CHAPTER 6
HOUSING

6.0 Introduction

Housing is a fundamental human right. The National Planning Framework recognises that '*homes are both the places where we live and the foundation stone from which wider communities and their quality of lives are created*'.

One of the principal functions of a development plan is to put in place a framework for the delivery of new housing. The Core Strategy has outlined the population and housing targets for the County. This chapter in addition to the Core Strategy puts in place a framework to guide the delivery of new housing. The aim of this framework is to ensure:

- The protection of residential amenity enjoyed by existing communities;
- That new housing development is encouraged and facilitated in appropriate locations;
- That adequate zoned and serviced land is available to meet housing demand;
- That in areas where new housing will be permitted, on unzoned lands (e.g. in villages and in the open countryside) the policies and objectives for such development are clearly articulated;
- That a range of house types and tenures are delivered to cater for all in society;
- That new housing development is of the highest quality;
- That climate considerations are adequately integrated into housing delivery, including for example, by directing new housing away from areas at risk of flooding or coastal erosion and designing new housing to accordance with the net zero greenhouse gas emission target for 2050; and
- That the design of new housing will have consideration for Universal Design standards.

While the County Development Plan is not directly responsible for the delivery of affordable homes there are a number of things it can do to create the right environment for the delivery of affordable homes, removing development bottlenecks and enabling a continuous supply of housing. These include:

- Providing a robust development framework and core strategy;
- Zoning land for development that is serviced and in appropriate locations which gives a greater degree of certainty to developers and infrastructure providers;
- Providing a clear and articulated longer term development strategy that facilitates the coordinated and efficient provision of enabling infrastructure;
- Including policy to support active land management;
- Providing for higher densities that ensure more efficient use of land and enable more units to come to the market;
- Providing flexibility in terms of design particularly in urban cores to enable more cost-efficient construction and variety of homes;
- Including policy which encourages infill development and the densification of existing built up areas.

With reference to the desired **Strategic National, Regional and County Outcomes** set out in Chapter 2 of this plan, the delivery of high quality housing will contribute to numerous goals across the three pillars of 'healthy placemaking', 'climate action' and 'economic opportunity by':

- Delivering sustainable settlement patterns and compact growth in all towns and villages by capitalising on the potential for infill and brownfield development, moving away from a reliance on greenfield development and creating places that encourage active lifestyles;
- Strengthening rural communities by leveraging the potential of rural areas to accommodate sustainable growth;

- Supporting the creation of sustainable healthy communities where access to housing is a priority.

6.1 Strategic Context

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework sets out that the '*the long-term vision for Ireland's housing future aims to balance the provision of good quality housing that meets the needs of a diverse population, in a way that makes our cities, towns, villages and rural areas good places to live now and in the future*'.

The NPF identifies a number of national core principles to guide future housing as follows.

National Core Principles to Guide Housing

- Ensure a high standard quality of life for future residents as well as environmentally and socially sustainable housing and placemaking through integrated planning and consistently excellent design.
- Allow for choice in housing location, type, tenure and accommodation in responding to need.
- Prioritise the location of new housing provision in existing settlements as a means to maximising better quality of life for people through accessing services, ensuring a more efficient use of land and allowing for greater integration with existing infrastructure.
- Tailor the scale and nature of future housing provision to the size and type of settlement where it is planned to be located.
- Integrate housing strategies where settlements straddle boundaries (county and/or regional).
- Utilise existing housing stock as a means to meeting future demand.

(Source: National Planning Framework, 2018)

The NPF acknowledges that the physical format of urban development is one of our greatest national development challenges and identifies compact growth as one of the National Strategic Outcomes. This entails delivering a greater proportion of residential development within existing built-up areas of settlements and moving away from a reliance on greenfield development to meet our development needs. In order to avoid urban sprawl, the NPF advocates for increased residential densities in urban areas.

The NPF recognises that planning affords an opportunity to facilitate and deliver a more socially inclusive society through better integration and greater accessibility at all stages of the lifecycle. It supports the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of households over time. Specifically, the NPF requires that local housing policy will be developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population.

The NPF warns against the intensification of social housing in areas that are already dense with social housing and advocates for the development of diverse neighbourhoods with a balance of public and private housing to create healthy communities. The NPF states that in addition to the significant investment in social housing we also need to ensure that more affordable homes are built for sale or rent, particularly in our cities, towns and villages, enabling people to choose to live within their communities and closer to where they work. It indicates that this will be facilitated through more proactive land management and coordinated and efficient provision of enabling infrastructure, particularly on local authority and State-owned lands, as well as providing flexibility on design and density, particularly in our urban cores, to enable more cost-efficient construction and provide a variety of homes aimed at first-time buyers.

The National Planning Framework also identifies a number of National Policy Objectives (NPOs) that are relevant to housing:

National Policy Objectives	
NPO 30	Local planning, housing, transport / accessibility and leisure policies will be developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population along with the inclusion of specific projections, supported by clear proposals in respect of ageing communities as part of the core strategy of city and county development plans.
NPO 33	Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.
NPO 34	Support the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.
NPO 35	Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights.

Source: National Planning Framework, 2018)

Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019 (RSES)

The RSES recognises that housing affordability and supply issues are impacting upon health and wellbeing, due to overcrowding, with people residing in substandard accommodation or becoming homeless. The slow growth of housing stock compared to rates of population growth and household formation has led to an increase in the average number of persons per household to around 2.8 in the Region, based on the 2016 census, which saw a reversal of the long-term decline in the average household size. The RSES points out that there is a need to incentivise mobility in the housing market, to address social isolation among older people and to offer more choice by way of an increased supply of accommodation for all life stages. The RSES highlights the importance of housing quality to secure positive health outcomes.

The RSES recognises that achieving compact growth targets will require active land management responses to ensure that land and building resources within existing settlements are used to their full potential.

6.2 Wicklow County Housing Strategy

The preparation of a Housing Strategy is a requirement under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that provision is made for the housing needs of the existing and future population of the plan area. The Act stipulates that the housing strategy shall take into account:

a. *'the existing need and likely future need for housing to which subsection (4)(a)[1] applies,*
b. *the need to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income,*
c. *the need to ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements, of the different categories of households, as may be determined by the planning authority, including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities, and*
d. *the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds'.*

The Strategy shall include an estimate of the amount of social housing required during the plan period and shall provide that as a general policy a specified percentage of the land zoned in the development plan for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for those in need of social housing in the area. The Housing Strategy for 2022-2028 is included as an Appendix to this plan.

