Kilkenny City and County Development Plan

Volume 1 County

2021-2027

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021
Adopted 3rd September 2021, came into effect on the 15th October 2021

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1   Introduction

County Kilkenny is situated in the South East of Ireland. It has a land area of 2,062 sq. kilometres and a recorded population in the 2016 Census of 99,232[1]. The main urban centre is Kilkenny City. The next largest urban areas in the County are the Ferrybank area, adjacent to Waterford City, and the District Towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown.

This Development Plan sets out Kilkenny County Council's policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the City and County from 2021 to 2027. In preparing this City and County Development Plan the County Council had regard to relevant national plans, policies and strategies which relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. It also had regard to the plans of adjoining authorities. The plan provides for the mandatory objectives which are to be included in Development Plans as set out in the Planning and Development Acts[2].

1.1   Legislative Framework

Under the Planning and Development Acts, Kilkenny County Council is obliged to make a Development Plan every six years which comprises of a written statement and accompanying maps that give a graphic representation of the objectives contained in the Plan. Planning legislation sets out a number of mandatory and discretionary objectives to be addressed in Development Plans. In accordance with the Planning and Development Acts the Plan will come into effect four weeks from the date of its adoption.

1.2   Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The purpose is to "*provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development*"[3]. In accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC, SEA has been carried out on this Development Plan.

1.3   Appropriate Assessment

Article 6(3) of European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) requires competent authorities to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

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[1] http://census.cso.ie/sapmap/

[2] Section 10 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended.

[3] EU, Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, Article 1

Kilkenny County Council is the competent authority and an appropriate assessment has been carried out for this City and County Development Plan[4].

All plans, programmes and projects being carried out by public or private organisations and individuals need to be screened for the potential impact on Natura 2000 sites.

Appropriate Assessment means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, of the potential impacts of a plan or project, wherever located, on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and the inclusion, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of the plan or project. Therefore, whether a plan or project is located within, or is at a geographically remote area from a Natura 2000 site, if significant impacts cannot be ruled out then the plan or project must be subject to an appropriate assessment.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and Section 177 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), require that any plan or project with the potential to impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site must be screened to determine if appropriate assessment of the plan or project is required. In the event that the screening indicates that potential significant impacts cannot be ruled out then the plan or project will require an appropriate assessment.

> **Objective**
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> **1A   To implement the provisions of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive and ensure that any plan or project within the functional area of the Planning Authority is subject to appropriate assessment in accordance with the Guidance *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*, 2009[1] or any subsequent version, and is assessed in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in order to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity and conservation objectives of the site.**

This will apply to all plans and projects whether public or private and across all sectors of development.

Projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects)[5].

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[4] The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities,* 2009.

[5] Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.)

1.4   Sustainability

The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) agreed the following definition of sustainable development:

"*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*"[6].

In formulating this Development Plan, the Council has integrated the principles of sustainability across all of the Plan sections.

1.5   Structure of the Plan

This Plan comprises two Volumes. Volume 1 consists of a written statement and accompanying maps and includes the overarching strategies, objectives and Development Management Requirements common to both the City and the County. Volume 2, Kilkenny City Strategies, consists of City-specific strategies (which apply to the area defined by the City Development Boundary), such as a Core Strategy, Retail Strategy and Heritage Strategy. In the interest of avoiding duplication and contradiction, Volume 2 should be read in conjunction with Volume 1, and cross references will appear as relevant. Where the City has particular Objectives, Development Management considerations and requirements these will be set out in Volume 2. However, if a particular policy/objective is not included in Volume 2, the relevant section of Volume 1 will be applied as appropriate.

The text of the entire Plan Vol1 and Vol 2 **is a statement of Council policy.** Each chapter contains objectives and also has Development Management Requirements in relation to specific areas and topics. Objectives are in as far as is possible **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime bound (SMART). The Development Management Requirements will apply to development proposals in addition to the requirements for development set out in Volume 1, Chapter 13 and Vol 2.6 Place-making Strategy for the City. It should be noted that each chapter is not a stand-alone chapter, but should be read in conjunction with all other chapters.

In assessing any development, the overall context will be informed by all relevant sections in the entire Plan, including the Core Strategy, the housing strategy, community, economic, heritage and infrastructure considerations, underpinned by the strategic aims. Therefore, no one item takes precedence over another, but rather all plan provisions converge, founded as they are on the goal of sustainable development.

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[6] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, 1987, Transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to *document A/42/427* - Development and International Co-operation: Environment

Objective:

1B   To implement Development Management Requirements for new development as set out in Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the Plan as appropriate.

1.6   Policy Context

1.6.1   Climate Change

1.6.1.1   National Adaptation Framework, Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland, 2018

Ireland is a signatory of the Paris Agreement[7] a legally binding agreement to restrict global temperature rise, and to limit any increase, to significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. Ireland's first statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF) was published in January 2018. The NAF sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change. The NAF was developed under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. In relation to the 'Built Environment and Spatial Planning' it states that;

"*It is clear that climate change considerations need to be taken into account as a matter of course in planning-related decision-making processes and that the deepening of adaptation considerations in the planning and building standards processes is considered the most appropriate way of increasing the resilience of the built environment*".

Climate change is a cross cutting overarching theme across all the other chapters in the Plan and requires to be integrated into all plans and policies and operations of the Council over time.

Integrating climate considerations into decision making should ensure that inappropriate forms of development in vulnerable areas are avoided and compact development in less vulnerable areas is promoted.

1.6.1.2   The Climate Action Plan 2019

This sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address climate disruption. The Plan clearly recognises that Ireland must significantly step up its commitments to reduce emissions and sets out targets per sector. In relation to onshore wind energy, the Plan estimates that in 2017 the total contribution of onshore wind was 3.3 GW. To meet the required level of emissions reduction by 2030, we will need to increase electricity generated from renewable sources to at least 70%, indicatively comprised of:

- at least 3.5 GW of offshore renewable energy
- up to 1.5 GW of grid-scale solar energy
- up to 8.2 GW total of increased onshore wind capacity

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[7] A legally binding global agreement on climate change was agreed in Paris on the 12th December 2015

*The exact level of offshore wind, onshore wind, solar and other renewable technology will be determined by a new system of competitive auctions, known as the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS), where the lowest cost technology will be determined.

To reach the 2030 decarbonisation ambition, for electricity, the increase in onshore wind capacity will be delivered in a competitive framework of auctions and corporate contracting with a renewed focus on community and citizen participation.

Action no. 21 of the Climate Action Plan states as follows: *Ensure that updated planning guidelines for onshore wind are published in 2019.*

The Council has had regard to the [National Climate Change Adaptation Framework](#) in framing this development plan and has already sought to introduce planning and development measures in the overall approach to adaptation to climate change, for example by ensuring that risks of flooding are identified and integrated into the planning process. The local authority recognises that a pro-active approach, in which the challenges posed by climate change are integrated into the development of policies, plans and programmes is essential.

The Council have integrated and will continue to integrate both mitigation and adaptation measures into the City & County Development as required by National and Regional policies and objectives.

1.6.1.3   Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
In accordance with the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, Kilkenny County Council published its *Climate Change Adaptation Strategy*[8] (CCAS) in 2019. The Kilkenny CCAS recommends actions for climate adaptation and mitigation. The CCAS includes a number of policy recommendations to ensure County Kilkenny remains resilient to climate change and those recommendations have been included in this Development Plan.

1.6.2   National Planning Framework (NPF)
The NPF is the overarching planning policy for the state. It is based on the Vision of an additional 1million people living in the state by 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities and to protect and enhance the environment. The implementation of the NPF will ensure that the planning system responds successfully to the challenge of climate change through compact growth, sustainable mobility, and transitioning to a low carbon climate resilient society. This Draft Plan has embraced the 10 National Strategic Outcomes set out in the NPF

1.6.3   The National Development Plan 2018-2027
The National Development Plan sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the new National Planning Framework (NPF). The National Development Plan demonstrates the Government's commitment to meeting Ireland's infrastructure and investment

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[8] Kilkenny County Council, [Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024](#)

needs over the next ten years, through a total investment estimated at €116 billion over the period. A Climate Action Fund has been established under the NDP[9] to support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets.

1.6.4   Ministerial Guidelines and Directives

In accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) a statement has been appended to this Plan which includes information which demonstrates how the Planning Authority has implemented the policies and objectives of the Minister contained in Section 28 Guidelines when preparing the Plan. Where the Planning Authority has decided not to implement certain policies or objectives of the Minister contained in the Guidelines, the statement must give the reasons why. This is contained in Appendix L.

1.6.5   Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy Southern Region (RSES)

The Southern Region represents over 40% of Ireland's total landmass and one third of the national population. With three of the country's five cities - Cork, Limerick and Waterford and a network of large towns, the region has a strong urban structure. It remains largely a rural region with contrasting rural landscapes that range from the Atlantic seaboard to rich productive lands and river valleys. It is also divided into three sub-regional areas, called Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs) - the South-West the Mid-West, and the South-East. The South East Planning Area consists of Kilkenny along with Carlow, Tipperary[10], Waterford and Wexford.

The RSES Vision is to:

• Nurture all our places to realise their full potential;
• Protect and enhance our environment;
• Successfully combat climate change;
• Achieve economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all our citizens;
• Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
• Make the Southern Region one of Europe's most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions.

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[9] *National Development Plan* page 77
[10] Tipperary straddles both the Mid-West and the South East planning areas.
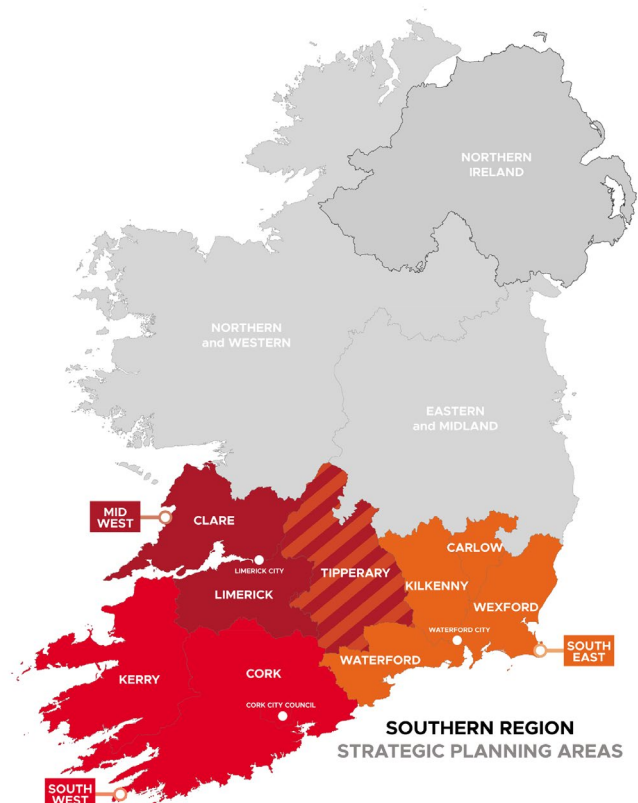
Figure 1.1 Regional Context

1.6.6   Food Wise 2025

Since its launch in July 2015, Food Wise 2025 has evolved from a high-level strategy into a shared blueprint for all involved in the sector. The agri-food and fisheries sectors are Ireland's most important indigenous industry. Food Wise 2025 sets out a vision of the industry, to help continue its course of growth, and recognising the importance of strategic foresight if emerging opportunities are to be fully realised in the decade ahead.

A guiding principle that Food Wise 2025 will seek to embed at all levels of the agri-food industry is that environmental protection and economic competitiveness are equal and complementary: one will not be achieved at the expense of the other. Food Wise 2025 also recognises that the three pillars of sustainability - social, economic and environmental – are equally important and carry commensurate weight.

1.6.7   Local Economic and Community Plan

The Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (LECP) is an integrated statutory plan that is reviewed and adopted by the Council every 6 years. It provides the supporting framework for the economic and community development of the County. The County Development Plan provides the policy framework for the spatial allocation of development. In this regard, both plans are interdependent in setting out the strategic vision for the economic growth of the County, accompanied by supporting policies and objectives to be employed in securing this vision. The Southern Regional Assembly has a role in ensuring coordination between the City and County Development Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plan.

1.7   Mission Statement

Kilkenny County Council's mission statement from the <u>Corporate Plan</u>[11] is as follows:
Kilkenny County Council is committed to working with the people of Kilkenny to develop sustainable, connected, economically thriving and proud communities with the consideration of climate change embedded into all of our policies and services.

The purpose of this five-year Corporate Plan is to provide a framework for the Elected Members, Management and staff to set the policies and direction for Kilkenny County Council until June 2024. The Corporate Plan will guide the policy making processes of the Strategic Policy Committees and the Corporate Policy Group and sets out and reviews Kilkenny County Council's agreed vision, objectives and strategies in respect of our many functions and activities. This vision is then translated into the City & County Development Plan by means of the policies and objectives contain therein which set out its strategic direction.

1.8   Monitoring and Review

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to assess the effectiveness or otherwise of policies and objectives in terms of achieving stated aims. Section 15(2) of the Act states that the Chief Executive shall, not later than two years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives and section 95(3)(a) of the Act expressly requires that the two-year report includes a review of progress on the housing strategy. The Development Plan objectives are listed in Appendix M of this Plan.

Following adoption of the Plan, key information requirements will be identified focusing on those policies and objectives central to the aims and strategy of the plan. These information requirements identified will be evaluated on an annual basis during the plan period.

The Council will aim to implement all the provisions of this Plan, subject to the availability of resources.

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[11] *Kilkenny County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024* - adopted 2019.

2   Climate Change

Strategic Aim: To provide a policy framework with objectives and actions in this City and County Development Plan to facilitate the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient County with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change.

2.1   Introduction

Scientific evidence for warming of the climate system is unequivocal[1]. The effects of climate change are clear. It is important to act and for the whole of society to work together to share best practices, to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and address the impacts of climate change. Reducing GHG emissions and preparing for climate change impacts will generate environmental, social, economic and health benefits for individuals, families, and communities. It is important to take action to adapt to the consequences of climate change and to work collectively to ensure that the local authority sector is positioned to build resilience against negative impacts and avail of the positive effects that may occur. Whilst Climate Change policies and mitigation measures are set out at an International and National level, Kilkenny County Council has a central role in the implementation of these policies and in promoting behavioural and attitude change towards climate change. Climate and environmental sustainability are key considerations for councils in their strategic planning and day-to-day actions across all service areas, most significantly in planning, transport, housing, lighting, waste management, and economic development.

An Adaptation Strategy has been prepared for this Plan as part of the requirements of the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* (2012). This Strategy will ensure that this Plan will appropriately address adaptation to climate change. Specific actions in the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 relating to the Development Plan are as follows:

- *Integrate climate adaptation and energy actions in the new Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2020-2026*
- *Develop policy in the City & County Development Plan to promote local materials and use of sustainable, low carbon footprint materials instead of those that require intense high temperature and carbon emissions*
- *Develop policy in the City & County Development Plan to promote and advise for the use of environmentally friendly material and appropriately designed new buildings, which utilise orientation, shelter, sun, light, etc. in design details*
- *Provide sufficient guidance to the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan to ensure renewable energy projects, including projects for wind-, solar- and bio-energy can be progressed throughout the County without significant impacts on the landscape, amenity, heritage and the environment*

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[1] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

- *Incorporate climate adaptation policies into the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2020 2026*
- *Review tree and hedgerow protection policies in the review of the City & County Development Plan to ensure they support the CCAS and are adequately implemented and enforced*
- *Review relevant wetland policies in the review of the City & County Development Plan to ensure they support the CCAS and are adequately implemented and enforced*

Local Authorities have signed up to a National Climate Action Charter, which commits the local authority sector (with the support of Central Government) to a range of actions including:

- be advocates for Climate Action in policies and practices, and in the various dealings with citizens and to underpin this role through the corporate planning process.
- adhere to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 13 Climate Action;[2]
- aim to measure the carbon impact of our various activities as accurately as possible and report as required to inform relevant local, regional, and national policies,
- implement, in so far as is practicable, measures which reduce our carbon emissions in line with national objectives, and develop a method for planning and reporting on these actions
- deliver a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030 (on the 2009 baseline),
- ensure that policies and practices at local government level lead us towards low carbon pathways and put in place a process for carbon proofing major decisions, programmes and projects on a systematic basis, including investments in transport and energy infrastructure moving over time to a near zero carbon investment strategy,
- exercise planning and regulatory roles to help improve climate outcomes in the wider community and beyond the public sector, by developing and implementing robust evidenced based policy and standards on climate action, through appropriate and relevant adaptation and mitigation measures,
- continue to identify and develop specific actions to be taken to reduce the risks associated with negative climate change impacts and build resilience to these impacts through effective implementation of climate adaptation strategies/ Climate Change Action Plans. The Development Plan has an important role to play in the implementation of climate change actions for example by influencing spatial pattern of development, encouraging a modal shift from private car to more sustainable modes of travel, assisting in the protection and promotion of biodiversity, the protection of trees and hedgerows, etc. This Plan sets out to integrate climate implications to inform spatial choices.
- Support and translate National and Regional targets/obligations to a local level.
- Prescribe objectives and policies to realise adaptation and mitigation actions.
- Ensure integration on these policies and objectives in planning related decision-making processes.

Summary

The implications of this approach are that Climate change policies are integrated into all sections of the Plan. Every chapter of the plan is based on this over-arching approach. The text of the plan which

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[2] Strategic Development Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

is considered policy along with the objectives and the Development Management Requirements are framed in this context. It is not necessary therefore to repeat in each chapter objectives and policies for climate change.

The Council have embedded and will continue to embed climate change adaptation and mitigation considerations in all the policies and services of the Council.

2.2   International Context

The Paris Agreement 2015 is a protocol set within the context of the UNFCCC (ratified by Ireland on 4th November 2016) and it is aimed at:

- Limiting global warming to less than 2◦C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5◦C;
- Increasing the ability to combat the impact of climate change and foster climate resilience.

This agreement states the need for parties to formulate and implement National Adaption Plans.

The Global Covenant of Mayors (COM) for Climate and Energy is a voluntary, bottom up approach for cities and local governments to combat Climate Change and move towards a low emission, resilient society. The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy brought the Compact of Mayors and the EU Covenant of Mayors under one international body in January 2017 incorporating over 9,000 cities and local governments. Kilkenny County Council is a party to the Covenant of Mayors.

2.3   National Context

The Government has identified Climate Change as the most important long-term challenge facing Ireland. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 is a landmark national milestone in the evolution of climate change policy in Ireland. It provides the statutory basis for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable society. It gave statutory authority to both the *National Mitigation Plan* (NMP), published in 2017 and the *National Adaptation Framework* (NAF) published in 2018. Kilkenny County Council's *Local Adaptation Strategy* forms part of the National Adaptation Framework.

Climate Action & Low Carbon Development Act 2015

National Mitigation Plan

Sectors (Electricity generation, built environment, Transport, Agriculture)

National Adaptation Framework

Local Authority Adaptation Strategies Sectoral Adaptation Plans
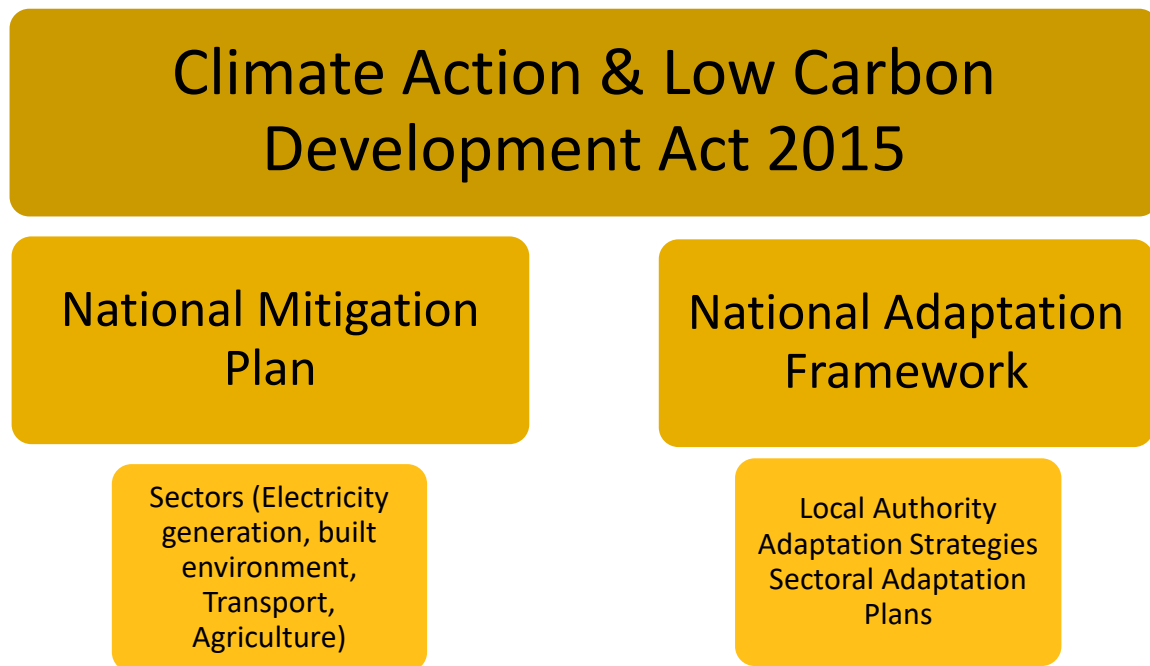
Figure 2.1 Climate Change Policy Framework

Climate change will have a profound change on Ireland's political and administrative systems into the future, setting out governance arrangements including the carbon-proofing of government policies, the establishment of carbon budgets, the strengthening of the Climate Change Advisory Council and providing greater accountability to the Oireachtas. Figure 2.1 above shows how our approach to Climate change will impact on everything we do.

National Mitigation Plan 2017 (NMP)
The NMP represented an initial step in transitioning Ireland to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. It is a whole-of-Government Plan, and the sectors of Electricity Generation, the Built Environment, Transport and Agriculture. The Plan included over 100 individual actions for ministers and public bodies to implement and begin the process of developing medium to long term mitigation choices for the next and future decades.

National Adaptation Framework 2018 (NAF)
National Adaptation Framework (NAF), complements the mitigation approach by addressing the climate resilience challenge. The NAF specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur. A key action under NAF requires each local authority in the country to prepare local climate adaptation strategies.

Climate Action Plan
The Government published its Climate Action Plan in June 2019. The plan sets out 183 actions which, for the first time, show how Ireland can reach its 2030 targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and also put Ireland on the right trajectory towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The Action Plan sets out inter alia the following targets:

Electricity
- Increase reliance on renewables from 30% to 70% adding 12GW of renewable energy capacity (with peat and coal plants closing).

Buildings
- Design policy to get circa 500,000 existing homes to upgrade to B2 Building Energy Rating (BER) and 400,000 to install heat pumps
- Require at least one recharging point in new non-residential buildings with more than 10 parking spaces
- All Public Buildings to reach BER 'B' Rating

Transport
- Accelerate the take up of EV cars and vans so that we reach 100% of all new cars and vans being EVs by 2030
- Raise the blend proportion of biofuels in road transport to 10% in petrol and 12% in diesel
- Zero emission postal deliveries in Cork, Galway, **Kilkenny,** Limerick and Waterford by 2020

Agriculture
- Deliver substantial verifiable greenhouse gas abatement through adoption of a specified range of improvements in farming practice in line with recommendations from Teagasc

Enterprise and Services
- Embed energy efficiency, replacement of fossil fuels, careful management of materials and waste, and carbon abatement across all enterprises and public service bodies

Waste and the Circular Economy
- Develop coherent reduction strategies for plastics, food waste, and resource use

Under the Built Environment section of the plan, three specific actions were identified for Local Authorities:

64	Introduce minimum BER standards in the Local Authority social housing stock as part of retrofit works being carried out on older stock or refurbishment of vacant dwellings
65	Develop and establish a climate-action toolkit and audit framework for Local Authority development planning to drive the adoption of stronger climate action policies in relation to the patterns and forms of future development
66	Roadmap to develop supply chain to support the phase out of fossil fuel boilers in new dwelling

Source: Climate Action Plan p83

Through this City and County Development Plan the Council has adopted the relevant policies and objectives to guide the pattern and form of development to mitigate the impact of new development on climate change.

National Planning Framework
National Strategic Outcome Objectives 8 (Build Climate Resilience) and 9 (Support the transition to low carbon and clean energy) under National Strategic Outcome 8 *"Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society"*.

The Council has pursued an agenda of compliance with the National Planning Framework outcomes in relation to the spatial allocation of new development.
This has been achieved by incorporating the policy for compact growth of settlement and by providing for 30% of new development to be within the footprint of existing settlements, the integration of land use and transportation and the further development of the concept of the 10 minute city for Kilkenny city.

National Development Plan
Under the National Development Plan (NDP) a Climate Action Fund has been established with an allocation of at least €500m to 2027.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
The Southern Regional Assembly supports the implementation of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2019[3], and the RSES has identified three priority areas for action to address climate change and to bring about a Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society:

- Decarbonisation;
  It is an objective of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy to develop a Regional Decarbonisation Plan to provide a framework for action on de-carbonisation across all sectors.

- Resource Efficiency;
  Resource efficiency means using the Earth's limited resources in a sustainable manner while minimising impacts on the environment. Climate Action Plan Target for Ireland is a 70% in GHG emissions with at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.

- Climate Resilience.
  Climate adaptation aims to reduce the vulnerability of our environment, society and economy to the current and future risks posed by climate change. It focuses on short-term and long-term responses to climate change by taking a cross-cutting themed approach for all key sectors of Government, society, and the economy.

Climate Action Regional Office
Four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) were established as Centres of Excellence, to deliver on the local government sector's obligations under the Climate Act 2015. Kilkenny County is located within the Eastern and Midlands area and the Council is a Partner County, in CARO to the lead authority – Kildare. As a Partner County, Kilkenny County Council will have a full-time staff member of the Eastern & Midlands CARO based in Kilkenny to assist in the roll out of the CARO work programme over the next five years.

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[3] RSES, Chapter 5

The CAROs are based on distinct geographic/ topographic characteristics and are key to enabling local authorities develop and roll out climate action strategies in a coordinated response to national and regional policy at a local level.

2.4 Integration of Climate Change into the County Development Plan

Climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives have been incorporated into the policies of this Plan. This is to ensure that climate change has been consistently integrated into the policy themes addressed by this plan. Only those sources and impacts of climate change within the Statutory remit of the County Development Plan are included.

The City and County Plan has aligned its policy and objectives with the Strategic Objectives of the NPF and the RSES to maintain and improve the County's attraction in order to maximise investment opportunities.

This Plan has also taken cognisance of the Council's own Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Therefore, the transition to a low carbon economy and society is embedded in the policies and objectives of the Plan. Built heritage, in particular the reuse of existing fabric, can play a role in combating climate change.

2.4.1 Core strategy

One of the key Strategic Outcomes of the NPF is the achievement of compact growth. Compact and sustainable growth focuses on reusing previously developed "brownfield sites" and building up infill sites which may not have been built on before, particularly in well serviced urban locations served by good transport links and in close proximity to employment opportunities.

A core strategy has been developed to implement the concept of compact growth within the settlement hierarchy of the City and County with policies and objectives to secure the implementation of the provisions of the NPF and RSES and the Climate Action Plan.

It is a strategic aim of the Plan to:
- **Deliver growth in population within the existing built-up footprint of urban areas and improve quality of life within urban and rural areas.**
- **Reduce travel distances and provide for greater proximity to employment and services.**
- **Facilitate more journeys by bike or on foot; and greater urban density, that in turn will support more viable public transport options.**
- **Providing for appropriate land use policies to deliver development in a compact form resulting in development at sustainable locations with inherent climate resilience.**

2.4.2 Transport

The Plan provides for the following:
- The successful execution of Compact Growth through appropriate densities, the focus development of brownfield and under-utilised sites in our urban areas,
- Integrating land use and transportation policy,

- The expansion of walking, cycling and public transport networks to encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable transport options,
- Facilitating the take up of EV cars and vans by making provision for charging points in new developments,
- The successful roll-out of the National Broadband Plan to facilitate remote working and less travel demand for work journeys,
- Facilitate the rollout of compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles by supporting the development of CNG refuelling infrastructure.

2.4.3   Flood Resilience

Three key principles that should be adopted by regional authorities, local authorities, developers, and their agents when considering flood risk are as follows:

- Avoid the risk, where possible,
- Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible, and
- Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for the County as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment which identified the areas at risk to flooding and appropriate policy response. Where any zoning did not pass the Plan-Making Justification Test, the land was rezoned to accommodate less vulnerable uses[4]. In addition, this Plan includes a requirement that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue. This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of climate change (See Chapter 10 Infrastructure and the accompanying SFRA).

Ecosystem based Adaptation (EbA) such as Natural Water Retention Measures (such as restoration of wetlands and woodlands), can benefit the Water Framework Directive, flood risk management and biodiversity objectives.

The Council will continue to apply the Sustainable Urban Design Drainage Systems when assessing development proposals. Examples of SUDS include green roofs, soakaways, swales, infiltration trenches ponds and wetlands. SUDS provide areas within the built environment where the natural processes of rainwater interception, storage and infiltration can take place.

2.4.4   Natural Heritage/ Biodiversity

The Plan supports the provision of green infrastructure within the county through the policy and objectives in Chapter 9 Heritage and the Development Management Requirements for the provision of open space within new housing developments. Biodiversity is vulnerable to climate change; however, it offers opportunities for both mitigation and adaptation. Through its own projects and through the development management policies within the Plan the Council will protect and enhance

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[4] There is one exception where a site at Canal Walk, Kilkenny City, was zoned residential – See Council meetings minutes (8th June and 3rd September 2021)

biodiversity. The Council also has an objective to protect, manage and enhance the wetlands of the county.

2.5   Strategic Objectives

2A   To support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrate land use and transportation, and maximise opportunities through development form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon emissions.

2B   To support the implementation of the National Climate Action Plan and the National Climate Action Charter for Local Authorities, and to facilitate measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by embedding appropriate policies within the Development Plan.

2C   To promote, support and direct effective climate action policies and objectives that seek to improve climate outcomes across the settlement areas and communities of County Kilkenny helping to successfully contribute and deliver on the obligations of the State to transition to low carbon and climate resilient society,

2D   To integrate appropriate mitigation and adaptation considerations and measures into all forms of development.

2E   To ensure that the Development Plan transposes, supports and implements strategic objectives of the National Planning Framework and the *Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* to create an enabling local development framework that:
(a) promotes and integrates important climate considerations in local development and the assessment of planning applications and
(b) supports the practical implementation of national climate policy and targets to assist in the delivery of the national transition objective.

2F   To adopt nature-based approaches and green infrastructural solutions as viable mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions where feasible. The Council will promote and support physical activity, active recreation and an active lifestyle.

2G   To reduce energy related CO_2 emissions of Kilkenny County Council.

2H   To achieve the commitment under the European Climate Alliance to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent every 5 years.

The Council will monitor revised Government Guidelines and statutory requirements and will propose an appropriate variation of the City & County Development Plan to ensure consistency between the approach to climate action at local and national policy level.

For Kilkenny County Council to achieve their 33% energy reduction obligation by 2020, the Council identified a number of energy efficiency areas. The Council's adaptation plan identified five key areas where Kilkenny County Council could reduce its energy consumption and meet the 2020 target. These

areas were public lighting, electricity efficiency in buildings, thermal efficiency, transport, and renewable energy.

KCC has achieved this 2020 target of 33% improvement in energy efficiency in accordance with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), as reported by SEAI in their *Annual Report on Public Sector Energy Efficiency Performance*, 2019.

3   Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends

3.1   Population trends

Census 2016 records the population of County Kilkenny as 99,232 which is an increase of 3,813 over the population recorded in 2011. This is a 4% population increase for the county, less than half the 8% increase in the previous 2006-2011 intercensal period, but still slightly above the State which averaged an increase of 3.8% over the period.

Kilkenny City recorded a population of 26,512 in 2016 which is an increase of 2,089 (8.5%) over the population recorded in 2011.

Table 3.1 Recorded population 2002 - 2016				
	2002	2006	2011	2016
Kilkenny County	80,399	87,558	95,419	99,232
Kilkenny City	20,735	22,179	24,423	26,512

At a regional level Kilkenny County performed well compared to its neighbours, with County Carlow being the only county within the south east recording a higher percentage population increase.

Table 3.2 Recorded population in the South East			
	2011	**2016**	**Percentage change**
Carlow	54,612	56,932	+ 4,6%
Kilkenny	95,419	99,232	+4%
Tipperary	158,754	159,553	+0.5%
Waterford County	113,795	116,176	+2.1%
Wexford	145,320	149,711	+3%

3.1.1   Population Change

3.1.1.1   *Urban Areas*

The major focus for expansion in population has been in Kilkenny City and the Ferrybank area (Environs of Waterford City within County Kilkenny). In Kilkenny City, an increase of 2,089 persons was recorded in the intercensal period 2011 to 2016, which compares well with the 2,244 persons recorded in the period 2006 to 2011. The Ferrybank area (Waterford City Environs within County Kilkenny) also recorded an increase of 435 persons between 2011 and 2016. Those two areas alone account for 66% of the total population increase within the County. The population of Ferrybank, the second largest urban area within the County after Kilkenny City, has increased by 145% since 2002.

Table 3.3 Population of the District towns and Ferrybank				
	2006	**2011**	**2016**	**2011- 2016 % difference**
Kilkenny City	22,179	24,423	26,512	+8.5%
Callan	1,771	2,330	2,475	+6.2%
Castlecomer	1,531	1,456	1,502	+3.1%
Graiguenamanagh[1]	1,097	1,476	1,389	-5.8%
Thomastown	1,837	2,273	2,445	+7.5%
Ferrybank Area	3,465	4,811	5,246	+9.04%

Table 3.3 shows that all of the District Towns have performed well in terms of population increase since 2011. Castlecomer was the only town that has shown a population decrease between 2006 and 2011, but the population has slightly recovered according to the 2016 census.

The table also shows the dominance of Kilkenny City as the most significant urban area within the County. The population of the County within aggregate town areas as defined by the census has increased from 35.3% in 2006 to 37% in 2011 and to 40% in 2016. This shows that the proportion of the population living in urban areas[2] is increasing. However, it also shows that Kilkenny is still a predominantly rural county in terms of population.

3.1.1.2   Rural Areas
Figure 3.1 shows the population change across all Electoral Divisions (EDs) in the county between 2002 and 2016. There are 113 Electoral Districts and of these, 100 showed an increase in population, one remained constant and only 12 experienced a decrease in population. The EDs that experienced the most significant growth are Paulstown (105%), Tiscoffin (87.69%), Jerpoint West (120.49%) and Kilculliheen (Part) (144.57%).

The most significant decreases were in the Tullaroan and Baunmore EDs, which respectively experienced decreases of 10.5% and 13.55%.

Over that time period it can be seen that on average, in the electoral districts close to Kilkenny City, there have been significant increases in population with high double digit increases.

3.1.2   Age Cohorts
Over the intercensal period 2011-2016 there was noticeable change in the age cohorts in County Kilkenny. In accordance with trends in the State, the slight reduction in cohorts in the 0-4 age bracket may be an indication of a lower birth rate whereas the increase in the cohorts 45-64 and 65+ may be indicative of the ageing of the County's population. The cohorts of 18-24 and 25-44 have also reduced accordingly, which may be indicative of emigration from both the County and State. This seems to be indicative of the slow erosion of the working population which may over time lead to concerns for

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[1] These figures do not include the Tinnahinch area in Graiguenamanagh, located within Co. Carlow. If Tinnahinch is included within Graiguenamanagh, then the population of the town would be 1,475 for 2016 (1,543 for 2011).
[2] Urban areas as defined by CSO i.e. towns with populations of 1,500 or more.

sustained economic growth. The tables below compare the Age cohorts in the County against those in the State. Decreases in cohorts are highlighted in red.

Table 3.4	Percentage of Population in various Age Cohorts in the State						
	Age Group						
Year	**0-4**	**5-12**	**13-17**	**18-24**	**25-44**	**45-64**	**65+**
2011	7.77	10.99	6.28	8.96	31.61	22.73	11.67
2016	6.96	11.52	6.52	8.24	29.53	23.84	13.39

Table 3.5	Percentage of Population in various Age Cohorts in County Kilkenny						
	Age Group						
Year	**0-4**	**5-12**	**13-17**	**18-24**	**25-44**	**45-64**	**65+**
2011	7.86	11.49	6.68	7.8	29.84	23.89	12.25
2016	7.17	11.86	7.11	7.09	27.67	24.93	14.16

3.1.3   Nationality

The 2016 Census provides the breakdown of different nationalities within the state and compare that to the county. In the state the largest Non-Irish nationality is that of the Polish community accounting for 2.61% of the national population.

Table 3.6 Nationalities living in the State		
Nationality	**Number**	**%**
Ireland	4,082,513	87.04
UK	103,113	2.19
Poland	122,515	2.61
Lithuania	36,552	0.77
Other EU 28	146,738	3.12
Rest of World	126,557	2.69
Not stated	71,933	1.53
Total	4,689,921	

The census shows that 90% of the population of the county identify as being Irish in nationality. Of the 10% of non-Irish nationals in the County, the Polish community now make up the largest number at 2.34% of the of the county population, or 2,305 persons.

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 3.1 Population Change 2002-2016

Date: September 2021

Legend
- -13.55% to 0%
- 0% to 15.96%
- 15.96% to 32%
- 32% to 68.32%
- 68.32% to 144.57%

Clogh -2.24
Moneenroe
Skehana 10
5.48
Byrnesgrove
Castlecomer 0.17
Coan
Lisdowney -9.81 18.95
Ballyragget
34.76
8.98
Coan 16.28
Gathabawn 27.48
Connahy
Clogharinka -3.15
Galmoy 10.25
Crosspatrick 15.68
14.75
35.02
-13.55
-7.6
Johnstown
Urlingford 38.64
12.37
2.36
Freshford
3.64
Threecastles
Ballyfoyle 38.43
Johnswell 37.83
Castlewarren 87.69
17.71
25.61
28.95
-5.39
35.17
Castlewarren
Tullaroan 15.48
-10.51
25.79
Kilkenny City 8.73 32
19.04
20.11
Clara
Paulstown 28.87
105
Ballycallan 11.39
9.96 Kilmanagh
7.03
-6.77
Bennetsbridge 8.07
Gowran 53.33
Goresbridge -5.51
68.32
Cuffesgrange 9.65
13.01
Danesfort 48.39
3.75
17.94
Dungarvan 19.79
8.82 Skeoghvasteen
4.02
17.52
0.37
11.06 Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch
37.02
Callan 34.64
Newtown 15.96
Kells 27.67 Ennisnag
Stonyford 35.52
37.9
25
58.09
-5.97
Dunamaggin 27.8
Knocktopher 38.1
Thomastown 29.27
11.99
Inistioge
52.62
Newmarket
Ballyhale 26.57 24.11
19.76 Coolroebeg 5.59
15.09
3.45
Windgap 7.03 Kilmaganny
Hugginstown 20.8
4.17
25
The Rower 11.57
3.45
0
19.31
4.42
Tullogher 25.17
17.72
Listerlin 120.49
20.21
New Ross Environs
20.37
14.86
Templeorum
-6.47 Mullinavat 12.99
20.48
15.44
Owning 4.51
29.11
Piltown 35.52
24.07
8.19
Bigwood
10.74
Glenmore
Fiddown 43.42
43.1
12.36
4.94
14.23
6.95
Kilmacow
Mooncoin
8.56
Slieverue -9.05
17.67 Carrigeen -0.34
144.57
Ferrybank
Waterford Environs

Bagenalstown

Carrick on Suir

Portlaw

Table 3.7 Nationalities living in County Kilkenny		
Nationality	**Number**	**%**
Ireland	88,938	90.63
UK	2,128	2.16
Poland	2,305	2.34
Lithuania	401	0.40
Other EU 28	2,195	2.23
Rest of World	1,186	1.20
Not stated	972	0.99
Total	98,125	

On further analysis of the Census figures, it can be seen that the majority of the Polish community in the county live in Kilkenny City at 1,257, accounting for 4.85% of the City's population at 2016.

3.1.4   Household size

The changing nature of household patterns is an important consideration for the Plan. In 2002 the average household size was 3.3. In 2006 the average household size had decreased to 2.88. The 2011 Census records an average of 2.8 people per household throughout the county, which rose to 2.84 in 2016 (the state average is 2.75).   The National Planning Framework expects that household size is expected to decline to around 2.5 by 2040, while also acknowledging that household sizes in urban areas tend to be smaller than in the suburbs or rural parts of the country.

Table 3.8 Average Household size (County Kilkenny)			
	No. of households	Persons in households	Average household size
2002	25,603	75,965	3.03
2006	29,651	84,973	2.88
2011	33,619	94,342	2.8
2016	34,855	99,232	2.84

Source: CSO 2002, 2006, 2011, 2016

If we examine the urban areas of the County, a similar trend exists but the occupancy rate is lower.

Table 3.9 Average Household size for aggregate town areas in Co. Kilkenny			
	No. of households	Persons in households	Average household size
2002	8,239	22,713	2.75
2006	11,355	29,536	2.6
2011	13,250	34,089	2.57
2016	14,699	37,369	2.54

For the urban areas within the County household size has continued to decrease from 2.75 in 2002 to 2.54 in 2016. For Kilkenny City and the Ferrybank area the average household size in 2016 was 2.57, similar to 2011. This has implications for the amount of zoned land required in these settlements and the range and size of houses to be catered for within the settlements.

3.2   Population Forecasts

The population targets for the City & County are set by the *Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework*. These figures were also set out in Appendix 1 of the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*. The population forecasts are further refined in Chapter 4, Core Strategy. The targets set for the City and County are set out in Table 3.10 below.

Table 3.10 National Planning Framework population projections					
	2016	NPF 2026	2027	Uplift from 2016	2031
Kilkenny County	99,232	110,000	111,077	11,845	114,500
Kilkenny City	26,512	29,822	30,153	3,641	31,477
Ferrybank/Belview	5,288	6,608	6,740	1,452	7,268

3.3   Housing Vacancy Rates

The 2016 Census recorded a vacancy rate of 9% for the County, 1.4% of which is holiday homes. This rate represents a decrease from the 11.9% recorded in 2011. The national average was recorded at 12.2% which includes 3.1% holiday homes, down significantly from the 14.5% recorded in 2011. The vacancy rate within Kilkenny City was recorded at 7% which includes 0.6% holiday homes, also significantly down from the 11.3% recorded in 2011. The vacancy rates within the county since 1991 are indicated in Table 3.11 below. It can be seen that before 2006 the vacancy rate ranged between 6.4 and 7%. There has been a significant increase in the vacancy rate since then.

Table 3.11: Vacancy rates in Co. Kilkenny 1991-2016					
Year	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016
Vacancy rate	6.4%	6.6%	12%	11.9%	9.0%

Source: CSO, 2016

3.4   Socio-Economic profile

3.4.1   Kilkenny's Economy

Kilkenny city is identified as a self-sustaining regional driver with a significant population and as a major centre for delivery of public services, with public and private hospitals, third level education, courts, local and national government functions as well as economic and business roles and higher order retail functions. The City is an administration centre for state and semi-state agencies including the regional HQ of the Health & Safety Authority (HSA) and the Health Services Executive (HSE), the national HQ of the Patents Office, the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland and The Heritage Council.

Kilkenny city has also developed a strong profile as a services centre with companies such as State Street, VHI, and Taxback.com being present. This is reflected in the fact that the City is the 8th largest employment centre in the State.

The County as a whole boasts a strong indigenous industry in sectors such as food and drink (e.g. Glanbia, Connolly Red Mills and artisan food producers) as well as the craft sector. The city has a high

profile nationally and internationally as a medieval city and a centre for tourism, festivals, heritage and the arts.

3.4.2   Employment

Employment in the county declined over the period 2006 to 2011 in line with the recession in the World and European economies. Between 2011 and 2016 there was a steady increase in employment in all sectors except Public Administration and Manufacturing.

Table 3.12: Occupation by Industry[3]		
Industry	**2011**	**2016**
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3,011	3,488
Building and construction	2,117	2,496
Manufacturing industries	4,482	4,069
Commerce and trade	8,761	9,348
Transport and communications	1,834	1,991
Public administration	2,238	2,150
Professional services	9,042	10,446
Other	5,400	6,475
Total	**36,885**	**41,363**

Source: CSO 2011, 2016

At a national level post 2016 as the economy recovered jobs continued to grow and unemployment continued to fall. This is illustrated by CSO figures of June 2019, which show that the country was close to full employment as the jobless rate slumped to just 4.4%[4].

The CSO's Business Demography Survey reports that there were 4,635 businesses operating in County Kilkenny (in 2018), with 20,321 people employed. The Retail and Wholesale Sector with 909 businesses employed the largest percentage of people (at c23%). The Manufacturing Sector employed the next highest proportion (at c20%) and the Hospitality Sector was the third highest employer (at c17% - c42% higher than the national average employed in Hospitality.) The Construction Sector with 1,200 enterprises accounted for the largest proportion of businesses (at c26%) and c15% of those employed (c40% higher than the national average employed in Construction.)

Kilkenny has built a strong cohort of shared services operations, a sizeable portfolio of international financial services companies and has strong activity in the future growth sectors of Fintech/Regtech[5]/Insurtech[6] and the global payments sector. It plays a critical role as a central

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[3] Source: Census 2006 and 2011 and 2016

[4] Irish independent June 5th 2019

[5] Regulatory technology, in short Regtech, is a new technology that uses information technology to enhance regulatory processes.

[6] Insurtech is any technology that's used by insurance companies to streamline their operations, provide a better service, or save money

location within the Ireland South East financial services cluster with key companies including State Street, Taxback Group, Carne Group and VHI.

Kilkenny has distinct competitive advantages in the Agri and Agri-tech sectors with major companies operating in the county including Glanbia and Connolly's Red Mills, complemented by an emerging artisan food producer base of micro and medium sized food producers. Glanbia have continued to expand and new entrants such as AB Agri being attracted by the level of innovation and agri-tech research originating from the county.

Kilkenny, home to the Design & Craft Council Ireland headquarters and Grennan Mill Craft School, has long been recognised as the centre of Ireland's design and craft sector. Kilkenny's reputation as a centre for creativity and design thinking continues to be enhanced with the expansion of Cartoon Saloon and Lighthouse Studios.

Notwithstanding, there is some uncertainty to future performance due to the potential economic impact of Brexit on the Irish economy. However, since the first quarter of 2020 the situation has changed dramatically due to the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is now a high degree of uncertainty around economic performance for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021 and beyond.

3.5   Broadband

The county is continuing to show a strong increase in broadband accessibility. Broadband is one of the key drivers in maintaining competitiveness and supporting socio-economic development. It provides a connectivity that has transformed the way people and businesses operate.

From 2017 to 2019, there was an increase of 505 premises covered by Broadband, from 47,650 to 48,155. Over the same period commercial broadband availability has increased from 47% to 62%. The availability of Broadband is becoming a prerequisite for economic competitiveness and there is also an increased reliance on broadband for communication and entertainment. The Covid-19 pandemic with its associated social distancing has led to a paradigm shift in terms of accepting remote work and social practices and these have become extensively prevalent. It is anticipated that many of the trends that developed in response to Covid-19 will remain, potentially speeding up the reliance on broadband.

The National Broadband Plan[7] will be rolled out nationwide over the next seven years. The contract for the National Broadband Plan State intervention area was awarded in November 2019. Over the next four years, more than 90% of premises in the State will have access to these services, opening up opportunities in health, agriculture, education, rural development and tourism. A mobile broadband taskforce was established to identify solutions to broadband and mobile phone coverage deficits and to investigate how better services can be provided to consumers prior to the NBP rollout. See Figure 3.2 for the intervention areas in Co. Kilkenny.

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[7] https://nbi.ie/

Clogh
Skehana
Moneenroe
Byrnesgrove
Castlecomer
Coan
Galmoy
Lisdowney
Ballyragget
Crosspatrick
Gathabawn
Connahy
Clogharinka
Johnstown
Freshford
Ballyfoyle
Urlingford
Threecastles
Johnswell
Castlewarren
Paulstown
Tullaroan
Kilkenny City
Clara
Ballycallan
Gowran
Goresbridge
Kilmanagh
Cuffesgrange
Skeoghvasteen
Bennetsbridge
Dungarvan
Danesfort
Callan
Newtown
Ennisnag
Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch
Kells
Stonyford
Thomastown
Dunamaggin
Inistioge
Knocktopher
Newmarket
Windgap
Ballyhale
Coolroebeg
The Rower
Kilmaganny
Hugginstown
Tullogher
Listerlin
New Ross Environs
Owning
Templeorum
Mullinavat
Glenmore
Piltown
Bigwood
Fiddown
Kilmacow
Mooncoin
Slieverue
Carrigeen
Ferrybank
Waterford Environs

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 3.2 National Broadband Plan for Kilkenny County

Date: September 2021

National Broadband Plan Q1 2020

Exclusion Area
Intervention Area
Towns and Villages

3.6   Travel to Work

The travel modes used by people travelling to work, school or college in the county are set out below for 2006, 2011 and 2016. The census figures show that in 2016, 3,242 persons worked from home, up from 2852 persons in 2011. It is anticipated that the numbers in "work from home" category will increase significantly in the next census, primarily due to the changes brought about by Covid-19. The CSO figures show an overwhelming majority still use the private car as a means of transport and this percentage is rising, with 61.9% of the total numbers travelling using the car either as a passenger or as driver in 2006, and this had increased to 64.5% in 2011 and 65% in 2016.

Table 3.13: Mode of travel to work, school or college in 2006, 2011 and 2016										
Year	**On foot**	**Bicycle**	**Bus, mini bus or coach**	**Train**	**Motor-cycle or scooter**	**Car driver**	**Car passen ger**	**Other (includes working from home)**	**Not stated**	Total
2006	7,223	891	5,568	175	204	24,974	11,094	7,374	692	**58,195**
2011	7,229	751	4,464	221	108	25,481	11,942	6,283	1,540	**58,019**
2016	7,237	814	5,014	307	116	27,878	13,354	6746	1,965	**63,426**

According to the CSO, approximately 62 per cent of workers spend less than 30 minutes travelling to work and just under 5 per cent spend more than 1 hour travelling to work. On average, workers in County Kilkenny live just over 18Km from their place of work, compared to an average of 15km nationally.

3.7   Unemployment

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, unemployment in the county had decreased significantly from 2011 to 2020. This has been due to a sustained recovery which led to the live register decreasing to around 3,254 in early 2020. Following the very severe economic shock that has been brought about by the Covid-19 virus, Covid-19 pandemic unemployment payments were made to 10,658 persons in the county during the month of May 2020. This had reduced to 4,000 by the 11th August[8]. Covid-19 will continue to affect the economy for some time to come.

The historic unemployment rates are set out in Table 3.14.

Table 3.14 Unemployment rates in County Kilkenny		
Year	**Unemployed Persons**	**% Rate**
2006	3,233	7.5%
2011	8,992	19.4%
2016	6,044	12.7%

Source: CSO, 2011, 2016

The employed labour force within the County was 37,273 in 2011[9] and increased to 41,363 in 2016.

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[8]https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/e936b-update-on-payments-awarded-for-covid-19-pandemic-unemployment-payment-and-enhanced-illness-benefit/

[9] CSO, 2016 and Kilkenny Economic and Community Monitor, 2020

3.8   Physical Development Trends

The expansion of the urban centres has continued within the County. It is notable that Kilkenny City is performing well, with its population still expanding at a rate slightly above the national average. Ferrybank, now falling within the Waterford Metropolitan Area, has grown significantly and has consolidated itself as the second largest urban area within the county.

Physical infrastructure has been delivered and improved during the 2014 – 2020 plan period, including:

- The Central Access Scheme and St. Francis Bridge over the River Nore in Kilkenny City has been delivered,
- Commencement of works on the Abbey Quarter in Kilkenny, including redevelopment of the Brewhouse and the new linear park along the River Nore,
- St Mary's hall renovated to become the Medieval Mile Museum,
- The redevelopment of Evans Home to accommodate the Butler Gallery,
- The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge for the New Ross Bypass, was officially opened in 2020,
- Public Realm improvements along the Medieval Mile have been completed,
- Moat field walk completed in Callan,
- In Thomastown work has commenced on a primary care unit on a site at Lady's Well Street adjacent to the town centre,
- In Castlecomer the former Creamery House refurbishment was completed and the former Avalon Inn adjacent to the Discovery Park was redeveloped as a hotel. An objective of the Local Area Plan for a pedestrian bridge linking the town to the Discovery Park was advanced with planning permission being granted for its construction.
- In Graiguenamanagh the former creamery site was redeveloped with the opening of an Aldi store with associated laneway improvements from the site to the town centre. Work is also progressing on the development of a flood relief scheme for the town,
- Redevelopment of former creamery in Piltown as an enterprise centre.
- Significant investment by Irish Water in water and waste water for the towns and villages such as:
  - Waste water – Castlecomer, Urlingford, Stoneyford, Freshford, Johnstown and Goresbridge
  - Water supply- Kilferagh, Furzehouse, Outrath, Wallslough and Inistioge

Substantial investment has been taking place at Belview as a result of the infrastructural improvements, including the construction and extension of a new milk processing plant by Glanbia. As a result of that investment, a new natural gas supply has also been delivered. Further investment is planned at Belview for the construction of cheese production facility recently granted permission.

In Kilkenny City a substantial investment in tourism development has been approved through the development of the Medieval Mile project which has seen investment in the public realm between Kilkenny Castle and St. Canice's Cathedral, the restoration of St Mary's Hall (now the Medieval Mile Museum), the completion and opening of the new Butler Gallery at the former Evan's Home and the further development of the linear walk along the River Nore in the Abbey Quarter.

The development of the new neighbourhood at the Breagagh Valley on the western side of the City has commenced with the construction of a new access road and associated services to facilitate the opening of lands. Two new secondary schools have been committed to the area through the Kilkenny

and Carlow Education and Training Board and these are currently at design stage. There is also a commitment for the provision of a new primary school for the Breagagh Valley. This area will see development of these facilities and housing through this Plan period to 2027 and beyond.

3.9   Key Strategic issues for this Plan

The key issues to be addressed in this Plan are as follows:

- Contributing towards achieving climate change targets in particular by means of encouraging and facilitating a modal shift towards more sustainable travel modes and patterns and an increase in renewable energy production, including wind, solar and bio energy, both at a macro and micro scale
- Delivering compact growth in the form envisaged under the NPF and RSES for Kilkenny City, the Waterford MASP area and the towns and villages of the county.
- Facilitate the delivery increased housing supply from both public and private sources
- Facilitating the recovery of businesses across the county from the impacts of Covid-19 and helping businesses respond to the challenges presented by Brexit.
- The continued delivery of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan area
- Facilitating the recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 on the tourism sector in the county and further development
- Encouraging and supporting sustainable rural development by facilitating sustainable rural settlement patterns that will revitalise and sustain smaller towns and villages whilst continuing to facilitate the housing need of farming families and rural dwellers.
- Delivery of key infrastructure for the City and County to facilitate development.

4   Core Strategy

Strategic Aim: To implement the provisions of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and to promote the compact growth of Kilkenny City, Ferrybank/Belview (as part of WMASP), the District Towns, the other settlements in the hierarchy and to strengthen rural economies and communities through growth and development of rural areas.

4.1   Introduction

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires the written statement of a Development Plan to contain a Core Strategy which shows that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The Core Strategy will set out an evidence-based rationale for the settlement hierarchy for the Plan area and give details on:

1. Defining a settlement hierarchy for the County that is consistent with the NPF and RSES for the Southern Region.
2. Transposing the prescribed NPF and RSES housing and population targets set at County level for the rural and urban centres identified within the settlement hierarchy.
3. An evidenced based rationale for the zoning of lands.
4. Demonstrating how the Planning Authority has had regard to the statutory Retail Planning Guidelines in setting out objectives for retail development.
5. Classification of roads within the Plan area.
6. Inter urban commuter rail routes.
7. Rural areas where the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines* apply.

4.2   Development Strategy

The NPF and the RSES are high-level documents that will shape growth and development in Ireland and the Southern Region up to the year 2040. The specific focus of this Development Plan is a quantitatively based Core Strategy, which sets the framework for the spatial development of the County to 2027, within a medium to longer term context. The Core Strategy must demonstrate that the Development Plan and its objectives are consistent with national and regional development objectives set out in the NPF and RSES. Specifically, the first Regional Strategy (2020-2032) sets the parameters for the City and County Development Plan to cover the period to 2027 and 2031.

The ambition of the NPF is to create a single vision, a shared set of goals for every community across the country. These goals are expressed as National Strategic Outcomes. It is an approach that joins up ambition for improvement across the different areas of our lives, bringing the various government

departments, agencies, State owned enterprises and local authorities together behind a shared set of strategic objectives for rural, regional and urban development[1].

National Strategic Outcomes
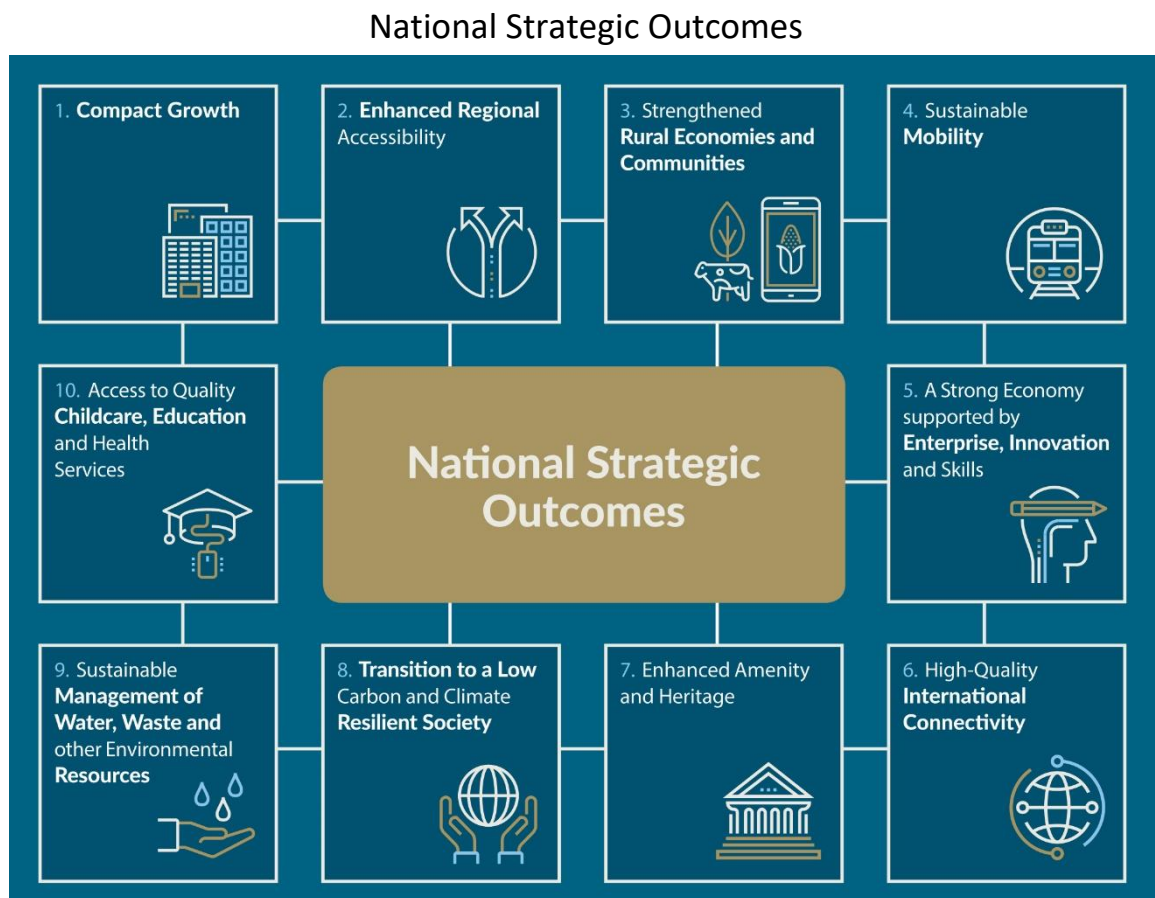
NPF National Strategic Outcomes. Source: NPF, p13

The NPF is fully supported by the Government's investment strategy for public capital investment and investment by the State sector in general through its 10-year National investment Plan, the NDP 2018-2027. The *Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework*[2] highlights the Government's focus on achieving alignment between national, regional and local planning policy and practice. The Roadmap provides transitional population projections at a regional and county scale.

At a regional level these 10 National Outcomes are set out by the 11 Statements of the Strategy to build a Strong, Resilient and Sustainable Southern Region[3].

This Development Plan and its Core Strategy seeks to achieve consistency with the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and Statement of Strategy of the RSES.

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[1] Foreword to the *National Planning Framework* P5

[2] *Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework*, Dept. of Housing Planning and Local Government, July 2018

[3] *Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region* p24

The Core Strategy is based on the housing demand analysis model provided by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government which has been used to create a housing demand for the County for the period 2021-2027.

Table 4.1: Population Projections at Regional and County level			
South-East Planning Area	2016	2026	2031
Kilkenny	**99,000**	**108,000-110,000**	**112,000-114,500**
Waterford	116,000	132,000-135,000	137,000-144,000
Wexford	149,000	163,000-166,000	169,000-172,500
Tipperary SR	88,500	96,000-98,000	99,500-102,000
Carlow	57,000	62,000-63,000	64,000-65,500
Total	509,500	561,000-572,000	581,500-598,500

For the purpose of this Plan, the time period will be to 2027. Growth is anticipated to take place towards the upper levels of the projections and growth is assumed to be linear.

It is important to note that the population targets set out in the NPF and RSES are based on the period 2016 to 2026. Accordingly, the projected NPF figures have been adjusted to align with the period of this Plan to 2027 i.e. an increase of 11,845 for the County. The figure for 2027 is derived from applying the annual average increase predicted by the NPF to 2026 and extrapolating same to 2027.

It is an objective of the NPF (National Planning Objectives 3a,3b and 3c) that targeted growth will be delivered in a compact form, with 40% of all new homes nationally to be provided within the built-up footprint of existing settlements. Of the growth targeted for settlements, 30% is to be provided within the existing built footprint[4].

The exception to this rule is the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area, which contains Ferrybank and environs, where 50% of new housing growth for Waterford City is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint.

4.2.1   Promoting Compact Growth

One of the key Strategic Outcomes of the NPF is the achievement of Compact Growth. Compact and sustainable growth focuses on reusing previously developed "brownfield sites" and building up infill sites which may not have been built on before, particularly in well serviced urban locations served by good transport links and in close proximity to employment opportunities.

Compact growth should be achieved in these areas without compromising the existing residential amenity or residential character of the area, either by "Increased Height", "infill" or by "sub-division". Densification will lead to the improved utilisation of existing infrastructure and help reduce the need for greenfield developments. In order to achieve this objective, the Council will promote infill and

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[4] This means within the existing built-up footprint of all sizes of urban settlement, as defined by the CSO in line with UN criteria i.e. having a minimum of 50 occupied dwellings, with a maximum distance between any dwelling and the building closest to it of 100 metres, and where there is evidence of an urban centre (shop, school etc.).

more intensive development brownfield and/or underutilised sites and on opportunity sites interspersed throughout the existing residential fabric of the city and towns.

Active Land Management

The Council will use its powers under the Derelict Sites and Vacant Sites legislation (see Section 6.6 Vacant Site Levy) in order to tackle the issues of dereliction and vacancy. Where possible, the Council will facilitate the regeneration and reuse of derelict buildings in appropriate locations for town centre uses.

The Council has served Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) on four derelict or vacant homes within the County area and another six in the City in 2020. The Council will continue to avail of its powers under the Derelict sites Act and the Vacant Sites levy and other statutory powers to actively manage land supply within the City and County.

Objectives

4A   **To accommodate future population growth for County Kilkenny in accordance with projections contained in the Implementation Roadmap for the NPF and Appendix 1 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy of the Southern Region.**

4B   **To ensure growth is achieved in a compact form, with:**
- **40% of the projected growth of the County to be delivered in Kilkenny City and the towns and villages within the county**
- **30% of the new housing earmarked for the City and towns to be catered for within their built-up footprints[1]**
- **50% new housing earmarked for the Waterford MASP area catered for within the built-up footprint of the Waterford area, including that part within County Kilkenny**

4C   **To actively promote the redevelopment and renewal of areas in need of regeneration whether urban or rural through appropriate active land management measures during the period of the Plan.**

4D   **To monitor the delivery of residential developments throughout the City and County in order to ensure alignment with the NPF, RSES and the Core Strategy and to adjust the approach as necessary where Core Strategy objectives are not being met.**

4.3   Settlement Hierarchy

Within the RSES, the settlement hierarchy is set out as follows:

Type of Centre	Place	Policy Level
Table 4.2: Settlement Typology of RSES		
Metropolitan Area	Cork, Limerick, Waterford	NPF, RSES, MASP, Development Plan, Local Area Plan
Key Towns	Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, Clonmel, Dungarvan, Gorey, Ennis, Thurles, Nenagh, Newcastle West, Tralee, Killarney, Mallow, Clonakilty.	RSES, Development Plans, Local Area Plans
Towns & Villages[5]	Towns and villages of above 1,500. To be identified in Development Plans	Development Plans, Local Area Plans
Rural Areas	Ballycallan, Ballyfoyle, Byrnesgrove, Bigwood, Castlewarren, Coan, Carrigeen, Clara, Connahy, Crosspatrick, Coolroebeg, Clogherinka, Cuffesgrange, Danesfort, Dunamaggin, Dungarvan, Ennisnag, Galmoy, Glenmore Hugginstown, Johnswell, Kilmanagh Lisdowney, Listerlin, Newmarket, Newtown, Owning, The Rower, Skehana, Skeoghvasteen, Threecastles, Tullaroan Tullogher, Templeorum, Windgap, Gathabawn.	Development Plans, Local Area Plans
Networks	Groupings of towns and villages (incl. cross boundary) which share geographic, economic, resources and contribute specialisms which if combined provide a strategic opportunity to drive regional economy.	

The RSES hierarchy is a framework based on the pillars of the three cities, supported by a network of strategically located Key Towns, towns and villages and rural areas. The Key Towns identified have a very significant population scale and are major centres for delivery of public services, with large hospitals, third level institutions, courts, local and national government functions as well as economic and business roles and higher order retail functions.

Kilkenny City is the largest of these and the 2nd largest settlement in the South-East and the 4th largest settlement in the Southern Region with a population of 26,512 in 2016. It is now the 8th largest employment centre (previously 9th in 2011) in the state[6].

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[5] In identifying settlements under 1,500 as "rural" and above 1,500 as "urban", the RSES reflects the CSO categorisation of settlements which is contained in the NPF.

[6] Southern Regional Assembly RSES p349

The settlement hierarchy for the purposes of the Core Strategy is set out on Table 4.3 and illustrated on Figure 4.1, Core Strategy Map.

In deriving the core strategy, the following key metrics, inter alia were considered:
- Designations under the NPF and RSES,
- The existing core strategy in the 2014 – 2020 County Development Plan,
- The retail strategy,
- The 2016 Census of population

Table 4.3: County Settlement Hierarchy in accordance with NPF and RSES	
Type of Urban Centre	**Town/Centre**
Significant Key Town	Kilkenny City
Waterford Metropolitan Area (Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan)	Waterford (Ferrybank/Belview in Co. Kilkenny)
Towns > 1,500 in population	Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch, Thomastown, Rosbercon (Environs of New Ross in Co. Kilkenny)[7]
Rural Towns and Villages (22)	Ballyhale, Ballyragget, Bennettsbridge, Clogh-Chatsworth, Fiddown, Freshford, Goresbridge, Gowran, Inistioge, Johnstown, Kells, Kilmacow, Kilmoganny, Knocktopher, Moneenroe, Mooncoin, Mullinavat, Paulstown, Piltown, Slieverue, Stoneyford and Urlingford.
Rural Nodes and the wider rural area	Ballycallan, Ballyfoyle, Byrnesgrove, Bigwood, Castlewarren, Coan, Carrigeen, Clara, Connahy, Crosspatrick, Coolroebeg, Clogherinka, Cuffesgrange, Danesfort, Dunamaggin, Dungarvan, Ennisnag, Galmoy, Glenmore Hugginstown, Johnswell, Kilmanagh Lisdowney, Listerlin, Newmarket, Newtown, Owning, The Rower, Skehana, Skeoghvasteen, Threecastles, Tullaroan Tullogher, Templeorum, Windgap, Gathabawn.

4.3.1   Kilkenny City (See also Volume 2)

Kilkenny is one of six Key Towns identified in the RSES of very significant population scale and service delivery. Kilkenny City is the largest of the Key Towns with a 2016 population recorded in excess of 26,000. In this context Kilkenny is evidenced as a self-sustaining regional driver with a comparable structure to the five regional growth centres identified in the NPF[8]. Under the NPF and the RSES, Kilkenny City has a targeted growth in population of 30% by 2040, to 34,465.

When considering this 30% growth projection to 2040, it is projected that with linear growth, this equates to a population uplift of 3,641 over the period of this plan to a total of 30,153 by 2027. In

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[7] A Local Area Plan for New Ross will to be prepared jointly with Wexford County Council.
[8] NPF Section 2.5 Building Stronger Regions: Accessible Centres of Scale p27

Kilkenny City and County
Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.1 County Core Strategy

Date: September 2021

Legend

- ● Significant Key Town
- ■ District Town
- ● Small Town/Village
- ▲ Rural Node
- ▨ Waterford MASP Area
- ▨ Ferrybank-Belview LAP Boundary
- Areas Under Urban Influence
- Other Areas
- —— Motorway
- —— National Primary
- – – National Secondary
- ┼┼ Railway

Clogh
Skehana
Moneenroe
Byrnesgrove
Castlecomer
Lisdowney
Ballyragget
Coan
Galmoy
Connahy
Clogharinka
Gathabawn
Crosspatrick
Johnstown
Freshford
Ballyfoyle
Urlingford
Threecastles
Johnswell
Castlewarren
Paulstown
Tullaroan
Kilkenny City
Clara
Gowran
Goresbridge
Ballycallan
Kilmanagh
Skeoghvasteen
Cuffesgrange
Bennetsbridge
Dungarvan
Danesfort
Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch
Newtown
Ennisnag
Callan
Kells
Stonyford
Thomastown
Dunamaggin
Inistioge
Knocktopher
Newmarket
Coolroebeg
Windgap
Kilmaganny
Ballyhale
The Rower
Hugginstown
Tullogher
Listerlin
New Ross
Environs
Owning
Templeorum
Bigwood
Mullinavat
Piltown
Glenmore
Fiddown
Kilmacow
Slieverue
Mooncoin
Waterford Environs
Carrigeen
Ferrybank

accordance with the NPF and RSES, 30% of new housing growth targeted for the city is to be provided within the built-up footprint, with 70% for new growth areas on the periphery. These new growth areas are identified as the Breagagh Valley and Loughmacask neighbourhoods which have been subject to Local Area Plans in the past.

A balanced, compact form combined with efficient mobility links between different land uses will facilitate easier circulation and mobility within the City. The resulting density and scale of population will support a wider range of retail, commercial, social and civic services than would be the case in a more dispersed city. The provision of a wide range of dwelling types and densities within the City will be critical in providing for the housing needs of the growing population. By providing residential accommodation within a compact city form there are substantial economies of scale to be made in terms of the costs of service provision.

The concept of the ten-minute city is that residents of the city can access the local services they require such as shops, schools, or local parks within 10 minutes, i.e. accessible in short walking and cycle timeframes from homes or accessible by high quality public transport. In simple terms, Kilkenny is approximately 3km wide and 4.5km long.

Strategic Objectives

4E   To strengthen the role of Kilkenny City as a self-sustaining regional economic driver with a significant zone of influence and a Key Town on Dublin – Carlow-Kilkenny Waterford M9 Road/Rail,

4F   To ensure investment and delivery of comprehensive infrastructure packages to meet growth targets that prioritise compact growth and sustainable mobility as per the NPF,

4G   To achieve a growth of more than 30% in population for Kilkenny City from 2016 to 2040 to 34,500, subject to capacity analysis and sustainable criteria under Section 3.3 of the RSES,

4H   To deliver 30% of that growth within the current built footprint of the city.

The Council will support urban regeneration and compact development through investment in the Abbey Quarter & other initiatives to improve the public realm and regenerate underused land in the City. The Council will also support sustainable enterprise growth, services, physical and social infrastructure investment and the sustainable growth of all communities in the City.

4.3.2   Waterford MASP (Ferrybank/Belview)

Waterford is the largest urban centre in the South-East and the State's fifth largest city and is unique in having a network of large and strong urban centres in close proximity. It has a diverse industrial and commercial base and has the fifth largest employment base in the State.

The metropolitan area extends beyond the physical built up area into a defined metropolitan area extending to County Kilkenny and County Waterford. The vision for the Waterford MASP area is to develop a concentric city both north and south of the River Suir (which will include areas within County Kilkenny) with services appropriate to its status as one of the five national cities and recognising the people of the area as the heart of its potential.

Notwithstanding Belview as a strategic location for employment, the wider Waterford Metropolitan Area within County Kilkenny has potential as a strategic employment location.

This will be addressed as part of the review of the Ferrybank Belview LAP under objective 4I.

The NPF has confirmed Waterford's status as the principal urban centre of the South-East with the objective for the City to become an important driver of national growth and a 'Regional City of Scale' with a defined Metropolitan Area. The Waterford Metropolitan Area is located around Waterford Harbour and the River Suir. It is centred on the City of Waterford and its suburbs with an extensive rural area beyond the built-up area which includes a number of small rural settlements such as Passage East, Cheekpoint in Co. Waterford, Slieverue, and extending almost as far as Lower Kilmacow. The Port of Waterford is located at Belview, approximately 5km east of the City Centre in County Kilkenny which is also included. The Waterford MASP area encompasses an area of 143sq.km of which 85.05sq.km is in Waterford City and County Council and 57.60sq.km is within Kilkenny County Council's administrative area. NPO 8 sets out the Minimum Target Population for Waterford City and Suburbs by 2040 of 81,000. This will require targeted growth focused on significant housing and employment locations identified[9].

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[9] Waterford MASP Southern Regional Assembly RSES p309
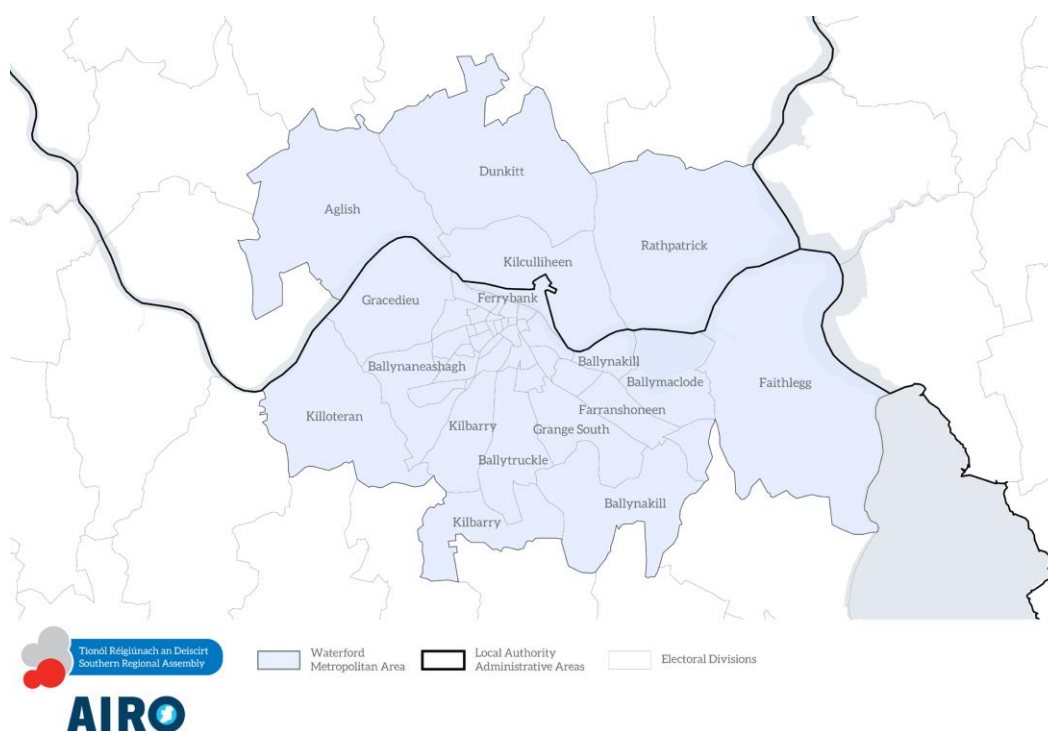
Figure 4.2 | *The Waterford MASP Boundary[10]*

The MASP provides a high level strategic framework for the sustainable development of the Waterford Metropolitan Area based on the ambition for the City and Metropolitan area as an innovation-centred, enterprising, University City with a diverse population, a vibrant cultural sector, a thriving economy, and a significant and substantial profile that brings European and international recognition[11].

The ambitious targets for over 60% population growth by 2040 seek to build on the critical mass of Waterford as a balanced Concentric Metropolitan Area, north and south of the River Suir. In the long term, an increased proportion of the population will live north of the River. The steps required to achieve this Core MASP objective are both long term and short term[12].

Waterford PLUTS

The Waterford PLUTS 2004 set out a strategy for the balanced and sustainable growth of Waterford, which proposed to bring the North Quays and the northern suburbs fully into the social and economic life of the City. The study advocated more balanced growth between the north and south sides of the River Suir. More recently, Waterford City and County Council and Kilkenny County Council have described this objective as the 'Concentric City'. The principles outlined in PLUTs have been incorporated and developed through to the Waterford MASP area and provide the basis for a new set of Guiding Principles to build critical mass and transform the Waterford Metropolitan Area[13].

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[10] Waterford Metropolitan Strategic Area Plan Southern Regional Assembly RSES p309

[11] Ibid p309

[12] Ibid p324

[13] Ibid p319

The RSES sets out the Vision Statement for the Waterford Metropolitan Area:

Waterford aims to be a dynamic, concentric, modern European city of scale and significance, a UNESCO Learning City, driving national and regional growth, prosperity, innovation and creativity which is supported by focused investment in transformational rejuvenation across the Metropolitan Area, a vibrant and diverse University City with a high quality of life for all through a high standard of physical and community infrastructure and housing options, education, amenities and opportunities for employment.

Short term steps to achieve MASP objectives:
In terms of physical development, the early enablers that will start the process are (a) the development of a new bridge to link the City Centre to the North Quays, (b) relocation of the railway station to a new Integrated Transport Hub on the North Quays and (c) development of the Abbey Link Road in Ferrybank. All three enablers support significant population and employment growth north of the river.

Long Term steps to achieve MASP objectives:
In order to rebalance the city, there is a need for a high degree of co-ordination across the entire Metropolitan Area. The implementation structures will need to oversee a rebalancing of overall population in favour of higher growth and population allocations north of the River. Significant growth targets set for the overall Metropolitan Area will not impede growth or development in the city centre and suburbs south of the river[14]. The Guiding Principles of the Waterford MASP are set out in the RSES.

4.3.2.1 Implementation of Waterford MASP

Through RPO226, the SRA will establish robust structures of cross-sectoral stakeholder and cross-boundary local authority steering group committees for the implementation phase to ensure the delivery of the RSES and the MASP is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. Delivery of these goals requires the early establishment of MASP implementation structures following adoption of the RSES. Kilkenny County Council will work proactively with the Southern Regional Assembly and Waterford City and County Council to establish a MASP area steering committee for the implementation phase of the Waterford MASP.

Ferrybank and Belview Port (Port of Waterford) is included in the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area and although located in Kilkenny, will be developed as part of an agreed Waterford Metropolitan Strategy.

For the purposes of this Core Strategy, the Council will use the figures set out in the RSES, which predicts an uplift of 1,452 people for Ferrybank/Belview between 2016 and 2027 (See Table 3.10). The Ferrybank-Belview LAP was adopted in 2017 and provides for significant housing opportunities within the plan area up to 2023.

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[14] Ibid p324

The Council has ensured in the short term, through a Local Area Plan for the environs of Waterford within County Kilkenny (Ferrybank/Belview LAP 2017), that there is sufficient development capacity for the various land uses required to support the international Gateway.

Given the need for change to a more balanced concentric city which would require significant growth, development and accompanying infrastructure on the northern side of the River Suir (predominantly in Co Kilkenny), the population distribution for the MASP area requires review by the MASP Implementation Group[15].

Kilkenny County Council is committed to developing Ferrybank/Belview as part of a concentric city as envisaged in the Waterford MASP and remains conscious of maintaining the area's social, cultural, sporting and political identity into the future.

For the Waterford MASP area, the Council will support the growth of Waterford city as the principal urban centre of the South-East and the Waterford MASP with the objective for the City to become an important driver of national growth and a 'Regional City of Scale' within a defined Metropolitan Area. The Council will assist in the implementation of the Waterford MASP by reviewing the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan to be consistent with the RSES MASP in a timely manner and incorporating it into the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan by means of variation. The Council will also adopt and give effect to the guiding principles of the Waterford MASP as set out on page 320 of the RSES and stated in text above.

> **Objective**
>
> **4I   To commence the review of the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan within 6 months of the coming into effect of this Plan having regard to the MASP and to incorporate into the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan by way of variation.**

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[15] RSES Population Projections 2026 and 2031 for the Waterford Metropolitan Area page 323.

4.4   District Towns

The Sustainable Place Framework in the RSES applies to towns and villages with a population over 1,500 people[16], which provide housing, employment and service functions, ranging from commuter towns to more remote towns.

Graiguenamanagh, while it does not exceed this population threshold of 1,500, possesses many of the characteristics of a District Town, such as being close to the population level of 1,500 and having primary and second level schools. If the area of Tinnahinch (within Co. Carlow) is included, the population in 2016 was recorded as 1,389. Graiguenamanagh plays a significant role as a rural service centre and has its own Local Area Plan, which is currently under review and is likely to be adopted during the making of this Development Plan.

Table 4.4 Population of District towns as a percentage of County population 2016		
	Population 2016	% of County Population
County	99,232	
Callan	2,475	2.49%
Castlecomer	1,502	1.5%
Graiguenamanagh[17]	1,389	1.4%
Thomastown	2,445	2.46%

Local Area Plans for the District Towns of Callan, Castlecomer and Thomastown were reviewed and adopted by the Council between 2017 and 2019. The Graiguenamanagh LAP is currently under preparation. In general, these District Towns have well developed services and community facilities and have the capacity to accommodate additional population (subject to certain physical infrastructural investments).   Population growth in the Local Area Plans was projected on a proportional basis and zoning for land for housing was allocated accordingly. In addition to the proportional projected population growth, provision was therefore made in each of the District Town's LAPs for targeted provision of Serviced Sites in accordance with NPO 18(b).

As part of the preparation of the Housing Strategy for this plan, the potential to review upwards the population allocation for the District Towns was considered. This revision was set in the context of the overall county allocation, the particular function of the town in the County context, aligning all population projections to a common date, planning decisions since the adoption of the LAPs, the availability of engineering services infrastructure (water and wastewater), social services such as primary and secondary schools and the ratio of resident workers and total jobs in the towns. The assessment concluded that some 150 additional people could be allocated over the plan period to the towns of Callan and Thomastown over and above that allocated in their respective Local Area Plans. Provided that water capacity issues can be addressed for Castlecomer, an additional population of 100 is considered appropriate over and above the adopted Local Area Plan.

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[16] In identifying settlements under 1,500 as "rural" and above 1,500 as "urban", the RSES reflects the CSO categorisation of settlements which is contained in the NPF.

[17] These figures do not include the Tinnahinch area in Graiguenamanagh

The Local Area Plans for Callan, Castlecomer and Thomastown, will be reviewed to ensure consistency with the Core Strategy and policy promoting regeneration, sequential development and compact growth and will identify regeneration, brownfield and opportunity sites that will contribute to compact growth. The reviews will be carried out within 12 months of the coming into effect of this Plan, subject to resources.

Table 4.5 District Towns Allocation under Core Strategy		
	LAP population allocation	Core Strategy Allocation
Callan	291	441
Castlecomer	207	264
Graiguenamanagh	277	277
Thomastown	265	437

The Council will ensure that the District Towns will in so far as practical be self-sufficient incorporating employment activities, sufficient retail services and social and community facilities.

4.5   Rosbercon (New Ross Environs)

It is an objective to review the zoning for the area of Rosbercon in County Kilkenny in a joint Local Area Plan for New Ross and Environs in conjunction with Wexford County Council. The zoning map for New Ross is shown in Figure 4.3.

4.6   Smaller Towns and Villages

The smaller towns and villages within the County need to be developed in a way that strengthens their role as local service centres whilst respecting their existing character. Achieving the right balance between encouraging development in smaller towns and villages and the scale and nature of such development is critical. It is important to ensure that new residential development in smaller towns and villages is of a design, layout, character and scale which fits well with the town or village involved and presents a high-quality living environment.

