

PART 2 Ashford Specific Objectives

2.1 Context

Ashford is situated on the eastern side of County Wicklow, approximately 21km south of the Wicklow – Dublin border, c. 6km northwest of Wicklow town, the county town and c. 4km inland of the coast. The regional road R772 passes north-south through the centre of the town, this road formerly being the N11, the national primary route from Dublin to Rosslare. This road now connects the town, via interchanges to the north and south of the town, to the new M11, which now by-passes the town (opened in 2004), and to Wicklow town via Rathnew to the southeast.

The town is also connected by regional roads R763 and R764 to Roundwood and Annamoe to the west and by local roads to the surrounding rural areas and the village of Glenealy to the southwest. Due to these links, the town has strong connections to Wicklow, Rathnew and Glenealy in terms of shared services, parish affiliations and schools.

The River Vartry passes through the town from west to east, which drains to the Murrough, a, EU protected wetlands site running along much of the northern coastline of County Wicklow. The river forms a valley through the centre of the town, with higher lands surrounding the valley to the southwest, northwest, and northeast. The flow in the river is constrained further upstream by the Vartry Dam and rarely experiences serious flood events.

Historically the settlement developed in two poles around Ballinalea and Nun's cross, avoiding the central valley along the river. During the 20th century, the town grew in three main areas – along the main road (N11), at Ballinalea (such that these two areas effectively combined), and around Nun's Cross. A GAA pitch was developed in the centre of the town on the west side of the main road, just south of the bridge. Commercial and retail development was focussed on the N11 – Roundwood Road junction (route out towards Nun's Cross) and along both sides of the main street. Due to the location on the N11, a number of petrol stations were developed. The town was by-passed to the east in 2004, with Inchanappa House, Mount Usher and Rosanna House now located to the west of the motorway. The old N11 was redesignated a regional road, which carries significantly reduced traffic volumes.

On the steeper lands around the town, development has generally been limited to lower density housing while the denser housing areas are now found around Ballinalea on the southern side of the settlement and in Ballinahinch on the northern side.

The town core of Ashford has developed in a disjointed manner overtime with a lack of a consistent and continuous streetscape and sense of place due mainly to the presence of petrol stations, large car parks and the gap created by the GAA pitch in the middle of the town.

In recognition of the above, this plan has aimed to consolidate the existing built pattern in Ashford by maximising the potential of large sites within the town core in order to create a distinct streetscape capable of meeting Ashford's function as a town serving its immediate and wider hinterland population. The designation of specific lands for residential development has been provided in a manner that facilitates greater connectivity between the village core and the existing developed lands within the plan area. Sufficient lands have been zoned in order to meet the population targets as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

2.2 Overall Vision & Development Strategy

A key aim of a Town Plan is to set out the vision and development strategy for the future development of a settlement and from this vision, all policies and objectives can be developed and implemented with the overall aim of achieving this vision. The vision and development strategy must be consistent with the 'Core Strategy' of the County Development Plan and reflect the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of Ashford.

The vision for Ashford is:

- To ensure a high-quality living environment for existing and future residents.
- To provide a framework for the moderate growth of the town, in order to provide housing for current and future generations, to revitalise the economy of the town, and to allow improvements of social and community facilities.
- Sustain a revitalised town centre with commercial, residential, and community developments forming a new streetscape along the R772.
- Create increased connectivity between a revitalised town core and the existing and proposed residential areas within the town.
- Facilitate and encourage the integration of the River Vartry as a key feature in the redevelopment of the town centre, maximising its potential as a local amenity.
- Promote and foster economic development and linkages to surrounding larger settlements within and outside the County.
- Develop the tourism potential of the area as a visitor/ tourist destination in itself and in its role as a 'gateway' linking the east and southeast of the County and the Wicklow Mountains.
- Protect the built and natural heritage of the area.
- Facilitate a transition to a low carbon settlement.

In recognition of the historical pattern of development, the profile of the settlement, the demands of higher-order strategies and the vision for the town set out above, the development strategy is as follows:

- To reinforce and improve the visual appearance of the central area of the town and encourage development that will enhance the town's vitality and vibrancy.
- To identify key sites suitable for development in the town centre and set out design criteria capable of meeting the overall vision for the town core area.
- To plan for and encourage the provision of high-quality housing, concentrated principally around Ashford town centre and lands within 500m of the town centre.
- To plan for and encourage the development of new employment opportunities, in the form of both new mixed-use developments in the town centre and office/light industrial/warehousing development on greenfield lands to the north of the town centre.
- To facilitate and support the film industry.
- To identify and address deficits in social, community, and recreational services; to require developers to provide such facilities in tandem with new housing development where appropriate and to require the payment of development levies for the provision of such facilities by the local authority.
- To ensure that only appropriate land uses are provided on lands identified as being at risk of flooding.
- To create functional public spaces and pedestrian routes linked to new development that maximise the natural features of the area.
- To ensure the protection and enhancement of natural habitats, cultural heritage, ecological resources, and biodiversity. In particular, to safeguard the integrity of streams and watercourses which are hydrologically linked to the Murrough European site downstream.
- To facilitate and support climate action initiatives.

2.3 Residential Development

Having regard to the aggregate population target for the Level 5 plans, land is zoned for residential development to meet housing targets. All of the lands that are suitably zoned to cater for residential development are within the built up envelope of the town and therefore considered 'compact growth'.

Residential Development Objectives

ASH1 New residential development shall comply with the principles, objectives and standards set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan.