[1] Social housing support and affordable housing

The NPF acknowledges that the housing sector is more complex since the requirement for housing strategies was introduced under the Planning and Development Act 2000. Accordingly the NPF has identified that an enhanced methodology is required - a Housing Need Demand Assessment - to support the preparation of housing strategies.

National Policy Objective 37

A 'Housing Need Demand Assessment' (HNDA) is to be undertaken for each Local Authority Area in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. The HNDA is:

- to be undertaken by Local Authorities with coordination assistance to be provided by the Regional Assemblies, and also at a Metropolitan scale, particularly where inter-county and inter-regional settlement interactions are to be planned for and managed;
- to primarily inform housing policies, housing strategies and associated land use zoning policies as well as assisting in determining where new policy areas or investment programmes are to be developed; and
- to be supported, through the establishment of a coordination and monitoring unit to assist Local Authorities and Regional Assemblies in the development of the HNDA (DHPLG, Regional Assemblies and the Local Authorities). This will involve developing and coordinating a centralised spatial database for Local Authority Housing data that supports the HNDA being undertaken by Local Authorities.

The purpose of the Housing Need Demand Assessment tool is to:

- Assist local authorities to develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures;
- Provide robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall national housing profile;
- Inform policies about the proportion of social and affordable housing required, including the need for different types and sizes of provision;
- Provide evidence to inform policies related to the provision of specialist housing and housing related services[2].

HNDA is required to be integrated into the development plan review process where planning authorities give notice of review of a development plan in accordance with Section 11(1) of the 2000 Act, *after* the date of Circular 14/2021 (14 April 2021). As the notice of the review of the Wicklow County Development Plan occurred before the date of this circular, HNDA is not being carried out at this time. It will however be carried out in due course, and should it identify that amendment of the County Development Plan is necessary to reflect its outcomes, the plan will be varied accordingly. Therefore until this exercise is completed, this Housing Strategy is to be considered an 'interim' one.

While the Housing Strategy has found that there is rationale for seeking 10% of eligible residential development to be reserved for social housing (or 20% social and affordable in certain circumstances) during the strategy period of 2022-2028, this only addresses social housing needs that will arise during the 2022-2028 period and does not take into account the considerable demand for such housing that has built up over the currency of the previous strategy. It is also clear that the combination of the Council's own construction and Part V will only cater for a proportion of the population experiencing affordability problems in the County. The Council must continue to utilise all policy avenues open to it and any new schemes that become available to ensure the greatest delivery of social housing possible and to ensure a regionally equitable balance of housing delivery, including providing for housing for older people in town centres more suited for those with reduced mobility.

[2] Section 6.6, National Planning Framework

6.3 Key Housing Principles

6.3.1 Sustainable Communities

Well-designed homes in the right locations are fundamental to building strong, sustainable communities. It is essential to provide high quality places to live that:

- deliver a quality of life which residents are entitled to expect, in terms of amenity, safety and convenience;
- prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, and minimise the need to use cars;
- provide a good range of community and support facilities, where and when they are needed and that are easily accessible;
- provide access to high quality usable public open space including parks and playgrounds;
- present an attractive, well-maintained appearance, with a distinct sense of place and a quality public realm that is easily maintained;
- are easy to access for all and to find one's way around;
- promote the efficient use of land and of energy, and minimise greenhouse gas emissions;
- provide a mix of land uses to minimise transport demand;
- promote social integration and provide accommodation for a diverse range of household types and age groups;
- enhance and protect the green infrastructure and biodiversity; and
- enhance and protect the built and natural heritage.

Sustainable communities require a variety of house types, sizes and tenures. It is important that new multi-unit residential development provides an appropriate mix that caters for a variety of household types and sizes.

The number of people aged 65 or over has increased from 10.9% of the population in Census 2011 to 13% in 2016. The Council will support and facilitate the provision of supported housing for older people. This can enable people to live independently for longer and is an alternative housing option that falls somewhere between continuing to live in their own home independently and nursing home/residential care. A recent report[3] prepared by the Housing Agency found that there is a strong financial benefit from the provision of supported housing. Social benefits include providing options to enable older people to remain living in their communities, improving wellbeing for the individual, their family and community, and the value of freeing up housing in communities for other households.

6.3.2 Location of new residential development

In accordance with the NPF, RSES and the Core / Settlement strategies set out in Chapters 3 and 4 of this plan, new housing development shall be generally required to locate on suitably zoned / designated land in towns and villages.

The priority for new residential development shall be in the designated town / village / neighbourhood centres, in the 'primary zone' or in the historic centre of large and small villages, through densification of the existing built up area, re-use of derelict or brownfield sites, infill and backland development. In doing so, particular cognisance must be taken of the need to respect the existing built fabric and residential amenities enjoyed by existing residents, and maintaining existing parks and other open areas within settlements.

Where insufficient land is available in the centres of settlements, new housing development shall also be permitted on greenfield lands that are zoned / designated for housing.

The zoning / designation of greenfield land for new housing shall adhere to the following principles:

[3] Thinking Ahead: The Financial Benefits of Investing in Supported Housing for Older People (The Housing Agency, 2020)

- Application of the 'sequential approach' whereby zoning extends outwards from centres, contiguous to the existing built up part of the settlement;
- Application of compact growth targets;
- Creation of 'walkable' neighbourhoods, whereby undeveloped lands within 10 minutes walking distance of the settlement centre and 5 minutes walking distance of any neighbourhood / village centres are prioritised;
- Promotion of a sustainable land use and transportation pattern, whereby undeveloped lands that are accessible to public transport routes are considered most suitable for development. In this regard, undeveloped land within 1 km of any rail or light rail stop or 500m of bus routes will be prioritised;
- Application of the tiered zoning approach in accordance with NPO 72 whereby land that is fully serviced is differentiated from land that can be serviced within the lifetime of the plan;
- Lands already or easily serviced by a gravity fed water supply system and waste water collection system will be prioritised;
- Cognisance will be taken of the need to provide upmost protection to the environment and heritage, particularly of designated sites, features and buildings;
- Prioritisation of environmental and sustainability considerations for meeting sustainable development targets and climate action commitments in accordance with the National Adaptation Framework – examine environmental constraints including but not limited to biodiversity, flooding, and landscape;
- The need to maintain the rural greenbelt between towns.