In the 2014 – 2020 Plan 14 such settlements were identified. For this current Plan a total of 22 smaller settlements have been identified. To promote the vitality and viability of these smaller settlements as rural service centres, it is an objective of the National Planning Framework (NPO 18b) to *"develop a programme of new homes in small towns and small villages with local authorities and agencies such as Irish Water and local communities to provide serviced sites with the appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages".*

In order to offer an effective alternative to the provision of single houses in surrounding un-serviced rural areas, proposals for developments with densities of up to 10 dwellings per hectare will be considered in smaller towns and villages where social services such as a school, church, pub etc. are available and engineering services are either available or can be provided by the relevant agencies within the lifetime of the plan. Individual houses are promoted and where a housing scheme is
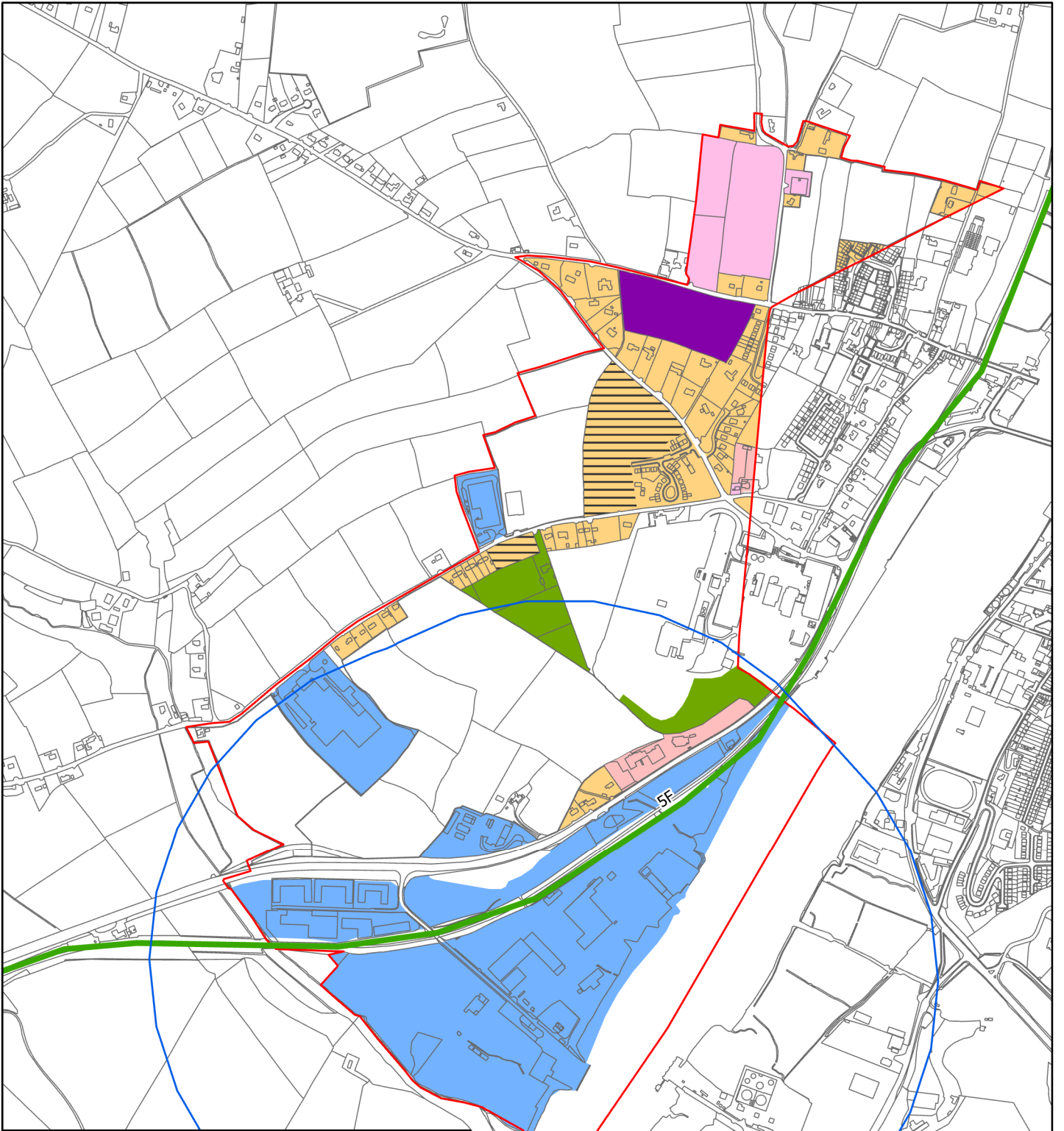
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.3 Rosbercon (New Ross Environs)

Date: September 2021

Plan Boundary
Proposed Greenway Route
700m Consultation of Seveso Site
Agriculture
Amenity/Green links/Biodiversity Conservation/Open Space/Recreation
Community Facilities
Existing Residential
General Development
Industrial
Mixed Use
Phase 1 Residential
Residential (Low Density)

proposed, these will be proportionate to the scale of the settlement[18]. Housing development within the development boundary of the small towns included in Table 4.3 County Settlement Hierarchy will not be subject to the rural housing policy as outlined in Section 7.8 Rural Settlement Strategy.

The scale and density of development in these settlements will depend on a number of factors including:

- Availability of infrastructure including appropriate social, waste water treatment facilities and water supply,
- Contribution to the enhancement of the village form by reinforcing the street pattern or assisting in the redevelopment of backlands
- Contribution to the protection of the architectural and environmental qualities of the village
- Capacity of the existing services in the village to accommodate the proposed development.

Future growth in these smaller towns and villages will be incremental, small in scale and appropriate to the size, scale and character of the village.

The Council will encourage development of economic activity, services and infrastructure provision in the smaller towns and villages of the county and allow for town renewal and serviced site housing provision in smaller towns and villages where services are available and/or planned, at a scale and character which is proportionate, in order to sustain and renew population and services in these areas.

Settlement boundaries have been drawn up having regard to the following considerations:

- The need to provide a compact and accessible town in accordance with the principles of sustainable development,
- Its population at the time of the 2016 Census,
- The potential for lands to be at risk from flooding,
- The location and capacity of existing engineering (water and wastewater) infrastructure,
- Proximity to existing and potential community and commercial facilities and the need to encourage sustainable growth (schools, shop, church),
- The need to offer location choice and housing mix,
- The existing built environment and road infrastructure and local topography,
- Linkages (transport) to other larger settlements,
- Existing planning permissions.

The smaller settlements are identified in Table 4.3 County Settlement Hierarchy.

Each of these settlements are subject to a map (See Figure 4.4 to 4.25), which depicts a settlement boundary.   These settlement boundaries define an area within which development will be encouraged. Proposed development in these settlements will however have to have regard to the

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[18] In compliance with objective 18a of the NPF p73. "*Support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.*"

Settlement Boundary Ballyhale

Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.4 Settlement Boundary for
Ballyhale

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary
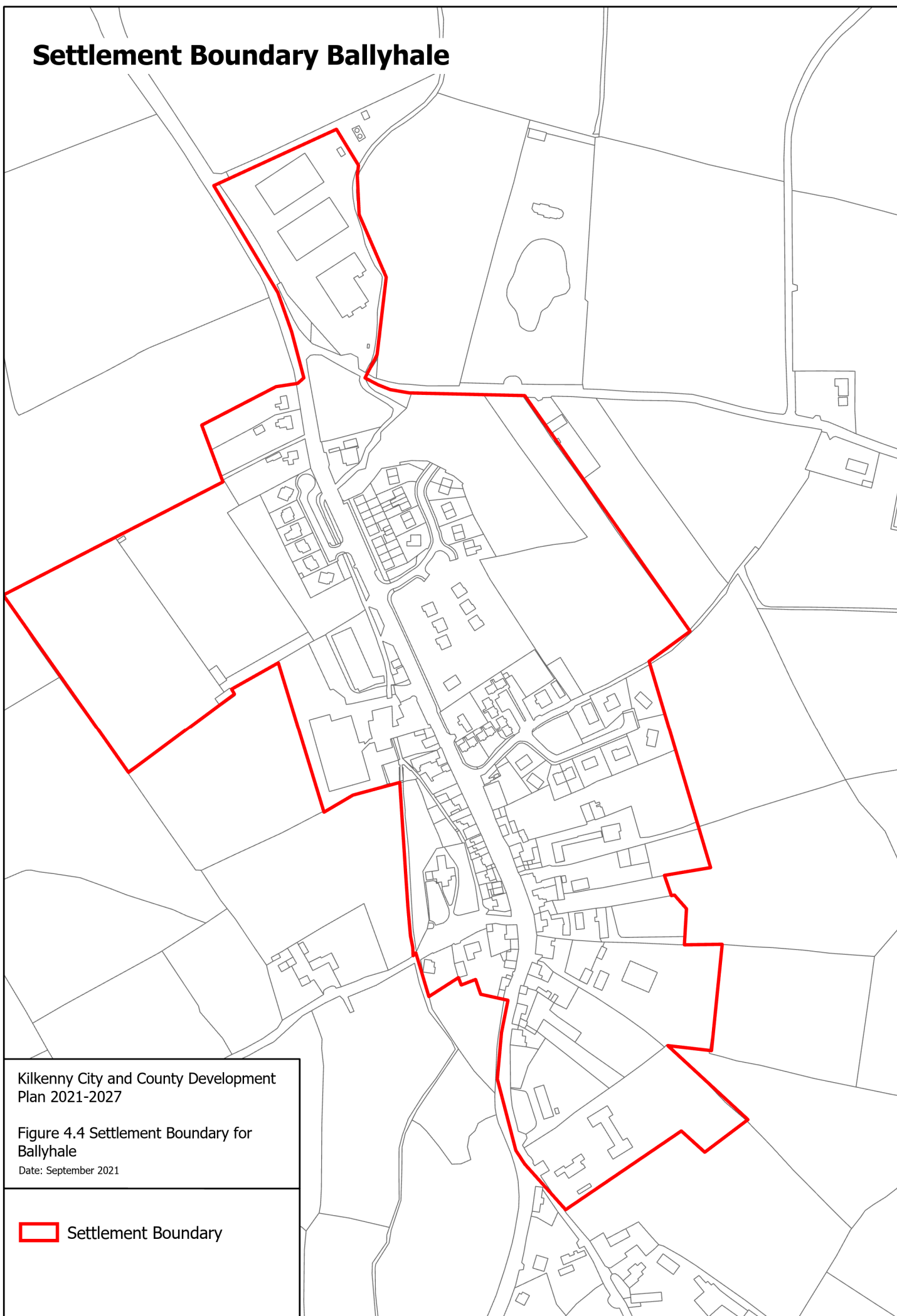
Settlement Boundary Ballyragget
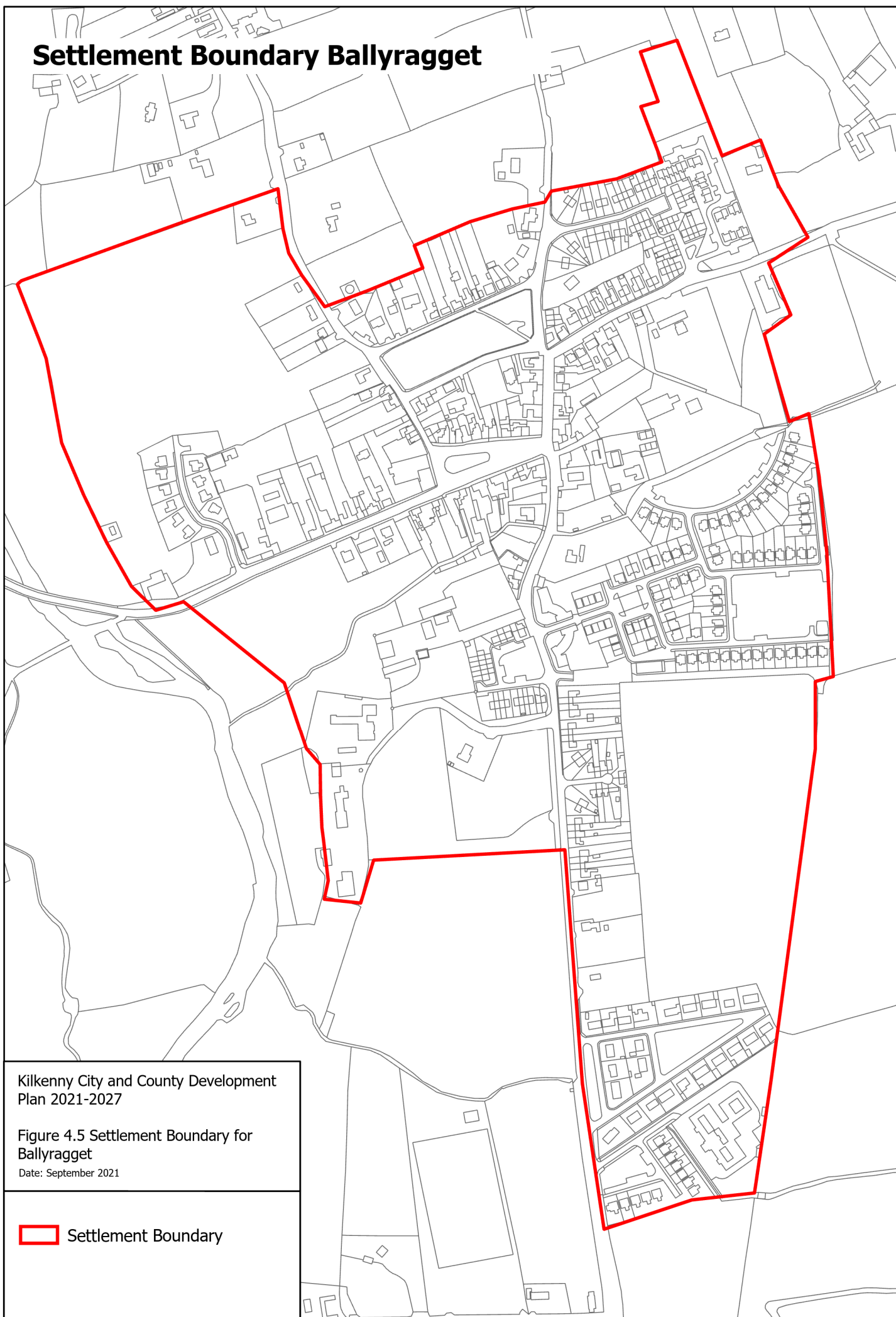
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.5 Settlement Boundary for
Ballyragget
Date: September 2021

▢ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Bennetsbridge
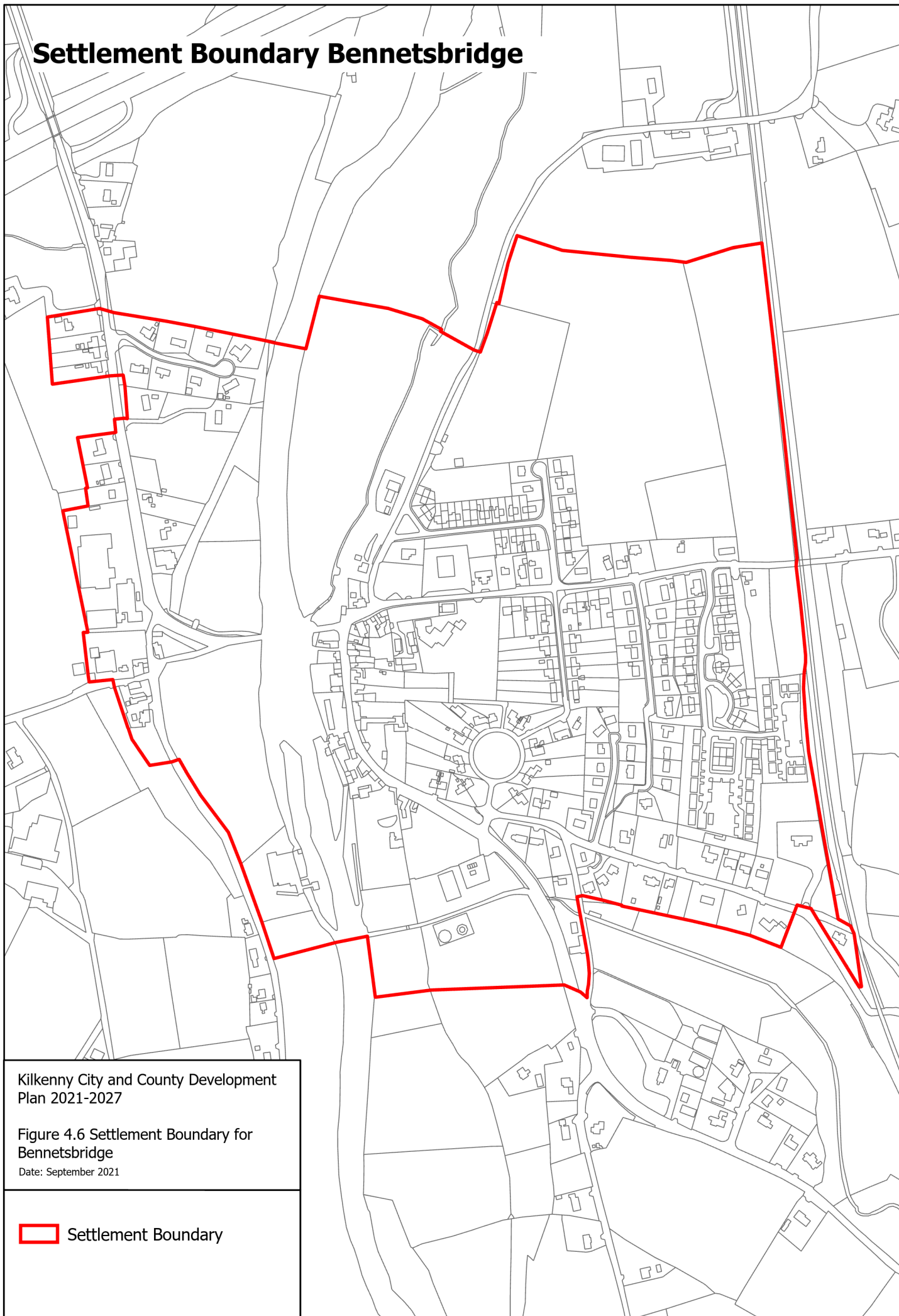
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.6 Settlement Boundary for
Bennetsbridge

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Clogh
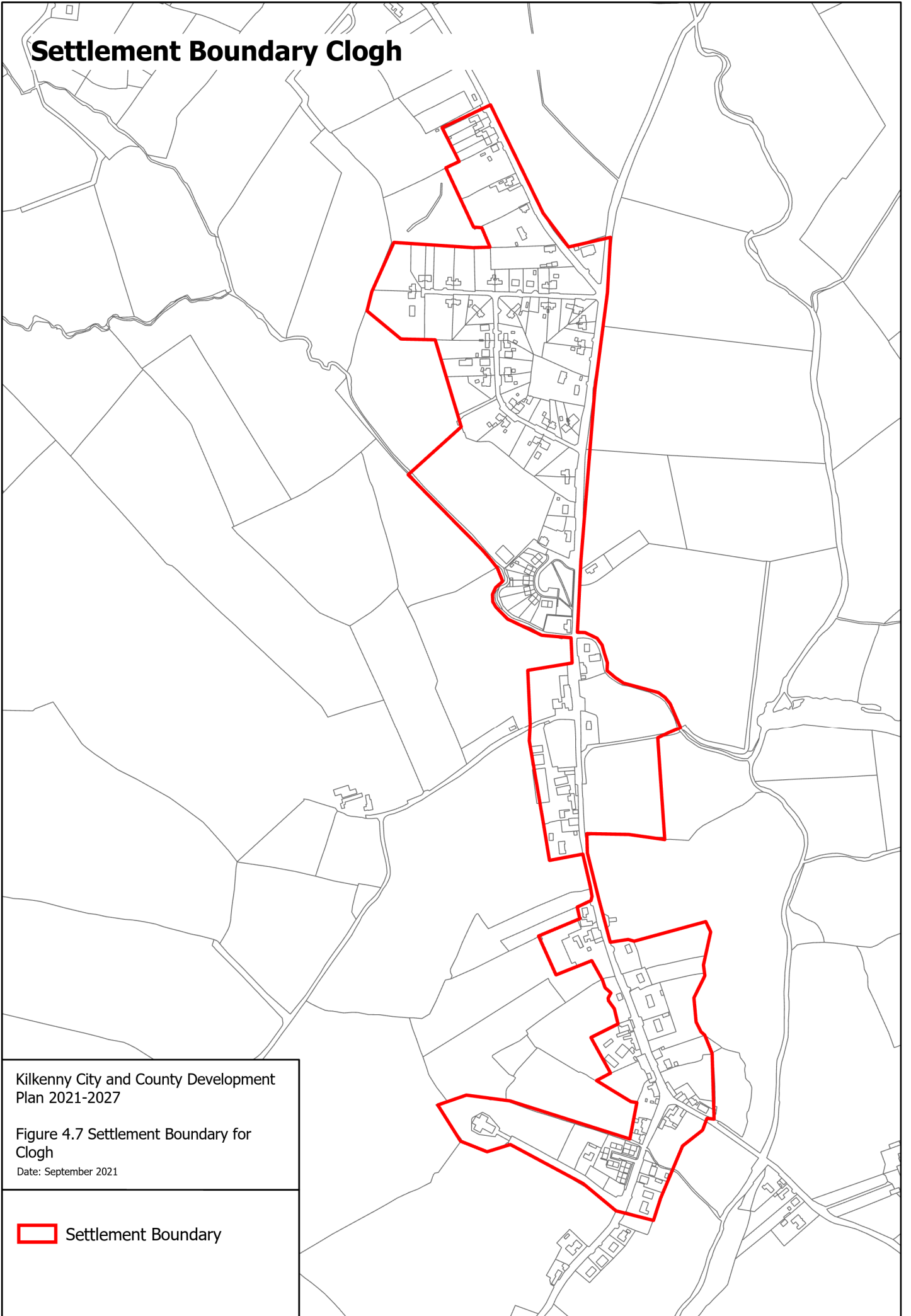
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.7 Settlement Boundary for Clogh

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Fiddown
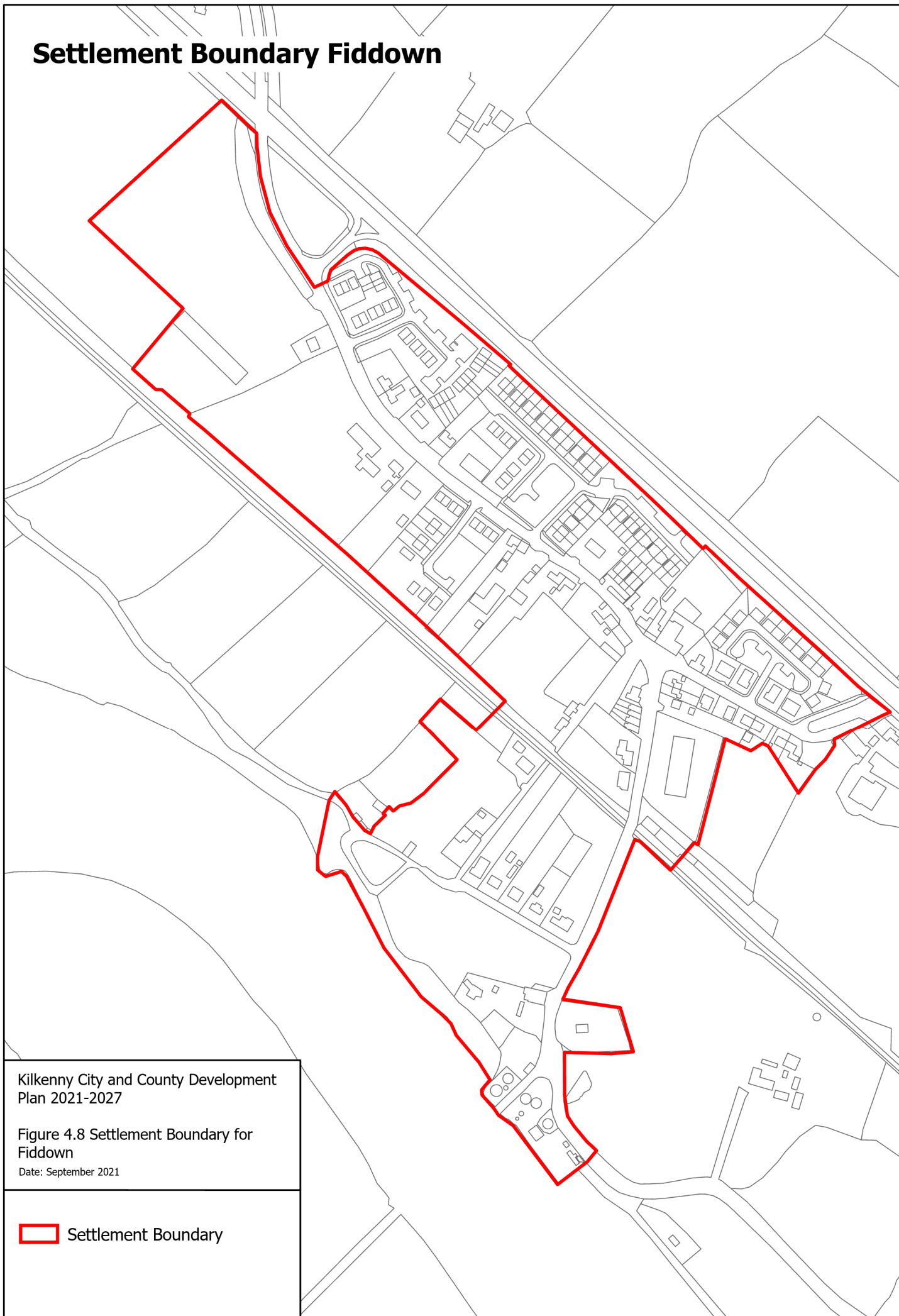
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.8 Settlement Boundary for
Fiddown

Date: September 2021

Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Freshford
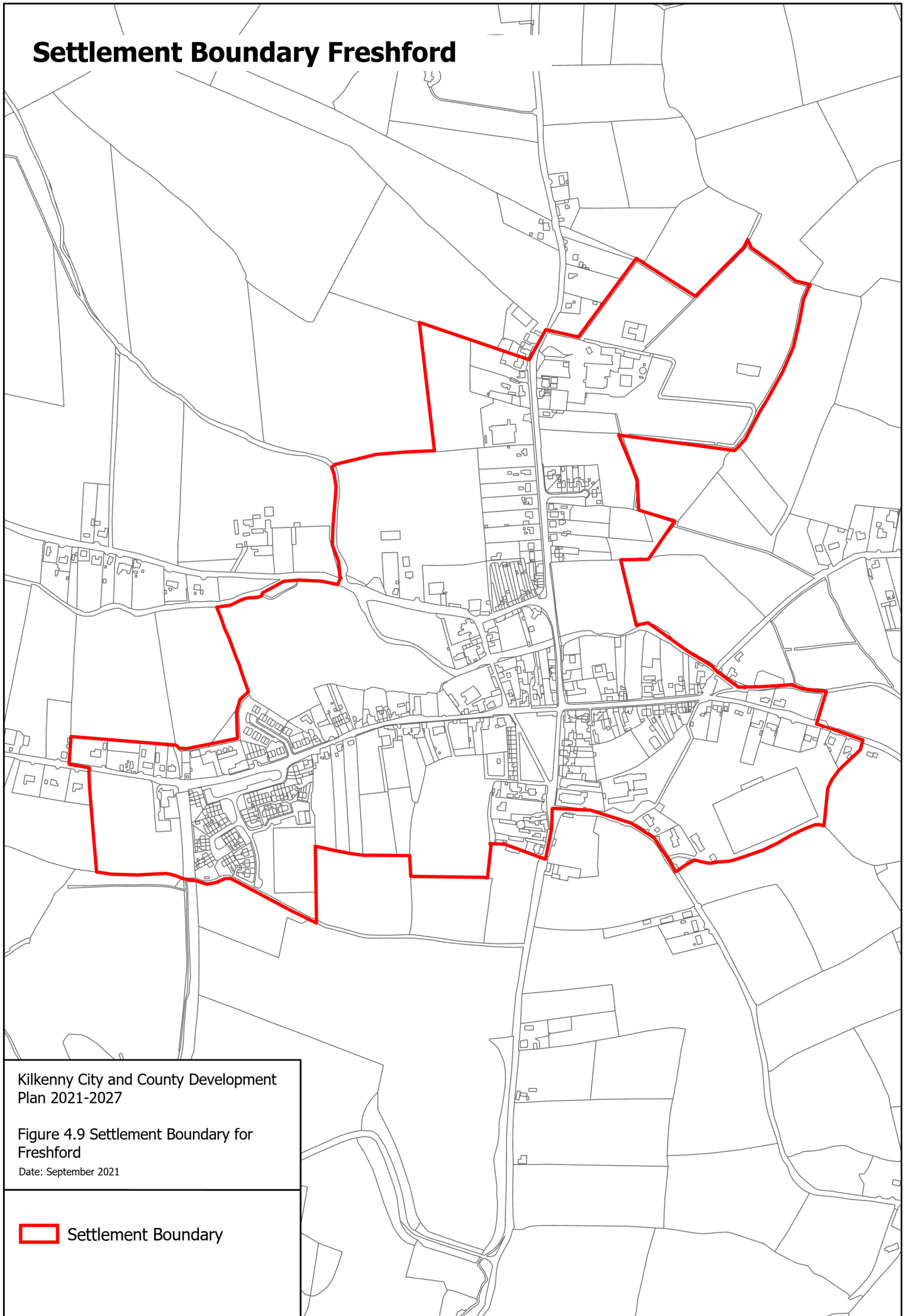
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.9 Settlement Boundary for
Freshford

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Goresbridge
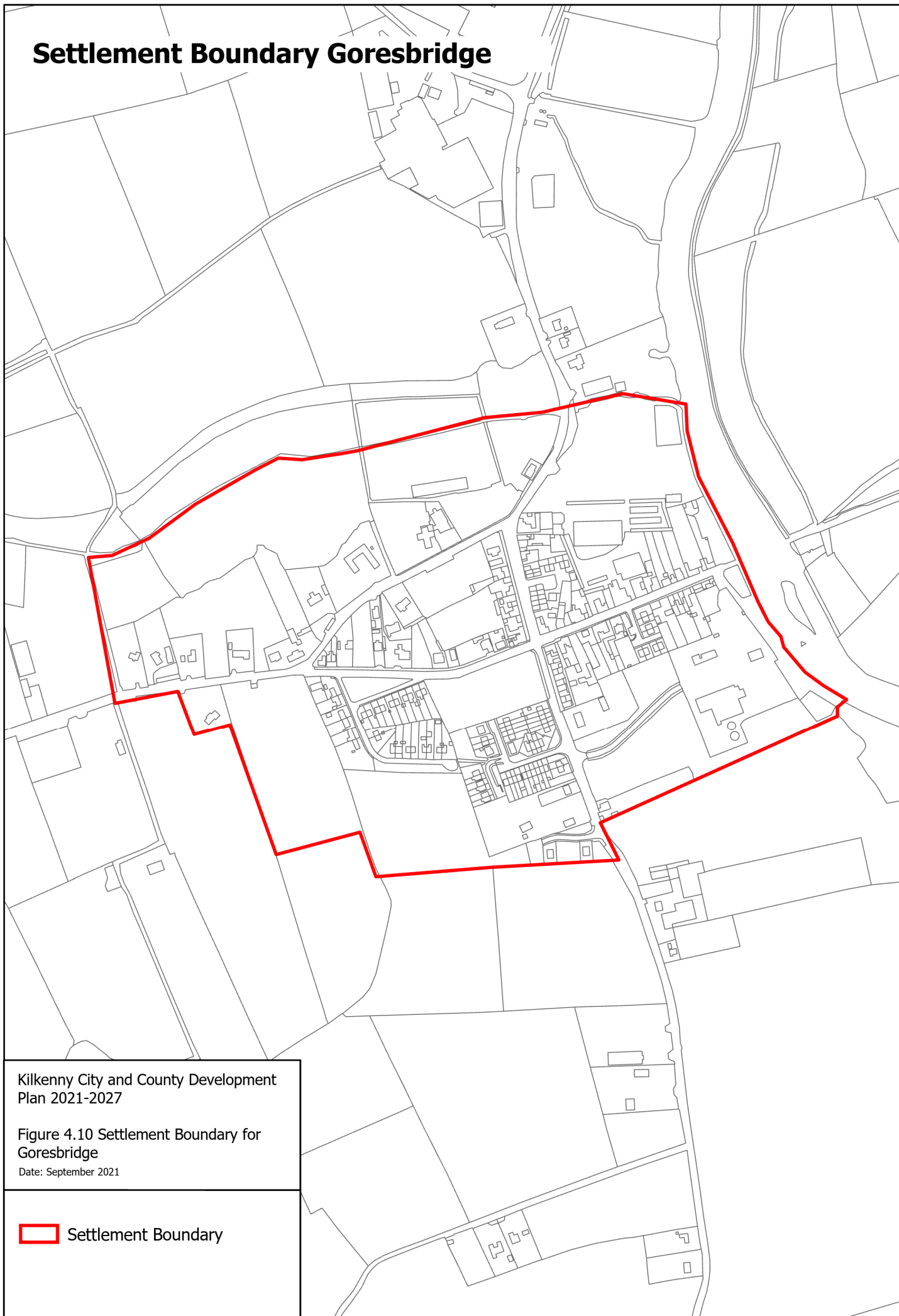
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.10 Settlement Boundary for
Goresbridge
Date: September 2021

Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Gowran
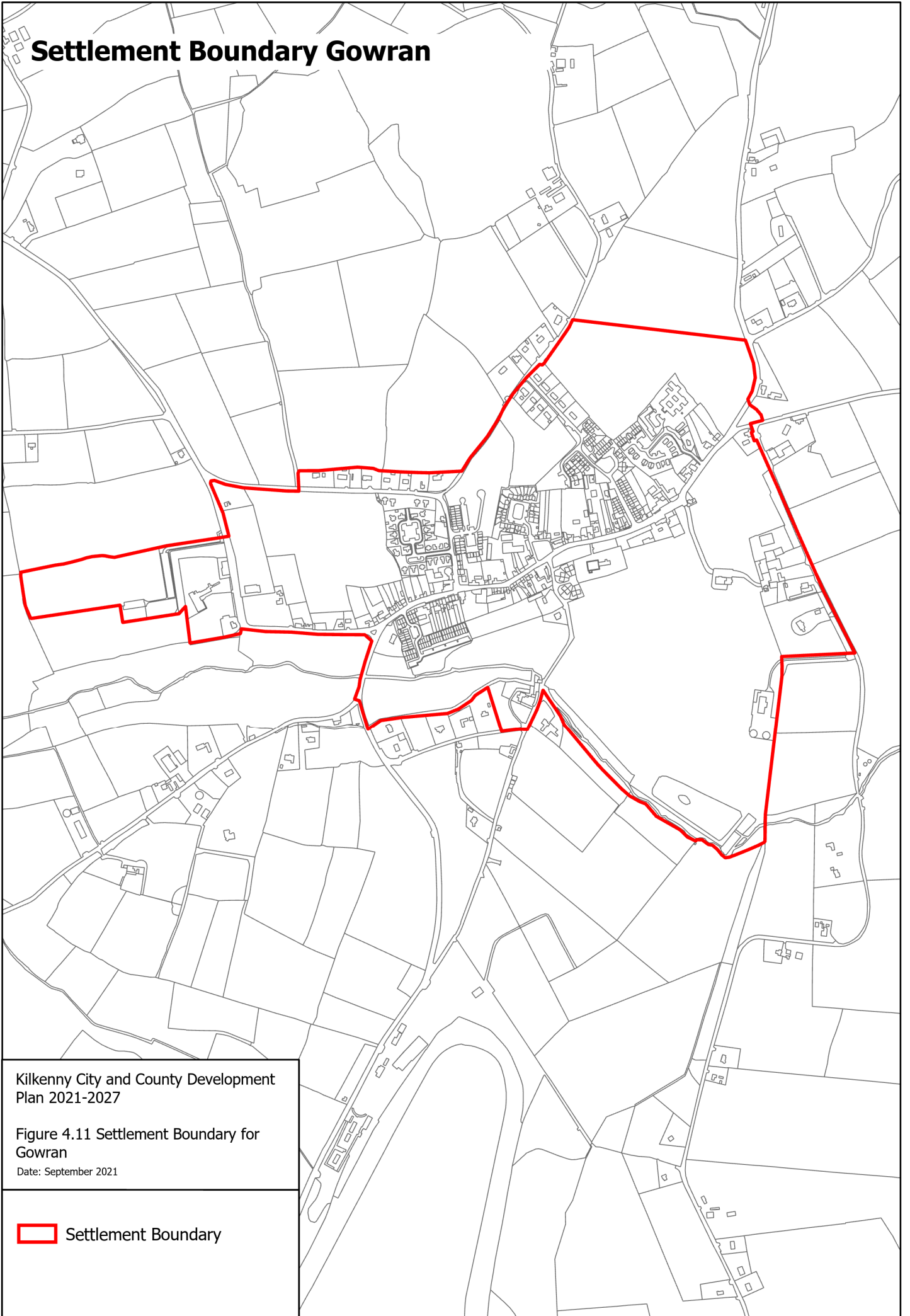
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.11 Settlement Boundary for Gowran

Date: September 2021

Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Inistioge
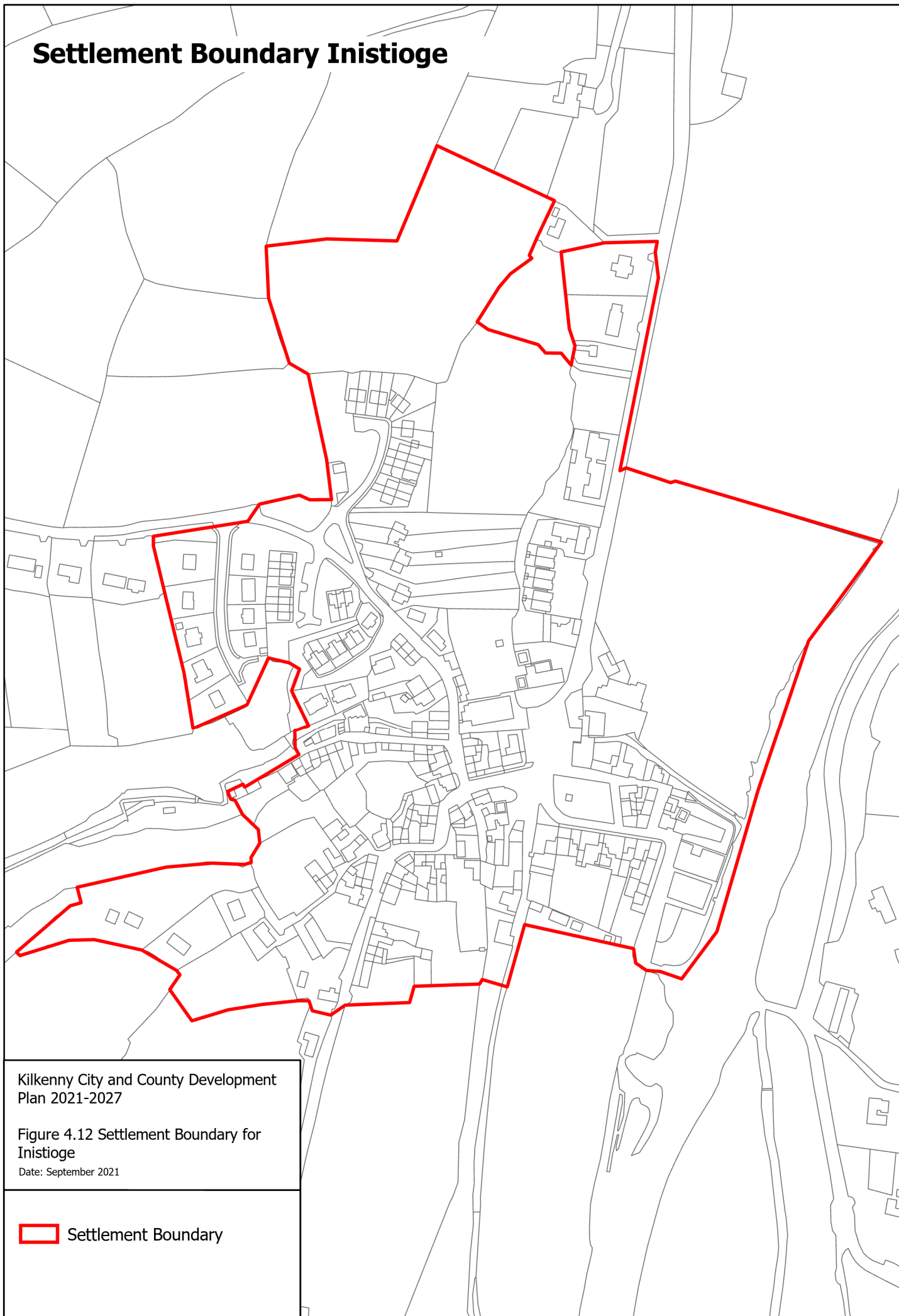
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.12 Settlement Boundary for
Inistioge
Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Johnstown
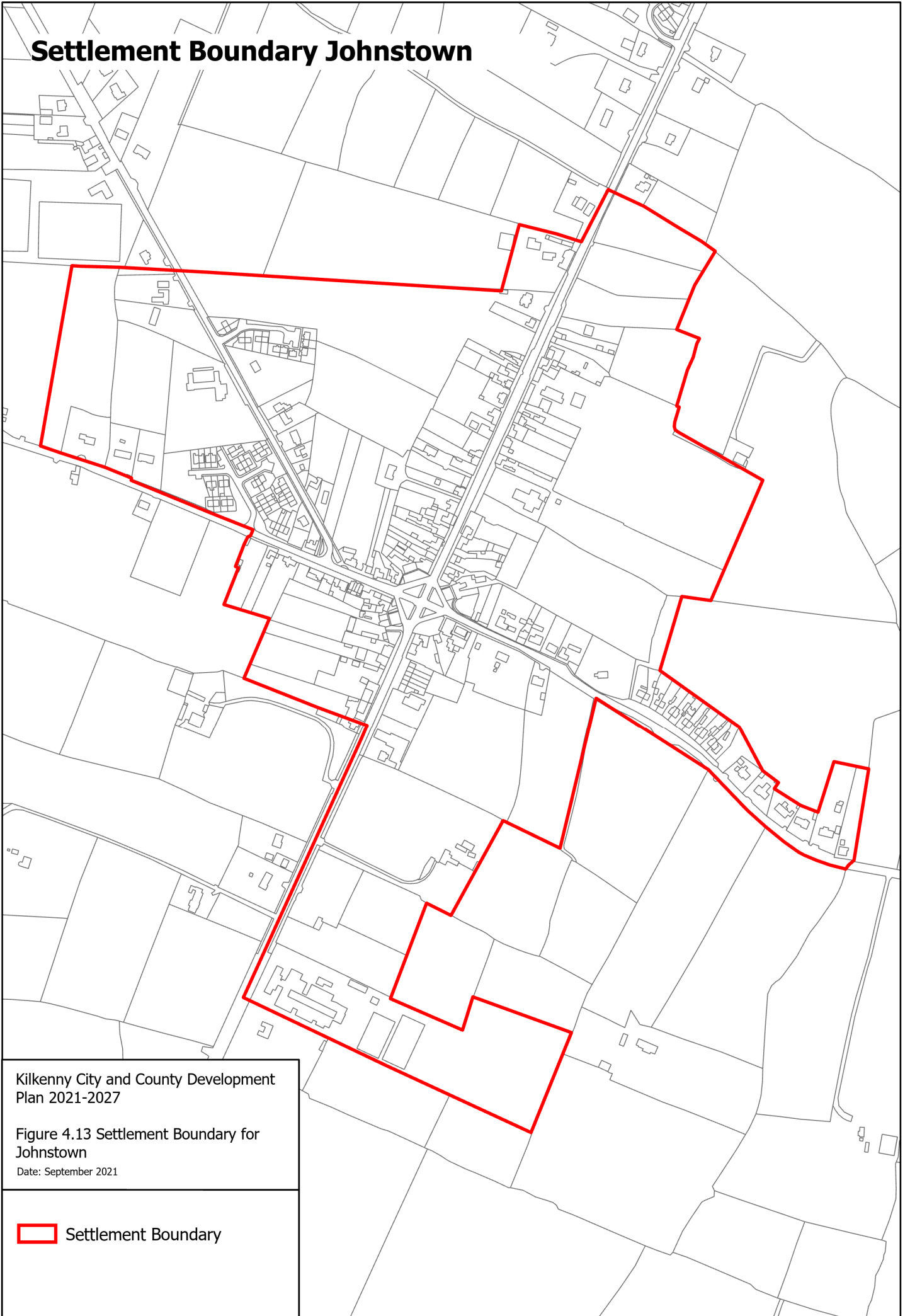
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.13 Settlement Boundary for
Johnstown

Date: September 2021

Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Kells
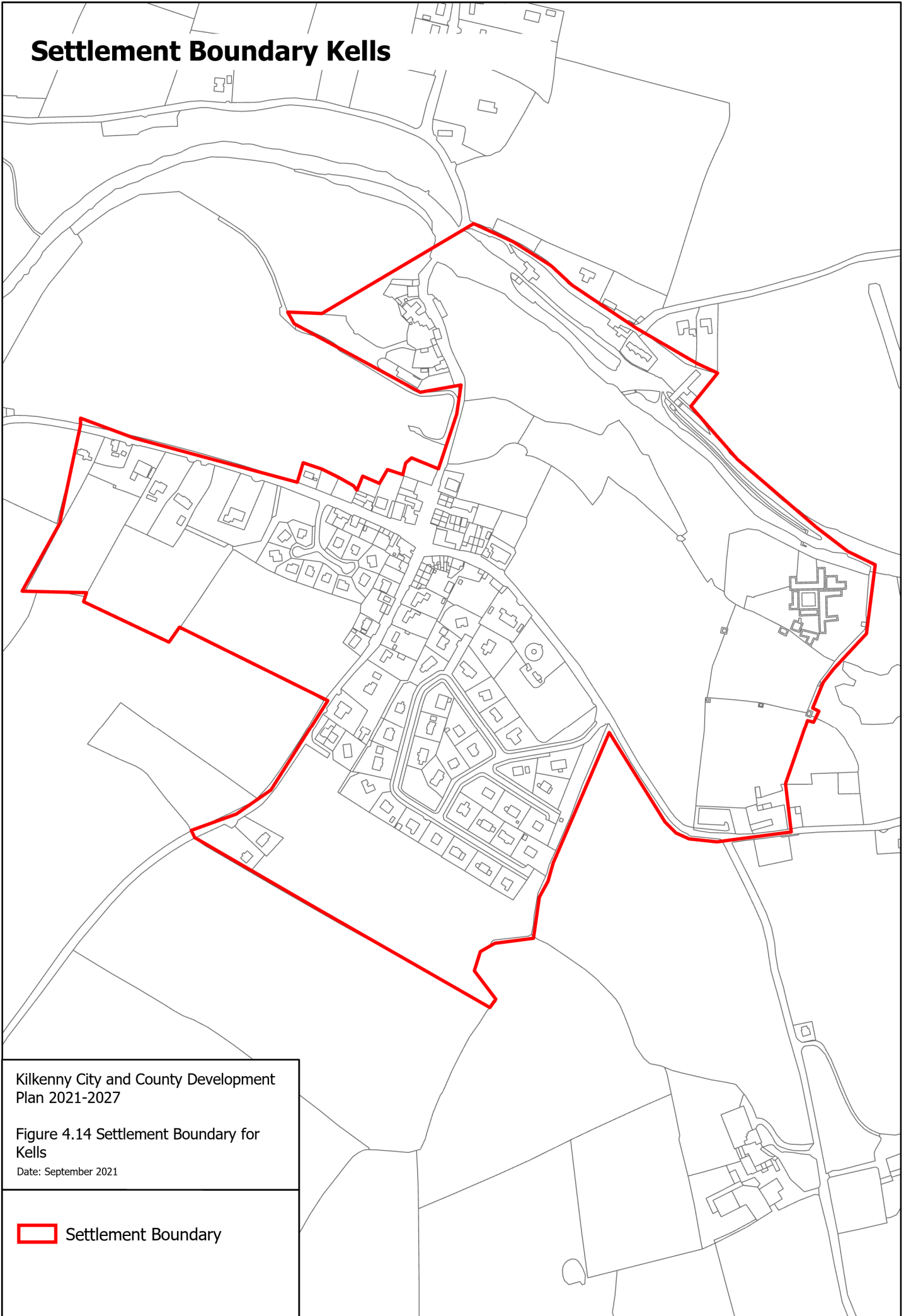
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.14 Settlement Boundary for
Kells

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Kilmacow
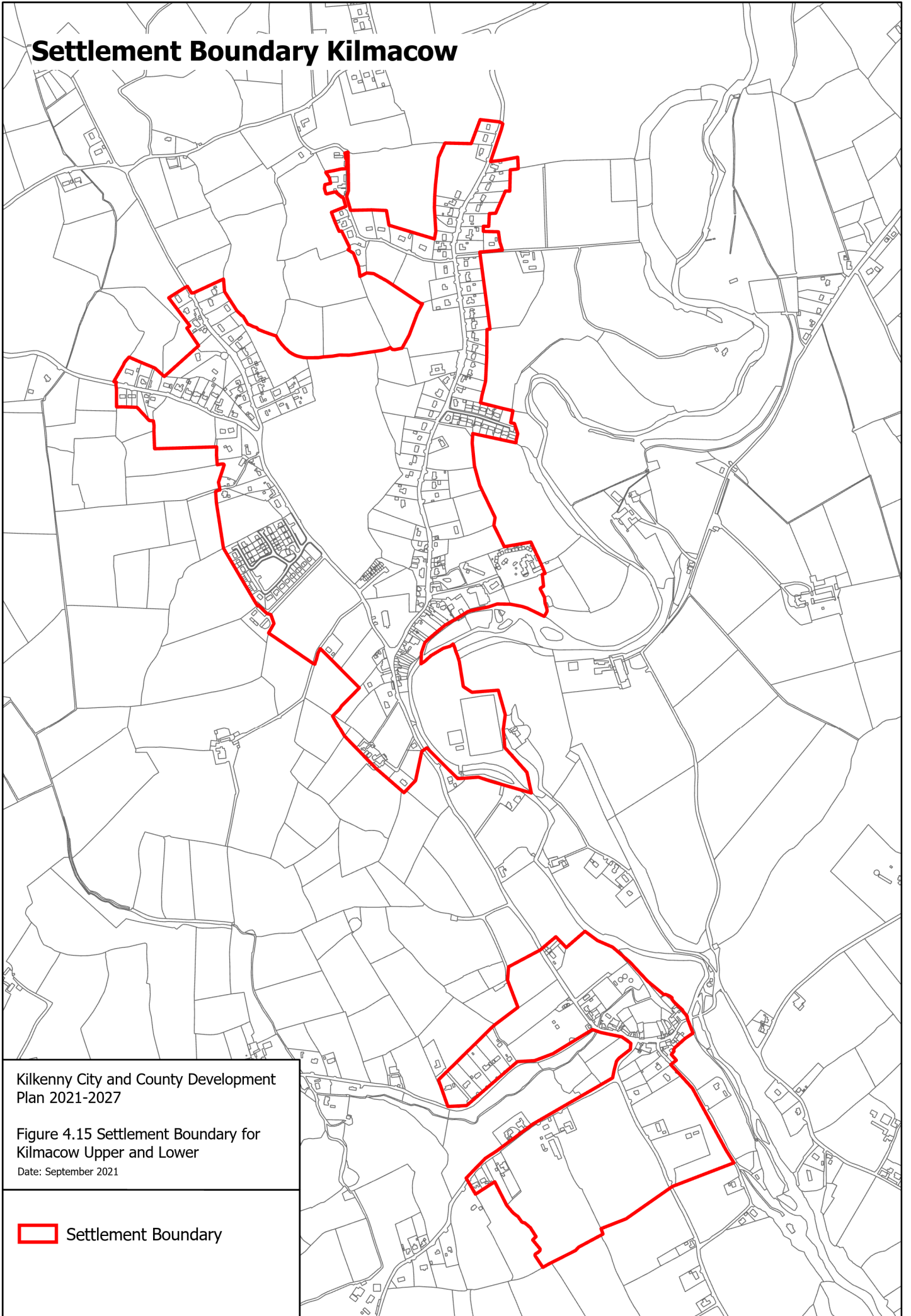
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.15 Settlement Boundary for Kilmacow Upper and Lower

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Kilmaganny
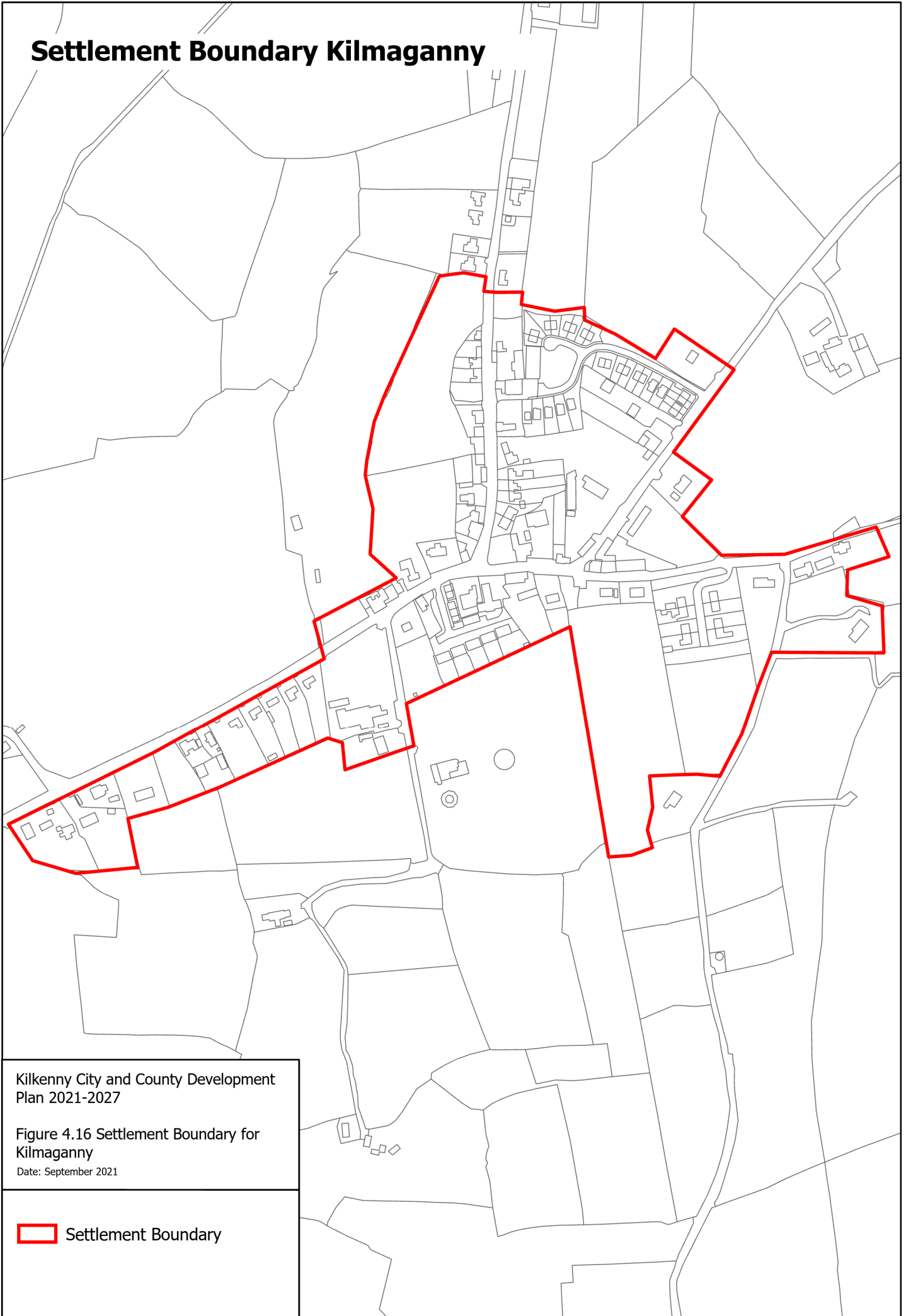
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.16 Settlement Boundary for Kilmaganny

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Knocktopher
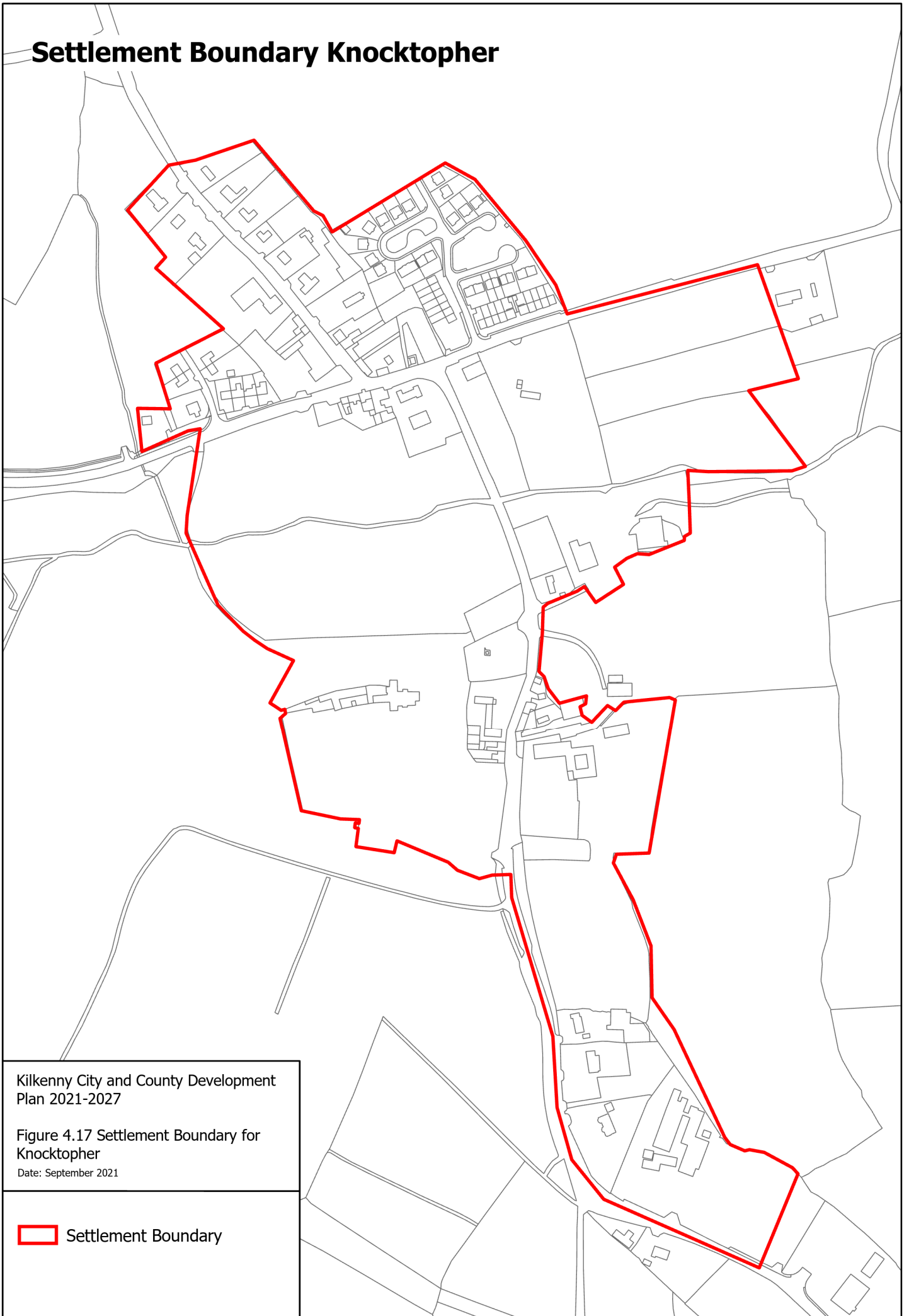
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.17 Settlement Boundary for
Knocktopher
Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Moneenroe
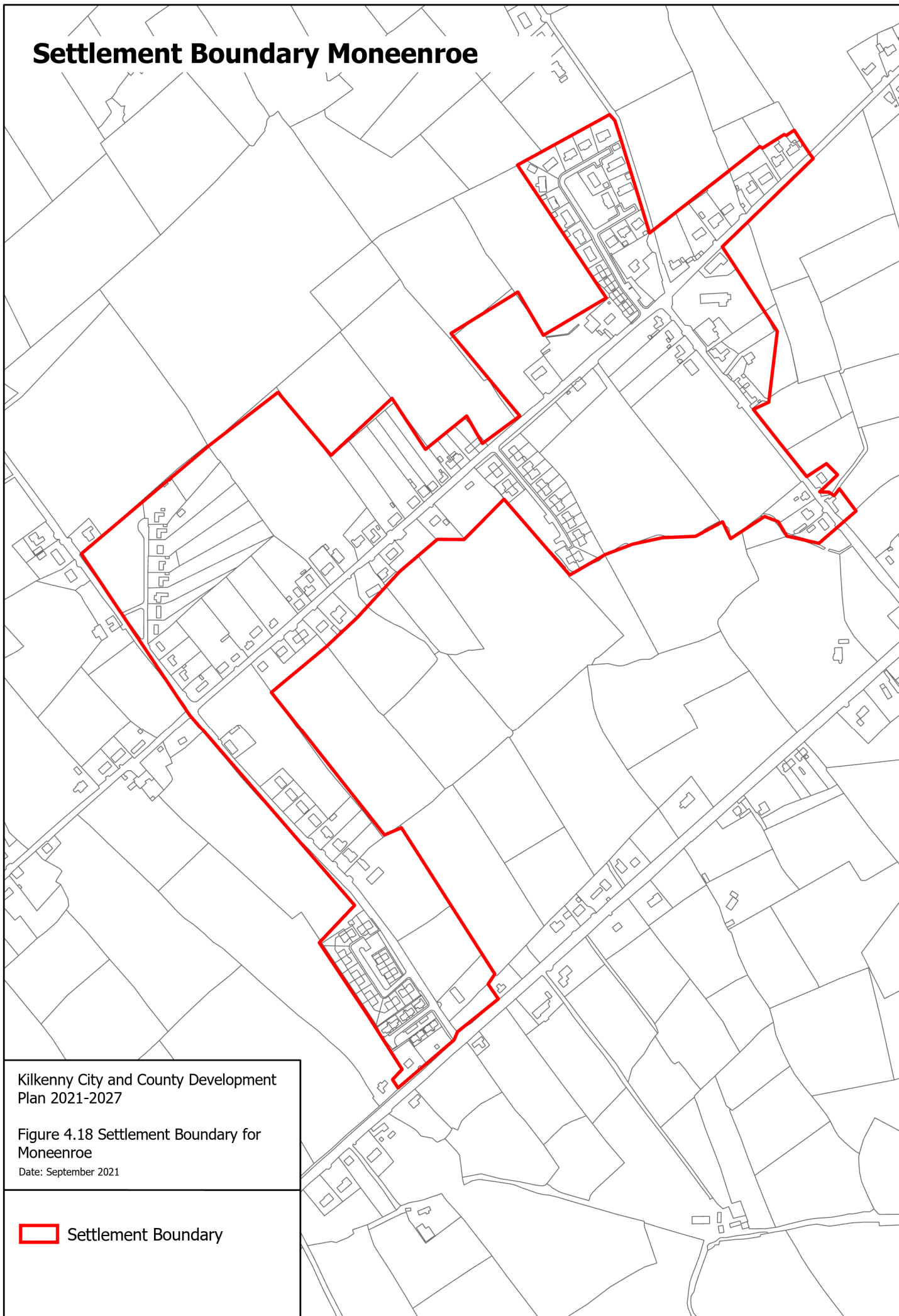
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.18 Settlement Boundary for Moneenroe

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Mooncoin
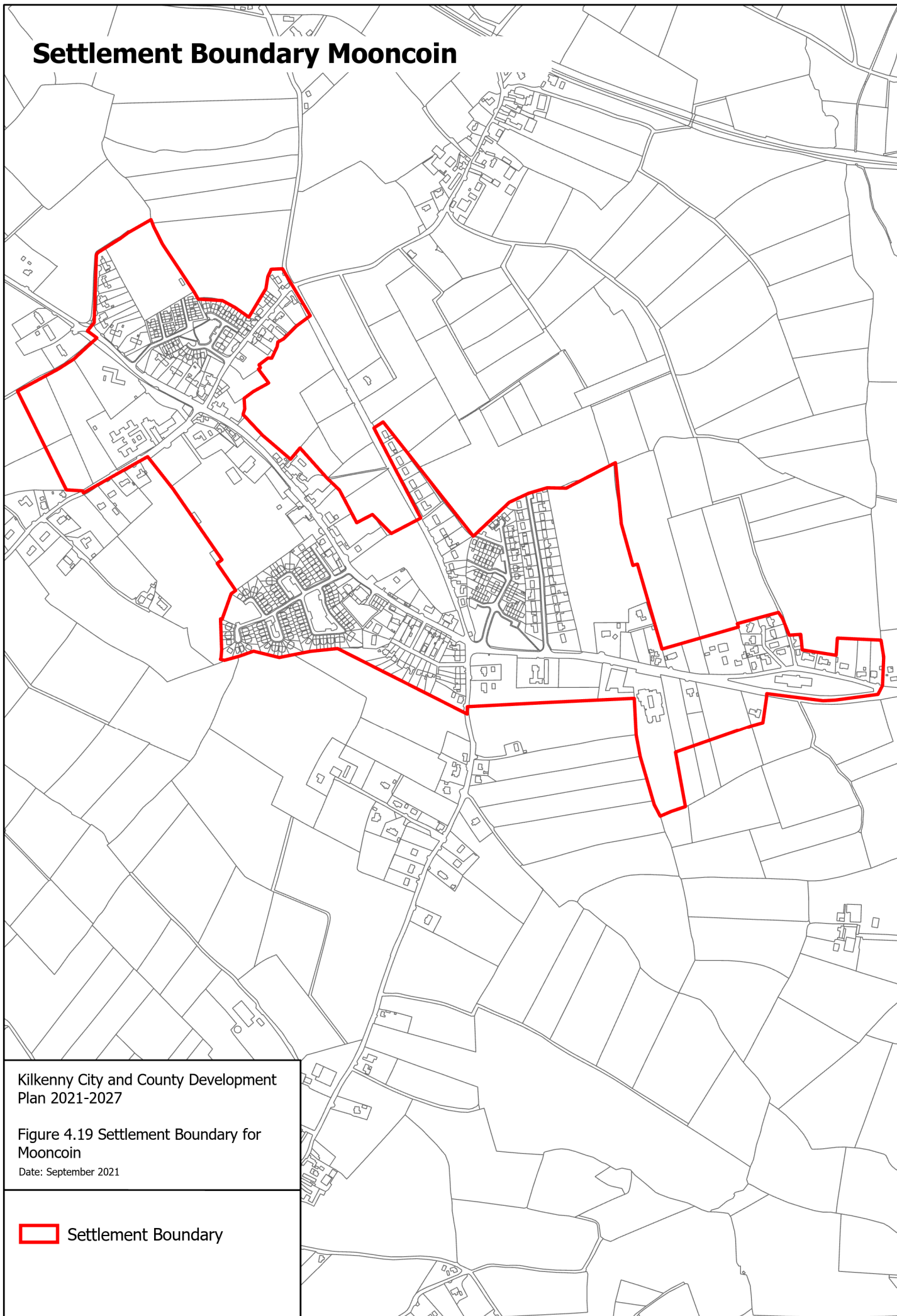
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.19 Settlement Boundary for Mooncoin

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Mullinavat
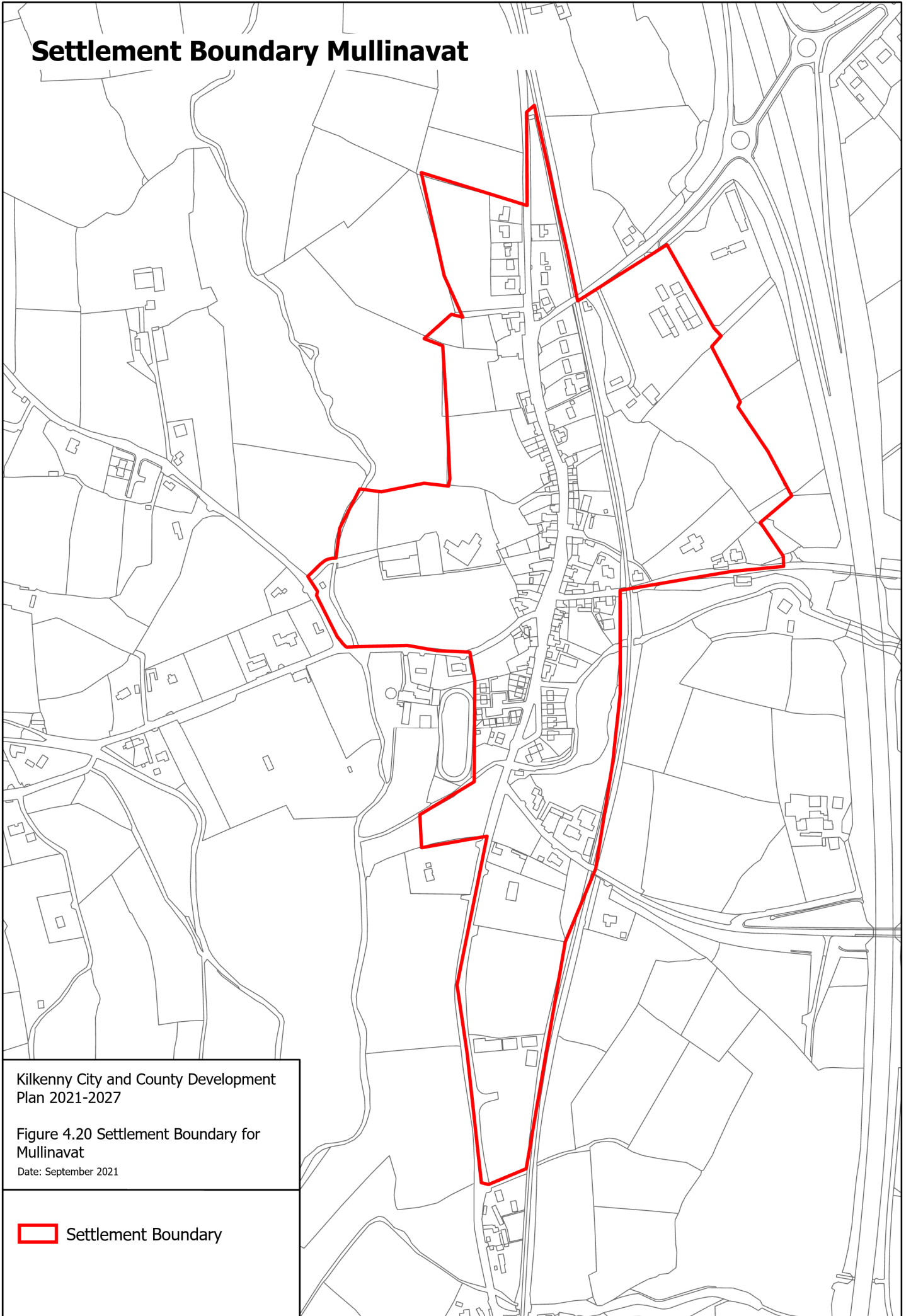
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.20 Settlement Boundary for
Mullinavat

Date: September 2021

Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Paulstown
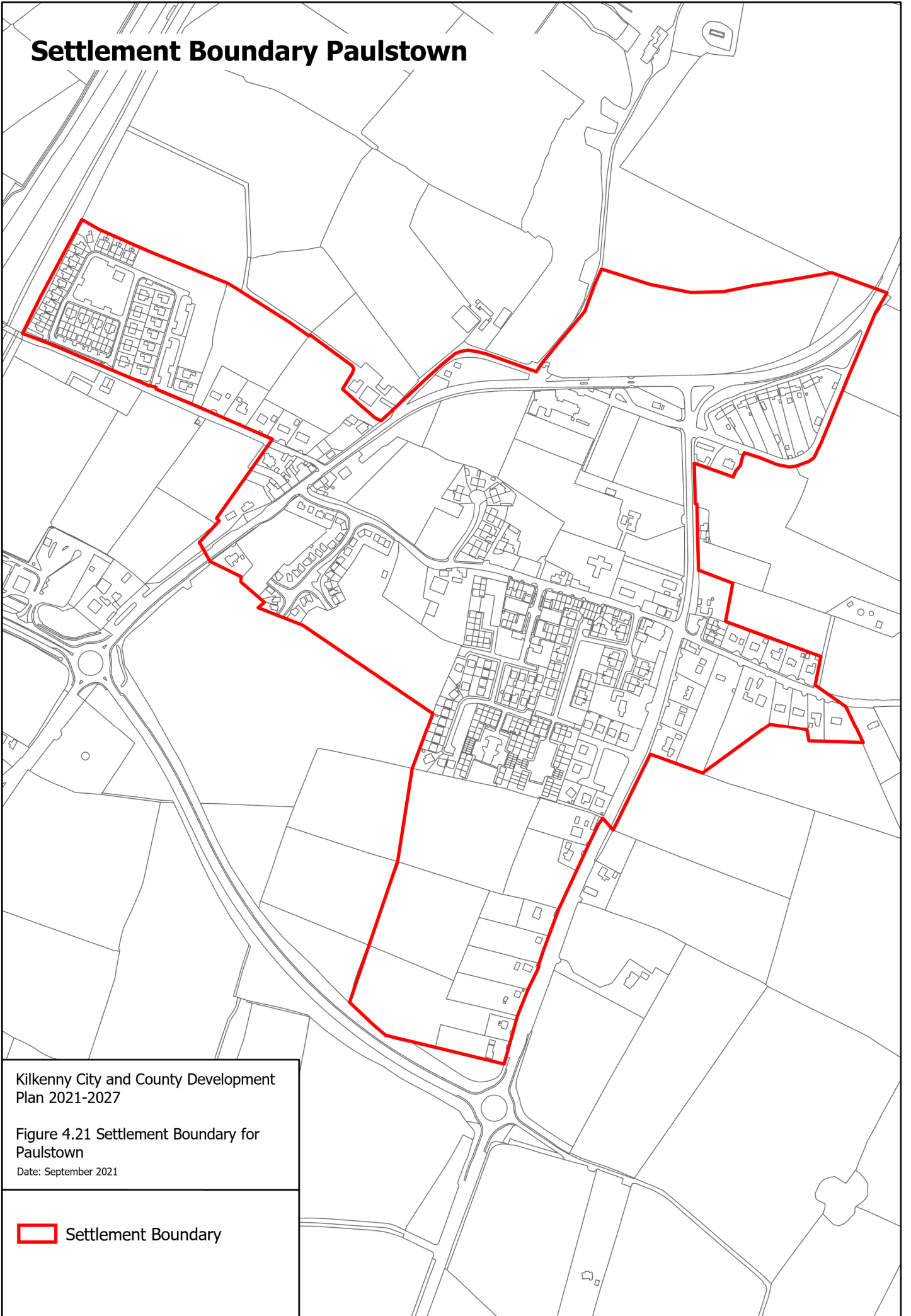
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.21 Settlement Boundary for Paulstown

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Piltown
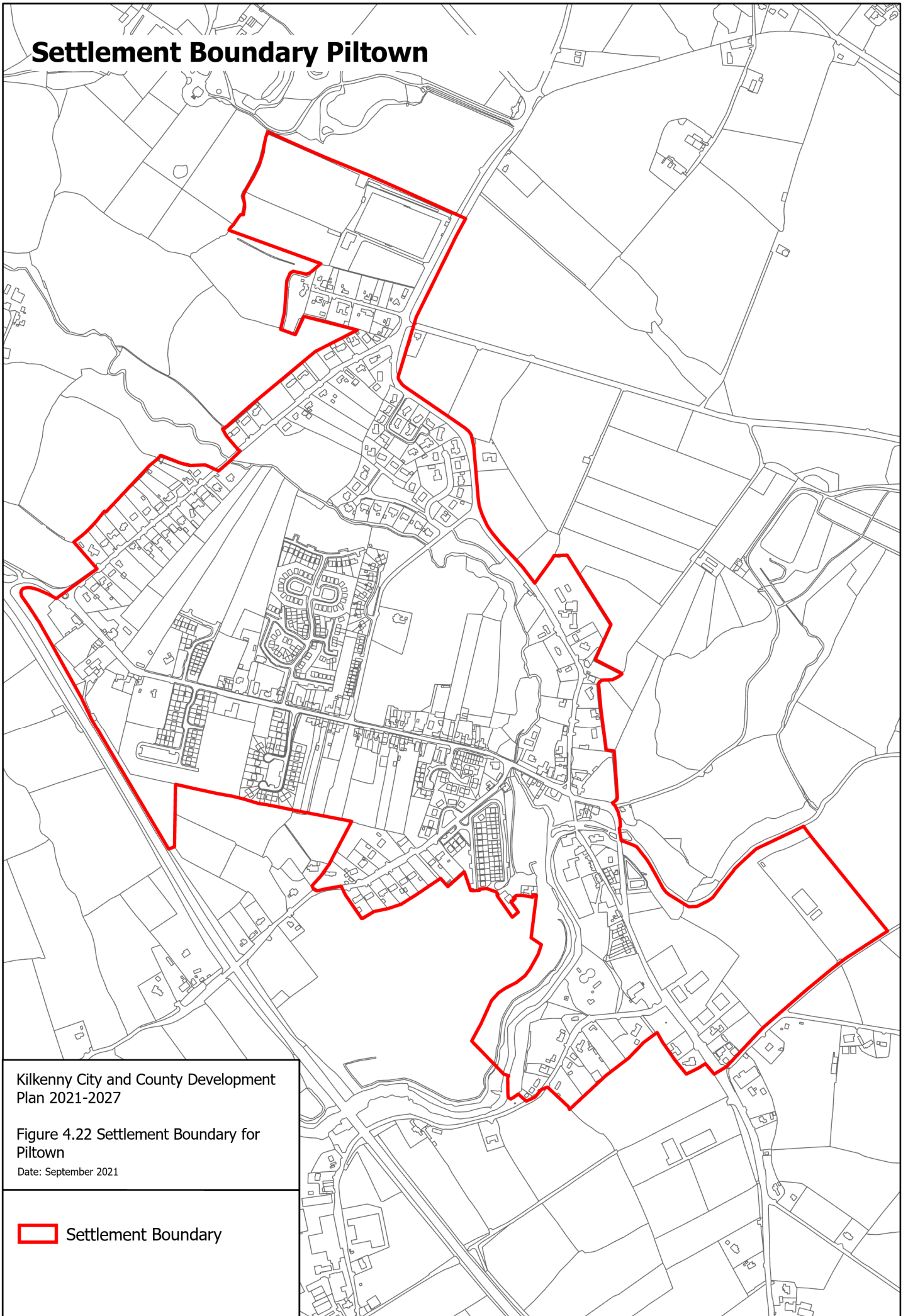
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.22 Settlement Boundary for Piltown

Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Slieverue
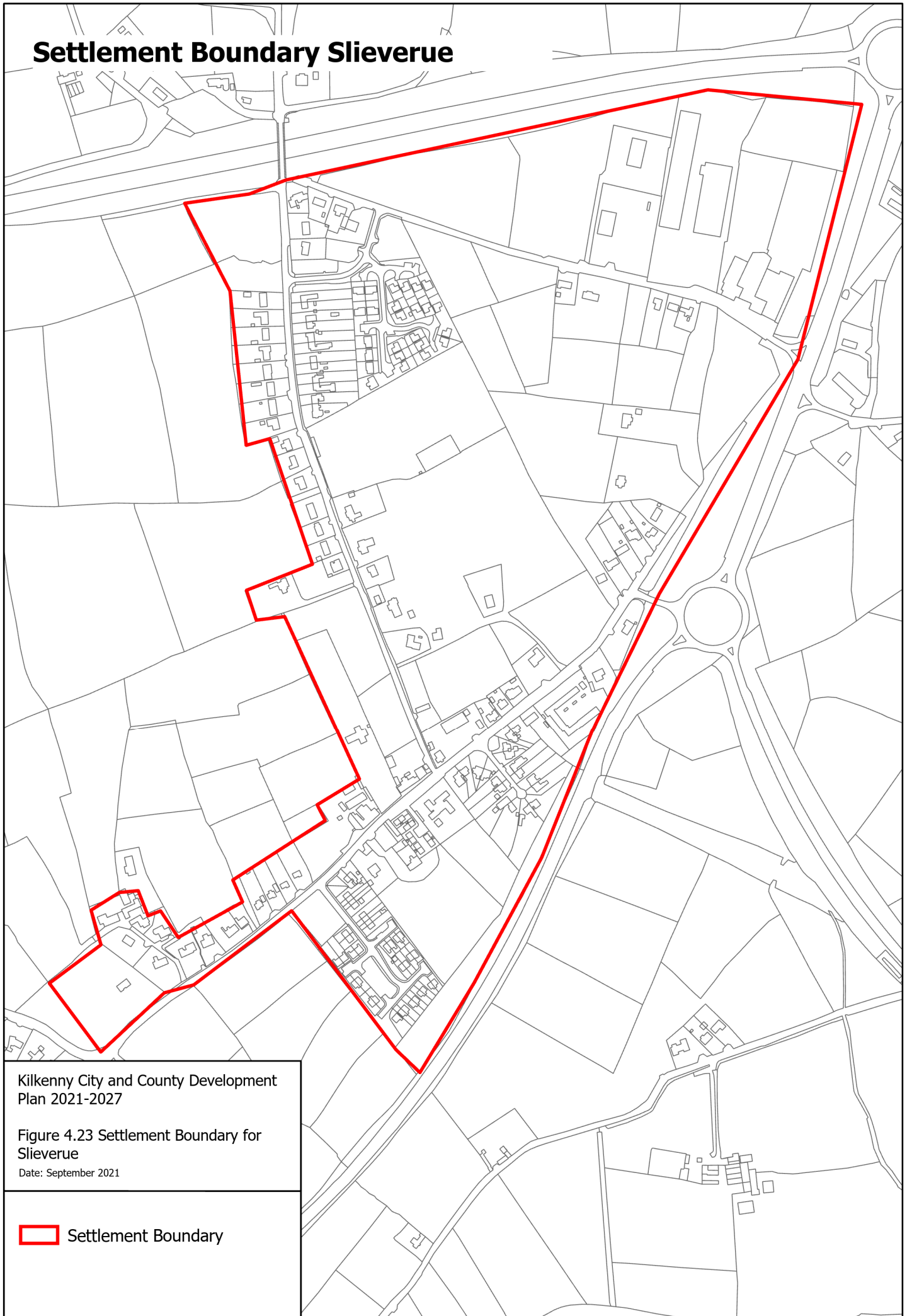
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.23 Settlement Boundary for Slieverue

Date: September 2021

Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Stoneyford
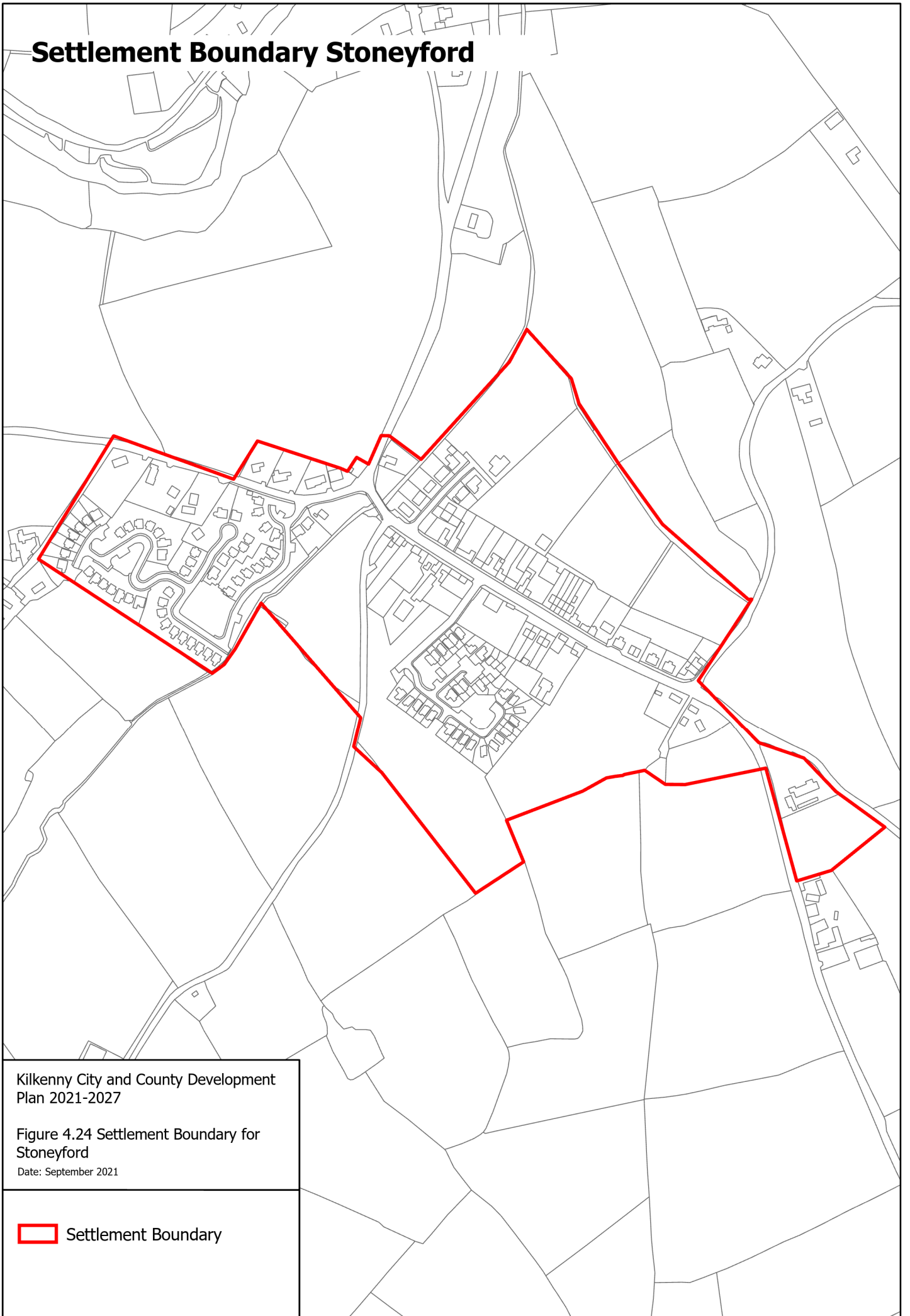
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.24 Settlement Boundary for
Stoneyford
Date: September 2021

☐ Settlement Boundary

Settlement Boundary Urlingford
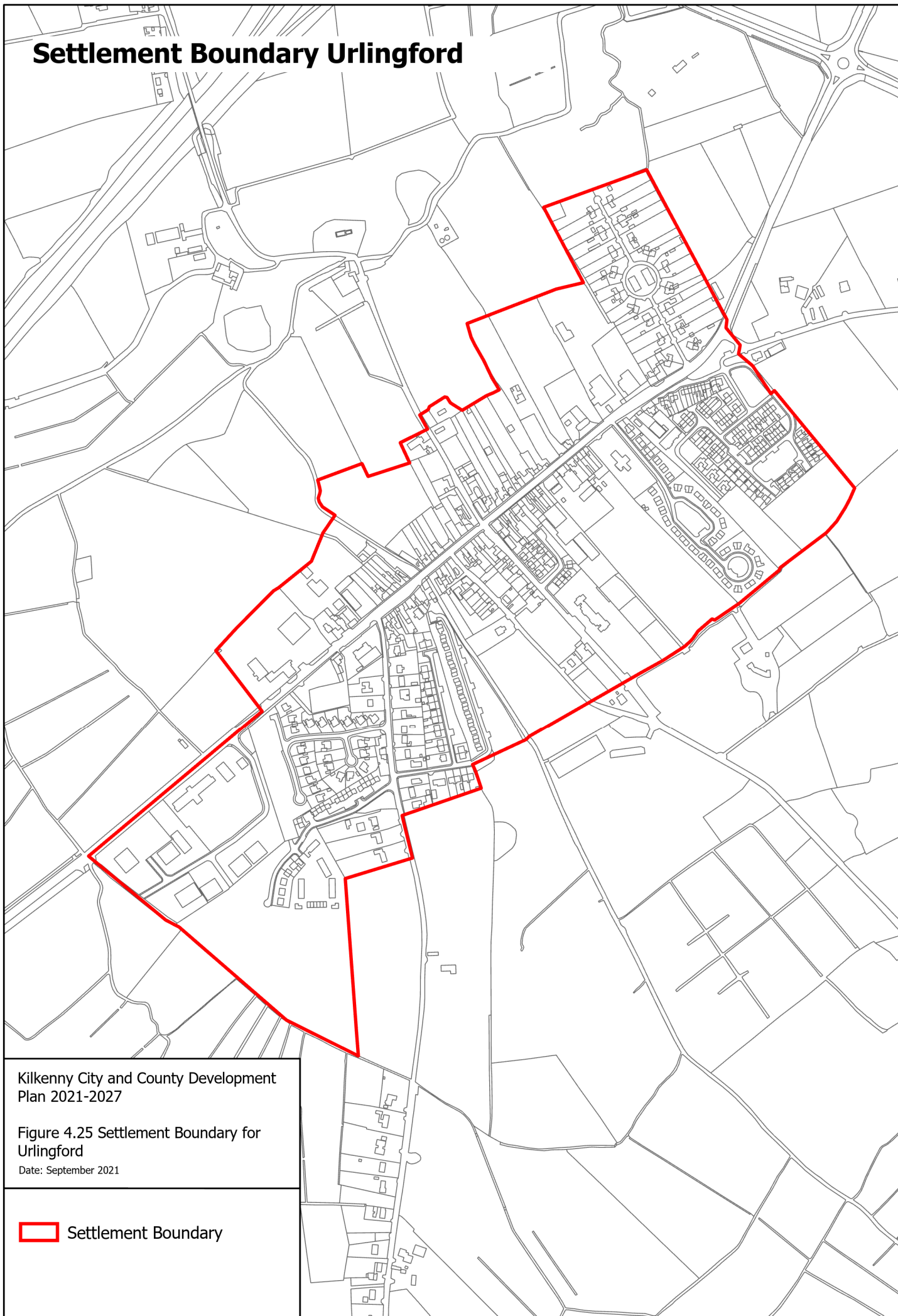
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 4.25 Settlement Boundary for Urlingford

Date: September 2021

Settlement Boundary

availability of infrastructure capacity of each respective settlement over the lifetime of the Plan. Accordingly, development proposals within the boundary will be considered on their merits against the policies and objectives contained in this core strategy and the Development Plan generally.