2.4 Economic Development & Employment

The strategy of this plan is to take advantage of the existing economic assets in order to stimulate employment within the area. The key assets the town has to offer are:

- proximity to the N11/M11 and the higher order town of Wicklow - Rathnew;
- the established film industry adjoining the plan area and the potential spin off tourism benefits;
- the availability of Local Authority lands earmarked for employment and enterprise;
- a large hinterland population offering a wide variety of skills;
- a strong agricultural sector; and
- sufficient water and wastewater infrastructure.

Given the town's location, situated in close proximity to the higher order settlement of Wicklow town, it is unlikely that the town can act as an attractor for a large scale employer to locate over the lifetime of the plan. Therefore it is considered likely that most new employment creation will be generated by smaller and medium sized local enterprises/service providers. Opportunities particularly exist to develop 'product-based'¹ intensive industries given the town's proximity to the national primary route, while the town's proximity to Wicklow Town offers further opportunities to foster employment linkages and spin off industries from this large employment centre. With the operation of a state of the art film studio in north Ashford, which has permission for large scale expansion, the potential to develop related and spin off enterprises arises.

With respect to tourism, the proximity of Ashford to the eastern ends of both the Sally Gap and Wicklow Gap roads mean that Ashford could provide a tourism 'gateway' role between the Wicklow Mountains and visitors coming from Dublin, east Wicklow, and the southeast of Ireland. The scenic village of Ashford is also home to the famous Mount Usher gardens which act as an attractor for tourists, giving rise to the potential for spin-off businesses, such as shops, public houses, restaurants, and guesthouses/B&Bs.

This plan will therefore make provision for the development of both local service employment in the form of light industry / small start up units and larger scale industry / employment development alongside the provision of a number of specific tourism objectives aimed at maximising the potential of this sector in Ashford.

This plan provides c. 11.5ha of greenfield zoned 'employment' land that would be suitable for various types of industries and start up businesses requiring purpose-built premises.

¹ The development of this type of industry by reason of the product based nature of the traded commodity, is dependent on ease of access to the main transportation networks.

Economic Development & Employment Objectives

- ASH2** To facilitate and support the development of Ashford Town Centre in accordance with the provisions of this plan and to encourage the development of new employment, including but not limited to retail / retail services, business support services (such as solicitors, accountants, architects, etc), start-ups etc within the TC zone.
- ASH3** To facilitate and support the development of the tourism industry in Ashford and maximise the town's location as a gateway between the tourism assets within Co. Wicklow and the east coast of Ireland.
- ASH4** To facilitate spin-off film related industries on appropriately zoned lands within the plan area that complement the existing and proposed expanded film studios to the north of the plan area.
- ASH5** To promote the development of employment lands within Ashford in accordance with the provisions of Specific Local Objective 1 as set out in Section 2.9 of this plan.
- ASH6** To improve, as funding allows, the principal access routes and junctions linking Ashford town centre to surrounding tourist attractions and strategic transport corridors.
- ASH7** To support and facilitate in co-operation with relevant bodies and landowners, the provision of tourism amenity routes around the town.

2.5 Town Centre & Retail

The commercial core of Ashford extends from a cluster of shops, cafes, and other businesses at the old N11 – Roundwood Road junction, down along the main street over the Vartry Bridge, as far south as the junction up to Ballinalea. The pattern of development within the town core is quite disjointed with large sites remaining undeveloped or underutilised. This has led to the town lacking a distinct street frontage and core for urban activity where residential, commercial and community functions can take place side by side.

The existing retailing services within the town currently fall below what is envisaged by the County Plan for an area of Ashford's size with only a small number of buildings within the town core area actively being used for retail purposes. The plan must therefore address this shortfall and be capable of facilitating the future retailing needs of the projected population. Accordingly, this plan identifies two opportunity sites, which alongside the objectives for the town centres as set out in Part 1 of this Volume and in the County Plan, shall facilitate the overall strategy for the development of Ashford town centre.

Opportunity Sites

OP 1: Lands at Inchanappa adjoining the former Garda Station

This site measures c. 0.22ha and adjoins the former Garda Station building and provides an opportunity to further enhance the street frontage opposite Ashford House.



Objectives

- The subject lands shall be developed as an extension to the main street and provide for an active street frontage, designed in a manner that is in keeping with the surrounding developments in this area;
- The development of these lands shall include the provision of a pedestrian/cycle crossing, and the overall layout and design shall be laid in a manner that facilitates a passively supervised pedestrian/cycle route to the adjoining zoned open space lands to the immediate north.

OP 2: The Mart Site

This site measures 0.98ha and provides an opportunity to develop a large area of back lands within the town centre of Ashford, while maintaining / providing a new street fronting building.

**Objectives**

- To provide for a mix of uses capable of accommodating retail/commercial/residential development. The development of the northern half of the site should provide for an active retail street frontage with ancillary retail units to the rear centred around a hard and soft landscaped public square/civic space.
- The overall development proposal for the site shall include a detailed landscaping plan. The proposed landscaping plan shall place a specific emphasis on the eastern and southern boundaries of the site in order to screen the proposed development site from Mount Usher Gardens.

2.6 Social & Community Development

The Council seeks to create an environment in which everyone can develop to their full potential to enable them to participate in and contribute to all aspects of social, economic and cultural life. While the town of Ashford has a good range of community facilities, including sports grounds, parks, indoor community and recreational facilities and primary schools, enhanced facilities are needed to accommodate the recent and planned future growth in population, particular with respect to sports grounds and education capacity.