The NPF recognises that in rural areas many people seek the opportunity to build their own home but find it difficult to do so in smaller settlements because of lack of available sites and services. Accordingly NPO 18b gives a commitment to develop a programme for 'new homes in small towns and villages' with Local Authorities and infrastructure agencies to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own home in small towns and villages.

6.3.3 Compact Growth & Active Land Management

Land is a finite resource. Sustainable development is predicated upon the efficient use of land. A compact growth policy combined with a strong focus on high quality design provides the best opportunity to harness the potential of our existing settlements and make them desirable places to live in.

The NPF acknowledges the potential to re-use existing building stock to address housing needs. Creating more compact development has been traditionally more difficult to achieve than a continuous process of pushing development onto greenfield locations. Specifically the NPF requires that 30% of all new homes will be delivered within the existing built up footprint of settlements. This applies to all scales of settlements within the County, from key towns to villages. This will require making better use of underutilised land including infill and brownfield sites. All zoning plans will be prepared having regard to the requirement to deliver a minimum 30% of new housing within existing built up areas.

Active land management will ensure that land and building resources within existing settlements are used to their full potential. High quality infill and brownfield development in town and village centres will be encouraged and supported. There are a number of different mechanisms available to the Council to assist with the active management of lands and buildings, contributing to the consolidation of existing town and village centres.

The Urban and Regeneration Housing Act (2015) introduced measures to incentivise the development of vacant sites in urban areas for housing and regeneration purposes. Under the Act, Local Authorities had to establish a vacant site register and apply a vacant site levy to properties on the register. The vacant site levy is designed to discourage land hoarding and to act primarily as a site activation measure, rather than an income generating mechanism. For a site to be considered vacant, it must meet certain criteria:

- For residential land, the site must be situated in an area in which there is a need for housing, the site is suitable for housing and the majority of the site must be vacant;
- For regeneration land, the site or majority of the site must be vacant, the site being vacant or idle has adverse effects on existing amenities or reduces the amenity provided by existing public infrastructure and facilities or the site has adverse effects on the character of the area.

The 2015 Act defines a site as 'any area of land exceeding 0.05 hectares', excluding a person's home which is defined as a 'dwelling in which the person ordinarily resides'.

Vacant buildings and underused building stock undermine the vitality and appeal of our towns and villages. Bringing them back into use presents a significant opportunity to consolidate, revitalise and strengthen town and village centres as attractive and durable places to live. Many vacant buildings form part of the historic core of town and village centres and contribute towards the character and appeal of these settlements. A key objective of Pillar 5 of 'Rebuilding Ireland' is to ensure the existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible with a particular focus on measures to use vacant stock to renew towns and villages. '*Bringing Back Homes – Manual for Reuse of Existing Buildings*' was developed to support and facilitate the reuse of older / vacant buildings in our towns and villages for residential use (DHPLG 2018). The Manual recognises that revitalising our main streets through well-planned and designed residential units, particularly above shops, could help to rejuvenate smaller town centres.

Rent pressure zones were introduced as part of the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019. A Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ) is a designated area where rents cannot be increased by more than 4% per annum. Rent Pressure Zones are located in parts of the country where rents are highest and rising, and where households have the greatest difficulty finding affordable accommodation. All of County Wicklow is designated a rent pressure zone. New planning reforms[4] were introduced to control short term letting in rent pressure zones.

Short-term letting is defined as the letting of a house or apartment, or part of a house or apartment, for any period not exceeding 14 days. The use of any house or apartment for short-term letting use in a rent pressure zone is a 'material change in the use' of the structure and is therefore deemed to be development requiring planning permission except where the relevant exemptions apply. Applications for change of use from residential to short-term letting will have to provide a detailed justification for the proposed use and demonstrate that there is not a shortage of housing in the area.

6.3.4 Phasing

The development of zoned / designated land should generally be phased in accordance with the sequential approach:

- Development shall extend outwards from the centre of settlements with undeveloped land closest to the centre and public transport routes being given preference, i.e. 'leapfrogging' to peripheral areas shall be resisted;
- A strong emphasis shall be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and better use of under-utilised land; and
- Areas to be developed shall be contiguous to existing developed areas.

Only in exceptional circumstances should the above principles be contravened, for example, where a barrier to development is involved. Any exceptions must be clearly justified by local circumstances and such justification must be set out in any planning application proposal.

[4] Section 3A of the Planning and Development Act 2000- inserted by section 38 of the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2019 (No 14 of 2019), and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Exempted Development)(No.2) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No 235 of 2019).

6.3.5 Densities

Higher densities are encouraged to achieve an efficient use of land and create compact, vibrant and attractive settlements. The capacity of a site to absorb higher densities is influenced by a range of factors including the local setting, development context, neighbouring uses, access, topography etc. The preparation of a design statement, including a detailed contextual and site analysis, will help determine a site's capacity and the appropriate density. The potential of brownfield sites to consolidate the built form and deliver higher densities should be capitalised subject to protecting existing amenities and achieving high quality standards for future occupants.

The design of any higher density development should be sensitive to, and respectful of, existing surrounding residential development. In existing residential areas, infill development shall generally be at a density that respects the established character of the area in which it is located and subject to the protection of the residential amenity of adjoining properties.

New development should incorporate a mix of dwelling types and heights to achieve minimum densities and create interesting and attractive settlements. Large development should incorporate a mix of densities. This will result in interesting and distinctive built forms that enhance the character of an area while also providing an opportunity to provide for a mix of dwelling types. Mono-type building typologies (e.g. two storey or own-door houses only) will not be considered favourably, particularly developments of 100 units or more. High density does not necessarily mean high rise. Terraced housing offers an opportunity to achieve relatively high density. The design of the terrace can take a very modern interpretation or traditional guise.