These settlements have been assigned proportionate growth targets for the purpose of this Core Strategy, using the CSO 2016 figures as a base.

The County's Rural Housing Policy will not apply on zoned lands within a Development plan or any Local Area Plan. Similarly, the Rural Housing Policy will not apply to housing within any defined settlement boundary. Where a settlement does not have a statutory Local Area Plan or a settlement boundary in existence at the time of this development plan, then for development management purposes, it will be considered as part of the County's rural area i.e. the rural housing policy will apply.

The local authority will, if the need arises, prepare Local Area Plans or other appropriate planning framework documents for areas within the County whether urban or rural.

4.6.1.1   *Serviced Sites*

For the District Towns and the smaller towns and villages, support is also provided for the development of a 'New Homes in Small Towns and Villages' initiative to provide services and serviced sites in rural settlements which is a policy objective of the NPF[19] and RSES[20].

The following incentives are designed to encourage the development of serviced sites within settlement boundaries:

- Provision of services by agencies subject to budgetary constraints
- Exclusion from the compliance requirements of the Rural Housing Policy for persons wishing to purchase services sites

The Council will proactively work with the respective agencies to prioritise services delivery in support of this initiative.

4.7   Rural Nodes

Below the level of the Smaller town/village in the settlement hierarchy is the wider rural area containing rural nodes which are small generally un-serviced settlements characterised by an existing clustering of houses around a limited level of support infrastructure such as a school, church or shop. These Rural Nodes are listed in Table 4.3. The list is not exhaustive and settlements not listed displaying these characteristics may also be considered as nodes for the purpose of the plan. In general, housing developments in and around these settlements will be subject to compliance with the rural housing policy, with the following exceptions. For multiple housing developments (2 or more houses in a cluster) 20% of the houses proposed can be made available for people who do not meet the requirements of the rural housing policy. For one-off houses or schemes where 20% cannot be reached in whole housing units in and around these nodes applicants will be required to satisfy the

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[19] NPO 18b page 73
[20] RPO 26g page 89

Council rural housing policy. Development will be limited to incremental local growth appropriate to their size and character.

Objectives

4J   To develop a programme for 'new homes in small towns and villages' in conjunction with, public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities for the provision of serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages.

4K   It is an objective of the Council to facilitate and assist Irish Water with the provision of a Water and Wastewater treatment plant upgrades in settlements, including the villages of Mullinavat, Paulstown, Bennettsbridge, Inistioge, Piltown, Fiddown, Kells and others where capacity is required.

4L   It is an objective of the Council to prepare design and best practice guidelines for the provision of cluster housing in the rural settlements and rural nodes of the County.

4La   To develop a set of criteria and a programme to carry out an analysis of the Smaller Towns and Villages (Tier 4) to consider:

(a) The provision of zoning maps where appropriate (particularly for Ballyragget, Mooncoin, Paulstown, Piltown, Kilmacow and Urlingford)

(b) Developing specific objectives for core areas, focal spaces, amenities and opportunity sites etc., (c) Identify land with development constraints.

This programme to be commenced within 12 months of the coming into effect of the Plan.

4M   To support the recommendations of the town plans compiled under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme subject to compliance with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directive and subject to the availability of funding.

4.8   Development Management Requirements

- **For smaller towns and villages with settlement boundaries, individual serviced sites for individual houses and appropriately designed small housing schemes are promoted where social and engineering infrastructure are available. Housing will be encouraged at 15-20[21] units to the hectare and design should be sympathetic to the character of the existing settlement. Designs for the development of backlands should seek, where feasible, to maximise permeability for pedestrians and connectivity to existing streets and roads, rather than creating cul-de-sacs and dead-ends.**

- **The Planning Authority may limit the extent of development on any one site within the designated smaller towns and villages in accordance with the overall water services capacity and the availability of land for development within the village.**

- **For Rural Nodes where no settlement boundary is designated, individual housing sites or small clusters, sympathetic to the existing form, will be considered contiguous to the existing built up**

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[21] Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas- Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009

area so as to promote their contribution to place making and the strengthening of the settlement/village core. No one proposal for residential development should increase the existing housing stock[22] by more than 10-12 units within the lifetime of the plan.

- **To ensure that development of backland areas does not prejudice any potential comprehensive development.**

- **Have regard to existing framework plans/community action plans (including existing Village Design Statements that have been prepared in consultation with the local community, and with relevant agencies), and expired LAPs, as supplementary planning information where appropriate.**

4.9 Retail Strategy

A Retail Strategy for the County has been prepared as part of this Plan. This Core Strategy is consistent with the Retail Hierarchy as set out in Chapter 5. The County Retail Strategy confirms a retail hierarchy, as set out in Table 5.3. This hierarchy is consistent with the Retail Planning Guidelines and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. Appendix A gives the detailed methodology used in the preparation of the retail strategy.

4.10 Housing Strategy

Section 94 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires a Development Plan to include a strategy for the purposes of ensuring that the proper planning and sustainable development of the area provides for the housing of the existing and future populations of the County. This strategy is known as the Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy is set out in detail in Appendix B and is supported by Chapter 6 of this plan. Objectives are included in Chapter 6 to secure the implementation of the Housing Strategy.

4.11 Rural Areas

RPO 27 of the RSES requires that the Core Strategy identifies areas under urban influence and sets the appropriate sustainable rural housing response which facilitates the provision of single housing whilst having regard for the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements. These areas under urban pressure have been identified and contained in Figure 7.1 Rural Development Strategy.

4.11.1 Rural Housing

The Rural Housing Policy is contained in Chapter 7, Rural Development Strategy. The Rural Housing Policy complies with the requirements to designate two policy areas, being

- **Areas under Urban Influence** i.e. within commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment and elsewhere.
- **Other Rural Areas i.e.** areas where housing will be 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

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[22] Including permitted and committed development

4.12 Core Strategy Table

The implementation of the NPF and RSES at the County level will:

- ★ Promote the sustainable development of rural areas of the county,
- ★ Promote the sustainable growth of Waterford City, Kilkenny as a Key Town and significant regional driver, the District Towns, and smaller settlements and rural areas within the County,
- ★ Ensure adequate lands are zoned to provide for the population projections as contained in the Roadmap for the Implementation of the NPF and Appendix 1 of the RSES for the Southern Region,
- ★ Ensure that at least 30% of future housing as targeted is delivered within the existing footprint of Kilkenny City and the District Towns and 50% within the Waterford MASP area.
- ★ Base zoning on a tiered approach as defined in the NPF, with:
- ★ Tier 1 being serviced lands and
- ★ Tier 2 being lands that are potentially fully serviceable within the lifetime of the plan
- ★ Avoid the overprovision of zoned lands,
- ★ Avoid the potential of unsustainable leapfrogging of undeveloped lands

In line with the *NPF Implementation Roadmap's* requirement for an infrastructure assessment and Tier 1 and Tier 2 considerations for future zoning, it is important to note that the Loughmacask area of the City, which includes extant permissions on 19.23 Ha of zoned lands outside the CSO boundary, is dependent on wastewater investment to realise the existing permissions. (See Core Strategy for Kilkenny City Volume 2 Section 2.2.)

(1)	Core Strategy popu- lation allocation 2016 – 2027 (2)	Household Demand NPF 50/50 (3)	Housing land requirement to 2027 (hectares) (4)	NPO 3C (5)	Zoning (Ha) (6)
County Kilkenny	11,842	4,649			
Kilkenny City	4,144	1,627 (35%)	46.48[23]	(30%) 13.9ha[24] **inside** CSO boundary and (70%) 32.5ha **outside** CSO boundary	18.6ha Abbey Quarter 4.4Ha (30-35%) plus 25Ha mixed 42.84Ha[25] zoned outside CSO
Ferrybank/ Belview (Part of MASP)	2,320[26]	910 (19.5%)	26	(50%) 14ha inside CSO boundary and (50%) 14ha outside CSO boundary	28Ha
District Towns (a) Callan (b) Castlecomer (c) Graiguenamanagh (d) Thomastown	441[27] 264 278 437[28]	160 (3.4%) 93 (2%) 100 (2.1%) 159 (3.4%)	8 Ha 4.65 Ha 5 Ha 8 Ha		7.65Ha 5.5Ha 6Ha 6.7Ha (Review land provision in LAPs to 2027)[29]
Smaller Settlements **Remainder area**** **Rural Housing**	1,284[30] 3,542	467 (10%) 1,133 (24.37%)	128 58[31]		
Total	**11,842**	**4,649**	**284.13**		**119.69**

<div style="text-align:center">**Table 4.6: Core Strategy 2016-2027**</div>

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[23] 1,627 households divided by 35units/ha = 46.48 ha.

[24] The Council has established through its own research that there is more than sufficient capacity within the existing built up area to cater for this increase.

[25] See Housing Strategy and Core Strategy Volume 2

[26] Estimated based historical population distribution model in PLUTS 2004 2016- 2026. (subtract no. of units built in Ferrybank to 2021)

[27] The figure for Callan is an increase of 150 persons to 2027 over and above the 2019 LAP following review under this Core strategy.

[28] The figure for Thomastown includes an additional 150 persons to 2027 over and above the 2019 LAP.

[29] To realign the timelines of the LAPs with the City and County Development plan 2021-2027 the housing land required in the District towns will be reviewed to 2027 in light of the new housing demand figures.

[30] See housing strategy

[31] 700 Households divided by 12 units/ha = 58 ha

*See Table 4.3 Settlement hierarchy: Ballyhale, Ballyragget, Bennettsbridge, Clogh-Chatsworth, Fiddown, Freshford, Goresbridge, Gowran, Inistioge, Johnstown, Kells, Kilmacow, Kilmoganny, Knocktopher, Moneenroe, Mooncoin, Mullinavat, Paulstown, Piltown, Slieverue, Stoneyford and Urlingford.

**Remainder area to include smaller towns and villages and environs of New Ross and the rural area of the county.

4.13 Monitoring and Review

The period of this Development Plan is one of transition. The targeted pattern of population growth is one which is an attempt to move away from the business as usual model and move towards a more sustainable pattern of development for a competitive low carbon, economy. In setting overall targets for future growth, it is a pattern of development that is being targeted, rather than precise numbers.

In line with this, the Council will monitor and review the operation and implementation of this Plan and adjust as needed to ensure the effectiveness of its alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives. This will also ensure that any new statutory guidelines are fully incorporated.

Objective

4Ma **To monitor the implementation of the Core Strategy during the lifetime of the plan to ensure effective alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives and to adjust, where necessary, the policy and objectives of the Development Plan to secure effective alignment.**

5   Economic Development

Strategic Aim: To provide a framework for the implementation of the Council's economic strategy by fostering competitiveness and innovation in all sectors within a high-quality physical environment while having due regard to the protection of the environment and heritage, in order to position the county for sustainable economic growth.

5.1   Introduction

The economic development of the County and associated job creation will be supported by the work of the Planning and Economic Development Directorate and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) guided by this Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plan[1] and any revisions thereof.

5.1.1   Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on economic performance internationally, nationally and consequently at local level. The closure of businesses in March of 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on economic performance including in terms of;

- Loss of revenue at national level
- Loss of revenue at local level (Rates and car parking)
- Reduction in activity within town centres generally
- Loss of business activity and revenues in the majority of sectors
- Increase in the numbers in the Labour Force availing of state employment supports.

Both nationally and at local level there have been initiatives to counteract the impact through:
- A range of emergency legislation to deal with the impacts of Covid-19
- Making town centres more pedestrian and cycle friendly
  - One-way traffic system in Kilkenny City core area
  - Tables and chairs in the public realm
- Implementation of financial supports – LEO
- Partial waiver of commercial rates for impacted businesses

It is Council policy to support the provision of co-working facilities and digital hubs in settlements that promote flexible working arrangements for the established businesses, self-employed persons and start-up enterprises.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created many challenges for society including the Council in terms of assessing the potential long-term impact on the economic and development progress of the Council.

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[1] *Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021*

At the time of writing of this plan, it is national and local policy to assume that the restrictions created by Covid-19 will last at least into the short term, until such time as we as a society learn to adjust to its presence or a medical cure is developed in order to control the virus which would negate the physical impacts.

For the purpose of this plan it is assumed that the physical impacts of the pandemic will be short term in the context of strategic planning.

5.1.2   Local Economic and Community Plan

The *Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021* (LECP) is an integrated statutory plan that is reviewed and adopted by the Council every 6 years. The County Development Plan informs the content of the LECP, and the content of the LECP must be consistent with the Development Plan. In this regard, both plans are interdependent in setting out the strategic vision for the economic growth of the County, accompanied by supporting policies and objectives to be employed in securing this vision.

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) details the following economic actions:
- strengthening the local enterprise base, and thereby encouraging job creation and multi-sectoral employment potential.
- providing an integrated support structure for enhanced levels of enterprise start-up and growth, including through the LEO and Enterprise Ireland (EI).
- supporting, co-ordinating and optimising the visitor experience across the county.
- encouraging and supporting up-skilling, job mobility and enterprise creation in key economic growth sectors.
- increasing the levels of rural economic activity and building sustainability into the rural economy.
- encouraging integrated transport systems through the use of existing and new infrastructure innovations, and increasing the use of communications technologies through enhanced infrastructure and skilled communities.
- encouraging and supporting biodiversity and the protection and enhancement of local heritage and culture, supporting energy efficiency and maximising the circular economy potential.
- proactively working with IDA Ireland to increase inward investment.
- contributing to the growth of the region and expanding the international reach of the local economy.

Objective

5A1   To review and complete a new Local Economic and Community Plan for the period 2021 to 2027.

5.2   Economic Strategy for City & County

County Kilkenny has a rich diversity of mainly indigenous enterprises across the full spectrum of industry sectors and is not overly reliant on large employers. From the profile of the County in Chapter 3 it can be seen that there were 4,635 businesses operating in County Kilkenny (in 2018), with 20,321 people employed. The Retail and Wholesale Sector with 909 businesses employed the largest percentage of people (at c23%), the Manufacturing Sector the next highest proportion (at c20%) and the Hospitality Sector was the third highest employer (at c17% - c42% higher than the national average employed in Hospitality. The following industry sectors are identified as being key to Kilkenny's future economic development, especially in terms of employment growth:

- Financial Services
- Technology
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture & Food
- Creative Industries
- Tourism & Hospitality (See Section 5.3 Tourism)
- Third Level Education

In addition to the above sectors, the retail sector is critical, especially in terms of promoting the vitality and viability of town centres. In this regard, this Development Plan includes a Retail Strategy which sets out clear evidence-based policies and objectives.

5.2.1   Financial Services

Kilkenny has attracted significant investment from leading financial services companies such as State Street International, Carne Group and BOI 365. A proven location for financial services, Kilkenny has a cluster of other high-profile companies in the sector including personal & corporate tax solutions provider Taxback.com and Taxback International along with international payments company TransferMate.

> **Objective**
>
> **5A   To ensure an adequate amount of employment land is available within the City and County for ICT and technology office-based industry at the appropriate strategic locations.**

5.2.2   Technology

Kilkenny is home to global tech organisations and start-ups including global cyber security specialists, CipherTechs and SRA Security Risk Advisors and agri-tech AB Agri. Applied research centres in the region are leading the agenda in the Internet of Things and next generation. ICT research group Telecommunications Software & Systems Group (TSSG) have a base at Burrells Hall, St Kieran's College, Kilkenny along with the innovation centre – PACE (Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence). The Centre for Design (C4D) has also recently set up a base in Kilkenny (See Section 5.3 for details.)

5.2.3 Manufacturing

The Belview Port area near Ferrybank in South Kilkenny is just 4 miles from Waterford City and is an ideal location for large-scale industries and manufacturing companies. Belview Port is the nearest major Irish port to mainland Europe providing a saving to shippers of both time and fuel while being a natural hub for the integration of port, shipping, road and rail freight services. Existing businesses operating from there include Medite Smartply, part of the Coillte group.

The Ferrybank Belview Local Area Plan provides ample zoned land for large scale industries, including a strategic IDA site of 53 hectares, the Marine Point Business Park and Belview Port. Belview has all the necessary infrastructure for high volume production and is supported by significant water, waste water and gas capabilities.

> **Objective**
>
> **5B**   **To ensure that there is sufficient quantity of zoned land available and serviced at suitable locations within the City and County to maximise the potential for employment and Foreign Direct Investment in the County.**

5.2.4 Agriculture & Food

The agriculture sector is important, with almost twice the proportion of the labour force employed in the sector compared to the national average. There are c 3,750 farms in County Kilkenny employing over 5,244 people directly. However, the agri-food sector supports thousands of additional jobs including in food & drink processing, input suppliers, agricultural contractors, transport and engineering, professional services, veterinary and other advisory services.

Kilkenny forms part of the Waterford/Kilkenny Teagasc Advisory Region. The average farm size in the region is 44.7 hectares (over one third larger than the national average), the largest of any region in the country. The standard output per farm as measured by the CSO is almost double the national average.

Dairying is the dominant enterprise in the region. Key components of the Teagasc Strategic Plan for the region (to 2020) is for farmers to become world leaders in sustainable agricultural production; increase milk production by 60%; maintain suckler cow numbers while increasing the calf to beef enterprise; and increase the number of ewes by 10%. All development is to be carried out in harmony with the environment and all clients are to complete a Carbon Navigator to guide their farming activities. The abolition of milk quotas, changes in income tax reliefs for land leasing, a broadening of partnership rules and the introduction of share farming combined with a growing demand for food all provide an opportunity for farmers in the region to exploit.

Kilkenny has a long established agri-food sector with major companies operating in the county including Glanbia and Connolly's Red Mills, complemented by an emerging artisan food producer base of micro and medium sized food producers. During the period of the last Plan, Glanbia opened a high-specification processing facility in Belview and planning permission has been granted for a cheese manufacturing facility also in Belview.

Foodwise 2025 sets out a ten-year plan for the agri-food sector. It underlines the sector's unique and special position within the Irish economy, and it illustrates the potential which exists for this sector to grow even further. This plan supports the objectives of Food Wise 2025 as it strives to achieve sustainable farming practices and the sustainable growth of the farming sector. (See also Chapter 7 Rural Development).

The Plan will facilitate and support the development of agriculture and food while ensuring the highest standards of environmental protection in the assessment of planning applications for all development proposals.

5.3 Tourism, Creative Industries and Services

The tourism industry has long been recognised as an important economic driver for the economy of Kilkenny. Sustainable Tourism is considered tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. It is a Core objective of Kilkenny County Council to develop tourism and the County's tourism offer, working with key stakeholders – public, private, community, and voluntary - to implement Kilkenny's *Statement of Tourism Strategy and work programme 2017-2022*[2] as well as maintaining Kilkenny's position as the finest Cultural and Heritage destination in Ireland.

Kilkenny is recognised as an international destination with the capacity to deliver significant growth in international visitor numbers and a substantial increase in tourism related employment in accordance with the Government's Tourism Strategy; *People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025*[3], Food Vision 2020-2025 and the three-year Destination Marketing, Sales and Revenue Growth Plan for Kilkenny City and County.

Kilkenny has long been recognised as the centre of Ireland's design and craft sector, and is home to the Design & Craft Council Ireland headquarters in the City and Grennan Mill Craft School in Thomastown, with centres of excellence in jewellery and ceramics at these locations. Working closely with the Design and Craft Council of Ireland, Kilkenny County Council developed plans for the refurbishment of Session House in Thomastown as part of the school. This proposed education facility at Sessions House represents a commitment to supporting and promoting the progression of new creative talent to employment in the creative sector. Kilkenny's association with craft and design can be attributed in large part to the role of the Kilkenny Design Workshops (KDW), which operated from the 1960s to the 1980s.The cross-disciplinary approach to design attracted designers from many different countries to work in a centre of excellence for product and craft design. The legacy of KDW spawned a cluster of creative industries and services, in artistic endeavours leading to the establishment of master designers in jewellery, ceramics and artisan crafts.

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[2] Kilkenny County Council, *Statement of Tourism Strategy and work programme 2017-2022*
[3] Government of Ireland, *People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025*, 2019

Kilkenny's flourishing creative scene has led to some world-leading creative companies setting up their operations here including Cartoon Saloon (a four-time Academy Award nominated animation studio). Cartoon Saloon have also teamed up with Canadian animators Mercury Filmworks to create Lighthouse Studios, a new animation studio in the city that has helped to transform Kilkenny into a centre of excellence in animation.

The Centre for Design (C4D) is funded under the Enterprise Ireland Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF), C4D is a design innovation hub that helps companies to conceptualise, innovate, build and test new products and services through critical problem-solving methodologies and design thinking concepts. The C4D partners are the Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC), Kilkenny County Council (KCC), The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI), the Kilkenny Industrial Development Company (KIDCo) and the Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP).

It is Council policy to:
- support the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.
- support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the County.
- support the provision and improvement of visitor facilities, infrastructure and accommodation (including self-catering, hotels, hostels, guesthouses, B&Bs, caravanning, camping, motorhome service areas and glamping) at appropriate locations, preferably clustered within existing settlements, in order to provide a range of accommodation type to suit all visitors.

> **Objective**
>
> **5C   To continue to develop sustainable high quality tourism, leisure and complementary activities for the City & County with the key stakeholders enhancing the position of Kilkenny as a Hero site within Ireland's Ancient East branding.**

5.3.1   Kilkenny County
Outside the City, the tourism sector continues to be a crucial element of community and economic development. Recent developments, which shall be encouraged and supported include:

- Callan - Cultural Hub: Proposed Capital Project, also referred to as the Friary Conservation Plan, which is the subject of a funding application under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Funding is sought to support the development of the Friary Complex as a cultural and creative hub with a modern library service at its centre.
- Castlecomer – The continued expansion of the Discovery Park including the town's mining heritage. The opening of the Avalon Hotel during 2019 was a tremendous boost to the town's tourism offering.
- Graiguenamanagh - The continued development of The Hub as a focus for outdoor recreation and camping infrastructure, developed as a base for exploring the great outdoors

- Thomastown – the continued development of Mount Juliet as a unique luxury destination, and the recent addition of Mountain View in Ballyhale offer accommodation for visitors to the area. The school of jewellery and ceramics building on the town's design and craft reputation.
- Inistioge and Woodstock – capitalising on Woodstock's natural assets to maximise its contribution to the tourism product. The Council has and will continue to engage with Coillte which owns 1,000 acres of commercial forestry in the Woodstock estate.
- Kilkenny Greenway as part of the South East Greenway in South of the county.

5.3.2 Mount Juliet Estate

Mount Juliet Estate and the adjoining Ballylynch Stud are situated in the Nore Valley to the west of Thomastown. Mount Juliet is generally recognised as a high-quality tourism and sporting resource of significant local, national, and international importance. It is also a significant built, natural and cultural heritage resource. The golf course and stud are recognised on an international scale, with the stud in operation since 1914 and the golf course has played host to international competitions. The estate and stud are a significant source of direct and indirect employment in the county. An action plan was developed for the estate in 2000 to set out the guiding principles and overall future direction for the development of the estate. The objectives of the action plan have been largely delivered over the intervening period. The provisions of the action plan have been incorporated into this plan which now aims to facilitate appropriate development in a manner which respects the sensitive nature of the landscape, heritage and environmental attributes of the estate and seeks to ensure their protection and enhancement, see Figure 5.1.

Mount Juliet Development Management Requirements
- To protect and enhance the Protected Structure, its curtilage and attendant grounds and woodlands. To protect and enhance existing landscape, ecological, water quality and other environmental amenities and in particular to provide for the protection of the River Nore (designated cSAC and SPA).
- To provide for the maintenance and enhancement of tourism, sporting, leisure and related uses, and of existing agricultural and equestrian lands and buildings in an area of sensitive landscape.
- To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings.

Permissible uses/ developments:
- Equestrian, sport and leisure facilities.
- Stores, machinery storage/repair & office uses related to maintenance of estate lands.

Uses open for consideration:
- Temporary tented or other temporary enclosures.
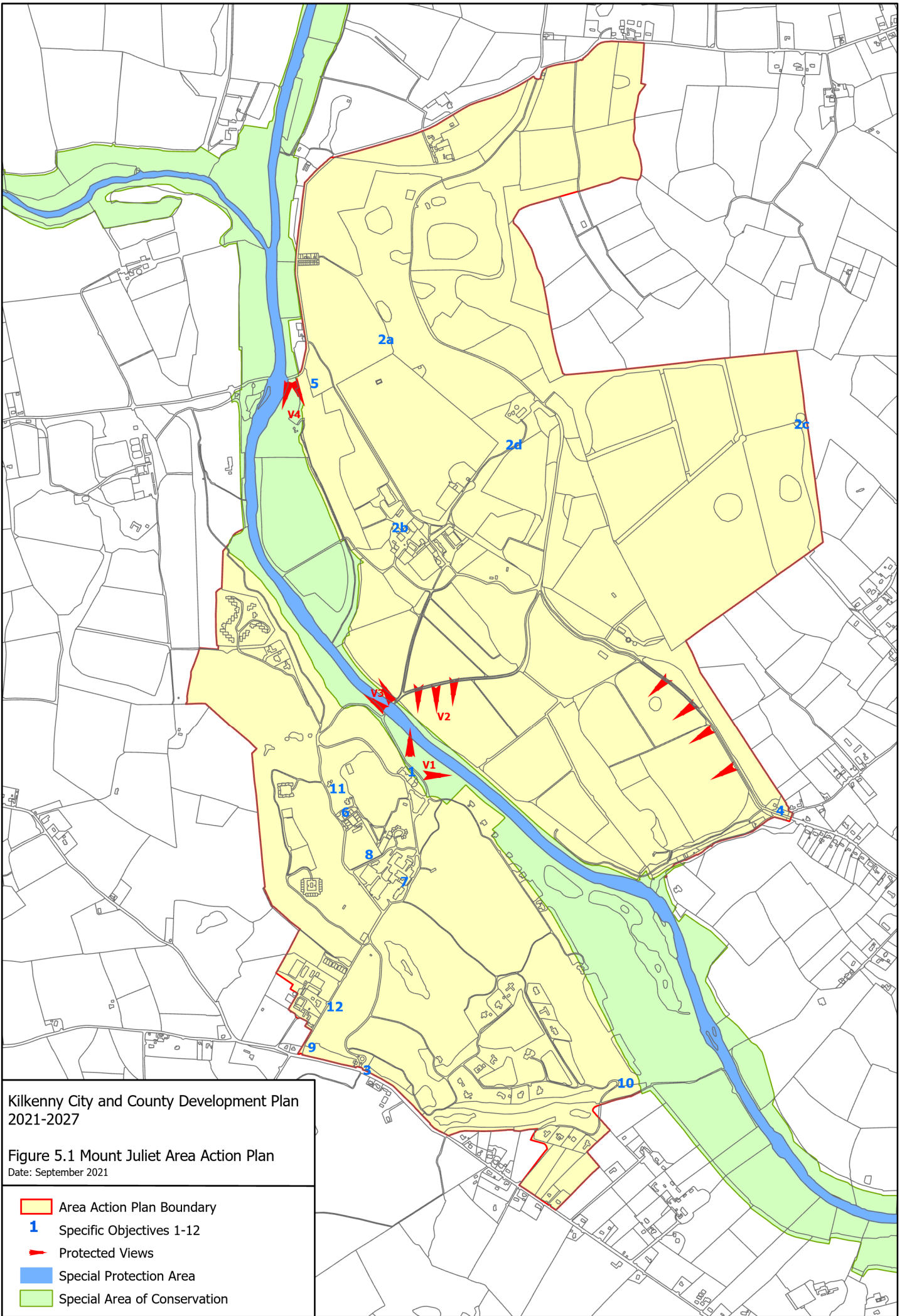
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan
2021-2027

Figure 5.1 Mount Juliet Area Action Plan
Date: September 2021

Area Action Plan Boundary
1 Specific Objectives 1-12
Protected Views
Special Protection Area
Special Area of Conservation

Table 5.1: Mount Juliet Protected views	
View	**Description**
V1	From Mount Juliet House to Ballylinch Stud
V2	Approach from Thomastown gate towards Mount Juliet House and the Inch
V3	River valley from White bridge
V4	River valley from Ballylinch bridge

Table 5.2: Mount Juliet Site-specific Development Management Requirements	
Map Ref. 1	To protect and enhance Mount Juliet House (protected structure), its curtilage and attendant grounds and allow for its extension as appropriate.
2	To protect and enhance existing archaeological features: 2a Ecclesiastical Remains 2b Castle and Mansion 2c Enclosure 2d Enclosure
3	To protect and enhance the existing south western entrance to the estate, gate lodges, boundary walls and road frontage.
4	To protect and enhance the existing Thomastown entrance to the estate, gate lodges, boundary walls and road frontage.
5	To provide for the enhancement of the cricket pavilion facilities.
6 & 7	To provide for the enhancement and development of tourism, leisure and recreational facilities and related activities at appropriate locations within the estate, including the Hunters Yard and the Walled Garden, without detracting from the estate's built and natural heritage.
8	Provide for the extension of the upper car park at Hunters Yard (New Map Ref. 8)
9	Provide for an extension to the existing golf maintenance facility to include changing area and other associated staff uses. Provide for the development of a Golf Maintenance Facility to include changing area and other associated staff uses to the east of the service entrance to the Estate, subject to the capacity of the estate to absorb development without detracting from the estate's landscape character and built and natural heritage context (Relocated Map Ref. 9)
10	Provide for the development of 3 no. detached houses associated with the estate's sporting and recreational functions.
11	Provide for a house at the maintenance facility building associated with the estate's sporting and recreational facilities.
‾‾‾‾	Provide for estate maintenance/administration area at an appropriate location to replace existing maintenance facility building for the on-going management of the estate.
12	Provide for the development of 9 No. houses (8 No. 2 bed apartments and 1 No. 3 bed house) at the Golf Maintenance Yard subject to the capacity of the estate to absorb development without detracting from the estate's landscape character and built and natural heritage context. (Relocated map Ref. 12)

5.3.3   Woodstock

A Local Area Plan for Woodstock was first prepared in 2008 and extended in 2013 in anticipation of developing the estate. Under that plan no significant development occurred. A business plan was prepared for the Woodstock estate in 2018 (in conjunction with Coillte), which set out a vision of transforming Woodstock into a major tourism and recreation flagship project for the South East. It is a 10-year vision to transform Woodstock into a high-quality regional park as follows:

- Woodstock House & Gardens Visitor experience centred around the gardens and house & interpretation
- Woodstock Resort a 5-star glamping, lodge and recreational vehicle (RV) resort
- Inistioge village A carefully curated resort village experience with better parking, ground transportation, orientation, retail, accommodation, eating and drinking options plus interpretation of the village's rich history of monastic, trading and other themes.

Through the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructural Scheme (ORIS) works have been completed on upgrading the forest walks. Further work on opening up the Woodstock estate as a recreational amenity in conjunction with Coillte will be carried out over the coming years. Kilkenny County Council will consider development proposals for appropriately scaled forest-based tourism accommodation at Woodstock that is sensitive to the woodland environment and can ensure appropriate protection of the important natural, cultural and architectural features of Woodstock House and setting.

> **Objective**
>
> **5D   To implement the Woodstock Business Plan on a phased basis as resources permit subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.**

5.3.4   Camping/Glamping sites

The Council recognises that the provision of camping sites is an important element in the range of tourist accommodation offers. While the Council considers that camping sites should be located on appropriately zoned land within or adjacent to existing settlements, small scale camping sites and/or forest based tourism accommodation, may be appropriate in a rural location removed from any settlement where they support rural tourism initiatives developed upon rural enterprise, natural heritage assets and outdoor recreational activities. In general, camping sites should be located at appropriate locations within or adjacent to existing settlements where such proposals demonstrate the provision of safe pedestrian links to the settlement. Proposals for camping sites to complement a high potential tourism asset such as the Greenway, or other walking trails etc, should be located in existing settlements or at established centres which provide existing services to tourists, subject to the capacity of the site and the location to facilitate the proposal. The planning authority may facilitate proposals for camping sites which support rural tourism initiatives and which are located at a rural location removed from any settlement or high potential tourism asset, subject to the capacity of the site and the location to facilitate the proposal. The scale of any tourism accommodation will be determined by the nature and scale of the existing tourist attractions and/or the extent of existing

underutilised agricultural/commercial/ancillary building stock available for reuse for the purposes of tourist accommodation and ancillary services.

Proposals for the provision of standalone campervan facilities i.e. designated parking bays/electrical supply, within car parks, will be considered in terms of the availability of surplus car parking and the capacity of the site and the location to facilitate the proposal.

5.3.5   Outlook

Notwithstanding the severe impact COVID 19 has had on the tourism sector, Kilkenny County Council will continue to develop the tourism offering in Kilkenny focusing on;

- Developing and adding depth to Kilkenny's Tourism Experience by implementing the Orientation and wayfinding plan for Kilkenny through both approved Destination towns funding and other funding streams.
- Developing and delivering a unified tourist attraction at the Tholsel and Medieval Mile Museum.
- Developing a Visitor plan for the South East Greenway incorporating the Kilkenny Greenway.
- Supporting Butler Gallery to enhance the visitor experience at Evans Home.
- Seeking opportunities to expand the offering at Woodstock through the Woodstock/Inistioge business plan.
- Working with Kilkenny's Festivals and Events organisers to support Kilkenny's reputation as an international festival destination.
- Selecting, preparing and delivering ORIS, or equivalent, funding schemes across the County.
- Working with local communities and businesses to expand the tourism offering of County Kilkenny such as in the Lingaun Valley.
- Working with Kilkenny Tourism and Fáilte Ireland to support and further develop a Marketing and Public Relations Campaign to promote Kilkenny both nationally and internationally as a top-class tourist destination.
- Use the new Kilkenny – 'Best of Ireland' brand, the 'Outdoor Kilkenny' and 'Taste Kilkenny' brands and visitkilkenny.ie website to attract more visitors to Kilkenny.
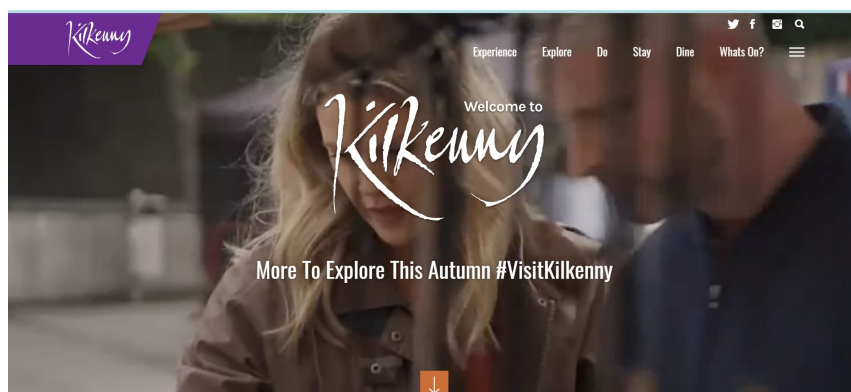
5.3.6 Tourism Objectives

Objectives

5E   Invest in public realm to create more multi-functional vibrant and inviting public spaces in urban areas and villages, which will greatly enhance the overall quality of place and act as a catalyst to stimulate private sector development. The public realm will be informed by the Kilkenny Access for All Strategy 2018-2021. The Council will ensure that the maintenance, cleanliness and animation of public spaces is manged in order to encourage visitors to dwell more in these spaces.

5F   Development of the Kilkenny Greenway as part of the South East Greenway in South Kilkenny.

5G   Development of the Waterford to Rosslare Greenway.

5H   Continue the development of projects for submission under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and other funding schemes (e.g. LEADER Programme).

The Council will continue the development of major flagship tourism projects within the county to enhance the tourism product and will develop Kilkenny City and County as a leading tourism destination through continued sustainable expansion of the tourism sector, with a focus on creating high-quality visitor services and the continued development and enhancement of visitor attractions and activities, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations.

5.4 Third Level Educational Facilities

Kilkenny County Council has proactively supported the case for the establishment of a multi-campus Technological University of the South East (TUSE). This is an objective of the *Local Economic & Community Plan* (LECP) (as per action 4.6), and has been prioritised by the Council's Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development, Tourism and Enterprise Supports. This has also been supported through appropriate objectives in previous development plans.

Technological Universities[4] were recommended by the National Strategy for Higher Education as a new type of university in Ireland. Internationally, a technological university (TU) (often called university of applied science) is a higher education institution operating at the highest academic level and specifically focused on career- and labour-market-oriented education, research and innovation. TUs will be formed by the amalgamation of existing Institutes of Technology. In the SE, Carlow (ITC) and Waterford Institutes of Technology (WIT) have come together to form a multi-campus Technological University of the South-East (TUSE). The aim of the TUSE is to create "*a new fully integrated entity, with physical campuses in Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, and Wexford, creating a different and better whole that will broaden and deepen the academic, research and engagement activities across the new unified institution, while ensuring a strengthened platform on which to build*

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[4] DES (2018, 24 January) TU Bill progress https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2018-press-releases/PR2018-24-01.html

an internationally recognised and nationally relevant Irish Technological University"[5]. A Project Office has been established by ITC and WIT and an application will be made to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research and Innovation in early summer 2021 for an order to establish the TUSE.

A joint venture between Kilkenny County Council, Waterford Institute of Technology (Telecommunications Software & Systems Group or TSSG) was successfully established on St Kieran's College campus previously which is a 3rd/4th level Research and Innovation unit. The centre focuses on next generation internet services and service innovation.

The Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence (PACE), was established in Kilkenny city through Waterford Institute of Technology with assistance from Kilkenny County Council. It is a new digital innovation hub in Kilkenny which will drive digital transformation of Europe's agri-food sector.
There is a convincing educational, social and economic case for locating tertiary/higher education and training provision in Kilkenny[6]. The proposal for a third level campus in Kilkenny aligns well with regional policy, especially as regards providing counterweights to Dublin, based on making the South-East region more attractive than it currently is. Leveraging the advantages of smart specialisation, which is based on maximising regional expertise for national and global competitiveness, would be essential. The proposal also aligns with government policy across education.

Objective

5I   **To secure the development of a third and/or fourth level campus(es) in Kilkenny as part of the development of a Technological University for the South East) and to encourage the fostering of links between industry and education within Kilkenny.**

5.5   Strategic Locations for Enterprise and Employment

A targeted evidence-based Plan led approach has been applied to identify a number of strategically important sites intended to attract specific employment sectors based on a number of variables such as; the strategic location of the sites within the County; the proximity of the sites to a critical mass of skilled workers and public transport and the level of critical infrastructure provision at each location. Within County Kilkenny there are two nationally and regionally important strategic locations for enterprise and employment. These are Kilkenny City and Belview Port[7] within the Waterford Metropolitan area which is in County Kilkenny. At a level below that, the four District Towns play an important role providing for local employment for their catchments and as drivers of development within the county. Notwithstanding Belview as a strategic location for employment the wider Waterford Metropolitan Area within County Kilkenny has potential as a strategic employment location.

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[5] TUSE website: https://www.tuse.ie/about/

[6] From Charter to Framework: The Case for Higher Education Provision in Kilkenny April 2018.

[7] The Belview Port Industrial area & IDA Lands are identified as a strategic location for the Waterford MASP -RSES page 338

This locational strategy of employment centres will help ensure a sustainable pattern of economic development across the county in both urban and rural areas. Strong quality of life and place-making attributes are critical components of the economic strategy, especially in attracting inward investment. The Government's 'Enterprise 2025 Strategy' highlights the importance of placemaking, noting that: "…*investment in the creation of 'place' is key to realising regional potential. Companies are attracted to invest in locations where they can access skills, where people will want to live and work and where the surrounding infrastructures are supportive of business investment and for people to live and work*"[8].

Kilkenny City, as a strategic location for economic development, is addressed in detail in Volume 2.

See Volume 2 Section 3 Economic & Retail Strategy

5.5.1   Belview Port

The Belview Port area is located approximately 5km downstream of Waterford City in the River Suir estuary. The Port at Belview is a strategic national, regional and county asset with good road and rail links. The Port is one of 5 ports of national significance within the terms of National Ports Policy 2013 and is classified as a comprehensive port on the EU's Ten-T network. The Port is active in bulk handling, break bulk/project cargoes and container handling (Lo-Lo[9]). The bulk side of the business is predominantly import and focussed on agri-inputs. The container operation supports a wide range of imports and regional exporters from the food, pharmaceutical and other sectors. The annual value of goods through the Port was estimated at €1.7 billion in 2017 with just under 1,000 jobs in, or supported by businesses in, the port zone.

The port is a significant economic facilitator with an important role to play in the economic development of the South East and further afield. To fulfil its role, the Port needs to be positioned to deliver the infrastructure and capacity required of it in a timely manner. The Port of Waterford Company is the commercial state company responsible for the operation and development of the Port and has prepared a masterplan setting out a strategic vision to position the Port as the preferred cargo gateway for the South East Region.

The Port has a significant industrial hinterland including the IDA's 55 ha Strategic Industrial landbank and the port has identified the need for further additional land and facilities to support port activity in the Master Plan. One of the main priorities for expansion in the Belview area is the attraction of FDI. The Belview area is dealt with in detail in the current Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan 2017.

The Council will support the development of the necessary port infrastructure and associated road and rail connectivity required for the development of the Port, to enhance the role of the Port as an Economic Driver for the South-East subject to the outcome of appropriate appraisal, environmental

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[8] Enterprise 2025 Ireland's National Enterprise Policy 2015-2025 https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Enterprise-2025-Summary-Report.pdf

[9] Lo-Lo is load on and load off.

assessments and the planning process. In support of infrastructure delivery, the Council will support the continued rollout of high-speed broadband to the Belview port area within the lifetime of the Plan.

Kilkenny County Council will work with Irish Water to ensure an adequate waste water treatment plant and distribution network to service the employment lands at Belview.

The Council will also support development of freight rail services and facilities at Belview for the Port to function effectively for the State and support modal shift to freight rail as part of wider climate action programmes.

The Council will support the Port of Waterford in the development of port facilities at Belview as outlined in its strategic masterplan[10].

> **Objective**
>
> **5J** To continue to work with Transport Infrastructure Ireland to finalise an approach for access to the zoned lands along the N29 at Belview (See Chapter 12 Transport objectives).

5.5.2 District Towns

The District Towns perform an important role in driving development in the County and have much potential that can be capitalised upon. Indigenous industry and SME's are important to these areas. Their strengths lie in their capacity to accommodate employment, residential and other functions on the basis of their comparative advantage in terms of lower costs and a quality of life which is attractive to many people. Each District Town (Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch[11] and Thomastown) has a statutory Local Area Plan.

> **Objectives**
>
> **5K** To ensure the sustainable development of the District towns in the County to achieve their target populations and enhance their capacity to attract new investment in employment, services and public transport for the benefit of their own populations and that of their rural hinterlands.
>
> **5L** To promote a diverse and sustainable local economy through the designation of sufficient lands for employment related uses, including facilities, to promote SME growth through the local area plans for the District towns.

5.5.3 Enterprise and Employment in Rural Areas

Rural areas have a vital contribution to make to the achievement of balanced regional development. This involves utilising and developing the economic resources of rural areas, particularly in agriculture

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[10] Port of Waterford Masterplan 2020 - 2044

[11] Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch LAP is a joint venture with Carlow County Council and will be adopted as a plan in 2021

and food, tourism, forestry, renewable energy, enterprise and local services, while at the same time capitalising on and drawing strength from vibrant neighbouring urban areas. In this way rural and urban areas are seen as working in partnership and complementing, rather than competing with each other. Rural development is addressed in detail in Chapter 7 of this plan. Certain kinds of industry, especially those which involve natural resources and serve rural communities may, at an appropriate scale, have a role to play in rural development.

5.6   Retail Strategy

The purpose of a Retail Strategy is to set out clear evidence-based policies and objectives in relation to retailing, in order to support competitiveness and choice whilst promoting the vitality and viability of town centres.

Having reviewed the performance of the retail strategy within the City & County Development Plans since it was introduced in 2002, it is considered that, given the scale of activity in County Kilkenny, the requirement for a broad assessment of the quantity of additional retail floorspace needed in counties over the lifetime of their strategy is not necessary to determine spatial allocation of future retail activity.   For this reason, the retail strategy carried out for the County (See Appendix A) does not contain a broad quantitative assessment of any potential requirement of retail space.

At the national level, the National Planning Framework (NPF) guides all development within Ireland until 2040. The NPF does not provide specific guidance on the national retail strategy, but provides broader guidance on achieving sustainable cities and communities, as well as regionally specific guidance to help promote growth and sustained development. The NPF contains strategic policies seeking to ensure the vitality and viability of Ireland's urban and rural places. Objective 6 relates to the role and function of urban places, highlighting the Government's ambition to regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages as environmental assets to ensure the resiliency and vitality of urban places. National Objective 11 sets out a presumption in favour of development that will encourage people, jobs and activity within existing urban places of all sizes. National Policy Objective 16 highlights the Government's intention of addressing vacancy rates in small town and village centres to reduce rural decline, and encourage the viability and vibrancy of rural areas.

The Southern *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (RSES) also recognises retailing as a "*key part of the regional economy employing significant numbers and is central to the life and vitality of our cities, towns and village centres*"[12].

The retail climate in Ireland and Kilkenny has become dominated by the impact of COVID-19. Whilst it is difficult at this stage to determine the extent of the impact, there is no doubt that the global pandemic will have a considerable effect on the Irish economy and on the way, we carry out our day to day business. It will be necessary to closely monitor the situation over the coming months and years in order for the Council to respond quickly to impacts as they arise.

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[12] Southern RSES, page 115

Pre Covid-19, the retail sector represented 12% of the country's GDP, and employed 280,000 employees[13]. Notwithstanding, and despite the impact of the economic recession and Brexit on the Irish economy, the retail sector was continuing to make a critical contribution to the Irish economy and employment prior to the outbreak of COVID-19.

There were 909 wholesale and retail businesses in County Kilkenny (in 2018), representing an increase of 20% since 2012. A large proportion of these businesses are independent traders, specialist boutiques and fashion stores located in the retail centre of Kilkenny City.

5.6.1 A Framework for Town Centre Renewal

The Framework for Town Centre Renewal is a document developed from working groups to cultivate strategies aimed at securing vibrant and resilient town centres through town centre renewal. At the centre of this goal, is the importance of the retail sector and its role in supporting town centres, communities and job creation.

It identifies the key attributes of successful towns, and provides an action plan and support for town centre renewal. The key driver of the framework's strategy is stakeholder engagement and a community-led approach to developing a bespoke town centre plan that aims to support its vitality and viability.

5.6.2 Trends in Convenience and Comparison Goods Retailing

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic so far has had varying effects on different types of retailers. Grocery and key services are seeing an increase in activity. DIY stores and garden centres have seemingly benefitted from the situation, with a spike in customers undertaking projects at home[14].

Meanwhile, many other retailers are struggling. While there is activity online, discretionary spending generally falls dramatically in difficult times. For the comparison goods market, the recurrent theme reported in the media and advised by specialist reports analysing retail trends, relates to the need for retailers to shift towards prioritising the customer experience. This relates to improving the customer experience of in-store shopping, by providing an environment to showcase the potential of products, thereby improving the experience of the product itself, and enhancing in-store experience[15].

Leisure is often considered a discretionary activity and, as such, consumer spending on leisure is greatly influenced by the economic climate and, in particular, average levels of disposable incomes. Leisure uses within this context include visiting restaurants, bars, cafes, arcades, cinemas and leisure centres. Consumers in Ireland have shown a growing desire to engage in leisure activities. The Central

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[13] Retail Consumer Report', PwC, March 2018

[14] In Ireland, although economic activity remains below pre-Covid-19 levels, the Chadwick's and Woodie's businesses have in recent months outperformed the prior year: Grafton Group half year results Aug 2020.

[15] 'How Does That Make You Feel', Kantar World Panel, September 2018

Statistics Office estimates that expenditure in this category has increased from 20.5% in 1980 to 33.6% in 2016[16].

5.1.2.1   Local Trends

During the course of 2018-19, a number of successive store closures in Kilkenny provoked public debate concerning the future of shopping in the city. This prompted news articles and discussion around how to support local businesses to ensure they succeed despite general retailing uncertainty[17]. The latest GeoView Commercial Property Report (for Q2 2020) reveals that the vacancy rate in County Kilkenny (at 12.4%) is below the national average of 13.5%, and is one of only 3 Counties to record a decrease, albeit marginal (at -0.2%) in the previous 12-months[18].

The debate is consistent with commentary and discourse at national level. Retailing has always been subject to change and that the main streets of towns and villages are constantly adapting and evolving as a result. While rates, rents, car parking restrictions and poor public realm are cited as reasons for shop closures, it is more likely to do with changing values and behaviour of consumers and in particular - online shopping[19]. Places that accept and plan for change will fare best. In response to the challenges faced by retail owners, Kilkenny County Council has put in place a number of supports including the Small Business Vacant Premises Scheme, and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) created a Retail Development Programme to assist retail owners to address the challenge they face in this fast-changing sector. Most recently, the Council has facilitated the establishment of a Kilkenny City Task Force.

5.6.3   Retailing in Local Area Plans

The Local Area Plans for Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown support and guide retail development in those District Towns.

The Callan Local Area Plan (2019) identifies Callan as having experienced an improvement in convenience retailing since 2007, but a decline in comparison floorspace in the same period. Callan reportedly had 522 sqm of vacant retail floorspace, down from 569 sqm in 2007 but up from 440 sqm in 2010.

The Castlecomer Local Area Plan (2018) recognises Castlecomer's classification as a small town in the retail hierarchy described in the Development Plan. The town's retail activity is generally centred on the Square, and is comprised predominantly of basic convenience shopping and lower order comparison shopping.

The soon to be published Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan 2021, identifies that the food and tourism sector could be enhanced to contribute further to the town's economic development.

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[16] Household Budget Survey 2015-2016', CSO Ireland, 2016

[17] During this time the impact of BREXIT was causing uncertainty.

[18] GeoView Commercial Property Report Q2 2020

[19] Sunday Independent, 4th November, 2018

The Thomastown Local Area Plan was adopted in 2019. The LAP identifies that food and food tourism are an important contributor to the local economy. There are a number of leisure trails, including a food trail, which supports the local food economy in the area.

The Ferrybank Belview Local Area Plan (2017) recognises the relationship between nearby Waterford City Centre and Ferrybank. The designated district centre has remained unoccupied for retailing since it was constructed in 2009. It currently houses a branch library and the Council Area Office.

Whilst at the current time Coronavirus dominates the retail news headlines, key to maintaining a strong economy post-pandemic will be retailers' ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Notwithstanding the increase in sales in some sectors (including grocery), COVID-19 is guaranteed to have major implications for most retailers.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and despite continued global uncertainty, shifting consumer patterns, and the continued rise of internet shopping, the Irish economy and the retail sector remained strong and competitive. In a market disrupted by continued changes in consumer behaviour, investing in the consumer experience is anticipated to be the key to success[20] in securing resiliency in retail stores moving forward. Kilkenny County is seeing the same shifting consumer patterns. Planning policy can play an important role in helping to future proof city, town and village centres against the ongoing uncertainty.

5.6.4   Retail Hierarchy

As expected, Kilkenny City sits at the top of the hierarchy as a major town centre/key/ county town. Ferrybank is included at the second tier as a district centre, the tier above the remaining District Towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown.

Tiers 4 and 5 are comprised of neighbourhood centres (defined) and small town/village centre/rural areas[21].

[20] Sunday Independent 4th Nov 2018 Article, Dr. Conor Skehan
21 A detailed evaluation was carried out as part of the County's Retail Strategy Review, see Appendix A

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Table 5.3 Retail Hierarchy	
Level/Retail Function	**Centre**
Level 1	Kilkenny City
Level 2 **District Centre**	Ferrybank District Centre
Level 3 **District/sub county town**	Callan Castlecomer Graiguenamanagh Thomastown
Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre	As designated for Kilkenny City & Environs (Newpark, Loughboy, Loughmacask, Western Environs) and Ferrybank/Belview area in the Environs of Waterford City (Ross Abbey)
Level 5 Small Town/village **centre/Rural Area**	Smaller towns and villages and nodes within the county.

5.6.5   Core Retail Areas

Kilkenny City is dealt with in detail in Volume 2.

See Volume 2 Section 3 Economic & Retail Strategy

5.6.5.1   District Towns

For the District Towns, in general the retail offer does not warrant a Core Retail Area in the same way that is appropriate for Kilkenny City. However, there is value in some form of designation for a retail area within the District Towns and that ideally, the focus for new retail development should be in that retail area. Figures 5.2 to 5.5 show the Core Retail Areas in the four District Towns.

5.6.6   Out of Centre Retail

Out of centre retailing is predominantly relevant to Kilkenny City, where there are a number of small out of centre retail locations. In addition, there is a large retail park on the outskirts and south of the city. The Kilkenny Retail Park is comprised of large units mostly for the sale of bulky goods.

In addition to the retail park, there are a number of local neighbourhood centres located within the bounds of Kilkenny that provide a supporting role to the retail and services offer of the City Centre. While these shops and services are important, their growth should continue to be carefully managed so as to ensure that they would never have the opportunity to compete with Kilkenny City Centre.
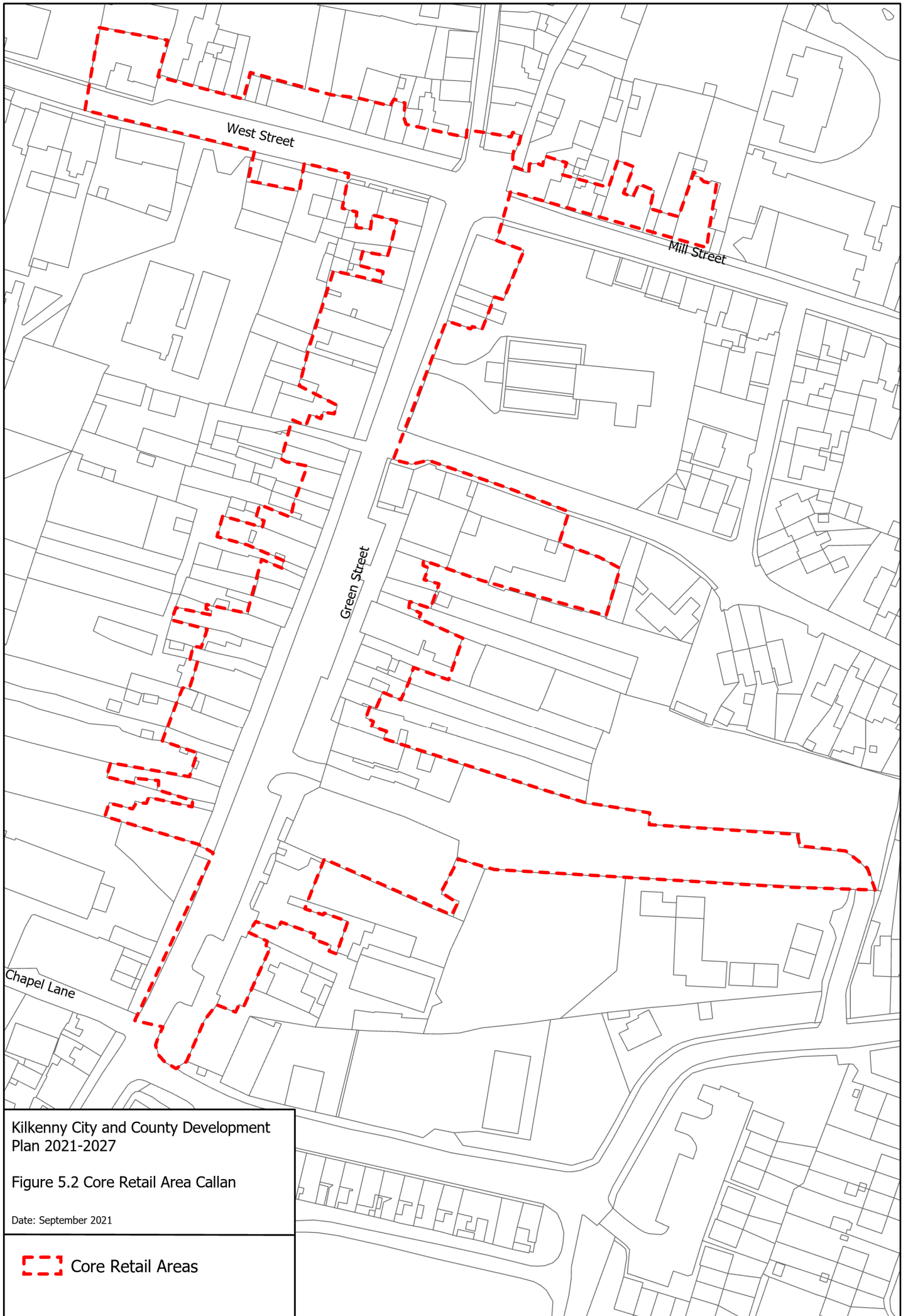
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 5.2 Core Retail Area Callan

Date: September 2021

Core Retail Areas

Chatsworth Street

The Square

Barrack Street

Market Square
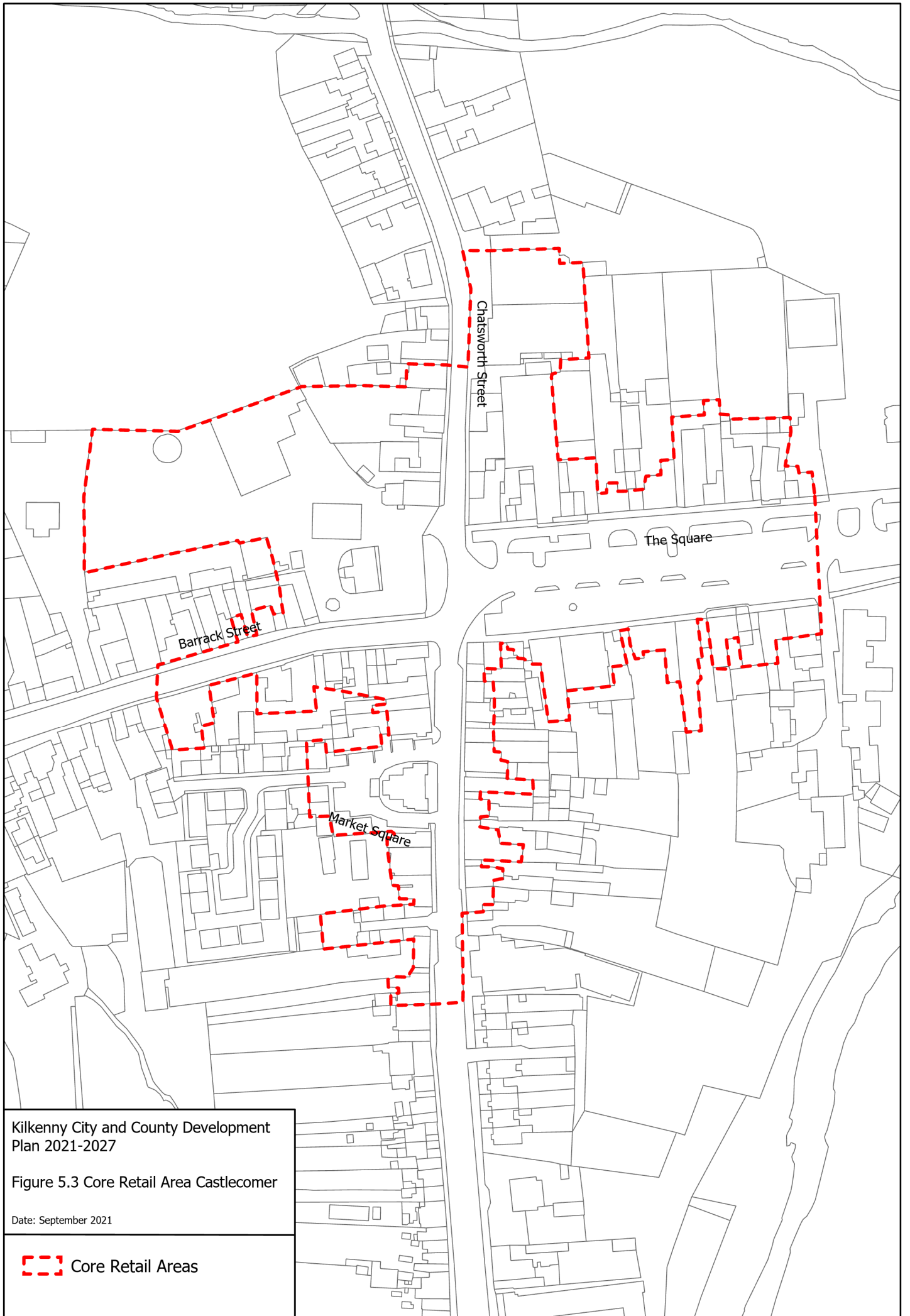
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 5.3 Core Retail Area Castlecomer

Date: September 2021

Core Retail Areas

Main St Upper

Mill Road

High Street

High Street

High Street

Main St Lower

The Quay
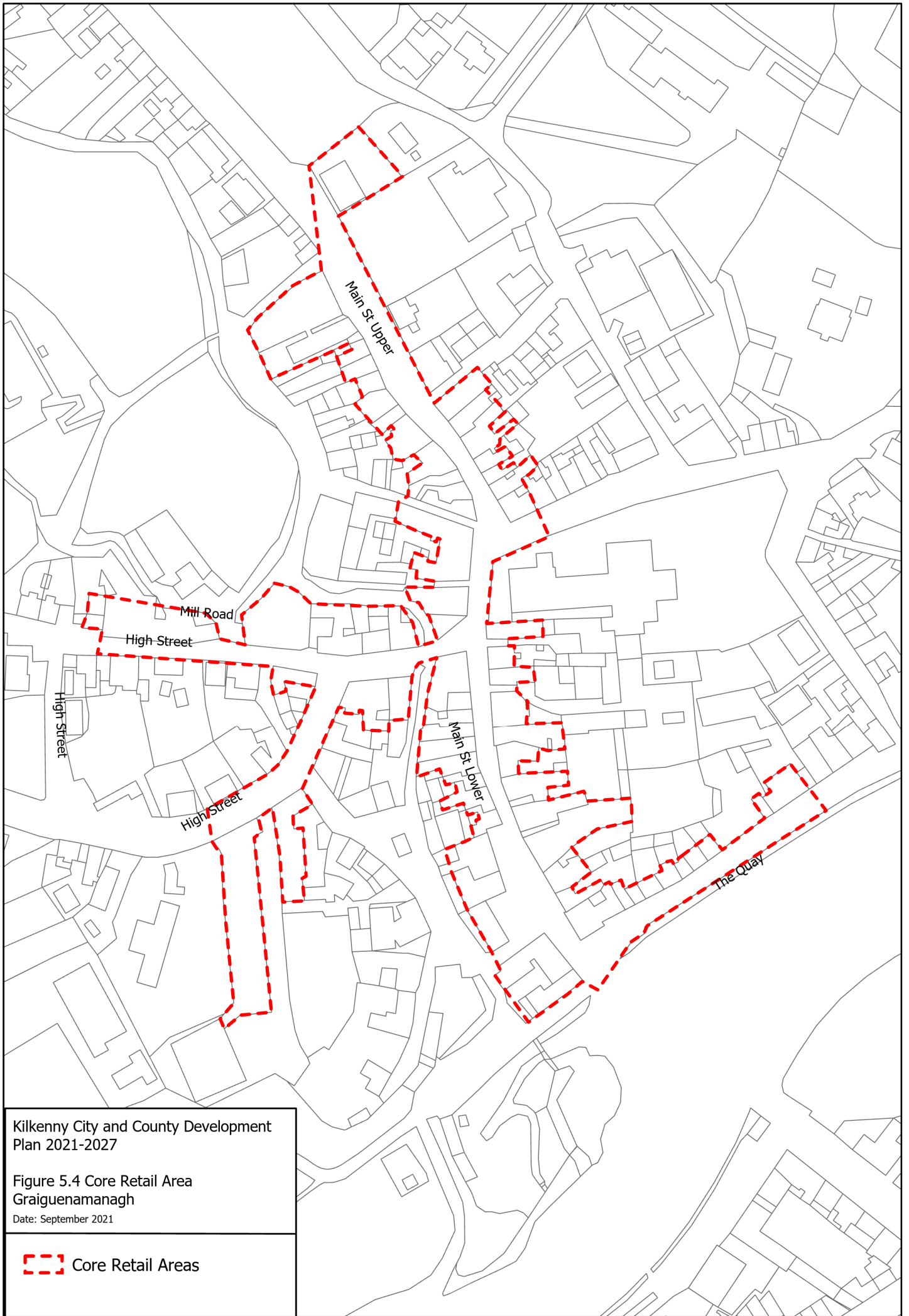
Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 5.4 Core Retail Area
Graiguenamanagh
Date: September 2021
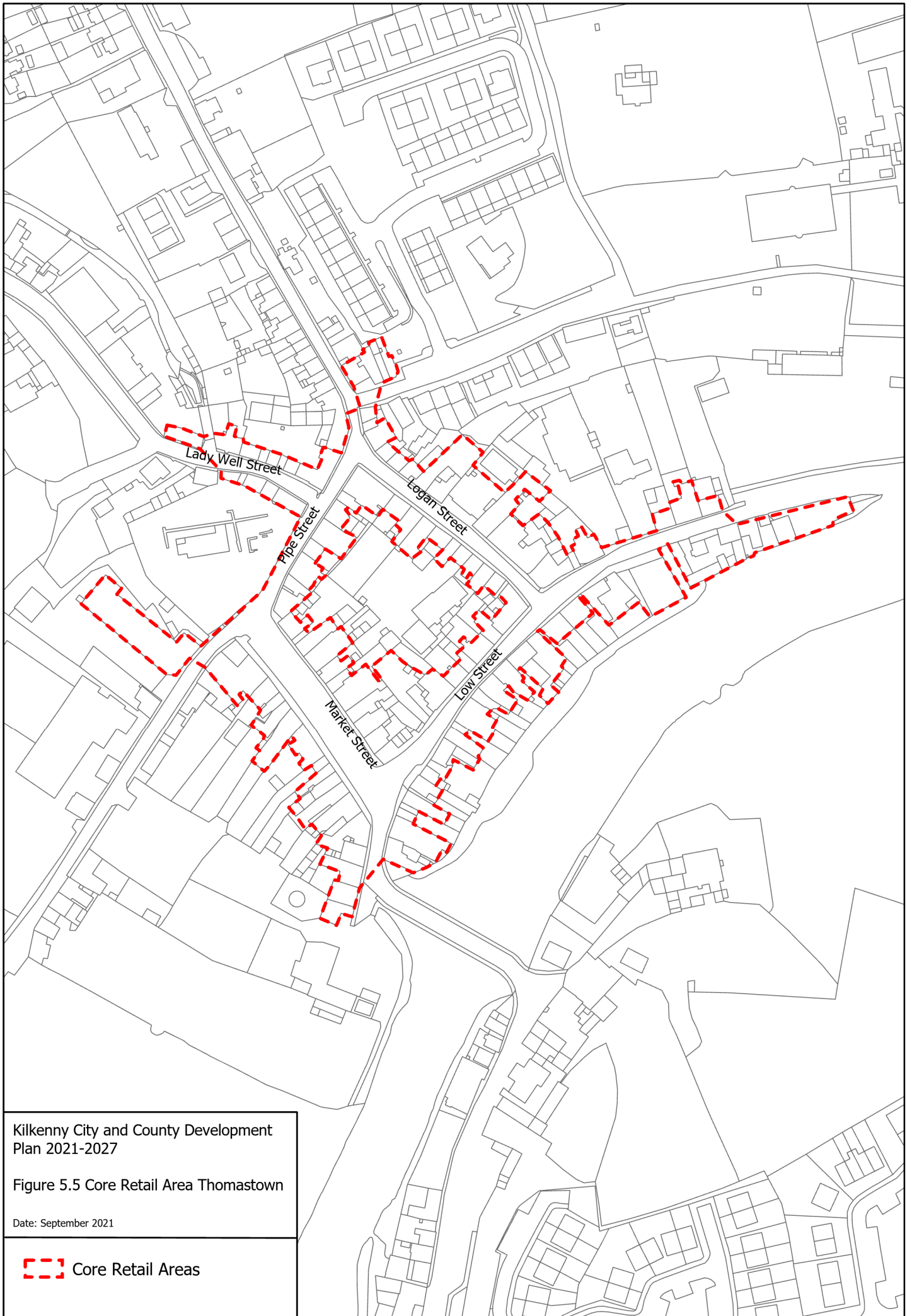
Core Retail Areas

Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 5.5 Core Retail Area Thomastown

Date: September 2021

Core Retail Areas

Lady Well Street

Pipe Street

Logan Street

Market Street

Low Street

The local centres within the bounds of Kilkenny include:
> • Newpark Shopping Centre (19 units);
>
> • Loughboy Shopping Centre (12 units);
>
> • Waterford Road (11 units);
>
> • Lidl on Johnswell Road;
>
> • Aldi at Hebron Industrial Estate

These local centre locations provide an important convenience goods offer and, in most cases, a limited range of services for local residents and should continue to be supported albeit given limited opportunity to expand.

5.6.7   Retail Objectives

5M	**To ensure that Kilkenny County possesses a clear policy framework that can adequately meet the retail needs of the County's residents over the plan period**
5N	**To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the four District Towns and their retail offer, and to support their continued growth in accordance with the Core Strategy**
5O	**To ensure all new development respect and enhances the historic environment**
5P	**To ensure that the synergies between tourism and retailing are taken advantage of**
5Q	**To improve the accessibility of each of the County's town centres and promote all sustainable modes of transport**
5R	**To enhance and promote the vitality and viability of Kilkenny City Centre, and to support the centre's role as the dominant retail destination within the County**
5S	**Promote Kilkenny City Centre as a shopping destination that is competitive with other comparable shopping destinations in the South East and further afield**
5T	**To promote a mix of uses within the County's centres, and, promote residential development on upper floors**
5U	**To ensure a town centre first approach is adopted for all future retail development across the County, whereby the order of priority for the sequential approach will be City and Town Centre sites first, then edge-of-centre sites, and then out-of-centre sites**
5V	**To encourage the reduction in vacant floorspace, taking into account suitability, obsolescence, and potential alternative uses that may be appropriate where possible**
5W	**To facilitate the regeneration and reuse of derelict buildings in appropriate locations for town centre uses and support the retention and maintenance of heritage premises and shopfronts**
5X	**To promote investment in Place-Making and high-quality public realm through new development, and the enhancement of existing public realm in the City as well as throughout the County's centres. The aim is to provide more attractive and vibrant urban centre and village locations, supporting retail activity and the wider commercial economy of our settlements and thereby increase footfall**
5Y	**Promote the adaptive reuse of existing units as a priority ahead of developing sites for additional retail floorspace, unless there is a demonstrated need**
5Z	**A joint Retail Strategy shall be undertaken between Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City and County Council for the area covered by the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) in accordance with the retail guidelines and RSES and to carry out the Joint or Multi-Authority Retail Strategy for the Waterford Metropolitan Area within 12 months of the coming into effect of this Plan**
5Aa	**To appropriately manage car parking and accessibility in the short term, whilst also planning for the transition to sustainable modes of transport looking ahead to a future where private vehicle travel may not be the dominant form of transport**

These retail planning objectives provide an overarching guide for the future of retail and town centre development. In adhering to these objectives, the goal of the Kilkenny City and County Retail Strategy 2021-2027, will be to encourage the growth of healthy, vibrant and resilient city and town centres.

5.6.8   Retail Policies

Having regard for the retail objectives outlined above, a set of retail policies have been drafted. In formulating and adhering to these policies, Kilkenny County Council will ensure that the development of all future retail floorspace is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the 2012 Retail Planning Guidelines, the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Policy 1: Plan-led approach

All proposals for retail floorspace and town centre uses, must accord with the relevant requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012 and the Kilkenny County Retail Strategy 2021-2027.

Policy 2: Retail hierarchy

Development in the County's centres should be of a type, size and scale appropriate to the centre, having due regard for the retail hierarchy and the appropriate level of development at each tier. The appropriate level of development at each tier is defined at Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Summary of Appropriate Level of Retail Development			
Tier	**Settlement Category**	**Settlement**	**Appropriate Level of Retail Development**
1	Cities	None at present	Major retail destination within the County, offering a wide variety of convenience and comparison goods along with an extensive offer of retail, financial and business, leisure services including arts and cultural facilities. Provides a range independent and specialist shops.
2	Large towns	Kilkenny City	Key shopping destination offering a variety of convenience and comparison goods, along with a range of retail and leisure services and some financial and business services.
3	Smaller towns and villages	Callan Castlecomer Graiguenamanagh Thomastown	Local shopping destination serving the surrounding hinterland with a limited offer of convenience and comparison goods, and retail and leisure services.
4	Smaller settlements and rural areas	Various	Limited retail offer generally comprising a local convenience store, public house, fuel filling station and post office.

Policy 3: Town centre vitality and viability

Within the Core Retail Areas in Kilkenny City and the District Towns, development proposals that will contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre will be permitted. Residential development will be encouraged on the upper floors of town centre properties.

Policy 4: City/Town centre first

In addition to the sequential approach outlined in the Retail Planning Guidelines, Kilkenny County Council will adopt a City/Town centre first policy. Where the location of a proposed retail development is in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location, a sequential test must be applied in line with the Retail Planning Guidelines. The order of priority for the sequential approach is to locate retail development in Kilkenny City Centre CRA, the District Town Centre CRAs and village centres, and only to allow retail development in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations where all other options have been exhausted. The sequential test should be strictly applied and applicants will be required to consider altering their formats and considering smaller sites and multi-storey options. In accordance with RPO 151(f) and (g) of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, adequacy of parking provision at non-residential sites will not be considered as a measure for site suitability in sequential tests.

Where retail development at an edge-of-centre site is being proposed, permission will only be granted where the applicant can demonstrate that there are no sites or potential sites including vacant units within the city/town/village centres that are (a) suitable (b) available and (c) viable, as defined at Paragraph 4.4.2 of the Retail Planning Guidelines.

Where no town centre or edge of centre sites are available, the Planning Authority must not approve development unless it is satisfied that there will be no negative impact on the viability or vitality of the city/town centre. Where retail development at an out-of-centre site is being proposed, the site will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate that:

a) there are no sites or potential sites either within, or on the edge of, Kilkenny City Centre, the District Town Centres and village centres that are (a) suitable (b) available and (c) viable; and
b) they would contribute towards and support the achievement of compact growth and revitalisation/rejuvenation of city or town centre as envisaged in objectives 3c, 4 and 6 of the National Planning Framework in order to allow a positive presumption in favour of the application under NPO 11 of the NPF.

Policy 5: Retail Impact Assessment

A Retail Impact Assessment will be required for development which features:
a) Proposals of greater than 1,000 sq. m of net floorspace in Kilkenny city, including extensions to existing units; or
b) Proposals of greater than 500 sq. m of net retail floorspace in all other settlements, including extensions to existing units.

As described at Paragraph 4.9 and Annexe 5 of the Retail Planning Guidelines, the Retail Impact Assessment shall at a minimum include the following:

(i) Identification of catchment or study area;

(ii) Estimation of expenditure available within the defined catchment or study area;

(iii) Estimation of the turnover of existing centres within the catchment area which is likely to be affected by a new development;

(iv) Estimation of the turnover of the new development for which a planning application is being lodged; and

(v) Estimation of the quantum of consumer retail spending available in the catchment area which will be diverted from existing centres to the new retail development.

In addition to the above, the Retail Impact Assessment shall demonstrate how the development proposal would contribute towards and support the achievement compact growth and revitalisation/rejuvenation of city or town centres as envisaged in objectives 3c, 4 and 6, 11 and 27 of the National Planning Framework.

Policy 6: Kilkenny City Centre

In order to ensure the retail function, profile and competitiveness of Kilkenny City is retained, applications for retail development and other town centre uses that will make a contribution to retaining Kilkenny's role as the dominant retail destination within the County will be supported.

Retail development and other main town centre uses should be prioritised to be located within Kilkenny's Core Retail Area to ensure the vitality and viability of the historic core is protected and promoted. Similarly, it is of great importance to ensure that the historic character of the Core Retail Area is protected. An important balance must be struck between creating a dynamic and commercially successful retailing environment and an attractive historic setting. Proposals that incorporate improvements to the City's laneways will be supported by the Council, particularly where involving creative solutions designed to activate redundant spaces.

Policy 7: Town centre accessibility

Improvements to the accessibility of each of the centres will be supported. In particular, proposals that include developing a pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment, and/or improve safety and limit traffic congestion will be prioritised. Wherever possible, development that encourages a shift towards sustainable modes of transport will be encouraged.

Policy 8: High quality public realm

Development proposals that incorporate improvements to public realm within town centres, and particularly within the Core Retail Areas, shall be supported by the Council.

Policy 9: Historic environment

Development within each of the centres should be designed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 9 Heritage.

Policy 10: Amalgamation of units

The Council may accept proposals for the amalgamation of two or more units within a centre where the applicant can demonstrate:

a) There is no alternative vacant unit of an appropriate size and location for the proposal; and

b) The proposal would not detract from the overall vitality and viability of the centre; and

c) Where relevant, the proposal has been designed using appropriate conservation principles and expertise (See Chapter 9 Heritage), thereby retaining the building in use and maintaining the essential character of the streetscape.

Policy 11: Traffic and Transport Assessment
Applications for retail development proposals for more than 1,000 sq. m net floorspace shall be required to submit a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA). As required by the Retail Planning Guidelines, the TTA must examine the transport impacts of a proposed development, incorporating any subsequent measures necessary to ensure roads and junctions and other transport infrastructure, including car parks, in the vicinity of the development are adequate to accommodate the proposed development without causing additional delays or issues to existing and future road based traffic. Most importantly, a TTA will be required to demonstrate how to encourage a shift towards sustainable travel modes by those using the retail development in question.

Policy 12: Tourism, Markets and Events
Development proposals within the County's centres that seek to improve the tourism offer will be supported. Tourism proposals should contribute to improving a positive public perception. Proposals that form a link between tourism and the offer of the town centre will be looked upon favourably by the Council. Similarly, markets and public events that are expected to have a positive influence on public perception of a centre will be supported. Within Kilkenny City Centre, proposals that would make a positive contribution to the function of the Medieval Mile will be supported.

Policy 13: Retail Parks
No further retail parks will be granted permission in and around Kilkenny City and Environs over the period of this City and County Development Plan.

Policy 14: Significant Retail Locations
In line with the sequential approach to retail developments the first-choice location for significant retail development is the Abbey Quarter and McDonagh Junction. The Mart site can be considered following completion of the masterplan exercise required by Objective C2E.

Policy 15: Joint Retail Strategy
In co-operation with Waterford City and County Council, develop a mechanism and deliverable timelines to carry out a joint Retail Strategy with Waterford City and County Council for the area covered by the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) in accordance with the Retail Guidelines and Waterford MASP policy Objective 19 of the RSES within 12 months of the coming into effect of this Plan.

6   Housing and Community

Strategic Aim: To develop and support vibrant sustainable communities in an attractive living and working environment where people can live, work and enjoy a high quality of life, with access to a wide range of community facilities and amenities, while ensuring coordinated investment in infrastructure that will support economic competitiveness.

6.1   Housing

Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives. The delivery of housing in the appropriate location and the creation of sustainable communities requires not only economic development, but also provision of and access to education, health and community support services, amenities and leisure services and a good quality-built environment.

The availability and supply of housing to meet the required demand is a critical element in maintaining the competitiveness of the County and its attractiveness as a place to live and invest.

Placemaking, compact growth, active land management, and addressing the impact of climate change are some of the key themes of both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The Council's role is to formulate a planning policy for housing, consider planning applications for private housing, ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to meet the projected housing demand and provide houses or facilitate the provision of social and affordable housing for those unable to house themselves. The County Council is both the housing authority and the planning authority. In these roles it has the capacity to influence the supply, location and scale of new housing within its functional area.

The Council's core objective in relation to the provision of housing is to ensure that every household has accommodation suitable to their needs, located in a suitable environment, at a price or rent it can afford.

The Settlement Strategy outlined in Chapter 4 has taken cognisance of these themes and will support the implementation of the National and Regional Strategic Outcomes and Policy Objectives for population and settlement growth set out in the NPF and RSES.

6.2   The Making of Place

The National Strategic Outcomes in Chapter 1 and the National Policy Objectives in Chapter 2 of the NPF set a Framework to make our cities, towns and villages the places where many more people choose to live, as well as to work and visit, by 2040[1].

It is the policy of the Council to make our city, and the towns and villages within the County more attractive and 'liveable' places that will offer a quality of life that more people are willing to choose in the years ahead.

There are also critical links between the quality of urban place-making and business investment/job creation. Place-making is identified as a key differentiator in *Enterprise 2025, Ireland's National Enterprise Policy 2015-25*. It is a priority of the enterprise strategy to "*realise the full potential of our regions through investments in place-making – developing places that are attractive for business investment and for people to live and work*"[2].

An important policy of the Council is to revitalise our towns and villages and spaces through creative and regenerative place-making, to assist in the delivery of compact growth. The Council is embarking on a significant programme of town and village renewal works throughout the County under the Town and Village renewal schemes. These schemes will assist in improving the quality of the public realm and assist in the making of Place.

> **Strategic Objectives**
>
> **6A**   **To ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.**
>
> **6B**   **To secure, through the application of Development Management Requirements within the Plan, the making of quality urban spaces embodying inclusive and universal access design principles for our building stock, public realm, amenities and transport services.**
>
> **6Ba**   **To ensure that people are at the centre of all placemaking activities. To ensure that co-design and participatory processes are used to engage people in shaping their built environment, with a particular focus on supporting harder to reach communities to take part in public engagement processes.**

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[1] Government of Ireland, *National Planning Framework*, 2018, page 54

[2] Enterprise 2025 Renewed Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation March 2018 page vii

Note: Project Ireland 2040, and the National Development Plan 2018-2027, are key instruments to realise the potential of our regions. All Government Departments align their capital expenditure to realise the ambition set out in Project Ireland 2040 and to achieve the desired outcomes over the coming decade

6.3   Sustainable Community

The creation of sustainable communities is an overarching aim of this plan. The Council seeks to support thriving communities and provide access to a wide range of household types, age groups and tenures with community facilities. Sustainable Communities and place making are key entities in creating attractive places for people to invest, live, work and visit.

Where Camphill communities have developed, the Council seeks to support the development of inclusive neighbourhoods, community led housing and social enterprise and promote the integration of a wide range of household types and people with varying degrees of support needs.

6.4   Housing strategy/Housing Needs Demand Assessment

As part of the preparation of the Housing Strategy, see Appendix B, a Housing Needs Demand Assessment was undertaken to inform key decisions on housing need and supply.

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that housing strategies be drawn up by planning authorities and integrated into their development plans.

The housing strategy shall:

a) Include an estimate of, and provision for, the existing need and the likely future need for housing in the area covered by the development plan. The Planning Authority shall ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned in its development plan for residential use (or for a mixture of residential and other uses), to meet the requirements of the housing strategy and to ensure that a scarcity of such land does not occur at any time during the period of the development plan.

b) Take into account the need to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income, and for those in need of social or affordable housing in the area. A housing strategy shall therefore provide that as a general policy a specified percentage, not being more than 10% of the land zoned in the development plan for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for social and/or affordable housing.

c) 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.

d) Counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds. The Planning Authority may indicate in respect of any residential area that there is no requirement for social/affordable housing in respect of that area, or that a lower percentage than that specified in the housing strategy may instead be required.

The needs of various groups, including the homeless, travellers and the elderly are addressed as part of the Housing Strategy. A Housing Strategy has been prepared for the period 2021 - 2027 for Kilkenny City and County. This Strategy is incorporated into the Development Plan in Appendix B. The principal features to emerge from the analysis presented in this housing strategy are as follows:

- Based on the *Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework*[3] and the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy,* for the period 2016 to 2027, housing provision for a total of 4,307 new households will be required to meet the population targets set for County Kilkenny.

- The existing local authority waiting list is c.1,988[4], a decrease of 888 (30%) from 2010

- The availability of zoned land is not expected to act as a constraint over the course of the Development Plan 2021– 2027

It is the view of the Planning Department that the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 in relation to any particular site should be incorporated into any development proposal at an early stage in the development process. The Council will therefore require housing developers to whom the 10% requirement will apply to discuss the likely terms of Part V agreements at pre-planning consultations. Both the Council and the developer would thus have a common understanding of the nature of the likely agreement before detailed designs are prepared for any planning application.