Within the plan area, the following lands are zoned for social and community use:

Use Group	Specific Use	Zoning	Location	Area (ha)
Education/Community	Primary Education	CE	Lands at Nun's Cross	1.15
	Primary Education	CE	Lands at Inchanappa South	2
	Community Use			
	Community Use	CE	Former Garda Station	0.08
Open space	Active Open Space	AOS	Ashford GAA existing playing field	3.1
		AOS	Ashford Rovers existing playing field	1.4
		AOS	Lands at Ballinalea	4
		AOS	SLO-1	2.1
		AOS	SLO-4	1.8
		AOS	SLO-5	3.25
	Equipped Play Spaces	OS1	Ashford Community Park	0.05
	Casual Play Space	OS1	Informal Park/Walk Inchanappa	5

2.7 Service Infrastructure

To ensure that Ashford can fulfill its role within the Wicklow Core Strategy, the adequate provision of services infrastructure is essential in order for the town to develop.

Water Services

Wastewater: Ashford is served by the Wicklow Sewerage Scheme. This wastewater treatment system has a capacity of 34,000pe (population equivalent) and is operating at c. 19,000pe loading as of 2022. Therefore there is adequate capacity to meet the needs of the plan area alongside the projected populations for Wicklow and Rathnew up to 2031.

Water Supply: Ashford is served by the Wicklow Water Supply Scheme from Cronroe Reservoir. The water at Cronroe is a combination of water from the Dublin Regional Scheme at the Vartry Reservoir and groundwater abstracted and treated at the Cronroe Water Treatment Plant. Ashford Town will have sufficient water supply to meet the needs of projected population growth. Notwithstanding the availability of water supply, improvements may be required in the watermain distribution system within Ashford to serve all zoned lands.

Transportation and Movement

Public transport: Public transport to/from Ashford is provided by Bus Eireann, which provides three routes Dublin – Rosslare, Dublin – Waterford, and Dublin – Wicklow Town, with stops located along the R772. The proximity of the town to Wicklow Train Station (c. 6km) also offers opportunities to avail this rail service linking the area to Dublin and Wexford.

Walking and cycling: While the majority of the main routes in the town have footpaths, these are in need of enhancement to width and overall quality. A number of peripheral locations do not have complete footpath routes to the town centre. The vast majority of the town's roads are dedicated to the needs of motorists, in terms of width dedicated to the road carriageway and car parking. Therefore there is scope to carry out footpath widening and to provide cycleways in some locations. It is also imperative to protect the integrity of the existing pedestrian infrastructure that exists within the town and to put measures in place to reduce the instances where pathways and cycleways may become obstructed from parked vehicle.

Vehicular movement: The main street in Ashford is generally of good quality and reasonably wide, with no bottlenecks; however this plan includes an objective for a new road in Ballinahinch which could provide for alternative routes for traffic circulation in and out of the town from the R763 (Annamoe Road) and R764 (Roundwood Road), thereby reducing traffic at the existing junction and allowing for the development of proposals to improve this junction.

Service Infrastructure Objectives

ASH8 To provide for a new through road linking the R764 to the R772 (old N11) through and serving employment lands designated as SLO- 1.

ASH9 To improve/provide new footpaths, cycleways, and traffic calming on existing roads where required and to require the provision of new link roads, footpaths, and cycleways as specified in this plan in 'Action Areas' and 'Specific Local Objective' areas.

ASH10 To reserve lands zoned PU 'Public Utility' at Rosanna Upper for the development of a park-and-ride facility.

2.8 Built & Natural Heritage

There are limited buildings and items in Ashford town centre recorded for heritage value – there is only one building on the Record of Protected Structures or the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (the same building – the former Garda Station). However, surrounding the centre, are a number of important demesne houses, their grounds and their associated ancillary buildings (such as gate lodges) and architecturally and socially important historical features such as old schools houses, churches, thatched cottages, and bridges.

There are few identified archaeological sites (national monuments) in the plan area; in the main, any features that have been identified are on the grounds of the demesne houses, other than on lands just north of the national school.

In terms of natural heritage, the key feature in the settlement is the Vartry River, which is an EU protected salmonid river. This river flows to The Murrough, a protected wetland on the coast. There are no designated European or NHA sites in the settlement or very close by.

The landscape within and around Ashford is highly attractive, particularly due to its valley topography and numerous mature trees. More in-depth development is nestled well into the topography, and in more elevated areas, densities have tended to be very low which allows for excellent integration of development into the landscape.

The landscape around Ashford is designated a 'corridor area' in the Wicklow County landscape assessment, which is considered to be of 'low vulnerability'.

In formulating policies for the protection of natural heritage in the Ashford plan area, the Council will be required to give consideration to the potential impacts of development on all such sites, and the plan is accompanied by the required environmental assessments as separate documents.

The protection and enhancement of heritage assets through the plan will help to safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of Ashford and its surroundings, providing local economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Heritage Objectives

ASH11 To maintain and protect the demesne settings of Inchanappa House, Mount Usher House and Rosanna House, and to require all development proposals within or directly adjoining these demesnes to fully evaluate and address any impacts of the setting and character of these demesnes.