It is Council policy to encourage higher residential densities at suitable locations in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009). Locations that are appropriate for higher densities include sites that are particularly close to existing or proposed major public transport corridors and nodes, sites that are within or proximate to major centres of activity such as town and neighbourhood centres.

The density standards as per the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) are set out in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Density Standards

Location	Density Standards
Large Towns[5] (Bray, Greystones-Delgany, Arklow, Wicklow –Rathnew and Blessington)	▪ Public Transport Corridors: Minimum density of 50 units per hectare within 500m walking distance of bus stop or 1km of light rail stop or rail station. ▪ Outer Suburban / Greenfield Sites: Minimum density of 35 - 50 dwellings per hectare. ▪ Development at net densities less than 30 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged particularly on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares.
Small Towns and Villages[6] (Kilcoole, Newtownmountkennedy, Baltinglass, Enniskerry, Rathdrum, Aughrim, Ashford, Carnew, Kilmacanogue, Roundwood, Tinahely, Newcastle, Dunlavin, Avoca, Shillelagh, Donard)	▪ Centrally located sites: 30 – 40+ units per hectare for mainly residential schemes may be appropriate or for more mixed use schemes. ▪ Edge of Centre Sites: 20-35 dwellings per hectare. ▪ Edge of small town / village: Densities of less than 15 – 20 dwellings per hectare (as an alternative to one-off housing) as long as such development does not represent more than 20% of the total new planned housing stock of the small town or village.
Villages under 400 Population	Any individual scheme for new housing should not be larger than 10 units.

In the application of density standards and the assessment of applications, cognisance shall also be taken on Circular letter NRUP 02/2021 that clarifies that in the application of the Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines, Planning Authorities should apply a graduated and responsive, tailored approach to the assessment of residential densities in Peripheral and/or Less Accessible Urban Locations, as defined in the Apartment Guidelines and as they apply to towns of all sizes, to ensure that such places are developed in a sustainable and proportionate manner.

Apartments will be considered favourably in the Key Towns and the Self-Sustaining Growth Towns. High quality smaller scale apartment development will be considered in the Self-Sustaining Towns and rural towns provided that adequate services and amenities are in place to serve the development including high quality public open space.

Where up to 9 residential units are proposed there shall be no restriction on dwelling mix provided that no more than 50% of the development comprises studio type units.

6.3.6 Universal Design & Lifetime Adaptable Housing

Universal design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. New developments, where possible, should include universally designed homes that can be easily adapted to meet people's changing needs over time.

The *Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland (2015)*[7] are a first step in the process of raising awareness and inspiring people to think differently about the benefits of Universally Designed homes and the potential

[5] These are defined in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) as those with a population of 5,000 or more.
[6] These are defined in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) as those with a population ranging from 400 to 5,000 persons.

opportunity to address some of the challenges society faces by future-proofing our homes through embracing Universal Design thinking. *Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach* provides comprehensive best practice guidance on how to design, build and manage buildings and spaces so that they can be readily accessed and used by everyone, regardless of age, size, ability or disability[8].

6.3.7 Quality of Design in New Housing Developments

The Planning Authority has to strike a careful balance between on the one hand enabling new housing development that meets housing demand while ensuring that highest standards of urban design, architectural quality and residential amenity.

The quality and character of our towns and villages lies in the consistency of the language and the way the buildings relate in form, scale, treatment, materials and details. It is important that new development is designed to respect and complement the historic urban grain and incorporate a layout and design that strengthens the identity and character of the settlement. An understanding of context and appreciation of character is at the core of good urban design. It lays the foundations for a unique design response. The design and layout of new development should be based on an informed and considered response to a site's setting and context. All applications for multi-unit residential development should be accompanied by a design statement which clearly demonstrates how the design responds to the local context. Further detail on this is provided in Appendix 1.

New housing development should be designed to respect its setting and provide for a strong connection with the character of the existing settlement. Particular attention should be paid to boundaries, public space and planting in order to achieve good quality. Permeability should inform the layout and design. New residential and mixed-use schemes should deliver attractive street-based traditional town environments that incorporate a good sense of enclosure, legible streets, squares and parks and a strong sense of place. Developments should include an effective mix of heights that integrates well with the existing urban structure and historical streetscapes.

The NPF requires a flexible approach to planning policy to enable infill and brownfield development with a focus on design-led performance-based outcomes rather than specifying absolute requirements in all cases. Therefore planning standards will be flexibly applied to well-designed development proposals that can achieve urban infill and brownfield development objectives. Such flexibility must still ensure that public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected[9].

The Development and Design Standards (Appendix 1) sets out Wicklow County Council's requirements with respect to the design standards for new housing developments. All new housing developments will be assessed in accordance with the development and design standards set out in this appendix.

Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)

The *Urban Design Manual*, which accompanies the '*Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas'* (DoEHLG 2009), provides comprehensive guidance on design issues. The Manual sets out a series of 12 design criteria for development sub-divided into three groups: (i) Neighbourhood (ii) Site (iii) Home. These groups reflect the spatial scales and order of priorities that should help inform and guide the design of any new residential and mixed-use development.

The 12 criteria, as set out in Table 6.2, are sequenced in logical order to reflect the need to prioritise the fundamental strategic issues including density, layout and connections. The Manual should be used as a key reference tool at pre-planning consultations and in the assessment of planning applications for any new residential

[7] *National Disability Authority Centre for Excellence in Universal Design*
[8] http://universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/
[9] Refer to NPO 13 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

and mixed-use development proposals. The design and layout of new housing development in rural towns and villages should reflect their rural setting and pay homage to the principles of vernacular architecture.

Table 6.2 Design Considerations – 12 Criteria

Neighbourhood	**Context** **Connections** **Inclusivity** **Variety**	How does the development respond to its surroundings? How well connected is the new neighbourhood? How easily can people use and access the development? How does the development promote a good mix of activities?
Site	**Efficiency** **Distinctiveness** **Layout** **Public Realm**	How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land? How do the proposals create a sense of place? How does the proposal create people friendly streets and spaces? How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?
Home	**Adaptability** **Privacy & Amenity** **Parking** **Detailed Design**	How will the buildings cope with change? How does the scheme provide a decent standard of amenity? How will the parking be secure and attractive? How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

Source: *Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (DoEHLG 2009)

Urban Development & Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

The *'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* acknowledge that increasing prevailing building heights has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in our urban areas particularly the large towns through enhancing the scale and density of development. The Guidelines require that building heights must be generally increased in appropriate urban locations. Specifically the Guidelines require that the scope to consider general building heights of at least three to four storeys, coupled with appropriate density, in locations outside what would be defined as city and town centre areas, and which would include suburban areas must be supported in principle in development plans.