Conditions attached to planning permissions for residential development will require developers to enter into an agreement with the Council in relation to the provision of social and affordable housing in accordance with the housing strategy.

The Housing Strategy also identified that there will be a requirement for a greater mix of unit types due to an increase in the number of single persons requiring accommodation.

The various options for compliance are set down in the Section 96(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The following preferred options are available to satisfy the requirements of the housing strategy, **in descending order of preference** of Kilkenny County Council –

Option 1
Build and transfer to the ownership of the planning authority, or persons nominated by the authority, of a number of housing units on the site subject to the planning application (section 96(3) paragraph (b)(i)).

Provision of units within the proposed development is the preferred Part V solution. Units should be spread throughout the scheme insofar as possible, and delivered in accordance with any proposed phasing of development.

Housing Unit types and sizes must be agreed with Kilkenny County Council Housing Section at pre-planning stage. Details of social housing need in the relevant areas can be supplied to developers on request.

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[3] Government of Ireland, *Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework,* 2018
[4] Housing Section, April 2020.

Option 2
Transfer, to the ownership of the planning authority, of a part or parts of the land subject to the planning application (section 96(3) paragraph (a)). This land may be fully or partially serviced by the Developer.

Option 3
Transfer to the ownership of the planning authority, or persons nominated by the authority, of housing units on any other land in the functional area of the planning authority (section 96(3) paragraph (b)(iv)).

This would be subject to units being deemed suitable by Kilkenny County Council. Second hand houses are not the preferred option, new houses in a turnkey condition are preferred.

Option 4
Grant a lease of housing units to the Council either on the site subject to the application or in any other area within the functional area of the planning authority (section 96(3) paragraph (b)(iva)). This option of leasing units might only be considered where the development consists of apartments only, but it is not a preferred solution.

An agreement that provides for a combination of options 1-4 above can also be entered into.

The Council will continue to meet social and affordable housing needs in the towns, villages and rural areas of the county in a balanced way avoiding over-concentration in any one particular area.

The Council recognises the important role played by the voluntary sector in meeting social housing need and will support and facilitate the expansion of that role.

The Council will seek to meet the increased demand for social and affordable housing in a number of ways as a housing authority through,

- the sale of sites scheme,
- the Voluntary Housing Sector and the Rental subsidy scheme,
- the capital assistance scheme,
- Housing Aid for Older People Grant
- Housing Adaptation Grant for a Person with a Disability
- Mobility Aids Grant Scheme and other measures,
- the Homeless Forum initiative, and
- Travellers Accommodation programme

6.5   Travellers

A review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme took place in accordance with Section 17 (1) (a) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. The *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 -2024* was adopted by Kilkenny County Council on September 21st 2019 and outlines the approach to provision of Traveller accommodation and the provisions for same are set out in Appendix B, Housing Strategy.

6.6   Vacant Site Levy

A vacant site levy was established under the Urban Regeneration & Housing Act 2015. This levy is a site activation measure, to ensure that vacant land in urban areas is brought into beneficial use. At the passing of this Act, the Minister stated the levy is a "visible demonstration of the Government's commitment to tackle reasons why so many key sites that are suitable for development are not coming forward at a time of such a major need for housing".

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act set out two broad categories of vacant land that the levy may apply to:

> i) Lands zoned primarily for residential purposes
> ii) Lands in need of regeneration

The Levy is an integral part of the development planning process to incentivise the development of vacant or idle sites identified by planning authorities as "regeneration land" or "residential land", with a view to bringing such sites into beneficial use. It can be imposed by planning authorities under certain conditions in designated areas where sites remain vacant and site owners/ developers fail to bring forward reasonable proposals, without good reason, for the development/reuse of such property in line with the provisions of the relevant local area or development plan.

The Council will examine lands within the City and County, as appropriate as part of its active land management strategy for the purposes as set out in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, in relation to the Vacant Site Levy. The Vacant Sites Register is reviewed on an annual basis (See Section 4.2.1 also).

Objectives

6C   To promote the redevelopment and renewal of areas identified having regard to the core strategy, that need regeneration, in order to prevent—

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

The levy may be applied to all identified 'Regeneration' land and 'Residential' land in existing land use zonings. Land in the residential category must be served by the public infrastructure and facilities to enable housing to be provided and serviced. In particular, the areas covered by the following zoning objectives are considered to constitute regeneration land:

- **General Business**
- **Mixed Use**
- **Urban Village**
- **Business, Industry and Technology Parks/Business Park**
- **Community Facilities**

Other regeneration zonings may be identified in relevant Local Area Plans.

6D   To identify vacant sites where appropriate zoning applies and maintain a Vacant Sites Register in the plan area for the purpose of the Vacant Site Levy.

6.7   Residential Development

The Core Strategy as set out in Chapter 4 outlines the range of settlements within the county and the housing required. The provision of additional housing throughout the county offers an opportunity to deliver new development of the highest physical and environmental quality that contributes to the achievement of more sustainable communities and balanced regional development.

In continuing to facilitate an increase in the number of houses the Council must ensure that it achieves quality in terms of single rural houses as well as quality in urban areas of the county. It must also ensure that there is choice in terms of location and the tenures available.

Designers of single houses are referred to the *County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide*[5] prepared and published by the Planning Department.

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[5] Kilkenny County Council, *County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide*, 2007

Quality in the context of urban development means the development of a high quality built environment through the promotion of high quality urban design. The Council will have regard to and apply the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* and its companion document *Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide*[6], in assessing and dealing with housing developments.

In general, new residential development in smaller towns and villages will be required to take cognisance of the prevailing scale and pattern of development in the area and be of a design, layout, character and scale which fits well with the town or village involved and presents a high-quality living environment.

Further details of the standards and requirements for residential developments are set out in Chapter 13, Requirements for Development. This means that it is necessary to tailor the scale, design and layout of housing in rural towns to ensure that a suburban or high density urban approach is not applied to a rural setting and that development responds to the character, scale and density of the town (NPF 18(a))[7].

6.8   Universal Design

People of diverse abilities should be able to use buildings and places comfortably and safely, as far as possible without special assistance. People should be able to find their way easily, understand how to use building facilities such as intercoms or lifts, and know where pedestrian facilities are, and know where they may encounter traffic.

Given the wide diversity of the population, a universal design approach, which caters for the broadest range of users from the outset, can result in buildings and places that can be used and enjoyed by everyone. That approach eliminates or reduces the need for expensive changes or retrofits to meet the needs of particular groups at a later stage.

In all development proposals it will be the policy of the Council to promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in accordance with best practice and the policies and principles contained in *Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach*[8] and *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*[9] and its companion document *Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide*[10] and the '*Strategic Plan for Housing Persons with Disability*'[11].

6.9   Housing Objectives

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[6] Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide, 2009

[7] National Policy Objective 18a page 73

[8] National Disability Authority, *Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach*, 2012

[9] Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*

[10] Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide*

[11]   https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Publications/Council_Publications/Kilkenny-Strategic-Plan-for-Housing-People-with-a-Disability-2016-2020.html

Objectives

6E	**To implement the provisions of the Housing Strategy contained in Appendix B.**
6F	**To require 10% of the land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, be made available for the provision of social housing.**
6G	**To require that a mixture of residential unit types and sizes are developed to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households within the city and county.**
6H	**To implement the provisions of the Traveller Accommodation programme 2019-2024 and any updates thereof.**
6I	**To ensure that all new housing developments and developments for renewal which includes housing, includes a mix of house types with universal design so as to provide for an aging population.**
6J	**To ensure the widest possible range of housing options in each new development and to prevent the proliferation of limited option house types in any particular area.**
6K	**To seek that all new private residential developments on zoned lands in excess of 20 residential units provide for a minimum of 10% units that can be converted to Universal Design standards in accordance with the requirements of the 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design' developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (National Disability Authority).**
6Ka	**Acknowledge and support Community-Led Housing as a means of empowering communities to meet their specific housing needs affordability and collectively.**

6.10 Housing Development Management Requirement

- **To ensure that all new housing applications give effect to the housing objectives and policy and accord with the requirements for development as set out in Chapter 13 of Volume 1.**

6.11 Local Economic and Community Plan

The Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (LECP) is an integrated statutory plan that is reviewed and adopted by the Council every 6 years. The County Development Plan informs the content of the LECP, and the content of the LECP must be consistent with the Development Plan. In this regard, both plans are interdependent in setting out the strategic vision for the economic growth of the County, accompanied by supporting policies and objectives to be employed in securing this vision.

The purpose of the LECP is therefore to identify objectives and implement actions to strengthen and develop both the economic and community dimensions of the County over a six-year period. The objective of the County Kilkenny LECP is to further the promotion of economic development, and the promotion of local and community development.

The Development Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plan effectively operate along parallel and supportive lines. The LECP provides a supporting framework for economic and local community development, whereas the County Development Plan provides an overarching strategy and statutory policy support for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County at a spatial level.

The current LECP contains numerous actions to enhance economic and community development. A new LECP will be commenced in 2021.

> **Objective**
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> **6L   To continue to promote and facilitate the delivery of the objectives and actions set out in the *Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021* (or any subsequent replacement).**

6.12 Community Facilities

Community facilities are essential to the well-being and functioning of populated areas. These facilities include health clinics, hospitals, schools, churches, shopping facilities, libraries, community halls and burial grounds.

The primary role of the Planning Authority is to reserve sufficient lands within the settlement centres to meet likely future demands for community infrastructure. A recurring problem with respect to the provision of this infrastructure is its timely provision in conjunction with new housing. The Council will reserve sites for community facilities as appropriate and seek to remedy deficiencies in existing developed areas. The Council will locate community facilities within existing settlements and where population levels warrant a particular service, and will liaise with community groups and to assist community initiatives subject to the availability of resources.

The preferred option for the Planning Authority is for new and existing buildings to facilitate and provide for a range of compatible community uses. The Planning Authority will investigate opportunities for multi-purpose use to ensure that communities are best served without duplication of effort. It is important that the greatest possible use of a building is made, thereby providing community and leisure facilities close to the areas where they are needed. The Council will ensure that, where practicable, community, recreational and open space facilities are clustered, with the community facilities being located in local centres or combined with school facilities as appropriate. Community facilities should be located close to or within walking distance of housing, accessible to all sectors of the community and facilitate multi-use functions through their design and layout.

6.13 Education & Childcare

6.13.1 Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare and early education facilities is recognised as a strategic piece of social infrastructure required to enhance children's early learning experiences and enable people to participate more fully in society, particularly in accessing employment, education and social networks. National policy on childcare facilities is set out in *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities[12]*. Government planning policy on childcare is to improve the quality of childcare services for the community. The primary role of the Planning Authority is to facilitate childcare facilities in appropriate locations to high development standards. The Guidelines identify appropriate locations for childcare facilities including in the vicinity of concentrations of work places, of schools, of neighbourhood, district and town centres and adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

Kilkenny Council has worked with the Kilkenny County Childcare Committee, to improve the quality, provision and affordability of childcare in the city and county, and will continue to work with the County Childcare Committee in responding to the changing needs of society in terms of childcare demand and services.

The Planning Authority will ensure that any new facilities are suitably located, are of a high quality and are inclusive of all children, including children with disabilities. Developers are encouraged to liaise with the County Childcare Committee in advance of preparing planning applications in order to ascertain the local requirements. In so far as possible, the provision of childcare and early childhood education facilities should be adjacent to, or co-located with, other facilities required for other community use.

The Council will facilitate the provision of childcare and early childhood education facilities in a sustainable manner in appropriate locations which include the following: larger new housing estates, industrial estates and business parks, in the vicinity of schools, neighbourhood and district centres and adjacent to public transport facilities.

The Council will assess, in conjunction with the Kilkenny County Childcare Committee and the Local Community Development Committee, the continuing needs around childcare and related facilities and review progress on the provision of same during the period of this Plan.

6.13.1.1 Childcare Development Management Requirements

The Council will implement the *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. Where a large housing development is proposed, i.e. seventy-five houses or more the planning authority will require the provision of a purpose-built unit for childcare on the site which shall have regard to the existing level of childcare provision in the area. The Council will operate this requirement in a flexible manner.

In general, childcare facilities will be assessed on the following:

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[12] Department of Environment and Local Government, *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities,* 2001.

- The suitability of the site/premises for the type and size of facility proposed, taking into consideration the effects on the existing amenities of the area.
- Adequacy of vehicular and pedestrian access and parking provisions, which may be required to include satisfactory and safe collection/drop-off areas where appropriate, for both customers and staff where it is merited by the scale of the development and the resultant intensity of vehicular movements.
- Provision of an adequate outdoor play area within the curtilage of all full day care facilities. This outdoor play area shall be located to have minimum impact on the amenity of surrounding properties, particularly in residential areas and should also be separate from car parking and service areas.
- The design of the structure and capability of it being assimilated satisfactorily in to the built environment.
- Ease of accessibility for all.

Applications for crèches, playschools and pre-school facilities shall comply with the *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Child Care (Pre-School Services)(No. 2) Regulations 2006 and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 and We Like This Place - Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities (2005) (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted) and shall be accompanied with information in relation to details of the proposed opening times, proposed number and age range of children, proposed number of staff, internal floor areas devoted to crèche, excluding areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas, details of external play areas and car parking arrangements for both parents and staff.

6.13.2 Primary and Post Primary

Census 2016 results show that the County's population increased by 3,813 from 2011 (4%) to 99,232 persons. It is notable that persons in the 0-14 age cohorts has also increased, which has implications for the need for educational facilities. The 2016 Census recorded similar results for Kilkenny City, the level of population increased by 8.52% to 26,512 persons, which was an increase of 2,083 since 2011. The age cohort of 0-14 increased by 488 persons (10%) during this intercensal period.

Decisions on the future requirements for educational facilities are primarily a matter for the Educational Authorities. However, the *Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities*[13] outlines that the planning system plays a critical role in anticipating future development and co-coordinating the provision of the essential supporting infrastructure such as transport, water services, schools, amenity and community facilities.

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[13] Depts of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Education and Science, *Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities*, 2008

The primary role of the Council is to reserve sufficient land within the identified development centres to meet likely future demands for community facilities including education. The provision of educational facilities should be planned and implemented in concert with residential development. In accordance with *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*[14] no significant residential development should proceed without an assessment of the capacity of existing schools or the provision of new school facilities in tandem with the development. **The Council will continue to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills, and all providers of education, to assist in the development of adequate education centres.**

Where new schools are required, they should be located close to, or within, the main residential areas of the village or town so that as many children/students as possible can walk or cycle to school. The opportunity should be taken to locate the schools so that they naturally contribute to the development of a sense of community in new neighbourhoods. Where possible, these schools should be served by a dedicated and safe footpath and cycle-way network.

In Kilkenny City, new schools are planned in the emerging neighbourhoods of the Breagagh Valley and Loughmacask. Two new secondary schools are currently at design stage as part of the development of the Breagagh Valley neighbourhood (See Volume 2, Chapter 6). A site has also been reserved for a new primary school at this location.

In the Loughmacask neighbourhood, a site has been reserved for a new secondary school to facilitate the relocation of the CBS secondary school from James's street.

The Council will support the intensification of development and/or uses on existing school sites while maintaining sufficient space for required minimum standards of play and recreational facilities.

> **Objective**
>
> **6M   To identify and facilitate the provision of suitable sites for new educational facilities as the need arises throughout the City and County.**

6.13.2.1 *Dual Use of School Buildings*

Schools and other educational premises represent a valuable resource in terms of land and buildings, which generally is only used on a partial basis. The dual use of educational facilities, where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service (i.e. outside school hours and during school holidays) can contribute to meeting the wider needs of the community, by helping to satisfy demand for a variety of activities.

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[14] Department of Environment and Local Government, *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas,* 2009

Where lands and buildings can be beneficially used by the community, the Council will promote such uses. Where new schools or community facilities are proposed, opportunities will be sought to ensure that they are designed in such a way as to facilitate multi-use of the buildings.

6.13.3 Third Level Education

The 2016 Census shows that 25% of persons aged 15 years and over in the county whose full-time education has ceased had attained a third level qualification or higher. This is slightly under that of the national average of 28.45%. For the City this figure was 30%[15], which is above the national average.

Kildalton Agricultural and Horticultural College is located in Piltown in the south of the county. Kildalton is the largest agricultural college in the country, and is a leading provider of training in Equine Studies, Machinery, Agriculture and Horticulture.

A range of further education and training courses are also run in a number of Vocational Colleges throughout the county.

Additionally, the Design & Craft Council Ireland headquarters in the City and Grennan Mill Craft School in Thomastown run a number of third level courses in in jewellery and ceramics at these locations.

Kilkenny 3rd/4th level Research and Innovation Centre officially opened in 2012 at St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny City, see Section 5.4.   Third Level Educational Facilities.   Section 5.4 also outlines the Council's support for the establishment of a multi-campus Technological University of the South East (TUSE).

6.14 Social Capital

Social Capital may be defined as that which accrues to a person or group as a result of their active participation in the life of their communities. For example, social capital is said to be gained from neighbourliness, local area networking or volunteering.

The Council is committed to the Agenda 21 process of building partnerships between local authorities and local development and other sectors to develop and implement local policies for the development of sustainable communities. This commitment involves a wide range of public consultation in the actions taken by the local authority from plan making and policy formulation to implementation of specific projects such as Kilkenny Age Friendly County Initiative, Kilkenny Integration Forum as well as capital projects involving local community leadership. The Council will promote the development of social capital by providing opportunities for interaction, participation and the co-ordinated provision of public services.

Local Community Development Committees, or LCDCs, were established in each local authority area as a way of improving community development and giving local government a more central role in

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[15]http://census.cso.ie/sapmap2016/Results.aspx?Geog_Type=ST2016&Geog_Code=82A1BB79-02A9-47E6-84D0-467FE8C8A31E#SAPMAP_T10_1001

local and community development. A key function of the LCDC is to prepare the community elements of 6-year Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs).

The Council will work with statutory, voluntary, private sector and community groups, including the LCDC, to identify, facilitate and support the provision of public and social services in areas of identified need in the city and county.

The Council will promote and advance social inclusion and development in the county by ensuring the co-ordinated delivery of services and facilities and will seek to build social capital by integrating the social, community and cultural requirements of the county in the future planning and sustainable development of the County in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies.

6.15 Social Inclusion

Planning affords an opportunity to facilitate and deliver a more socially inclusive society through better integration and greater accessibility at all stages of the life cycle. Housing, education, health and transport are four key areas where social inclusion can be improved; for example, through universal design of buildings to deliver greater accessibility for all, or co-location of community facilities and uses to ensure communities are active during the day and into the evening[16].

The Council seeks to reduce barriers to participation in all areas such as education, recreation, employment and health. The Council is also conscious of the need to ensure that minority groups, people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, the travelling community, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, the elderly, children and young people are recognised as valuable members of the community.

According to Census 2016, 14.5% of Ireland's population now identify themselves with ethnic groups with roots in other countries and whose cultures are quite different to that of the majority population; while a further 0.66% at least are re-affirming their distinct Traveller cultural identity. The corresponding figures for Kilkenny are a little lower at 10% and 0.56% respectively, but no less significant.

The Council will support social inclusion measures including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development and measures to improve educational attainment levels, upskilling in key competencies and skills acquisition.

Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in accordance with best practice and the policies and principles contained in Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012) and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2008) will be promoted through the delivery of the Plan

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[16] *National Planning Framework* page 84

The Council supports a socially inclusive society, through the provision of appropriate community infrastructure, located in local centres or where easily accessible to communities and that is designed appropriately for accessibility and ease of use for all.

6.16 Health and well-being

Planning has an important role to play in promoting and facilitating active and healthy living patterns for local communities and in promoting well-being. Kilkenny County Council plays in important role in implementing the actions of the National Sports Policy 2018-2027[17]. A range of measures are included in this Plan to promote active and healthier lifestyles including:

- Pedestrians, cyclists and users of other modes of transport that involve physical activity are given the highest priority (See Chapter 12);
- Public open spaces are located and delivered in a way that ensures they are capable of being easily reached on foot or bicycle by routes that are secure and of a high standard and that take biodiversity issues into account in their design (See Chapter 8);
- Any new workplaces are linked to walking and cycling networks (See Chapter 12); and
- Play areas are designed to encourage varied and physically active play (See Chapter 13)

Healthcare and medical facilities are provided by a range of public, private and voluntary agencies within Kilkenny City and County. The Health Service Executive is the primary organisation responsible for the delivery of health care and personal social services to the people of Kilkenny. With the scale of increase in population, and the recent Covid-19 pandemic, it is to be expected that there will be a demand for more healthcare and medical facilities within the city and county to cater for the resident population.

The primary role of the Planning Authority with regard to health care is to ensure that there is an adequate policy framework in place inclusive of the reservation of lands should additional services be required. Future provision should be planned and implemented in concert with residential development, especially where this is undertaken in the context of Local Area Plans. The Planning Authority will reserve sites within appropriate settlements for health care facilities in consultation with the HSE.

The SláinteCare Implementation Strategy[18] presents a ten-year vision to transform Ireland's health and social care services. The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy is the framework for a system-wide reform programme. It sets out the direction for the next ten years and actions to be taken in the first three years of the Sláintecare implementation process. The focus is on establishing the building blocks for a significant shift in the way in which health and social care services are delivered in Ireland.

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[17] Government of Ireland, National Sports Policy, 2018

[18] Government of Ireland, *SláinteCare Implementation Strategy*

Healthcare facilities may include health centres, day centres, community nursing units, family resource centres, nursing homes/convalescent homes, community residences, sheltered workshops, activation centres and residential facilities for children and adolescents. These facilities require locations which are integrated with new and existing communities and which are easily accessible.

There are two existing primary health care centres in County Kilkenny, one in Kilkenny city on the Granges Road and another in Callan. Construction has recently commenced on Primary Care units at Newpark in Kilkenny City, in Thomastown on Lady's Well Street and another on the Belmont/Ross road in Ferrybank.

6.16.1 Hospitals

St. Luke's General Hospital and Lourdes Orthopaedic Hospital, Kilcreene are the two public hospitals located in the city and serving the county and wider catchment. St. Luke's General Hospital recently completed improvement works to include a new emergency department, a new medical assessment unit and a new day-services ward.

In addition to these facilities, private operators provide healthcare facilities at Aut Even Private hospital on the Freshford Road.

Hospitals are also located in Thomastown and Castlecomer within the County. Since 1952 St Columba's Hospital has been utilised specifically for the care of older people in the region but also accommodates a day care centre which offers services to the community within the grounds of the hospital. Castlecomer District Hospital is a 29 bed hospital with day care centre, providing acute medical care, convalescent, respite and terminal care. It serves all of North Kilkenny.

St. Canice's campus and its grounds comprise a significant land bank within the city. At present it contains the offices of the Health Service Executive, Lacken pitch and putt club, and the original hospital and associated outbuildings. The site presents an opportunity for regeneration but within the context of an overall planning framework for the lands. The Council has engaged with the HSE in the preparation of a masterplan or planning framework document for the St. Canice's hospital site in order to determine the optimal land uses for the area. The advancement of the masterplan was stalled due to the emergence of the Covid – 19 pandemic. Both the HSE and the Council are committed to the development of a masterplan framework for the lands and it is an objective of the Council to complete the masterplan within the Plan period.

The Council will facilitate the development and expansion of health and medical care facilities to meet the needs of the city and County, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Requirements.

> **Objective**
> **6N**   **To complete the preparation of a masterplan for the lands at St Canice's campus in partnership with the Health Service Executive within the period of the plan (See Volume 2 Core Strategy).**

6.16.2   Nursing Homes

In the light of an increasing ageing population, it is anticipated there will be increasing investment in developing a range of facilities for the elderly. Nursing homes and residential care homes should be integrated wherever possible into the residential areas of towns and villages where residents and staff can avail of reasonable access to local services. The Council recognises that nursing homes should not only be provided in established urban areas but also in appropriate rural areas. In rural areas it is preferable that nursing homes be located within the existing network of smaller towns and villages within the county to serve rural demand.

6.16.2.1   Development Management Requirements

In determining planning applications for a change of use from a residential dwelling or other building to a nursing home or for the construction of new build facilities the following will be considered:

- Compliance with the standards as laid down in Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2009 and the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted);
- The proximity to local services and facilities,
- The effect on the amenities of adjoining properties
- Whether such a use would not give rise to a traffic hazard
- Adequate visitor and employee car parking spaces and turning areas;
- Adequate access and turning areas for emergency vehicles;
- Adequate provision of private open space;
- Pedestrian linkages to existing social and community facilities within the settlement;
- Facilities to cater for a range of occupants ranging from those seeking semi-dependant living accommodation to those requiring a high level of care
- Whether the size and scale are appropriate to the area.

6.17 Positive Ageing

According to the Department of Health, by the year 2036 the number of older people aged 65 and older living in Ireland is expected to increase by 250% over 2016 figures. For County Kilkenny this would mean that the older population of 11,690 in 2011 will increase to 29,225 in 20 years' time. Kilkenny County Council has been actively engaged in the Age Friendly County Initiative since 2010. Kilkenny was the second County in Ireland to become an Age Friendly County. The concept of an Age Friendly Community is linked to an initiative of the World Health Organisation started in 2007. The Age-Friendly County initiative seeks to engage older people and their communities in making their communities better, healthier and safer places for older people to live and thrive. Positive ageing can be facilitated by means of various age friendly initiatives, including universal design and can be supported by the adoption of the appropriate development objectives. (See Objective under 6.10 Housing Development above, and see Section 12.13 Age Friendly and Accessible parking.) The delivery

of such facilities has a symbiotic relationship with other segments of society as it promotes accessibility for all.

St. Luke's Hospital in Kilkenny implemented a programme of measures to enable older patients and visitors to enjoy an improved hospital experience during the period of the last Plan, and it is now designated as an Age-Friendly Hospital. An Age Friendly Hospital is one in which older people are actively involved in the design of an environment that is friendly and accessible to all.

During the course of the 2014 -2020 Development Plan the concept of positive ageing was brought to the level of the Age Friendly Town.

6.17.1   Age Friendly Town

In 2019 Thomastown was designated as County Kilkenny's first Age Friendly Town. To achieve this status, the '*Thomastown Age Friendly Town Plan 2019*'[19] was published. This document sets out the vision for the town alongside the actions to achieve that vision and address the key issues facing older people, which have been identified by the older people of Thomastown.

As part of the move towards achieving 'Age Friendly' status for Thomastown a number of issues were highlighted. A significant level of work in terms of identifying the areas to be addressed was carried out by the Thomastown Age Friendly Town Committee. The issues included the provision of age friendly seating, age friendly bus stops (at appropriate locations in the town) and also carried out a detailed Walkability study which identified a number of areas which require attention. These issues have been collated and will form the Thomastown Age Friendly Action Plan.

The Thomastown Local Area Plan supports the concept and vision for Thomastown as a sustainable age friendly community.

The Council will support the actions set out in Kilkenny Age Friendly County Strategy 2017 – 2022 regarding the implementation of Age Friendly principles in the planning, design and delivery of physical infrastructure, public realm works, business and commercial premises as resources permit.

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[19]   https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Community_Culture/Age_Friendly_County_Initiative/Thomastown-Age-Friendly-Town-Plan-2019.pdf

7   Rural Development

Strategic Aim: To manage rural change and guide development to strengthen the rural economy and community through the network of towns and villages ensuring vibrant, sustainable and resilient rural areas whilst conserving and sustainably managing our environment and heritage.

7.1   Introduction

Rural areas of County Kilkenny are home to a diverse range of activities including all those associated with agriculture, established villages, rural housing, recreation and tourism. The results of the 2016 Census show that County Kilkenny is still predominantly a rural county. Sixty percent of the county's population live in rural areas outside Kilkenny city, the four District Towns and Ferrybank[1]. In 2016 a total of 8.0% of Kilkenny's labour force was classified into Broad Industrial Group A – Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, compared with 4.4% nationally.

The Council recognises that Kilkenny has a long tradition of people living in rural areas. It is the Council's intention to support the continued development of Kilkenny's rural areas in a way that is sustainable. This Chapter sets out the policies required for rural Kilkenny to achieve that in a manner that is consistent with the guidance, strategies and policies at National and Regional level.

Rural communities across Kilkenny function well beyond their immediate catchments and have a strong interrelationship with adjacent towns and villages, often beyond the county boundary.

The rural development strategy is based on National Planning Objectives 15 to 25[2] as contained in the National Planning Framework (NPF), which aims to promote rural growth and arrest rural decline whilst sustaining vibrant rural communities. This chapter is also based on other higher level policy documents such as the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region* (RSES)[3], Foodwise 2025, *Action Plan for Rural Development 2017*, the CEDRA report[4], and *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

The RSES reflects the NPF statement that the rural countryside "*is and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities*".

The Council supports the implementation of all National and Regional Objectives at local level and it is the broad objective of the Council's rural development strategy to provide for sustainable rural

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[1] CSO 2016, Deducting the population for Large Urban settlements with populations predominantly over 1500 a per the NPF classification (Callan, Castlecomer, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh and Ferrybank) from the County's total population

[2] National Planning Framework pp 71-79

[3] Southern Regional Assembly- Regional spatial and Economic Strategy

[4] The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA)

communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural or heritage resources of the county.

This broad objective is underpinned by the following detailed policy objectives:
- Promote the sustainable development of rural areas
- Promote sustainable settlement patterns
- Protect the quality and character of rural areas
- Protect the quality of the environment, including the prevention, limitation, abatement and/or reduction of environmental pollution and the protection of waters, groundwater and the atmosphere
- Protect features of the landscape and areas of major importance for biodiversity
- Protect the character of the landscape, including views and prospects listed in this Plan and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.
- Protect natural resources such as minerals and construction aggregates
- Protect areas where sustainable energy production is feasible, such as high lying areas where wind energy production is acceptable in principle.

The Council recognises the need to manage rural change and to guide rural development and will work to:
- Maintain and enhance the existing rural community to ensure vibrant sustainable rural areas,
- Improve the attractiveness of the built environment in rural towns and villages as places in which to work and live and as locations for industry, services and tourism investment.
- Enhance connectivity throughout rural areas in order to promote sustainable settlement, economic and social activity and tourism.
- Ensure that the rural environment will be respected and that development in rural areas will take place in a sustainable manner
- Promote a broad concept of rural development and not one based solely on agriculture or other dominant natural resource and encourage the sustainable development of resources in such sectors as agriculture, tourism including agri-tourism, forestry, farm diversification, and renewable energy resources.
- Where Camphill communities have developed, the Council seeks to support the development of inclusive neighbourhoods, community led housing and social enterprise and promote the integration of a wide range of household types and people with varying degrees of support needs.

7.2   Agriculture

Agriculture is a vital part of the economic life of the County and is a major driver for sustaining, enhancing and maintaining the rural economy and culture. In recent years agriculture has contributed to the growth in export revenue.

Kilkenny has a well-established agri-food sector with food and drink production and processing representing a sizeable proportion of the local economy, see Chapter 5, Economic Development. The major companies operating in this sector within the county are Glanbia PLC and Connolly's Red Mills, complemented by an emerging artisan food producer base of approximately 40 micro and medium sized food producers.

7.2.1   Food Wise 2025

Food Wise 2025 sets out a ten year plan for the agri-food sector. It underlines the sector's unique and special position within the Irish economy, and it illustrates the potential which exists for this sector to grow even further.

Food Wise 2025 foresees a sector that acts more strategically and achieves a competitive critical mass in the international marketplace while targeting more quality conscious consumers through sustainable production and high-quality produce. The Food Wise programme is based on the principle of "Local Roots, Global Reach" and identifies growth projections for the industry over the 10 year period 2015-2025 including:

- 85% increase in exports;
- 70% increase in value added
- 65% increase in primary production
- and creation of additional jobs all along the supply chain from producer level to high-end value-added product development.

To achieve the projections set out above, Food Wise 2025 identifies over 400 recommendations to achieve sustainable growth and these will require a concerted and coordinated approach by primary producers, industry, Departments and State agencies.

This plan supports the objectives of Food Wise 2025 as it strives to achieve sustainable farming practices and the sustainable growth of the farming sector. See also Section 9.2 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity.

7.2.2   Action Plan for Rural Development 2017

This Government strategy, introduced in 2017 (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs) is aimed at delivering real change for people living and working in rural Ireland. The objective of the Action Plan is to "*unlock the potential of rural Ireland through a framework of supports, at national and local level, which will ensure that people who live in rural areas have increased opportunities for employment locally, and access to public services and social networks*". A number of key initiatives were proposed as part of the Strategy including the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is one of a number of measures to assist in rejuvenating rural towns and villages under the Department of Rural & Community Development's "Rural Development Investment Programme".

In 2020 the scheme was tailored to address the emerging challenges associated with COVID-19. Under additional measure introduced in response to Covid-19 Kilkenny County Council received approval for 9 projects. These were generally small in scale to encourage economic activity and tourism. The Council will continue to avail of opportunities under such schemes.

7.2.3   Commonage Land

Commonage land is land owned by more than one person. There are a few examples of commonage land in Co. Kilkenny, including some land in the townlands of Ballygub New, Brandonhill, Danganbeg,

Grangefertagh, Rochestown and Weatherstown[5]. In the future, commonage and other rough grazing land should be regarded primarily as an environmental/recreational resource.

It is policy to preserve the open character of commonage land and other hill land and support access over paths and tracks through consensus with landowners, particularly in mountain areas.

7.2.4   Fencing

It is a requirement of the Planning Regulations 2001 Art 9(I)(a)(x) that the fencing of land open to or used by the public during the ten years preceding such fencing or enclosure, for recreational purposes or as a means of access to any seashore, mountain, lakeshore or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility requires planning permission. Wire fencing constitutes visual pollution and destroys the "away from it all" feeling which makes the upland areas such an attraction for both local people and visitors.

Farmers are acknowledged as custodians of the natural resources of the countryside and of rural landscapes. The Council will work with farmers to promote and facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural activities, whereby watercourses, wildlife habitats, areas of ecological importance and other environmental assets are protected from the threat of pollution, and where development does not impinge on the landscape character, visual amenity, views and prospects of the countryside. As such the Council will also ensure that developments shall not be detrimental to archaeological and heritage features of importance.

7.2.5   Equine

The Council recognises the role and importance of the equine industry as part of the wider agriculture sector and in particular the breeding, rearing and training of thoroughbred horses and will support the improvement and expansion of the equine industry within the county. The only significant racecourse in the county is the Gowran racecourse.

7.3   Remote Working and Home-Based Economic Activity in Rural Areas

The trend of people working from home is continuing to increase, either through e-working or setting up a home-based economic activity. Remote-working can be defined as "any business function that is conducted away from the office using modern communications and information technologies". The popularity of working from home has increased due to advances in broadband and communication technology and the savings achieved in terms of time and commuting costs. This approach has been boosted due to the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed on society on movement and gatherings of people. The trend towards more remote working likely to grow during the lifetime of the plan.

Applications for small-scale home-based economic activity in rural areas where the occupants of an existing dwelling are employed at home will be positively considered. Home based economic activity

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[5] http://www.commonage.agriculture.gov.ie/Search.asp

should be sited either in converted existing farm buildings located adjacent to the main dwelling house or within the house where the use is compatible with and ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a home. The Council will facilitate new development and/or the conversion of part of a dwelling to an appropriate home-based economic activity in rural areas, where the dwelling remains as the main residence of the practitioner, and the economic use is clearly ancillary to the residential use and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. Home based businesses, which wish to expand beyond employing the household on site, will be required to locate in a village or other area suitable to the use proposed.

7.4   Forestry

Forestry has direct benefits for local communities through the establishment of plantations, in spin-off effects in support services, through industries ranging from woodcraft to industrial processing, to rural tourism, and contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gases by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine regulates forestry practices and published *Forests, products and people Ireland's forest policy – a renewed vision* in 2014. This sets out national policy to guide the expansion of the forest sector out to 2046 in a sustainable and cost efficient manner. National policy is to increase the forest cover from the current level to 18% in 2046 with a target of 30% broadleaf planting in afforestation.

According to the Forest Service, 9.6% of the county was in forest cover in 2017[6]. This has decreased slightly from 9.98% in 2011[7], but is an increase on the 2007 level of 7.8%. Nationally, 11% of land is under forest cover.

Forestry activities must be appropriate in terms of nature and scale to the surrounding area, so that they are not visually obtrusive in the landscape. The Landscape Character Assessment in Chapter 9, Heritage, should be consulted to facilitate guidance on areas which contain opportunities for the creation of new woodland and areas which might be sensitive to new forestry proposals.

Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are also important as links in the county's green infrastructure network. Coillte have provided access to many of their forests and support the use of the forests for recreational uses, and provide access to three forests currently in Co. Kilkenny; Jenkinstown, Coill an Fhaltaigh near Kilkenny City and Castlemorris.   Coillte's Recreation Policy[8] states that Coillte recognises that forests provide an excellent landscape for a wide range of recreational activities, and Coillte will continue to provide recreation that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

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[6]Forest Service, National Forest Inventory, 2017

[7] Forest Service, Afforestation Statistics, 2011

[8] Recreation Policy, Coillte, 2017 (www.coillte.ie)

The Council will encourage and promote access to forests, including private forestry, in co-operation with Coillte, the Forest Service and other agencies, for walking routes, mountain trails, bridle paths, orienteering, cycling and other recreational activities (see Chapter 7 Open Space and Recreation).

It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the sustainable development of forestry in appropriate areas of the county, where it will not significantly impact upon designated habitats and biodiversity, archaeology, and that it does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the local landscape.

7.4.1   Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

Sustainable forest management is the sustainable development and management of forests and forest lands in a way that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local national and global levels and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems. The Forest Service is implementing SFM with a view to ensuring that all timber produced in Ireland is derived from sustainably managed forests. This is supported by the [Irish National Forest Standard](#)[9], the [Code of Best Forest Practice](#)[10] and a suite of environmental guidelines (relating to water quality, landscape, archaeology, biodiversity and harvesting) as well as the work of the Forestry Inspectorate and the ongoing review of Irish forest legislation.

To ensure that SFM is implemented, the Forest Service publishes a suite of Guidelines as follows:
- Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines
- Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines
- Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines
- Forest Biodiversity Guidelines
- Forest Harvesting and Environmental Guidelines
- Forest Protection Guidelines
- Forests and Water – Achieving Objectives under Ireland's River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (2018)
- Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Requirements

7.4.2   Development Management Requirements:
- To have regard to the [Indicative Forest Statement](#)[11] and all relevant Forest Service Guidelines in the assessment of any forestry applications.
- To encourage sustainable forest management and require a diversity of species in afforestation proposals and in particular to require a proportion of all new forestry development to consist of native hardwood species in order to extend the range of potential end uses and to reduce the potential for adverse impact on the landscape resulting from monoculture.
- To ensure that forestry shall not obstruct existing public rights of way and established walking routes.

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[9] Department of Marine and Natural Resources, Forest Service, [Irish National Forest Standard](#), 2000

[10] Department of Marine and Natural Resources, Forest Service, [Code of Best Forest Practice, Ireland](#), 2000

[11] Indicative Forest Statement - Department of Agriculture 2008

7.5   Extractive Industries

The County had a large lead–zinc deposit at Galmoy, which was worked as Galmoy mines, but which is now closed. There are numerous sand and gravel and stone resources within the County currently in operation. The Council recognises the importance of extractive industries to the local and national economy as valuable sources of raw material for industry in general and the construction industry in particular and as an important source of employment. However, the industry can have serious detrimental impacts on the landscape and amenities generally, including traffic generation, vibration, dust, noise, water pollution and visual intrusion. *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Quarries and Ancillary Activities*[12] were published in 2004.

7.5.1   Aggregate Potential Mapping

As part of a National Development Plan funded programme, Aggregate Potential Mapping (APM) has been carried out by the Geological Survey of Ireland for County Kilkenny[13]. Aggregate consists of any hard, inert material, used in variously-sized fragments, either loose or in bound form, in the building of roads and other construction. Aggregate in Ireland is acquired from (a) sands and gravels, known as granular, and (b) bedrock which is blasted and crushed in quarries. The APM has identified both the Granular Aggregate Potential (GAP) and the Crushed Rock Aggregate Potential (CRP).

Because the extraction industry is a very significant industry serving the construction, industrial and energy sectors, it is important to facilitate development with due regard to mineral reserves so that inappropriate development does not impinge on the viable exploitation of the resource. The Council will have regard to the aggregate potential mapping within the County in assessing applications for non-extractive industry related in areas in close proximity to existing sites or significant resource potential where such development would limit future exploitation.

7.5.2   Development Management Requirements:

- The Council will have regard to the following:
  - *Quarries and Ancillary Activities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities*[14],
  - the ICF Environmental Code[15]
  - Environmental Management Guidelines, Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry[16].
  - Undertaking non-energy extractive activities in accordance with Natura 2000 requirements[17].

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[12] Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Quarries and Ancillary Activities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities,* 2004

[13] https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ee8c4c285a49413aa6f1344416dc9956

[14] Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Quarries and Ancillary Activities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities,* 2004

[15] Irish Concrete Federation, Environmental Code, 2005

[16] EPA, Environmental Management Guidelines, Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry, 2006

[17] European Commission, Guidance Document, *EC Guidance on undertaking new non-energy extractive activities in accordance with Natura 2000 requirements*

- o NPWS Guidelines for the protection of Biodiversity within the Extractive Industry and the GSI's Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry.
      - o The Archaeological Code of Practice agreed between the ICF and the National Monuments Division in Section 6.4.2 Development Management Requirements.
- The Council will require adherence to the EPA Guidelines- Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry as a standard for the extractive industry in Kilkenny.
- The Council will ensure that all existing workings shall be rehabilitated and that all future extraction activities will allow for the rehabilitation of pits and proper land use management.
      - o The Council may require that development is phased and that each phase is rehabilitated before the next phase is developed/commenced;
      - o The Council shall require applicants to submit a restoration programme with their application on the manner and timing of restoration;
      - o The Council will consider the current land/quarry resource of the applicant and may seek that current quarries are restored before new sites are developed.
- The Council will seek to minimise environmental and other impacts of mineral extraction through rigorous application of licensing, development control and enforcement requirements for quarry and other associated developments including, but not limited to, consideration of visual impacts, methods of extraction, noise levels, dust prevention, protection of ground and surface waters, impacts on residential and other amenities, impacts on the road network (particularly with regard to making good any damage to roads), road safety, phasing, re-instatement and landscaping of worked sites.
- The Council will ensure that any extractive development does not significantly impact on existing public rights of way, walking routes, or tourist or recreational activities.
- The Council will consider the current land/quarry resource of the applicant and may seek that current quarries are restored before new sites are developed.

7.6   Fishing

The Barrow, Nore and Suir are historically renowned as premier salmon and coarse fishing rivers in Ireland although salmon fishing no longer takes place on the River Barrow. Snap net fishing is a long tradition on the Rivers Nore and Suir. The Kings River is also an important fishing river. Fishing remains an important natural resource for the county which has potential for development in its own right and as a resource for tourism development. Fishing as a resource can assist in the development of tourism within the county and in rural diversification and appropriate angling-related tourism, fish farming and mariculture will be encouraged. The Council will liaise with and facilitate the Southern Fisheries Board in this regard.

7.6.1   Development Management Requirements:
- Require that adequate provisions are made to accommodate free upstream and downstream migration of all fish in development proposals.
- Ensure that the Protection of water quality will be a primary consideration in relation to assessing development proposals.

7.7   Diversification

The diversification of the rural economy from mainstream farming can both supplement existing rural incomes and add to the richness of the rural area. Farming has been diversifying into areas such as

horticulture, forestry and agri-tourism. In transitioning to a low carbon economy in line with Government policy, future diversification and adaptation to new energy technologies is seen as an important mechanism to achieve diversification. Renewable energy such as wind, solar and biomass will assist in the transition of the local economies of such areas. The Council will support the development of agriculturally related industries, which are environmentally sustainable and considered a suitable use, subject to the protection of heritage and amenities. In particular, the Council will encourage the conversion of redundant farm buildings for appropriate owner-run diversification enterprises.

It is an objective of the Council to enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability in line the NPF.

Industries that are not directly related to agriculture will however be encouraged to locate to settlements so as to support the creation of economies of scale which will underpin the vitality and vibrancy of these rural settlements.

7.7.1   Development Management Requirements
- A high standard of design and maintenance will be required in all developments in rural areas.
- Agriculture developments will be constructed and located so as to ensure that there is no threat of pollution to ground or surface waters.
- Buildings and structures in visually sensitive areas will be required to:
    o   be sited as unobtrusively as possible;
    o   be clustered to form a distinct and unified feature in the landscape;
    o   utilise suitable materials and colours; and
    o   utilise native species in screen planting
- Fencing in upland or highly scenic areas (See Section 9.2.12 Landscape) will not normally be permitted unless such fencing is essential to the viability of the farm and that it conforms to the best agricultural practice. The nature of the material to be used, the height of the fence, and in the case of a wire fence the type of wire to be used will be taken into account. Barbed-wire will not be used for the top line of wire. Stiles or gates at appropriate places will be required.

7.8   Rural Settlement Strategy
The Council recognises the long tradition of people living in rural areas of the County and promotes sustainable rural settlement as the key component of delivering viable rural communities. Chapter 4, Core Strategy sets out the overall development strategy for the county including the rural area. The Council will ensure that the provision of one-off houses in rural areas does not undermine the vibrancy and vitality of the town or settlements in rural areas while accommodating the dispersed rural living traditions of the rural areas of County Kilkenny.

7.8.1   Development Objectives for Rural settlement

Chapter 5 of the National Planning Framework (NPF) provides a comprehensive set of objectives to strengthen the rural fabric and support the communities living there; to plan for future growth and development, while addressing decline, and focusing on the potential for the renewal and development of smaller towns and villages[18].

An important element of that strategy is the development of new homes in small towns and villages with all relevant state agencies and stakeholders encouraged to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes[19].

The NPF also prescribes that in relation to the development of rural housing that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence and rural areas elsewhere. Smaller towns and villages below the level of the District towns in the settlement hierarchy are classified as part of the rural area but their viability and vitality must be protected and enhanced through the rural settlement policy.

The Regional Spatial and Economic strategy for the Southern Region (RSES), through RPOs 26 and 27[20] identifies the requirement for local authorities to implement an appropriate sustainable rural housing policy response to avoid ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas, support revitalised towns and villages, achieve sustainable compact growth targets and protect the rural resource for rural communities, including people with an established local connection to the area.

7.8.2   Analysis of Rural Housing demand in the County

The population of the county increased by 4% (3,813) during the last intercensal period (2011 -2016), with the state average at 3.78%. Notwithstanding the financial crisis which arose in the late noughties and which carried over well into the current development plan, the number of single rural house applications granted over the period 2014- June 2020, was 946.

Planning applications have rebounded as the country emerged from the financial crisis and this is reflected an increasing rural housing demand. However, certain areas have been shown to be more attractive, particularly around the major urban centres such as Kilkenny City and Waterford City area, the District towns, New Ross and Carrick on Suir. The rural housing strategy map (Figure 7.1) analyses this in more detail and quantifies the commuting patterns from rural areas to these urban centres.

In accordance with National Policy Objective 19, the future focus will continue to be on the facilitation of single houses in the countryside, based on the Core considerations of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and the siting and design criteria for rural housing, whilst having regard to the viability of the smaller towns and rural settlements. It will continue to be necessary to demonstrate a functional Economic and/or Social need to live in the commuter catchment of large towns and cities, including Kilkenny City and Waterford City. Outside these catchment areas, a more flexible approach will be based primarily on siting and design. Therefore, the thrust of the existing

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[18] NPF, National Policy Objectives 14 to 25 (p70-79)
[19] NPF, NPO 18b p73
[20] Southern Regional Assembly, *RSES* p89, p90
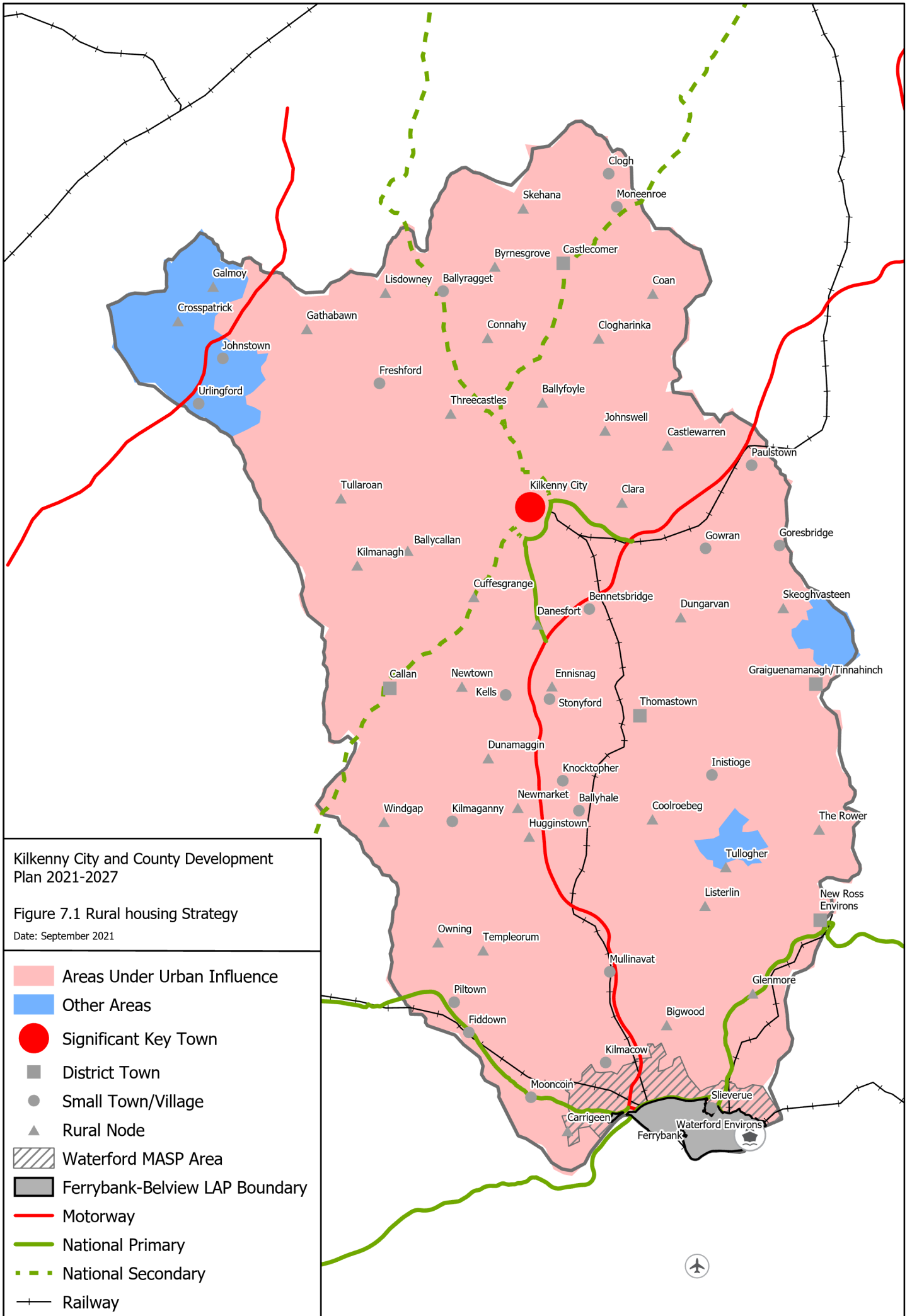
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 7.1 Rural housing Strategy

Date: September 2021

Areas Under Urban Influence
Other Areas
Significant Key Town
District Town
Small Town/Village
Rural Node
Waterford MASP Area
Ferrybank-Belview LAP Boundary
Motorway
National Primary
National Secondary
Railway

Clogh
Skehana
Moneenroe
Byrnesgrove
Castlecomer
Coan
Lisdowney
Ballyragget
Connahy
Clogharinka
Gathabawn
Freshford
Ballyfoyle
Threecastles
Johnswell
Castlewarren
Paulstown
Tullaroan
Kilkenny City
Clara
Ballycallan
Gowran
Goresbridge
Kilmanagh
Cuffesgrange
Bennetsbridge
Dungarvan
Skeoghvasteen
Danesfort
Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch
Callan
Newtown
Ennisnag
Kells
Stonyford
Thomastown
Dunamaggin
Knocktopher
Inistioge
Newmarket
Ballyhale
Coolroebeg
The Rower
Windgap
Kilmaganny
Tullogher
Hugginstown
Listerlin
New Ross Environs
Owning
Templeorum
Mullinavat
Glenmore
Piltown
Fiddown
Bigwood
Kilmacow
Slieverue
Mooncoin
Waterford Environs
Carrigeen
Ferrybank

Galmoy
Crosspatrick
Johnstown
Urlingford

rural housing policy, with slight variations, will be retained. The changes reflect appropriate responses to changes in housing demand over the period of the previous plan.

7.8.3   Rural Housing Policies

The following policies have been devised in order to respond to the different housing requirements of urban and rural communities and the varying characteristics of rural areas. This is to ensure that first and foremost the housing requirements of persons with intrinsic links in rural areas are facilitated in all such areas, but that planning policies also respond to local circumstances whether these relate to areas experiencing economic and population decline or to areas under sustained pressure for development.

The following definitions and associated policies will be used:

Definition of Urban Area: A city or town with a population of 1,500 or more at the time of the 2016 Census of Population (This definition is consistent with the CSO and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines). For the purpose of this plan, these urban areas constitute Kilkenny City and Environs, the Waterford Metropolitan Area and the District towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown as well as New Ross and Carrick-on-Suir.

Urban Generated Housing: Housing need is considered to be Urban Generated where application is made in rural areas by persons originating from urban areas and includes applications for second homes. The Council will endeavour to accommodate such non-rural generated housing within the development limits of all towns and villages subject to appropriate servicing arrangements. This approach has been adopted to strongly support strengthening the viability of our towns and villages and because of the long-term issues that arise from a proliferation of one-off houses, such as:
- creation of demands for the subsequent provision of public infrastructure (i.e. roads and services);
- over concentration of septic tanks in areas leading to potential ground water issues;
- potential contamination of local water supplies and a reduction in water quality;
- higher energy consumption and transportation costs arising from increased car-based commuting;
- potential erosion of landscape character, and depletion of high-quality landscapes; and harmful effects on the tourism sector,
- loss of investment in small towns and rural settlements, leading to dereliction and vacancy;

Subject to satisfying good practice in relation to site location and access, drainage and design requirements, rural generated housing need should be facilitated as close as possible to its origin to ensure that strong local ties are maintained and that the applicant remains an intrinsic part of the local community.

Rural Generated Housing: Housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by persons from that community or whose occupation is intrinsically linked with that particular rural area as defined in Section 7.8.4 Categories of Rural Compliance below.

Ribbon Development: is defined as where there are 5 or more houses exist[21] on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage. If four houses exist on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage, it is likely that ribbon development may be created with an additional house.

Ribbon Development is discouraged for a variety of reasons, including road safety, future demand for the provision of public infrastructure and visual impact. The Planning Authority will have discretion to allow well-spaced infill ribboning to complete a particular settlement pattern only, but not where it will lead to further gap infill sites or the coalescence of separate ribbons of development or, in combination with other ribbons, lead to the over proliferation of houses resulting in overdevelopment creating ribbon development, wastewater disposal difficulties, traffic or other serious planning issues in the immediate area.

Local Area: Local area is defined as within approximately a radius of 10km from the site, excluding defined urban areas. Where the site is of a greater distance but the applicant can demonstrate significant ties with the area for example immediate family or well-established landownership then these applications will be considered on their merits.

7.8.4   Categories of Rural Compliance and Qualifying criteria:
In line with the NPF, National Policy Objective 19 requires a clear distinction to be made between areas under urban influence and elsewhere in providing for the development of rural housing.

County Kilkenny can be divided into two broad categories as follows:
1. **Areas under Urban Influence**
2. **Other rural areas**

Qualifying Criteria for Rural Housing:

Areas under urban influence
- Areas classified as under Urban Influence are located close to the immediate environs or commuting catchment of cities and towns or to major transport corridors with ready access to urban areas. They are characterised by
- High levels of commuting patterns to urban areas
- Areas with high population growth in the County
- Ready access to a good road network with ready access to the larger urban areas.

It is the Council's objective for areas of urban influence to facilitate the rural generated housing requirements of the local rural community (as identified in this section) while on the other hand directing urban (non-rural) generated housing to areas zoned and identified for new housing development in the city, or towns and villages.

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[21] Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Sustainable Rural housing- Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, April 2005

Areas under urban influence display the greatest pressures for development due to the commuter dependence of these areas on urban areas for reasons of employment and other social and economic functions[22].

In areas under urban influence the Council will permit (subject to other planning criteria) single houses for persons where the following stipulations are met:

1. Persons with a demonstrable economic need to live in the particular local rural area, being people who are for example:
   a. employed full-time in rural-based activity such as farming, horticulture, forestry, bloodstock or other rural-based activity in the area in which they wish to build or whose employment is intrinsically linked to the rural area in which they wish to build, such as teachers in rural schools or other persons who by the nature of their work have a **functional need to reside permanently in the rural** area close to their place of work, provided that they have never owned a house in a rural area.
2. Persons with a demonstrable social need to live a particular local rural area,
   a. Persons born within the local rural area, or who have lived a substantial period of their lives in the local rural area (minimum 5 years), who have never owned a rural house and who wish to build their first home close to the original family home. Persons born in the area without having lived for the minimum of 5 years must be able to demonstrate strong family and social connections to the area to demonstrate a demonstrable social need.
   b. Returning emigrants who do not own a house in the local area and wishes to build their first permanent home for their own use in a local rural area in which they lived for a substantial period of their lives (5 years), then moved away or abroad and who now wish to return to reside near other family members.

All applicants for one-off rural housing will need to demonstrate compliance with the qualifying criteria of one of the above categories unless otherwise specified as being located within an area where the Rural Housing Policy does not apply.

The Planning Authority shall have regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements in the implementation of the policy.

Occupancy Condition
All permission granted for rural housing within the Areas of Urban Influence shall be subject to an occupancy condition restricting the use of the dwelling to the applicant or members of his/her immediate family as a place of permanent residence for a period of seven years from the date of first occupancy.

Sterilisation Agreements
In areas where significant levels of rural housing development have taken place on the edges of urban areas within the county and where the Council considers such areas are becoming over developed the council may seek agreement under Section 47 of the Planning Act (sterilisation agreement) if it considers it necessary to regulate development in the area.

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[22] Fig 7.1 Rural Housing Strategy reflects this position.

Other Rural Areas

Areas classified as other rural areas comprise those areas not identified as under urban influence, where housing restrictions do not apply in the rural countryside subject to siting and design criteria as contained in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

In these areas it will be the policy of the Council to accommodate proposals for individual rural or urban generated permanent residential development subject to meeting normal planning and environmental criteria.

In all cases the consideration of individual sites will be subject to normal siting and design considerations, which will include but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- Any proposed vehicular access would not endanger public safety by giving rise to a traffic hazard,
- That any proposed on-site waste water disposal system is designed, located and maintained in a way which protects water quality,
- That the siting and design of new dwellings takes account of and integrates appropriately with its physical surroundings and other aspects of the natural and cultural heritage and,
- That the proposed site otherwise accords with the objectives of the development plan in general.

In both areas under Urban Influence and Other Rural Areas the Planning Authority shall have regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements in the implementation of the rural housing policy.

7.8.5   Refurbishment and Replacement Dwellings in rural areas

The Council will encourage and facilitate the appropriate refurbishment of existing housing stock and other structures in rural areas and in certain limited cases the replacement of existing dwellings subject to the criteria outlined below.

Development Management Requirements:

- For refurbishment of structures the emphasis should be on the retention, refurbishment and reuse of the structure as part of the development proposal.
- For refurbishment the scale and architectural treatment of proposed works should be sympathetic to the character of the original structure and the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development.
- In the case of replacement dwellings, to require proof that the original structure was last used as a dwelling and was a habitable dwelling so as not to invoke the policies under Section 7.8.3 Rural Housing Policies.
- In cases where retention or reuse of the existing dwelling is not technically feasible, the size and scale of any replacement dwelling should reflect the site's characteristics and context and shall accord with best practice in rural house design.

Where an original structure was not habitable, if an applicant can demonstrate that their proposals will ensure the sensitive restoration of vernacular and traditional buildings in the rural area, thereby respecting and maintaining the integrity and scale of the original building, and does not compromise

any other development management considerations, such proposals shall not be subject to the policies in Section 7.8.3 Rural Housing Policies that applies to new dwellings (see also Section 9.3.6 Vernacular Built Heritage).

7.8.6   Rural House Design Guidance

A Rural Design Guide was produced in 2008 for County Kilkenny. The Design Guide acts as an instrument to develop best practice in the design and siting of one-off rural housing. Those intending to build houses in the countryside are advised to consult the Rural Design Guide for advice on site choice, local design and landscaping at an early stage in their preparations.

Further guidance is given in Section 13.22 Rural Housing and Section 12.11.3 Access to National Roads and Section 12.11.10.1 Roads Development Management Requirements.

7.8.7   Implementation of Settlement Strategy

The settlement strategy outlined above will be reinforced by the Council reviewing the Local Area Plans that are already made, and preparing additional LAPs and Village Design Statements or other supplementary guidance documents, where appropriate.

The settlement strategy will be underpinned by the prioritisation of investment in local infrastructure under the Council's programmes in water services, roads and other infrastructure.

> **Objective**
>
> **7A   To monitor the trends in rural housing and population during the lifetime of the plan to ascertain if further rural housing policy responses are required during the plan period.**

7.9   Rural Transport

Bus services are particularly important in low-population density, dispersed, rural areas, where population mobility levels can be low. The Rural Transport Programme, as well as providing regular public transport services and Demand Responsive services, also funds the provision of 'Once Off' trips for individuals and community/voluntary groups to help address rural social exclusion. The programme operates under the brand name Local Link and they operate two types of bus services:

7.9.1   Door-to-Door Routes

Rural transport projects, such as 'Ring-a-Link', have a key role to play in providing public transport services, particularly in peripheral areas, and in providing access to the services located in towns. Ring-a-Link is a rural transport initiative which serves rural communities in County Kilkenny. This community-based rural transport service provides flexible, door to door services to meet the needs of people who cannot access public or private transport locally.

7.9.2   Scheduled Routes

Rural bus services play a vital social role in urban and rural communities, linking rural areas with settlements and essential services, such as schools and healthcare facilities. Bus services, both public and private, will continue to be the principal form of public transportation service in the region.

To improve the effectiveness of rural transport services, the following measures are required: -
(a) Improved connectivity to inter-regional bus services at connection points.
(b) Development and use of new technology to support demand response services.

The Council will support and facilitate local and community-based initiatives, to provide rural transport services within the County. This will improve accessibility and promote social inclusion.

8   Open Space and Recreation

Strategic Aim: To ensure the provision of open space and recreational facilities in order to maintain, and improve open spaces that contribute to the well-being and making of place for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors to the County while protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

8.1 Introduction

Open space performs a wide range of functions relating to amenity, biodiversity, education, social and community benefits, and health benefits. Public Open Space is a key element in defining the overall quality of the residential environment. As well as providing passive and active recreational benefits for residents, open space enhances the aesthetic and environmental quality of a neighbourhood or town and promotes social interaction. The Council is committed to the protection and sustainable development of the amenities of the county for recreational purposes to benefit residents and to aid in the promotion of tourism.

The Council will ensure that people are at the centre of all open space and recreation opportunities and activities and will ensure that co-design and participatory processes are used to engage people in shaping their built-environment, with a particular focus on supporting harder to reach communities to take part in public engagement processes.

The Council, with the assistance of relevant agencies and sporting organisations in Kilkenny, will seek to:
- preserve and improve amenities and recreational facilities, and shall facilitate and provide for the extension of recreational amenities where appropriate, subject to environmental, heritage and financial considerations.
- Increase levels of local participation, improve access and promote the development of opportunities for the benefit of all groups of the population to become involved in sports and recreation, in conjunction with Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (www.krsp.ie.).

The Council will use its powers under the Planning & Development Acts to ensure that adequate recreational open space and facilities are provided for all groups of the population at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work. Residents, workers, and visitors to Kilkenny benefit from a rich natural heritage, including its rivers valleys, wetlands, woodlands and uplands. These natural heritage components plus open spaces and playing fields form part of the interconnected networks of Green Infrastructure.

This Chapter addresses open space provision in general. Requirements for the provision of private and public open space as part of any planning application are set out in Chapter 13.

8.2 Hierarchy of Open Space

Recreational space is provided in parks of various sizes throughout the county ranging from regional parks and major local parks down to smaller pocket parks, private gardens and balconies, as well as

intensive recreational, amenity and community facilities such as active Multiple Games Areas (MUGAs). This Plan aims to achieve a hierarchy of high quality, attractive and secure public and private open spaces.

In the Waterford Metropolitan Area, the *Southern Regional and Economic Strategy* has included an objective for the preparation of a Metropolitan-wide Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy. The Council will cooperate and participate in the preparation of such a Strategy, in co-ordination with Southern Regional Assembly, Waterford City and County Council and relevant stakeholders.

8.2.1　Regional Parks

The County hosts a number of regional-scale facilities, such as the Castle Park, Castlecomer Demesne, the River Nore Linear Park and Woodstock Estate in Inistioge.

8.2.1.1　*Castle Park*

The Castle Park is located in the grounds of Kilkenny Castle and is about 50 acres in extent. It contains a playground and is extensively used for walking, running and passive amenity. It is a significant piece of green infrastructure within the City and environs. It is in State ownership and is operated by the Office of Public Works.

8.2.1.2　*River Nore Linear Park*

The Nore Linear Park provides a network of footpaths and cycleways along the river in the City and Environs combined with a sequence of high-quality public spaces, which is a significant recreational and biodiversity asset to the city. Within the City, a walk between Talbotsinch and Ossory Bridge has been developed and upgraded to make it accessible to all users, including cyclists, people with disabilities and people using buggies. Two pedestrian bridges provide access across the river: the Ossory Pedestrian Bridge under the Ossory Road Bridge to the west of the City, and The Lady Desart Bridge along Bateman Quay in the city centre. The provision of a third pedestrian bridge at Talbotsinch would connect the River Nore Linear Park to the Bleach Road and the northeastern area of the City.

The part of the Nore Linear Park that runs through the Abbey Quarter is being developed at present, known as the Riverside Park. A boardwalk will also be provided along Greensbridge, which will connect the southern Nore Linear Park, to the northern element, through the Abbey Quarter Riverside Linear Park**.** The Nore Linear Park also connects with countryside riverside trails to the south, and this is the starting point of the Nore Valley Walk (See Section 8.3 Trails, Walkways).

The Council is currently engaged in developing a recreational and biodiversity park on the site of the now closed municipal landfill at Dunmore, adjacent to the Civic Amenity Site and the training facility for Kilkenny GAA. This Park can be accessed from the existing public roads; the Castlecomer Road, N77 and the Bleach Road. It is an objective to provide for pedestrian and cycle access to the facility utilising the River Nore Linear Park. A pedestrian bridge at Talbotsinch would provide connectivity from the western side of the City to the linear park and then onto the proposed biodiversity park.

8.2.1.3   The Breagagh and Pococke River Corridors

The Breagagh River corridor, from the Water Barrack (westwards and southwards) is designated open space for most of its course and has the potential to be developed as a regional open space providing links from the Western Environs to the City.

Sections of the Pococke River to the east of the city centre are designated open space. There is potential to link the Pococke open space areas back to the existing residential developments and the River Nore walking route/River Nore Linear Park.

The Council will seek to establish public parks along the Pococke and Breagagh Rivers subject to resources and finances.

The River Nore is the principal river flowing through Kilkenny City, and together with the River Breagagh and River Pococke, offer significant opportunities for recreational opportunities both water and landside, including an interconnecting network of routes for walking and cycling which also provide access for water-sports such as swimming, angling, boating, kayaking and nature trails amongst others. Routes along the river have the potential to connect to other trails – such as walking, cycling and driving trails in the county and routes along the River Nore have been extended out of Kilkenny city to link with routes in the countryside. The River Nore and Pococke River form part of the Natura 2000 network (see Section 9.2.1.1 European Sites (Natura 2000)).

The Council will promote the natural amenity potential of the River Nore, River Breagagh and Pococke River in order to facilitate the development of amenity, recreational, biodiversity and tourism benefits for the city, and will work with agencies and communities to improve access and facilities along the rivers in appropriate locations subject to the availability of resources.

8.2.1.4   Ferrybank Linear Parks

Throughout the Belview /Ferrybank plan area there is a significant amount of interconnected open space, in the Passive Open Space, Active Open Space and Water Compatible Development zones. In any review of the Belview/Ferrybank LAP this open space strategy will continue with a comprehensive walking (and cycling) network. The establishment of linkages and connections between areas of open space as identified in this LAP is essential if this goal is to be realised.

Regional Park Objectives

8A   **To develop a recreational and biodiversity park on the site of the now closed municipal landfill at Dunmore.**

8B   **To progress plans for the provision of a pedestrian bridge upstream of Greens Bridge including the provision of access along the eastern bank of the river up from Greensbridge, to the proposed bio-diversity park at Dunmore as part of the River Nore Linear Park.**

8C   **Construction of a Boardwalk at Greensbridge to link the River Nore Riverside Walk at Riverside Drive with the new Riverside Linear Park in the Abbey Quarter and onwards to the Canal Walk**

8D   **To undertake a feasibility study to determine the optimal location for, and to develop, a water sports hub on the River Nore**

8E   **To provide a pedestrian crossing along the northern side of Greens Bridge.**

8.2.2   Neighbourhood Parks

In addition to the Regional parks as outlined above, day to day recreational provision for local communities will be provided by a series of neighbourhood parks.

The District towns and Ferrybank are all served by town parks, which are generally in a very central location and easily accessible. These parks provide facilities for both formal and informal recreation in a parkland environment. In the City, neighbourhood parks were provided at Loughboy and Newpark as part of the development of these neighbourhoods. In the Breagagh Valley and Loughmacask neighbourhoods, the provision of recreational facilities is a requirement of their phased development. Provision has been made in both of these areas for open space networks, neighbourhood parks and smaller pocket parks as part of the Local Area Plans previously prepared in 2004 and 2008 (See Volume 2 Core Strategy).

The Clover Social Centre is located in Christendom. The possible redevelopment of the overall site for sports and amenity uses, with retention of the social centre, is being explored.

The Council will support the retention of the Clover Social Club and facilitate public use of the associated open space.

8.2.3   Local Parks

There is a series of open spaces throughout the built-up areas of Kilkenny city, which provide a range of informal, passive and active recreational spaces. Some are located within housing developments or some are small pocket parks within the wider public realm.

8.2.4   Protection of Open Space

The Council will not normally permit development which is not compatible with or would result in the loss of green infrastructure or land zoned for recreational or open space purposes. An exception may be considered where one or more of the following requirements are demonstrably met:

- There is a clear excess of playing fields or open space provision within the area. This should take into account the long-term needs of the community, the type, recreational, amenity value and accessibility of such provision.
- Alternative compensatory provision is made which is both accessible to and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community served by the existing open space.
- The continued use, proper maintenance and enhancement of the amenity/facility can best be achieved by the redevelopment of a portion of the site that will not adversely affect its overall sporting, recreational, amenity or place making value of the facility.
- The site is indicated for an alternative use in this Development Plan.

8.3 Trails, Cycleways, Walkways and Linear Parks

There are a number of walking routes available in Kilkenny, through publicly owned and private lands – including long distance and looped walks and hiking routes[1]. Current trails (and rights of way) are depicted on Figure 8.1. The Council will continue to identify and promote a series of walking routes within the city and county and to link these to a strategic network of trails where feasible.

Long distance walking routes in the county include the South Leinster Way (stretching from Graiguenamanagh to Piltown) and the Nore Valley Walk. The Nore Valley walk currently has two complete sections; Kilkenny to Bennettsbridge and Thomastown to Inistioge. It remains a priority objective to complete the third section, from Bennettsbridge to Thomastown. Trail Kilkenny are the lead agency in the development of this walk.

There are also over 15 linear, looped and community walks throughout the county that have been developed by various agencies, including Trail Kilkenny and Coillte. The Council recognises the value of looped walks with public lighting in towns and villages, and will facilitate further development of such walks where feasible. Two walks are currently planned; a looped trail around the slate quarries of the Lingaun River Valley, and a walk through Castlecomer.

Long distance cycling trails have been developed or are in various stages of development throughout the county through the work of a number of agencies. Trail Kilkenny have developed two long distance cycling routes (the East and North Kilkenny routes) and two cycle loops (the North and South Kilkenny loops). A route links Kilkenny City with Carlow town with a total length of 44.5km.

Slí na Sláinte is an innovative scheme developed by the Irish Heart Foundation, supported by the HSE to encourage people of all ages and abilities to walk for leisure and good health. To date there are nearly 220 routes around the country.

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[1] A list of existing walking and cycling routes is included in Appendix C to this plan and shown on Figure 8.1.

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Figure 8.1 Walking, Cycling and Rights of Way

Date: September 2021

Legend
- Walking Routes and Trails
- Long Distance Walking Routes
- Cycling_Routes-line
- Public Rights of Way

Map labels:
- Discovery Park Castlecomer
- North Kilkenny Cycle Route
- Urlingford The Islands Walk
- Freshford Loop
- Jenkinstown Wood
- Brownswood
- Ballyrafton Wood
- River Nore Linear Park
- Newpark Marsh
- River Nore Linear Park
- Kilkenny Castlepark
- Millenium Wood
- Ballykeefe Wood
- Nore Valley Walk
- East Kilkenny Cycle Route
- Southern Kilkenny Cycle Route
- East Kilkenny Cycle Route
- Callan Abbey Meadow Walk
- Kings River at Kells
- Silaire Wood
- Kyledoir Wood
- Nore Valley Walk
- South Leinster Way
- Brandon Hill
- Garryricken Wood
- Brownsbarn Wood
- Woodstock
- Castlemorris Wood
- Tullahought Kilmacoliver Walk
- Mountain Grove Wood
- Clonassy Waterfall
- South Leinster Way
- Tory Hill

Slí na Sláinte is an important and valuable facility for every community. The widespread appeal is due to the fact that it provides an easily accessible and inexpensive environment for regular exercise. Many GAA club grounds within county have developed walking routes around their facilities. They provide a perfect location for a Slí na Sláinte route. They are regularly frequented by the community; they are safe, well maintained and can work in harmony with the local club to promote the many health benefits of active lifestyle. It will be the Council's policy to support community organisations in the development of walking routes such as Slí na Sláinte.

The Council will support, promote and facilitate a comprehensive network of greenways, linking parks and public open spaces to the Regional and National Greenway Networks and work with the NTA and adjoining local authorities and communities in this regard.

It is Council policy to continue to assist with and support the development of the Nore Valley Walk and protect its route from encroachment by unsympathetic development.

Trails and Walkways Objectives:

8F   To continue the development of new trails and walkways such as the Castlecomer, Knockdrinna Wood and Ballyhale Looped Walks and the upgrade of others such as the Freshford, Gathabawn and Kilmacoliver Looped Walks and the Nore Valley Walk.

8G   Investigate the development of a horse trail/bridle path at Woodstock estate.

8H   To complete the development of the linear park along the River Nore in the area of the Abbey Quarter.

8I   To extend the linear park at the Abbey Quarter to link with the existing section of the River Nore Linear Park at Riverside Drive.

8.4 Greenways and Blueways

There are two Greenways under development at present within the county, one of which is the Waterford to New Ross Greenway, known as the South East Greenway and incorporates the Kilkenny Greenway. This Greenway is a joint venture between Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford County Councils. While the three Councils are backing the project, it primarily passes through County Kilkenny, see Figure 8.2.

The second greenway under development is the Rosslare to Waterford Greenway. The route is centred around the out-of-service Rosslare Strand to Waterford rail corridor north of Belview Port. It will form part of a proposed integrated network of greenways, blueways and EuroVelo routes in the region providing an array of recreational facilities, constructed to the highest quality standards, for enjoyment by local and visiting pedestrians and cyclists. It will link to the Kilkenny Greenway at Belview, avoiding the working port area.

The Council will investigate the potential of and opportunities for the funding of walking and cycling greenways and trails in the county, and for the development of linkages between existing trails and others in adjoining counties; and support national trail development in conjunction with other local authorities, agencies and organisations. The Council will continue to support and facilitate the on-

Tullogher

Listerlin

New Ross
Environs

New Ro

Mullinavat

Glenmore

M9

Bigwood

Kilmacow

Slieverue

N29

Waterford
Environs

Ferrybank

Waterford

Kilkenny City and County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Figure 8.2 Kilkenny Greenway Project
Route

Date: September 2021

700m Consultation of Seveso Site

Kilkenny Greenway Route

going development of walking and cycling routes and trails in the city and county in conjunction with agencies such as Trail Kilkenny (see http://www.trailkilkenny.ie) and will support the proposals as set out in the *Trail Kilkenny Development & Business Plan.* Issues of accessibility such as car parking for walkers and cyclists to the trails must be included in any strategy. Possibilities for improved signage and maps should be facilitated to ensure wider access to the county's recreational assets.

In addition, the Council may seek to incorporate the provision of pedestrian and cycle ways as a condition of planning permission to link amenities, facilities and points of interest. The Council will also encourage the provision of access routes to amenity areas in co-operation with landowners and protect amenity areas from infringement by inappropriate development, and will seek to extend those spaces and pathways that can usefully form green links, footways and cycle ways to connect residential areas with parks and open spaces and with each other.

The Council, in conjunction with Laois County Council, Trail Kilkenny and Abbeyleix Community Development, examined the feasibility of using the former Kilkenny to Portlaoise railway line as a trail, in 2012. The feasibility study found that in some sections the track was incomplete, so the development of a continuous trail would pose significant land owner issues. The Council will protect the Kilkenny – Portlaoise former railway line and spur to Castlecomer from encroachment**.**

The Council will cooperate with other state agencies in the development of blueways along existing watercourses as considered appropriate with existing greenways and blueways.

The Council will support the progression of long-distance linear greenways and greenway town networks, and the further development and improvements of cycling and walking trails and paths in County Kilkenny, and the provision of appropriate services along these trails, and for the development of linkages between these trails and adjoining counties.

The Council will consider appropriate car parking facilities in conjunction with the development on amenity areas, amenity cycleways and walkways.

The Council will also support other local authorities and state agencies in the delivery of sustainable strategic greenway, and blueway projects in the region under the *Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways*, in particular the Rosslare to Waterford Greenway and the New Ross to St. Mullins connection.

Greenways and Blueways Objectives

8J   **To complete the construction of the Kilkenny Greenway, connecting New Ross to Waterford.**

8K   **To promote and develop the Waterford to Rosslare Greenway in association with Waterford City and County Council and Wexford County Council.**

8Ka   **The Council will investigate the potential of developing a Greenway from Kilkenny to Castlecomer and Ballyragget and onwards to Co. Laois as part of the development of Greenways and Blueways within the County.**

8Kb   **To undertake a metropolitan-wide Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy to include the identification of a location for a regional scale park within the Waterford Metropolitan Area as well as the development of neighbourhood parks and open spaces.**

8.4.1   The Rivers Nore, Suir and Barrow

The Rivers Nore, Suir and Barrow (known as the "Three Sisters") are the principal rivers flowing through County Kilkenny, and they form part of the Natura 2000 network (see Section 9.2.1.1 European Sites (Natura 2000)). These rivers, together with their tributaries offer significant opportunities for recreational opportunities both water and landside, including an interconnecting network of routes for walking and cycling which also provide access for water-sports such as swimming, angling, boating and kayaking. Routes along the river have the potential to connect to other trails and routes, such as the Nore Valley Way, as discussed above.

The Council will promote the natural amenity potential of the Rivers Nore, Suir and Barrow in order to facilitate the development of amenity, recreational, biodiversity and tourism benefits for the city and county generally, and will work with adjoining local authorities, agencies and communities to improve access and facilities along the rivers in appropriate locations subject to the availability of resources.

8.4.1.1   River Nore

The setting of Kilkenny city in the Nore River Valley provides an opportunity for establishing open spaces and networks of open spaces of strategic value and importance within the city. During the formulation of the Kilkenny Heritage Plan, the River Nore was identified as one of the county's most important heritage resources. The river encompasses built, natural and cultural heritage; is strongly identified with, and has had a very significant influence on, the life and development of the county. The *River Nore Heritage Audit*[2] has been undertaken as an action of the Heritage Plan. The study provides a comprehensive mapped dataset of the built, natural and cultural heritage of the study area, and the resulting report (which is in the final stages of completion) and database is a very significant

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[2] Kilkenny Heritage Forum, River Nore Heritage Audit, 2009

resource for community, heritage and tidy towns groups; it has the potential to inform planning and management of the area; and is a baseline against which change can be assessed[3].

8.4.1.2   River Barrow

The River Barrow flows along the eastern boundary of the county from north of Goresbridge to just north of Belview Port where it joins the River Suir to flow into Waterford Estuary. The River Barrow towpath is a significant amenity resource which runs along the riverbank on the County Carlow side of the river. Part of the towpath, through Counties Kildare and Carlow, is currently being developed as a Blueway. The Council will support proposals to enhance the tourism and recreation potential of the area subject to environmental, economic and heritage considerations.

Trail Kilkenny are currently examining the feasibility of a walk connecting St. Mullins to New Ross, which would link the Barrow Blueway to the South East Greenway. The achievement of such a connection will be pursued in conjunction with the relevant agencies, including Carlow and Wexford County Councils.

8.4.1.3   River Suir

The Suir River Valley also offers significant opportunities for the development of tourism and recreation in the south of the county.

8.4.2   Riverside Development

Factors that will be taken into account when considering proposals affecting the rivers include:

- Any landscape or natural, built heritage or archaeological designation for the area (refer to Chapter 9 Heritage for guidance),
- Any proposals to increase the extent of public access,
- The extent of any environmental improvements to the water environment and its surroundings,
- The nature of any recreation use proposed,
- Any conflict or compliance with proposals for walking or cycling routes

8.4.3   Riverside and Water sports Development Management Requirements

Most development associated with water sports such as slipways, boathouses, toilet and changing facilities, parking areas and access will require planning permission, and all will require screening for Appropriate Assessment. The following requirement must be met:

- **A high quality of design in terms of layout, buildings and other structures and in the treatment of boundaries either adjacent to the road or the actual waterway must be achieved. The Council will normally require details of landscaping and surface treatments to accompany all planning applications.**

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[3] http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage/).

- **any development along rivers must set aside land for recreation routes. Such routes could be linked to the wider network of green infrastructure and any established settlements in their vicinity.**

Water sports cover a wide range of activities from tranquil uses such as angling, sailing, canoeing, rowing and sail boarding to powered activities such as jet skis, water-skiing and powerboat uses. The Council may require management plans for particular water areas to address the compatibility of such varying demands.

The Council will normally only permit proposals for development associated with water sports adjacent to waterways and inland lakes where all the following criteria are met.

- The proposed facilities are compatible with any existing use of the water, including non-recreational uses;
- It will not have adverse impacts on any Natura 2000 site, will not result in damage to sites of nature conservation importance or features of the archaeological and built heritage;
- The development can be satisfactorily integrated into its landscape or townscape surroundings;
- The development will not have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity, having regard to the landscape character assessment; and
- The development will not result in over intensification of use leading to pollution, excessive noise and nuisance.

8.5 Recreation and Sporting Facilities

There are a large number of built recreation and sporting facilities provided throughout the county through a mix of public, private, schools, community facilities and voluntary organisations. Hurling and equestrian pursuits are of considerable importance to the county. Outdoor facilities include GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association), soccer and other playing pitches, golf courses, pitch and putt courses, equestrian facilities and athletic running tracks. Some of these facilities also combine other uses – such as the walking tracks developed around playing pitches and some facilities also combine locations with indoor facilities including swimming pools, gyms and community and sports halls catering for indoor sports – such as at the Watershed in Kilkenny City.

The Council will co-operate with local development organisations, community groups, sporting organisations and other stakeholders in the development of active recreational facilities throughout the county and to enter into joint venture arrangements where appropriate for the provision of such facilities.

Kilkenny County Council is committed to support the development of Urban and Rural Community Sports Hubs.

8.5.1 Accessibility

The Council recognises that local scale facilities must be located close to the population they serve. To this end, the Council will ensure, as far as practicable, that open space and recreational facilities are accessible by sustainable means of transport; namely walking, cycling and public transport,

depending on the catchment of the facility in question. In general, there will be a presumption against the location of facilities in out-of-centre sites unless the nature of the development is such that it is tied to the location, e.g. a walking trail. Applications for new recreational facilities will be subject to a sequential test. Sequential development means that the overall preferred location for new recreational facilities is within city and town centres or on edge-of-centre sites. Only where the applicant can demonstrate, and the planning authority is satisfied, that there are no sites or potential sites within or on the edge of centres or that suitable pedestrian and cycling connectivity is available should an out-of-centre site be considered.

In cases where the nature of the development is such that it is tied to the location, e.g. a walking trail, or a centre connected to existing amenities at that location, the following criteria should be met (in cases where no suitable sites exist within or on the edge of centres, out of centre sites will also be subject to these criteria):

Development Management Requirements:
- That the development will not cause harm to the appearance and character of the local landscape and can be readily absorbed into its surroundings by taking advantage of existing vegetation and/or topography
- That the amenity of the people living nearby or the enjoyment of other countryside users is not adversely affected by the nature, scale, extent, frequency or timing of the recreational activities proposed including any noise or lighting likely to be generated;
- That any ancillary built development is small in scale, designed to a high standard and sympathetic to the surrounding environment in its siting, layout and landscape treatment.
- Consideration is given to access to the proposed facility by means of transport other than the private car and;
- The local road network can safely handle the extra traffic the proposal would generate and satisfactory arrangements are provided for access, parking, drainage, litter and water services.

8.5.2   Protocol for the Development of Facilities

The provision of new facilities may not always be preferred as it may be more appropriate to upgrade, refurbish and improve existing facilities, particularly in established settlements. The following protocol will be used to ensure that development occurs in an orderly, sustainable manner, and should be considered as a sequential approach to developing or improving facilities (where existing).

a. Bring into use a redundant or infrequently used facility.

b. Make better/more frequent use of existing sports facilities, including sharing of facilities.

c. Improve management procedures within existing facilities.

d. Refurbish facilities within the existing footprint.

e. Extend existing facilities.

f. Provide a new stand-alone facility, to be considered as a last option once options (a) to (e) have been explored.

The final option (f) should be chosen after all other options have explored and ruled out.

8.5.3   Skate Park

A skate park is being developed in the Abbey Quarter, Kilkenny City as part of the Riverside Park. The skatepark is current under construction.