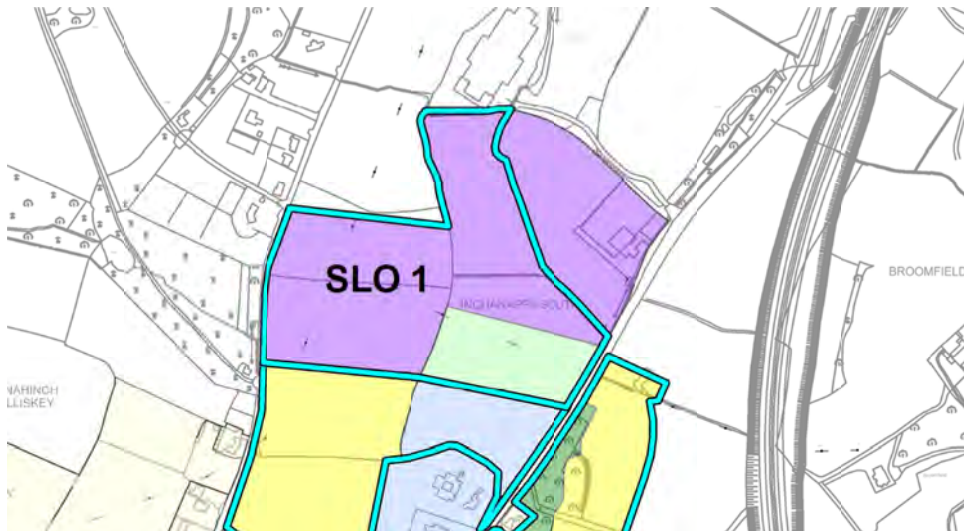
ASH12 To safeguard the integrity of streams and rivers in the plan area, in particular all watercourses that are hydrologically linked to The Murrough European site, including the use of adequate buffer zones between watercourses and proposed developments.

2.9 Specific Local Objectives

SLO-1 Inchanappa South (west of Glanbia)

This SLO area is located on lands at Inchanappa South, west of the existing Glanbia premises and north of Ashford national school. The overall action area measures c. 10.5ha, as shown below. This action area shall be delivered as an employment and community open space zone in accordance with the following criteria:

- Development of these lands shall provide a new public road linking the R764 to the R772, which will service the development of the employment zoned lands.
- Any buildings proposed along the eastern boundary of this action area shall address the R772 and be of a high-quality design and finish providing for both hard and soft landscaping in order to provide an attractive northern entrance to the town of Ashford.
- The existing stream running through these lands shall be incorporated in the overall design and layout of the action area, but it shall be left in a natural condition with a minimum set back of any development (including landscaped areas) of at least 30m on both sides.
- A minimum area of 2ha shall be developed as a sports ground (the location shown below is for indicative purposes only with the overall layout subject to detailed design), including the laying out of pitches and the construction of appropriate parking and changing room facilities. The future management/maintenance arrangements and use of this facility shall be agreed with Wicklow County Council prior to the commencement of its use.
- Only 50% of the proposed employment lands may be developed prior to the completion of the required sports facilities.

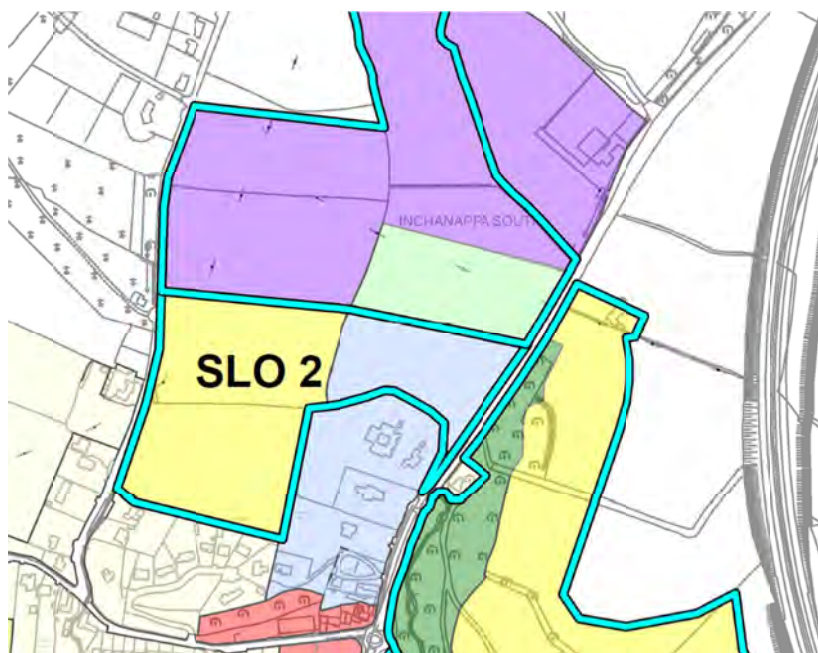


SLO-1

SLO-2 Inchanappa South (west of school)

SLO 2 lands measure c. 7ha located to the north and west of the school as shown below and are zoned for residential (5ha) and community / education use (2ha).

It is the objective of this SLO to ensure that community / education development is delivered in tandem with any residential development; in this regard however it is noted that permission was granted (via SHD process) for a residential development on these lands in 2020 not tied to the delivery of enhanced community / education development on the lands zoned for such use in the SLO. However, for the duration of this plan, no new permission or significant amendment to the existing consent, or consent for extension of duration of permission, will be considered for the residential lands until the community / education lands have been developed or devoted to a community or educational user.