Proposals including buildings that are of a height and scale significantly greater than the prevailing height and scale shall be assessed in accordance with the development management criteria set out in Section 3.0 of the *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines* (DHPLG 2018).

In accordance with Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 1 of the *Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018),* Local Area Plans (LAPs) shall identify locations where increased height and density will be supported where it forms part of strategic redevelopment, regeneration and infill development proposals.

Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2020)

The shift in Government policy towards securing more compact and sustainable urban development will result in a significant increase in apartment type development. The Guidelines recognise that it is therefore critical to ensure that apartment living is an increasingly attractive and desirable housing option for a range of household types and tenures.

With regard to location, the Guidelines indicate that apartments are most appropriately located within urban areas. The scale and extent of apartment development should increase in relation to proximity to core urban centres, locations that are well served by public transport, are close to employment and a range of urban amenities including parks / waterfronts, shopping and other services.

The Guidelines set out detailed design parameters including mix, internal space standards, dual aspect ratios, floor to ceiling height, storage space, amenity space and car parking. All new housing developments that include apartments are required to demonstrate compliance with the Guidelines in accordance with the specific planning policy requirements.

6.3.8 Rural Housing

Wicklow's countryside hosts a variety of uses including rural communities, attractive towns and villages, agriculture, forestry, tourism, renewable energy, rural enterprise and scenic landscapes. The Planning Authority will continue to carefully manage demand for housing in the countryside in order to protect natural resources, continue to cater for a variety of land uses, protect the environment and rural landscape, to avoid urban generated rural housing and ensure the needs of those with a bona fide necessity to live in the rural area are facilitated. It is also important that the scale of rural housing permitted does not undermine the role of small towns and villages and threaten their viability.

The NPF identifies the following national policy objective which the Development Plan must be consistent with:

National Policy Objective 19

Ensure in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:

- *In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;*
- *In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.*

The NPF states that it is important '*to differentiate, on the one hand, between rural areas located within the commuter catchment of the five cities and our largest towns and centres of employment and, on the other hand, rural areas located outside these catchments'*. Wicklow's rural areas are considered to be 'areas under urban influence' due to their location within the catchment of Dublin, Bray, Greystones, Wicklow-Rathnew and Arklow in addition to Gorey (Co. Wexford) and Naas (Co. Kildare). In rural areas under urban influence it is necessary to demonstrate a functional economic or social requirement for housing need. This is also subject to siting and design considerations.

Rural areas are more sensitive to development and therefore require a quality design response to help assimilate development into the landscape. All new rural housing is required to apply the design principles set out in the Wicklow Rural Housing Design Guide which is included in the appendices.

6.4 Housing Objectives

General

CPO 6.1 New housing development shall be required to locate on suitably zoned or designated land in settlements and will only be considered in the open countryside when it is for the provision of a rural dwelling for those with a demonstrable housing social or economic need to live in the open countryside.

CPO 6.2 The sale of all developments of residential units, whether houses, duplexes or apartments, to commercial institutional investment bodies shall be prohibited.

Design

CPO 6.3 New housing development shall enhance and improve the residential amenity of any location, shall provide for the highest possible standard of living of occupants and in particular, shall not reduce to an unacceptable degree the level of amenity enjoyed by existing residents in the area.

CPO 6.4 All new housing developments (including single and rural houses) shall achieve the highest quality of layout and design, in accordance with the standards set out in the Development and Design Standards (Appendix 1) and the Wicklow Single Rural House Design Guide (Appendix 2).

CPO 6.5 To require that new development be of the highest quality design and layout and contributes to the development of a coherent urban form and attractive built environment in accordance with the following key principles of urban design:

- Strengthening the character and urban fabric of the area;
- Reinforcing local identity and sense of place;
- Optimise the opportunities afforded by the historical and natural assets of a site / area;
- Providing a coherent, legible and permeable urban structure;
- Promoting an efficient use of land;
- Improving and enhancing the public realm;
- Conserving and respecting local heritage;
- Providing ease of movement and resolving conflict between pedestrians/cyclists and traffic;
- Promoting accessibility for all; and
- Cognisance of the impact on climate change and the reduction targets for carbon emissions set out by the Government.

CPO 6.6 To require that all planning applications for multi-unit residential development are accompanied by a Design Statement[10]. Design Statements shall include a detailed assessment of existing environment and historic character and demonstrate how the design has evolved in response to these underlying characteristics and fabric of the town / village. The Design Statement should address each of the 12 criteria set out in the Urban Design Manual (DECLG May 2009). The layout, access, road widths and open space should be cognisant of town and village character.

CPO 6.7 The design and layout of new residential and mixed-use development shall deliver highly permeable, well connected streets which facilitate active street frontage in accordance with best practice set out in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DEHLG May 2009) and the *Design Manual Urban Roads and Streets* (DTTS & DECLG 2013).

[10] Design Statements may be required for additional formats of development the discretion of the Planning Authority

CPO 6.8 Support the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time and in particular to require that all new residential developments in excess of 20 residential units to provide a minimum 5% universally designed homes in accordance with the requirements of '*Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach* and the *Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland (2015)*[11].

Social and Affordable Housing

CPO 6.9 To implement the provisions of the Wicklow Housing Strategy and in particular, to apply a 10% (or a greater percentage if provided for in future legislation) social housing requirement pursuant to Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential or other uses, except where the development would be exempted from this requirement. In certain circumstances, as set out in the Affordable Housing Act 2021, this requirement will be 20% devoted to social and affordable housing.

CPO 6.10 To ensure the selection of lands or housing units to purchase or lease by the Council, including Part V, counteracts undue segregation by persons of different social backgrounds.