> **Objective**
>
> **8L   To complete the skate park as part of the Riverside Park at the Abbey Quarter.**

8.5.4   Intensive and Major Sports Facilities

Intensive sports facilities e.g. stadia provide a wide range of activities attracting significant numbers of spectators, that may have long opening hours. The location of intensive sports facilities can often be contentious.

The assessment of the proposal shall have regard, inter alia, to the following criteria.
- The proposal is compatible with development plan zonings.
- There will be no detrimental impact on residential amenity.
- It is located so as to be accessible to its catchment population and gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport and does not generate unacceptable levels of traffic.
- It is designed so as to minimise the impact of noise and light pollution.
- There is no significant detrimental impact on the natural environment or features of the archaeological or built heritage.
- The proposal is of high-quality design and respects and contributes to the character of its location and townscape.
- Public access is provided.

8.5.5   Noise Generating Sports

The impact of noise is an important issue in assessing proposals for activities such as motor sports. Appropriate sites for the regular use of these sports are not easy to identify and will depend on the type of activity, the tone, level and duration of any noise generated, local topography and the amount of existing and proposed screening. Proposals for noisy sports will only be acceptable where the likely impact can be contained and minimised by landform or woodland. Other suitable sites may include degraded land, former mineral workings or land adjacent to an existing source of noise. In certain cases, it may be considered appropriate to only grant a temporary permission to allow the impact of noise levels and any potential disturbance or nuisance to be more fully assessed.

Development Management Requirements:
The Council will not normally permit development proposals for sport or recreational uses generating high levels of noise unless the following criteria are met.

- There will be no unacceptable disturbance to local residents.
- There will be no unacceptable disturbance to farm livestock and wildlife.
- There will be no conflict with the enjoyment of areas used for informal recreation.

- The ambient noise level in the area is already high and the noise likely to be produced by the new activity will not be dominant.

8.5.6 Floodlighting of Recreational Facilities

The Council will normally only permit proposals for the floodlighting of recreational facilities where the amenities of adjacent residents will not be significantly impaired and the visual amenity and character of the locality will not be adversely affected.

8.6 Public Rights of Way

A public right of way is a person's right of passage along a road or path, even if the road or path is not in public ownership. They can be created by use from time immemorial, by statute or by dedication by the full owner of the land. The Council recognises the legal rights of all landowners and that rights of access to their lands may only be obtained with their permission where an existing right of way does not exist. A list of existing known rights of way in the county are included as on Appendix C to this plan and are shown on Figure 8.1. Known existing rights of way at the time of writing this Plan are listed, however this is not a comprehensive list, and further work will be carried out during the life of this plan to provide a more extensive listing.

- The Council recognises the importance of maintaining established rights of way and supports initiatives for establishing new walking routes and enhanced accessibility. The Council will use its powers under the Planning Acts to preserve, protect, maintain and enhance existing rights of way which give access to seashore, uplands, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational use.
- The Council aims to determine where public rights exist and where public rights of way should be created, and to promote their greater use in amenity areas – including access points to the Rivers Nore, Suir and Barrow and other amenity areas of the County.

> **Objective:**
> **8M To undertake a survey to establish any additional existing public rights of way in the county and establish a register within the life of the Plan.**
> **8N To protect existing public rights of way that give access to estuary, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational use.**

8.6.1 Rights of Way Development Management Requirements:

- **The Council will ensure that development does not impinge on public walking routes or on public rights of way.**

8.7 Play Policy

The Kilkenny Interagency Play Forum *Play Plan 2007 to 2012[4]* was developed based on the National Play Policy [Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy](#)[5]. The policy advocates a child-centred approach to the development of play facilities. The Council will seek to maintain the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas and create a child-friendly and safe environment where the importance of play is recognised for a child's development.

A number of playgrounds have been developed in various locations throughout the city and county as follows (see Figure 8.3):

Kilkenny City (8):	Castle Park, Assumption Place, Fr. McGrath Centre, Garringreen, Newpark Close, Margaretsfield, Talbot's Court and Rose Hill.
County (24):	Ballyhale, Ballyragget, Bennettsbridge, Callan, Castlecomer Demesne, Clogh/Moneenroe, Coon, Ferrybank (Blackthorn Hills and the Ferrybank Neighbourhood park), Fiddown, Goresbridge, Graiguenamanagh, Johnstown, Kells, Kilmacow, Mooncoin, Mullinavat, Paulstown, Stoneyford, Thomastown, Tullaroan, Urlingford, Windgap and Woodstock

The Council, in conjunction with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, will investigate the development of playgrounds in the county, as resources permit and will assist communities in the development of the playgrounds. Two additional playgrounds are currently being developed at Bigwood and Piltown.

Objective

8O   **To provide a playground at Rosbercon.**

8.7.1   Development Management Requirements:

The Council will require provision for children's play or developer contributions towards providing children's play facilities in association with new residential developments. Within new residential developments where there is a significant family residential component the whole environment should be designed so as to permit children to play in safety. (See Chapter 13)

8.8 Allotments

An emerging new form of land use has been the development of allotments. Allotment gardens allow a number of people to cultivate their own vegetables in individual plots/land parcels on lands owned by another private individual or body. The individual plot/parcel can vary in size and often the plots include a shed for tools and shelter. Allotments can have a number of benefits including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, biodiversity and providing a cheaper, local and sustainable source of food. The Council will support and facilitate the development of allotments within the county.

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[4] Kilkenny Interagency Play Forum, [Kilkenny County Play Policy 2007-2012 & Kilkenny Implementation Plan](#), 2007

[5] Department of Children & Youth Affairs, [Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy](#)

Clogh

Castlecomer
Demense

Ballyragget

Coon

Johnstown

Freshford

Urlingford

Johnswell

Paulstown

Tullaroan

Kilkenny

Goresbridge

Gowran

Kilmanagh

Bennettsbridge

Graiguenamanagh

Callan

Kells

Stoneyford

Thomastown

Dunnamaggin

Inistioge

Knocktopher

Ballyhale

Windgap

Kilmoganny

New Ross

Mullinavat

Glenmore

Piltown

Fiddown

Kilmacow

Slieverue

Mooncoin

Ferrybank
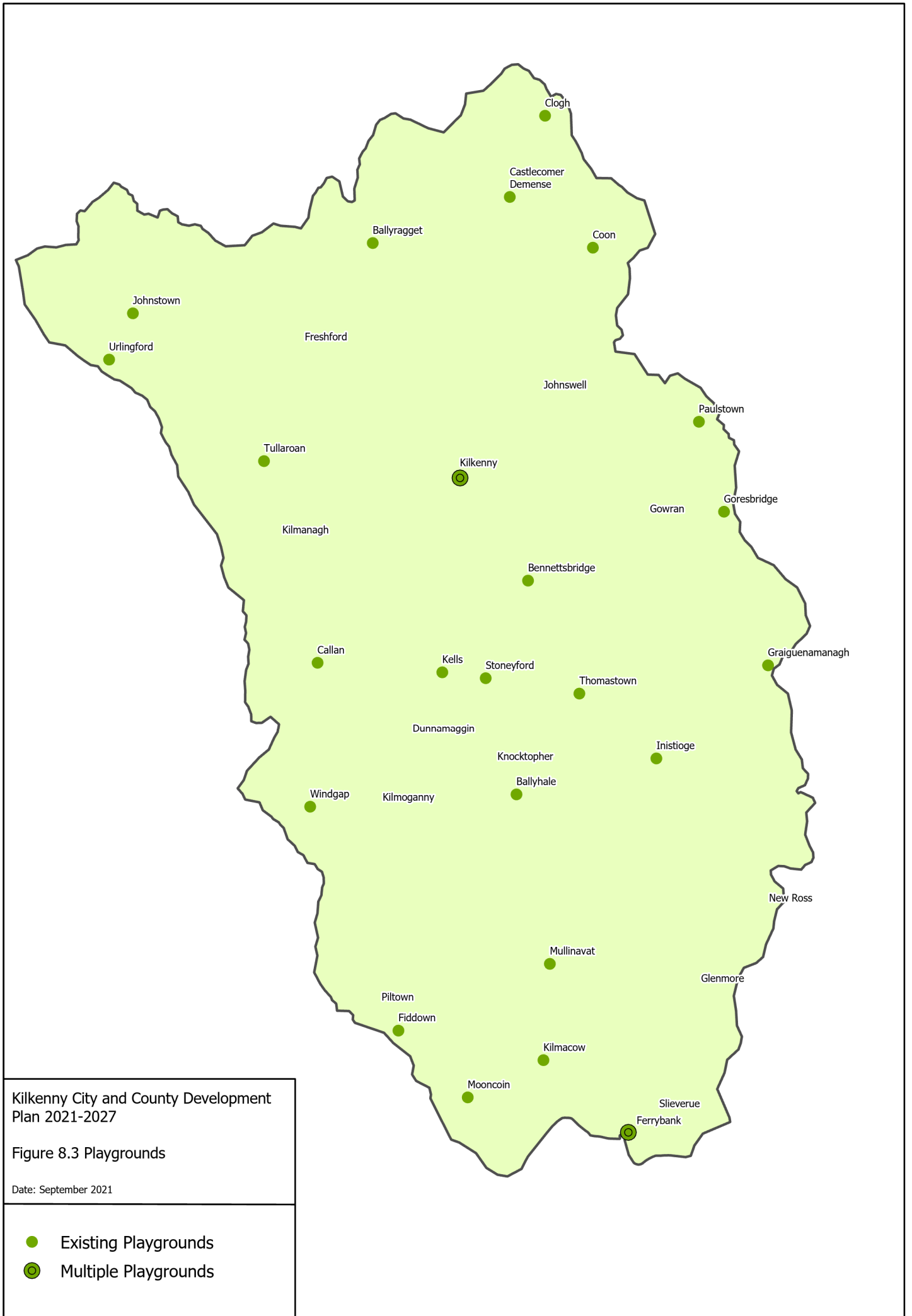
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Figure 8.3 Playgrounds

Date: September 2021

● Existing Playgrounds

◎ Multiple Playgrounds

8.9 Recreation/Open Space in new residential development

Applicants will be required to make provision for sports and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs generated by any development and the capacity of existing facilities in the area to cater for existing and future needs. For details of the requirements for the provision of open space within residential developments refer to Chapter 13.

9   Heritage, Culture and the Arts

> *Strategic Aim: To seek the protection and sustainable management of the arts, culture and heritage of Kilkenny for the benefit of current and future generations; to encourage the collection of knowledge to inform its protection; and to promote access to, awareness of and enjoyment of Heritage, Arts and Culture, to further develop the infrastructure and actively support engagement with communities. throughout Kilkenny.*

9.1   Introduction

County Kilkenny has a rich and varied built, natural and cultural heritage resource. Landscapes, rivers, woodlands, hedgerows, geology, plants and animals are all part of our natural heritage. Archaeological sites and many other buildings and structures such as houses, shops, churches, bridges and mills are features of our built heritage. Our cultural heritage includes aspects of heritage such as traditions, practices, knowledge and skills, which are an expression of our culture.

Kilkenny's heritage is that which makes the county unique, what gives it its special character and its 'sense of place'. Heritage has many values including economic, social, environmental and cultural[1]. It is vital for the health, well-being and quality of life of communities. It is a valuable economic resource. It underpins Kilkenny's tourism and agricultural sectors, and brings significant economic benefits to the county and its residents. Protecting and enhancing our heritage is vital to the health, well-being and quality of life of our communities. County Kilkenny's heritage plays a key role in planning for climate change in the county. It will be affected by changes in climate, and it also has the capacity to be part of our climate adaptation and resilience strategies.

The *National Heritage Plan* and the *National Biodiversity Action Plan* recognise the key role that local authorities, and locally-led action, plays in heritage awareness and management. A key element of both plans is an enhanced role for local authorities in heritage management, to be given effect through the preparation and implementation of County Heritage Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans. The County Kilkenny Heritage Plan and County Kilkenny Biodiversity Plan are incorporated in the *Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy 2018-2022*[2].

Under this remit the Council will support the implementation of the *National Heritage Plan* (Heritage 2030, in preparation) and the *National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021* (and subsequent plans). It will seek the protection and sustainable management of the heritage of County Kilkenny for the benefit of current and future generations. Through its policies and actions, the Council will promote increased awareness of the heritage of the county.

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[1] Ecorys and Fitzpatricks and Associates, *Valuing Heritage: Scoping Study. A report to Kildare, Kilkenny and Meath County and Cork City Councils*, 2015
[2] Kilkenny County Council, *Cultural Strategy 2018 - 2022*

The Council will support the implementation of the *National Heritage Plan* and *National Biodiversity Action Plan*. The Council will prepare and implement, in partnership with the Kilkenny Heritage Forum and all relevant stakeholders, a County Heritage Plan and County Biodiversity Action Plan. The Council will also support the implementation of key legislation and national and local policies, programmes and plans which identify, protect and promote Kilkenny's heritage[3].

It is the aim of the Council to develop and support programmes which encourage active participation in identifying, recording, protecting, communicating and enjoying Kilkenny's heritage[4].

9.2   Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

Natural heritage, also referred to as biodiversity, includes the variety of life around us. It comprises all plants and animals (including humans), fungi, algae and micro-organisms, the habitat where they live and their genetic diversity. It also includes the physical and geological foundation that forms landscapes.

Biodiversity is important because all of life depends on biodiversity for survival. Our biodiversity underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation and is a core component of the county's green infrastructure. Protection and wise use of the county's natural resources is necessary to achieve sustainable development. The Council will support the implementation of the *Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan*[5].

It is the aim of the Council to conserve, sustainably manage and enhance the County's natural heritage and biodiversity and to promote understanding of and sustainable access to it.

A number of areas in County Kilkenny have been identified as being of exceptional importance for biodiversity at a national and/or international level (See Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1). These areas are protected through national and European legislation. In addition, certain plant, animal and bird species found in the county are considered rare or vulnerable and are protected by Irish law.

The Council recognises the important role of the environment through diversity, quality, integrity and quality of life by promoting the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and will promote appropriate enhancement of the natural environment as an integral part of all development.

9.2.1   Protected habitats and species designated for nature conservation

9.2.1.1   European Sites (Natura 2000)

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) provide for the conservation and protection of breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and rare habitat types in a European context considered to be most in need of conservation. Such sites form

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[3] ibid

[4] ibid

[5] Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, *Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan,* 2019

part of an EU network of ecologically important and protected sites known as Natura 2000 sites and comprise:

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** – these sites are selected for the conservation and protection of plant and animal species (other than birds) and habitats listed in Annex I and Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) respectively.
- **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** – these sites are selected for the conservation and protection of birds and their habitats designated under the EU Birds Directive 2009 (2009/147/EC) (first adopted in 1979) and transposed into Irish law by the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations (SI 291 of 1985).

There are 8 Natura 2000 sites within the County (see Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1). The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage identify, evaluate and propose sites for designation. The boundaries of protected areas may change and/or new sites may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan. Up-to-date information on boundaries and details of designated sites is available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website (www.npws.ie).

As set out in Chapter 1, the Council will ensure that an Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with Articles 6(3) and Article 6(4) is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, but likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

There are a number of overlaps between areas zoned for development and/or areas within settlement boundaries and European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas). These European Sites are protected from inappropriate development under the European Habitats and Birds Directives, transposing national legislation and various provisions under this Plan. The protection of the integrity of European Sites as per these requirements will take primacy over other Plan provisions.

Visitor and Habitat Management
The Council will seek to control the impact of visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new any projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones. As per Section 1.3, all projects that may have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. Control measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for projects as relevant and appropriate.

Integrated Management Plans for European Sites
The Council shall be available to engage with the NPWS with the objective of achieving the preparation and implementation of Integrated Management Plans, informed as appropriate by comprehensive species surveys, for sites within the County, including those which are designated for Kingfisher and Otter. Such Plans would establish the necessary conservation measures for European sites in line with the Habitats Directive and be integrated with other plans and programmes, with the intention that

004160
000652
000652
001853

002332 002333

002162

004233 000869

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001858

000831

002162

000849

000407

26

5

002162

18

9

8 7

002382

10 3

13

Freestone
Hill

1

4

6 24

20

21

19

002162

002252

004233

12

000770

25

22 14 15

17

Lingaun
River
Valley

002137

002388

000404

2

23

16

Tory Hill

002137

11

002137

002162

002162

002137

000671 004027

000697

000764
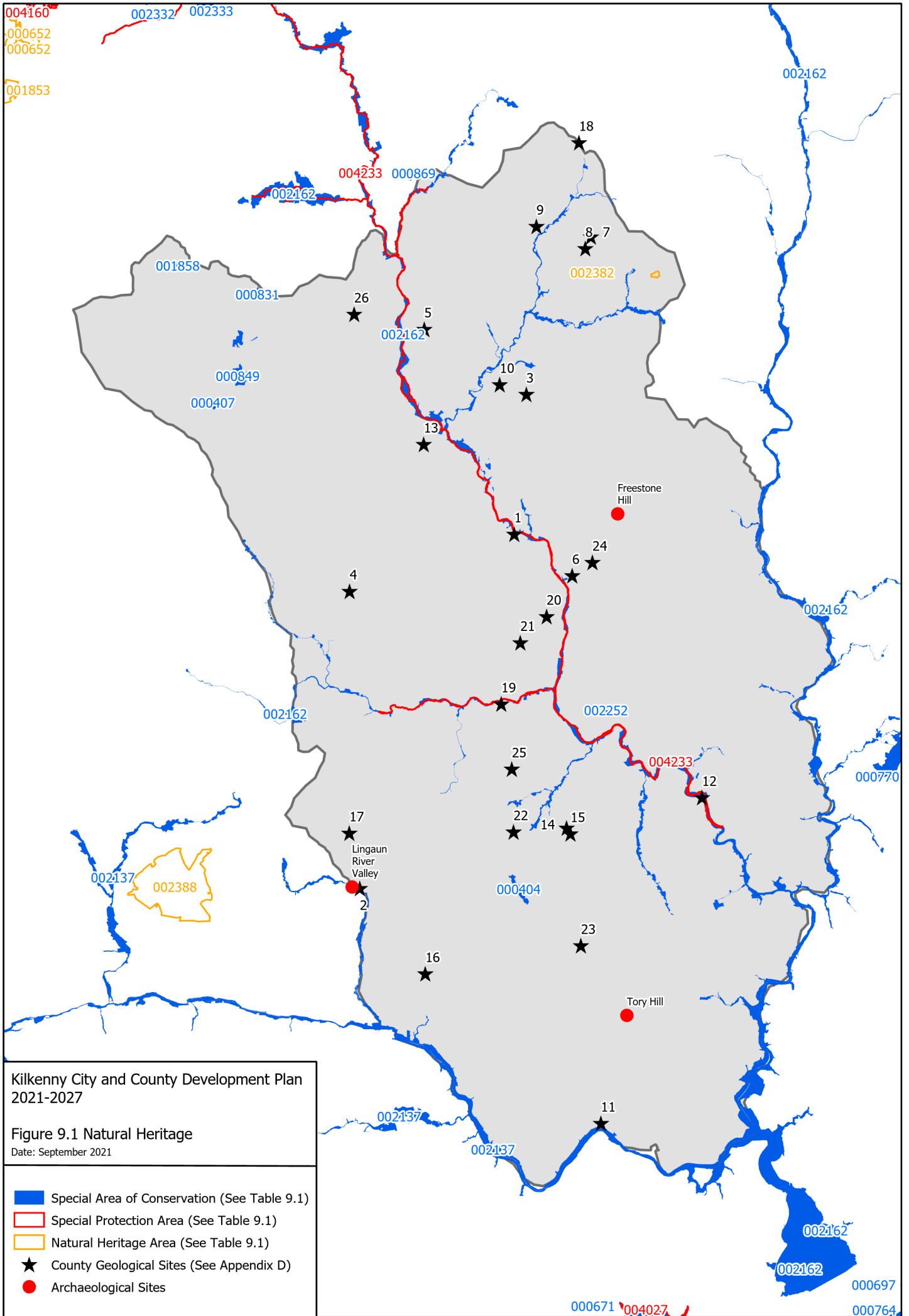
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Figure 9.1 Natural Heritage
Date: September 2021

■ Special Area of Conservation (See Table 9.1)
□ Special Protection Area (See Table 9.1)
□ Natural Heritage Area (See Table 9.1)
★ County Geological Sites (See Appendix D)
● Archaeological Sites

such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations, including those of local communities.

Development Management Requirements
AAs for Recreation
AAs for recreational projects that have the potential to affect the integrity of any European site shall demonstrate that potential direct, indirect and cumulative effects including in relation to the following issues, have been adequately mitigated, where they exist:

- Hard infrastructure in riparian zones;
- Increased recreational access;
- Species and populations of conservation concern, such as Kingfisher and Otter where relevant; and
- Water quality

9.2.1.2   Natural Heritage Area
Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and encompass nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms and geomorphological features. There are 34 Natural Heritage Areas in the county. See Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1.

9.2.1.3   Statutory Nature Reserve
A Nature Reserve is an area of importance to wildlife which is protected under Ministerial order. Most are owned by the State. There are 4 Statutory Nature Reserves in the county. See Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1.

9.2.1.4   Wildfowl Sanctuary
Wildfowl Sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. There are 2 wildfowl sanctuaries in the county. See Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1.

9.2.1.5   Protected Plant and Animal Species
Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. These includes plant species listed in the Flora (Protection) Order 2015 (S.I. No. 356 of 2015) (or other such Orders) and animals and birds listed in the Wildlife Act, 1976 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and those listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

The Planning Authority will consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (a) in respect of any proposed development where there is a possibility that such development may have an impact on a protected area of international or national importance, and (b) take account of any licensing requirements, when undertaking, or approving development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by national or European legislation.

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU legislation and national legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds

and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts). This protection will extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may arise during the lifetime of this plan.   The Council will also protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI94 of 1999).

Development Management Requirements:

- Ensure that an ecological impact assessment is carried out, by suitably qualified professional(s), for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on rare and threatened species including those species protected by law and their habitats. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.

Table 9.1 Protected Habitats of International and National Importance						
Site Name	Site Code/Ref	SAC	SPA	pNHA	SNR	WF
Cullahill Mountain	000831	✓				
Hugginstown Fen	000404	✓		✓		
Galmoy Fen	001858	✓		✓		
Lower River Suir	002137	✓				
River Barrow & River Nore	002162	✓		✓		✓
River Nore	004233		✓			
Spa Hill & Clomantagh Hill	000849	✓				
The Loughans	000407	✓				
Thomastown Quarry	002252	✓				
Archersgrove	002051			✓		
Ardaloo Fen	000821			✓		
Ballykeeffe Woodland	000400			✓	✓	
Barrow River Estuary	000698			✓		
Brownstown Wood	000827			✓		
Clohastia	000830			✓		
Coan Bogs*	002382			✓		
Dunmore Cave	000401			✓		
Dunmore Complex	001859			✓		
Esker Pits	000832			✓		
Fiddown Island	000402			✓	✓	
Garryrickin Nature Reserve	000403			✓	✓	
Grannyferry	000833			✓		
Ice House near Inistioge	002094			✓		
Inchbeg	000836			✓		
Inistioge	000837			✓		

Kilkeasy Bog	000839			✓		
Kyleadohir Wood Nature Reserve	000405			✓	✓	
Kylecorragh Wood	000842			✓		
Lough Cullin	000406			✓		✓
Lough Macask	001914			✓		
Mothel Church, Coolcullen	000408			✓		
Mount Juliet	000843			✓		
Murphy's of the River	000844			✓		
Newpark Marsh	000845			✓		
Rathsnagadan Wood	000409			✓		
Red Bog, Dungarvan	000846			✓		
Thomastown	000410			✓		
Tibberaghny Marshes	000411			✓		
Whitehall Quarries	000855			✓		

See www.npws.ie for further information.

* refers to the fact that Coan bog is an NHA, not a pNHA

9.2.2 Biodiversity Outside of Habitats Designated for Nature Conservation

Much of the biodiversity in the county occurs in the wider countryside, i.e., in areas which are not subject to legal protection under National or EU biodiversity law. These habitats and features are particularly important in contributing to the biodiversity, landscape value and sense of place of the county. They provide vital links and corridors to allow the movement of plant and animals between the network of protected sites. These features include: hedgerows, ditches and banks, stone walls, woodlands, estates and parklands, rivers, streams and associated riparian zones, reservoirs, ponds and canals. Such corridors or interconnected networks are the basis of our Green Infrastructure.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive outlines the obligations of EU member states in relation to natural heritage in the wider countryside. It provides that through land use planning and development policies, Planning Authorities shall endeavour to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their function and structure are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species and form part of the network of green infrastructure.

Kilkenny County Council has commissioned, and continues to commission, habitat assessments and Green Infrastructure surveys of a number of towns, villages, and habitats throughout the county, including Kilkenny City, Gowran, Fiddown, Piltown, Johnstown, Urlingford, Ballyragget, Ballyhale, Mooncoin, Thomastown, and Knocktopher. The findings of these surveys are vital to improving our understanding of biodiversity resource in the county and will be used to inform the development management process.

Objective

9A   Continue to identify and map habitats and green infrastructure of county importance, and raise awareness and understanding of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity identifying green corridors and measures to connect them.

Development Management Requirements:
- **To ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.**
- **To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands, trees) which are not within designated sites.**
- **To ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure networks are required in developments where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development.**

9.2.3   Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure can be defined as strategically planned and interconnected networks of green space and water capable of delivering ecosystem services and quality of life benefits. Green Infrastructure can include parks, open spaces, rivers, farmland, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens which surround and intersperse our towns and villages. The National Planning Framework (NPF) highlights the importance of the interrelationships between biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and our green spaces. The NPF states that integrated planning for green infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of economic, environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities including:

- adaptation to the impacts of climate change and flooding
- high-quality environment which can attract investment and new business
- places for people to access nature, outdoor recreation and for social interaction
- local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture
- space for nature and wildlife to flourish
- a sense of place and local distinctiveness
- a resource for environmental education

Green Infrastructure planning has a significant role to play in assisting in the protection of Natura 2000 sites, biodiversity in the wider countryside and climate resilience. The Council's Land Use Plans will protect, manage and provide, where possible, green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner.

Objective

9B   To identify and map green infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.

Development Management Requirement:

- **Require all developments in the early pre-planning stage of the planning process to identify, protect and enhance ecological features and habitats, and making provision for local biodiversity (e.g. through protection of existing breeding sites, and provision of appropriate new infrastructure such as swift, bat and barn owl boxes, bat roost sites, green roofs, etc.) and provide links to the wider Green Infrastructure network as an essential part of the design process.**

9.2.4   Geological Heritage

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) has assessed the geological heritage of County Kilkenny and identified sites of geological and geomorphological importance, and recommended their protection as County Geological Sites[6] (See Appendix D). Some of these sites may in future be designated by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the GSI as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) because of their geological interest from a national perspective. In the interim, the Council will seek to maintain the geological value of these sites and to protect, and where appropriate, enhance their geological and geomorphological heritage values. The locations of the sites are shown on Figure 9.1.

The Council will consult the Geological Survey of Ireland when considering undertaking, approving or authorising developments which are likely to affect County Geological Sites. In some locations, in consultation with landowners, it may be possible to access geological and geo-morphological features of interest, and the Council will support and facilitate this where appropriate.

9.2.5   Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

Woodlands and trees contribute significantly to the biodiversity and landscape character of the county. They are a vital part of a network of habitats, ecological 'corridors' and 'stepping stones' essential for wildlife to flourish and move between and within habitats. They have a vital role to play in climate adaptation. They filter out noise, dust and pollutants and help minimise flooding by retaining moisture.

Useful databases and sources of information on woodlands and trees in County Kilkenny include:

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[6] Clarke, A., Parkes, M. & Gatley, S. 2007. *The Geological Heritage of Kilkenny. An audit of County Geological Sites in Kilkenny.* Geological Survey of Ireland. Unpublished Report.
https://www.gsi.ie/ga-ie/publications/Pages/The-Geological-Heritage-of-Kilkenny.aspx

- Ancient woodlands are areas which have been wooded since 1660. 28 Possible ancient woodlands (PAWS) and long-established woodlands (LEWS) were identified by the NPWS in Co. Kilkenny[7]
- The Tree Register of Ireland (TROI) database of outstanding trees in Ireland compiled by the Tree Council of Ireland identifies significant trees in the county. A copy of the TROI for Kilkenny is available to view from the Parks Department of Kilkenny County Council.
- Woodland Survey of Kilkenny (Kilkenny County Council, 1997) identifies the amenity potential of woodlands in the county. A copy of the survey is available to view from the Parks Department of Kilkenny County Council.
- The National Survey of Native Woodlands (2003-2008) identified and surveyed 58 sites in Kilkenny as part of a National Survey[8].
- Survey of Mature Trees Kilkenny City, see Appendix F

There are a number of legislative measures which recognise the importance of trees and woodlands and provide for their protection. These include:

i.   Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's)
        Under the Planning and Development Act 2000, TPO's allow for the protection of trees, groups of trees and woods of amenity value. Trees, which are the subject of a TPO, cannot be felled unless the owner also obtains planning permission. See Appendix E for list of current TPO's in the county. This list may be added to over the course of this Plan.   Consult with the Parks Department of the County Council for the most up-to-date list.   The Council will conserve important trees, groups of trees or woodlands, using Tree Preservation Orders, as appropriate.

ii.   Tree Felling
        Under the Forestry Act 2014, with certain exceptions, it is illegal to uproot or cut down any tree unless notice of intention to do so has been given in accordance with the Act. The Council will provide guidance to landowners on the legal requirements and procedures in relation to tree felling in order to protect the landscape character and biodiversity of the county.

9.2.5.1   Hedgerows

Hedgerows contribute significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. They have an important farming function, they are wildlife habitats, and corridors, between habitats, and they also have historical significance as townland and field boundaries. Hedgerows are afforded protection under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, prohibiting the cutting of hedges within the bird nesting period (1st March -31st August).

Kilkenny County Council has undertaken surveys of hedgerows in a number of areas/settlements around the county, as part of the Habitat and Green Infrastructure Assessments, undertaken to inform Local Area Plans (See Section 9.2.2 Biodiversity Outside of Habitats Designated).

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[7] Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *A provisional inventory of ancient and long-established woodland in Ireland,* 2010

[8] BEC Consultants, *National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003-2008,* 2008

The Council will promote the planting of native tree and shrub species, by committing to using native species (of local provenance wherever possible) in its landscaping work and on County Council property and maximise the opportunity to enhance biodiversity within the City & County during the life time of the plan.

Development Management Requirements:

- **To protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character of the county, and to ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management, when undertaking, approving or authorising development.**

- **To ensure that when undertaking, approving or authorising development that sufficient information is provided to enable an assessment of impacts on woodlands, trees, and hedgerows.**

- **To have regard to, and seek the conservation of identified trees and woodlands from a) the National Survey of Ancient and Long-Established Woodlands, b) the Tree Register of Ireland (c) sites of significance identified in the Kilkenny Woodlands Survey 1997, (d) the National Survey of Native Woodlands, and (e) Survey of Mature Trees in Kilkenny City and Environs, in the assessment of planning applications**

- **To retain hedgerows, and other distinctive boundary treatment such as stone walls, when undertaking, authorising or approving development; where the loss of the existing boundary is unavoidable as part of development, to ensure that a new hedgerow is planted using native species, and species of local provenance to replace the existing hedgerow and/or that the wall is re-built using local stone and local vernacular design.**

- **To discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and, where appropriate make use of Tree Preservation Orders to protect important trees and groups of trees which may be at risk or have an amenity, biodiversity or historic value.**

- **To require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments as appropriate. See Appendix G for a list of native trees and shrubs.**

9.2.6   Inland Waters- Rivers, Streams and Groundwater

The rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater in County Kilkenny are important riparian zones and are home to a variety of plant and animal species, and are one of the most important biodiversity resources in the county. The Rivers Barrow, Nore and Suir (known collectively as the "Three Sisters") are the principal rivers flowing through County Kilkenny. They are protected habitats under European legislation. The rivers provide a rich landscape setting for the towns and village of the county and are the primary green infrastructure network in the county. The economic benefits of the rivers are significant.   The development of riverside walks has enabled greater access to the waterway corridors, whilst the rivers themselves are used for water-pursuits including angling, boating, canoeing and kayaking, and swimming. The River Nore Heritage Audit (2009-2011) identifies and maps the built, natural and cultural heritage of the River Nore corridor in County Kilkenny (See section 8.4.1.1 River Nore for further details). Groundwater is important for supplying water and maintaining wetlands and river flows in dry periods.

Relevant planning applications shall have regard to the guidance document '*Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment*'.

9.2.7   Wetlands

Wetlands include a wide range of habitats including watercourses, marshes, fens, bogs, turloughs, wet woodlands and estuaries. They support a variety of habitats and species, function in the protection of water quality and flood control, are important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience, and provide open space and recreational opportunities. The *County Kilkenny Preliminary Wetland Survey*, 2020 provides baseline ecological data on wetland sites in the county.

National planning legislation requires that work or development involving the drainage or reclamation of a wetland greater than 0.1ha needs planning permission. For drainage or reclamation of wetlands greater than 2ha, an Environmental Assessment is required.

The Council will protect, manage and enhance the wetlands of the County having regard to the '*County Kilkenny Preliminary Wetland Survey, 2020*' and subsequent surveys published during the lifetime of this plan. The Council will also ensure that there is an appropriate level of assessment in relation to proposals which involve draining, reclaiming or infilling of wetland habitats.

9.2.8   Peatlands

Peatlands are important ecosystems sustaining a range of animal and plant species. The distribution of peatland in Kilkenny is shown on Figure 9.3. Industrial extraction of peat for energy and horticulture in Kilkenny is limited to a small area in the northwest of the county, adjacent to the Tipperary county boundary. Damage to peatlands can occur from domestic peat extraction, afforestation, wind farms, recreational activities and invasive species. Peatlands may contain archaeological artefacts. The *National Peatland Strategy*[9] guides peatland management and conservation.

Baunmore Bog has been selected by Bord Na Móna to be part of a project to establish and accelerate the development of native woodland that would have climate action benefits and provide significant new habitat for a wide range of species.

The Council will protect peatlands from inappropriate development having regard to their amenity and biodiversity value and their visual sensitivity.

9.2.9   Pollinators

One third of our bee species are threatened with extinction from Ireland. Habitat loss, loss of food sources, pests and disease, pesticide and climate change all contribute. In addition to their intrinsic value, they are vital to our agricultural and horticultural industries, contribute to our health and wellbeing, and also pollinate up to 78% of flowering plants.

Kilkenny County Council has adopted the All Ireland Pollinator Plan (www.pollinator.ie), a national framework which aims to make Ireland a place where pollinators thrive. The Council will continue to

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[9] Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, *National Peatland Strategy*, 2015

support the implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and is committed to undertaking actions to support pollinators in the county.

The Council will in as far as is practicable and affordable manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants on Council land.

9.2.10 Invasive Species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species (animals and plants that are introduced accidently or deliberately into a natural environment where they are not normally found) are a significant threat to biodiversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment, buildings and the economy.

Irish legislation makes it an offence to plant, breed, disperse, allow dispersal or cause to grow a range of plant and animal species, or to import or transport these or vector material such as soil or spoil from which they can grow (Articles 49 and 50 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011). The Council will seek to prevent the spread of invasive non-native species.

Development Management Requirements:

- **To require relevant development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.**
- **For proposals connected to surface water systems, risks associated with the spread of crayfish plague shall be considered and applicants should submit a crayfish plague management strategy where appropriate.**

9.2.11 Native Plant Species

Where possible, the use of native plants and seeds from indigenous seed sources should be used on all developments and landscape projects/treatments. This will help to:

- contribute to national commitments on the conservation of biological diversity by establishing native habitats and reducing the planting and dispersion of non-native plants
- support a reduction in the threat posed by the importation of pests and diseases carried on non-native (and non-indigenously sourced) plant material
- compensate for loss of habitat
- maintain regional identity, landscape character and diversity

Development Management Requirement:

- **The Council will promote the use of native plants and seeds from indigenous seed sources in all landscape projects**

9.2.12 Landscape

"Landscape" is defined as an area whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The landscape of County Kilkenny is a dynamic and valuable resource which incorporates all aspects of the natural, built and cultural heritage. Landscapes provide a sense of place and characterise the county for local residents and visitors alike both in terms of a place to live and also for recreational and tourism purposes.

Developments by their nature are likely to have some varying degree of visual impact on a landscape's character profile depending on the type, use and scale of development proposed. It is important that Kilkenny's landscape as a resource is sensibly managed and protected. Consequently, the onus shall be on the developer to satisfactorily demonstrate that such new development can be adequately absorbed into its surrounding landscape without significant adverse visual impacts to its overall landscape value.

The County's landscapes offer a significant economic asset, with the agricultural and tourism potential of the rivers and upland landscapes being of particular significance. The protection and promotion of the landscape as an economic product is therefore critical.

The European Landscape Convention promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes. The Convention was adopted by the Council of Europe in October 2000 and came into force in March 2004. The Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht published a National Landscape Strategy[10], in 2015   One of the recommendations of the NLS is to develop a National Landscape Character Assessment, and once that is completed the Council will review its own LCA to ensure compliance.

9.2.12.1 Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process which describes, maps and classifies landscapes objectively. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future.

Having regard to the European Landscape Convention a Landscape Character Assessment report was prepared for County Kilkenny in 2003 (in accordance with the *[Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities](#)*, 2000[11]). The Landscape Character Assessment identified four landscape character types, which are subdivided into 14 landscape character areas, with some areas identified as being of special landscape character value and also identified features and areas of high landscape sensitivity.

The Council will protect and sustainably manage the landscape character of County Kilkenny, having regard to the findings of the landscape character assessment and the Development Management

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[10] https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8a59b-national-landscape-strategy/

[11] Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015 – 2025*, 2015

Requirements as set out in this chapter for the sustainable development of the county and appropriate conservation of its landscape character.

9.2.12.2 Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the county, but share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, for example, Upland Areas.

The Landscape Character Assessment divides the county into four landscape character types (LCTs). These are:
- Upland Areas,
- Lowland Areas,
- River Valleys, and
- Transitional Areas.

9.2.12.3 Landscape Character Areas

LCTs are sub-divided into 14 geographically specific Landscape Character Areas. Landscape character areas and types are identified in Figure 9.2 (for further details please refer to the Landscape Character Assessment, which formed Appendix C to the 2008 Development Plan, and is reproduced in full on the Council's website[12] and available for inspection at the Planning Section of the Council). Landscape Character Areas are units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, landuse, cultural, historical and ecological features.

9.2.12.4 Landscape Character Values

In addition to the physical and visual characteristics of the landscape, communities or individuals attach certain values to the landscape. Landscape values can be described as the environmental or cultural benefits (including services and functions) derived from various landscape attributes.

Landscape Areas of Highly Scenic and Significant Visual Amenity Value
The Landscape Character Assessment highlights the special landscape value of several of the Landscape Character Areas illustrated in Figure 9.2 – in particular Brandon Hill Uplands and the River Valley Areas of the Rivers Nore, Barrow and Suir have been identified as being highly scenic and visually pleasing, and as having significant visual amenity value and tourism potential within the county.

Development Management Requirement:
- **To ensure that development within the Landscape Character Areas of Brandon Hill Uplands and the River Valleys of the Nore, Barrow and Suir, which are highly scenic and visually**

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[12]http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/resources/eng/Services/Planning/DevelopmentPlans/Appendix_C_Landscape_Character_Assessment.pdf

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Figure 9.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Date: September 2021

Legend
- ProtectedView
- Highly Scenic
- Visually Pleasing
- Lowland
- Transition Zone
- Upland
- River Valley
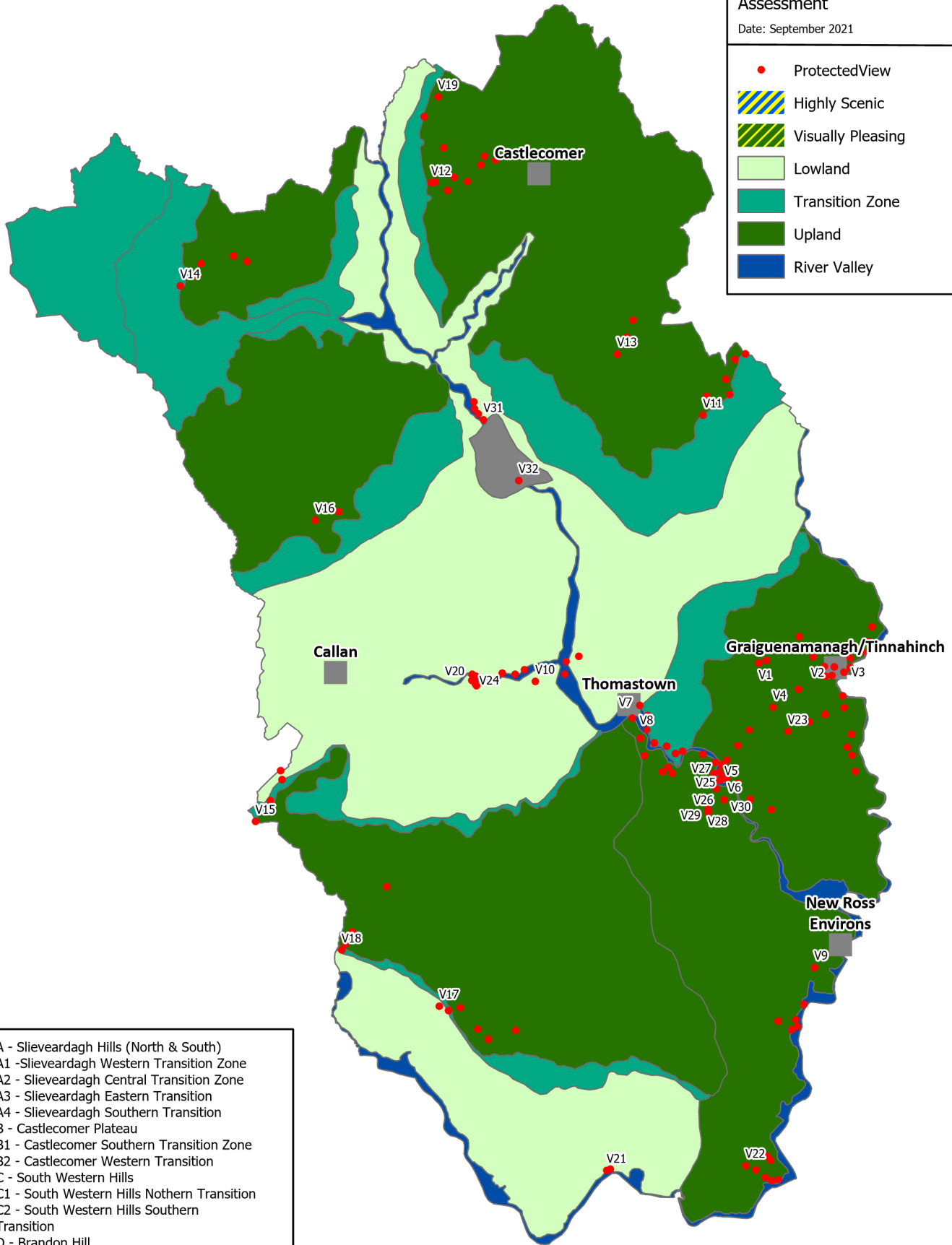
A - Slieveardagh Hills (North & South)
A1 - Slieveardagh Western Transition Zone
A2 - Slieveardagh Central Transition Zone
A3 - Slieveardagh Eastern Transition
A4 - Slieveardagh Southern Transition
B - Castlecomer Plateau
B1 - Castlecomer Southern Transition Zone
B2 - Castlecomer Western Transition
C - South Western Hills
C1 - South Western Hills Nothern Transition
C2 - South Western Hills Southern Transition
D - Brandon Hill
D1 - Brandon Hill Transition Zone
E - South Eastern Hills
F1 - Kilkenny Northern Basin
F2 - Kilkenny Western Basin
F3 - Kilkenny Eastern Basin
G - South Kilkenny Lowlands
H - Nore Valley South
I - Barrow Valley
J - Suir Valley

pleasing, and of significant visual amenity value, are carefully sited and designed and can be successfully assimilated into the landscape.

9.2.12.5 Landscape Character Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas is defined as its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components.

Areas of Greater Sensitivity

The Landscape Character Assessment identified areas throughout the county that are highly sensitive to development and have a limited capacity for change. These areas are identified on Figure 9.3. These areas take account of areas of higher altitude in the county and of land cover. In general areas of elevated topography, with low growing or sparse vegetation and little existing development are landscapes of high sensitivity and have a low potential to absorb new development.

Sensitive land-use categories include areas which are open and exposed with sparse or low growing vegetation cover which is insufficient to provide screening. Even if planting is introduced, the exposed nature of these areas will not support any significant tall vegetation. Due to this, any development would be visible over a wide area. The exceptions to this are broadleaved, mixed forest and transitional woodland scrub areas which do support tall vegetation with potential to screen development. However, these categories area sensitive due to their natural character and their longevity in the landscape; any loss to their structure (for example, through felling) would have a visual impact over a wide area.

9.2.12.6 Views and Prospects

There is a need to protect and conserve views and prospects adjoining public roads and river valleys throughout the county where these views are of high amenity value. In conserving views, it is not proposed that this should give rise to the prohibition of development along these routes but development, where permitted, should not seriously hinder or obstruct these views and should be designed and located to minimise their impact. The views and prospects to be protected are contained in Appendix H to the Plan and are shown on Figure 9.2. The Planning Authority will be cognisant of the impact of developments within the county on views from neighbouring counties.

The Council will preserve and support the improvement of places or areas from which views or prospects of special amenity value exist, as identified in Appendix H and on Figure 9.2.

Development Management Requirements:

- To protect the landscape character, quality and local distinctiveness of County Kilkenny, and have regard to the guidance set out in the Landscape Character Assessment.

- Where necessary, to require that applications are accompanied by a visual impact assessment, particularly in upland areas, river valleys and areas of greater sensitivity.

Castlecomer

Kilkenny City

Callan

Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch

Thomastown

New Ross Environs
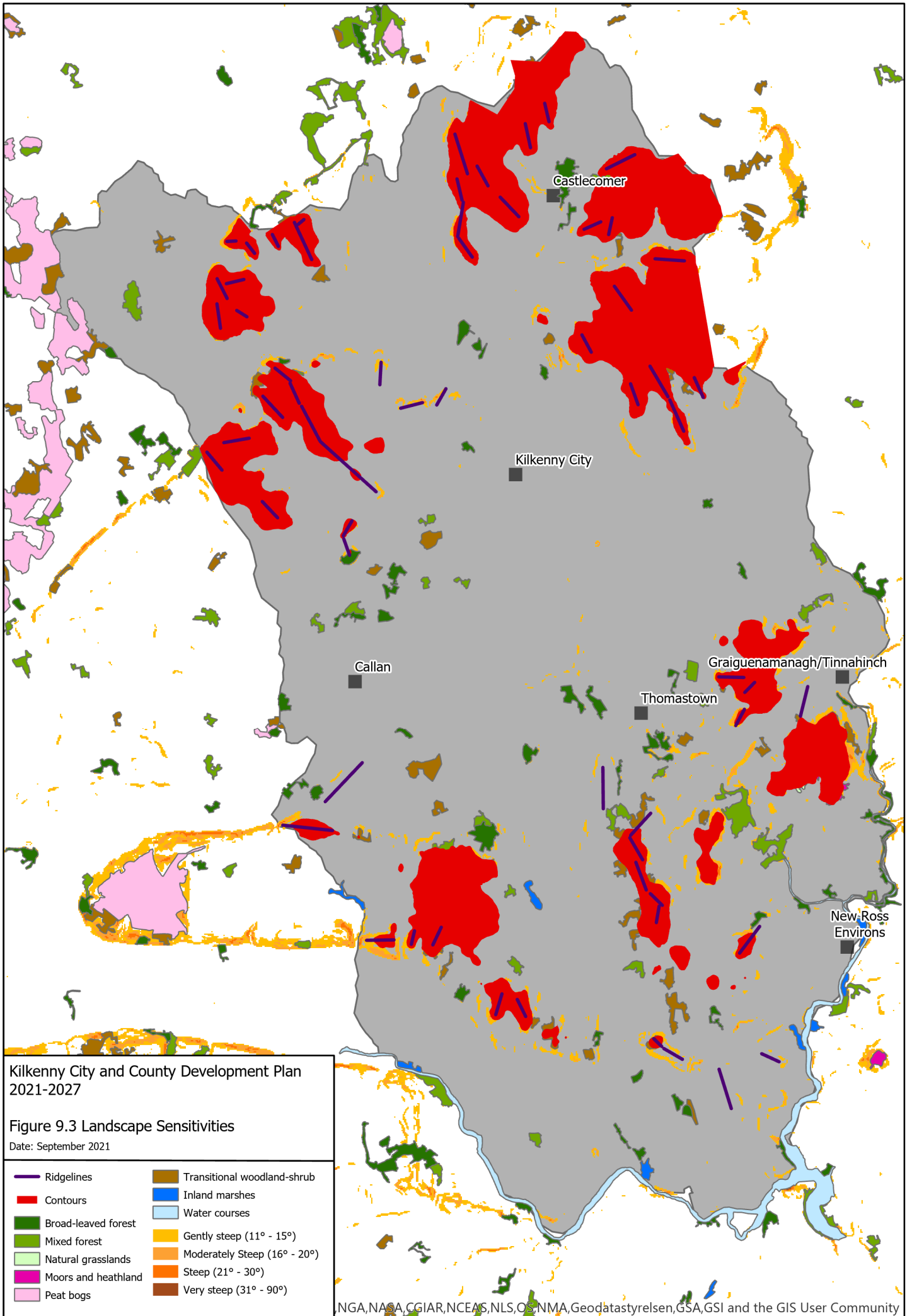
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan
2021-2027

Figure 9.3 Landscape Sensitivities

Date: September 2021

Ridgelines
Contours
Broad-leaved forest
Mixed forest
Natural grasslands
Moors and heathland
Peat bogs

Transitional woodland-shrub
Inland marshes
Water courses
Gently steep (11° - 15°)
Moderately Steep (16° - 20°)
Steep (21° - 30°)
Very steep (31° - 90°)

NGA,NASA,CGIAR,NCEAS,NLS,OS,NMA,Geodatastyrelsen,GSA,GSI and the GIS User Community

- To facilitate appropriate development that reflects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape throughout the county, and require that developments minimise the loss of natural features such as trees, hedgerows and stone walls.

- To facilitate, where appropriate, developments that have a functional and locational natural resource requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoir, telecommunications or wind energy structures) with reference to the appropriate County strategies currently in place, and to ensure that any residual adverse visual impacts are minimised or mitigated.

- To ensure that development in upland areas or on steep slopes will not have a disproportionate or dominating visual impact (due to excessive bulk, scale or inappropriate siting) and will not significantly interfere or detract from scenic upland vistas, or when viewed from public areas, scenic routes, viewpoints or settlements.

- To have particular regard to the potential impacts of new development on sensitive upland areas, and to materially consider the difficulty of establishing and maintaining screening vegetation when assessing development proposals in these areas.

- To continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures and settlement areas whilst taking account of the local visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and prevailing vegetation and to direct new development whenever possible towards the vicinity of existing structures and mature vegetation in the Lowland Areas, River Valleys and Transitional Areas.

- To recognise that in the Lowland Areas which are comprised of low lying open environments, tall and bulky development sometimes can have a disproportionate impact against the landscape particularly when viewed from the predominantly low lying areas of the public realm. Visually obtrusive and/or insensitive development shall be discouraged in such instances.

- To ensure that development in the River Valleys will not adversely affect or detract from either protected views (see Appendix H) (especially from bridges) or distinctive linear sections of river valleys (especially open floodplains) when viewed from settlements.

- To maintain the visual integrity of areas of greater sensitivity in the county and ensure that any development in these areas is appropriately sited and designed. Applicants shall demonstrate that the proposed development can be assimilated into the landscape and will not have a disproportionate visual impact on the landscape.

9.3 Built Heritage

Built heritage includes all man-made features, buildings, and structures in the environment. It includes our rich and varied archaeological and architectural heritage.

- The Council will encourage the sensitive redevelopment and / or return to suitable use, of derelict, vacant or redundant buildings, in appropriate locations in order to provide for visitor accommodation and tourism development, while having regard to ecological constraints and architectural heritage requirements.

- The Council will encourage the reuse and refurbishment of vernacular buildings (houses or farm/industrial buildings) in appropriate locations for tourist related facilities, including holiday home accommodation. The development shall relate in scale to the site's characteristics and location, shall not be detrimental to the rural amenity of the surrounding area and be in accordance with the development standards of this plan, particularly as they relate to the protection of the natural and built environment.

9.3.1 Archaeological Heritage

Our archaeological heritage consists of the material remains left behind by past societies and includes structures, places, sites, features or portable objects, whether on land, underwater or in the intertidal zone. It contributes to our understanding of our past and also to our cultural, educational and tourism assets. Archaeological sites and monuments vary in form and date.

In Kilkenny our archaeological heritage dates from the Mesolithic Period (8000 BC) to the end of the Medieval Period (1700 AD) and includes earthworks (e.g. ringforts), megalithic sites; Fulachta Fiadh; early Christian ecclesiastical sites, churches, graveyards, medieval buildings; castles, industrial archaeology and underwater sites. Archaeological remains may not always be isolated finds or sites but may have been linked at one time with other archaeological monuments in the immediate vicinity or sometimes in more distant locations – creating archaeological landscapes.

Archaeological heritage is a resource that can help us to understand the past. It also is of importance in terms of heritage tourism, and as an educational resource. The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Kilkenny and will provide guidance to developers and property owners regarding the archaeological implications of proposed developments.

The National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 provide for the protection of archaeological heritage. The principles set out in the *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*[13] provide the national policy framework in relation to archaeological heritage.

There are different levels of monument protection under the National Monuments Acts:

- A level of universal protection is afforded to all monuments listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). All entries on the list are known as Recorded Monuments. The RMP for County Kilkenny can be viewed in the Council's Planning Department and online at www.archaeology.ie.
- A lesser number of monuments are accorded a higher level of protection, that is, some are entered on the Register of Historic Monuments.
- The highest level of protection is afforded to National Monuments, i.e., monuments deemed to be of national significance. A list of National Monuments, including those subject to a preservation order (or temporary preservation order), and those in State Care, is available from the National Monuments Service.

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[13] Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage,* 1999

New sites are continually being discovered and it is advisable to check the National Monument Archaeological database on www.archaeology.ie when considering development on any site.

Archaeological structures may, in some situations, also be considered as architectural heritage and therefore may appear on both the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

Various types of development can impact on the visual appreciation, setting and amenity of recorded monuments. Such impacts should be adequately assessed and, where possible, eliminated or minimised. Previously unidentified archaeological sites may be uncovered during development works, while archaeological deposits that would be damaged by development must be investigated and recorded in detail. Any proposed development (due to its location, size or nature) with the potential to affect the archaeological heritage resource will be subject to an Archaeological Impact Assessment. This includes proposals close to archaeological monuments, proposals extensive in area (half a hectare or more) or length (1 km or more), and development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Council will support the implementation of the Sectoral Adaptation Plan[14].

In some locations, in consultation with landowners, it may be possible to access archaeological heritage sites, and the Council will support and facilitate this where appropriate. In some appropriate locations, signage for archaeological sites and National Monuments may be beneficial.

9.3.1.1   *Archaeological Landscapes*

An archaeological landscape is a natural landscape that has been deliberately modified by a group (or groups) of people during a particular archaeological period (or periods). It provides context and meaning to individual archaeological sites and helps us to understand how our ancestors lived. Such landscapes have the potential to be of cultural, economic, social and/or environmental value.

International best practice, as outlined in the *European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention)* 1992 and the *European Landscape Convention (Florence Convention)* 2000 supports a landscape-based approach to archaeological protection.

In 2019 the Council carried out a *Preliminary Audit of Archaeological Landscapes in County Kilkenny* which identified a number of potential archaeological landscape sites, including 3 sites which were selected as a priority for protection, as follows:

- Freestone Hill and environs
- The Lingaun River Valley - specifically the megalithic monuments within it and the relationships between them

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[14] Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, *Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan,* 2019

● Tory Hill and environs

These sites in particular each have strong visual interconnectedness or sightlines, which can be sensitive to inappropriate development in the vicinity. These are indicated on Figure 9.1.

Development Management Requirement:
The Council will have regard to the archaeological landscapes associated with the areas listed above in the Plan and may, if considered necessary, require an impact assessment for proposed development which could have a significant impact on the identified landscape.

9.3.1.2   Underwater Archaeology
County Kilkenny's rivers and tidal estuaries contain features and objects associated with its riverine and limited maritime heritage (such as boat wrecks, fishtraps, fording points, bridges etc.). Data on underwater archaeological sites (marine, coastal and inland waterways), including the Shipwreck Inventory of Ireland and the Ports and Harbours Archive are available from the Underwater Archaeology Unit in the National Monuments Service.

Any development either above or below water, including to river banks or coastal edges, within the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting. Planning applications will be referred to the National Monuments Service where relevant.

9.3.1.3   Walled Towns
County Kilkenny has a rich medieval heritage including a number of walled towns and villages, of which Kilkenny city is perhaps the best known. There are also other towns and villages throughout the county which are known to have been walled, including Callan, Gowran, Inistioge and Thomastown[15]. Town defences are considered to be monuments for the purposes of the National Monuments Acts, 1930-2004. The Council will support the *National Policy on Town Defences*[16] which sets out national policy for the protection, preservation and conservation of the defences of towns and cities.

9.3.1.4   Industrial Heritage
Kilkenny has a wealth of industrial heritage sites - sites of past industrial activity. This includes sites and machinery relating to extractive industries (e.g. mines and quarries), manufacturing (e.g. corn and textile mills), service industries (e.g. main drainage, water supply, gas, electricity), power (windmills, watermills, steam engines) and transport and communications (e.g. roads, bridges, railways, canals, harbours, airfields). Although some of this heritage extends back to prehistoric times, most of what survives relates to the last 250 years, the period during which Ireland became progressively industrialised.

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[15] Thomas, A, *The Walled Towns of Ireland*, 1992

[16] Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *National Policy on Town Defences,* 2008

An *Industrial Archaeology Survey of County Kilkenny*[17] (1990) was commissioned by Kilkenny County Council and this identified significant sites which have since been added to the Record of Protected Structures.

Additional audits of Kilkenny's industrial heritage will be carried out as appropriate and as resources allow.

Valuable sources of information on lime kilns include the Industrial Archaeological Heritage Survey and various local history projects.

Objectives

9C   **To protect archaeological sites and monuments (including their setting), underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, and in the Urban Archaeological Survey of County Kilkenny or newly discovered sub-surface and underwater archaeological remains.**

9D   **To carry out further research on the eighteen archaeological landscapes as identified in the *Preliminary Audit of Archaeological Landscapes in County Kilkenny.***

9E   **To develop an enhanced policy framework for the three priority sites identified in Section 9.3.1.1 above, plus for any additional sites identified through Objective 9D above.**

Development Management Requirements:

- To endeavour to preserve in situ all archaeological monuments, whether on land or underwater, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any newly discovered archaeological sites, features, or objects by requiring that archaeological remains are identified and fully considered at the very earliest stages of the development process and that schemes are designed to avoid impacting on archaeological heritage.

- To require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological remains.

- To ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sited and designed appropriately so that it does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature or its zone of archaeological potential. Where upstanding remains of a Recorded Monument exist a visual impact assessment may be required to fully determine the effect of any proposed development.

- To require the retention of surviving medieval plots and street patterns and to facilitate the recording of evidence of ancient boundaries, layouts etc. in the course of development.

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[17] Contact the Heritage Office of the County Council for further details

- To safeguard the importance of significant archaeological landscapes from developments that would unduly sever or disrupt the relationship, connectivity and/or inter-visibility between sites.

9.3.1.5   Conservation Plans

Conservation Plans are important documents in ensuring the necessary strategies for managing significant archeological and architectural sites is undertaken. Kilkenny County Council has been a key partner for the compilation of the conservation plans for the Kilkenny City Walls[18], Rothe House[19], St. Mary's Church and Graveyard[20], St. Lachtain's Church, Freshford[21] and Newtown Jerpoint among others over the years. Other Conservation Plans include St. Canice's Cathedral, Callan Workhouse, High Crosses of Western Ossory and Knockroe Passage Tomb. A conservation plan is currently being compiled for St. Francis' Abbey, Evan's Turret, and sections of Kilkenny City walls which are located on the Abbey Quarter site.

The Council will facilitate and support the implementation of existing (and any further) conservation plans, as resources allow.

Development Management Requirement:
- **To adhere to recommendations in Conservation plans when assessing development proposals for these sites**

9.3.1.6   Historic Graveyards

The historic graveyards of Kilkenny, in addition to being the resting places of our ancestors, are an important part of the heritage of the county. They contain a wealth of architectural and archaeological features and are refuges for many species of plant and animal. Most historic graveyards are afforded legal protection through the National Monuments (Amendment) Acts and/or the Planning and Development Acts.

Kilkenny County Council has compiled an inventory of the historic graveyards of the County. The data from this survey has been mapped and is available at for inspection on the Council's website[22]. Advice on caring for and recording historic graveyards is available in *Guidance for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards*[23].

The Council will conserve and protect historic graveyards and churches within Kilkenny in accordance with national legislation and encourage their maintenance in accordance with conservation principles and as resources allow.

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[18] Oxford Archaeology and Heritage Council, *Kilkenny City Walls Conservation Plan*, 2005

[19] Ozmin, E, Sharma, B., Wait, G and Heritage Council, *Rothe House, Parliament Street, County Kilkenny Conservation Plan*, 2002

[20] Heritage Council, The Integrated Conservation Group, *St. Mary's Church and Graveyard Conservation Plan*, 2005.

[21] Heritage Council, St. Lachtain's Church, Freshford Conservation Plan, 2004

[22] In addition, the headstones in some historic graveyards have been recorded by community groups with support from the Council and can be accessed at https://historicgraves.com/

[23] Heritage Council, *Guidance for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards*, 2010

9.3.1.7   Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

Historic gardens and designed landscapes are of natural heritage, architectural, landscape, cultural and historical importance. In addition, they are often the important setting of a Protected Structure. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has carried out a preliminary survey of historic gardens and designed landscapes in 2003-2005. A total of 196 potential historic gardens and designed landscape sites in County Kilkenny were identified[24].

Development Management Requirements:
- To seek the protection and sustainable management of historic gardens, parklands and designed landscapes in the Kilkenny County and City, their setting and their visual amenity.
- To request visual impact and /or an architectural heritage impact assessment where development is considered to, have a potential impact on a historic landscape or protected structure.
- To protect elements of designed landscapes within the attendant grounds of Protected Structures, including boundary features.

9.3.2   Architectural Heritage

9.3.2.1   Record of Protected Structures

Protecting architectural heritage is an important function of the planning authority. A Development Plan must include policy objectives to protect structures or parts of structures of special interest. The primary means of achieving this is to include a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for the functional area within the development plan. A planning authority is obliged to include in the RPS every structure, which, in its opinion, is of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

A protected structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes the interior and exterior of the structure, land lying within the curtilage, any other structures lying within that curtilage[25] and their interiors, plus all fixtures and features which form a part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

Works which would, in the opinion of the planning authority, have a material effect on the character of the protected structure require planning permission. Those with an interest in a protected structure may seek a Declaration under Section 57(2) which would offer practical guidance in relation to the protection of the structure. Section 57(10)(b) of the Planning and Development 2000 provides that permission may only be granted for the demolition of a protected structure in exceptional circumstances.

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[24] For further information see http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/Surveys/Gardens/

[25] Curtilage is defined as the area of ground that is directly connected with the functioning or inhabitation of the structure. The Heritage Council -*What is curtilage*?

There are now approximately 1,400 (City and County) buildings, structures and features listed in the RPS. The RPS (as correct at time of publication) is listed in Appendix I of this written statement. To ensure the protection of the County's architectural heritage, the Council will promote the importance of regular maintenance of structures contained within the Record of Protected Structures. Information is available to owners of protected structures through the Architectural Conservation Office of the Council, while useful information and advice is also provided on the Council's website. The Council will promote best practice and principles in conservation of the built heritage through the custodianship of Protected Structures in the Council's ownership/care. The Council administer and manage conservation grants for the repair and safeguarding of Kilkenny's architectural heritage[26].

9.3.2.2   *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage*

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) survey for Kilkenny was published in 2006[27]. The planning authority is obliged to consider for inclusion in its Record of Protected Structures any buildings rated as being of Regional, National or International importance by the NIAH and to consider including structures rated of local importance. The Council are continuing to process, on a phased basis, the addition to the RPS of NIAH buildings recommended for inclusion by the Minister. While structures on this Inventory await assessment for inclusion in the RPS, Kilkenny County Council will have regard to the heritage value of such structures in the context of any development proposals.

It is Council policy to ensure the protection of architectural heritage by including all structures considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the Record of Protected Structures.

Objectives

9F   **To provide assistance to owners of protected structures in undertaking essential repairs and maintenance by the provision of relevant information.**

9G   **To respond to the Ministerial recommendation to include in the RPS, structures which have been identified as being of regional, national or international significance in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage survey and to consider for inclusion those rated as being of local significance.**

9H   **To continue to review the Record of Protected Structures and add or delete structures as appropriate.**

9I   **To ensure all digital mapping for the Record of Protected Structures is up to date and current, and readily accessible to the public.**

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[26] For more information, see https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Planning/Conservation/Conservation-Grants/
[27] www.buildingsofireland.ie

Development Management Requirements:

- To have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines[28] when assessing proposals for development affecting a protected structure and buildings listed in the NIAH.
- To encourage the sympathetic retention, reuse and rehabilitation of protected structures and their setting, while ensuring the involvement of suitably qualified professionals
- To ensure proposed service upgrades undertake an initial assessment of current services, to ensure the internal environment and fabric is not impacted on by such works. Energy assessments and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessments may be required where energy and service upgrades are proposed.
- To ensure proposed development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure respects the protected structure and its setting,
- To require an architectural impact assessment where appropriate for developments within the grounds of country house estates which are Protected Structures.
- To promote principles of best practice in conservation in terms of use of appropriate materials, repair techniques, and thermal upgrades by adhering to the guidelines as set out in Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Advice Series publications
- To promote best conservation principles and practice when assessing proposals for Kilkenny's architectural heritage
- To ensure that energy upgrades for buildings constructed from traditional materials are respectful of architectural features, form, and environmental requirements necessary to maintain breathability in the structure.

9.3.3   Architectural Conservation Areas

Each development plan must include a policy objective to preserve the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) within its functional area. An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve.

The purpose of designating an area as an ACA is to manage change, affording greater control over the form of development and reducing instances of inappropriate development and demolition. The character of an ACA is often derived from the collective value of an area's buildings, their setting, landscape and other locally important features developed gradually over time. It is usually an expression of our culture and identity and contributes significantly to the quality of our lives.

A general set of policies for all ACAs within the County and City is set out below. A statement of character has also been devised for each of these ACAs in order to identify the character that is worthy of protection. Any works proposed to the exterior of a building within an ACA which would affect the special character of the area would not be considered exempted development. For example, replacement of timber sash windows with inappropriate alternatives (e.g. uPVC) would not be

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[28] Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2004

exempted development within an ACA. Where applications are made for works outside an ACA which would have the potential to impact on the character of the ACA, these applications will be assessed using the criteria set out in the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines* for assessing developments within the attendant grounds of protected structures (Section 13.8 AHPG Guidance on the criteria the planning authority will use to assess proposals for new development and proposals for demolition within an ACA are given in section 3.10 of the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines*.

Implications for Planning and Development

The objective of the ACA designation is to protect the special character of an area through control and positive management of any changes made to the built environment. Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures in any ACA should be aware that works which in the opinion of the planning authority would materially affect the character of the area as outlined here would require planning permission.

Objectives

9J   To ensure the preservation of the special character of each ACA listed in this Plan (See Table 9.2 and Volume 2 Heritage Strategy) with particular regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, fenestration, signage, and other appendages such as electrical wiring, building materials, historic street furniture, paving and shopfronts.

9K   To designate ACAs where appropriate and provide a local policy framework for the preservation of the character of these areas.

9L   To prepare and introduce a set of Shopfront Guidelines.

General ACA Development Management Guidance

- To have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines and the Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (Washington Charter 1987), when assessing proposals for development affecting the character of an ACA

- To seek the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make up the streetscape of the ACA

- To ensure the retention, repair and the regular maintenance, rather than replacement, of original/early features in buildings which contribute to the character of an ACA such as chimney stacks, roof coverings, roof profiles, external wall treatments, doors and windows, shopfronts and pub fronts, while ensuring appropriate materials and repair techniques are used when repairs are being carried out.

- To ensure that inappropriate materials for windows, doors and rainwater goods constructed in aluminium or uPVC are not introduced to buildings within ACAs.

- To encourage high quality, contemporary design and materials where appropriate when new buildings are being introduced into an ACA and the retention of the historic scale and plot size. In this regard new development should be of a very high standard of design, and should contribute to the visual enhancement of the area and respect the character of the ACA as set out in the statement of character. New development should be appropriate in form and use

to its corner, infill or backland location. Established views to local landmarks should be maintained.

- To ensure that new fascia boards inserted in the shopfront entablature are seamless without visible vertical joints or fixing materials. Hand painted fascia are encouraged and will be favoured over glossy, reflective signage.
- To ensure the preservation of the special character of the ACA when assessing proposals for advertising signage, to limit the number of projecting signs to no more than one on each commercial premises to avoid visual clutter, to control lighting and coloured lighting on facades.
- To seek the retention of mature trees/significant planting (those in good condition) which contribute to the character of each ACA where appropriate.
- To retain historic items of street furniture where they contribute to the character of the ACA, such as, post boxes, benchmarks, gates, plaques, milestones, railings etc.,
- To facilitate the removal of overhead cables throughout the ACA, and to assesses all further cable installations against its likely impact on the character of the ACA. The cumulative impact of wiring is seen as a particular negative impact on the character of ACAs
- To ensure existing stone kerbs and paving, and or cobble stones are to be retained and refurbished, where new kerbs are necessary they shall be in a like for like basis so as to enhance the area's character.
- To ensure the embodied energy of the current building stock within ACAs are acknowledged when considering proposed developments, and to encourage the reuse of these building over demolition.

9.3.3.1   Kilkenny County ACA's

There are 13 ACA's located within County Kilkenny, see Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Architectural Conservation Areas, County Kilkenny (excluding Kilkenny City)
Ballyragget
Bennettsbridge
Callan
Castlecomer
Freshford
Gowran
Graiguenamanagh
Inistioge
Johnstown
Kells
Piltown
Stoneyford
Thomastown

There may be other ACA's designated within the lifetime of this Development Plan. The ACAs for Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown are set out in the Local Area Plans for those towns.

9.3.3.1.1   Ballyragget ACA

Description and historical Background

Ballyragget is the Anglicised version of Béal Átha Ragadh meaning mouth of Ragget's Ford and it takes its name from Richard le Ragget, an Anglo-Norman landowner who held these lands in the 13th century. The layout of the town lends support to its Anglo-Norman origins. The Square was originally laid out as a wide main street to accommodate markets and the famous 'fair day' which took place here right up to the 1960s when people bought and sold farm animals. In 1580, Richard Butler, Viscount of Mountgarret inherited Ballyraggett, the town becoming the principal seat of this junior branch of the Ormonds.

Older names of the settlement include 'Donoughmore' (Irish: Domhnach Mór 'Large Church'). There is some debate as to the meaning of Donoughmore. The very first Journal of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society "Old Kilkenny Review, Number 1 (1946–1947) January 1948" has an article about Ballyragget and its environs and states the belief that Domhnach Mór means Big Sunday and relates to the fact that thousands of people congregated at the now ruined church in Donoughmore for its opening on a Sunday and the name stuck.

The town has a rich archaeological past, represented by Ballyragget Castle, a 15th tower house, while the town is also recognised as a Historic Town, later post medieval activity is represented by the 18th and 19th century two and three storey residences.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.4 for ACA Boundary).

Ballyragget's unique character is formed by:

1. The urban street pattern, characteristic of a town rather than a village, with streets leading off the square in different directions and a complete urban block between the Square and the Fair Green.
2. A generally coherent streetscape as a backdrop to the public realm, made up for the most-part of 18th and 19th century structures of consistent architectural scale, proportion and finish, particularly around the square.
3. The contrast between the town's principal open spaces of the Fair green and the central triangular shaped Main Square
4. The well-contained space and triangular shape of the Square which allows attractive oblique views of the complete streetscapes from most vantage points.
5. By contrast, the open nature of the Fair Green which allows long views to landmark buildings like the Church and Stephouse.

The characteristics as set out above combine to create an urban quality of very pleasant scale in Ballyragget and this gives the town a strong identity and a unique 'sense of place'.
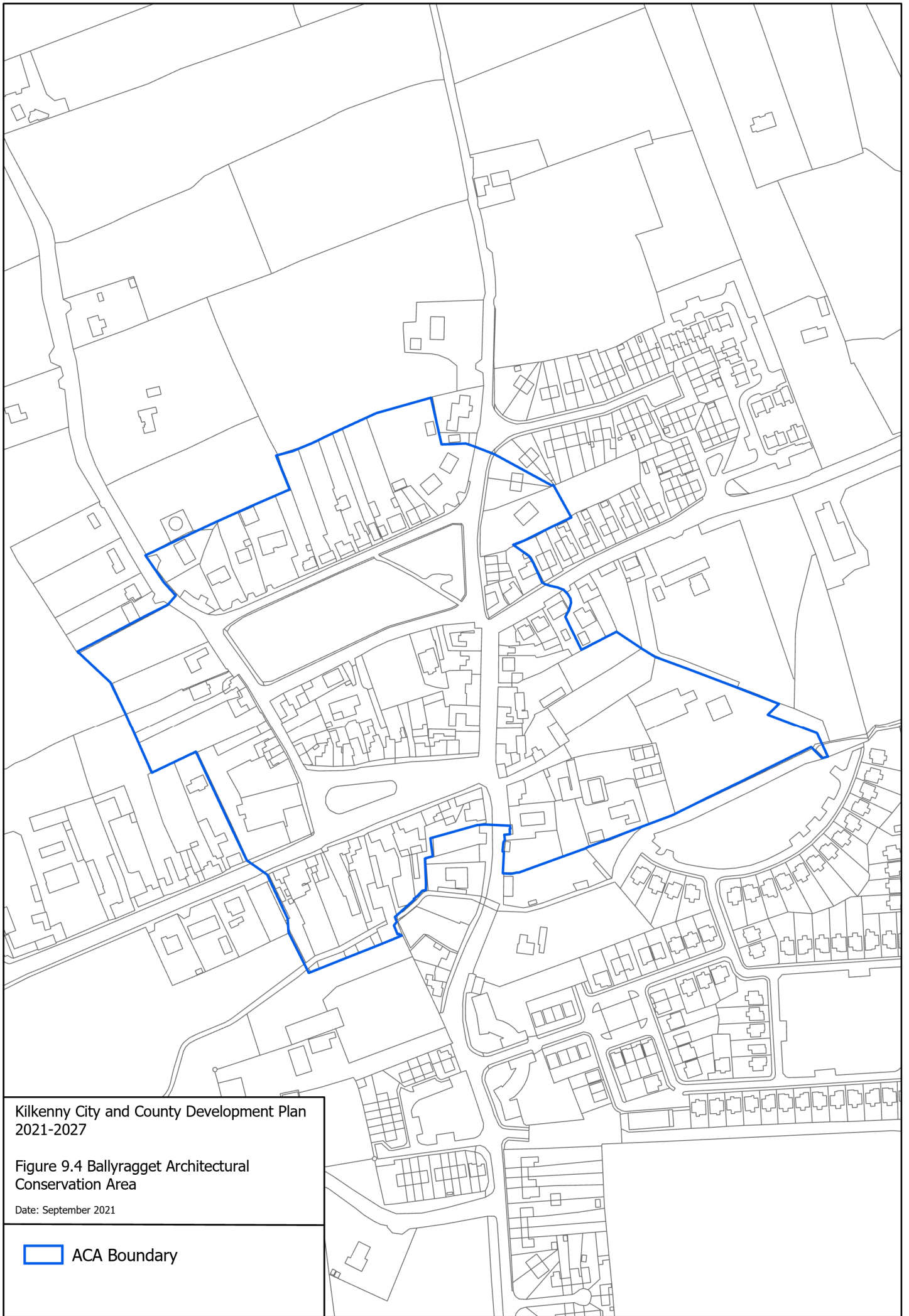
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Figure 9.4 Ballyragget Architectural
Conservation Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

ACA Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character
See policies in Section 9.3.3 relating to all ACAs

- **BACA 1:** The roofscape of Ballyragget is part of its special character. Original elements and profiles should be retained where possible and repaired and reused rather than replaced.
- **BACA 2:** To seek the retention of materials and finishes, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions that reflect the existing character of the area
- **BACA 3:** To seek the protection of the existing landscaping and features within the public realm that contribute to the character of the town
- **BACA 4:** Carriage arch openings are a feature of many of the buildings around the square. These openings should be retained with planning permission required for alterations.
- **BACA 5:** To protect the setting of Ballyragget Lodge and its 19th century masonry wall visible on approach to the village from Kilkenny from the N77.

9.3.3.1.2   Bennettsbridge ACA
Description and Historical Background
Bennettsbridge is located on the main Kilkenny to Thomastown road (R700) which passes over the bridge, curving southwards towards the centre of the village. The historic footprint of the village centres on the bridge and Gowran Road junction and then extends southwards in the direction of Thomastown. The village is dominated by the presence of the river, the bridge and the mills on both sides of the river south of the bridge. However, the heart of the village is located on the main street which turns its back on the river and runs parallel with it.

The village is recorded as being dedicated to Saint Benet from which it derives its name. The early bridge is clearly delineated on the Down Survey map of 1654. This bridge was washed away in the great flood of 1763 and replaced by the distinctive landmark bridge which exists today (See Section 9.3.8 Bridges). The industrial origins of the village are evident in the two landmark mills situated on either bank of the river, and these have been in existence since at least the eighteenth century.

The village provided a significant local civic centre for the surrounding rural hinterland. This is evident in the number of civic and public buildings marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (c. 1829). The village is shown as being well established by this date with buildings such as the original school, the RC church, a police station situated to the west of the bridge, and two flour mills and a weir all downstream of the bridge.

Since the publication of the early OS maps the village has changed little. A school was constructed in 1914 (now a community hall following the construction of a replacement school in the 1990s). The church built in 1822 was replaced by a new structure in 1967 and residential development has continued over time, concentrated on the east side of the village.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.5 for ACA Boundary)
Bennettsbridge is located within a gently undulating landscape of fields dedicated to livestock grazing or tillage. The historic heart of the village pivots on the riverscape, the mill buildings and the landmark structure of the bridge. These structures were responsible for the development of the village and provide it with its historical identity which is further expressed in the collection of vernacular buildings on Main Street, the undulating roof lines and modest vernacular detailing contributing to the
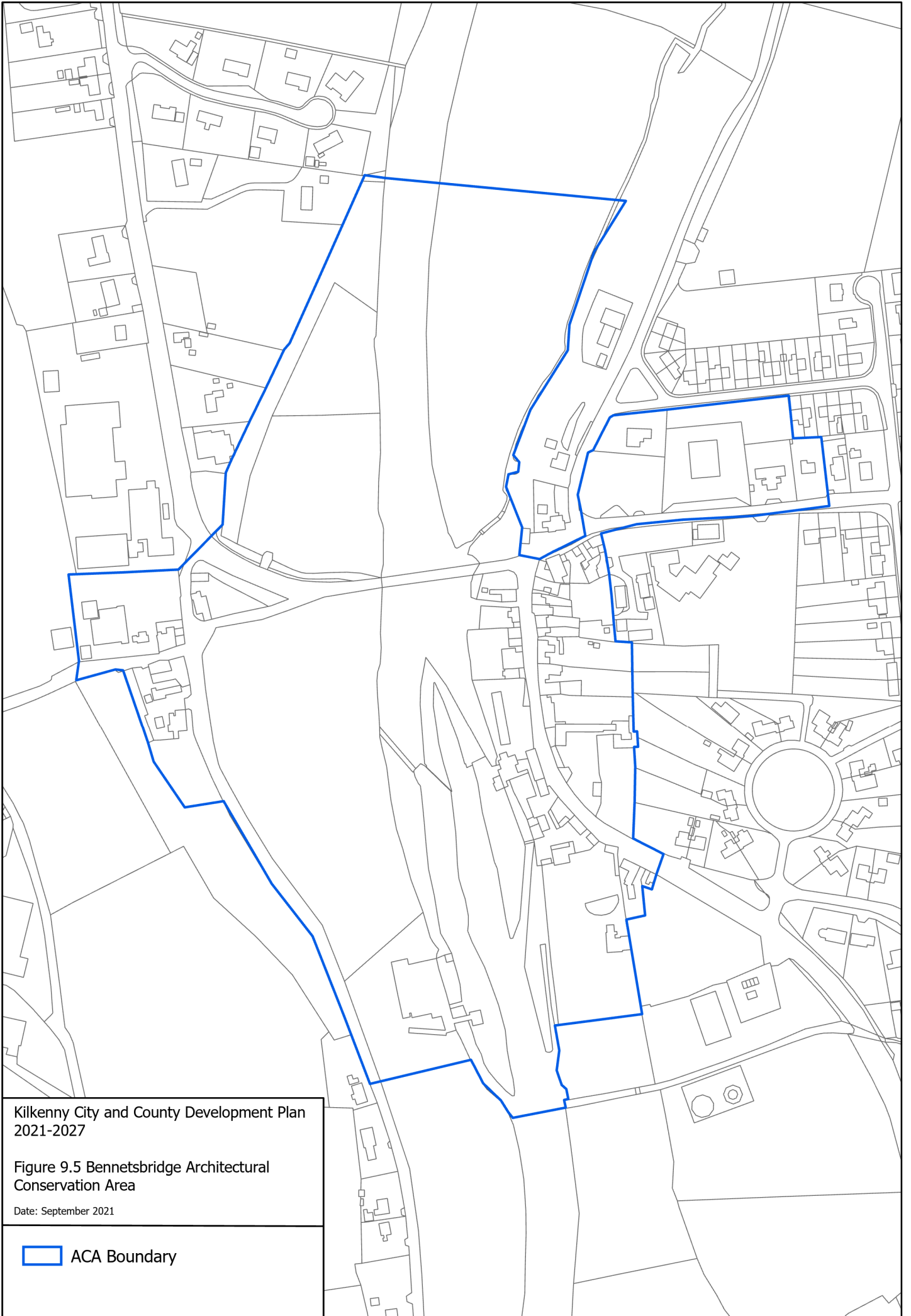
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Figure 9.5 Bennetsbridge Architectural
Conservation Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

character of the village. Even though Bennettsbridge has expanded over time with an extension along Main Street to the south and further residential development to the east, the centre of the village has not changed and remains strongly linked to its origins. The views of the river and the surrounding countryside are an important aspect of the character of the village.

Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character
See policies in Section 9.3.3 relating to all ACAs

- **BBACA 1:** To respect the pleasing visual aesthetic of 18th century bridge, and its visual link to the Nicolas Mosse mill. The Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) of these two landmark buildings and their settings shall be maintained. A series of wheel stones are also present on the bridge, and shall be retained.
- **BBACA 2**: To retain, restore and repair historic items of street furniture and paving within this Architectural Conservation Area.
- **BBACA 3:** No development shall be permitted that in any way negatively impacts on the Main street/Riverscape, including any proposals that would dwarf the street's prominence, that would cause visual impacts or any development that would negatively impact on the current vibrancy and pivotal nature of the street in the town.

9.3.3.1.3   Freshford ACA

Description and historical Background

The square in Freshford was not laid out as a planned space but instead developed and evolved organically as an urban centre to facilitate the needs of the community. Its appearance as a planned settlement is due to the work of the Eyre family of Upper Court Demesne and particularly, Thomas Eyre.

During the late nineteenth-century the landowner Thomas Eyre undertook a programme to formalise the centre of the village. His ambitious plans included the construction of two schools, housing for his estate workers, a new Roman Catholic Church, installation of water pumps and construction of a new formal entrance to his property, Uppercourt House, on the south side of the square.

The two schools were realised. Separate male and female schools were built and were officially opened by their patron, Thomas Eyre on 10th May 1876. These fine two-storey rendered buildings with tooled limestone dressings continue to flank the south side of the square. It was Thomas Eyre's intention to construct the new entrance to Upper Court House in the space between the schools. This was never built and instead the void was gradually filled with extensions to the schools. These buildings are now in use as a community nursing home called Prague House.

The town's water pumps were installed by the same member of the Eyre family in 1878. A large pump was installed in the centre of the Square with limestone slabs and drains around it. Thomas Eyre's patronage of the project was recorded on one of the limestone slabs. The second smaller water pump is located on the west side of the square.

Thomas Eyre also undertook the construction of estate workers' cottages on the west side of the square. He was responsible for the first four to six cottages at the south end of the west side of the square known as 'New Row'.

By the late nineteenth century, the formalised square had become the central focus of the town, accommodating schools, the doctor's house and the town's dispensary, the constabulary barracks, the canon's house, local shops and public houses. In c.1910 Emma Browne Clayton built a town hall and donated it to the community. Located on the north side of the square, it is the only three-storey structure on the square.

In c.1913 Stanislaus Eyre planted the horse chestnut trees around the green. These trees formalise the square's character and contribute greatly to the setting of the architecture. In the past the square was used as a public meeting area, recreational grounds and fair green. Charles Stewart Parnell delivered his speech from the steps of Dr. Hourigan's house (a large detached house on the east side of the square) when he visited Freshford in 1890.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.6 for ACA Boundary)
Freshford is arranged around a tree-lined square. The Square forms not only the physical centre of the town but also its social and commercial heart. It is the hub from which all local roads radiate, bringing life into the community. The green is surrounded by nineteenth-century terraced houses, the Roman Catholic Church, a community hall and various shops and public houses.

The square is flanked to the east by a long wide road leading to the Catholic Church and to the local primary school located to the rear of the Church. The entrance to Uppercourt Demesne is located further out this road. The west side of the square consists of a terrace of eleven two-storey houses and the south side consists of the former girls' and boys' school, now Prague House, a community nursing home. The north side of the square has a predominantly commercial character and forms a thoroughfare west out of the town.

