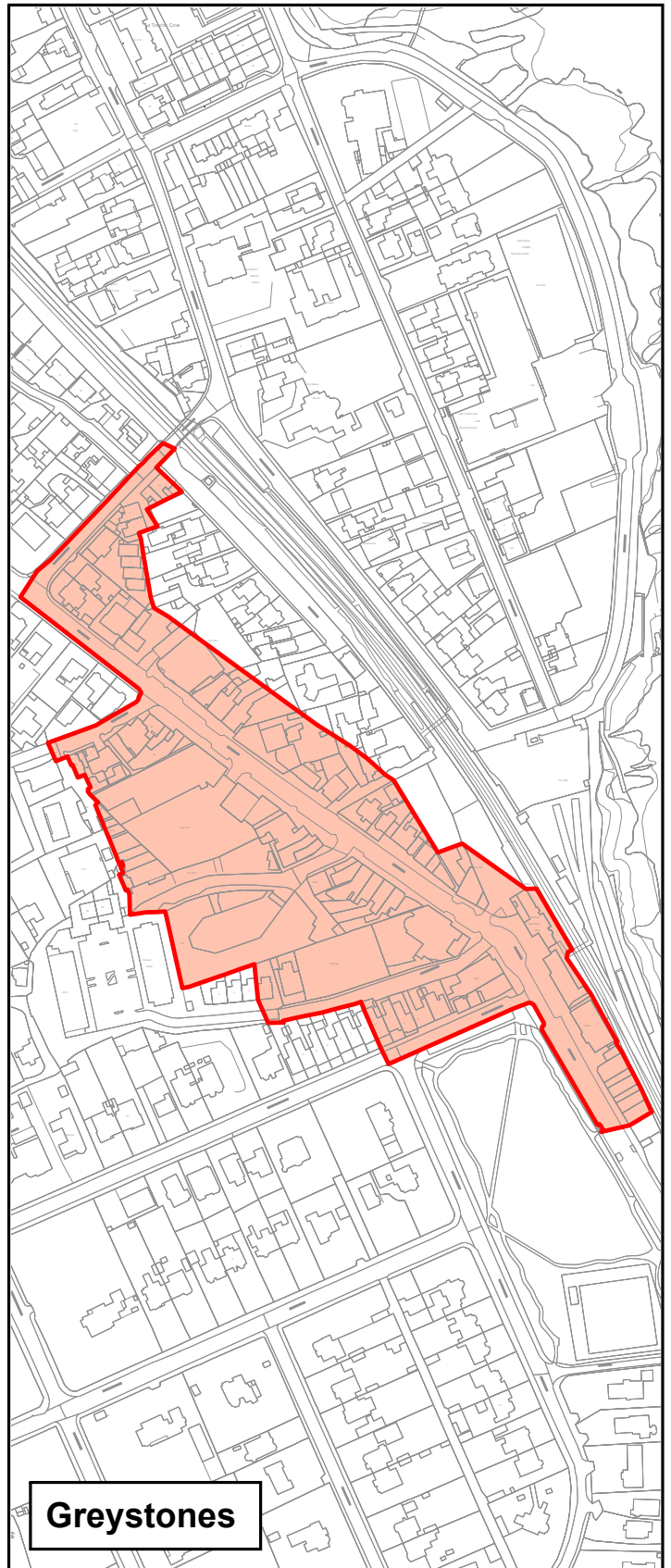
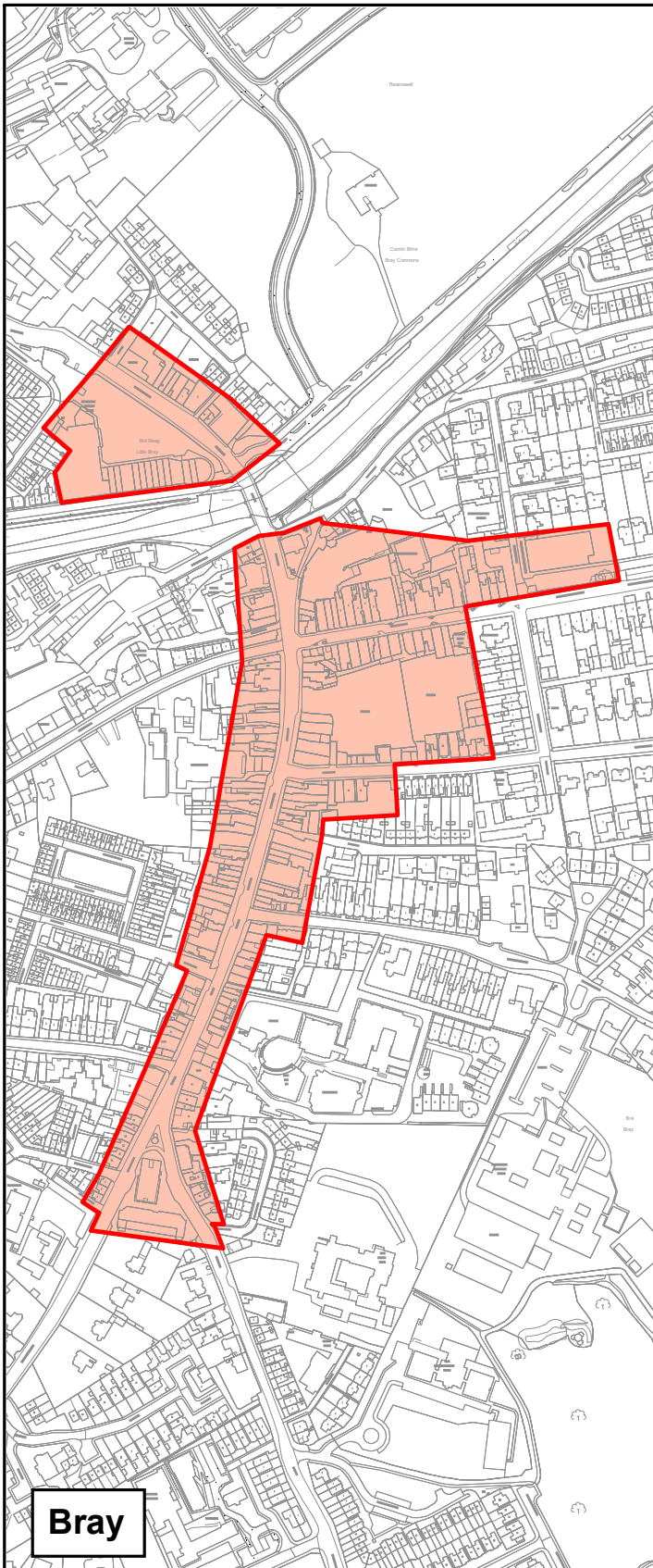
**CPO 10.31** Proposals for retailing use at motor fuel stations shall be considered in accordance with the *'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (DoECLG, 2012). Proposals for online and off line motorway service areas shall be considered in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG, 2012) and the TII Policy on Service Areas (2014 or subsequent revisions).