SLO 2

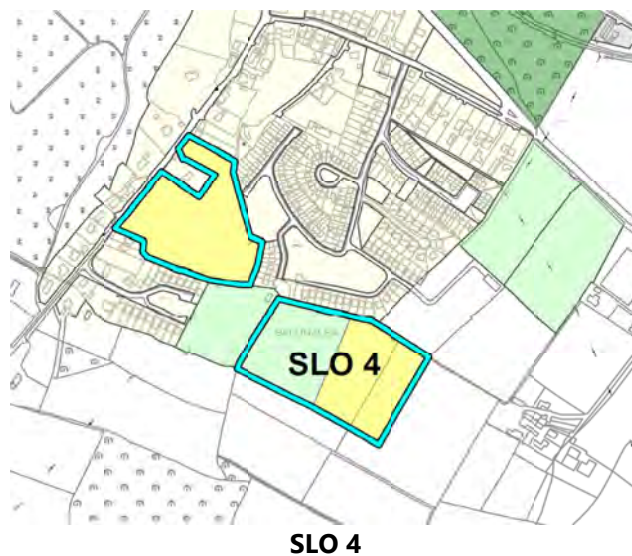
SLO-3 Ballinalea (west of Woodview)

SLO 3 is situated at Ballinalea between the Grangelea and Woodview estates fronting onto the L-1096 as shown below and measures 2.6ha. These lands shall be developed for residential purposes with the main access road being designed in a manner that facilitates a through access to the existing Ashford Rovers football grounds.



SLO-4 Ballinalea (south of Woodview)

SLO 4 is situated at Ballinalea south of the Woodview estate as shown below and measures c. 3.8ha. These lands shall be developed as a residential and open space area, subject to the AOS area being laid out and suitably developed by the landowner to be suitable for active sports use and dedicated to public / sports club use prior to commencement of any residential development.



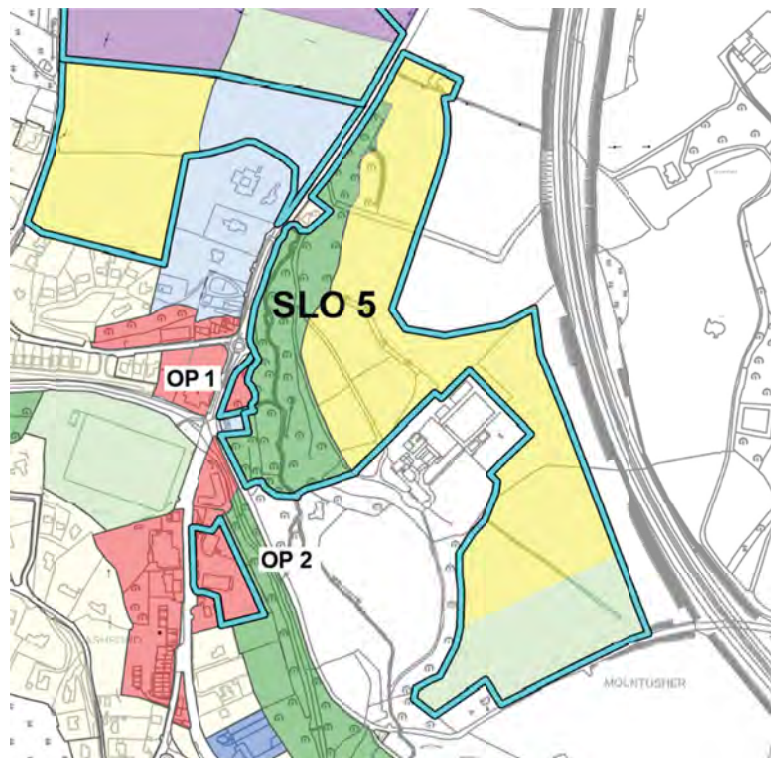
SLO-5 Inchanappa (Inchanappa House)

This SLO is located on part of the grounds of Inchanappa House that adjoin the M/N11 to the east, the R772 to the west and bounded by Inchanappa House and outbuildings to the south. The overall SLO measures c. 19.25ha, as shown below.

This SLO shall be delivered as a residential and open space development in accordance with the following criteria:

- The lands zoned 'OS1' in this SLO shall be developed as a 'community park' open to all (not just residents of this SLO) comprising woodland walks, landscaped areas, seats etc and a teenage zone and adult gym (minimum 0.4ha in area) at an easily accessible and safe location and well connected to Ashford centre;
- The lands zoned 'AOS' (or other similarly sized lands within the SLO area) shall be developed as a community sports area, including (but not limited to) playing pitches / courts etc and an indoor sports / community hall suitable for a range of sports and community uses; only a site that is well connected to Ashford village by active and sustainable transport modes will be considered for this element of the SLO;
- Only 50% of the residential element may be developed prior to the OS1 and the community sports zone (including buildings and appropriate access) on AOS being laid out and completed by the developer in manner to be agreed with Wicklow County Council and devoted to the public;
- The design and layout of the overall SLO, in particular the residential element, shall address and provide for passive supervision of the community park and amenity walks. At no point should the design or layout allow for housing backing onto this proposed public open space area.
- A pedestrian walk linking the residential area of this SLO to land designated as Opportunity Site 1 shall be provided as part of the development.
- The minimum set back of new housing development from the M11 in this SLO shall be 50m. Where housing development is proposed within 100m of the M11, the developer shall be responsible for designing, providing and maintaining suitable noise and light pollution mitigation measures.

This SLO shall be the subject of a comprehensive (not piecemeal) masterplan that allows for the sustainable, phased and managed development of the SLO area during the plan period. Separate applications for sections of the SLO will not be considered until an overall SLO masterplan has been agreed in writing with the Planning Authority unless it can be shown that any application will not undermine the achievement of the overall objectives for the area. The position, location and size of the land use zonings shown on plan maps are indicative only and may be altered in light of eventual road and service layouts, detailed design and topography, subject to compliance with the criteria set out for the SLO.