ACA Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character
See policies in Section 9.3.3 relating to all ACAs
- **FACA 1:** The roofscape of Freshford is part of its special character. Original elements and profiles should be retained where possible and repaired and reused rather than replaced
- **FACA 2:** To seek the protection of the Square in Freshford, and maintain its importance as natural amenity. No development shall be permitted that in any way negatively impacts on the pivotal nature of the square in the town.
- **FACA 3:** To maintain the height lines of the structures particularly the relationship of the Community Hall to its surrounds to the north of the square.
- **FACA 4:** To seek the protection of the existing landscaping and features within the public realm that contribute to the character of the town. To retain the horse chestnut trees around the green.
- **FACA 5:** To seek the retention of materials and finishes, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions that reflect the existing character of the area
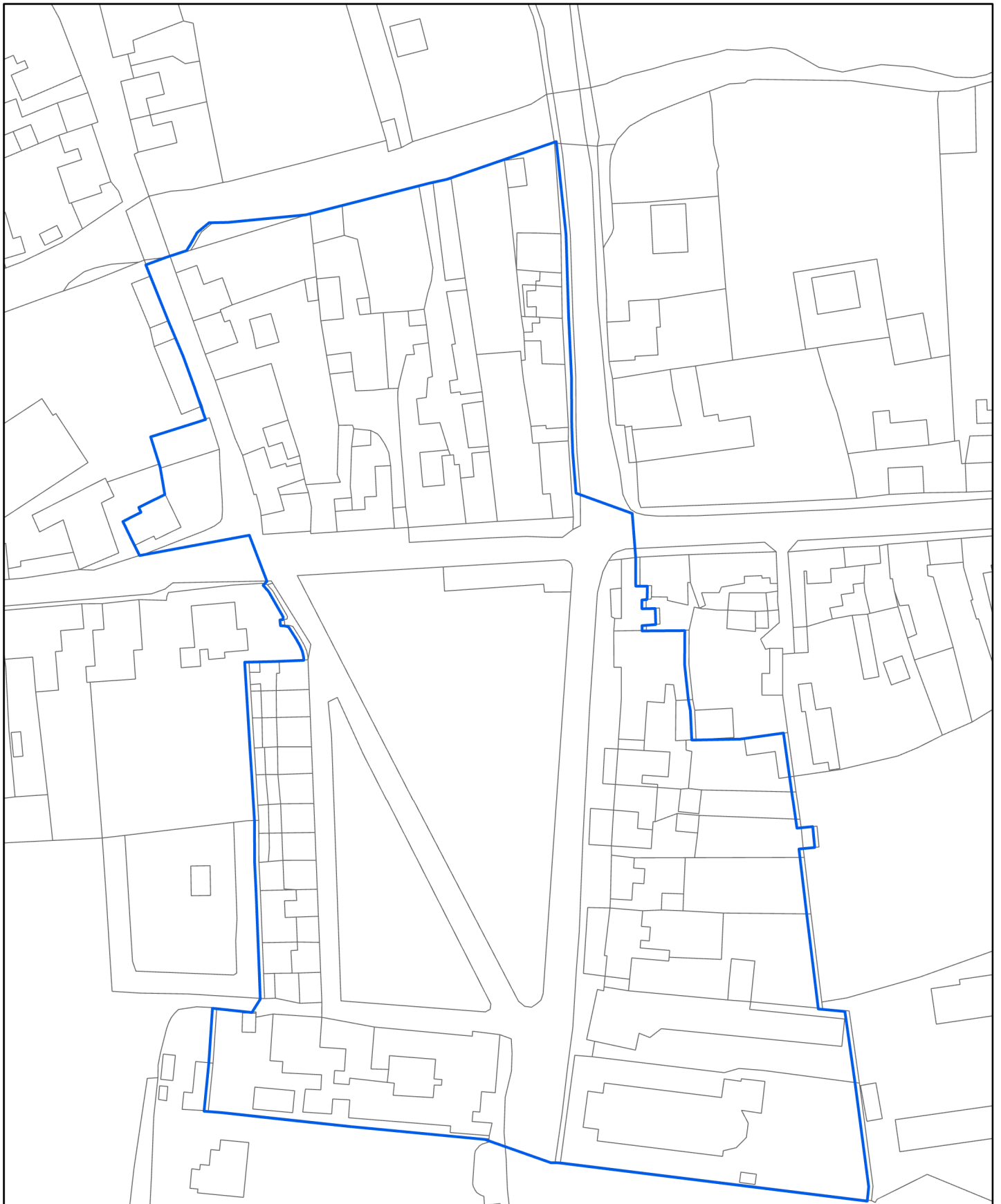
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Figure 9.6 Freshford Architectural
Conservation Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

9.3.3.1.4   Gowran ACA

Description and Historical Background

Gowran developed as a settlement in Norman times. It was granted a charter by Theobald Fitzwalter in 1206. It was one of County Kilkenny's walled towns, having defences with stone gatehouses by the early 15th century. The principal evidence of medieval Gowran lies in the ruins of the collegiate church of St. Mary's in the centre of the town which was built in 1275.

Gowran continued to grow in the 18th century in a typical urban linear pattern with the construction of single and two-storey buildings. The Fair Green is in effect a small Georgian Square and other contemporary structures such as Byrne's opposite the green and Loughlin's at the junction for Kilkenny attest to the prosperity of the town at the time. The influence of the benevolent landlord of Gowran Demesne is also in evidence in the former Alms-houses at the top of the town and later in the estate cottages and picturesque semi-detached houses dispersed along Main Street.   The result is a streetscape which unfolds in an interesting and distinctive way as one passes through the town.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.7 for ACA Boundary)

Gowran derives much of its special architectural interest from a curving streetscape with a significant change in level from high ground at its eastern entry point to its lowest level where it crosses the river at the western end of town. This combination of curving streetscape and change in levels brings a lively dynamic of movement and drama to the streetscape as the visitor proceeds from east to west or vice versa. The influence of its topographical setting is enhanced by the four nodal points in the town which encourage the visitor to linger before moving on; these points are: (i) the entrance to Gowran Demesne, (ii) the medieval church of St. Mary's and formal 18th century square with mature trees opposite (Fair Green), (iii) the interesting grouping of curved and corner buildings at the Kilkenny Road junction and (iv) the formal quality of the entry point at the western end of the town.

The streetscape is composed of mostly vernacular buildings principally two storeys in height, rendered and painted with classically proportioned window openings and wall to window ratio. Timber sash windows, classical timber doors, external painted render, natural slate roofs and early timber shopfronts are significant details which contribute to the character of the area. There are a small number of buildings which depart from this vernacular including the formal stone building beside the entrance to Gowran Demesne (the former Court House), Gowran Castle gate lodge, the Tudor Revival former Curate's House, and several terraces of both single storey and two storey estate workers' houses built by the local Big House owner. The sinuous streetscape and interesting unfolding of buildings is framed within the rich agricultural setting of the County Kilkenny countryside.

An area separate to the main streetscape in both location and character is the grouping of ecclesiastical and educational buildings on the western fringe of the town to the north of the river's flood plain. The school, Catholic Church and presbytery are characterised by their relative isolation on the western edge of town and derive much interest from the sense of open parkland which characterises their setting.

The designation of the area as an ACA is further justified by the special historic interest of the town which retains a very representative collection of buildings spanning the centuries. This includes the 13th century Church of St Mary, a classical courthouse, an urban vernacular streetscape dating to the
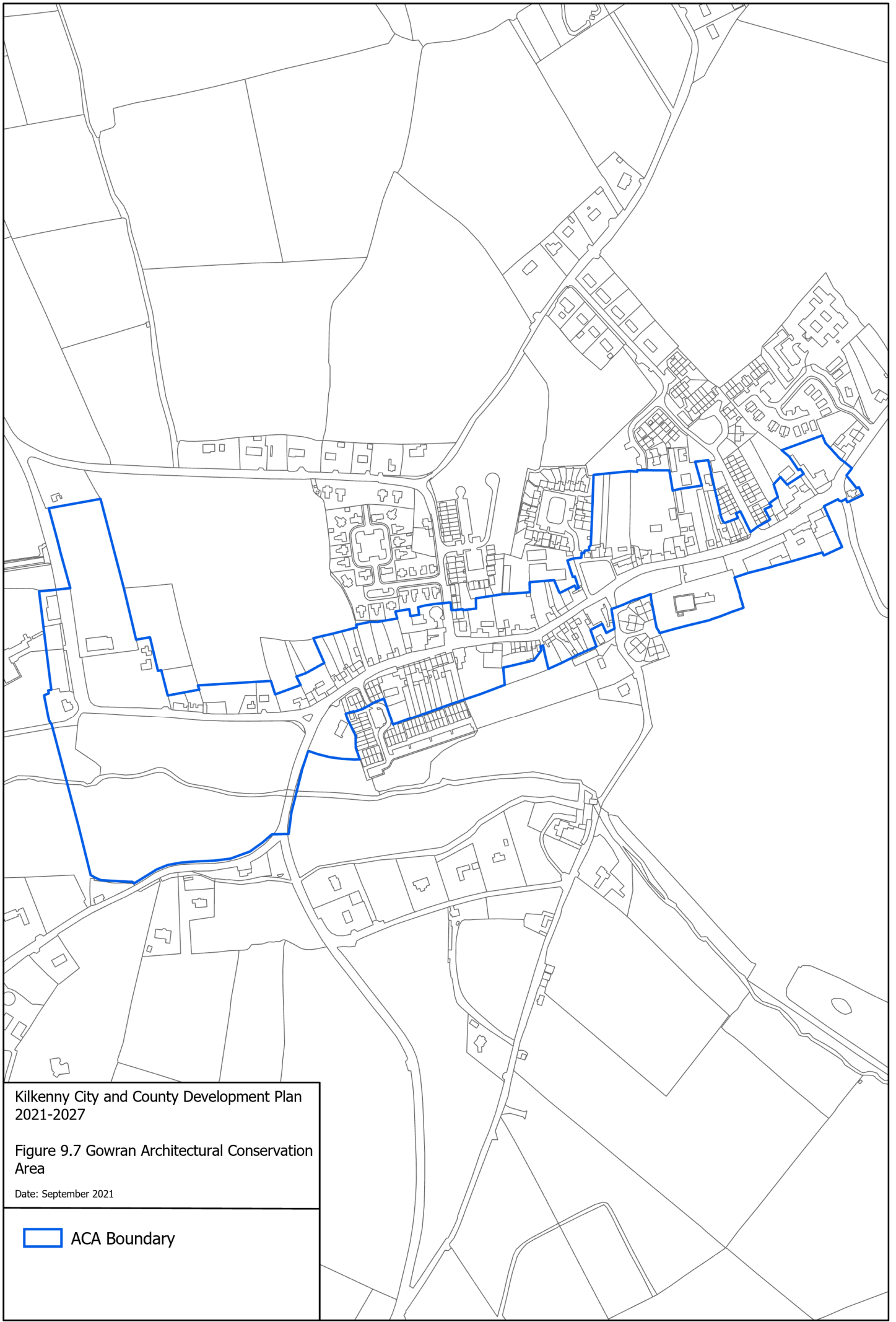
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Figure 9.7 Gowran Architectural Conservation
Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

18th and 19th centuries, reflective of the prosperity of the area due to the richness of the surrounding agricultural landscape, and picturesque examples of estate village houses indicating the benevolent influence of the improving landlords of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character

- **GACA 1:** Where roofs are being repaired/replaced natural stone slate only should be used.
- **GACA 2:** The creation of visual clutter should be avoided when making proposals for street signage, advertising, street furniture etc.
- **GACA 3:** New development should make use of good contemporary design and a strong emphasis should be placed on sensitive integration into the existing character of the area.
- **GACA 4:** There is a significant overlap between the ACA and the historic town, therefore all groundworks within or proximate to archaeological monuments as identified in the RMP shall require archaeological assessments
- **GACA 5:** Stone walls, especially those on Mill lane and Mill Road must be respected when assessing development proposals
- **GACA 6:** All future development proximate to the Tower House on Mill Road must acknowledgment the building's zone of visual influence.

9.3.3.1.5   Inistioge ACA

Description and Historical Background

Inistioge may have originated as a Viking settlement as it is located at the lowest crossing point of the River Nore and we know that the Osraige defeated Olaf Cuaran, King of Dublin, at Inistioge in 964. The area was granted to Thomas FitzAnthony in 1169 and he established the Augustinian Priory in 1206. The priors developed the settlement but Inistioge declined after the dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540, and in 1566 the Priory lands were granted to Sir Edmond Butler.

Inistioge was incorporated as a town by James 1st in 1608 and weekly markets on a Friday and an annual fair on December 13th were established. In 1649 the town was besieged and captured by the Cromwellians. Much evidence of medieval Inistioge can still be seen today.

- The vestibule of the Church of Ireland was part of the original priory and fragments from the cloister have been incorporated into the north and east wall of the Catholic Church.
- The Black Castle in the churchyard behind the Church of Ireland was part of the Augustinian Priory and is now the Tighe (Woodstock Estate) family mausoleum.
- The motte of Thomas FitzAnthony's first fortification is located behind the houses halfway up the hill from the Square and survives to a height of 10 metres. The ruin of a three-storey fortified town house can be seen on the west side of the Square and between the Square and the river is another two-storey medieval structure. The upper level is a later remodelling on the original base and we know this building was used as a courthouse during part of its history.
- St. Columbkille's Holy Well, tucked away in the north-east of the village has an elaborate entranceway incorporating a number of 16th century carved stone panels which were probably salvaged from the priory. There is mention of a town wall in the 1608 charter but knowledge of the line of the wall over most of its length has been lost, although Avril Thomas gives an indicative line of Inistioge Town Wall in *Walled Towns of Ireland Volume 2*. This line closely corresponds to the masonry wall found on the southern side of the village, located to the rear

of the current houses which face onto the Square, and, also a wall to the west, visible from Poyntz Lane. There also appears to be remains incorporated into the boundary walls of the houses running south from the fortified houses of the square.

Inistioge prospered in the 18th and 19th centuries and its development was intertwined with that of the Woodstock Estate. Woodstock was built by Francis Bindon in the late 1740's for the Fownes family and although the House is remote from the village, the main approach to Woodstock, the River gate, lower avenue and lodge and the alms-houses on the Square all attest to the importance of the Estate in the development of the village.

The combination of the steep hill and the earlier medieval walled settlement pattern resulted in a dense concentration of buildings by the end of the 19th Century with a high proportion of fine two and three storey structures.

The relative density and elegance of much of this development gives Inistioge an urban quality which is unusual in such a small town and the concentration of public buildings set out informally round a sheltered space away from the River would be more typical of pre-renaissance Italy.

The Catholic Church was built in 1836. The Church of Ireland Church incorporates sections of the mediaeval Augustinian abbey, with a belfry and clock donated by William Tighe, the local landlord, in 1876. With his wife, Lady Louisa, he is more famous for the development of the 19th century Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum now restored and managed by Kilkenny County Council. The influence of Woodstock estate is visible in the village today: the formal Square with Georgian house, the Tighe Memorial, the former Alms Houses, and the impressive Inistioge Bridge are all connected to Tighe family of Woodstock.

Inistioge Bridge required repair following extensive damage from floods on the River Nore in the mid-18th century. The repair works, undertaken by the Inland Navigation Corporation, resulted in an impressive, internationally influenced southern elevation works which included: granite Ionic pilasters, classical horizontal entablature with moulded cornice, with triangular cut waters also present. It is likely that the repair work which resulted in the Classical design of the southern facade of Inistioge Bridge were supplemented by the Tighe family, who owned Woodstock House and Gardens at the time, hence only the southern side was of such high international design.

Inistioge Bridge is part of a distinct group of bridges "Kilkenny Group": Ruddock commented on the similarity between Inistioge Bridge and it and Mylne's 18th River Thames Blackfriars Bridge when it described it as being *directly derived from Mylne's Blackfriars Bridge design* (See Section 9.3.8 Bridges). Inistioge is identified as a National Monument due to its rich archaeological heritage and is protected under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994. Buildings within the village are made of shale, sandstone and conglomerate, while granite is used in the more important buildings.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.8 for ACA Boundary)
Inistioge is a settlement which has prospered down through the ages. Located on the river, once a major thoroughfare and source of fresh water and sheltered by hills into which it nestles, its topography is a key contributor to its success as a settlement and to the sense of place which it retains
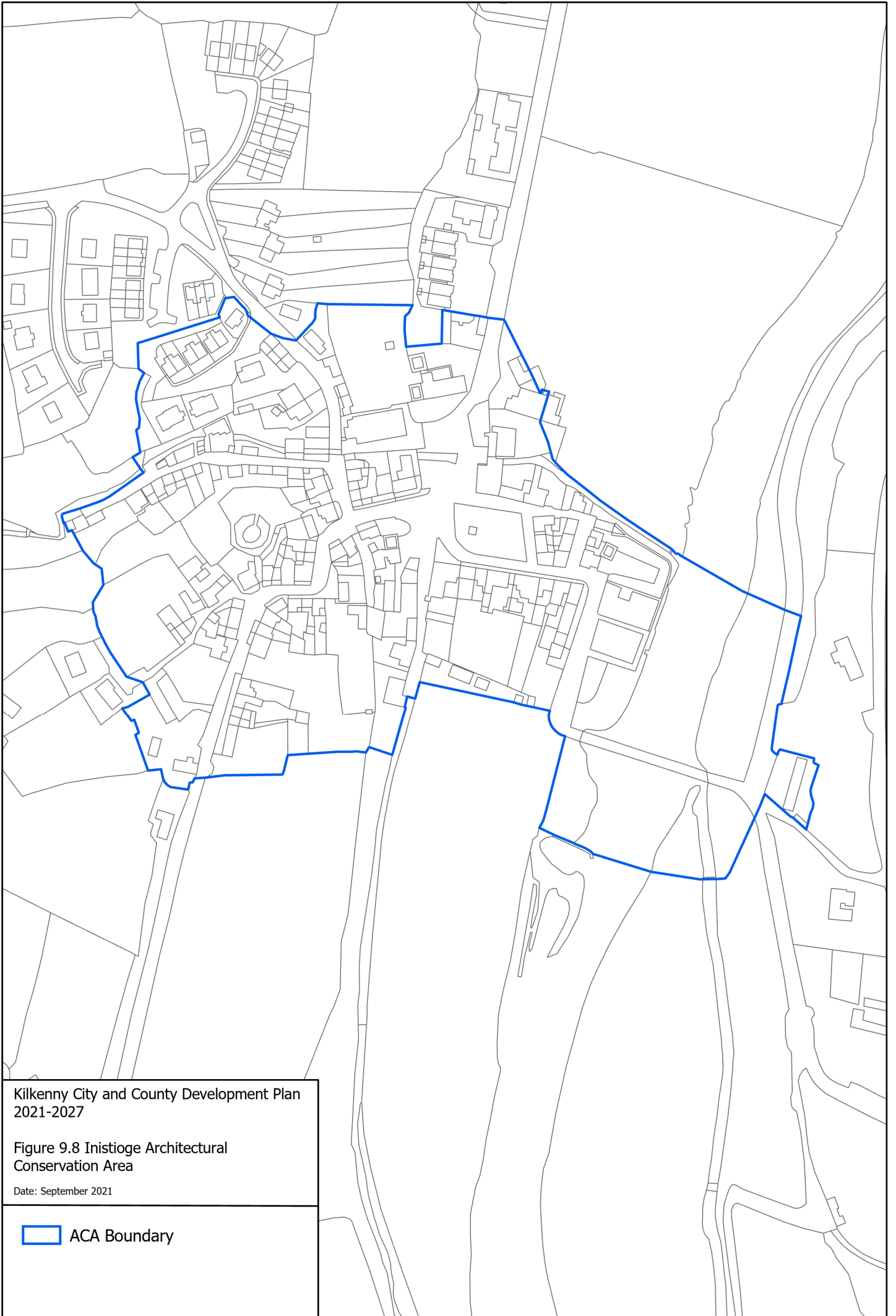
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Figure 9.8 Inistioge Architectural
Conservation Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

to this day. The unique character of Inistioge is formed by its siting as a compact urban settlement in a panoramic landscape, allowing Inistioge to be viewed as an entity from the surrounding hills. The rectilinear street pattern of the village and the numerous sharp turns provide shelter from the elements within the settlement but also frame beautiful and unexpected views out to the surrounding landscape.

The urban quality of Inistioge is founded in part on a remarkable hierarchy of public open space. The ready perception of the surrounding landscape, the open but gentle river front and bridge of international influence, the formal urban streetscape round the square, the effective civic core at the bottom of the hill sheltered and surrounded by public buildings, churches, restaurants and public houses, the more informal townscape of the rising streets with miniature gardens and picturesque porches. The incidence of such a variety of urban space, contained so neatly within a small settlement is rare indeed, almost as if a city in miniature had evolved on the historic crossing of the River Nore. The mix of medieval and Georgian architecture enlivens the setting of this small rural urban area, which is markedly different from similar sized medieval settlements, which would have developed organically and in an informal way.

ACA Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character
See policies in Section 9.3.3 relating to all ACAs

- **IACA 1**: The roofscape of Inistioge is part of its special character. Original elements and profiles should be retained where possible and repaired and reused rather than replaced.
- **IACA 2:** To seek the retention of materials and finishes, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions that reflect the existing character of the area
- **IACA 3:** To seek the protection of the hierarchy of public open spaces within Inistioge.
- **IACA 4:** To seek the protection of the existing landscaping and features within the public realm that contribute to the character of the town
- **IACA 5:** To maintain front garden walls and railings. Proposals to convert front gardens for use as off-street parking will not be looked on favourably.
- **IACA 6:** To ensure that all works on, or proximate to the 18th century Inistioge Bridge acknowledges the importance of the structure, its regional identity and international influence, while ensuring the setting is respected.
- **IACA 7:** To protect stone walls on the approach roads to the village, and to ensure they are retained and conserved in line with recognised conservation practices, and are not unduly impacted on by development.
- **IACA 8:** To protect historic cobbles and kerbing in the ACA
- **IACA 9:** Vistas of the village from L-4216-6, between High Street and Woodstock entrance shall not be negatively impacted on by any future development, see Section 9.2.12.6 Views.

9.3.3.1.6   Johnstown ACA

Description and Historical Background

Johnstown is so-called from John Hely of Foulkscourt who laid the first foundations of the town in about 1770. Previous to this date there was not even a small village here and previous to the building of the town the site was known as Hely's crossroads (Carrigan II, 299-300). Johnstown or Baile Sheáin and traditionally Foulkscourt or Cúirt an Phúca, is characterised by four roads converging on a formally

laid out square at the cross-roads. The town has changed little since it was mapped in the first half of the 19th century by the Ordnance Survey. This 1st edition OS map shows such landmarks as the Church of Ireland Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the formally laid out square, and a grouping of several country houses and their grounds occupying the fields on the southern approach to the town. By the turn of the century when the second edition OS map was published, a smithy and two schools had been added to the town's infrastructure and the pattern of development that had begun in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries had been consolidated. The 25" OS map dating to the early part of the twentieth century shows the addition of a courthouse, constabulary barracks and hotel to the square, and a post office, dispensary and a further smithy to the town. The town was known for its health-giving spa waters during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Ballyspellan spa well having been visited by the famous Dean Swift in 1728.

The extremities of the town as they existed on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map have been chosen as the boundaries for the ACA and include the grounds of Ellen Ville and Melrose House forming the southern entrance to the town and the Church of Ireland Church which formed the boundary to the eastern approach. Canal Road which forms the western approach has been included as far as the junction with the Rathdowney Road and the boundary on the northern approach route to the town, Chapel Street, has been taken as the point at which development had reached by the time the 2nd edition OS map was published. Along Church Street (approach from Kilkenny) the ACA boundary extends as far as St. Mary's Church and graveyard.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.9 for ACA Boundary)
The town is characterised by the essentially two-storey, late eighteenth-century principally residential structures which line the four roads converging on the formally laid out octagonal square. The houses on the square are for the most part in the classical vernacular style, their character imbued by their rendered and painted facades with simple classical window and door proportions which at one time would all have been enhanced by timber sash windows and solid timber doors. The roofs are simple pitched roofs often gable-ended but sometimes hipped, and traditionally covered with natural slate. The approach from the south, Urlingford Road, is characterised by open fields which form the semi-formalised grounds of a number of middle-sized classical country houses, set well back from the road and symbolising the level of prosperity derived from the rich agricultural hinterland. The approach from the east, Church Street, is dominated by the presence of the Church of Ireland Church, a Board of First Fruits design set in its own grounds back from the road and on a slightly raised piece of ground. The views from the Square to this Church make an important contribution to the character of the town. The approach route from the west, Canal Road, is much less formal and retains more modest vernacular buildings associated with less well-off occupants. The commercial end of the town lines the principal thoroughfare which is the route to the north of the square, and as its name, Chapel Street, suggests, forms the setting for the impressively sited and scaled Roman Catholic Church on its east side, set well back from the street and also on higher ground. Chapel Street is characterised by more two-storey rendered structures, often with a commercial element in the form of a shopfront at ground floor and often with a carriage arch leading to stable yards and other ancillary buildings to the rear.
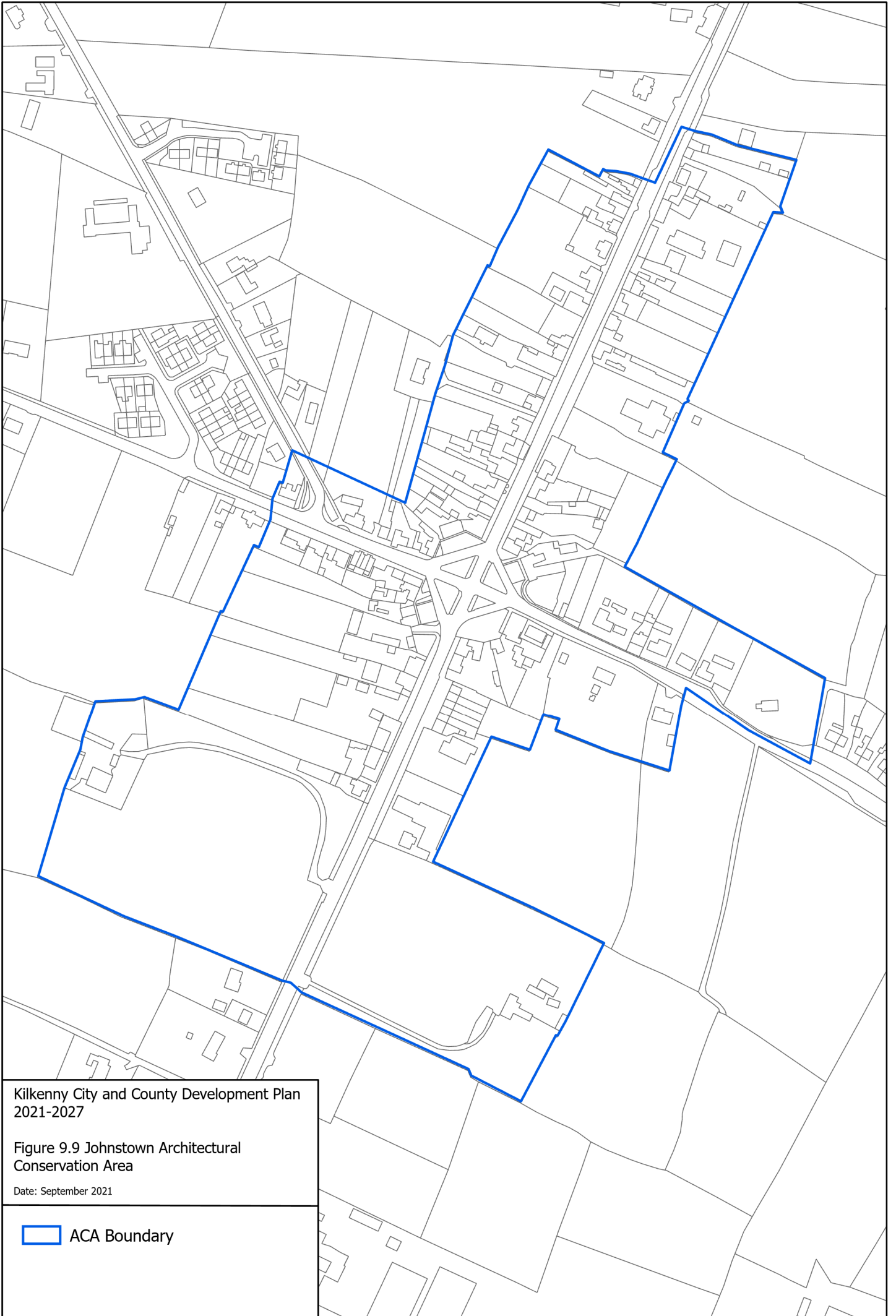
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Figure 9.9 Johnstown Architectural
Conservation Area

Date: September 2021

☐ ACA Boundary

ACA Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character

See policies in Section 9.3.3 relating to all ACAs

- **JACA 1:** The roofscape of Johnstown is part of its integral special character. Original elements and profiles should be retained where possible and repaired and reused rather than replaced. Removal or alteration of roofing materials or features of the roofscape requires planning permission.
- **JACA 2:** To retain, restore and repair historic items of street furniture and paving and features within such as wrought iron gates within this Architectural Conservation Area.
- **JACA 3:** To retain Carriage arch openings around the square in the event of any development proposals.
- **JACA 4:** New development should be appropriate in form and use to its corner, infill or backland location. Established views to local landmarks should be maintained. The view from the Square towards the Church of Ireland church on Church Street is of significance in Johnstown.
- **JACA 5:** To protect the masonry wall connected to the former Foulkscourt House, along the road R435.

9.3.3.1.7   Kells ACA

Description and Historical Background

The village of Kells has developed adjacent to the floodplain of the King's River, on its south side. The surrounding landscape is undulating, with a mix of tillage and grazing lands. Kells village is bounded to the north and west by the Kings River and to the east by the twelfth-century Augustinian Priory.

Kells, known as Ceanannus in its original Irish form, was the site of the 12th century Priory and associated town founded by Strongbow's seneschal of Leinster, Geoffrey FitzRobert de Monte Marisco. The Priory was built in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary for the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. Four monks were brought from Bodmin in Cornwall to establish and run the new monastery, which was richly endowed, receiving tithes from many parishes in the neighbourhood. When the Priory was founded in c.1192, most of the town activity was centred on it. FitzRobert's also constructed a castle on a small island between the site of the current town and the Kings River. The is also the site of the motte and bailey. With the Dissolution of the monasteries in 1540, and Cromwell's confiscation of the Priory in the mid-17th century the site declined and the village core was relocated further west.

Kells village today stands as a predominantly mid- to late nineteenth-century village clustered around a crossroads south of Kings Bridge and west of Kells Priory. The village enjoyed a boom-time during this period with the building of the new Hutchinson Mill and the construction of the fine Roman Catholic church, north of the village, and the impressive Church of Ireland church and rectory to the south-east. The heart of the industrial area of Kells village is located along the Kings River. The earliest mill was established on the site of Mullin's Mill in the late twelfth century. The mills are landmark buildings and significant features located on the outskirts of the village. They contribute significantly and positively to the landscape and more particularly to the riverscape. Sixteen mills were once operational along the Kings River between the village of Callan and Ennisnag, indicating the economic and social importance of the milling industry to this region of County Kilkenny.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.10 for ACA Boundary)

The impressive limestone bridge over the King's River is a two-phase bridge, the western and earlier side of the bridge dates from the 17th century, and consists of 8 round-headed arches with a further flood arch to the south. The bridge was widened, to the east, in the 18th century, with three large elliptical-headed arches overlapping the central arches of the earlier bridge, while the two outer arches are flush with the original arches.

Moving from the bridge southwards, a small group of two storey buildings and the 19th century Catholic Church of Saint Michael the Archangel are visible on the right side of the street, these buildings conceal the site of the early motte and bailey constructed by Geoffrey FitzRoberts in the 12th century. This area is separated from the main village core by a small stream, while the absence of development between it and the village core also heightens a strong sense of enclosure here.

The village core comprises predominantly of nineteenth and early twentieth-century terraces of two-storey rendered structures with pitched slate roofs. The mixed-use character of the village is an interesting combination of residential, commercial and social use. In recent years, there have been some residential housing schemes developed within this basic frame provided by the crossroads, consisting of infill development and backland development, close to the village core.

Development Management Requirements:

- **KACA 1:** Established views to local landmarks shall be maintained, while the zone of visual influence connected with Kells Priory shall be acknowledged when assessing development proposals.
- **KACA 2:** To ensure that all works on, or proximate to the early Kells Bridge acknowledged the importance of the structure, its regional identity and influence, while ensuring the setting is also respected.
- **KACA 3:** To protect stone walls on the approach roads to the village, while ensuring they are retained and conserved according to recognised conservation practices, and are not unduly impacted on by development.

9.3.3.1.8   Piltown ACA

Description and Historical Background

Piltown is located in the southwest of County Kilkenny, in the valley of the River Suir. Piltown is ringed by uplands, with Slievenamon to the northwest, an outlier of Slievenamon to the north and the Comeragh Mountains to the southwest. The River Pil, a tributary of the River Suir, runs through the centre of the town.

The name Piltown derives from an Anglicisation of the Irish name, Muilcann Bhaile an Phoill, meaning 'Mill of the Town of the Hollow'. One of the earliest references to Bhaile an Phoill was in the Psalter of Cashel of a battle there in the mid-15th century, which the Earl of Desmond defeated Mac Richard Butler.

The development of Piltown was largely linked to the development of the Bessborough Estate (now Kildalton college), which was designed by Francis Bindon and built in 1745. Piltown has many examples of 18th and 19th century buildings and structures, including Anthony's Inn, the Garda
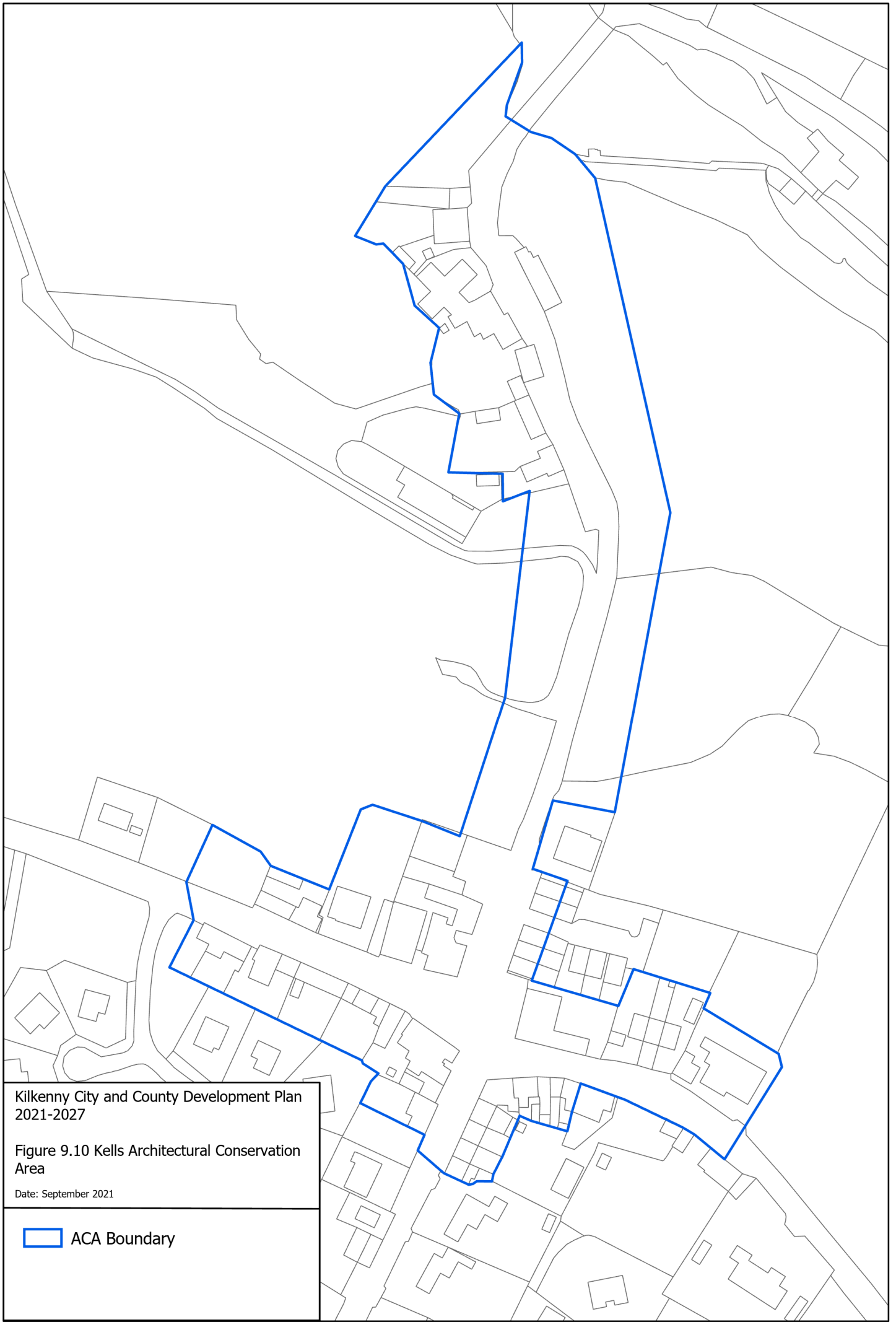
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan
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Figure 9.10 Kells Architectural Conservation
Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

Station, Belline House and Ponsonby's Tower. Piltown was established as an important location in transport through the use of Anthony's Inn as a staging post for the famous 19th century Bianconi's Stagecoach line. It also had access to the waterway of the River Suir and barges transported the goods from the Creamery and mill downriver.

The pre-1940 development of Piltown took place almost entirely along the Main Street. In more recent years development has taken place on the periphery of the town.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.11 for ACA Boundary)
As is typical in a village context, there is a fairly low-density development along Main Street and there are several substantial gaps between the short terraces of dwellings which allow views into the agricultural lands which come right up to the street. These gaps, in tandem with the gentle slope up from east to west means that the sides of buildings along Main Street are often as prominent as their fronts. These gaps in the streetscape add to the special character of Piltown and provide a strong visual connection to the surrounding landscape.

The town is bisected by the River Pil, and is quite spread out, containing a number of attractive vernacular buildings. The mix of these vernacular buildings combined with a number of picturesque buildings of unique design and detail, including the bow-fronted Anthony's Inn, contribute to Piltown's character.

One of the styles recurring in the town is the dormer style dwelling. The unity and symmetry of these buildings, of which some are enhanced by a simple porch, make them extremely attractive. These dwellings are typically three bay and gable ended with wide based gables on the front with pitched roofs and are single, storey and a half or two storeys. This diversity does not disrupt the harmony of the townscape because of the consistency in the other elements. The roofs were traditionally of natural slate and are high pitched, single span with end chimney stacks. The variety of rooflines convey a feeling of diversity, but unity is provided by their common domestic scale and common characteristics.

Front boundary walls, railings and front gates are also distinctive features in Piltown. These boundaries vary from the simple to the ornate, but are most successful when simple. One of the most effective is a low plastered wall and rounded coping.

Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character
- **PACA 1:** The design of any development in the ACA, including any changes of use of an existing building, should not negatively impact and/or detract from the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole. This includes ensuring the continuation of existing building lines within the centre of the town.
- **PACA 2:** The Council will recognise the importance of the traditional elements of rough-cast rendering, brick and limestone walls, natural slate, vertical timbers sash windows, traditional chimney stacks, doors with fanlight, all which are integral to Piltown's character. They reflect indigenous craftsmanship and resources. They often reflect the simplicity and modest scale used in the execution of finishes to buildings. Their importance should not be underestimated in their contribution to the make-up and aesthetic appearance of an ACA. The council will support the retention, repair and re-use of such materials.
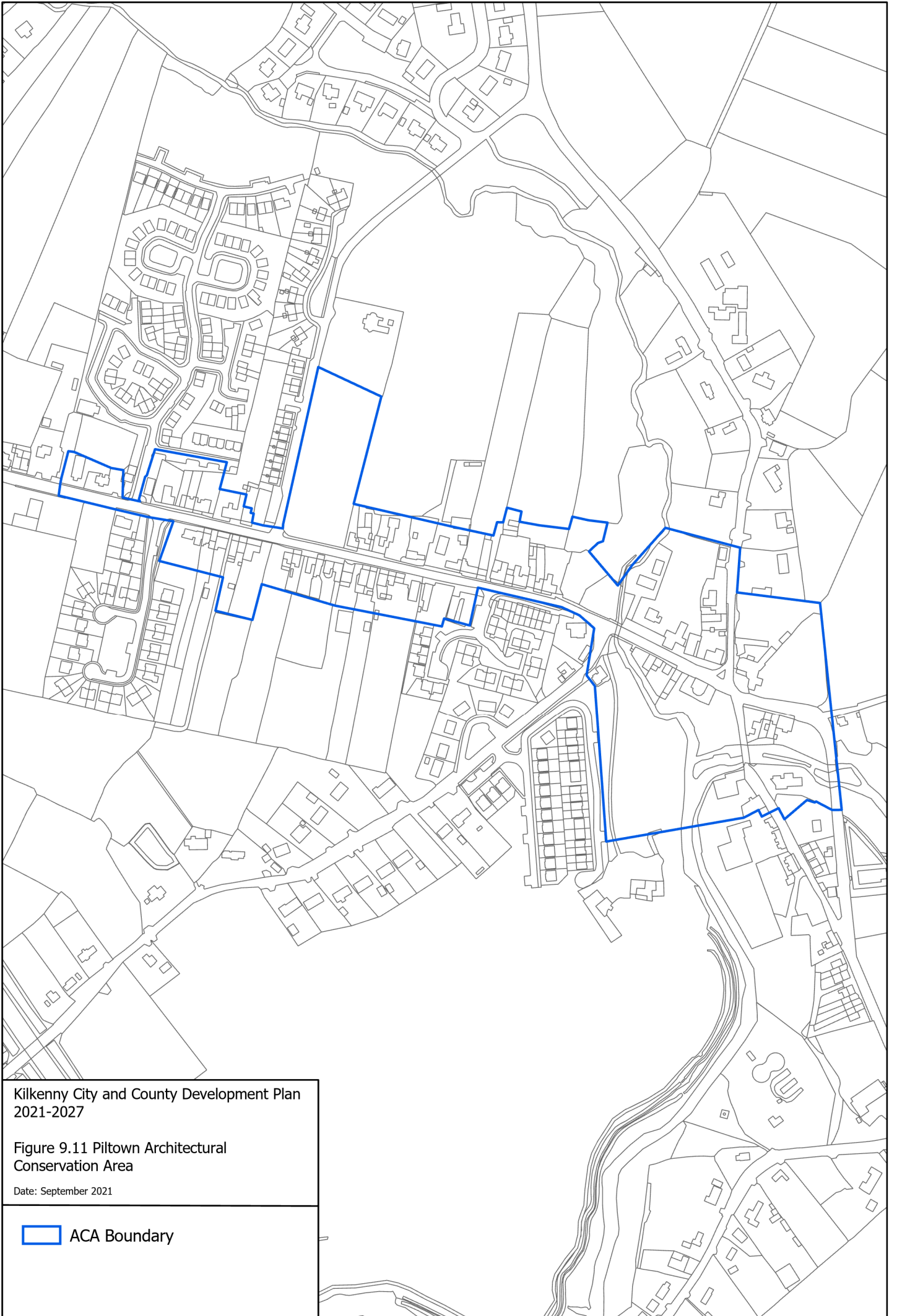
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Figure 9.11 Piltown Architectural
Conservation Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

- **PACA 3:** The removal of street side boundaries to allow for the front to be used for parking detracts from the streetscape. The sense of order and enclosure is affected, and the parking of cars obscures the buildings and their amenity. The removal of such low street walls should be avoided.
- **PACA 4:** The Council will ensure that new development proposed for the back lands and green areas within the village respect the character of the ACA by ensuring appropriate scale, composition and character, in size, scale and materials on new development.

9.3.3.1.9 Stoneyford ACA

Description and Historical Background

Stoneyford, known in Irish as At Stúin, meaning the Ford of the Stang, is situated approximately 11 kilometres south of Kilkenny City. The village is set within a saucer like depression in the landscape. Two small streams run through the village – one to the west and the second to the north. Both streams join to the north of the village and continue northwards as a tributary to the Kings River, which is less than 500 metres from the village.

Little is known about the origins of the settlement, but it may be linked to construction, in 1810, of the nearby Merino Woollen Mills on the Kings River, as many of the inhabitants of the village worked there. By the 19th century, the village had a Fever Hospital, a Dispensary, a Petty Sessions Court, a Police Barracks, a school house, Infants School, a Bank and Roman Catholic Church and graveyard.

Statement of Character (See Figure 9.12 for ACA Boundary)

The village is laid out in a linear fashion along a wide Main Street. A notable feature of the village's plan is the uniformity of the plot pattern, with most of the traditional plots running to the same depth, with the notable exception of the traditionally more important Church. This would suggest that the village was laid out or planned at one particular point in time, as opposed to a slow or gradual evolution over a few hundred years.

A broad street with continuous building line runs along much of the street. Traditionally, a departure from standard or existing building lines was reserved for important civic and religious buildings and this is evident in Stoneyford in the siting of the Roman Catholic Church. It is set-back significantly from the street and in doing so, has positioned the Church on a more elevated portion of the site, thus enhancing its profile in the streetscape of the village.

There is good variation in building heights in the village with single and two storeys predominating with some three storeys also evident. Natural slate, timber sash windows in places, and small squat chimney stacks are evidence of early buildings on the main street, while new developments have taken place in the back lands, south of the Main Street, and to the north side of the Main Street on the southern extremity of the village. There are many notable roadside masonry walls, especially those on the R713, approaching the village from the south, which make a positive impression on character of the area.
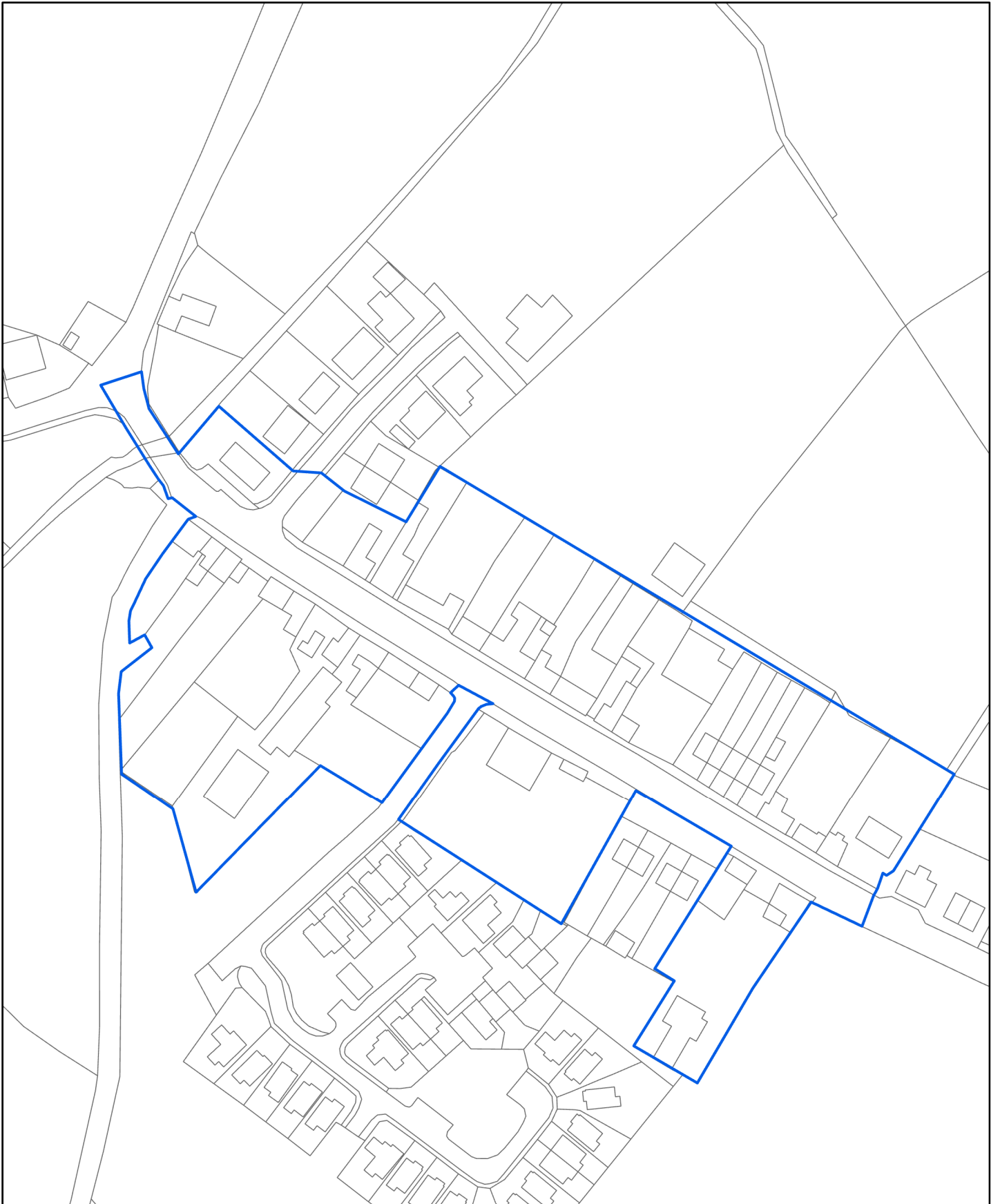
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Figure 9.12 Stoneyford Architectural
Conservation Area

Date: September 2021

ACA Boundary

Development Management Requirements based on assessment of special character

- **SACA 1:** The design of any development in Architectural Conservation Areas, including any changes of use of existing buildings, should preserve and/or enhance the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole. This includes ensuring the continuation of existing building lines within the centre of the village.
- **SACA 2:** The Council will ensure that new development of back lands and green areas within the village respect the character of the ACA, by ensuring appropriate scale, composition and character, in size, scale and materials on new development.

9.3.4   Kilkenny Farm Villages

Statement of Character

The farm villages of South Kilkenny are a settlement type consisting of a unique clustering of houses, outbuildings and haggards, and often lacking public buildings like shops, church or post office. According to architects Patrick and Maura Shaffrey, in their 1985 publication *Irish Countryside Buildings*, the settlement patterns in the Irish countryside have been influenced by the tradition of farmers living on their farms, which has meant that in Ireland we tend not to have farming villages, which are common in other parts of Europe. However, there are exceptions, as in south Kilkenny, where there are clusters of farm buildings grouped together in an informal manner with the physical sense of a village. Only rarely do they include social or community facilities. Dwellings often string out along a narrow laneway, or street, and share a common entrance. Ownership boundaries are blurred and the land associated with the farm buildings may be some distance away and intermixed with other holdings. Shaffrey goes on to say that in the farm villages of south Kilkenny, in places like Licketstown, Glengrant and Corluddy, sometimes the sense of timelessness and history is quite unique. The buildings are huddled together on high ground above the River Suir. Defence considerations may have influenced the location of these groupings, and this estuary was a probable landing place during Viking and Norman times. These are among the oldest settlement patterns and are based on the ancient rundale system of farming, whereby strips of land with ill-defined boundaries were owned by different families, but often worked on a co-operative basis. This type of settlement is frequently located in relatively good farming land, so it is not a question of subsistence or part-time farming, but an old and distinctive settlement pattern[29].

In an article on the unique nature of these settlements which was published by historical geographer Jack Burtchaell in 1988[30], these villages display a settlement pattern that is broadly different to that of other village types throughout the country. Burtchaell describes the villages as having a 'nucleated and agglomerated' rural settlement pattern. It is likely that this settlement pattern is medieval in origin and that these villages have enjoyed continuous and settled occupation since early medieval times. This phenomenon is likely due to the continued political stability of this part of County Kilkenny particularly during the seventeenth century when the over lordship of the Ormonde Butlers, which

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[29] Patrick and Maura Shaffrey, *Irish Countryside Buildings, Everyday Architecture in the Rural Landscape*, The O'Brien Press, Dublin 1985, p. 30.

[30] Jack Burtchaell, 'The South Kilkenny Farm Villages', *Common Ground: Essays on the Historical Geography of Ireland*, ed. William J Smyth and Kevin Whelan, pp. 110-23, Cork University Press.

spanned almost 400 years from 1319 until the end of the 17th century, provided protection to this part of Kilkenny from the rapid change that was taking place in other parts of the country during this time. Burtchaell identifies a number of characteristics which he claims are typical of the farm villages of South Kilkenny.

1. Unlike the 'clachan' model, the South Kilkenny farm villages did not house just farmers, but instead displayed a socially varied and economically prosperous cross section of rural society.
2. They display a degree of social segregation between an 'old' village and a 'new' village again which distinguishes them from the 'clachan' model.
3. The 'farm villages are not marginal in either location or function, they are local centrepieces of a rich agricultural heartland. It is the fundamental stability of the areas, accompanied by social diversity, commercial agriculture, medieval roots and geographic location that mark the distinctiveness of these farm villages from the so-called western-type clachan.

These villages display a unique morphology having grown organically over time following the local topography. The houses are often clustered quite close together and arranged in an apparently random configuration, but one which allows each house to retain its own privacy from adjacent farmsteads and shelter from the elements. The villages are often characterised by a network of laneways, roadways and sometimes raised walkways. The high density of this type of housing and its associated network of roads and lanes is very distinctive and has given one of the villages (Listrolin) the name of 'Little London'[31]. There are many archaeological monuments in this area also, indicating a long phase of activity.

Jack Burtchaell identifies 57 villages in south Kilkenny which fit into this category. The following are mentioned by him in his study: Licketstown, Portnahully, Corluddy, Kilmacow, Ballytarsney, Listrolin, Moonveen, Glengrant, Portnascully, Carrigeen, Ballybrasil, Doornane, Pollrone, Clonmore, Killinaspick, Ullid, Aglish, Dunkitt, Rathcurby, Ballygorey, Dungooly, Arderra, Weatherstown, Kilmakevoge, Rathinure, Kilcraggan, Davidstown, Rochestown, Ballykillaboy, Curraghmartin, Ballyfasy, Grange, Bearstown, Ballincrea, Tinnaranny, Carranroe, Killahy, Baunskeha, Rahillakeen, Ballynamuck, Owning, and Boolyglass.

These villages are of great historical and social significance and their distinctive physical pattern and visual character should be retained where possible[32]. While this settlement type is not unique to South Kilkenny, it is here that the villages have the strongest links with their medieval origins given the political and social stability of this part of the country during some of the turbulent 16th and 17th centuries.

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[31] John Cronin and Associates, Cultural Resource Management, *A Cultural Heritage Assessment of Listrolin Village*, April 2004.
[32] Patrick and Maura Shaffrey, *Irish Countryside Buildings, Everyday Architecture in the Rural Landscape*, The O'Brien Press, Dublin 1985, p. 30.

Farm Villages Development Management Requirements:

- To seek the preservation of the unique morphology of the south Kilkenny Farm Villages, the unique clustering of buildings, outbuildings and haggards, their relationship to the public spaces between and the scale of the buildings which make up the villages.

- To protect the special character of the spaces between the various elements of these villages; created by the relationship between buildings and their outhouses and between the outbuildings and the public roadways, paths and laneways through and around these settlements.

- To seek the retention of the vernacular quality of the buildings and their associated outbuildings and boundary structures including walls, embankments and gates.

- To seek the retention of surviving traditional materials used in the construction of the houses and outbuildings – thatch, natural slate, rubble stone walling, traditional wrought iron gates, rendered finishes; and to require the use of traditional building finishes such as lime plasters and mortars, timber windows and doors and natural slates in the repair and refurbishment of existing buildings and in proposed new developments.

- New developments in or adjacent to these villages should not dominate their surroundings but should sit comfortably in their setting, respecting the local character, and should be of good quality contemporary design using a palate of good quality materials which complement the traditional setting.

- Extensions to existing structures within these villages should respect their setting in terms of scale, materials and design, while energy upgrades of the interior will be assessed against any likely impact on the internal environment which exists as a result of these materials.

The Council will work closely and constructively with a selected village identified in Jack Burtchaell's study to explore mutual benefits for the community and the village of possible Architectural Conservation Area designation.

9.3.5   Street Furniture and Roadside Features

Items of street furniture are an important part of our built and cultural heritage in both an urban and rural context. They are also important elements in establishing the character and interest of an area, whether designated an ACA or not. Such items could include the following; lamp standards, seats and benches, bollards, railings, street signs, freestanding or wall mounted post boxes, telephone kiosks, horse troughs, water pumps, drinking fountains, jostle stones, milestones, paving, kerbstones, cobbles and setts, pavement lights, coal hole covers, weighbridges, statues, plaques, gates and other monuments.

Development Management Requirement:

- To protect and sustainably manage historic items of street furniture and roadside features, as appropriate.

9.3.6   The Vernacular Built Heritage

The vernacular built heritage consists of buildings and settlements historically created by local people from local materials and resources to meet local needs following local traditions. The response to the local environment gave rise to construction techniques which vary from region to region, often with

great subtlety. This type of building is often undervalued because it does not represent 'great architecture' and because of associations with poverty and a perception that the buildings have become obsolete. The value of these buildings lies in the regional distinctiveness and identity that they confer on a place and their importance as an embodiment of the accumulated wisdom and cultural traditions of the people who built and lived in them. Vernacular styles of architecture and their importance in modern buildings in the countryside is discussed and illustrated in the publication *County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide*[33].

The Council will apply the conservation principles and guidelines in practice as set out in the ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (Mexico 1999) when considering proposals to adapt vernacular buildings to meet contemporary living standards and needs.

The Council will promote the retention and re-use of the vernacular built heritage through increasing public awareness of its potential for re-use and its adaptability to change.

Development Management Requirements:
- To apply the conservation principles and guidelines in practice as set out in the ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (Mexico 1999) when considering proposals to adapt vernacular buildings to meet contemporary living standards and needs.
- To promote the retention and re-use of the vernacular built heritage through increasing public awareness of its potential for re-use and its adaptability to change. See Re-use of Farm Buildings Laura Bowen and Nicki Matthews, Kildare County Council, 2007 and National Rural Network Case Study, Conservation of Old Farm Buildings.
- To promote the refurbishment of vernacular built heritage in rural areas as per development managements standards set out under Section 7.8 Rural Settlement Strategy of this Plan.

9.3.7   Bridges

There are many 18th and 19th century bridges still in use in the county today. Such structures are constructed from traditional materials of local stone, lime, and sand. They are testament to the durability of local materials and civil engineering at local level, while adding significantly to the architectural heritage of the County.

9.3.7.1   *Kilkenny Group of Bridges*

The Inland Navigation Company was assigned to rebuild and repair a number of bridges on the River Nore and its tributaries following large floods in the 1760s. The engineer, George Smith was the principal of the INC at time, and had previously worked under George Semple on Essex Bridge in Dublin. Among the bridges that were rebuilt and repaired at this time are: Greensbridge and Johns Bridge (Johns Bridge was replaced in 1910) in Kilkenny City, Bennettsbridge, Thomastown Bridge, Castlecomer Bridge (over the River Dinan), Graiguenamanagh Bridge (over the River Barrow), and Inistioge bridge. These bridges, along with some later 18th century River Barrow bridges of Croomaboo

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[33] Kilkenny County Council, *County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide*

Bridge in Athy, Co. Kildare, and Maganey Bridge in Laois, have been identified by Ted Ruddock as forming a distinct local typology, and were labelled the "Kilkenny Group" of bridges.

The presence of classical detailing such as pedimented aedicules, niches with round headed and ogee shaped arches, Doric and Ionic columns and pilasters, entablatures, stringcourses, circular oculi all positioned in the spandrel area of these bridges is the basis for the grouping. These bridges are testament to the international connections and influences: Green's Bridge built in 1766 by William Colles to designs prepared by George Smith is very similar to the Roman Bridge at Rimini described by Andrea Palladio in his Four Books on Architecture, while Ruddock who noted the similarity between Inistioge Bridge and designs for Mylne's 18th century Blackfriars Bridge over the River Thames in London, commented that the repair work at Inistioge was "directly derived from Mylne's Blackfriars Bridge design".

The Council recognises the "Kilkenny Group" of bridges as being of significant importance to be protected against inappropriate development which may impact on their character.

Development Management Requirements:
- To ensure that new development does not detract either directly or indirectly from the character or setting of these historical bridges.
- To ensure that where pedestrian access is necessary to ensure public safety, independent structures avoiding contact with the historic bridges be the preferred option for new footbridges.
- To ensure that development which may compromise or detract from the spandrel detailing of the Kilkenny Group of bridges be avoided. The spandrel detailing in these bridges is the basis of the groups' typology, and therefore their most significant feature.
- To ensure appropriate materials and methodologies are used for the repair works for Kilkenny's historic bridges.

9.3.8   Embodied Energy

A large portion of Kilkenny's buildings were constructed using traditional materials and building techniques. While the use of cement became more common from the early 20th century onwards, dwellings prior to that consisted of stone, brick, lime mortar, with timber sash windows and a slate or thatched roof.

These traditional materials allow the necessary permeability required for these traditionally constructed buildings, while also being the sources of stored carbon. The phrase "the greenest building, is the one that is already built" acknowledges the embodied energy and carbon within these buildings. Embodied energy is the energy required for the construction of a structure, from extraction of the raw materials, manufacturing processes, transport, machinery involved in the construction right through to completion of the building. The demolition of buildings for new development results in enormous loss of embodied energy, while simultaneously creating more waste in landfills and the need for new materials which produce vast amounts of carbon.

Kilkenny County Council are committed to a sustainable development building approach, and will assess the potential for reuse and refurbishment of current building stock as an alternative to demolition of existing buildings.

The Council recognises the embodied energy within our traditionally constructed building stock while assessing proposals for demolition or development and will ensure that refurbishment works to traditionally constructed buildings will not be detrimental to the occupants or to the fabric of the building.

Development Management Requirements:
- To have regard to the DCHG Advice Series on Energy when assessing energy upgrades of traditionally constructed buildings.
- To assess the whole life energy costs, its lifespan and durability of new building stock, as part of proposals to demolish traditionally constructed structures in favour of new development.
- To ensure refurbishment work on these buildings is undertaken in an appropriate manner using suitable materials.

9.3.9   Floodlighting

The floodlighting of buildings and structures is often regarded as a means of highlighting the significance of a structure and reflects the substantial pride that communities have in heritage sites and structures. Notwithstanding this, floodlighting and other artificial lighting has the potential to negatively impact on both natural and built heritage. It contributes to energy use, carbon emissions and climate change. It can also contribute to light pollution, impinge on protected species such as bats, and affect the architectural and archaeological significance of a site.   Draft guidance "*Guidelines on the Floodlighting of Monuments*" has been prepared by the National Monuments Service.

Development Management Requirements:
- **To require an assessment, including mitigation measures, of the potential environmental, visual, and heritage impacts of proposals to floodlight buildings and structures.**
- **To ensure the protection of the special character and setting of protected structures, ACAs and Recorded Monuments, and protected species when considering proposals for floodlighting.**

9.4   Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage includes aspects of heritage such as traditions, practices, knowledge and skills which are an expression of our culture. It is what communities today recognise as part of their cultural heritage. Therefore, it is often called "living heritage". It also encompasses features of cultural heritage interest such as mass rocks, mass paths, civic memorials and plaques, rag trees and vernacular gates which are locally significant and add to the distinctive character and sense of place of an area. In Kilkenny our cultural heritage includes oral history, placenames, fieldnames, folklore, local history and sport.

The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is an international multilateral instrument intended to safeguard and raise the profile of intangible cultural

heritage. The National Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage[34], co-ordinated by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, aims to protect, promote and celebrate Irish living cultural heritage practices, customs, crafts and traditions.

The Council will preserve, protect and where necessary enhance, significant cultural heritage objects such as mass rocks, holy wells, and other significant cultural expressions and features that form part of the cultural heritage of the County.   The Council will support expressions of interest on aspects of Kilkenny's cultural heritage to be included on the National Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

9.4.1   Placenames

Placenames are an important and disappearing part of our cultural heritage. They provide a link to the past and reflect the natural, built and cultural heritage of a locality. Kilkenny County Council has undertaken surveys in partnership with local communities, to record and map traditional place and fieldnames through the Kilkenny Fieldname Recording Project and the River Nore Heritage Audit (See Section 8.4.1.1 River Nore). A Glossary of fieldnames in Irish has also been produced.

The names of all new developments should reflect the local topography, history, culture, ecology or significant people and events, and also incorporate traditional and Irish language placenames from the locality. The Placenames Database of Ireland[35] is a comprehensive management system for data, archival records and placenames research conducted by the State.

9.4.1.1   Commemorative Memorials

The commemoration of significant historical events, anniversaries or people associated with, or who have made important social, cultural or economic contributions to, Kilkenny is an important way of celebrating and remembering our cultural heritage.

The Council has developed a "Naming and Commemorative Memorial Policy" to provide guidance on the naming of new infrastructure and the installation of commemorative plaques, memorials or monuments in public places and buildings. It is overseen by the Naming and Commemorative Memorial Assessment Committee.

Development Management Requirements:
- To encourage the use of bi-lingual and Irish-Language place names and signs.
- To ensure that the naming of all new public infrastructure within the ownership or control of Kilkenny County Council complies with the provisions of the Naming and Commemorative Memorial Policy.
- To ensure that installation of commemorative plaques, memorials or monuments complies with the provisions of the Naming and Commemorative Memorial Policy.

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[34] https://nationalinventoryich.chg.gov.ie/

[35] https://www.logainm.ie/

9.5   Arts and Cultural Development

Kilkenny City and County has an extensive, illustrious and spirited tradition within the arts. The arts continue to be a significant ingredient largely contributing to the progression of the social, cultural, creative, economic and political future of Kilkenny. The *Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy*[36] provides a framework for the delivery of the Arts, Heritage and Library Services of Kilkenny County Council from 2018 to 2022. It replaces the former Arts Plan.

Cultural development is seen as an integral part of the overall development of the county. The culture of a county, city or town is one of the crucial aspects which distinguish it from other counties or cities and the capacity to regenerate communities and a claim to the world's attention and investment is very much based on the county's cultural offerings. Cultural development creates cultural heritage.

Kilkenny County Council's Arts Office works to develop, co-ordinate, motivate, inspire and empower artistic activity throughout the city and county. The office promotes the arts as a worthwhile activity for all, providing advice and support for groups and individuals, and works to strengthen Kilkenny's position as a centre of excellence for the arts and ensure a successful and prosperous arts environment. The Council works to ensure that there is continued support in this sector, not simply for its intrinsic value, but as a driver of major economic and social development. The Arts office will continue to support artists at all stages, taking into account the range and needs of different disciplines and practices. The Office will support the active engagement of diverse audiences in rural and urban Kilkenny through social and collaborative practices.

9.5.1   Arts Organisations

Kilkenny's cultural and arts organisations span a diverse breadth of disciplines and activity including Barnstorm Theatre Company, Lighthouse Studios, the Butler Gallery, Kilkenny Arts Festival, the National Craft Gallery, the Cat Laughs Comedy Festival, Savour Food Festival, Kilkenomics, Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent (KCAT) inclusive Arts Centre, Young Irish Filmmakers, Devious Theatre Company, Subtitle Film Festival, Rhythm and Roots Music Festival, AKA Festival, Tradfest and Design and Crafts Council of Ireland and Cartoon Saloon. All of these fulfil important roles within the arts and cultural development of the county and have raised its profile nationally and internationally. The support of existing organisations and creative industries is crucial and successful business and cultural activity attracts further business and complementary industry to locate and relocate to specific regions.

9.5.2   Arts Infrastructure

Kilkenny is served by a selection of general venue, performance and exhibition spaces, including the internationally-recognised Butler Gallery, now housed in the former Evan's Home, the National Craft Gallery (Design and Crafts Council Ireland), the Watergate Theatre, Rothe House, St. Canice's Cathedral, the Arts Office, pop up spaces and the libraries.

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[36] Kilkenny County Council, *Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy 2018-2022*

Objectives

9M   To provide a shared space facility for the creative sector within the Abbey Quarter.

9N   To implement the Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy.

9.6   Library Service

Kilkenny County Council Library Service operates through a branch network of eight libraries. It is supported by the administrative functions of library headquarters which also provides a local studies service. The mobile library provides a vital rural service and serves over 50 rural areas. A broad and varied range of digital services are also provided via the library's website[37]. The *Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy*[38] provides a framework for the delivery of the Arts, Heritage and Library Services of Kilkenny County Council from 2018 to 2022. It replaces the former Library Plan.

It is Council policy to promote and develop the County Library Service in accordance with the national objectives laid down in the *National Strategy – Our Public Libraries 2022 – Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities*[39]. This will focus on 3 strategic programmes that reflect the core functions of the library service:

- Reading and Literacy
- Information and Learning
- Community and Culture

It is recognised that the Library Service plays an important role in supporting the educational, digital, learning, cultural, community and informational needs of citizens. Kilkenny County Library's mission statement is to provide a quality, accessible service which enhances the lives of the communities of Kilkenny, through the provision of a knowledge resource promoting imagination, lifelong learning and culture.

The delivery of a new City Library at the Mayfair Ballroom in the Abbey Quarter has been approved by the Department and works are due to commence in 2021. This facility will enhance the range of services and activities that can and will take place in the City library space. The existing City (Carnegie) library, is strategically located and is a very significant building for Kilkenny City and therefore will remain in use for library services including the relocation of the library headquarters and Local Section. The relocation of the Local Studies will provide greater public access and attract greater usage and interest in this area.

The Thomastown and Callan libraries have been earmarked for redevelopment. Suitable solutions will be examined during the period of this Plan. The Council will continue to support the development of library services and the implementation of the objectives and actions as set out in the County Kilkenny

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[37] https://www.kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/

[38] Kilkenny County Council, *Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy 2018-2022*

[39]https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/56d1d4-our-public-libraries-2022-inspiring-connecting-and-empowering-commun/

Cultural Strategy Arts, Heritage and Libraries 2018-2022[40] to support the library to provide a multi-faceted service which can play a vital role in the lives of individuals and their communities.

Objectives	
9O	**To progress and achieve completion of a City Library for Kilkenny City at the Mayfair ballroom.**
9P	**Investigate and examine the redevelopment of library services in Thomastown and Callan.**

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[40] https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2018/09/creative-kilkenny-culture-creativity-strategy-2018-2022-2/

10 Infrastructure & Environment

Strategic Aim: To ensure a sufficient level of water services within the county for the implementation of the core strategy, provide a framework for the protection of the environment, including water quality, the avoidance of flood risk and the provision of a high-quality telecommunications infrastructure.

10.1 Water services

10.1.1 Background

Water distribution input in the county has amounted to 27,166 m3 per day over 365 days, amounting to 9,915,500 m3 of potable water per year. Given the losses on the network, a far greater production is however required to meet the future demand. Wastewater in similar quantities is disposed of back to the environment.

Irish Water was incorporated in July 2013, as a company under the Water Services Act 2013. Irish Water took on the operation of the assets through Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with all initial 34 local authorities who continue to provide day to day operations. Irish Water now brings the water and wastewater services of the 31 local authorities (after amalgamation of the previous 34) together under one national service provider. From the 1st January, 2014, Irish Water became responsible for all public water services, involving the supply of drinking water and the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater.

Irish Water's primary function is to provide public water and wastewater services nationally. In providing these services Irish Water plays a central role in enabling economic growth, protecting both the environment and the health and safety of the population of the county. Irish Water also took over responsibility for planning and managing capital projects.

Potential challenges to the future provision of services include the effects of climate change such as flooding or periods of drought which would have impacts on drinking water, water quality, foul drainage and wastewater. The protection of our water resources is of fundamental importance as it is directly related to our health, well-being and ultimately our quality of life.

10.1.2   Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024

Irish Water Investment Plan (Revenue Control Period 3) 2020 to 2024

Irish Water is required, under the Water Services (No.2) Act 2013, to prepare a Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) and Investment Plan. These plans provide a key link between water services planning and investment and the spatial planning system. The WSSP sets out overarching objectives in relation to the provision of services for a 25 year period. The WSSP must as far as is practicable, be consistent with, the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. The Investment Plan must be submitted to the CRU (economic regulator) as part of the price control process for approval.

The Draft Investment Plan is subject to the final determination by the Commission of the Regulation of Utilities (CRU)[1].

> **Objectives**
>
> **10A   To facilitate Irish Water and to assist, subject to service level agreements, with the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure provision in accordance with the water services strategic plan, made in accordance with the Water Services Act 2007.**

10.1.3   National Water Resource Plan

Irish Water is preparing for the future by developing the National Water Resources Plan (NWRP). This strategic plan for water services will outline how Irish Water will move towards a sustainable, secure and reliable public drinking water supply over the next 25 years, whilst safeguarding our environment. The NWRP will outline how Irish Water intends to maintain the balance between the supply from water sources around the country and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long-term. A statutory public consultation will be launched in 2021 seeking feedback on the draft NWRP and associated draft SEA Environmental Report and draft Natura Impact Statement.

10.1.4   Water Supply and Treatment

The sustainable growth of the County is dependent on the provision of an adequate water supply. A plan led approach, in accordance with the County's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy is required for the delivery of infrastructural services in order to ensure there is adequate capacity to support the future development of the County. The Council will work closely with Irish Water to ensure the timely provision of infrastructure within the County in line with the Core Strategy. The Council will continue to engage with Irish Water to ensure that the future demands of the County are provided for and will continue to promote water conservation in conjunction with Irish Water.

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[1] Further information on the current plan submitted for approval can be found on the CRU Website at the following link: https://www.cru.ie/document_group/irish-water-revenue-control-2020-2024/.

There are deficiencies at present in water supply schemes serving Castlecomer and Graiguenamanagh and in the Paulstown/Bennettsbridge water supply scheme within the county. Of the four settlements mentioned Irish Water will consider, on a case by case basis, solutions from developers who wish to provide wells as a temporary solution for their proposed development.

The Council will consider the provision of wells on a temporary basis to service developments in the short-term where there is a deficiency in the public water supply and where that deficiency is identified to be addressed as part of the Irish Water Investment programme.

The provision of such temporary facilities shall only be considered where the solution is environmentally sustainable and would not affect the quality status of water sources. Proposals for such facilities must clearly demonstrate they would not singularly or cumulatively adversely affect the ecological integrity of any European Site. Adequate provision shall be made by the developer for the operation and maintenance of the proposed temporary facility for the duration of its required existence and thereafter for its decommissioning and removal from site.

The Council will work with Irish Water to protect existing water and wastewater infrastructure in the City and County and facilitate the development of new infrastructure aligned with the Core strategies.

Where public watermains are available or likely to be available and have sufficient capacity, the Council will require that new development proposals connect into the existing public water mains.

10.1.5   Water Conservation

Irish Water has instigated a major leakage reduction programme with the objective of reducing leakage in key areas of demand, thus mitigating as far as possible existing stresses on supply systems and facilitating new development in these areas.   The leakage reduction programme is active nationwide. Irish Water and the Council will continue to monitor the performance of the networks to ensure that the most urgent works are prioritised as required.

Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council are continually progressing leakage reduction activities, mains rehabilitation activities and capital maintenance activities. There have been find and fix and Demand Management Area (DMA) establishment and rationalisation programmes progressed on the Kilkenny City water networks over the past number of years to improve the reliability of the network and reduce leakage. Kilkenny County Council has significantly reduced water distribution input from 33,000m3 /day in 2010 to the current figure of 27,166m3 /day which is a reduction of 18%.

10.1.6   Waste water networks and treatment
There are currently 34 public wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in Kilkenny county. Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council are continually progressing sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities, etc, and the Council will continue to work with Irish Water to monitor the performance of the networks and to advance and realise capital expansions and upgrades of wastewater infrastructure for the continued sustainable growth of the County.

A Drainage Area Plan is being progressed for the wastewater network in Kilkenny City. The Drainage Area Plan (DAPs) will assess in detail the performance of the wastewater networks in the City which will inform future investment requirements for the City network.

10.1.7 Small Towns and Village Investment programme

Irish Water, in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council, has identified smaller settlements within the County which may be eligible for some of the investment fund of €5 million over the period of this Plan to address waste water deficiencies. These are:

- Bennettsbridge
- Paulstown
- Piltown
- Fiddown
- Glenmore
- Windgap
- Dungarvan
- Inistioge

It is the Council's policy to liaise with and work in conjunction with Irish Water for the provision, extension and upgrading of waste water collection and treatment systems in accordance with the requirements of the Core Strategy and further investment may take place under Irish Water's Investment program for the period 2024-2029.

Kilkenny County Council will require that development in all main settlements connect to public waste water treatment facilities, subject to sufficient capacity being available which does not interfere with the Council's ability to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.

The Council will support the servicing of rural villages (to include for serviced sites) to provide an alternative to one off housing in the open countryside. The Council will require that septic tanks, proprietary effluent treatment systems and percolation areas are located and constructed in accordance with the recommendations and guidelines of the EPA and the Council in order to minimise the impact on surface water of discharges.

10.1.8 Water Quality

10.1.8.1 Water Framework Directive

In response to the increasing threat of pollution, physically damaging activities and the increasing demand from the public for cleaner rivers, lakes and beaches, the EU developed the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This Directive establishes a framework for the protection of all waterbodies for the benefit of everyone, in terms of water quality and quantity. The protection of water for wildlife and their habitats is also included under the Directive.

Management of water resources must be planned and implemented, through national River Basin Management Plans which set standards on what each EU member state must achieve. These water quality road maps aim to achieve the best possible balance between the protection and improvement of the water environment and the interests of those who depend on it for their livelihood and quality of life.

The WFD sets out the strategic response to the threat of pollution and its four objectives are:

- Prevent further deterioration of water quality;
- Restore 'good' status of water quality and quantity for ground waters and 'good' or 'high' status for surface waters;
- Reduce chemical pollution of water sources;
- Achieve protected area objectives[2].

For the purposes of implementing the WFD, Kilkenny County Council is implementing the programme of measures to address significant pressures on water outlined in the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (RBMP) and will for the subsequent RBMP plan 2022-2027. These include working with all relevant stakeholders to ensure appropriate measures are taken to provide adequate protection of both water quality and quality. This work includes working with the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme and other agencies, stakeholders and the public to restore water quality status in Areas for Action identified in the RBMP and protect water quality in areas outside of this network. Specific care is required for the protection for the High-Status objective waterbodies (near pristine waterbodies) in Kilkenny which may require additional measures to meet their specific requirements[3].

The Council has responsibilities in the areas of maintaining, improving, enhancing and protecting the ecological quality of all waters in the County. The work includes implementation of pollution control measures, licensing of effluent discharges, implementing and monitoring compliance with environmental legislation, and drawing up pollution contingency measures, development control and forward planning.

The Council will continue to take appropriate measures in relation to all development in order to prevent ground and surface water pollution and will implement the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021 and its successors.

> **Objective**
>
> **10B   To implement the measures of the River Basin Management Plan, including continuing to work with communities through the Local Authority Waters Programme to restore and improve water quality in the identified areas of action.**

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[2] Protected areas are those requiring special protection under existing national or European legislation, either to protect their surface waters or groundwater, or to conserve habitats or species that directly depend on these sites.

[3] To protect and restore our high-status waters, a *"Blue Dot Catchments Programme" will be* established …. This will ensure that high-status waters are prioritised for the implementation of supporting measures…(RBMP 2018-2021)

10.1.8.2 Blue Dot Designations

The objective of the Blue Dot Catchment programme is to protect and restore the high-water status waterbodies by protecting their catchment. Kilkenny has one blue dot designation, the catchment area of which is located at Muckalee.
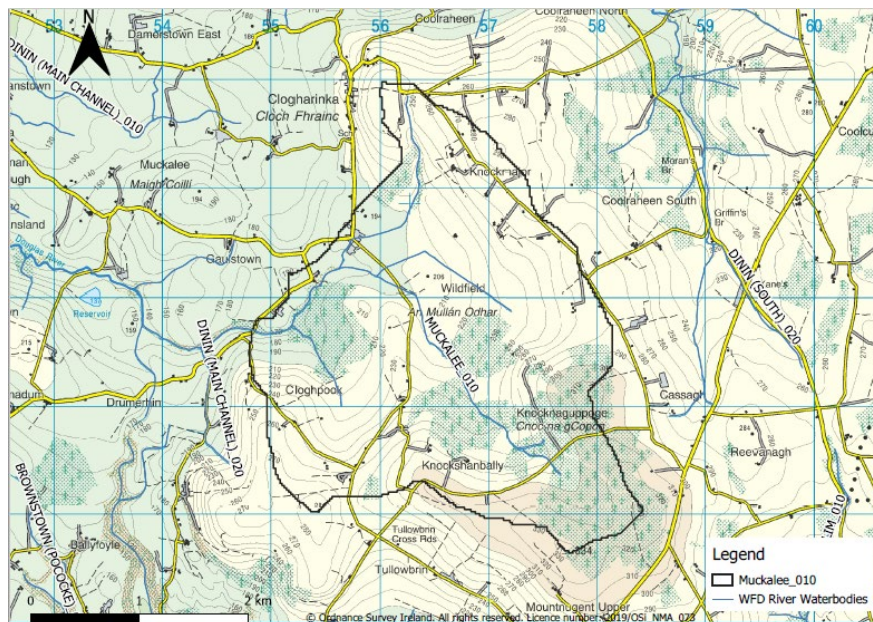
Figure 10.1 Kilkenny's High-Water Quality (Blue Dot) Catchment area (Muckalee)

The Council will support and protect the high-water quality status of the Kilkenny Blue Dot designated catchment area by restricting high intensity agriculture and other developments that may impact the quality of the water in the catchment.

10.1.8.3 Groundwater

Groundwater is used to supply some water supply schemes, and is also used by a significant number of households in the county who are dependent on private wells. A number of group schemes are also dependant on groundwater (aquifers). Underground aquifers are exploited commercially for bottled water, which can be a significant economic resource. Groundwater also contributes to the river system.

The Geological Survey of Ireland has completed a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Kilkenny[4]. The overall aim of a Groundwater Protection Scheme is to preserve the quality of groundwater, for drinking water, surface water ecosystems and terrestrial ecosystems, for the benefit of present and future generations. The groundwater protection schemes are based on information provided by a suite of maps, including:

•   Groundwater protection zones, hydrogeological data
•   Aquifers
•   Vulnerability

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[4] GSI, Kilkenny County Council, County Kilkenny Groundwater Protection Scheme Volume I: Main Report, 2002

- Outcrop and depth to bedrock
- Subsoils geology
- Bedrock geology

The Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidance for Kilkenny County Council in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.

10.1.8.3.1 Source Protection Areas

Groundwater sources, particularly for public, group scheme and industrial supplies, are of critical importance. Consequently, Source Protection Areas are delineated around groundwater sources to provide protection by placing tighter controls on activities within those areas. Source Protection Areas are divided into Inner Protection Areas and Outer Protection Areas[5].

Irish Water has adopted the World Health Organisation (WHO) Water Safety Plan approach. Drinking Water Safety Plans (DWSPs) seek to protect human health by identifying, scoring and managing risks to water quality and quantity; taking a holistic approach from source to tap. The 'source' component of DWSPs is a key component and a priority within Irish Water, as protecting and restoring the quality of raw water is an effective and sustainable means of reducing the cost of water treatment in line with Article 7(3) of the WFD.

Development within Source Protection Areas shall be subject to stringent requirements in accordance with the Groundwater Protection Scheme and the Water Services Acts 2007 & 2012. Developments which include on-site wastewater treatment in Inner Source Protection Areas of Extreme Vulnerability shall be subject to strict Development Management Requirements.

In practical terms, protection of groundwater can be achieved through the encouragement of best practice in agricultural and industrial activities and through best practice in the installation and use of wastewater treatment systems.

10.1.8.4 Water Quality

The Council will promote compliance with environmental standards and objectives established—

- for bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009;
- for groundwater, and groundwater by European Union Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) (Amendment) Regulations 2016;

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[5] Maps and data are available from the Geological Survey of Ireland, see https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/Groundwater.aspx

Objectives

10C   To complete the mapping of source protection areas and to map Source Protection Areas for any new public water supply schemes as appropriate.

10D   To ensure that Source Protection Areas are identified for any multiple unit housing developments with private water supplies.

10.1.8.5 Water Quality Development Management Requirements:

- To assess all new applications for single houses in accordance with the EPA manual entitled *Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10)*[6] or any subsequent revisions or replacement. The person carrying out the assessment will be suitably qualified and in the local authority's opinion, be competent to do so.
- To ensure that all industrial development is appropriately located, and to seek effluent reduction and 'clean production' where feasible, and require that waste water treatment facilities are adequate, and that effluents are treated and discharged in a satisfactory manner.
- To have regard to the Groundwater Protection Scheme and to comply with the Water Services Acts 2007 as amended in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.

10.2 Environment

10.2.1 Pollution Control

The importance of a clean environment for the economic and social life of the county is recognised. In this regard, continuous effective monitoring and enforcement in relation to pollution control measures is imperative and will continue over the period of this Plan.

10.2.1.1 Air Quality

The Council's role in relation to air quality is mainly is to promote a reduction in air pollution, through the implementation of relevant legislation and through the provision of advice and guidance on best practice. The Council also implements the provisions of the [Air Pollution Act 1987](#) and [Air Pollution (Licensing of Industrial Plant) Regulations 1988](#).

The Council will promote the best ambient air quality compatible achievable with sustainable development.

10.2.2 Noise Mapping

In 2006, the European Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) was adopted by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government under Statutory Instrument No. 140/2006. This is also known as the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.

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[6] EPA, *Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10)*, 2021

The regulations set out to "*provide for an implementation in Ireland of a common approach within the European Community intended to avoid, prevent or reduce on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to exposure to environmental noise*" (Article 4(1) S.I No. 140/2006).

As part of the regulations, a Noise Action Plan is required to be created and adopted. The latest Noise Action for County Kilkenny was finalised and published early 2019. The Noise Action Plan is designed with the twin aims of:

• Avoiding significant adverse health impacts from noise, and
• Preserving environmental noise quality where it is good

Under the Regulations, Kilkenny County Council is the action planning authority responsible for the creation and implementation of the Noise Action Plan for County Kilkenny. The regulations require that a Noise Mapping Action Plan must refer to places near major roads, major railways and major airports, and within any relevant agglomeration. A [Noise Action Plan][7] was finalised for the period 2019 -2023, and was published in January 2020 as an implementation plan. The current plan is in force until 2023 and is the third round of Noise Action Plans.

In County Kilkenny, based on the thresholds stated in the Regulations, the main source of Environmental Noise is from major roads. The thresholds defining major roads under the Regulations is any major road with more than 3 million vehicles passages per year.

The Noise Action Plan for County Kilkenny is based on strategic noise mapping carried out for County Kilkenny and is based solely on road traffic noise. Based on the noise mapping for the county, the following areas are within the subject criteria of the Regulations:

Kilkenny County:
• The M8 and M9 Motorways within County Kilkenny.
• The N10, N24 and N25 National Primary Routes within County Kilkenny.
• The Section of the N76 National Secondary Route from the Waterford Road Roundabout on the Kilkenny Ring Road to its junction with the R692 Kilbride Junction south of Callan.
• The Section of the N77 National Secondary Route from its junction with the N78 at Hennebry's Cross to the Hebron Road Roundabout on the N77 Kilkenny Ring Road.
• The R448 Regional Route from the County Boundary near Newrath to its junction with the R861 at the Newrath Roundabout;
• The R711 Regional Route from the County Boundary at Ferrybank to its roundabout junction with the N29 National Route;
• The R861 Regional Route from the N25 Grannagh Junction Roundabout to its junction with the R448 at the Newrath Roundabout.