CPO 6.11 To actively promote and support the development of affordable housing across all areas and settlement categories in the County, and in particular, to avail of and maximise take up of all and any future national affordable housing programmes and funds, including serviced site initiatives in smaller towns and villages.

CPO 6.12 To provide and facilitate social housing in rural areas.

Density

CPO 6.13 To require that new residential development represents an efficient use of land and achieves the minimum densities as set out in Table 6.1 subject to the reasonable protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of existing settlements. In promoting higher densities and more compact development, new development should demonstrate compliance with:

- the *Sustainable Urban Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DEHLG 2009) and accompanying *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide*;
- *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities* (DoEHLG 2007);
- *Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2018)
- *Design manual for Urban Roads and Streets*; and
- any subsequent Ministerial guidelines.

CPO 6.14 To densify existing built-up areas subject to the adequate protection of existing residential amenities.

CPO 6.15 Higher density proposals should be designed to a high standard, incorporate a mix of housing types and sizes and deliver compact urban forms that enhance the local built environment and contribute towards a sustainable mix of housing options. Proposals should provide an appropriate design response to the site, be designed to a high quality and afford adequate protection for residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

CPO 6.16 To encourage and facilitate high quality well-designed infill and brownfield development that is sensitive to context, enables consolidation of the built environment and enhances the streetscape.

[11] National Disability Authority Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

Where necessary, performance criteria should be prioritised provided that the layout achieves well-designed high quality outcomes and public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected.

Height and Scale

CPO 6.17 To facilitate development incorporating higher buildings (i.e. buildings that exceed the contextual prevailing height) where it has been adequately demonstrated that the development complies with the assessment criteria set out in Section 3.2 of the *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning* Authorities (DHPLG 2018) or any subsequent height guidelines.

In accordance with the SPPR 3 of *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines*, where:

- an applicant for planning permission sets out how a development proposal complies with the *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines*, particularly SSPR1 and SPPR2 thereof; and
- the assessment of the planning authority concurs, taking account of the wider strategic and national policy parameters set out in the NPF and Guidelines;

then the planning authority may approve such development, even where specific objectives of the relevant development plan or local area plan may indicate otherwise.

In accordance with the SPPR 1 of *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines,* Planning Authorities are required explicitly identify areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the NPF and RSES. In this regard, the identification of locations for increased building height shall be carried out in the preparation of Local Area Plans for settlements in Tiers 1-3 of the County Settlement Hierarchy as these are deemed the only settlements of sufficient scale and diversity in urban grain to accommodate such increases in height.

CPO 6.18 To ensure that building height within future development makes a positive contribution to the built form of the area, is not obtrusive and does not adversely impact on the streetscape, local amenity or views. Require all development proposals, including infill development, to include an analysis of the impact of building height and positioning of buildings on:

- The immediate & surrounding environment - streetscape, historic character;
- Adjoining structures;
- Open spaces and public realm;
- Views and Vistas.

Sequence / Phasing of Housing

CPO 6.19 The development of zoned land should generally be phased in accordance with the sequential approach as set out in this chapter. The Council reserves the right to refuse permission for any development that is not consistent with these principles.

CPO 6.20 Housing development shall be managed and phased to ensure that infrastructure is adequate or is being provided to match the needs of new residents.

New significant residential or mixed use development proposals (of which residential development forms a component)[12], shall be required to be accompanied by a **Social Infrastructure Audit**, to

[12] Being defined as developments in excess of 50 units of housing in any settlements in Levels 1-4 in the hierarchy, 25 housing units in Levels 5-10, and **all developments over 25 units** in excess of 500m distance to a public transport service, as well as other format / sizes / locations are may be deemed necessary by the Local Authority.

determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services.

New significant residential or mixed use development proposals shall be required to be accompanied by a '**Accessibility Report'** that demonstrates that new residents / occupants / employees (including children and those with special mobility needs) will be able to safely access through means **other than** the private car:

(a) local services including shops, schools, health care and recreational facilities, and
(b) public transport services.

Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity/quality of existing or planned linkages.

Existing Residential Areas

CPO 6.21 In areas zoned 'Existing Residential' house improvements, alterations and extensions and appropriate infill residential development in accordance with principles of good design and protection of existing residential amenity will normally be permitted (other than on lands permitted or designated as open space, see CPO 6.25 below). While new developments shall have regard to the protection of the residential and architectural amenities of houses in the immediate environs, alternative and contemporary designs shall be encouraged (including alternative materials, heights and building forms), to provide for visual diversity.

CPO 6.22 In existing residential areas, small scale infill development shall generally be at a density that respects the established character of the area in which it is located, subject to the protection of the residential amenity of adjoining properties. However, on large sites or in areas where previously unserviced, low density housing becomes served by mains water services, consideration will be given to densities above the prevailing density, subject to adherence to normal siting and design criteria.

CPO 6.23 To facilitate mews lane housing in suitable locations, subject to high quality design that respects the existing character and heritage of the area and provides for a high standard of residential amenity for existing and future occupants.

CPO 6.24 To facilitate family / granny flat extensions for use by a member of the immediate family subject to protection of existing residential amenity and compliance with the criteria set out in the Development and Design Standards (Appendix 1).

CPO 6.25 In existing residential areas, the areas of open space permitted, designated or dedicated solely to the use of the residents will normally be zoned 'RE' as they form an intrinsic part of the overall residential development. Such lands will be retained as open space for the use of residents and new housing or other non-community related uses will not normally be permitted.

Protection of Residential Amenity in Transitional Areas

CPO 6.26 While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in principle in each zone it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land use zones. In these areas it is necessary to avoid developments that would be detrimental to amenity. In zones

abutting residential areas, particular attention will be paid to the use, scale, density and appearance of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals in order to protect the amenities of residential properties.

Dwelling Mix / Sizes / Locations / Formats

CPO 6.27 To require new multi-unit residential development to provide an appropriate mix of unit types and sizes to ensure that there is a range of unit types available to suit the needs of the various households in the county, in accordance with the Design Standards for new Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2020).

CPO 6.28 Apartments generally will only be permitted in settlements Levels 1 to 6 and in accordance with the location requirements set out in Section 2.4 of the Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2020). All apartment development should be served by high quality usable open space.