SLO-5












Ashford Town Plan

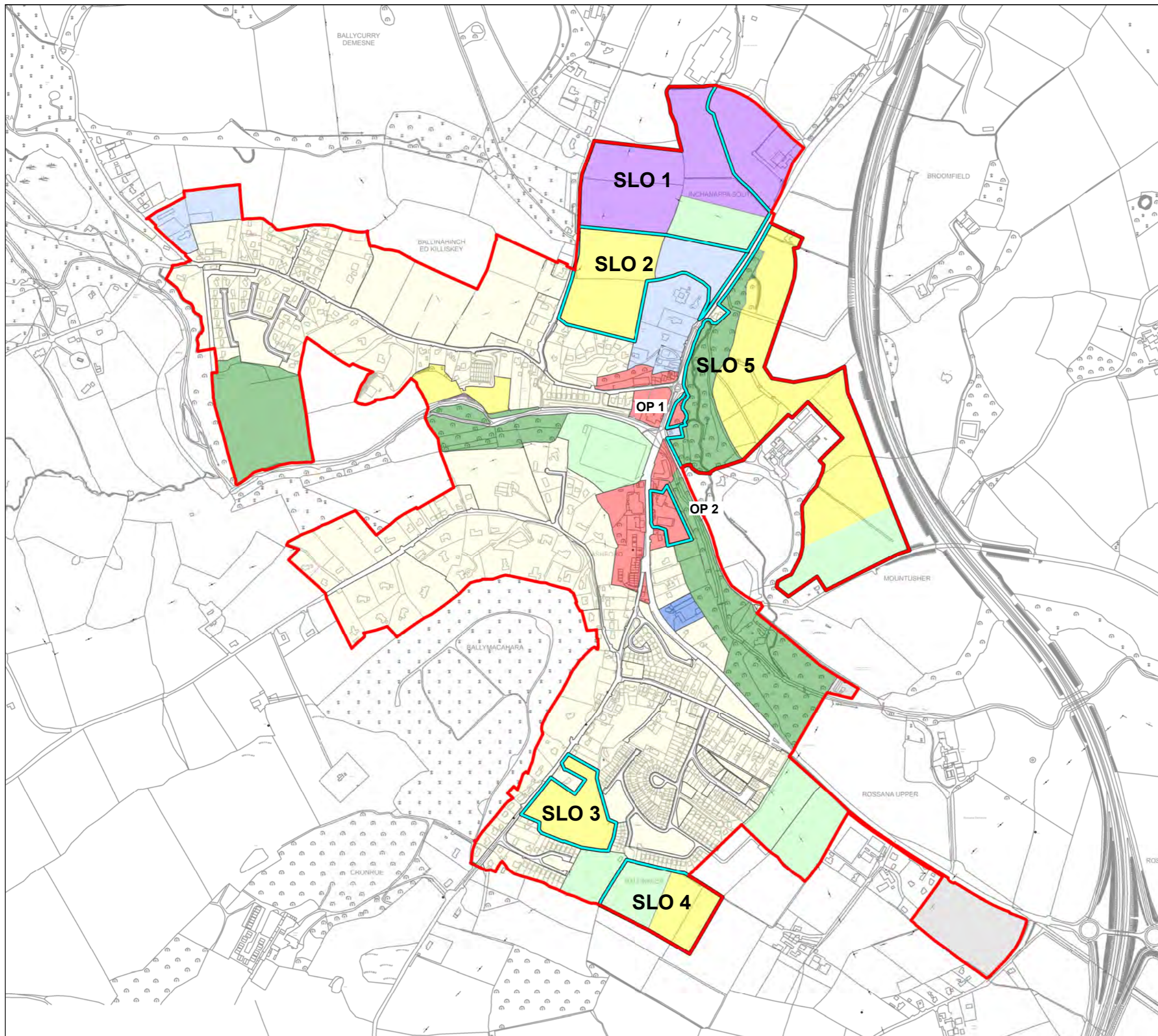
Map No. 1

Land Use Zoning Objectives



Legend

-  Settlement Boundary
-  RN-New Residential
-  RE-Existing Residential
-  TC- Town Centre
-  CE-Community & Education
-  E-Employment
-  PU-Public Utility
-  T-Tourism
-  AOS-Active Open Space
-  OS1-Open Space
-  OP-Opportunity Sites & SLO-Specific Local Objectives



WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

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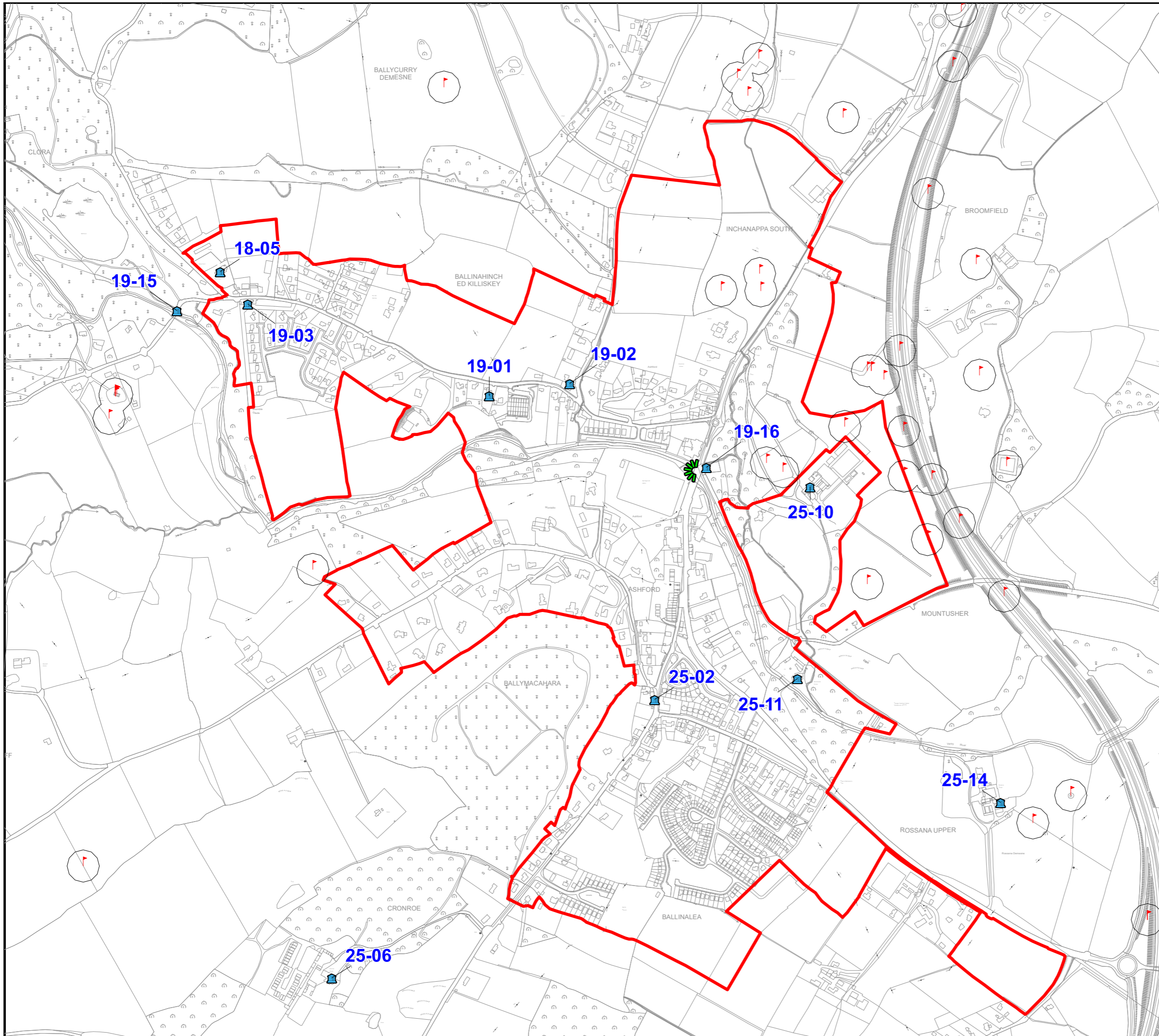
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Legend

- Settlement Boundary
- Protected Structure
- National Monuments
- View



Ashford Town Plan


Map No. 3

Indicative Flood Zones




Legend

 Settlement Boundary

 Flood Zone A: High probability of flooding

Where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding)

 Flood Zone B: Moderate probability of flooding

Where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding)

Disclaimer

These Indicative Flood Zones were based on information available at the time of drafting and amending this plan. Any new data and analysis carried out after this date has not been integrated into this map but should be used in conjunction with this map for development proposals. All information may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis.

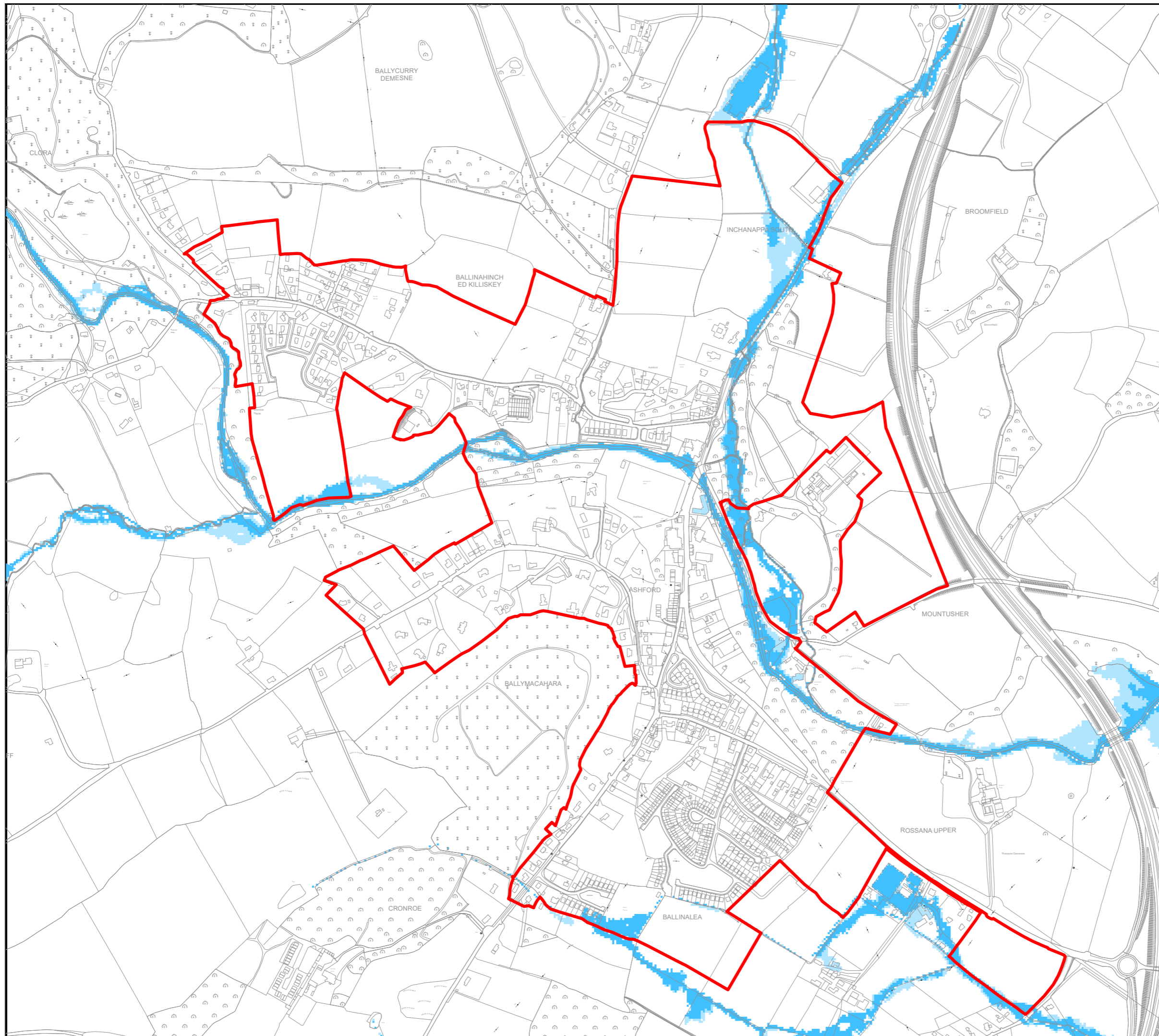
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WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