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[7] Kilkenny County Council, [Noise Action Plan 2019]

Kilkenny City:

The following Sections of Regional Roads located within and in the vicinity of Kilkenny City:

• The R693 Regional Route (Freshford Road to Vicar St to Parliament St) from its junction with the L6600 local road at Thornback to its junction with St. Kieran's Street;

• The R695 Regional Route (Dean St to Kennyswell Road) from its junction with the R693 at Irishtown to its junction with the Kennyswell Road;

• The R712 Regional Route (Castlecomer Road to Old Dublin (Carlow) Road) from its junction with the N77 Castlecomer Road Roundabout on the N77 Kilkenny Ring Road to it junction with the R702 Regional Road (Gowran);

• The R886 Regional Route from its junction with the R693 at Green Street to its junction with the R712 Castlecomer Road (Green Street and New Road);

• The R887 Regional Route (John St and Rose Inn Street) from its junction with the R712 at the old Dublin Road to its junction with the R693 at The Parade;

• The R909 Regional Route from its junction with the N76 Callan Road Roundabout on the N76 Kilkenny Ring Road to its junction with the R950 at the Old Callan Road (Callan Road);

• The R910 Regional Route (Patrick Street to Waterford Road) from its junction with the R693 at The Parade to its junction with the Bohernatounish Road (L2610);

• The R950 Regional Route (Old Callan Road) from its junction with the R909 at College Road to its junction with Walkin Street
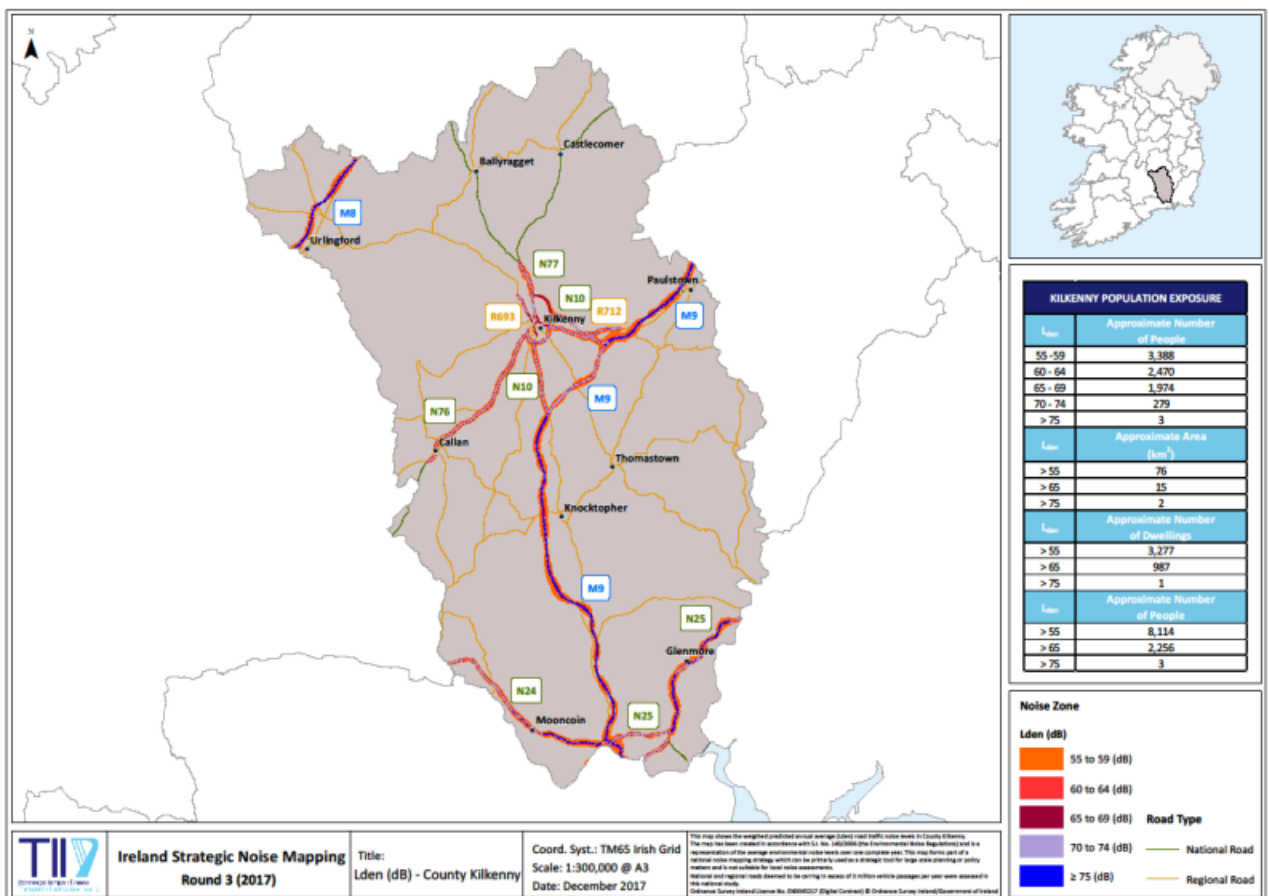

Figure 10.2 Lden(dB) of County Kilkenny

It is proposed to develop a process within the Noise Action Plan to effectively manage environmental noise throughout the County. The programme is scheduled to be phased over 5 years culminating in the preparation of the 4th phase noise action plan to be completed in 2023.

The programme for evaluation over this 5-year second phase of development of the Noise Action Plan proposes to review the Action Plan on an annualised basis or as the need arises. Any works to be carried out, subject to funding, will be monitored and appraised, a report for round 3 will detail progress against the planned timetable, any actions commenced or undertaken and any costs and outcomes or benefits achieved.

Quiet Areas:

Several quiet areas were considered for Kilkenny. Under Article 3 (1) of the Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006), a distinction is made between quiet areas in agglomerations and quiet areas in open country. With regards to the Regulations, County Kilkenny is not in an agglomeration. Therefore, quiet areas to be established in County Kilkenny will be quiet areas in open country. The Regulations define the requirements of quiet areas in open country as an area that is "undisturbed by noise from traffic, industry or recreational activities". From a usability aspect, the preferred location of quiet areas in open country would be in public areas and parks which are under the ownership of Kilkenny County Council. This removes any restrictions on designating the area as a quiet area. The quiet areas are in the Bishops Meadow Walk, Kilkenny City and in Woodstock Estate, near Inistioge.

10.2.2.1 Noise control

Excessive noise and dust levels can have an adverse impact on the county's environment. The Council will seek to minimise noise through the planning process by ensuring that the design of future developments incorporate measures to prevent or mitigate the transmission of noise and vibration, where appropriate.

10.2.3 Pollution Control Objectives

Objectives

10E   To continue to update noise mapping in accordance with revised or updated thresholds for noise mapping.

10F   Develop priority list of actionable works to mitigate against excessive noise and implement subject to cost benefit analysis.

10.2.4 Light Pollution

While adequate lighting is essential to a safe and secure environment, light spillage from excessive or poorly designed lighting is increasingly recognised as a potential nuisance to surrounding properties and a threat to wildlife, may pose a traffic hazard and can reduce the visibility of the night sky. Urban and rural locations can suffer equally from this problem. Lighting columns and other fixtures can have a significant effect on the appearance of buildings and the environment.

10.2.5 Pollution Control Development Management Requirements:

- To ensure that developments which are subject to the requirements of the Air Pollution Act 1987 and Air Pollution (Licensing of Industrial Plant) Regulations 1988 or any subsequent regulations meet appropriate emission standards and other relevant national and international standards.
- To seek to minimise noise and dust through the planning process by ensuring that the design of developments incorporate measures to prevent or mitigate the transmission of dust, noise and vibration, where appropriate.
- To ensure that that appropriate mitigation measures to counter noise impact are implemented at all new developments to limit exposure to high noise areas.
- Ensure that traffic noise levels are considered as part of all new developments along National routes, major roads (as identified in the Noise Action Plan) and rail lines. This includes, but is not limited to, consulting with the current Noise Action Plan and strategic noise maps as identification of areas that are within the subject criteria of the Regulations for noise exposure. Future developments are required to take account of designated quiet areas as in accordance with the Noise Action Plan 2019-2023. Any development near a designated quiet area will be subject to additional scrutiny so as to ensure that the quiet area is not impacted, and may be prohibited in certain cases.
- To ensure that lighting is carefully and sensitively designed
- To require that the design of external lighting minimises the incidence of light spillage or pollution into the surrounding environment.

10.2.6 Flooding

Flooding is a natural phenomenon of the hydrological cycle. There are many factors that influence flood behaviour and the degrees of risk that it possesses. Like other natural processes, flooding cannot be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and environmentally sustainable management. The accepted national policy response to flood protection is now to manage the risk to life and property as sustainably as possible and to consider flood risk and its related impacts on development on a catchment basis, rather than on an individual location basis. This will facilitate sustainable development through the reduction of future flood damage, and hence reduce the associated potential economic and social costs.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland. The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities were published in 2009 and these are incorporated here.

The Guidelines outline three key principles that should be adopted by regional authorities, local authorities, developers and their agents when considering flood risk. These are:

- Avoid the risk, where possible,
- Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible, and
- Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible

Avoidance of development in flood risk areas

Flood zones are geographical areas within which the likelihood of flooding is in a particular range and they are a key tool in flood risk management within the planning process as well as in flood warning and emergency planning. There are three types or levels of flood zones defined for the purposes of the guidelines:

- Flood zone A – where the probability of flooding is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding) and where a wide range of receptors would be vulnerable;
- Flood zone B – where the probability of flooding 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); and
- Flood zone C – where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding).

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for the County as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. This sets out the requirements for a Flood Risk Assessment, see Section 6.1.1 of the SFRA.

10.2.6.1 Flood Management:

It is Council policy to adopt a comprehensive risk-based planning approach to flood management to prevent or minimise future flood risk. In accordance with the [Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities](#), the avoidance of development in areas where flood risk has been identified shall be the primary response.

The Council will ensure that new developments do not reduce the effectiveness or integrity of any existing or new flood defence infrastructure, and will facilitate the provision of new, or the reinforcement of existing, flood defences and protection measures where necessary.

10.2.6.2 Development Management Requirements

- Where flood risk may be an issue for any proposed development, a detailed flood risk assessment should be carried out appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks arising. In particular, any area within or adjoining flood zone A or B, or flood risk area, shall be the subject of a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed. This shall be undertaken in accordance with *the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines* and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment accompanying this Plan.
- If a Site Specific FRA demonstrates an unmanageable level of flood risk and/or impacts to 3rd party lands, development cannot proceed.
- Proposals for mitigation and management of flood risk will only be considered where avoidance is not possible and where development can be clearly justified with the [Guidelines](#)' Justification Test.

10.2.7 Surface Water Drainage

Surface water drainage systems are designed to channel stormwater (rainwater) to the nearest suitable river. Rain falling on impervious surfaces is usually directed into surface water drainage systems. Best practice is to separate the surface water drainage system from the foul drainage system to maximise the efficiency of our waste water treatment plants.

Surface water drainage systems are effective at transferring surface water quickly, but they can cause the volume of water in the receiving watercourse to increase more rapidly thereby increasing flood risk. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can play a role in reducing and managing run-off to surface water drainage systems as well as improving water quality.

The Planning Authority shall have regard to any catchment-based surface water management plan in accordance with the Flood Risk Guidelines 2009, to facilitate the management of nature-based surface water management in a holistic manner. In all instances where development is proposed, non - nature based solutions to surface water management will only be considered where nature-based solutions cannot be incorporated or will not provide an adequate solution to the surface water management.

10.2.8 Development Management Requirements

The Planning Authority will have regard to the Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance on *'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment'* in assessing applications.

- Development must, so far as is reasonably practicable, incorporate the maximum provision to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff e.g.: -
    - Hard surface areas (car parks, etc.), should be constructed in permeable or semi-permeable materials,
    - On site storm water ponds to store and/or attenuate additional runoff from the development should be provided,
    - Soak-aways or french drains should be provided to increase infiltration and minimise additional runoff.
    - The Planning Authority will normally require that all new developments, include rainwater harvesting and/or grey water recycling in their design. except where not practical or feasible
- Individual developments shall be obliged, in all cases where surface water drainage measures are required, to provide a surface water drainage system separated from the foul drainage system.
- In the case of one-off rural dwellings or extensions, except in circumstances where an existing surface water drainage system is available to the proposed site for development and which, in the opinion of the planning authority has adequate capacity to accommodate the identified surface water loading, surface water shall be disposed of, in its entirety within the curtilage of the development site by way of suitably sized soak holes.
- In the case of driveways, drainage measures shall be provided to a detail acceptable to the planning authority so as to avoid run-off from the site to the adjoining public road.
- For all other green-field developments in general the limitation of surface water run-off to pre-development levels will be required. Where a developer can clearly demonstrate that capacity exists to accommodate run-off levels in excess of green-field levels then the planning authority shall consider such proposals on a case by case basis.

- In the case of brown-field development, while existing surface water drainage measures will be taken into account, some attenuation measures for surface water may be required at the discretion of the planning authority in the interests of balanced and sustainable development.
- In line with the above Kilkenny County Council will consider all drainage proposals consistent with SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems).
- For developments adjacent to watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back a minimum of 5-10m from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel clearing/maintenance. Any required setback may be increased to provide for habitat protection. Development consisting of construction of embankments, wide bridge piers, or similar structures will not normally be permitted in or across flood plains or river channels.
- The culverting of water courses is discouraged. Where culverting is unavoidable, the use of ecologically friendly box culverts is required. A development proposal requiring culverting should document open watercourse habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat.
- Adequate allowance be made for climate change in designing surface water proposals a multiplication factor of 1.2 shall be applied to all river return periods up to 100 years except in circumstances where the OPW have provided advice specifying the particular multiplication factor for return periods up to 100 years. In the case of rainfall a multiplication factor of 1.1 shall be applied to rainfall intensities to make allowance for climate change requirements.
- In the design of surface water systems, regard shall be had to the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works[8] and associated GDSDS technical documents.
- For larger scale developments a report will be required specifying the SUDS measures considered in principle. If natural measures are not included, the reasons why not should be outlined.

10.2.9 Waste Management

Waste management in Ireland is regulated by the Waste Management Act, 1996 as amended. Having given due regard to the national waste management policy as outlined in *A Resource Opportunity, Waste Management Policy in Ireland*, the *Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021* was made. The local authorities in the Southern Region comprise Carlow County Council, Clare County Council, Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Kerry County Council, Kilkenny County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Wexford County Council. The joint lead authorities for waste management planning in the Southern Region are Limerick City and County Council and Tipperary County Council.

The strategic vision of the *Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021*, a statutory document, is to rethink our approach to managing waste, by viewing our waste streams as valuable material resources, leading to a healthier environment and sustainable commercial opportunities for our economy. The Plan is the framework for the prevention and management of wastes in a safe and sustainable manner, and includes the promotion of resource efficiency and the circular economy as one of its strategic objectives.

Section 4 of the Waste Management Amendment Act 1996, as amended, provides that the Development Plan in force in an area shall be deemed to include the objectives contained in the

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[8] 8 Greater Dublin Local Authorities, Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works, 2006

relevant waste management plan. Therefore, this plan is deemed to contain the policies and objectives of the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 and its successor.

10.2.9.1 *Waste Management Development Management Requirements*

It is the Council's policy to have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.

- Proposed apartment and housing developments in urban areas must be appropriately laid out to enable the implementation of three bin collection systems, see Chapter 13.
- Proposed apartment, housing and commercial developments must be either serviced by existing infrastructure or make appropriate provision for bring sites in their layout. The sites shall be made available to the Council at the developer's own expense and will be maintained by the Council or its agents. Adequate access must be provided in developments to service proposed bring sites.
- To have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.
- For all significant construction/demolition projects, the developer shall include an Environmental Management Plan. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.
- Construction and demolition waste management plans, to be prepared in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.

> **Objective**
>
> **10G   To implement the Southern Region Waste Management Plan.**

10.2.10 Control of Major Accident Hazards Directive (Seveso II Directive)

The Major Accidents Directive[9] (known as the Seveso II Directive), seeks to reduce the risk and to limit the consequences to both man and the environment, of accidents at manufacturing and storage facilities involving dangerous substances.

There are a total of three Upper Tier Seveso (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (Revocation) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 208 of 2015) sites in the county; Grassland Fertilisers (Kilkenny) Ltd. Palmerstown, Tullaroan Road, Kilkenny; Nitrofert Ltd., Raheen, New Ross and Trans-Stock Warehousing and Cold Storage Ltd., Christendom, Ferrybank. There are two Lower Tier Seveso Sites in close proximity to Co. Kilkenny. See list below. It should be noted that these are the only sites currently identified and that there may be additional sites designated in the future.

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[9] EU, Major Accidents Directive (96/82/EC), 1996

Establishment Name	Establishment Address
Within County Kilkenny:	
Grassland Fertilisers (Kilkenny) Ltd.	Palmerstown, Kilkenny City
Nitrofert Ltd.	Raheen, New Ross, Co. Kilkenny
Trans-Stock Warehousing and Cold Storage Ltd	Christendom, Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny
Nearby sites:	
Goulding Chemicals Ltd	Stokestown, New Ross, Co. Wexford
SSE Generation Ireland Ltd (Formerly Endesa Ireland Ltd) Great Island Generating Station	Campile, New Ross, Co. Wexford

Article 12 of the Directive provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place so as to ensure that, before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of relevant establishments. The Health and Safety Authority (or the National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety NAOSH) provides such advice where appropriate in respect of planning applications within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites.

10.2.10.1 Seveso Sites

The Council will, in consultation with the Health and Safety Authority, control development with regards to SEVESO designated sites for the purposes of reducing the risk or limiting the consequences of a major accident.

> **Objective**
>
> **10H   It is an objective of the Council to, with due regard to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and Regulations, give effect to the Directive by controlling development with respect to—**
> - **The siting of Major Accident Hazard sites**
> - **The modification of an existing Major Accident Hazard site**
> - **Development in the vicinity of a Major Accident Hazard site**

10.2.10.2 Seveso Development Management Requirement

The Councils will consult with the Health & Safety Authority when assessing proposals for development of, in or near sites which are identified under the COMAH (Seveso II) Directive.

10.2.11 Fire Service

The County Council is the Fire Authority for Kilkenny City and County. There are stations located in Kilkenny City, Freshford, Castlecomer, Urlingford, Graiguenamanagh, Thomastown and Callan. The Council will upgrade and replace fire stations and replace and provide new equipment and vehicles as the need arises.

10.3 Energy

The availability of energy is of critical importance to facilitate new development.

10.3.1 The National Transmission/Distribution network

The existing transmission network in County Kilkenny comprises mostly 110 kilovolt (kV) circuits and one 220 kV circuit in the south of the county. There is one transmission substation within the County at Clara near Kilkenny City, which is served by two 110 kV overhead lines. The Council recognises the need to increase electrical infrastructure capacity and security.

Strategy 2020-2025[10] is the national programme being rolled out by Eirgrid, the state-owned independent transmission operator. Two projects are being developed by Eirgrid, in or affecting Kilkenny as follows;

- the Laois–Kilkenny Reinforcement Project to increase the quality and security of supply to an area which includes Counties Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Wicklow and Laois, including;
    - A new 400/110 kV substation situated to the south east of Portlaoise, at Coolnabacky. Two existing overhead lines will connect to this new substation. These are the 400 kV Moneypoint-Dunstown line and the 110 kV Athy-Portlaoise line.
    - A new substation to be located next to the existing 38 kV electricity substation at Ballyragget, County Kilkenny.
    - A new 110 kV line between these two new stations.
    - An upgrade to the existing Ballyragget - Kilkenny overhead line to a 110-kV standard.

Other new projects may arise also to facilitate electricity demand growth and the connection of new electricity generation projects.

The Council will support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan

10.3.2 Grid Development Management Requirements:

Kilkenny County Council will facilitate the provision of energy networks in principle, provided that it can be demonstrated that –

- the development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure;
- the route proposed has been identified with due consideration for social, environmental and cultural impacts;
- the design is such that will achieve least environmental impact;
- the lines should be planned to avoid areas of high landscape sensitivity;
- preference should be given to undergrounding services where appropriate;

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[10] EirGrid, *Strategy 2020-2025*

- the proposed infrastructure complies with all internationally recognised standards with regard to proximity to dwellings and other inhabited structures including best practice and new accepted research on the impacts on health;
- new power lines and power installations should be sited in accordance with the requirements of the "Health Effects of Electromagnetic Fields" Report issued by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in 2007, and
- where impacts are inevitable, mitigation features have been included.
- where considered necessary by the Council, a Visual Impact Assessment and a Landscape Impact Assessment will be required for significant Grid Infrastructural projects.
- That existing grid infrastructure should be used where possible in preference to erecting new grid infrastructure.
- Any proposed development must avoid impact on any Special Area of Conservation.

In considering facilities of this nature that traverse a number of counties or that traverse one county in order to serve another, the Council will consider the proposal in light of the criteria outlined above. The Council will also treat the proposal as if it were required to service a development within Kilkenny County Council.

10.3.3   Gas

The national gas mains network traverses County Kilkenny from the north west to south east, serving Kilkenny City and Ballyragget in the north of the county before continuing to Tipperary from where it serves Waterford via Carrick-on-Suir. A spur from this line starts south of Kilkenny City, from where it runs in a south eastern direction, serving both Great Island and Wexford Town. A spur from the Waterford pipeline in turn serves Ferrybank and Belview Port in the south of the County. Subject to appropriate commercial and technical evaluation, the Council will support an extension of the gas network to other significant population centres in the county.

10.4 Telecommunications

The Council recognises the importance of advanced communications infrastructure for an information-based society, and as a key support for business, education and research. The Council will support and facilitate the provision of advanced communication networks and services to the extent required to contribute to national, regional and local competitiveness and attract inward investment. The Council will also encourage the further co-ordinated and focused development and extension of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity in the county, as a means of improving economic competitiveness.

10.4.1   Digital Connectivity

10.4.1.1 Smart City/Region

The smart city/smart region concept aims to make our cities and their hinterlands more efficient and liveable by embedding smart technology across all functions. These smart concepts include smarter transport networks, upgraded water supply and waste disposal and more efficient ways to light up

and heat the city and its buildings. This concept applies not only to cities but also to the rural areas. However, the successful implementation of this concept is very much reliant on access to broadband, fibre technologies, wireless networks and associated infrastructure.

The RSES has the following objectives in this regard: (RPO 134)
a. to extend such initiatives (Smart cities/region) to towns, villages and rural areas to support a Smart Region.
b. To seek investment in broadband, fibre technologies, wireless networks (including an Internet of Things Network across the Region) and integrated digital infrastructures to enable actions that sustainably deliver on smart technologies to increase the innovative, sustainable and competitive placemaking dividend for the Southern Region.

10.4.1.2 *Broadband*

National Broadband Plan
The NPF has the following objective for the rollout of broadband (NPO 24):
"Support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development for those who live and work in rural areas".   The RSES has a specific objective to seek to expedite the implementation of the National Broadband Plan[11].

The National Broadband Plan (NBP), part funded by the Irish Government and the European Regional Development Fund, is the Government's plan to deliver high speed broadband services to all businesses, farms and households in Ireland, providing broadband to underserved areas where the market has failed due to factors such as low population density and ensuring that people living and working in rural areas have the same digital opportunities as those in urban areas. The targets of the NBP includes:

- 70Mbps - 100Mbps available to at least 50% of the population with a majority having access to 100Mbps
- At least 40Mbps, and in many cases much faster speeds, to at least a further 20% of the population and potentially as much as 35% around smaller towns and villages
- A minimum of 30Mbps available to all, no matter how rural and remote.

Some of County Kilkenny's towns suffer from broadband deficiencies, which are detrimental to their economic growth. The Council will work towards remedying this, through facilitating the implementation of the National Broadband Plan.

The Council will facilitate the delivery of the National Broadband Plan in accordance with National and Regional policy to:
- **Promote the attractiveness of smaller settlements and rural areas generally for economic development, both indigenous and FDI;**
- **Facilitate more flexible working arrangements such as working from home;**
- **Reduce social isolation.**

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[11] RSES page 158

10.4.1.3 *Metropolitan Area Networks*

The Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) is a network of ducting and fibre optic cable laid within a metropolitan area which can be used by a variety of businesses and organisations to provide services including, but not limited to, telecoms, Internet access, television, telematics and CCTV. The MANs are publicly owned, while allowing all telecommunication operators open access to the networks. They are fibre-based and technology neutral resilient networks, which will ensure adequate capacity for generations to come. To date, Kilkenny City, and Thomastown have been included in the MANs.

10.4.1.4 *Telecommunications Antennae*

The Council recognises the importance of a high-quality telecommunications service and will seek to achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenities and environmental quality.

Objectives

10I   **To support and facilitate the delivery of high capacity Information Communications Technology Infrastructure, broadband connectivity and digital broadcasting, throughout the County, in order to ensure economic competitiveness for the enterprise and commercial sectors and in enabling more flexible work practices e.g. remote working subject to other relevant policies and objectives of the Plan.**

10J   **To set up and maintain a register of approved telecommunications structures which will provide a useful input to the assessment of future telecommunications developments and would also be useful from the point of view of maximising the potential for future mast sharing and co-location.**

Broadband Development Management Requirements:

- All new developments and all refurbishments and urban renewal projects shall, at planning and design stage, show how they will provide for the installation sufficient of carrier neutral ducting for fibre-based data services and incorporate unobtrusive carrier neutral antennae where feasible to facilitate future co- location of services and accommodate multifunctional technologies in the rollout of high-speed broadband and the internet of everything;
- All new significant public infrastructure works such as roads, water and sewerage shall provide carrier neutral ducting where feasible.
- Ensure the provision for development in connection with telecommunications is made in ways which will maximise the use of existing masts and sites so as to limit the impact of development.

Telecommunications Antennae Development Management Requirements:

When considering proposals for telecommunications masts, antennae and ancillary equipment, it is the policy of the Council to have regard to the following:

a) the visual impact of the proposed equipment and access infrastructure on the natural or built environment, particularly in areas of heritage value (See Chapter 9 Heritage);

b) the potential for co-location of equipment on existing masts; and

c) Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures - Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Circular Letter PL 07/12.

The Council will discourage proposals for telecommunications masts, antennae and ancillary equipment in the following locations, save in exceptional circumstances where it can be established that there would be no negative impact on the surrounding area and that no other location can be identified which would provide adequate telecommunication cover:

i.   Highly scenic areas or areas specified as such in the landscape character assessment, such as Mount Brandon and the River Valleys or the areas identified in Section 9.3.1.1 Archaeological Landscapes; in such cases the developer shall demonstrate an overriding technical need for the equipment which cannot be met by sharing of existing authorised equipment in the areas and the equipment is of a scale and is sited, deigned and landscaped in a manner which minimises adverse visual impacts.

ii. In close proximity to schools, churches, crèches, community buildings, other public and amenity/conservation areas; and,

iii. In close proximity to residential areas.

In the assessment of individual proposals, the Council will also take the impact on rights of way and walking routes into account. To avoid proliferation of structures, which could be injurious to visual amenities, it is the Council's preferred approach that all support structures will meet the co-location clustering policy of the current guidelines for antennae. The Council will require documentary evidence as to the non-availability of this option in proposals for new structures. The shared use of existing structures will be required where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration.

Proposals within the county for telecommunications antennae and support structures must show:

a)   the alternative sites considered and why the alternatives were unsuitable,

b)   the number of existing masts within the County,

c)   the long-term plans of the developer in the County and the potential for further masts,

d)   and the plans of other promoters and any prior consultations which the developer may have had with other mast owners.

e)   all technology shall comply with the strictest environmental quality requirements, including the latest International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines and mitigate adequately against the potential to impact negatively on human health and wellbeing.

11 Renewable Energy

> *Strategic Aim: To generate 100% of electricity demand for the County through renewables by 2030 by promoting and facilitating all forms of renewable energies and energy efficiency improvements in a sustainable manner as a response to climate change in suitable locations having due regard to natural and built heritage, biodiversity and residential amenities.*

11.1 Introduction

Kilkenny County Council is a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors – a European cooperation movement involving Regional and Local Authorities which is aimed at increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. Renewable energy sources are defined here as *inexhaustible natural resources which occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment*. These sources include the wind, solar, oceans, bio (plant life) and falling water. Kilkenny County Council has also signed up to the Climate Action Charter for Local Authorities[1] which commits the local government sector to a range of measures including: delivering a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030 (compared to the 2009 baseline); exercising planning and regulatory roles to help improve climate outcomes in the wider community and beyond the public sector, by developing and implementing robust evidenced based policy and standards on climate action, through appropriate and relevant adaptation and mitigation measures. Kilkenny County Council has also recently joined the European Climate Alliance (in September, 2020), which among other things commits the Council to reduce CO2 emissions by 10 percent every 5 years, equivalent to the halving of per capita emissions by 2030 (from a 1990 baseline).

Ireland and Kilkenny have excellent renewable energy (RE) resources, which will be a critical and growing component of Irish energy supply to 2020 and beyond. Indigenous renewable energy already plays a vital role in our domestic fuel mix. It also increases sustainability through the use of clean power sources and enhances energy security by reducing Ireland's dependence on imported fuels. Ireland has established an ambitious and challenging target of increasing reliance on renewables from 12.8% to 34.1% by 2030, 70% of which is renewable electricity.

Kilkenny County Council passed a Sustainable Energy Action Plan in January 2017 and are monitoring and reporting this through 3 Counties Energy Agency every 2 years on www.energyhub.ie

From data collected, CO2 emissions values for Kilkenny began moving off the 2020 trajectory as we moved out of recession period earlier in the last decade.

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[1] Climate Action Charter for Local Authorities, countersigned by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment on behalf of Government 2019

Annual Data – Kilkenny
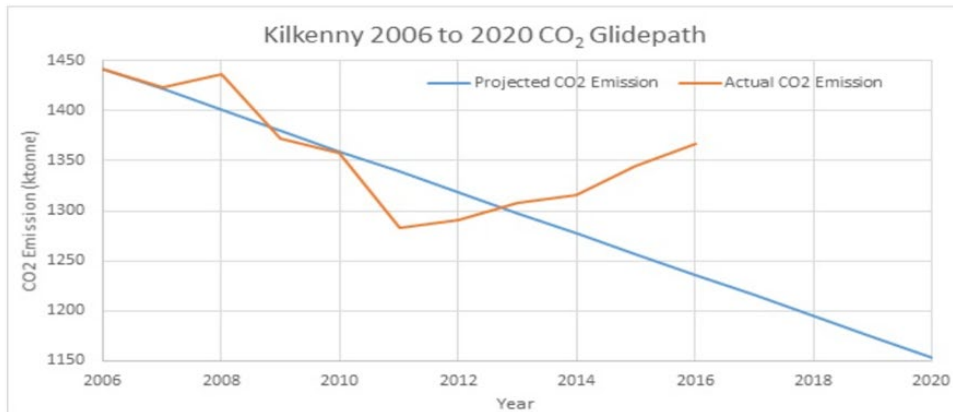
Projected and Actual Carbon Dioxide Emissions 2006 to 2016 for the county of Kilkenny in ktonnes. The County of Kilkenny consumed 1,788 GWh of primary energy in 2016. The County emitted 1,372 ktonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) in 2016.

Figure 11.1 Projected and Actual Carbon Dioxide Emissions for Kilkenny 2006-2016

Based on the 2017 data oil remains the highest source of energy for County Kilkenny at 56.82%, followed by electricity at 19.85%. Transport, which is primarily fossil fuel based, consumes approximately 37.8% of energy, with residential use slightly behind at 36.26% of energy use.
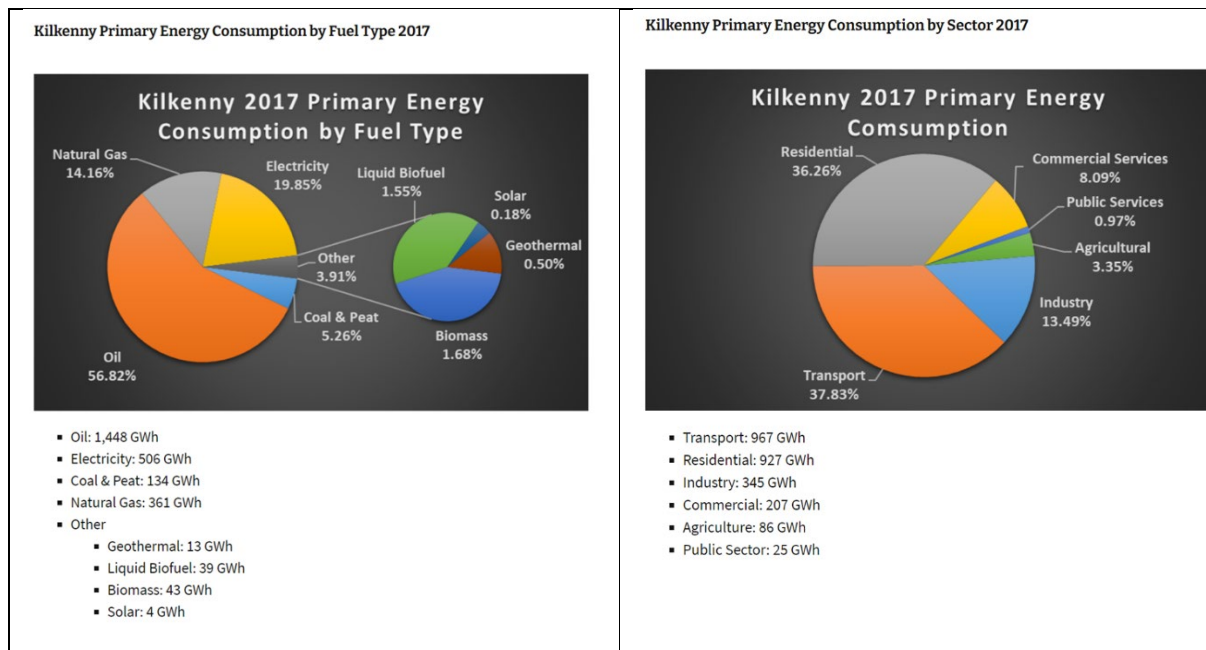
Figure 11.2 Energy Consumption Kilkenny 2017 By Fuel type

Figure 11.3 Energy Consumption Kilkenny 2017 By Sector

This chapter outlines the mechanisms to support the increased development of renewable energy production county wide and across communities and citizens in accordance with the EU Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU.

11.1.1   National Renewable Energy Targets

Table 11.1: Trajectories for renewable heating and cooling, electricity and transport[2]			
Renewable Energy Share (RES)	**Percentage Share by 2020**	**Percentage Share by 2030**	**Percentage Share by 2040**
RES Heating & Cooling	7.8%	24%	26.7%
RES Electricity	36.5%	70%	69.1%
RES Transport	5.8%	13.4%	17.8%
Overall RES Share	12.8%	34.1%	40.2%

It is the policy of this Plan to:

- Support the implementation of the NECP (National Energy & Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/energy/publications/Pages/National-Energy--Climate-Plan-(NECP)-2021-2030.aspx) and associated adaptation & mitigation measures
- Support the implementation of Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future
- Support the implementation of the All of Government Climate Action Plan (CAP) and associated adaptation and mitigation measures
- Support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate a renewable energy sources and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.
- Support the sustainable development of renewable solar photovoltaic energy at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the region in conjunction with the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS).
- Support alternative forms of renewable energy for the electricity, heat, and transport sectors
- Support the integration of indigenous renewable (Non fossil) Compressed Gas, either by local virtual pipelines or grid injection into existing or future Fossil Gas Lines.

Due to the ambitious targets set out by the Irish Government for renewables, this City and County Development Plan sets out a Renewable Energy Strategy here, taking into account the ever-changing landscape and the demand for renewable energy supply.

In this chapter the policy context for all renewables is outlined. This includes an analysis of each type of renewable energy within the county, covering three aspects as follows:

- An analysis of the resource potential,
- An outline of development management guidelines including potential impacts and
- Objectives and policies for their future development.

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[2] Table 5 – DCCAE National Energy & Climate Plan 2021 – 2030

> **Objective**
>
> **11A   To support and facilitate the provision of energy in accordance with Ireland's transition to a low carbon energy future by means of the maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure and by integrating renewable energy sources and ensuring our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows over the period of the plan.**

11.2 Three Counties Energy Agency (3CEA)

The 3 Counties Energy Agency was established to provide independent and sustainable energy information, support and services to the people of Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford, to local businesses and community groups and to their Core Local Authorities.

The 3CEA has extensive experience in supporting energy efficient and renewable energy projects for public and private actors, in particular for community developments. The 3CEA has the following Strategic Goals:

- Energy Efficiency
- Clean Energy (Increase Renewable Energy production locally)
- Empowered Citizens
- Sustainability

11.3 Policy context

As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, the Irish Government has committed to a decarbonisation pathway to 2030 consistent with reaching the EU Target of Zero emissions by 2050. The EU key targets are;

- At least 40% cuts in **greenhouse gas emissions** (from 1990 levels)
- At least 32% share for **renewable energy**
- At least 32.5% improvement in **energy efficiency**

Ireland's targets include at least 40% reduction in domestic Green House Gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 and an increase to 27 percent in renewable energy consumption[3].

The Government's *Climate Action Plan* sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address climate disruption. The Plan clearly recognises that Ireland must significantly step up its commitments to reduce emissions and sets out targets per sector. In relation to onshore wind energy, the Plan estimates that in 2017 the total contribution of onshore wind was 3.3 GW. To meet the

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[3]Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment website

required level of emissions reduction, by 2030 the Plan aims to increase electricity generated from renewable sources to 70%, indicatively comprised of:

- at least 3.5 GW of offshore renewable energy
- up to 0.4 GW of grid-scale solar energy (NDP: 1.5 GW)
- up to 8.2 GW total of increased onshore wind capacity

The *National Planning Framework* (NPF) identified the importance of climate change in National Strategic Outcome (NSO) 8, which relates to ensuring a 'Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society'. National Policy Objective 55[4] seeks to '*Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050*'.

Action no. 21 states as follows: *Ensure that updated planning guidelines for onshore wind are published in 2019*. These Guidelines are currently in draft.

The Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) published in 2020 the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 and a revised Renewable Electricity Policy Development Framework, intended to guide the development of large scale renewable electric projects on land. These plans, together with the Climate Action Plan 2019 are committed to a net zero carbon energy system for Ireland. The Climate Action Plan identifies how Ireland will achieve its 2030 targets for carbon emissions and puts the country on a trajectory to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The key objectives of the Climate Action Plan are as follows:

- Increase renewables from 30% to 70% adding up to 8.2GW of renewable onshore wind energy capacity
- Deliver the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) which will provide support for renewable electricity projects in Ireland through a series of scheduled, competitive auctions.
- Put in place a coherent support scheme for micro-generation with a price for selling power to the grid for homes and businesses.
- Open up opportunity for community participation in renewable generation as well as community gain arrangement;
- Streamline the consent system, the connection arrangements and the funding support for the new technologies both onshore and off shore.

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[4] National Planning Framework p122

> **Objective**
>
> **11B   To identify and designate a Decarbonation Zone (DZ) in the Council's Climate Action Plan for a spatial area in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures are developed to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs to contribute to national climate action.**

11.4 Kilkenny Targets

The 3 Counties Energy Agency (3CEA), covering the counties of Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford, have estimated that by 2030, County Kilkenny will use 633 Gigawatt hours (Gwh) of electricity. This equates to 253MW of energy, or 2.09% of the Country's 12.1 GW combined onshore and offshore renewable energy target.

11.5 Wind energy

The sun heats the earth unevenly, creating thermal air currents. To achieve equal temperatures around the earth these air pockets move about the earth as global wind. Energy that travels in the wind can be captured and converted to provide electricity through turbines. Turbines can be located onshore and offshore.

The Minster published draft Wind Energy Development guidelines and although the draft Guidelines do not replace or amend the existing Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, they do include requirements for Local Authorities when considering policies relating to wind energy.   All planning applications for wind energy developments shall be assessed against the DEHLG's Wind Energy Development Guidelines, 2006, (and any revisions thereof) and the County Council's Wind Strategy.

The draft Guidelines state that the Development Plan is a critical part of translating overall national policy on energy, renewable energy and wind energy in a manner that supports the achievement of Ireland's binding international obligations relating to climate change and renewable energy and taking account of local circumstances.

It is a specific planning policy requirement under Section 28(1C) of the Act that, in making, reviewing, varying or amending a development plan, or a local area plan, with policies or objectives that relate to wind energy developments, the relevant planning authority shall carry out the following:

(1) Ensure that overall national policy on renewable energy as contained in documents are acknowledged and documented in the relevant development plan or local area plan. Planning authorities shall, in particular, have regard to the following national plans, policies and strategies when making, reviewing, varying or amending development plan or local area plan policies or objectives that relate to renewable energy, and in particular, wind energy developments:

- The National Renewable Energy Action Plan 2010 (Irish Government submission to the European Commission);

- The Government's Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012 – 2020 (DCENR);
- The Government's White Paper on Energy Policy - Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 (DCENR); and
- The Government's National Mitigation Plan, July 2017 (DCCAE).

(2) Indicate how the implementation of the relevant development plan or local area plan over its effective period will contribute to realising overall national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource (in megawatts); and

(3) Demonstrate detailed compliance with item number (2) above in any proposal by them to introduce or vary a mandatory setback distance or distances for wind turbines from specified land uses or classes of land use into their development plan or local area plan. Such a proposal shall be subject to environmental assessment requirements, for example under the SEA and Habitats Directives. It shall also be a material consideration in SEA, when considering likely significant effects on climatic factors, in addition to other factors such as landscape and air, if a mandatory setback or variation to a mandatory setback proposed by a planning authority in a development plan or local area plan would create a significant limitation or constraint on renewable energy projects, including wind turbines, within the administrative area of the plan.

11.5.1 Current Status and Targets

Kilkenny currently has approx. 76 MW of installed wind energy, generated by 39 turbines. Renewable energy will be provided by a mix of renewable energies, in which solar is expected to play a significant role (see Section 11.6 Solar Energy).

Wind Farm name	Applicant	Townland	No. Turbines	Total output In MW
Table 11.2: Approved Wind Farms in Kilkenny				
Bruckana	Bord na Mona	Rathpatrick, Bruckana & Baunmore, Johnstown	8	20
Foylature	Art Generation	Foylature, Courtstown, Tullaroan	7	12
Ballybeagh	ART Generation Ltd.	Ballybeagh, Tullaroan	7	13.8
Ballymartin Phase 1	ART Generation Ltd./Bord Gais Energy Paul Martin	Ballymartin, Smithstown	3	7
Ballymartin Phase 2	Bord Gais Energy	Smithstown, Tullogher	1	9.2
	ART Generation Ltd.		3	
Rahora	Ecopowers Developments Ltd.	Guillkagh More, Brownstown	5	4
Lisdowney Community	Matt Bergin and Thomas McEvoy	Lisdowney Ballyragget		9.2
			4	
Ballinclare	Michael Aylward	Glenmore	1	0.5
		Total	39	75.7

11.5.2 Wind Energy Development Strategy

A wind energy strategy has been developed for this plan building on the strategies from previous development plans and having regard to Government policy generally and the *Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines*[5].

In accordance with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines, the Planning Authority undertook a 4-step process for identifying suitable locations for wind energy generation.

The four steps are set out below;
1. Assess wind area potential using SEAI's Wind Atlas for Ireland.
2. Utilise a landscape character assessment and the potential sensitivity of the landscape for wind energy developments
3. Do a multi criteria or sieve analysis by overlaying the wind energy mapping and landscape sensitivity

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[5] Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines December 2019 Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

4. Integrate the information with derived from the previous steps with information regarding accessibility to electricity transmission and distribution grids.

The final Strategy map, Figure 11.4 was then modified by resolutions at the Council meetings on the 8th June 2021 on the 3rd September 2021.

The Council's Wind Energy Strategy is attached as Appendix K.

Accordingly, the county has been divided into three policy areas for the development of wind farms, based on an assessment of viability against other considerations; "Acceptable in principle", "Open for Consideration" and "Not normally permissible". A matrix is set out below outlining which of the various category scales will be considered in each Wind Strategy area. Figure 11.4 shows a map of County Kilkenny with areas designated in accordance with their suitability for wind energy development.

Wind Energy Policy Areas:
Wind energy developments can be divided into five categories depending on their scale, as follows:
(a) Individual wind turbines
(b) Auto producer
(c) Small scale wind developments/Community Schemes (Compliant with the RED II Directive definition of community)
(d) Large scale wind developments

The Plan provides policy areas for a wide range of wind energy developments. The plan considers the potential for the landscape to absorb a variety of projects, ranging from large scale wind farm projects to relatively small-scale wind energy developments within urban and industrial areas, and for small community-based proposals outside the key areas that are identified as being appropriate for wind energy development. Community ownership of wind energy projects enables local communities to benefit directly from local wind energy resources being developed in their local areas, ensuring long-term income for rural communities and community benefit funds being mandatory for projects built post 2021 (Contact www.3cea.ie for further information).

Table 11.3: Wind Energy Strategy Areas – policy approach			
Strategy area **Project category**	**Acceptable in Principle**	**Open for consideration**	**Not normally permissible**
Individual turbine	✓	✓	✓
Auto producer	✓	✓	✓
Small scale wind farm/Community led initiative	✓	✓	X
Large scale wind farm	✓	X	X

Detail on the project categories and policies for their development are set out below.
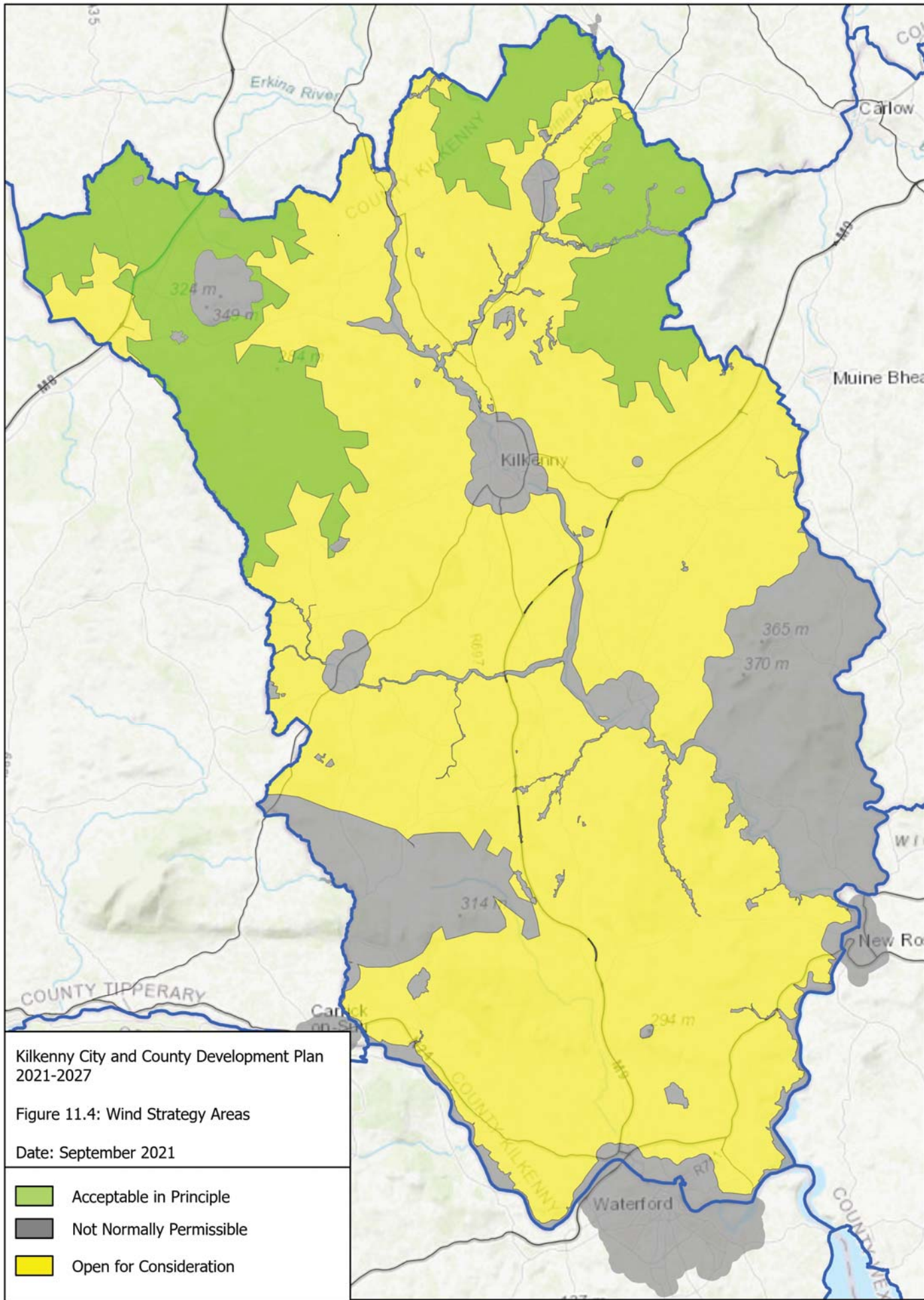
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan
2021-2027

Figure 11.4: Wind Strategy Areas

Date: September 2021

- Acceptable in Principle
- Not Normally Permissible
- Open for Consideration

(a) Individual Wind Turbines

It is recognised that landowners may wish to harness wind energy for private use. Planning applications for individual wind turbines (subject to a limit of 1 per holding) shall be considered throughout the county.

(b) Auto producer

An "Auto producer" is where an industry/large energy user uses a wind turbine to feed its own energy consumption.

These will be considered throughout the county subject to the following:

- The turbine proposed is for a significant energy user,
- The location of the turbine is within the curtilage of the facility or immediately adjacent.
- The site already contains significant development to reduce the visual impact of the turbine(s).

(c)   Small scale wind farm/Community Schemes

Local ownership and part-ownership of a generation project can extend the benefits of renewable energy to households. These benefits of community ownership can vary from providing cheaper energy to the creation of long-term revenue stream and even potentially creating employment for members of the local community.

Small scale wind development projects led by the community will be considered in the policy areas identified as being 'Acceptable in principle' and 'Open for Consideration' in the Wind Energy Strategy Map (Figure 11.4) as follows:

- Comprising no more than 5 turbines,
- Where the total capacity is not greater than 5 Megawatts.

(d) Large-Scale Wind Energy Developments (>5MW)

Large-scale wind energy developments will, in usual circumstances, only be considered in '
Acceptable in principle' areas. The rationale behind this policy is to minimise the visual impacts of such large-scale developments, in addition to effects on the environment of County Kilkenny as a whole, as well as to facilitate appropriate grid connections. These will be assessed in accordance with the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines*.[6]

11.5.3 Development Management Guidance

All planning applications for wind energy developments shall be assessed against the DEHLG's Wind Energy Development Guidelines, 2006, (and any subsequent update of these guidelines) and the County Council's Wind Strategy.

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[6] Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, draft Revised *Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, 2019

In accordance with the guidance, when considering an application for wind energy development, the planning authority may consider some, if not all, of the following matters:

- Environmental Assessments (EIA, AA etc. See 10.5.3.1 below) including mitigation included in Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs);
- Community engagement and participation aspects of the proposal and how its Community Benefit Fund will contribute to the wider County of Kilkenny's Energy Efficiency targets at a local level. (3CEA coordinate such proposals under the County Climate Action Plan.)
- Grid connection details
- Geology and ground conditions, including peat stability; and management plans to deal with any potential material impact. Reference should be made to the National Landslide Susceptibility Map to confirm ground conditions are suitably stable for project;
- Site drainage and hydrological effects, such as
    - water supply and quality and watercourse crossings;
    - management plans to deal with any potential material impact on watercourses;
    - the hydrological table;
    - flood risk including mitigation measures;
- Landscape and visual impact assessment, including the size, scale and layout and the degree to which the wind energy project is visible over certain areas and in certain views;
- Visual impact of ancillary development, such as grid connection and access roads;
- Potential impact of the project on natural heritage, to include direct and indirect effects on protected sites or species, on habitats of ecological sensitivity and biodiversity value and, where necessary, management plans to deal with the satisfactory co-existence of the wind energy development and the particular species/habitat identified;
- Potential impact of the project on the built heritage including archaeological and architectural heritage;
- It is recommended that consideration of carbon emissions balance is demonstrated when the wind energy developments requires peat extraction.
- Local environmental impacts including noise, shadow flicker, electromagnetic interference, etc.;
- Adequacy of local access road network to facilitate construction of the project and transportation of large machinery and turbine parts to site, including a traffic management plan;
- Information on any cumulative effects due to other projects, including effects on natural heritage and visual effects;
- Information on the location of quarries to be used or borrow pits proposed during the construction phase and associated remedial works thereafter;
- Disposal or elimination of waste/surplus material from construction/site clearance, particularly significant for peatland

11.5.3.1 Environmental Assessments

The assessment of the impacts of developments shall comply with the relevant European Directives as transposed into Irish legislation, including the **EIA Directive, the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive.** As regards the directives, these assessments will relate to all mandatory categories and where, following screening, if required, a full EIAR or NIS is produced, these must include the impacts

of both the planning application and its grid connections. In relation to EIAR, the assessment must address the direct effects and any short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative, indirect, secondary, cumulative and transboundary effects of the whole project, i.e. the wind energy development and the grid connection. In relation to the grid connection it is preferable that the corridor approach be used. In relation to NIS, the assessment shall consider all potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

It is recommended that **Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs)** of projects be submitted with applications. These plans generally include mitigation measures which should ideally input into both Environmental Impact Assessment Report or Appropriate Assessment at planning application stage. All planning application submission (and in particular the EIAR) must include details of the site compound and access arrangements. The applications must include details of the location and design of the site compound and construction methods, environmental mitigation methods and proposed reinstatement.

11.5.3.2 Pre-planning and public consultation
Applicants for small- or large-scale wind farms shall be required to engage with the local population in the vicinity of any proposed wind farm, prior to lodging their application.

11.5.3.3 Impact on the landscape
Both quantitative and qualitative factors are used to estimate the potential for impact of Wind Energy developments on the landscape. In accordance with the draft Guidelines on Wind Energy, these are comprised in four parts, being:

- *Landscape sensitivity (ranging from very low sensitivity to very high sensitivity*
- *Visual presence of the wind energy development (ranging from minimal presence to highly dominant)*
- *Aesthetic impact of the wind energy development on its landscape context (ranging from major positive impact to major adverse impact)*
- *Significance of the impact (ranging from insignificant to major)*

The Planning Authority will use these four elements of landscape impact assessment in considering the potential for impact of proposed wind energy development on the landscape.

Landscape Character Types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the county, but share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, for example, Upland Areas. The Kilkenny Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (see Chapter 9) divides the county into four landscape character types (LCTs); Upland Areas, Lowland Areas, River Valleys, and Transitional Areas. See also Figure 9.3 Landscape Sensitivities in Chapter 9 Heritage which identifies environmentally sensitive features.

The Guidance notes however that a wind energy development may be located in one landscape character type, but visible from another. In such instances the entire visual unit should be taken into consideration.

All applications shall be accompanied by a **Landscape Impact Assessment Report**, as set out in Appendix 3 of the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines* , and any revisions thereof including;

- Landscape and visual impact assessment, including the size, scale and layout and the degree to which the wind energy project is visible over certain areas and in certain views;
- Visual impact of ancillary development, such as grid connection and access roads;

11.5.3.4 Noise Impact Assessment and Noise Limit

The draft Guidelines indicate that noise is unlikely to be a significant problem where the distance from the nearest turbine to any noise sensitive property is more than 500 metres. Notwithstanding that there will be requirement for noise modelling as part of any wind energy development. Noise modelling carried out by the applicant in advance of and submitted with the planning application must test and demonstrate compliance with the required noise limits specified in the draft Ministerial guidance. The noise assessment shall include noise characteristics associated with both the wind turbines and any associated infrastructure such as transformers, sub-stations or any other ancillary equipment. Where any proposed distance between a wind farm and neighbouring offices or buildings is less, the Council will look for additional noise and shadow flicker mitigation.

A Relative Rated Noise Limit (RRNL) in the range of 35 – 43 dB(A) shall apply at noise sensitive locations, while not exceeding the background noise level by more than 5dB(A) with an upper limit of 43 dB(A). For instance, at noise sensitive locations where existing background noise levels are measured at less than 30 dB, a maximum 35 dB(A) noise limit will be strictly imposed at lower wind speeds.

11.5.3.5 Shadow Flicker

Where the turning blades of wind turbine cause intermittent shadows at sensitive nearby receptors, this is called shadow flicker. Shadow flicker generally can become an issue at properties 130 degrees either side of North relative to the wind turbines. A Shadow Flicker Study detailing the outcome of computational modelling for the potential for shadow flicker from the development should accompany all planning applications for wind energy development and suitable mitigation will be required.

11.5.3.6 Natural Heritage

Any impacts on birds or rare flora, mammals, amphibians and fish need to be assessed. For the purposes of this Development Plan, a registered thoroughbred stud farm is considered to be a noise and flicker sensitive property as referred to in the Government's *Wind Energy Development Guidelines*[7], and any revisions thereof.

11.5.3.7 Access to grid

Details of consultations with the electricity transmission operators regarding the nature and location of a proposed grid connection should be submitted as part of the pre-planning consultation.

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[7] Government of Ireland, *Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines*, 2019

11.5.3.8 Proximity to Roads and Railways

At a minimum, turbines shall be set back a distance equalling the blade tip height of the turbine plus 10% from National and Regional roads and railways. Set-back from other roads will be site specific and determined at application stage.

11.5.3.9 Proximity to power lines

The minimum clearance for all turbines and overhead transmission lines must be falling distance (measured from the edge of the foundation) plus an additional flashover distance for the relevant voltage.

11.5.3.10   Interference with communication systems

Any wind farm applicant should contact individual broadcasters to inform them of the proposals. A list of the licensed operators is available on www.comreg.ie. Mobile phone operators should also be informed. Contact should also be made with the Irish Aviation Authority. The outcome of such consultations shall accompany planning applications.

11.5.3.11   Appropriate Setback Distance to apply

As regards individual residential properties, it is required that applications for wind energy development should demonstrate a setback distance for visual amenity purposes of 4 times the tip height should apply between a wind turbine and the nearest point of the curtilage of any residential property in the vicinity of the proposed development, subject to a mandatory minimum setback of 500 metres. Discretion applies to planning authorities when agreeing separation distances for small scale wind energy developments such as auto producers or where the owner(s) and occupier(s) of the relevant property or properties are agreeable, provided minimum noise requirements are met.

11.5.3.12 Effects on Equine Facilities

Applications for wind energy developments shall be accompanied by an assessment detailing potential impacts, mitigation and residual impacts upon the equine industry. Such assessments shall, inter alia, consider issues including noise and shadow flicker.

11.6 Solar energy

Solar power can be used in buildings to produce hot water and electricity. It can be in the form of thermal solar energy (passive and active) or photovoltaic solar energy. Passive solar heating refers to the way in which buildings are designed to maximise solar gain and minimise heat loss. Active solar energy is where solar panels are used to transform solar energy into heat to provide space and/or water heating. Solar Photovoltaic Systems use daylight to convert solar radiation into electricity, the greater the intensity of light, the greater the flow of electricity.

11.6.1 Passive Solar Design (PSD)

Virtually all buildings enjoy free energy and light from the sun; the objective in PSD is to maximise this benefit by using simple design approaches which intentionally enable buildings to function more effectively and provide a comfortable environment for living or working. PSD has always been a feature of traditional vernacular architecture. A structure employing PSD is unlikely to cost more than a structure built without the benefit of passive solar design. Design, infrastructure and site layout are key to achieving energy efficient development by optimising passive solar gain in domestic and non-domestic buildings. PSD is a central principle of the Guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*[8] and the *Kilkenny Rural House Design Guide*[9].

11.6.2 Active Solar Heating (Solar Thermal)

A solar collector is a device that captures solar heat and transfers it to heat water, most commonly for sanitary hot water production, or in cases where a building has a very low heat demand, then often for both space heating and hot water. Larger scale active solar thermal technologies can also be used for cooling and steam production. Steam produced in this way can be used to drive turbines for electricity production.

11.6.3 Photovoltaic Solar Electricity

The production of solar electricity relies heavily on active solar technology. The most commonly encountered system for solar electricity production is solar photovoltaic. Solar photovoltaics (commonly referred to as "PV") is the term given to the conversion of light energy (irradiance) to electricity and also describes the active solar technology (Solar photovoltaic systems) which produces electricity from solar radiation using solar cells joined together in panels called PV modules.

Photovoltaic solar electricity can be generated at various scales, ranging from domestic to utility scale solar PV (USSPV). Such utility scale solar photovoltaic arrays are connected to the national grid and are generally referred to as "solar farms".

Although there is considerable variation in appearance, many solar modules are dark in colour and have low reflective properties. They are generally placed on the ground in arrays facing the sun, which allows for grazing underneath, or are fitted to buildings and in particular on south facing roofs. With improvements in technology, solar panels are becoming increasingly efficient and cost effective.

On average, 1 sq. m of silicon solar panels will generate 200W of power on a clear sunny day[10]. That's enough to power a laptop computer. A home solar PV system sized at 20 sq. m (3kW) and well located would generate around 2,600kWh of electricity a year. That is over 40% of the average annual electricity demand of an Irish home. Solar PV systems will still function on overcast days in Ireland although not at their maximum rated capacity.

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[8] Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Guidelines for Planning Authorities on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages), 2009*

[9] Kilkenny County Council, County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide, 2008

[10] According to the SEAI website.

Due to high levels of irradiance, according to SolarGIS, County Kilkenny has the potential to generate between 950 to 1000kWh/m2, which, together with Counties Wexford and Waterford, makes Kilkenny a very attractive location for utility scale solar farms. Standalone polar PV needs to be stored and for this purpose storage batteries are generally used in domestic and commercial scale solar installations to store the energy to match the domestic or network demand.
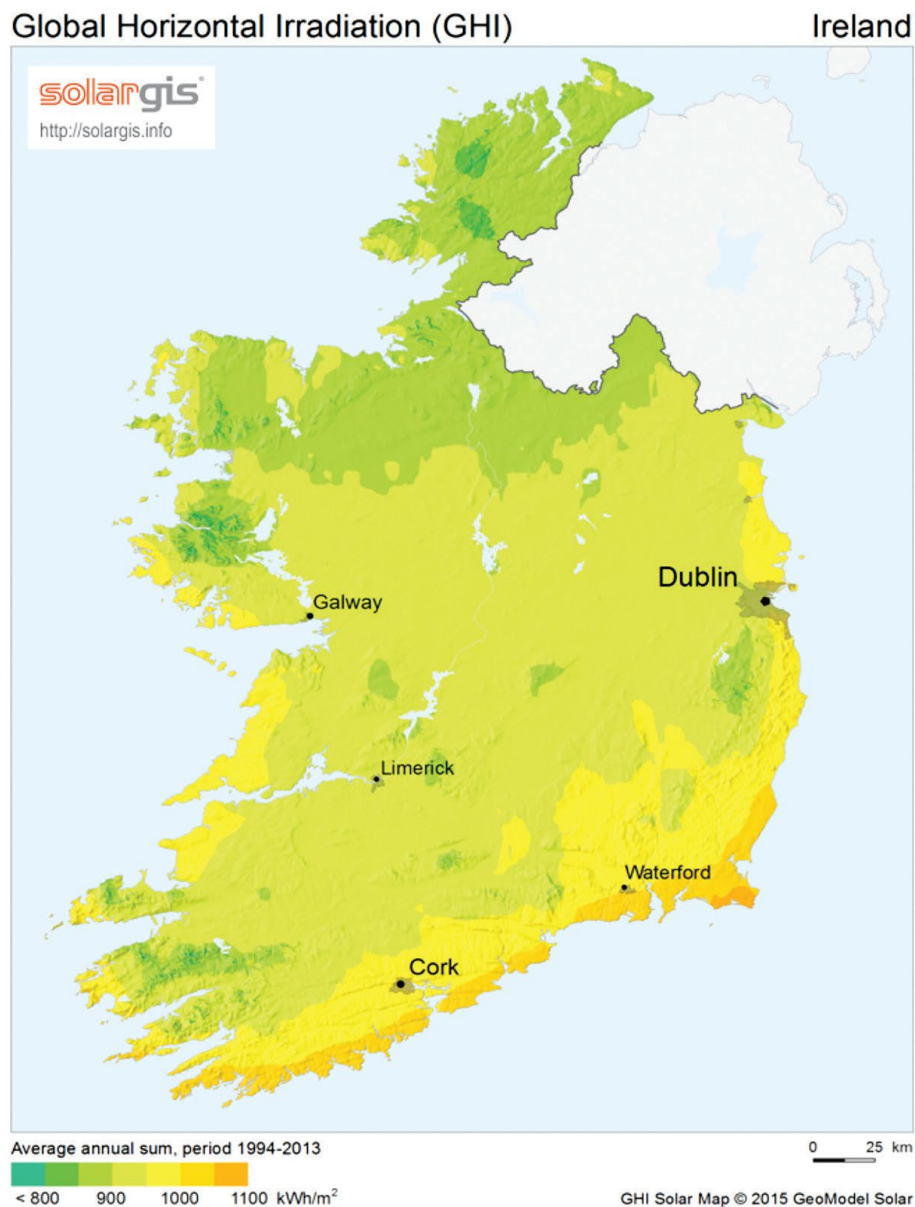

Figure 11.5 Horizontal Solar Irradiation

Solar Thermal (STE) power plants use solar radiation to heat a fluid to high temperatures. The technology is applied in domestic settings (i.e. to heat water) and at a utility scale, where heated fluid can transfer to water in order to create steam to drive turbines.

11.6.4 Current status of Solar development in the County

The use of domestic solar panels for the generation of heat for hot water and for the generation of electricity is widespread throughout the County. Several grant schemes exist to assist with the rollout of more domestic solar generation.

Under the Climate Action Plan 2019, the ESB networks have a requirement to transpose the EU 2019/944 Regulations. The EU regulations require that the export of PV from domestic and commercial microgeneration is permissible.

County Kilkenny currently has 13 approved solar farm developments, each potentially providing 4 to 5 MW of power, which, in combination, potentially provides between 50 and 75 MW of power, depending on efficiency.

Table 11.4 Solar farms granted in Kilkenny		
Applicant	**Townland**	**Output MW**
1.Elgin Energy Services Ltd.	Kiltorcan and Ballyhale	4.2
2.Elgin Energy Services Ltd	Grange Lower, Goresbridge	4
3.Wexford Solar Ltd	Curraghmartin, Carrigeen	4
4.Highfield	Derrynahinch, Knocktopher	
5.Highfield	Derrynahinch, Kiltorcan	
6.Solar Sense	Ballyhale and Kiltorcan	
7.Power Capital Renewable Energy	Grange Lower, Goresbridge	5
8.Power Capital Renewable Energy	Loan Castlecomer	5
9.Elgin Energy Services Ltd	Keatingstown	
10.Pascal and Niall Drennan	Parksgrove Ballyragget	50,000m2 of solar panels
11.Art Generation	Ballytobin and Ballyhall, Callan	5
12.Elgin Energy Services Ltd	Ballyconra, Ballyragget	
13.ENGIE Developments (Ireland) Limited	Farranmacedmond, Aglish	

Industrial scale solar generation is also widespread throughout the County. A good example of such rollout is O'Shea farms, located just outside Piltown, who have placed extensive solar arrays on the roofs of their agricultural sheds for electricity generation, yielding 208,000 kWh p/a, extensively cutting electricity demand from the grid.

11.6.5 Solar Energy Development Management Guidance

The main impact from the installation of solar energy technologies is visual. The installation of solar panels on a building can impact on the building's character. There are exemptions contained within the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 to 2008 (S.I. No. 83 of 2007 and S.I. No. 235 of 2008), regarding the placing of solar technology on domestic structures, and on buildings used/associated with industrial, light industrial, business and agricultural purposes, subject to certain criteria. Planning permission is required to install solar technology on a Protected Structure. Sensitive design and location are important so that the overall character is not diminished.

The following principles will guide Development Management:
- The Planning Authority will promote the use of solar technologies in new and existing dwellings, offices, commercial and industrial buildings, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management requirements.
- The Planning Authority will support and facilitate the generation of renewable energy from Utility Scale Solar Photo- Voltaic (USSPV) where solar arrays can be so positioned that, when considering Development Management Guidance, they will not have an excessively adverse impact on the landscape, either individually or in combination.
- The Planning Authority will support and facilitate the development of passive solar design proposals for the development of houses in rural and urban areas, and will draw on the recommendations of the *Kilkenny Rural House Design Guide*, and the Guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*.
- The Planning Authority will continue to make available advice on Passive Solar Design in preplanning consultations for domestic and commercial buildings.
- The Planning Authority will consider impacts of overshadowing on the efficiency of existing solar technologies when assessing planning applications.
- To support the installation of solar panels on public buildings such as libraries and schools and other Government and County Council projects within the county should the opportunity arise.

Public buildings and schools are not included within the Regulations. The Council will support applications to install solar panels on these buildings within the county should the opportunity arise.

All solar farm applications will be assessed on a site-specific basis and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The best locations for Utility Scale Solar PV (USSPV) are:

- Proximate to a 38kv or 110kv lines and substations
- Rural Brownfield (e.g. cutaway bog);
- Urban Brownfield (e.g. former landfill sites);
- Topographically assimilative and screening rich landscapes;
- Agricultural Lands

11.6.5.1 Utility Scale Solar PV (USSPV)

It is recommended that the impact of **Utility Scale Solar PV** (USSPV) on the landscape be considered with due cognisance of the following:

- Individual and cumulative 'zones of visual influence' identifying where the solar arrays will be visible from. Sequential effects on visibility need to be considered where an observer moves through a landscape and sees two or more schemes. Common routes through a landscape (e.g. major roads; long distance paths or cycle routes) can be identified as 'journey scenarios' and the proposals impact on them can be assessed;
- In addition to the proposal under consideration, consider photomontages to show all existing and consented solar farms, including those for which planning applications have been submitted,
- If necessary to undertake a glint and glare assessment, including cumulative effectives of all existing and consented solar farms. Glint and Glare is linked to the characteristics of some solar energy technologies such as older solar PV panels or concentrated solar power (CSP) where energy is focussed on a central boiler which drives a steam turbine.
  Glint and glare are defined as:
    "Glint" gives out or reflects small flashes of light.
    "Glare" shine with a strong or dazzling light.
- At the most detailed level, description and assessment of cumulative impacts may include the following landscape issues:
  o scale of development in relation to landscape character or designations,
  o sense of distance,
  o existing focal points in the landscape,
  o and sense of remoteness or wildness.
- Proximity of areas of archaeological potential. Any application for a USSPV scheme should at least submit an archaeological assessment predicated on a site walk over and desk research of possible archaeological potential.
- Proximity to sensitive visual receptors, such as those found in heritage landscapes or areas with scenic landscape qualities, including protected views.

A decommissioning statement should be included as a standard component of a planning application for utility scale solar PV. The Council will require a commitment to decommissioning at application stage. A condition to agree decommissioning details will be a consideration during the decision-making process.

It should be noted that over time, higher efficiency panels (repowering) during the lifetime of a grant of planning permission may need to be installed. This should be considered in all applications and as long as the physical characteristics or the planning impacts of the development are not materially different from the original (i.e. reflectivity, sun path tracking etc), such replacements can be conditioned subject to consideration by the Planning Authority.

11.6.5.2 Small scale domestic, business or light industrial solar collector panels

Domestic, business or light industrial buildings can use either thermal and/or Photo-Voltaic solar collector panels.
The best locations for arrays of domestic and commercial scaled solar panels are:

- South facing sloped roofs

- Free standing at or above ground level adjacent to domestic or commercial buildings.

Solar collector panels are in some instances, with limitations, exempted under the following regulations:
- Domestic under Class 2 c) of Part 1, Schedule 2, exempt in accordance with Article 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended
- Business or light industrial under Class 56 d) and e) of Part 1, Schedule 2, exempt in accordance with Article 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended

Planning applications dealing with developments which exceeds the exempt limitations, will be considered with due regard to the following;
- The location and elevation of the proposals
- The profile and colours of the solar panel arrays
- The direction the panels face
- Potential impact of the arrays of solar panels on the character of the structure and that of neighbouring structures.

11.7 Bioenergy

11.7.1 Background

The EU's 2050 long-term strategy outlines the bio-economy as one of the strategic priorities in the road to a climate neutral economy. A National policy statement on the bio-economy was published in 2018, and the First Progress Report of the Group was published in September 2019. The importance of the bio economy is also recognised in the Government's Climate Action Plan and other cross-sectoral policies including Future Jobs Ireland. The Government recognises that the bio economy is crucial for sustainability while also providing an impetus to rural development and employment. The Action Plan for Rural Development (2017) underlines how the bio economy can contribute to decarbonisation, sustainable growth and job creation in the agricultural, industrial and technological sectors in rural areas. With Kilkenny's large rural economy, the potential for the bio economy to boost employment in County is clear.

Bioenergy is energy extracted from biomass which includes biological material such as plants and animals, wood, agricultural residue and waste. Bioenergy is produced through many different processes: combustion and anaerobic digestion being the most common and widely used. Combustion is the energy conversion process whereby biomass (for example wood chips) is burned to produce process heat or to heat space or hot water. Anaerobic digestion involves the bacterial transformation of biomass (for example animal manure) to produce biogas which can be upgraded to Biomethane or biogas. The biogas can be used to fuel a stationary gas engine or gas turbine to produce electricity or burned in a boiler to provide heat or to raise steam. Biomethane can also be compressed and used as a transport fuel. The majority of current biomass-derived energy comes from wood combustion to produce heat.

Biofuel is often used to refer to liquid or gaseous fuel extracted from biomass. Biofuel and bioenergy are the same, both mean energy derived from biomass. Biofuel has become associated with transport fuel in Ireland; bioethanol is used in petrol spark ignition engines and biodiesel is used in compression ignition diesel engines. Biofuel produced from vegetable oils/animal fats can be used in unprocessed form or converted to biodiesel. Bioethanol is produced from the fermentation of organic materials such as sugar beet and cereals.

Bioenergy offers significant opportunities for rural communities to diversify into clean energy. In 2010, the Government introduced a biofuel obligation on suppliers of petrol and diesel to ensure that a set percentage of their supply is composed of biofuel.

The percentage is currently set at 8.69% by volume per annum but this rate is expected to be increased over time. This obligation on fuel blenders will be a key component in achieving the national target of 13.4% renewable energy in the transport sector by 2030 as set out under the NECP 2021 – 2030.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) is the simultaneous production of heat and power. CHP is the most efficient option for producing electricity with total efficiencies of 85% or greater possible. A modern power station has an efficiency of up to 35% with a further 10% of power generated lost in transmission. CHP technologies based on biomass combustion represent a great potential to reduce CO_2 emissions since they are based on utilisation of renewable energy sources (for example forest residue, wood fuels or sawdust). They also have the potential to increase local employment as fuel is sourced locally. Recycled timbers also form a waste management solution and a particular CO_2 net benefit when used in power or heat production.

Biomass district heating has many advantages. It can:
- Contribute towards the national target of 24% for renewable heating and cooling by 2030
- Significantly reduce CO_2 emissions and help combat climate change
- Combat fuel poverty by delivering lower cost heat to low income homes
- Create employment and sustain jobs by providing lower cost heat to customers
- Provide a secure heat supply from locally sourced biomass fuel.

The key objectives of the Plan are to increase the contribution of bioenergy to the region's energy balance, reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, decrease the carbon footprint of the region in terms of GHG emissions and promote rural development and sustainable agriculture.

The bioenergy industry is comprised of several elements set out below:

11.7.2 Wood Energy Supply Chain
Wood fuels are available in a number of generic forms. These include wood wastes, forest residues and energy crops. Some wood fuels are processed to provide a higher quality and more user-friendly product such as wood pellets and wood chips. There are considerable forestry plantations in the county. According to the Forest Service, 9.6% of the county was in forest cover in 2017, amounting to approximately 19,795 hectares. In Kilkenny it is likely that forestry will provide the main source of biomass for the foreseeable future.

11.7.3   Short rotation forestry

Short rotation forestry is the production of wood fuel through the cultivation of high-yielding trees at close spacing on short time rotations. Species such as willow and poplar are ideal for short rotation forestry, as they are easy to establish, fast growing, suitable for a variety of sites and resistant to pests and disease.

11.7.4   Energy crops

The main commonly grown energy crops in Ireland were Willow and Miscanthus.

11.7.5   Liquid Biofuels

Liquid biofuels are derived from biomass crops or by-products that are suitable for use in vehicle engines or heating systems. Biofuels can be considered as potential replacements or extenders for mineral fuels such as diesel or petrol. They can be sub-divided into a number of categories, the principal two being:

1. Vegetable oils/animal fats which can be used in unprocessed form or converted to biodiesel;
2. Bio-ethanol produced from the fermentation of organic materials such as sugar beet, cereals, etc.

11.7.6   Renewables Gas

The greenhouse gases created by agricultural and food waste emissions can be captured and converted into energy. This is done through a process called Anaerobic Digestion. The output, renewable gas, is then injected into the existing national gas network or transported as compressed BioMethane for the end user to replace Oil and Fossil Gas in their heat or transport uses supporting the decarbonising of the Heat and Transport Sector.

Advantages of renewable gas are that it can be stored and distributed as a liquid or gas to its end user. Creates local jobs sustainability for the lifetime of the plant in supply chain and upstream in bio fertiliser production to replace fossil based synthetic fertilisers widely used in agriculture.

11.7.7   Renewable Gas Anaerobic Digestion (Biomethane)

The process of Anaerobic Digestion (AD) involves the breakdown of organic matter by bacteria and enzymes in an oxygen-free environment. The end product of this process is biogas which is a gas with a high methane content. This methane can be captured and burned to produce heat, electricity or a combination of the two. It is the policy of the Plan to encourage the development of such anaerobic digestion and renewable gas infrastructure in County Kilkenny.

Anaerobic Digestion is used widely in the agricultural sector in the form of small on-farm digesters producing biogas to heat farmhouses and other farm buildings. The main types of organic material feedstock used in AD are:
• sewage sludge

• farm slurry
• municipal solid waste (MSW)

An anaerobic digestion plant typically comprises of:
- a digester tank
- buildings to house ancillary equipment such as a generator, a biogas storage tank
- a flare stack (3-10m in height)
- associated pipework.

Plants can vary in scale from small schemes treating the waste from an individual farm through medium-sized centralised facilities dealing with wastes from several farms (potentially supplemented by crops such as maize grown specifically to feed the digester) to sizeable industrial AD plant handling large quantities of municipal solid waste. In the case of small plants it is likely that the plant can be accommodated within the vicinity of existing farm buildings. Some forms of biomass produce digestate and other end products which must be disposed of.

The Camphill community in Ballytobin uses an anaerobic digester which performs centralised co-digestion of farm slurry with mixed food waste. This generates energy (heat and power) to meet the requirements of the 90 people living in Ballytobin Camphill Community.

Permission was granted (P.12/354) for an anaerobic digestor at a piggery in Piltown.

The 3 Counties Energy Agency are working through the gas innovation fund 2020 to identify the renewable gas resource potential in Co. Kilkenny within the South East Region. The findings of this report in 2021 will support the locating of grid gas injection points strategically located around the region to make this gas available to meet the fossil gas demands in the urban centres of the counties.

11.7.8 Combined Heat and Power

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) is a technology that uses the energy produced in the combustion of fuel to produce both useful heat energy and electricity. CHP can refer to gas fired CHP or to biomass CHP. Biomass CHP is a form of renewable energy. In Ireland most CHP plants burn gas. CHP Systems will comprise the following key components: -
- Fuel delivery and storage facilities (if fuelled by biomass)
- Boiler/turbine
- Connecting pipework
- Heat exchanger/heat recovery generator

CHP plants are available in a range of scales, from micro-CHP domestic applications, small scale CHP plants, medium size plants serving an office block to large industrial applications and CHP plants serving district heating schemes. There are no medium or large-scale CHP plants in the county.

11.7.9 Energy Recovery from Waste

As our need for energy increases, the recovery of energy trapped in waste materials can benefit the environment by replacing energy from non-renewable sources. Even after extensive recycling, the residual waste stream still has a high combustible content available for energy recovery.

Section 16.4.5 of The Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021, sets out the policies in relation to energy from waste (Thermal Recovery). The Plan takes a National view on thermal recovery and predicts a required additional 300,000 tonnes thermal of recovery capacity for non-hazardous waste and 50,000 tonnes for hazardous wastes nationwide by 2030. The Plan recognises the need for thermal recovery capacity to be developed specifically for the on-site treatment of industrial process waste and where justifiable the treatment of such waste at merchant thermal recovery facilities. Kilkenny County Council recognises the need to support the development of bioenergy resources.

The Council will support and encourage the development of the bioenergy sector and facilitate its development for energy production, heat storage and distribution, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management requirements.

In urban areas, Kilkenny County Council will support plants for the sustainable production of bioenergy, storage of heat and distribution of gas and electricity on brownfields sites within or adjacent to existing industrial areas or on lands zoned for future industrial use. Plants shall be located close to the point of demand and public roads shall have sufficient capacity to absorb any traffic generated by the plant. In rural areas, Kilkenny County Council will consider proposals for small scale developments on brownfields sites or within farm complexes close to the source material where public roads have sufficient capacity to absorb any traffic generated by the plant.

The Council will support and encourage the development of biomass district heating and facilitate its development for energy production, heat storage and distribution, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management requirements.

11.7.10 District Heating

District heating is a system for distributing heat generated in a centralised location through a system of insulated pipes for residential and commercial heating requirements such as space heating and water heating. Recoverable or 'waste' heat is an unavoidable by-product of thermal power production and many large industries such as data centres. Such industries can lead to huge energy waste. There is a benefit in using such excess heat for neighbouring heating requirements, but that approach is based on relative proximity and co-location of such industries with heat users such as offices and residential areas is required at planning stage. The Council will support and promote co-location where heat as an industrial by product can be utilised for the generation of space heating and water heating in adjacent areas/districts. The relevant resource documents will be considered when considering proposals for district heating, being *"Assessment of Geothermal Resources for District heating in Ireland"* and the *"Roadmap for a Policy and Regulatory framework for Geothermal Energy in Ireland"*.

11.7.11 Development Management Guidance:

Sites for commercial scale generation of bioenergy combined heat and power plants (CHP) should be located in brownfield sites within or adjacent to existing or future industrial areas or co-located with

other wood processing industries. Plants should be close to the point of demand and public roads should have adequate capacity to absorb any traffic generated by the plant.

Accordingly, the Council will facilitate the development of Organic Waste to Energy/Combined Heat and Power schemes, subject to the criteria for location of waste management facilities and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management requirements. Kilkenny County Council will also support the sustainable production of bioenergy where such production is based on Sustainable Forestry Management and best practices in growing of energy crops.

Bioenergy CHP plants shall not be located where such plants have the potential to impact residential or other amenities or environmental quality by virtue of:

- o   emissions to air, ground, water,
- o   visual impact,
- o   noise or light pollution

BioMethane (Compressed natural Gas) should be located in rural agriculture setting as a diversification option for beef sector.

The Planning Authority will consider the following when considering applications for planning consent for Bioenergy plants.

Table 11.5: Summary of potential impacts from anaerobic digestors/CHP plants	
Issue	**Potential impact**
Visual	Scale of the proposed development Visual impact of the digester, plant building(s) and chimney stack/flue on landscape, including protected views
Hydrology	Potential for pollution from operational procedures, e.g. spillages and from digestate and potential for contaminants to enter soil, groundwater and streams Potential ecological impacts of nitrogen deposition
Noise	During construction and during operation from plant operation and deliveries
Air quality	Odour from storage of wastes and feedstock, digestion process, transport, and disposal of digestate, dust and emissions may impact on proximate residential amenity. May require an assessment of their impacts and a model of emissions dispersion.
Light pollution	If operation is proposed on 24/7 basis
Traffic and transport	Increase in vehicle movements to and from the property; use of rail freight or shipping could be considered.
Architectural heritage	Impact on character of setting of protected building

In order to address these potential impacts, each application is to be assessed having due regard to the likelihood of any of these impacts and to any proposals for mitigation of same. The site and the size of proposed plants and the process proposed are the main indicators of potential impacts, and hence site size, plant size and nature and current proximate land uses are major considerations. Impacts of potential emissions on the natural environment, including humans, fauna and flora and in particular Natura 2000 sites should be carefully appraised. The origin of the biomass is also a consideration and whether same is to be obtained from sustainably managed resources where best practice in energy crops is applied.

The availability of a grid connection and proximity to same is also of importance, as is the need for transmission infrastructure that may have a visual impact. Details of the proposed transmission infrastructure, including any transformers and transmission lines, whether over ground or underground, should therefore be included in the application. Proximity to the point of demand is an important factor in particularly larger plants and due regard should be given to vehicular access and vehicular movements, including proximity to a transport network with adequate capacity.

Applications should provide detail on site management measures during both the construction and operational phases.

It is advised that community consultation take place in advance of the submission of any application that is likely to give rise to public concerns on siting/design or amenity impacts.

11.8 Hydro Power

Hydroelectricity is electricity derived from the power harnessed from the flow of falling water, typically from fast-flowing streams and rivers, impoundment, or in the form of pumped hydro schemes.

Carlow-Kilkenny Energy Agency published a report on hydro power potential in the county, entitled *Reclaiming Lost Power, Kilkenny's Potential Hydro power sites* in 2010[11]. According to that report, there was a total of 185 KW being generated through hydro power in 2010, see Table below.