CPO 6.29 Temporary residential structures (e.g. mobile homes, caravans, cabins, portacabins etc) form a haphazard and substandard form of residential accommodation and generally have poor aesthetic value and can detract from the overall appearance of an area. Therefore permission will generally not be granted for such structures.

CPO 6.30 The maximum size of any single 'housing estate' shall be 200 units and developments that include more than 200 units should be broken into a number of smaller 'estates', which shall be differentiated from each other by the use of materially different design themes.

CPO 6.31 To support the development of a programme for 'new homes in small towns and villages' to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages. The development of 'serviced sites', where site purchasers have the option of designing their own home, shall be particularly encouraged on zoned / designated housing land.

CPO 6.32 To support independent living and facilitate the provision of supported housing (specific purpose built accommodation) for older people and people with disabilities towns and villages. To facilitate the provision of nursing homes, retirement villages, residential care facilities at appropriate locations in towns and villages in the County. These facilities must be well served by infrastructure and amenities including accessible footpaths, local shops and public transport in order to allow the residents to be socially included and to allow better care in the community, independence and access.

CPO 6.33 To protect the existing housing stock to meet housing demand and require that any proposals for short-term letting[13] provide a detailed justification for the proposed use and demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that any proposals don't undermine the provision of housing and that there is a sufficient supply of rental properties available for longer-term rental in the area. The cumulative impact of applications will also be considered in the assessment of any application. Proposals that would increase pressures on the housing market including the rental market will not be considered favourably.

CPO 6.34 Support the change of use of vacant commercial premises in town / village centres to residential purposes outside of the retail core areas as identified in Chapter 10, subject to CPO 10.9.

[13] Short term letting is defined as the letting of a house or apartment, or part of a house or apartment, for any period not exceeding 14 days.

Vacant Site Levy

CPO 6.35 In many settlements in the County, there are sites and areas in need of development and renewal, in order to prevent:

a. adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
b. urban blight and decay,
c. anti-social behaviour, or
d. a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses

It is an objective of this plan to encourage and facilitate the appropriate development of such sites / lands and all available tools and mechanisms, including the Vacant Site Levy, may be utilised to stimulate such development.

All lands zoned for residential development in this plan (this refers to Level 4 and 5 settlements), including all lands zoned:

- Existing Residential (RE),
- New Residential (RN), and
- Town Centre, outside of the designated 'regeneration zone' as defined in each plan,

are deemed to be lands that may be in need of new development in order to ensure there is no shortage of housing, and these zones will be examined in detail in order to determine if there are sites where the Vacant Site Levy should be applied.

In addition, the following residential zones in larger towns, are deemed to be lands that may be in need of new development in order to ensure there is no shortage of housing, and these zones will be examined in detail in order to determine if there are sites where the Vacant Site Levy should be applied.

Settlement	Zones[14]
Bray and Environs	RE, R-HD, R20, R15, R10, R, MU (where the predominate use provided for is residential)
Wicklow Town and Rathnew	RE, R1, R2, R3, R4
Arklow Town and Environs	RE, R28, R20, R10, R, MU (where the predominate use provided for is residential)
Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole	RE, R22, R17, R15, R10, R5, R2.5, R (Special), MU (where the predominate use provided for is residential)
Blessington	RE, R1, R2

Housing in Rural Settlements

CPO 6.36 Urban generated housing shall not be permitted in the rural areas of the County, other than in rural settlements that have been deemed suitable to absorb an element of urban generated development as set out in the Settlement Strategy.

CPO 6.37 To implement the following housing occupancy controls for Type 1 Villages (Level 7), as set out in the Settlement Strategy:

Multi-House Development

50% no restriction
50% Applicant / purchaser of any new home must be either:

- resident for at least 3 years duration in County Wicklow or
- in permanent employment for at least 3 years duration in County Wicklow,

of within 30km of the Type 1 village in question prior to making of application / purchase of new house.

Single House

100% Applicant / purchaser of any new home must be either:

- a resident for at least 3 years duration in County Wicklow or
- in permanent employment for at least 3 years duration in County Wicklow,

of within 30km of the Type 1 village in question prior to making of application / purchase of new house.

CPO 6.38 To implement the following housing occupancy controls for Type 2 Villages (Level 8), as set out in the Settlement Strategy:

Multi-house development

50% Applicant / purchaser of any new home must be either:

- a resident for at least 3 years duration in County Wicklow or
- in permanent employment for at least 3 years duration in County Wicklow,

of within 30km of the Type 2 village in question prior to making of application / purchase of new house.

[14] or other such zoning codes as may replace these, during the making of future local plans

50% Applicant / purchaser of any new home must be either:
- a resident for at least 5 years duration in County Wicklow or
- in permanent employment for at least 5 years duration in County Wicklow,

of within 15km of the Type 2 village in question prior to making of application / purchase of new house.

Single house

100% Applicant / purchaser of any new home must be either:
- a resident for at least 5 years duration in County Wicklow or
- in permanent employment for at least 5 years duration in County Wicklow,

of within 15km of the Type 2 village in question prior to making of application / purchase of new house.

CPO 6.39 To implement the following housing occupancy controls for Level 9 Rural Clusters as set out in the Settlement Strategy:

Single house
Applicant / purchaser of any new home must
(a) be a resident for at least 10 years duration in County Wicklow of a settlement / area designated as Level 4 -10 in the County settlement hierarchy that is within 10km of the rural cluster in question prior to making of application / purchase of new house.
(b) demonstrate a proven need for housing, for example:
- first time home owners;
- someone that previously owned a home and is no longer in possession of that home as it had to be disposed following legal separation / divorce, the transfer of a home attached to a farm to a family member or the past sale of a home following emigration.

CPO 6.40 Where permission is sought for residential development in a settlement with occupancy controls the applicant will be required to show compliance with objectives for that settlement set out in this plan and to lodge with the Land Registry a burden on the property, in the form of a Section 47 agreement, restricting the use of the dwelling(s) for a period of 7 years in accordance with the relevant objective.