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





Ashford Town Plan

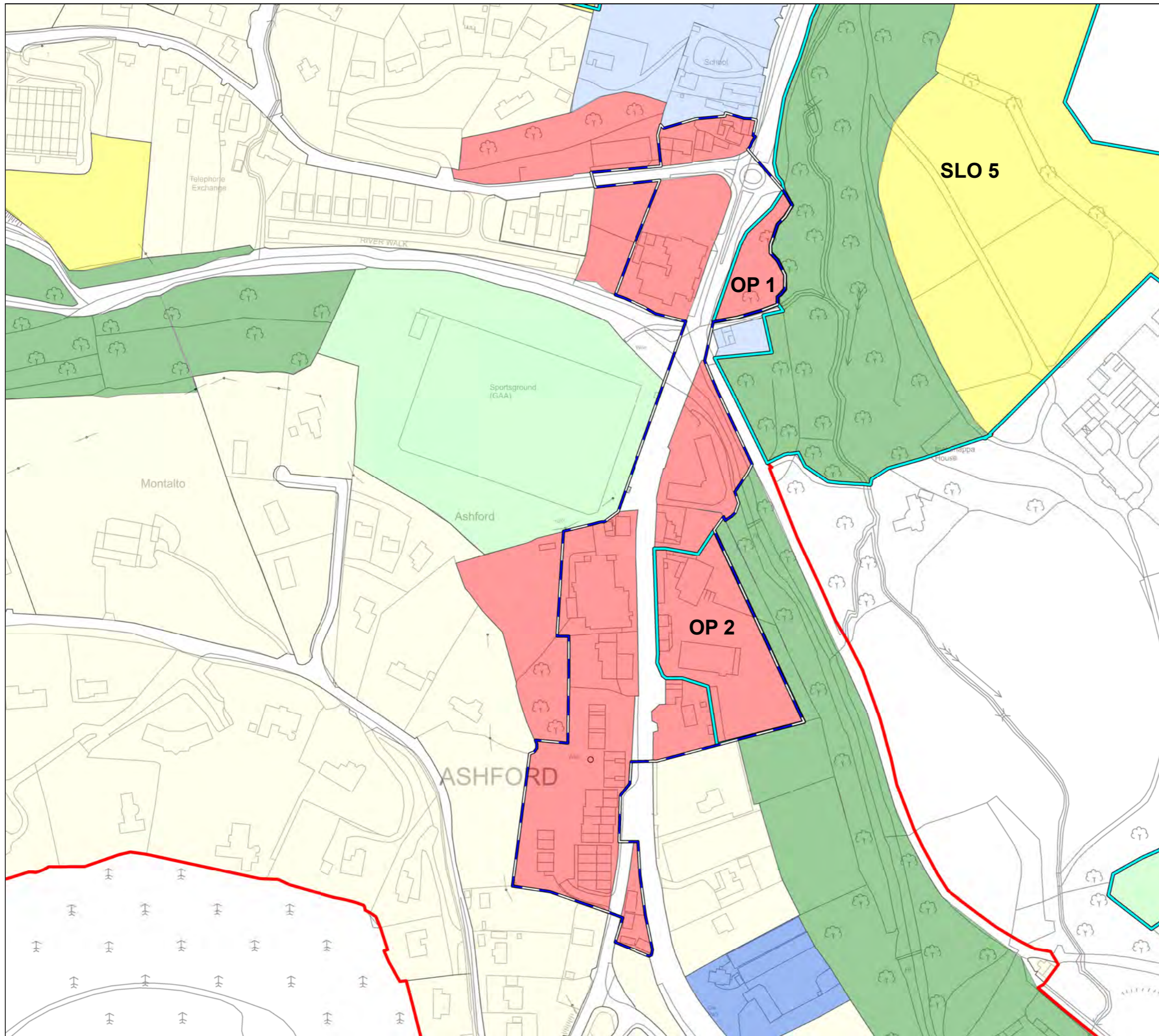
Map No. 4

Regeneration & Renewal Area



Legend

-  Settlement Boundary
-  Regeneration Boundary
-  RN-New Residential
-  RE-Existing Residential
-  TC- Town Centre
-  CE-Community & Education
-  E-Employment
-  PU-Public Utility
-  T-Tourism
-  AOS-Active Open Space
-  OS1-Open Space
-  OP-Opportunity Sites & SLO-Specific Local Objectives



**WICKLOW COUNTY
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