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

<sup>10</sup> For example joint marketing strategies, coordinated signage etc

## Casual Trading

- CPO 10.32** Proposals for casual trading developments such as farmers' markets, Christmas markets, car boot sales etc., shall be considered in accordance with the 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012).



**Core Retail Area**

**Map No. 10.01a**



**Legend**

 Core Retail Area

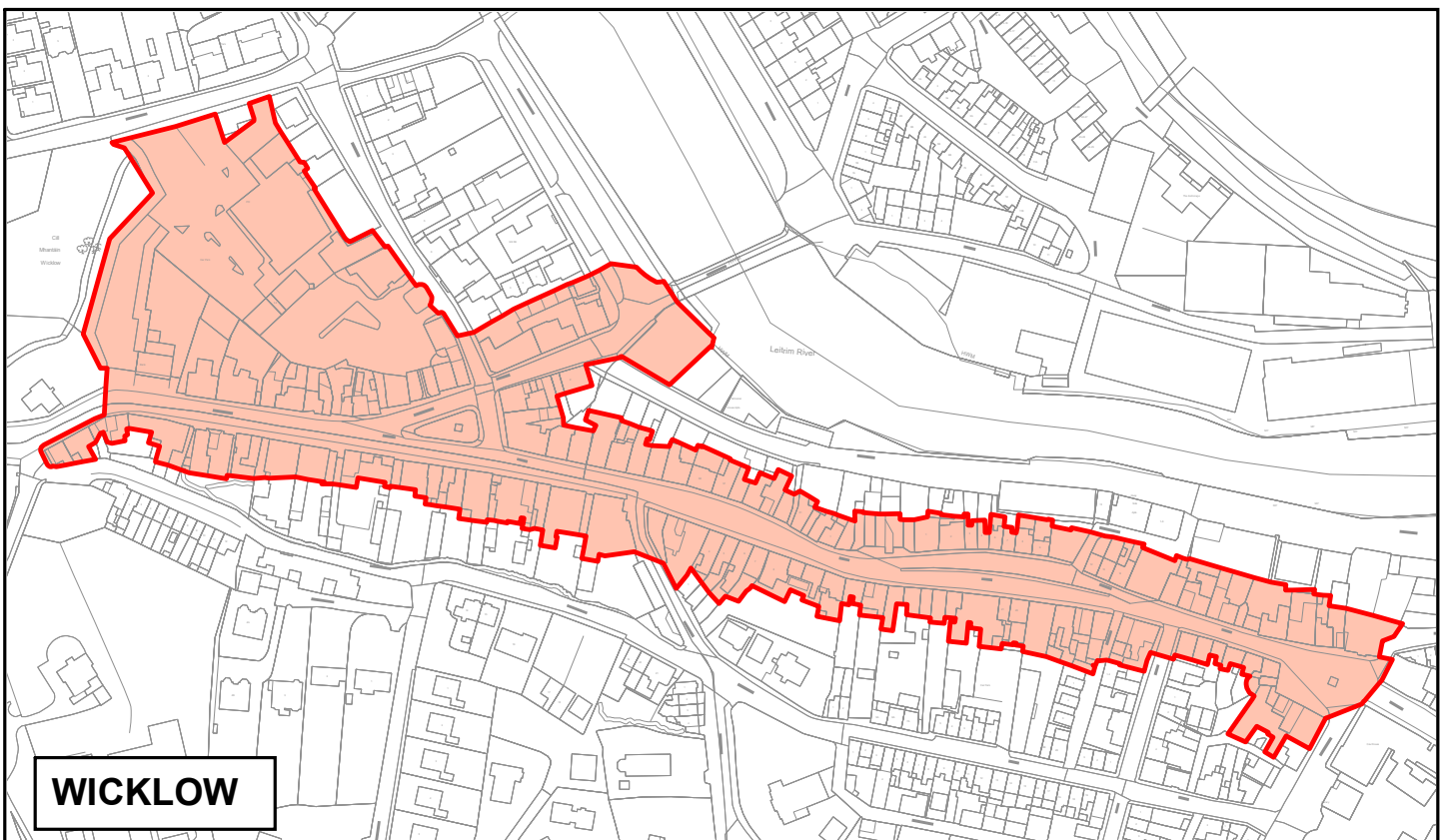
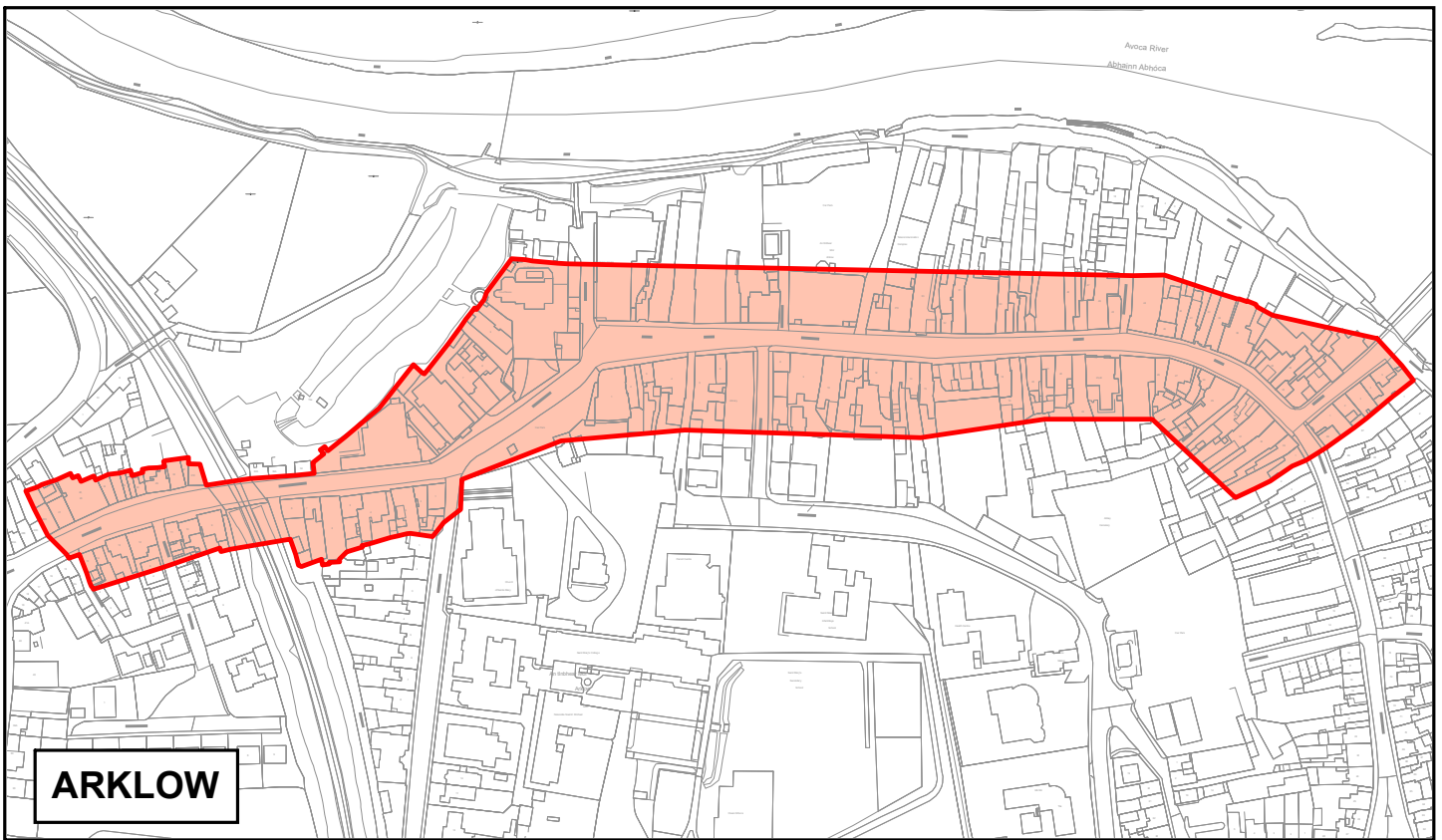
**WICKLOW COUNTY  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028**

Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department



Map not to Scale

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2022/35/CCMA/Wicklow County  
Council



**Core Retail Area**

**Map No. 10.01b**



**Legend**

 Core Retail Area

Map not to Scale

**WICKLOW COUNTY  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028**

Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department



© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2022/35/CCMA/Wicklow County  
Council