Housing in the Open Countryside

CPO 6.41 Facilitate residential development in the open countryside for those with a **housing need** based on the core consideration of **demonstrable functional social or economic** need to live in the open countryside in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Rural Housing Policy

Housing Need / Necessary Dwelling

This is defined as those who can demonstrate a clear need for new housing, for example:
- first time home owners;
- someone that previously owned a home and is no longer in possession of that home as it had to be disposed of following legal separation / divorce / repossession by a lending institution, the transfer of a home attached to a farm to a family member or the past sale of a home following emigration;

- someone that already owns / owned a home who requires a new purpose built specially adapted house due to a verified medical condition and who can show that their existing home cannot be adapted to meet their particular needs;

and other such circumstances that clearly demonstrate a bona fide need for a new dwelling in the open countryside notwithstanding previous / current ownership of a home as may be considered acceptable to the Planning Authority.

Economic Need

The Planning Authority recognises the rural housing need of persons whose livelihood is intrinsically linked to rural areas subject to it being demonstrated that a home in the open countryside is essential to the making of that livelihood and that livelihood could not be maintained while living in a nearby settlement.

In this regard, persons whose livelihood is intrinsically linked to rural areas may include:

a. Those involved in agriculture
The Planning Authority will positively consider applications from those who are engaged in a significant agricultural enterprise and require a dwelling on the agricultural holding that they work. In such cases, it will be necessary for the applicant to satisfy the Planning Authority with supporting documents that due to the nature of the agricultural employment, a dwelling on the holding is essential for the ongoing successful operation and maintenance of the farm. In this regard, the Planning Authority will consider whether there is already a dwelling / dwellings on the farm holding when determining if a new dwelling can be justified.

b. Those involved in non-agricultural rural enterprise / employment
The Planning Authority will support applications from those whose business / full time employment is intrinsically linked to the rural area that can demonstrate a need to live in the vicinity of their employment in order to carry out their full time occupation. The Planning Authority will strictly require any applicant to show that there is a particular aspect or characteristic of their employment that requires them to live in that rural area, as opposed to a local settlement.

Where an applicant's case for a new dwelling on the basis of economic need is based on establishing a new or alternative agricultural / non-agricultural rural enterprise and they have no previous experience in agriculture / rural enterprise, the Planning Authority shall not consider the above requirements met until the applicant can show that the new agricultural / non-agricultural rural enterprise has been legally and continuously ongoing for at least 5 years prior to the making of the application for a dwelling, and is the applicant's primary occupation and source of income. Applicants whose proposed business is not location-dependent will not be considered.

c. Other such persons as may have definable economic need to reside in the open countryside, as may arise on a case by case basis.

Social Need

The Planning Authority recognises the need of persons intrinsically linked to rural areas that are not engaged in significant agricultural or rural based occupations to live in rural areas.

In this regard, persons intrinsically linked to a rural area may include:

- Permanent native residents of that rural area (including Level 8 and 9 settlements) i.e. a person who was born and reared in the same rural area as the proposed development site and permanently resides there;
- A former permanent native of the area (including Level 8 and 9 settlements) who has not resided in that rural area for many years (for example having moved into a town or due to emigration), but was born and reared in the same rural area as the proposed development site, has strong social ties to that area, and now wishes to return to their local area;
- A close relative who has inherited, either as a gift or on death, an agricultural holding or site for his/her own purposes and can demonstrate a social need to live in that particular rural area,
- The son or daughter of a landowner who has inherited a site for the purpose of building a one off rural house and where the land has been in family ownership for at least 10 years prior to the application for planning permission and can demonstrate a social need to live in that particular rural area,
- Persons who were permanent native residents of a rural area but due to the expansion of an adjacent town / village, the family home place is now located within the development boundary of the town / village;
- Local applicants who are intrinsically linked to their local area and, while not exclusively involved in agricultural or rural employment, have access to an affordable local site;
- Local applicants who provide care services to family members and those working in healthcare provision locally; and
- Other such persons as may have a definable strong social need to live in that particular rural area, which can be demonstrated by way of evidence of strong social or familial connections, connection to the local community / local organisations etc as may arise on a case by case basis.

In the event of conflict of any other settlement strategy objective / Landscape Zones and categories, a person who qualifies under policy CPO 6.41 their needs shall be supreme, except where the proposed development would be a likely traffic hazard or public health hazard.

With regard to the preservation of views and prospects, due consideration shall be given to those listed within the area of the National Park; and with respect to all other areas, to generally regard the amenity matters, but not to the exclusion of social and economic matters. The protection and conservation of views and prospects should not give rise to the prohibition of development, but development should be designed and located to minimise impact.

CPO 6.42 Where permission is granted for a single rural house in the open countryside, the applicant will be required to lodge with the Land Registry a burden on the property, in the form of a Section 47 agreement, restricting the use of the dwelling for a period of 7 years to the applicant, or to those persons who fulfil the criteria set out in Objective CPO 6.41 or to other such persons as the Planning Authority may agree to in writing.

CPO 6.43 The conversion or reinstatement of non-residential or abandoned residential buildings back to residential use in the rural areas will be supported where the proposed development meets the following criteria:

- the original walls must be substantially intact – rebuilding of structures of a ruinous nature

will not be considered;
- buildings must be of local, visual, architectural or historical interest;
- buildings must be capable of undergoing conversion / rebuilding and their original appearance must be substantially retained; (a structural survey by a qualified engineer will be required with any planning application); and
- works must be executed in a sensitive manner and retain architecturally important features wherever possible and make use of traditional and complementary materials, techniques and specifications.

CPO 6.44 To require that rural housing is well-designed, simple, unobtrusive, responds to the site's characteristics and is informed by the principles set out in the Wicklow Single Rural House Design Guide. All new rural dwelling houses should demonstrate good integration within the wider landscape.

CPO 6.45 Subject to compliance with CPO 6.41 (rural housing policy), the Council will facilitate high quality rural infill / backland development in accordance with the design guidance set out in the Wicklow Rural House Design Guide provided that such development does not unduly detract from the residential amenity of existing properties or the visual amenities of the area, or the rural character and pattern of development in the area and does not result in a more urban format of development.

CPO 6.46 Subject to compliance with CPO 6.41 (rural housing policy), the Council will facilitate a new dwelling house that results in the creation of a rural cluster layout provided that such development is of a high quality design, meets all requirements in terms of public health and safety and does not unduly impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.