Table 11.6 Hydro power generating sites in Co. Kilkenny			
Generating station	**Address**	**Operator**	**Capacity (kW)**
Inch Mills	Sion Road Kilkenny	Inch Hydro Ltd	40
Greenville Mill	Kilmacow	Benedict Behal	75
Drying Plant	Bennettsbridge	Nicholas Mosse Pottery	28
Milling Plant	Bennettsbridge	Nicholas Mosse Pottery	42
Total			185

Source: Reclaiming Lost Power, 2010

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[11] Carlow-Kilkenny Energy Agency, *Reclaiming Lost Power, Kilkenny's Potential Hydro power sites,* 2010

In 1985, the Department of Energy published a document entitled *Small-scale Hydroelectric Potential of Ireland[12]*. In this, 32 potential hydro sites were identified in County Kilkenny. [*Reclaiming Lost Power*](#) assessed these 32 sites and identified 20 sites for prioritisation. These sites are shown in **Figure 11.6.**
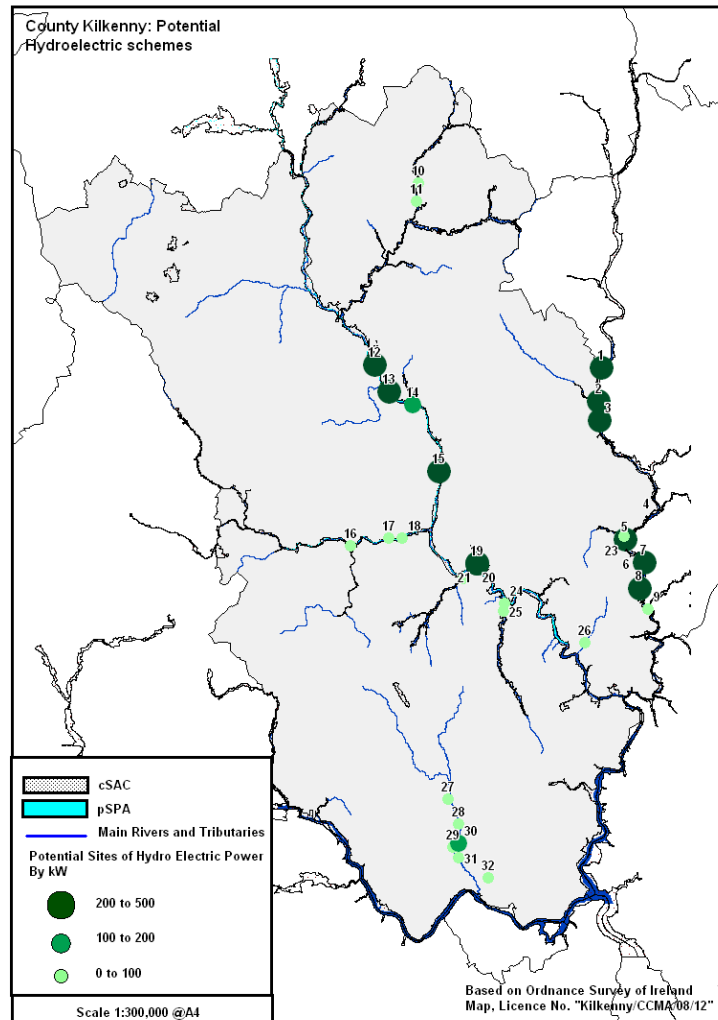
Figure 11.6:   Potential Hydroelectric Schemes

11.8.1 Types of scheme

The *flow rate* in the river is the volume of water passing per second. The *gross head* is the maximum available vertical fall in the water from the upstream level to the downstream level. Two hydro projects with the same power output could be very different; one using a relatively low volume of high-speed water from a mountain reservoir and the other using a high volume of water in a slow flowing river. As such, hydro schemes are classified as low, medium or high head schemes.

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[12] Department of Energy, [*Small-scale Hydroelectric Potential of Ireland,*](#) 1985

11.8.1.1 Low head schemes

Low head systems typically have a gross head of less than 10m. *Reclaiming Lost Power* identified the potential of low head hydro resources existing in disused mill sites, weirs and untapped areas around the county. These low head sites (< 10 m) have the potential to create employment, revenue and further enhance the green economy for County Kilkenny.

Low head systems are generally located in lowland areas, abstracting water from rivers through the use of weirs with diversion of a proportion of river flow to a leat (millrace) and from there to a turbine house. Water is returned to the river downstream of the turbine through a tailrace. Low head schemes are very dependent on flow, and may shut down during periods of low rainfall.

11.8.1.2 Medium-high head schemes

While there is no explicit definition, medium head systems typically have a gross head of between 10 – 50m, and high head schemes typically have a gross head of >50m. Medium and high head schemes typically, but not always, are larger in terms of installed generation capacity. In any case, there is little scope for development of these types of schemes in County Kilkenny. Only one site, on the River Blackwater is a high head scheme and the Greenville Mill hydroelectric scheme is already in place there.

11.8.2   Development Management Guidance

In the assessment of proposals for hydroelectric schemes the Council will have regard to the provisions of the *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction and Operation of Small Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries*[13], or any amending or replacement document. In addition, it is recommended that anyone considering a hydro-electrical project should consult the following documents (or any updates thereto);

- *Reclaiming Lost Power, Kilkenny's Potential Hydro power sites*
- *Requirements for the protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites*[14]

In addition to the effects on fisheries as covered by the Guidelines, possible impacts from hydro energy developments are outlined in the table below.

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[13] Central and Regional Fisheries Boards, & the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction and Operation of Small Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries,* 2007

[14] Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, *Requirements for the protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites,* 2009

Table 11.7: Summary of potential impacts from hydro-power scheme	
Issue	Potential impact
Visual	Impact on character of landscape, scenic views (turbine houses, embankments, structures, access routes and power lines)
Ecology	Impact on habitats, fish populations and protected species such as otters and bats
Hydrology	Possibility of pollution, effect on water quality and regime, must show compliance with River Basin Management Plan
Noise	During construction and operation
Archaeology	There may be underwater archaeology present
Architectural heritage	Many weirs and mills are protected structures

Taken from *Generating your own Energy, Hydropower*, Welsh Assembly Government, 2011 Pages 5-7

An Environmental Impact Assessment may be required for some hydroelectric schemes in accordance with Schedule 5 Part 2(h) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. An EIS may also be required for schemes not meeting this threshold, but where the Council considers that the potential environmental impact is such that an EIA is warranted.

As can be seen from Figure 9.1, many of the county's rivers are designated as SACs or SPAs (see Section 9.2 Natural Heritage). As with all developments, for any location within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site, an assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive will be required (See section 1.3 Appropriate Assessment).

As part of any planning application for a hydroelectric scheme, an Environmental Management Plan will be required to address all environmental issues arising during the construction and operation of the scheme.

The following types of scheme are likely to be detrimental to the fisheries resource and may be rejected by the planning authority:

- New low head schemes that may cause significant obstacles to fish movement.
- In catchments / sub-catchments of importance such as a spring salmon fishery.
- Placing structures / weirs at the outlet of lakes or creating new impoundments.
- The transfer of water from one catchment to another.
- River channel sections of high fisheries value where the impacts of the proposed hydro scheme development would be unacceptable from a fisheries perspective, i.e. in an area of important spawning or nursery area
- Where there are existing competing uses of the water resource, such as water abstractions, dilution of licensed discharges etc
- Where there may be an impact on river continuity, fish migration, or fish mortality.

Development Management Requirements

- **The Council will facilitate the development of appropriate projects that convert hydro power to energy with due regard to the provisions of the *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction and Operation of Small Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries***

11.9 Geothermal Energy

Geothermal energy refers to heat energy stored in the ground. Heat is supplied to the ground from two sources, namely the hot core of the planet and the sun. It can be classified as either 'deep' or 'shallow' depending on the depths involved. For deep geothermal energy extraction, developments drill into the earth's crust to reach 'hot rocks', such as granite whose radioactive elements generate heat at great depth. The second source of heat in the ground is from radiation from the sun. Solar thermal radiation is absorbed by the surface of the earth each day. This energy can be regarded as stored energy which stays relatively warm throughout the year. This type of solar energy is extracted from the first few metres of the earth's crust and can be harvested using heat pumps.

Heat pump systems extract the heat stored in the ground (ground source heat pumps), bodies of water (water source heat pumps) or air (air source heat pumps). This heat can then be used to heat the spaces in buildings, heat water or enable a building to be cooled. Through compression, heat pumps can 'pump up' heat at low temperature and release it at a higher temperature so that it may be used again. A heat pump looks similar and can perform the same functions as a conventional gas or oil boiler, i.e. space heating and sanitary hot water production. For every unit of electricity used to operate the heat pump, up to four units of heat are generated. Therefore, for every unit of electricity used to pump the heat, 3-4 units of heat are produced. The collector can be "closed loop" where the same fluid (usually water and antifreeze) always flows through the collector pipes or "open loop" where new water (e.g. from a well) flows through the heat pump.

Ground source heat pumps (GSHP) operate on the fact that the ground maintains a constant temperature between 11°C and 13°C, several metres below the surface. Ground source heat pumps use a 'closed loop' system of water/anti-freeze to collect the soil heat. In general terms the ground area required for the collector is approximately equal to that of the foot-print of the house or building to be heated[15].

Air source heat pumps (ASHP) use the surrounding air as a heat source to heat a building. Air source heat pumps can be located in the roof space or on the side of the building. They are similar in appearance to air conditioning boxes. Water source heat pumps (WSHP) extract heat from large bodies of water or rivers. These are generally 'open loop' collectors, i.e. the water is passed through and discarded, unlike the 'closed loop' systems.

11.9.1 Deep Geothermal

In 2004, CSA Group completed a study commissioned by SEAI which aimed at identifying the potential resources of geothermal energy in Ireland. Co. Kilkenny does not have significant potential for deep geothermal, as the study concluded that "*the best proven potential for medium and deep geothermal resources in the Republic of Ireland are in the northeast (Navan area) and northwest midlands... and in the west Clare and east midlands areas*"[16].

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[15] CSA Group, Geothermal Energy Resource Map of Ireland, Final Report; 2004; Report prepared for Sustainable Energy Ireland, 2004, Page 17

[16] CSA Group, Geothermal Energy Resource Map of Ireland, Final Report; 2004; Report prepared for Sustainable Energy Ireland, 2004, Page 82

One of the outcomes of the project was to create a series of geothermal maps[17] for Ireland. Subsurface temperatures increase from south to north in County Kilkenny. Figure 11.7 below shows the geothermal temperatures at 5,000m.
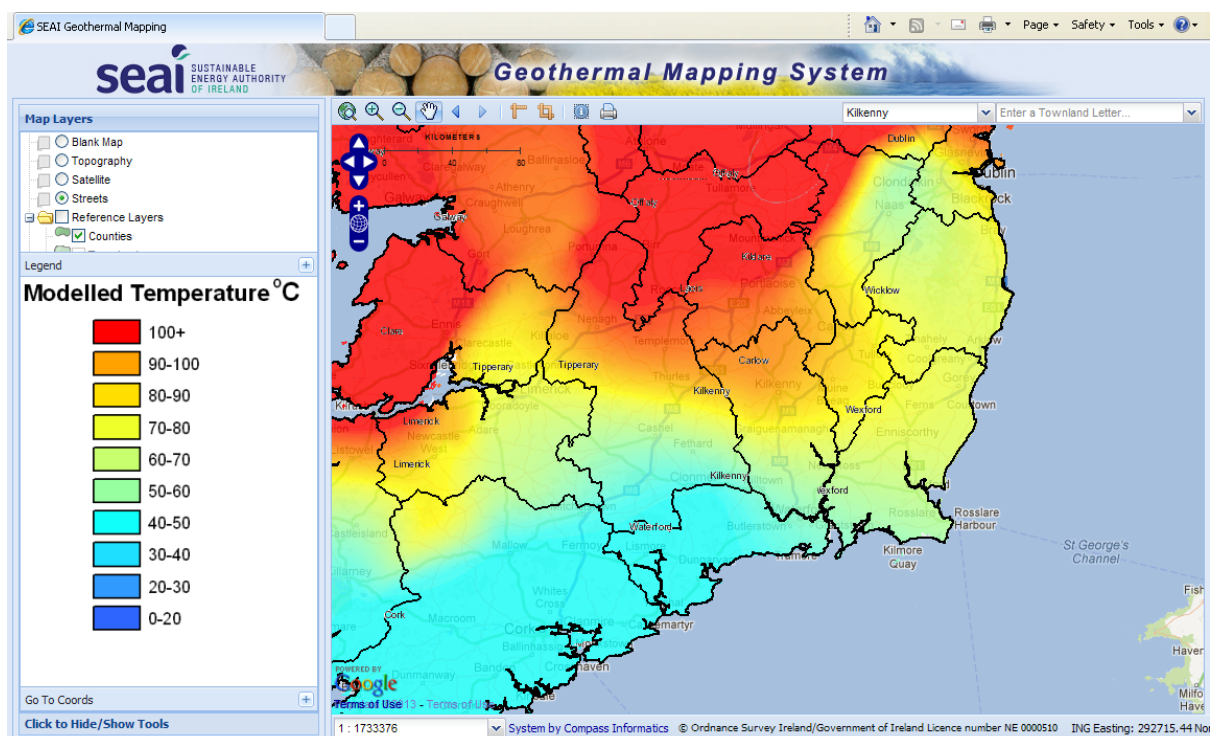

Figure 11.7 Geothermal temperatures at 5,000m

However, in the short term it is unlikely that deep geothermal will be utilised in Ireland. The first deep geothermal plant in Ireland was granted permission by South Dublin County Council in 2011 for Greenogue Business Park in Newcastle.

The Council will promote the use of geothermal energy products in new developments, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Requirements.

11.9.2   Air Source Heat Pumps

The most common heat pump systems extract heat from external air, typically using an outside unit. These heat pump systems do not require underground piping to source heat and so can be cheaper and easier to install compared to ground source heat pump systems. The most popular heat pumps are air to water heat pumps. The Climate Action Plan envisages 600,000 heat pumps by 2030, 400,00 of which will be installed in existing buildings.

The Council will promote the roll out of air source heat pumps in line with government policy in new developments and retrofits, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Requirements.

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[17] SEAI, Geothermal Mapping System

11.9.3   Water Source Heat Pumps

Water source heat pump systems use open water, such as lakes, rivers or streams, as a heat source. Heat is removed from the water through collector pipework and then transferred to the heat pump.

The Council will promote the use of water source heat pumps where applicable in new developments and retrofits, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Requirements.

11.9.4   Development Management Guidance

The various possible impacts from the three types of heat pumps, and from deep geothermal are set out in the Table below.

Table 11.8: Summary of potential impacts from heat pumps			
Potential impact	Ground source heat pump	Air source heat pump	Water source heat pump
Visual		x	
Ecology	X		X
Hydrology (risk of contaminating wells, aquifers and watercourses)	X		X
Hydrology (abstraction & disturbance)			x
Traffic & Transport	x		
Noise	x	x	x
Geology	X		
Archaeology	x		
Architectural heritage		X	
Building Design (structural impact)	x		x

Taken from *Generating your own Energy, Heat Pumps*, Welsh Assembly Government, 2011 Pages 7-11

Table 11.9: Summary of potential impacts from Deep Geothermal energy	
Issue	Potential impact
Visual	Plant and power infrastructure, there may also be structures around any tunnels
Ecology	Habitat and species disturbance
Hydrology	Risk of contaminating wells, aquifers and watercourses
Traffic & Transport	Vehicle movements during operation and also construction & decommissioning
Noise	Noise creation from drilling
Geology	Seismic factors associated with drilling near faults, risk factors from gas pockets and other sub-surface substances. Risk of ground subsidence.
Archaeology	There may be archaeology present.

11.10 Transport

The transport sector is the largest fuel consumer in Kilkenny and is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than any other sector of the economy. The achievement of a reduction in greenhouse emissions to comply with targets set out in the Paris Agreements will require significant measures to be taken in the transport section in particular. It was estimated that in 2020 renewable energy

accounted for 5.8% of transport energy consumption in Ireland. It is envisaged that this will increase to 13.4% by 2030 and 17.8% by 2040.

The White Paper for Energy 2015 is cognisant of the need to support alternatives to fossil fuels for transport and it recommends the following initiatives:

- The roll out of electric and gas vehicles through grants and tax relief, and
- Development of a national policy framework to support infrastructure for alternative transport fuels.

In this regard, a combination of energy efficiency transport initiatives, electric vehicles and renewable transport sources can reduce Kilkenny's dependence on imported fossil fuels and associated greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector.

11.10.1 Electric Vehicles

The carbon emissions relating to the powering of electric vehicles is expected to reduce significantly by 2030, through the adoption of electrical generating renewable technologies and more efficient generating plant and Smart Grid technology. The Climate Action Plan contains a target of 1m passenger electric vehicles by 2030.

11.10.1.1 Electric Vehicle Development in Kilkenny

ESB networks (ESBn) currently operate the electric vehicle network in Kilkenny and countrywide. Many homes and business already have e- chargers fitted since 2016. The ESBn is responsible for the rollout of EV charging points across the country with 3 types of charge points being installed by 'ESB ecars' nationwide, being:

- home charge points,
- public charge points and
- fast charge points

The Council have purchased some electric vehicles and support the roll out of the EV charging network.

11.10.1.2 Electric Vehicle Potential in Kilkenny

The Council supports the expansion of the EV charging network in conjunction with the ESB and will seek to require the installation of additional public charge points as part of car-parking facilities of private developments through its Development Management Requirements, see Section 12.14.

11.10.2 Biofuels

The National Biofuel Obligation Scheme 2010 requires all road transport fuel suppliers to use biofuel in the fuel mix (8.4% since January 2016) with a further target of just over 11.2% being adopted from January 2020. This scheme is recognised as the most promising means of securing national renewable energy targets by 2020. However, under this scheme much of the biofuel is imported.

11.10.2.1 BioFuel Potential in Kilkenny

There is a need to support and develop indigenous renewable energy sources that contribute to meeting the transport renewable energy targets. The potential exists for the development of second-generation biofuel production facilities which will produce more advanced biofuels. Such a development would likely be developed by a private company, requiring significant resources to develop such a facility.

Bio-ethanol has potential for use as a direct petrol supplement within vehicles. This is particularly the case where the ethanol is produced from residues of dairy products, thereby creating potential spin-off economic opportunity in the dairy sector.

11.11 Energy Storage

The National Transmission Operator – EirGrid and the National Electricity Distribution Operator (ESBn) are required to upgrade their infrastructure to cater for the large increase in flexible renewable generation. This requires role out of storage facilities on the gas and electricity network over the coming decade. This will be supported at domestic scale (batteries in our homes) and commercially at large scale. The Council supports new technologies such as battery storage, liquid air storage and synchronous condensers.

11.12 Sustainability & Energy Efficiency in Buildings

According to the EU, buildings account for 40% of total energy consumption in the Union[18]. Therefore, increasing energy efficiency in buildings has a huge role to play in meeting Ireland's renewable energy targets.

11.12.1 Kilkenny County Council Energy Efficiency

The Local Authority have signed up to Energy Map training and an Energy Management Action Plan delivered by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). An Energy team was established under the Energy Map programme consisting of personnel from across the various sections.

Kilkenny City & County Council achieved their 2020 target at the end of 2018 with 33.2% less energy use delivered 2 years ahead of the target. This stems from the great work of the KCC Energy Team coordinated by the 3 Counties Energy Agency and supported by the National Public Sector Energy Programme run by SEAI under the EU directive for Energy Efficiency recast 2018.

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[18] Directive 2002/91/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2002 on the energy performance of buildings
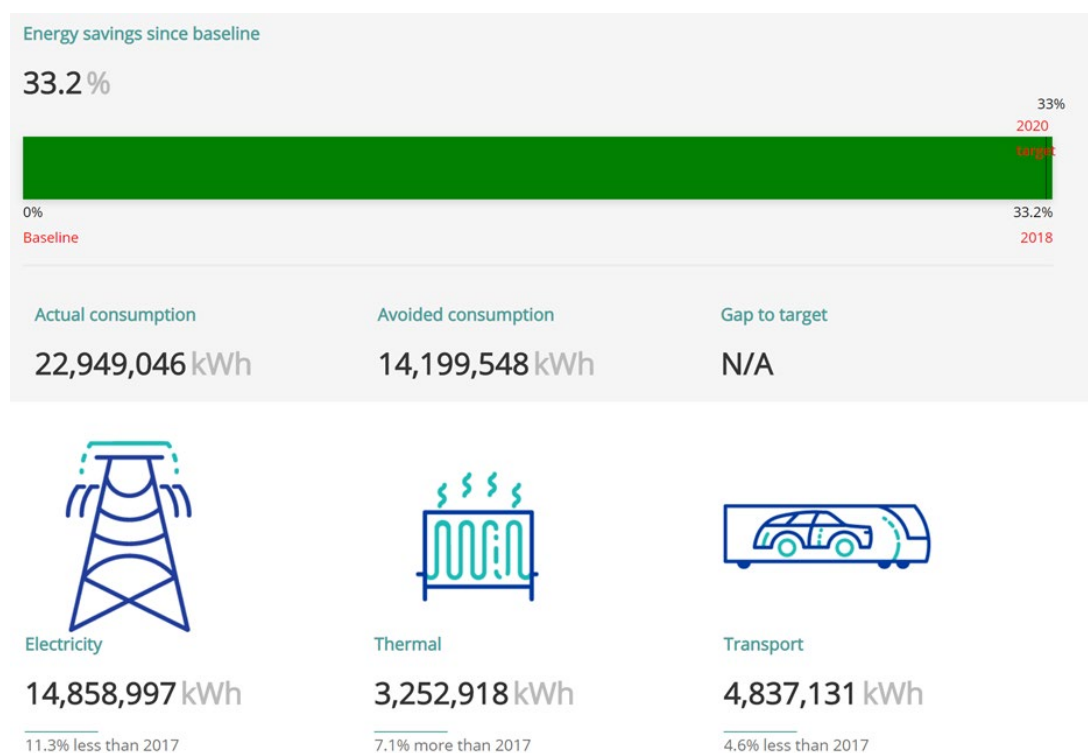
Figure 11.8 Energy Saving in Kilkenny County Council since 2018

11.12.2 Energy Performance of Buildings

Arising from the Recast of the European Performance of Buildings Directive 2010/30/EU, from 1 January 2019, every new public building will have to be designed to nearly zero energy building standards. Also, all other new buildings will have to comply with the new nearly zero energy buildings standards from 1 January 2021. The Council will have regard to the DoEHLG publication *Towards Nearly Zero Energy Buildings in Ireland Planning for 2020 and Beyond* and the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (2010/31/EU) which promote the increase in nearly Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB). The Council promotes the development of low carbon buildings.

Energy efficiency and the renewable requirements for new buildings including new residential development are addressed in the Building Regulations Part L. The aim of Part L is to limit the use of fossil fuel energy and related CO_2 emissions arising from the operation of the building.

11.12.2.1   Alternative Energy Systems for Large Buildings

For large buildings over 1,000m^2, <u>S.I. No. 666 of 2006</u> requires that due consideration has been given to the technical, environmental and economic feasibility of installing alternative energy systems in the proposed building, and that the use of such systems has been taken into account, as far as practicable, in the design of that building.

The preferred methodology for assessing the feasibility of such alternative energy systems shall be the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland software tool or other acceptable methodology as defined in (<u>S.I. No. 666 of 2006</u>).

This shall also apply to all new planning application for housing schemes of ten or more units.

### 11.12.2.2	Dwelling Energy Assessment Procedure

Dwelling Energy Assessment Procedure (DEAP) is the official Irish procedure for calculating and assessing the energy performance of dwellings. Published by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), the procedure takes account of the energy required, for space heating, ventilation, water heating and lighting, less savings from energy generation technologies. It calculates both the CO_2 emission rate and energy consumption per annum. This is a useful tool for designers when considering and comparing options to conserve energy and reduce CO_2 emission. The right design decisions in relation to building form, dwelling layout, levels of insulation, amount and orientation of glazing, utilisation of solar energy, heating system and fuel type, use of draught lobbies, construction materials and measures to conserve potable water, can contribute greatly to sustainability. In addition, these will lead to cost savings, in the long term, while raising the level of comfort for the occupants of the dwelling.

DEAP is also used to calculate the Building Energy Rating (BER) of a dwelling. The BER is a label containing the energy performance of the dwelling, expressed as primary energy use per unit floor area per year (kWh/m2/per annum) and illustrated as an Energy Rating (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, etc) for the dwelling, it also includes a Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) Emissions Indicator (kgCO2/m2/yr) associated with this energy use and an advisory report.

11.12.3 Building design

The _Urban Design Manual_[19] sets out how sustainable energy considerations should be incorporated into all stages of the design process.

The Building Regulations, Part L – Conservation of Fuel and Energy – set out the requirements for dwellings[20] and for buildings other than dwellings[21]. In order to ensure that the Building Regulations are fully taken into account in the design of any proposed dwelling, it will be a requirement that all planning applications be accompanied by a provisional BER cert stating that the proposed dwelling is in accordance with the current Technical Guidance Document L - Conservation of fuel and energy.

### 11.12.3.1	NZEB Building Regulations 2019 TGD -L

Since new building regulations have improved energy performance of homes over the past 10 years all new homes after 2016 are now A-rated homes providing warmth and comfort with very low energy demand. The integration of 20% renewables is now typically achieved using 2-4 kW of solar PV with heating typically provided by electric heat pumps and electric car charging unit fitted in most homes.

It is expected that batteries will be soon integrated into most homes and that they will store energy for use in home using smart appliances and charging electric vehicles over the next decade.

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[19] Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, _Urban Design Manual, A best practice guide_ 2009
[20] Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Building Regulations 2011 Technical Guidance Document L Conservation of Fuel and Energy – Dwellings
[21] Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Building Regulations 2008 Technical Guidance Document L Conservation of Fuel and Energy – Buildings other than dwellings

11.12.3.2   NZEB requirements for Non-Domestic Buildings

For new buildings

For all new builds, an equivalent to a 60% improvement in energy performance on the 2008 Building Regulations is required. This means an improved energy performance for the fabric, services and lighting specification. It also introduces a mandatory requirement for renewable sources. The renewable sources must in general provide 20% of the primary energy use, however there is flexibility where the building is more energy efficient than the regulations. This typically corresponds to an A3 Building Energy Rating.

For major renovation

For existing buildings under EPBD, major renovation is where "more than 25% of the surface area of the building envelope undergoes renovation". This will require that the building is brought up to cost optimal level, which is defined in the building regulations as:

- Upgrade Heating System more than 15 years' old
- Upgrade Cooling and Ventilation Systems more than 15 years' old
- Upgrade Lighting more than 15 years old.

11.12.3.3   NZEB requirements for Domestic Buildings.

For new buildings

For all new builds, NZEB is equivalent to a 25% improvement in energy performance on the 2011 Building Regulations. A range of examples are shown in excel versions of the DEAP software available in the Domestic BER Resource page. Key changes to Part L for NZEB compliance include a Maximum Energy Performance Coefficient of 0.3, a Maximum Carbon Performance of 0.35 and a renewable Energy Ratio of 20%.

For major renovation

For existing buildings, major renovation is typically activated under the following circumstances, where the work affects greater than 25% surface area of the existing dwelling:

- External Wall Renovation, external or internal insulation
- External Wall & Window Renovation
- External Wall & Roof Renovation
- External Wall & Floor Renovation
- New Extension

The cost-optimal level is a primary energy performance of less than 125 kWh/m2/yr (B2 BER) when calculated using DEAP or upgrade of ceiling insulation and heating system.

11.12.4 Building Energy Development Management Requirements

- **The Planning Authority will, through the development management process, promote the use of low carbon footprint materials to reduce transport emissions in the sector instead of those that require intense high temperature and carbon emissions.**

- **Encourage high standards of energy efficiency in all building developments and encourage developers, and owners to improve the environmental performance of the building stock, including the deployment of renewable energy.**

- **Require a provisional BER certificate as part of any planning application, showing how the proposal will comply with Part L of the Building Regulations.**

- **To require that planning applications for large buildings, as defined by the Energy Performance of Building Regulations, demonstrate that due consideration has been given to the technical, environmental and economic feasibility of installing alternative energy systems in the proposed building, and that the use of such systems has been taken into account, as far as practicable, in the design of that building. This shall also apply to applications for ten or more housing units.**

- **To promote and advise for the use of low carbon material and appropriately designed new buildings, which utilise orientation, shelter, sun, light, etc. in design details.**
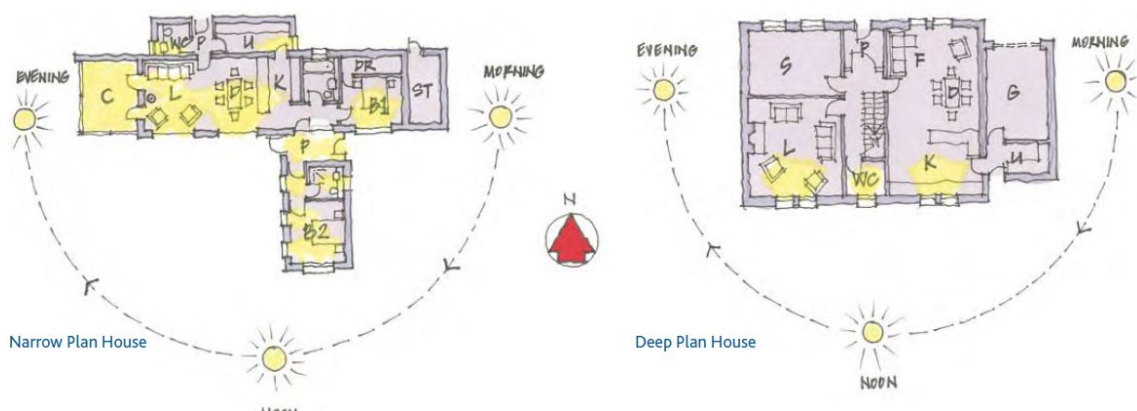
Taken from the *Kilkenny Rural Design Guide*, 2008

12 Movement and Mobility

Strategic Aim: To co-ordinate transport and land use planning, reducing the demand for travel and the reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, cycling and walking by providing for a greater mix of suitable uses and by promoting and facilitating the transition to electrification of our transport modes moving away carbon intensive modes to new technologies such as electric vehicles.

12.1 Introduction

The integration of land use and transportation is a fundamental principle of the National Planning Framework and the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The aim is to reduce the overall demand for transport by promoting a more efficient land use pattern where suitable land uses are located closer together. In time this will reduce costs for everyone and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors by allowing a greater number of day to day activities to be completed with a reduced necessity for travel, or travel by alternative modes other than the car.

Notwithstanding this, the Council acknowledges that for a County with a very significant rural based population, some essential travel will continue to be made by cars and goods vehicles and the Plan also facilitates improvement in road infrastructure to cater for these movements. While this section deals generally with the County as a whole there will be a more detailed analysis of transport for Kilkenny City in Vol 2 of the Plan which deals exclusively with Kilkenny City.

12.2 Significant Policy Documents and Guidance

The **National Planning Framework (NPF)** and the **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region** will impact on transport in the way they promote Compact Growth and Sustainable Mobility as National Strategic Outcomes. The transition to more sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling, public transport) is promoted, particularly within smaller towns and villages and rural areas. The implementation of planning and transportation strategies for urban areas, with a major focus on improving walking and cycling routes is a requirement of the NPF and RSES. This to be achieved through the preparation of local transport plans.

The NPF aims to *"expand attractive transportation alternatives to car transport to reduce congestion and emissions"*[1]. National Planning Objective 13 states that *"in urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building heights and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth".*

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[1] NPF p143

The **RSES** aims to transform *"our transport system towards well-functioning, sustainable, integrated public transport, walking and cycling and electric vehicles"[2]*. Regional Policy Objective 11 provides for Local Transport Plans to be prepared for all the Key Towns. Kilkenny City is designated as a significant key town within the region.

The **Climate Action Plan** identifies how Ireland will achieve its 2030 targets for reduction in carbon emissions and a pathway towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050. A priority of the Action Plan is tackling emissions from the Transport sector, which accounted for almost 20% of Ireland's greenhouse gases in 2017.

In order to achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gasses, the Government's approach to reducing emissions from the Transport sector is to adopt policies to influence both the transport intensity of growth and the carbon intensity of travel.

To make growth less transport intensive, key objectives of the Climate Action Plan include:
- The successful execution of Compact Growth as outlined in the NPF;
- Accelerate the take up of EV cars and vans so that 100% of all new cars and vans are EVs by 2030 (950,000 EV's on the country's roads by 2030);
- Expansion of walking, cycling and public transport networks to promote modal shift;
- Giving Local Authorities more discretion in designating low emission zones;
- Better use of market mechanisms to support modal shift;
- The successful roll-out of the National Broadband Plan, which can promote remote working and wider activities which reduce unnecessary journeys;
- Increase the renewable biofuel content of motor fuels.

The Climate Action Plan also deals with the electrification of both public and private transport, with a range of initiatives to boost the roll-out of low emission buses. The plan aims to decarbonise heavy and light goods vehicles and envisages zero emission postal deliveries.

The Council will promote walking, cycling, public transport and other more sustainable forms of transport as an alternative to the private car, together with the development of the necessary infrastructure and promotion of the initiatives contained within *Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020*.

The **Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS),** updated in 2019, promotes a holistic approach to the design of roads and streets within urban areas, focused on balancing the needs of all users. The principles, approaches and standards set out in the Manual apply to the design of all urban roads and streets (with a speed limit of 60 km/h or less) and aims to put well designed streets at the heart of sustainable communities to promote access by walking, cycling and public transport, influenced by the type of place in which the street is located.

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[2] RSES p 26

There is specific recognition of the importance to create secure and connected places that work for all, characterised by creating new and existing streets as attractive places with high priority afforded to pedestrians and cyclists while balancing the need for appropriate vehicular access and movement. It is designed to respond to the principles of universal design, as outlined in documents such as '*Building for Everyone, A Universal Design Approach*'[3].

The **National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport**[4] (2017) represented the first step in the Government's long-term vision for decarbonising transport by 2050. The cornerstone of this document was the ambition that by 2030 all new cars and vans sold in Ireland will be zero-emissions capable. This particular Framework focuses exclusively on reducing transport's dependency on oil through the provision of infrastructure and common standards for alternative fuels, such as Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) and biofuels.

Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (DoEHLG, 2012) sets out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting National roads. National roads play an integral role within Ireland's overall transport system and in the country's economic, physical and social development. The primary purpose of the National road network is to provide strategic connectivity between the main centres of population and employment, including key international gateways such as airports and ports, and to provide intra-regional connectivity.

Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments: Apartments are likely to form a greater proportion of housing delivery in Kilkenny in the future, particularly in the City. The standards contain a number of transport-related issues relevant to the development of the Kilkenny Local Transport Plan including the following:

- A default policy for car parking provision to be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated in highly accessible areas such as in or adjoining city cores or at a confluence of public transport systems such as rail and bus stations located in close proximity. Typically, these locations are within 15 minutes walking of city centres or within 10 minutes walking distance of commuter rail or bus stops or within 5 minutes walking distance of high frequency bus services;
- A reduced overall parking standard and application of a maximum car parking standard for housing schemes with more than 45 dwellings per hectare net in suburban/urban locations served by public transport or close to town centres or employment areas;
- A requirement that cycling is fully integrated into the design and operation of all new schemes; and a significant uptake in the quantity and quality of cycle parking provision in relation to the location, quantity, design, and management of bicycle storage areas.

The National Cycle Manual, developed by the NTA in 2012, presents the current best practice and advice in providing cycling facilities in urban and suburban environments. It promotes safe environments for cyclists, and all other road users, by integrating the design requirements of cyclists

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[3] Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, *Building for Everyone, A Universal Design Approach*

[4] Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, *National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport,* 2017

into the design for urban areas more generally. It underlines the importance of integrating high-quality cycle infrastructure in the planning and designing of new developments at all levels of the network including the strategic level, the route planning level and at design level. It provides technical information on the design of junctions, roundabouts, crossings, bus stops and so on to ensure the optimum balance between the various modes and road functions is reached.

A Best Practice Guide to Permeability, produced by the NTA in 2015, sets out guidance on how best to facilitate demand for walking and cycling in existing built-up areas. The concept of permeability describes the extent to which an urban area permits ease of movement of people by walking or cycling when accessing their homes, shops, schools, local services, places of work and public transport stops and stations. Characteristics of a permeable environment are as follows:
- Interconnected pedestrian and cycle street network;
- Absence of high walls and fences segregating housing areas and local/district centres;
- Absence of cul-de-sacs for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- Secure, well-lit, overlooked pedestrian and cycle links between housing areas and between housing and local/district centres.

Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans Guidance for Local Authorities aims to assist local authorities to fully integrate the principles and practice of Workplace Travel Plans into both the development plan and the development management processes. A Workplace Travel Plan is an effective instrument used within the planning process to promote and support sustainable travel patterns to work at a site-specific level.

National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021
We will make public transport easier for people with disabilities to use, especially buses, rural transport, bus stops and train stations.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.

12.3 Integration of Land Use Planning and Transport
This Plan supports the regional objectives (**RPO 151 to RPO 154**) as contained in the RSES to guide the integration of land use and transportation planning and to guide local planning objectives. Combined with a focus on infill development, integrated transport and promoting regeneration and revitalisation of urban areas, pursuing a compact growth policy at national, regional and local level will secure a more sustainable future for our settlements and for our communities[5]. Land use and the manner in

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[5] NPF page 169

which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. In this regard the Council is preparing a Local Transport Plan for Kilkenny City (See Volume 2, Chapter 5).

Through the Core Strategy provisions have been made to deliver 40% of the county's growth up to 2027 within the existing settlements and by promoting compact growth of settlements. This is particularly the case for Kilkenny City which has by far the largest population within the County.

At local level this will mean:

- Delivering a high level of permeability through walking, cycling and public transport modes,
- Complementary traffic management measures to facilitate the use of private car,
- Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport by maximising the number of people living within walking and cycling distance of their neighbourhood or district centres, public transport services, and other services at the local level such as schools;
- Designing permeability for walking and cycling in new development areas and retrospectively implementing walking and cycling facilities into existing neighbourhoods where feasible and practicable,
- Workplace travel plans will become increasingly important for all major trip generating uses including schools. Travel plans with a strong emphasis on sustainable travel modes will be conditioned as part of planning permissions and be carried out in a manner consistent with published NTA guidance. (See Section 12.5.2 Workplace Travel Plans.)

Where space or other constraints prevent the full implementation of the provisions of the Design Manual for Roads and Streets, best reasonable efforts in the interests of providing accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists should be used.

Public transport infrastructure should be considered in all plans and projects relating to the county's urban settlements, including local area plans, traffic management schemes, and public realm improvement schemes. This would include, inter alia, suitable infrastructure on public transport corridors to improve safety and efficiency for public transport users, including retro-fitting within existing development areas.

12.3.1 The 10 Minute City Concept

A balanced, compact form, combined with efficient transport links between employment and residential locations, will facilitate easier circulation and mobility within the City and Environs. It can bring new life and footfall, contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport, increase housing supply and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities, as well as to walk or cycle more and use the car less.

The provision of a range of dwelling types and densities within all the settlements will be critical in providing for the housing needs of the growing population. This is particularly true in the case of Kilkenny City. By providing for a compact city form there are substantial economies of scale to be made in terms of the costs of service provision. Since the 2014 Plan, Kilkenny has begun to develop the concept of the ten-minute city. It is where residents of the City/Town or neighbourhood can access the local services they require such as shops, schools, or local parks etc. within a 10-minute

travel trip by cycle or walking, public transport or car. Historically Kilkenny City has been planned in a compact form with the concept of the four neighbourhoods based around the medieval city core.

12.3.2 Objectives for the Integration of Land Use and Transport

Objectives

12A   **To plan for and progressively implement a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system by enhancing the existing transport infrastructure in terms of road, bus, rail, cycling and pedestrian facilities and interfacing different modes as the opportunity arises.**

12B   **To plan for a transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and 'walkable communities' together with promotion of compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement in all settlements.**

12C   **To undertake appropriate traffic management measures within the City and County to reduce congestion and minimise travel times.**

12D   **To develop a 10-minute city framework for Kilkenny City to map and identify infrastructural requirements to support the '10 minute' city.**

Development Management Requirements:

- All non-residential development proposals will be subject to maximum parking standards as a limitation to restrict parking provision to achieve greater modal shift;
- In locations where the highest intensity of development occurs, an approach that's based on performance criteria in relation to car parking that seeks to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth will be applied.
- Infrastructure for Electric Vehicles will be integrated into developments;
- The design of all roads and streets within the urban areas, including suburbs, towns and villages within the 60 kph zone shall be as per the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, being the designated appropriate road design standards for such locations.
- Applications are to achieve a more place-based and integrated approach to road and street design in accordance with the four core principles promoted within the DMURS:
  - **Connected Networks**: Support the creation of integrated street networks which promote higher levels of permeability and legibility for all users, and with emphasis on more sustainable forms of transport;
  - **Multi-Functional Streets:** Promote multi-functional, place-based streets that balance the needs of all users within a self-regulating environment;
  - **Pedestrian Focus**: Quality of the street is measured by the quality of the environment user hierarchy with pedestrian considered first; and

o **Multi-Disciplinary Approach:** Greater communication and co-operation between design professionals through the promotion of a plan-led, multidisciplinary approach to design.

- Accessible public transport infrastructure is to be considered as part of all significant residential or commercial developments. It will be a requirement to show how the need for accessible public transport infrastructure is considered and evaluated as part of the proposed development.

12.4 Modal share targets for County Kilkenny

The mode share targets set for County Kilkenny are focused on internal work and college trips. In terms of sustainable modes, "A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020" set out key National modal share targets for achievement by 2020. These targets were aimed at reducing work-related commuting by car as a modal share from 65% to 45% and accommodating car drivers on other modes of transport such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. Although these targets have not been achieved, County Kilkenny would aim to achieve this modal shift by 2040. The figures will be adjusted in accordance with Government policy. The development of multi-modal options has been based on these mode share targets.

The Council will work with the NTA on development and analysis of sustainable transport indicators at county and settlement levels to monitor modal shift.

For developments with private car spaces (residential and non-residential), including visitor car parking spaces e.g. office-spaces, at least one parking space should be equipped with one fully functional EV charging point and it should be possible to expand the charging system at a future date (e.g. by installing appropriate ducting now) so that up to 20% of all spaces can be fitted with similar charging points.

Table 12.1 Modal Share targets for County Kilkenny				
Mode Share	**Walk**	**Cycle**	**Public Transport**	**Car**
2016	11%	1.2%	8%	65%
2040 Target	20%	15% [6]	20%	45%

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[6] The National Cycle Policy Framework has a target of 10% for Cycling

Modal Share Objectives:

12E To deliver on sustainable mobility with an accompanying investment in infrastructure to provide for integration between all modes of transport to support the use of sustainable travel choices.

12F Implement strategies to meet the mode share targets during the lifetime of the plan and develop, in conjunction with the NTA, an effective monitoring regime for the implementation and where required, adjustment of the Council's sustainable transport strategy in order to ensure the achievement of the modal share targets referred to under Objective 12G.

12G To achieve a modal shift from the private car to walking or cycling in accordance with the targets in Table 12.1 for County Kilkenny.

12Ga To prepare mobility management plans incorporating mobility objectives of the local area plans for Thomastown, Castlecomer and Piltown.

12Gb To undertake a mobility study for Bennettsbridge.

12.5 Cycling and Walking

In line with the Guidance documents referred to above, the Plan will promote cycling and walking as efficient, fast and relatively inexpensive forms of transport. Policies of Compact Growth will re- focus the design and location of residential development so as to create an urban form which is more conducive to the provision of infrastructure for public transport, walking and cycling. The improved provision of alternatives to the private car should bring about a reduction in demand for private car journeys and a commensurate increase in public transport, walking and cycling. Providing public transport and a network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths and cycleways within residential areas with links to schools, local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage walking and cycling.

Various initiatives can contribute to an increase in walking and cycling. An example of this is the Walking bus, which consists of adults walking groups of pupils to and from school along set routes, with children joining the walking bus at various pick-up points along the route. This programme encourages children to walk, and so get used to this means of travel.

A [National Cycle Policy Framework](#)[7] 2009-2020 was published in 2009. This sets out a series of interventions and instruments to reverse the decline in cycling numbers, which includes planning and infrastructure measures. The approach recommended is a hierarchy of measures, including:

- reducing volumes of through-traffic, especially HGVs, in city and town centres and especially in the vicinity of schools and colleges;
- calming traffic / enforcing low traffic speeds in urban areas;
- making junctions safe for cyclists and removing the cyclist-unfriendly multi-lane one-way street systems.

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[7] Department of Transport, *Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework*, 2009

Other interventions include the following:

- Schools will be a strong focus of the National Cycle Policy Framework.
- Support for the provision of dedicated signed rural cycling networks building on Fáilte Ireland's Strategy to Develop Irish Cycling Tourism[8]. This will cater for recreational cyclists as well as visitors.
- Ensuring that all surfaces used by cyclists are maintained to a high standard and are well lit.
- Ensuring that all cycling networks – both urban and rural – are sign-posted to a high standard.
- Supporting the provision of secure and sheltered bicycle parking at all destinations of importance to the cyclist.

Greenways

As outlined in Chapter 8, Open Space and Recreation, two Greenways are under development at present within the county, one of which is the Waterford to New Ross Greenway, known as the South East Greenway, incorporating the Kilkenny Greenway, and the other is the Rosslare to Waterford Greenway. Greenways are an important element of cycling infrastructure. Greenways and Blueways also have a significant recreational use and benefit and this aspect is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 8 including specific objectives.

12.5.1 Cycling Objectives

12H	**To compile a Cycling Strategy for the County**
12I	**To develop a network of cycling and pedestrian routes within Kilkenny city to provide connectivity and provide an alternative to car-based transport.**
12J	**To develop a cycle route between the Eastern Environs and the Breagagh Valley.**
12K	**To investigate the provision of a cycle route along the River Nore Linear Park connecting north of the City with the east and south of the City.**
12L	**To improve cycling infrastructure throughout the city in accordance with the recommendations of the Kilkenny Local Area Transport Plan as resources permit.**
12M	**To reduce the Council's carbon footprint through the implementation of the Council's own cycle scheme, which will encourage staff members to discharge their official duties in a more sustainable way.**
12N	**To carry out an appraisal of each of the District Towns to determine measures to facilitate cycling and walking and improve connectivity within the town particularly from an age friendly perspective.**
12O	**To invest in cycling and other smarter travel projects in support of the compact '10-minute city' concept.**
12P	**To provide connections to the Kilkenny Greenway to settlements along its route as the need arises and resources permit.**

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[8] Fáilte Ireland, A Strategy for the development of Irish Cycle Tourism, Conclusions Report, New Executive Summary, 2007

Development Management Requirements

Require planning applications to demonstrate the development proposal's accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. Planning applications for residential/commercial or mixed-use developments need to:

i.   Demonstrate detailed layouts and design which reflect the importance of walking and cycling by providing safe and direct access to local services and public transport nodes.

ii. Demonstrate how walking and cycling is integrated with open space provision.

iii. Demonstrate that the proposal is easily accessible to pedestrians and cyclists alike with the layouts displaying high internal pedestrian and cyclist permeability.

iv. Show a high quality of internal routes which are safe, secure and convenient for users.

v.   Require that adequate covered facilities for the secure parking of bicycles are provided at convenient locations close to building entrances in order to encourage cycling. The number of bicycle parking spaces required will be in accordance with Table 12.2 below.

vi. Require a full range of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians such as showers and lockers in new retail/employment developments, where the cycle parking requirements exceed 5 spaces.

Table 12.2: Bicycle parking requirements	
Land Use	**Bicycle Parking Requirement** **GFA = gross floor area**
Apartment, Townhouse	1 space per bedroom[9] and 1 visitor space per 2 apartments
Student Accommodation/Residential schools, colleges or training centre	1 space per bedroom and 1 visitor space per 5 bed spaces
Guest Houses and Hotels	1 space per 10 bedrooms and 1 space for every 5 members of staff
Nursing Homes	1 visitor space for every 10 residents and 1 space for every 5 members of staff
Retirement Homes/Sheltered Accommodation	1 visitor space for every 6 residents and 1 space for every 5 members of staff
Hostels	1 space per 5 beds
Hospital	To be determined by Planning Authority
Convenience	1 space per 150sq m GFA
Shopping Centre	1 space per 300sq m GFA
Non-food Retail	1 space per 300sq m GFA
Retail Warehouse	1 space per 250sq m GFA
Retail Offices	1 space per 200sq m GFA
Food and Drink	1 space per 50sq m of dining/drinking area

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[9] For studio units, at least 1 cycle storage space shall be provided. Design Standards for new Apartments- Guideline for Planning Authorities 2018

General Offices	1 space per 50sq m GFA
Light Industry, Business and Technology	1 space per 100sq m GFA
Warehouses and Distribution	1 space per 200sq m GFA
Financial and Professional Services	1 space per 50sq m GFA
Cinema/Theatre	1 space for every 5 members of staff and 1 space per 30 seats
Museums, Exhibition Venues	1 space for every 5 members of staff. Visitors spaces to be determined by Planning Authority
Sports/Fitness Centre including Swimming Baths	1 space for every 50sq m net floor area or 1 space for every 30sq m of pool area and 1 space for every 30 seats provided for spectators
Place of Worship, public halls and community centres	1 space per 20 persons
Primary schools	Cycle spaces to be provided for 20% of children and 1 space for every 5 members of staff
Post primary schools	Cycle spaces to be provided for 33% of children and 1 space for every 5 members of staff
Further and Higher Education	1 space per 5 members of staff and 1 space for every 4 students
Creches	1 space for every 5 members of staff and 1 space for 20 children
Clinics/Surgeries	1 space for every 5 members of staff and 0.5 spaces per consulting room

In the case of any use not specified above, the Council will determine the bicycle parking requirements, having regard to the likely trip generation of the development. Where a number of uses are contained within one development, and the applicant can demonstrate that parking spaces will be utilised throughout the day by a number of different users, the Council may take this into account when assessing the spaces required.

In general, bicycle parking facilities should be within 25m of a destination for short term parking (shops) and 50m for long term parking (offices, schools etc). Cycle stands should generally be protected from the weather, in particular all long term (more than 3 hours) cycle stands.

12.5.2 Workplace Travel Plans

Developments which have a large potential impact on trip generation may be required to draw up and implement Workplace Travel Plans (also known as Mobility Management Plans). Workplace Travel Plans are a mechanism by which developments can manage the mobility needs of their users and work towards reduced car dependency.

Development for which a Workplace Travel Plan could be applied includes the following:

•   Office
•   Office based industry
•   Other industry
•   Retail (large one-off stores and major town/district centre developments)
•   Retail warehousing
•   Warehousing and distribution
•   Places of education

A Workplace Travel Plan may take the form of a formally published document, which outlines its measures and targets. Alternatively, it may simply evolve over time as different initiatives are piloted.

Development Management Requirement:
- **To require Workplace Travel Plans for proposed trip intensive developments in existing and established trip intensive locations where onsite parking cannot be provided on site in accordance with Table 12.3.**

12.6 Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

Regional Planning Objective 164 and Waterford MASP Policy objective 6(a) aims to develop a Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (WMATS) for the Waterford Metropolitan Area with the NTA, TII, Local Authorities and the relevant stakeholders, integrating priorities for the Metropolitan Area identified by the RSES and support investments in actions under this strategy. Kilkenny County Council supports this aim of the RSES and will facilitate the improved integration of the Ferrybank area of the MASP into the Waterford Metropolitan Transport Area whilst adhering to the principles of the concentric city model.

The Transport Strategy will see the development of sustainable travel options to support and facilitate improved access to the Waterford City Centre, from the wider urban area, north and south of the river by walking, cycling and public transport including provision for Park and Ride facilities in tandem with the Green Route, and additional cycle lanes.

MASP Objectives

12Q   **To, in combination with Waterford City and County Council, the NTA, TII and other stakeholders, undertake a Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy in accordance with Waterford MASP Objectives 6(a) and 6(b), covering the Waterford MASP area of County Kilkenny and to implement the adopted strategy to guide investment priorities in accordance with Waterford MASP Objectives 3.**

12R   **Support the improved regional connectivity of Kilkenny with Waterford and the South East Region generally through the development and maintenance of Strategic Transport Infrastructure in accordance with Waterford MASP Objective 7 and to prioritise transport investment accordingly.**

12S   **Develop the Link Road from the Abbey Road to the Belmont Road.**

12T   **To carry out improvements to the Abbey Road from the boundary with Waterford City and County Council to facilitate smarter travel improvements to Abbey Road and connect to the Link Road in objective 12S above.**

12.7 Public Transport

The development of public transport is critical in achieving more sustainable travel patterns and a reduced reliance on the car.

12.7.1 Bus

In areas of low to medium population, bus-based public transport can offer the most flexible means of providing services both for urban and inter-urban travel and can be introduced within a short time frame and at relatively low cost. Bus Éireann and a number of private operators operate services throughout County Kilkenny.

Kenneally's bus operates a regular city bus service in Waterford city, serving the area north of the bridge, including Ferrybank and Slieverue.

Kilkenny County Council will co-operate in the development of a high-quality bus-based public transport system in the Waterford MASP area and in the identification of an optimum site for a Park and Ride facility. This will be reviewed in the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, which is currently being drafted in conjunction with the National Transport Authority, Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City and County Council.

12.7.1.1 Kilkenny City Bus Network
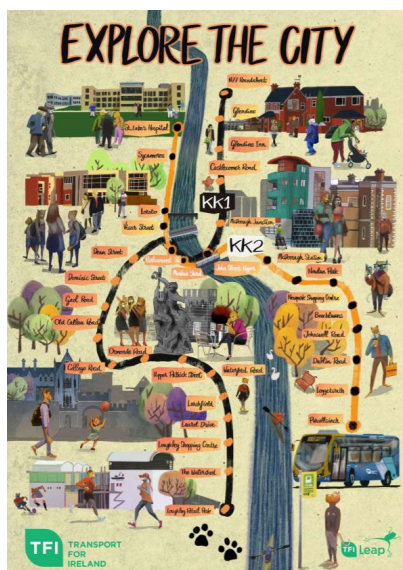
In conjunction with the National Transport Authority, a Local Bus Service for Kilkenny City was launched at the end of 2019. The Kilkenny City Bus Services was referenced by the NDP as an urban centre that would benefit from capital investment in bus services and infrastructure. The service consists of two routes, KK1 and KK2, operated by City Direct and funded by the National Transport Authority (NTA). The two routes combined serve 33 stops, feeding into a central spine crossing St. John's Bridge to the City Centre, sharing stops at Parliament Street, Market Yard and John Street Upper. Bus shelters are provided at key locations.

Both routes have circuitous alignments, designed to broaden their catchment areas including areas of high population density and low car ownership.

12.7.1.2 Regional Bus Services

Kilkenny is well served by a number of regional services providing national and regional connectivity to key urban centres such as Dublin, Cork and Waterford.

As there is no formal transport hub in Kilkenny, most regional services stop at Ormond Road, the Parade/ Kilkenny Castle or MacDonagh Junction. In addition to the two city bus services, six regional services cross St. John's Bridge namely the: 817; 890; 891; 73; 600; and 881/2.

12.7.1.3 Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022

Local Link is a service operated by the NTA to provide rural bus services across Ireland, both door-to-door and scheduled services in towns, villages and rural areas. The key priorities of this programme continue to be directed at addressing rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services.

Local Link operates in Kilkenny under the local name 'Ring a Link'. In addition to a number of scheduled services, some are Demand Responsive and must be booked in advance. These have flexible routes within a defined area to serve dispersed mobility needs, low demand hours and areas of low population. There are approximately 13 routes in operation.

The Plan supports the development of public transport routes throughout the county through collaboration with the National Transport Authority. The Council supports the NTA's Local Link Programme and the Plan acknowledge the role rural transport services and in particular the Local Link Rural Transport Programme can perform in providing for social and economic connectivity between small villages/rural areas and larger towns.

12.7.1.4 Bus

Kilkenny County Council will facilitate the provision of bus shelters as appropriate. The Council will also facilitate parking provision for tourist buses where feasible in the city and towns and villages and at tourist attractions around the county as the need arises and as resources permit.

12.7.2   Rail

There are two passenger railway lines in use in the county. A spur from Kilkenny City at Lavistown connects to the Dublin-Waterford main passenger line. There are stations on the line at Thomastown and Kilkenny City. The Waterford-Limerick passenger line runs in the south of the county, serving Waterford and Carrick-on-Suir stations. Belview Port is served by rail, connecting to the Waterford line, which facilitates the movement of freight.

The RSES has the objective to strengthen rail connectivity, which includes increased frequency of services and reduced journey times between Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow and Dublin. It also includes improvements to the Rosslare-Waterford-Limerick Junction line (although the Rosslare to Waterford connection is no longer operational since 2010). It is Council policy to support increased frequency of services and reduced journey times between Kilkenny and Waterford/Dublin thereby enhancing the economic corridor between Waterford Metropolitan Area and the Key towns of Kilkenny and Carlow

12.7.2.1 Rail Freight

There is major potential for more innovative and additional carriage of freight via the rail network. The RSES identified that rail cargo depots at Belview and Maddockstown (east of Kilkenny city) would facilitate the development of logistics businesses at these locations and would help to divert some heavy commercial traffic from the public road network. There are enormous environmental benefits in carrying freight using rail and properly run freight services offer huge potential to industry in the region, particularly at Belview. The use of the rail network for freight services will be promoted through appropriate land use measures.

12.7.3   Taxi

Taxis and hackney services are an integral part of the City and County's transport network. It is critical that the City and County are facilitated with adequate taxi services that are readily available at peak demand periods and provide a demand-responsive 24-hour door to- door service. The Council will continue to support improvements in taxi and hackney services in the County and will seek to ensure that all public transport services complement each other through the development of effective interchange opportunities.

12.8 Ports & Rivers

The RSES notes that the ports of Belview and Rosslare are of strategic importance to the region.

New Ross Port is Ireland's only inland port, some 32 kilometres from the sea on the River Barrow. New Ross Port Company operates from Marshmeadows, to the east of the Barrow in Co. Wexford. Stafford's Shipping yard is in operation in Rosbercon, in Co. Kilkenny.

12.8.1   Belview

Belview Port was developed in 1992 and its subsequent growth has been a significant driver of economic development in the county. Belview is located on the River Suir about 10 miles upstream from the open sea, adjacent to the Dublin/Waterford M9 motorway.

Belview Port is a Tier 2 Port, identified in the RSES as Ireland's closest multi-nodal port to Continental Europe with a significant capacity for growth. Belview is also listed on the Ten-T Network, which currently handles 1 million tonnes of primarily Agricultural bulk product and 100,000 tonnes of break bulk.

An Area Action Plan for Belview was completed in 2002, which aimed to provide for portal and industrial development within a planning framework which safeguarded local environmental resources. To update this, a Local Area Plan (LAP) was made for the area of Ferrybank and Belview in 2009 and reviewed in 2017[10].

IDA Ireland owns a Strategic Site in the Belview industrial area, which is suitable for large-scale projects[11]. During the course of the last Development Plan the Council along with the IDA and Department of Environment Community and Local Government invested significantly in upgrading water services at Belview. With improvements to the Belview Strategic Water Supply Scheme and the Gorteens Waste Water Treatment Plant, the port can now cater for expansion in suitable employment enterprises, as set out in the LAP and in Chapter 5.

Belview is served by the Limerick to Rosslare railway line (Belview to Rosslare has been closed since 2010). Belview has direct access, via the N29 road, to and from National Primary Route N25 (Euroroute E30) and the Country's motorway system.

Belview was identified in the RSES as requiring improved rail access and will benefit from the upgrade of the adjacent railway line to improve accessibility for bulk freight and to build the region's international connectivity. The upgrade of the N29 will enable lands to be released to facilitate Port expansion (See Section 12.11.6 National Road Objectives).

The Council will support and promote the development of the necessary port infrastructure and associated industrial and distribution activities as well as associated rail and road connectivity required to support the development of the Port of Waterford, Belview.

Objectives

12U   **Construct a roundabout on the N29 at the L3412 (Rathculliheen) junction.**

12V   **Provide for traffic calming measures between the roundabout and the port gate on the N29.**

12W   **To introduce a 60km/hr speed limit on the section of the N29 between the roundabout and the port gate.**

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[10] Kilkenny County Council, Ferrybank Belview Local Area Plan, 2017

[11] http://www.idaireland.com/connect-and-invest/waterford/

12.9 Airports

The Council recognises the importance of air travel in improving the attractiveness of the county for industrial, commercial and tourism development. The nearest airport to Kilkenny is the Waterford Airport, south of Waterford City centre. The Council supports the development of Waterford Airport as an important regional transport asset and the return of scheduled passenger services to and associated investment in Infrastructure.

Kilkenny Airfield

There is a privately-owned public use airfield located three miles to the west of Kilkenny City.

12.10 Universal Design

Street design must be inclusive and provide for all, regardless of age, size, disability or ability. Streets and footpaths should be designed in accordance with the principles of Universal Design, as set out in *Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, External Environment and Approach*[12]. The Council will ensure as far as feasible that areas are accessible to the broadest range of users, based on the principles of Universal Design. (See Section 13.3 Universal Design). The *Design Manual for Urban roads and Streets* (DMURS) and *DMURS Interim Advice Note – Covid-19 Pandemic Response* is also designed to respond to the principles of universal design.

The Plan supports Regional Planning Objective 181 in the *Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* which aims to promote disability awareness and access for all. The Council will ensure that decision-making in relation to investment in infrastructure and facilities is informed by engagement with representatives of disability support organisations to ensure that perspectives of those they represent (e.g. wheelchair users) are understood and an appropriate level of environmental assessment undertaken.

Development Management Requirements:
- **In the assessment of proposals where public realm works are involved whether public or private the Council will require such works to adhere to Universal design standard for public realm.**

12.11 Road Network

12.11.1 Achievements

Since the last Development Plan, the following projects have been completed:
- A significant upgrade to the N25 including the new bridge across the River Barrow, which opened in January 2020, and has improved linkages between Waterford and Wexford/Rosslare.
- Completion of the N76 Callan Road Realignment Scheme.
- Completion of phase 1 of the Kilkenny Central Access Scheme incorporating St. Francis Bridge

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[12] Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, *Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, External Environment and Approach*

- Completion of the N77 Ballynaslee to County boundary realignment.
- Completion of R697 Kells Road Improvement Scheme.
- In the Breagagh Valley, Kilkenny City, construction is underway of the link road between the Callan Rd and the Circular road

12.11.2 National Road Network

The national road network caters for the efficient and safe movement of long-distance traffic. The network also provides strategic links for the towns within the county and within the South-East region as a whole. In order to protect the investment in these roads and to maintain their primary function, it will be necessary to restrict access and junctions to the network to a minimum.

The capacity and efficiency of the national road network drainage regimes in County Kilkenny will be safeguarded for national road drainage purposes.

There are 10 national roads in the county as follows:

Road name	Classification	Description
M8	Motorway	Between M7 and Cork
M9	Motorway	Between M7 and N24 roundabout at Grannagh
N9	Primary	Between the M9/N24 roundabout and the N25 junction at Grannagh
N10	Primary	Kilkenny-Danesfort (M9 junction)
N24	Primary	Carrick-on-Suir – Grannagh
N25	Primary	Cork-Rosslare
N29	Primary	Belview access
N76	Secondary	Kilkenny-Clonmel
N77	Secondary	Kilkenny-Portlaoise
N78	Secondary	Kilkenny-Castlecomer-Kildare

12.11.3 Access to National Roads

National policy in relation to access to national roads is set out in the *Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines* (2012) and followed here. The Guidelines state that "*The policy of the Planning Authority will be to avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60kmh apply. This provision applies to all categories of development, including individual houses in rural areas, regardless of the housing circumstances of the applicant*" [2].

It is the intention of the Planning Authority to develop and agree a policy for access off the national roads in conjunction with the TII;

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[2] Section 2.5 of *Spatial Planning and National Roads*, 2012

- Blanchfieldslands near Hebron house roundabout on the N10.
- Glanbia plant on N77 at Ballyragget
- Dunmore civic amenity site on the N77

12.11.4 Regional Roads

There are 421km of regional routes in the County. Regional roads provide important strategic linkages within the county and to the national road network and other counties. In order to protect the investment in these roads and to maintain their strategic function it will be necessary to exercise control over new development requiring access to these roads by restricting new access points to a minimum in the interests of safety.

Development Management Requirements:
- **When considering development which would impact road capacity, the Planning Authority will follow a restrictive presumption in favour of maintaining road capacity.**

12.11.5 Local Roads

Local roads serve an important economic role and have a valuable social and community function, as they are often the sole means of access for local economic activity. In its programme of spending over the plan period, the Council will prioritise its spending on local roads which are deficient according to the strategic benefits and improved traffic and pedestrian safety which will result. The Council will have regard to the transportation needs of development generally, particularly that associated with agribusiness, tourism and the need to promote rural development and diversification in the prioritising of its spending.

12.11.6 National Road improvement projects

National Roads projects such as the N24 are of strategic importance to facilitate inter- and intraregional accessibility and the Council, with the support of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), supports and is progressing/developing a number of schemes within County Kilkenny as follows:

- N24 Carrick Road Improvement Scheme.
- N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme.
- N24 Tower Road Junction Improvement Scheme.
- N25 Waterford to Glenmore Scheme
- N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee
- N77 Kilkenny City (Dunmore) to Ballyraggett

12.11.7 National Road Policy

The Council will support the implementation of the TII projects as outlined above and will safeguard the strategic capacity of national road junctions and preserve free from development proposed road realignment/improvement lines and associated corridors where such development would prejudice the implementation of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) or County Council plans (See Figure 12.1). The Council will furthermore co-operate with the TII to identify the need for service areas

and/or rest areas for motorists along the routes of the M8/M9 and assist in the implementation of suitable proposals for provision of service and/or rest areas

In this regard the Council will as a priority facilitate the development of a link road from the N10/motorway access roundabout to the old Dublin road (R712) in conjunction with TII.

> **Objectives**
>
> **12X**   **To develop and agree an appropriately planned policy response to access the N10 roundabout at Blanchfieldslands near Hebron House in Kilkenny City.**
>
> **12Y**   **To investigate a link between the Hebron industrial estate/business park to the link road, see objective above.**
>
> **12Z**   **To protect the study area, route corridor options and thereafter the preferred route corridor selected for the national road schemes being progressed in the Development Plan in accordance with National Development Plan Objectives and to prohibit development that could prejudice their future delivery.**

12.11.8 Traffic Assessments

Development proposals may generate significant trips/travel, including road traffic, with potentially significant implications for national and non-national roads. Traffic and Transport Assessment is a methodology used to assess the transport impacts of a proposed development, incorporating any subsequent measures necessary to ensure roads and junctions and other transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the development remain fit for purpose and encourage a shift towards sustainable travel modes.

12.11.9 Road Safety Audit

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) can aid in the identification of any appropriate measures required to maintain safety standards. Guidance on the preparation of RSAs is included in the TII *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and in the *Design Manual for Roads and Streets* (DMURS). RSAs are required for all new housing estates in accordance with DMURS, for new/intensified accesses onto national roads and where specific risks have been identified.

12.11.10   Regional and Local Road Objectives

Objectives

12AA   To progress a relief road for Thomastown.

12AB   To seek an upgrade of the R700 between New Ross and Kilkenny to National Secondary status

12AC   To seek an upgrade of the Kilkenny to Urlingford road (R693) to National Secondary status.

12AD   Reserve the proposed line of the proposed Northern Ring road Extension in Kilkenny City and progress it through the planning process

12AE   Provision of a relief road from the Loughboy IDA estate to the Waterford Road including an upgrade to the Outrath Road.

12AF   To implement the recommendations of the Kilkenny City Local Transport Plan.

12AG   Completion of internal roads in Kilkenny City to serve the Western Environs\Breagagh valley and Loughmacask. (The Central Access Scheme) See Volume 2, Figure CS3.

12AH   To provide for a second access from the Hebron industrial estate/business park onto Hebron road

12AI   To investigate a connection between the internal roads within the Hebron industrial estate /business park.

12AJ   To implement the traffic strategy and road cross sections for the Hebron area in accordance with the *Hebron Urban Design Strategy*[1]

12AK   To improve substandard sections of regional\county roads throughout the County, in particular those most heavily trafficked, and those providing access to existing or proposed industrial, residential or commercial developments as required and as resources permit.

12AL   To maintain, develop and improve existing roads and to construct new roads as needs arise and resources permit in accordance with the Annual Roadworks programme.

12AM   It is an objection of the Council to carry out road safety improvements measures at Victoria Bridge, Ahenny.

12.11.10.1   Roads Development Management Requirements:

- To ensure that future development affecting national primary or secondary roads shall be assessed in accordance with the guidance given in <u>Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities</u>.
- To ensure that the required standards for sight distances and stopping sight distances are in compliance as far as possible, with current road geometry standards as outlined in:
    - the TII document *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB) and TII Standard DN-GEO-03060 *Geometric Design of Junctions*; and
    - the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DMURS) and TII Standard DN-GEO-03084 '*The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads*' where appropriate.

- In the case of single houses in the countryside such standards should not be achieved by the extensive removal of hedgerows, ditches, embankments, trees or old walls, and should be in accordance with Section 2.8 of the Rural Design Guide[13].
- All significant development proposals will be required to have transport and traffic assessments carried out in accordance with the publication *Traffic Management Guidelines*[14] and the *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*[15] (where the development affects a national road).
- Planning applications involving a new access or significant changes to an existing access to a national road, will be required to include a Road Safety Audit.

12.12 Car parking

In assessing development proposals, the Planning Authority will use the standards set out in Table 12.3 below. Such facilities shall cater for the immediate and anticipated future demands of the development, and where car parking provision on site is not possible, or desirable for other valid reasons, the Council may consider the payment of a financial contribution in lieu.

Where car parking is provided on site, spaces shall generally be provided behind established building lines in each development and shall be screened. The dimension of car parking bays shall be 4.8m by 2.4m. Accessible parking bays (including transfer hatching to side and rear) shall be 6.0m x 3.7m (See Section 12.13 Age Friendly and Accessible Parking). Developers should consult ***Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach***. Car parking areas shall be constructed having regard to drainage, surfacing and ancillary matters. They should be provided with proper public lighting facilities and shall be clearly demarcated. All car parking areas should be properly landscaped by the provision of trees, shrubs and grassed areas in order to ensure that damage to the visual amenities is avoided. In residential schemes parking should be secure and attractive and should be provided as close as possible to the dwellings served.

In all developments of an industrial or commercial nature, developers will be required to provide loading or unloading facilities sufficient to meet the demand of such development. Off-street loading facilities shall conform to the following requirements:

- Each required space shall not be less than 3.75m in width, 6.0m in length and 4.25m in height, exclusive of drives and manoeuvring space and located entirely on the site being served.
- There shall be appropriate means of access to a street or road as well as adequate manoeuvring space.
- The maximum width of the driveway opening onto the street boundary will be 6m and the minimum width shall be 3.75m.

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[13] Kilkenny County Council, *Rural Design Guide*, 2008

[14] Department of Transport, *Traffic Management Guidelines*

[15] TII, *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*

Table 12.3: Car Parking Standards[16]	
Land Use	**Parking Spaces per Unit**
Dwelling House	2 car parking spaces per unit 0.25 spaces per unit for visitor parking
Apartments[17]	1.25 spaces per unit 0.25 spaces per unit for visitor parking
Schools	1 space for every classroom plus 4 additional spaces
Churches, theatres, public halls	1 car space per 10 seats
Hotels, hostels and guesthouses	1 car space per bedroom
Public houses, incl hotel bar	1 car space per 10 m2 of bar and lounge floor area
Hotel function rooms	1 space per 10 m2
Shopping centres, supermarkets, Department stores	1 space per 25 m2 gross floor area
Shops	1 space per 20 m2 gross floor area
Restaurants, cafes	1 car space per 20 m2 gross floor area
Banks and offices	1 car space per 15 m2 of gross floor area and additional space to be determined by the Planning Authority
Industry	1 car space for every 60m2 of gross industrial floor area and operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Warehousing	Each application will be determined by the Planning Authority
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 m2 of net retail floor space
Golf	4 car spaces per hole
Par 3 golf courses or Pitch and Putt courses	2 spaces per hole
Sports grounds and sports clubs	I space per 15m2
Golf driving ranges, Shooting ranges	1 space per bay/ trap plus 3 spaces
Clinics and Medical Practices	3 car spaces per consulting room plus staff
Hospital	1.50 spaces per bed
Nursing Home	1 space per 4 bedrooms plus staff
Crèche/Childcare	1 space per 4 children plus 1 space per employee

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[16] All non-residential parking standards will be applied as maxima.

[17] Refer to the Design Standards for New Apartments in relation to reduced car parking requirements for development adjacent to existing and future rail stations and minimum requirements in peripheral/or less accessible urban locations.

One of the cross-cutting themes of the Development Plan is to encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of transport. The provision of sufficient car parking is important particularly in areas of the County which are currently poorly served by public transport networks. Therefore, the rationale for the application of car parking standards is to ensure that consideration is given to the accommodation of vehicles in assessing development proposals while being mindful of the need to promote a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport. Relaxation of the guidance in the table will be considered on a case by case basis.

In the case of any use not specified above, the Planning Authority will determine the parking requirements, having regard to the traffic levels likely to be generated as a result of the development.

Where a number of uses are contained within one development, the various uses shall be separated and the overall parking requirements for the development shall be assessed relative to each separate use in order to compute the overall parking requirement for the development (e.g. in a hotel the function rooms, bars etc. shall be assessed as separate from the bedroom provision).

However, where a developer can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that parking spaces will be utilised throughout the day by a number of different users, availing of different facilities within a proposed development, the Planning Authority may, in the interest of sustainability, take this multi-use into account when assessing parking needs. In addition to the above requirements, developers will be required to provide and maintain loading and circulation facilities sufficient to meet the likely demand of each development.

The above car parking standards shall be applied at the discretion of the Council in the County's rural towns and villages having regard to the availability and adequacy of on street parking, existing or proposed off street parking to serve the development and the status of the town/village within the settlement hierarchy of the County.

In cases where complete on-site provision of parking is not possible, the Planning Authority will insist on a Mobility Management Plan submitted as part of the application in weighing up the total requirements and possible financial contribution.

12.13 Age Friendly and Accessible parking

Kilkenny County Council has been actively engaged in the Age Friendly County Initiative since 2010[18], see Section 6.17 Positive Ageing.

The concept of an Age Friendly community is linked to an initiative of the World Health Organisation started in 2007. This initiative seeks to engage older people and their communities in making their communities better, healthier and safer places for older people to live and thrive. Positive ageing can be facilitated by means of various age friendly initiatives, including universal design and can be supported by the adoption of the appropriate development objectives to facilitate same (See Section

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[18] Kilkenny County Council, *Thomastown Local Area Plan*, 2019

13.2 Universal Design). The delivery of such facilities has a symbiotic relationship with other segments of society as it promotes accessibility for all. It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate the delivery of age friendly facilities in the city and all towns and villages within the county.

> **Objective**
>
> **12AN   To provide further age friendly parking spaces in Kilkenny City and the District Towns following consultation with the relevant stakeholders.**

Development management Requirement:
- **To require a minimum 2% of car parking spaces as accessible parking bays, to be applied at the discretion of the Council, depending on the nature of the proposal.**

12.14 Electric vehicles

National policy identifies the need to move away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles (EV) and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets. Nationally there is a target of 950,000 EVs[19] for 2040. There are currently 10 publicly available EV charging points in County Kilkenny, with seven of those located within the City. While most of these have more than one charging point, none are fast chargers. The Council will continue to support and facilitate the development of infrastructure to increase the usage of EVs by the inclusion of dedicated fully functional EV charging points through appropriate objectives.

Development Management Requirements:
- **For developments with private car spaces (residential and non-residential) including visitor car parking spaces e.g. office–spaces, at least one parking space should be equipped with one fully functional EV charging point and it should be possible to expand the charging system at a future date (e.g. by installing appropriate ducting now) so that up to 20% of all spaces can be fitted with similar charging points.**
- **Developments with publicly accessible spaces (e.g. supermarket car park, cinema etc.) should have at least one parking space equipped with one fully functional EV charging point and it should be possible to expand the charging system at a future date so that up to 20% of all spaces can be fitted with a similar charging point. Charge Point Parking space(s) should be clearly marked with appropriate signage should be capable of communicating usage data with the national charge point management system.**

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[19] Electric Vehicles (EV) refer to both Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV).

13 Requirements for Developments

> *Strategic Aim: To encourage the creation of living and working environments of the highest quality by ensuring a high quality of design, layout and function for all development under the Planning Acts and Regulations, to conserve and build upon positive elements in the built and natural environment, and to protect amenities.*

13.1 Introduction

Development Management will be exercised by the Council in a positive manner having regard to the provisions of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended, and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the County, its amenities and the Council's policies and objectives.

It is intended that reference to these standards will provide guidance and assistance to those who seek permission for development. However, it should not be assumed that compliance with the standards contained herein will automatically or necessarily result in a granting of planning permission, since the standards are merely a statement of general principles. Decisions regarding individual applications for development will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with circumstances at the time an application is submitted. Applicants are advised to consult with the Planning Authority prior to the preparation of detailed plans.

There may be instances where a conflict will arise between various objectives in this Plan, and in such cases all issues will be assessed in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

13.1.1 Pre-Planning Meetings

The Council provides a pre-planning consultation service which allows applicants the opportunity to engage in discussions with the Planning Authority, prior to making a planning application. Applicants are encouraged to avail of this service for all development proposals but particularly for one-off rural houses, or large-scale projects. As stipulated in Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the carrying out of such consultations shall not prejudice the performance by a Council of any other of its functions under this Act, or any regulations made under this Act, and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

13.2 Universal Design

The Council requires that all future developments used by the public (including public spaces, car parking, footpaths) are accessible to and usable by everyone. The requirements of people with disabilities, the elderly, parents and carers and others who may be temporarily impaired must be incorporated into the design. It is considered that applications for large-scale projects should be

accompanied by an Access Statement (as detailed in Appendix 6 of Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, National Disability Authority, 2012).

Guidance on the access requirements for public buildings and for residential dwellings is set out in Part M of the Building Regulations (S.I. No. 179 of 2000) and Part M of the Building Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 513 of 2010) and Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012) and the *Great Outdoors Access Guidelines* by the Irish Wheelchair Association. This Plan includes a requirement for a minimum number of houses to be designed to accommodate universal design standards for larger housing schemes (See Section 6.10).

13.3 Urban Design

Sustainable communities have a high quality natural and built environment. They are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well- planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

The Council will ensure that all new developments enrich the quality of its surroundings which means encouraging a distinctive response which complements the setting. A high standard of design is considered essential to this process. Creating a distinctive sense of place, taking into account site history and setting, is important.

The Councils will aim to create sustainable, high quality environments – attractive, vibrant and safe places which function effectively. High quality design will be required for all new developments.

In new residential areas, it is the sense of place which should have priority. It is the relationship between buildings and the creation of elegant functional spaces which will have priority. The Planning Authority will require a high level of residential amenity conducive to a good quality living environment in new residential developments.

Planning applications for new housing development shall have regard to the provisions of the following Guidelines:
- *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*[1]
- *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* and its companion document, *Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide*
- Design Standards for New Apartments 2018
- *Government Policy on Architecture-Towards a Sustainable Future: Delivering Quality within the Built Environment*[2]
- *Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Heights 2018*
- Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach

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[1] Depts. of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and Environment, Community and Local Government, *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2013*

[2] Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Government Policy on Architecture, Towards a Sustainable Future: Delivering Quality within the Built Environment, 2009

- *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities[3]*

New residential developments will be assessed in accordance with the following 12 design criteria for sustainable residential developments.

The 12 criteria are:
- Context: How does the development respond to its surroundings?
- Connections: How well is the new neighbourhood / site connected?
- Inclusivity: How easily can people use and access the development?
- Variety: How does the development promote a good mix of activities?
- Efficiency: How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?
- Distinctiveness: How do the proposals create a sense of place?
- Layout: How does the proposal create people-friendly streets and spaces?
- Public realm: How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?
- Adaptability: How will the buildings cope with change?
- Privacy and Amenity: How do the buildings provide a high-quality amenity?
- Parking: How will the parking be secure and attractive?
- Detailed Design: How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

A site-specific Design Statement will be required in the case of large-scale or sensitively located developments.   A design statement is a short document which enables the applicant to explain why a particular design solution is considered the most appropriate for a particular site and it shall demonstrate how design policy and issues of accessibility have been considered.

As in the preceding Development Plan it is not intended to prescribe maximum residential density standards. The emphasis will be on providing quality-housing environments based on innovation and a design led approach. The Planning Authority will seek to ensure that new developments have individuality and a sense of place, which is generated by the interaction between the physical characteristics and features of the site and its surroundings and the layout, landscaping and design of the new housing.

13.4 Compact Growth
In accordance with the NPF and the Core Strategy, it is an objective of the plan to promote compact growth. Compact Growth can be achieved through appropriate density and "infill" development and through increased heights.

13.4.1 Density
As in the preceding Development Plans it is not intended to prescribe maximum residential density standards. The emphasis will be on providing quality-housing environments based on innovation and a design led approach. A high standard of architectural design and layout will be required. The Planning Authority will seek to ensure that new developments have individuality and a sense of place, which is

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[3] Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities,* 2007

generated by the interaction between the physical characteristics and features of the site and its surroundings and the layout, landscaping and design of the new housing.

The appropriate residential density in any particular location will be determined by the following: -

i.   The extent to which the design and layout follows a coherent design brief resulting in a high-quality residential environment;

ii.   Compliance with qualitative and quantitative criteria set out (including the 12 design criteria above);

iii. Proximity to points of access to the public transport network;

iv.   The extent to which the proposal adheres to any masterplan or Local Area Plan for the area.

v.   The extent to which the site may, due to its size, scale, and location, propose its own density and character, having regard to the need to protect the established character and amenities of existing adjoining residential areas;

vi.   Existing topographical, landscape or other features on the site, and;

vii. The capacity of the infrastructure, including social and community facilities (such as child care), to absorb the demands created by the development.

The same criteria will be applied to development proposals involving an increase in density on existing housing sites.

13.5   Infill Development

The Council will also have regard to the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages) Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009) Infill development:

"Infill" residential development may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and "backland" areas, up to larger residual sites or sites assembled from a multiplicity of ownerships. Sub-division of sites can be achieved where large houses on relatively extensive sites can accommodate new residential development without unduly impacting the existing residential amenity. "Backlands" development generally refers to lands to the rear of existing dwellings which may, with the appropriate coordinated access and service interventions, give rise to opportunities for new development. New developments, particularly in established built up areas can only be developed with the appropriate consideration of existing neighbouring amenity.

Availing of development opportunities for infill sites will need to be sensitive to the potential of them imposing on existing neighbouring structures in terms of encroachment, overlooking and overshadowing. The potential for the development of such sites, which includes backland locations, should be considered on a site by site basis and will only be acceptable where the developer can show that the development is able to comply with certain minimum requirements.

In order to advance this process in Kilkenny City a study of the opportunities that exist with accompanying guidance will be carried out. **It is Council policy to facilitate infill development where minimum requirements can be met and where the proposed development will not materially impact the residential amenity or character of neighbouring developments.**

> **Objective**
>
> **13A   To compile an analysis and a development guidance criterion for housing opportunities in Kilkenny City's backland areas, underutilised lands and brownfield sites.**

13.5.1.1 *Development Management Requirements for Urban Infill Development:*

Infill with Multiple units on larger sites:

Infill/brownfield developments will be subject to normal siting and design criteria, which include sufficient access in accordance with the *Design Manual on Urban Roads and Streets* (DMURS). Where sites are substantial enough and not located in an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), developments thereon can sensitively create their own character. Each application will however be assessed on its own merit and apart from the requirement that new structures do not impact negatively on the amenity of proximate structures, sufficient access compliant with DMURS, the availability of service infrastructure, and exceptional quality of design are foremost requirements. In this regard, multiple units will need to address best practice in terms of meeting the 12 Urban Design Criteria set out in the *Design Manual, Best Practice Guide*, 2009, as well as DMURS where applicable. Where located within an ACA, proposals will need to show that they will not negatively impact on the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.

For large site applications the Planning Authority may require an appropriate Master Plan dealing with movement, public realm, design, and other issues that are best addressed at a neighbourhood level.

Smaller single unit infill sites:

For single unit infill developments (permanent subdivision), the following requirements should be met;

- normal plot ratio and site coverage requirements
- in the case of development proposals with access from communal access roads (back lanes), such communal access roads shall be improved to comply with DMURS standards or such relaxation as determined by the Planning Authority;
- Where accessing from existing public roads, have direct access via an access road at least 3m in width along its entire length;
- the proposal must provide a minimum of 25sqm of consolidated usable private open space, reserved exclusively for use of the infill unit. The original unit should also retain at least a minimum 25 sqm of consolidated usable private open space;
- Structures should maintain a setback distance of at least 7.5m from the rear of any neighbouring house;
- Structures must not unduly overlook any neighbouring house or private open space from upper floor levels and orientation and setback are important in this regard (22m rule applies between opposing first floor windows unless good merit exists for relaxation);
- Structures must not unduly overshadow or encroach on any neighbouring house and a shadow path impact analysis may be required;
- The proposed development must not unduly affect the character of the immediate environs, including ACAs or neighbouring protected structures.

Each application shall be considered on its own merit and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

13.6 Building Heights

Following on from the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Minster issued "*The Guidelines on Urban Development and building Heights*" (December 2018) under Section 28 (1C) of the Planning and Development Act, which has the aim to increase urban densities by allowing a greater range of building heights in the appropriate urban locations. The 5 cities and other major towns as identified and promoted for strategic development in the NPF are the focus of the guidelines. Kilkenny City is identified as a significant Key Town of scale, with a significant zone of influence in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy with a growth target of 30% by 2040. (RPO 11)

National Planning Objective 13 identifies building height as an important measure to achieve compact growth, stating:

"*In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth. These standards will be subject to a range of tolerance that enables alternative solutions to be proposed to achieve stated outcomes, provided public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected*."

The Guidelines set out the national policy that expand on the requirements of the NPF and sets out the criteria for considering increased building heights in various locations, but principally the town centre areas. The Guidelines include some Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR) which the Planning Authority must have regard to and apply and which takes precedence over conflicting policies and objectives. These are contained in the Development Plan as far as is applicable.

In accordance with the Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1 (SPPR 1) of the Guidelines, this Development Plan does not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height. It sets out a set of assessment criteria that will enable proper consideration of development proposals for increased building height linked to the achievement of compact growth.

SPPR 2 requires appropriate mixtures of uses, such as housing and commercial or employment development, are provided for in statutory plan policy.

Within Kilkenny City the Abbey Quarter Masterplan adopted by Council in 2015 provides for a mix of uses as described along with a block development type approach with building heights ranging from 3 to 5 storeys.

In determining the appropriate policy and making planning decisions on heights for buildings, the Planning process has to balance the long-term planning objectives for achieving compact growth as required in the National Planning Framework (NPF) with public safety and the environment particularly for Kilkenny City and County where architectural heritage historic character and protected structures are important considerations. In particular historic environments can be sensitive to large

scale or tall buildings. It is therefore imperative that the character of the area be assessed in order to establish the sensitivities and the capacity for development and to define opportunities for new development and to inform its design.

The Council will support increased building height and density in central locations with good public transport accessibility for both regeneration and infill purposes to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy.

The Council will also ensure that proposals for urban densification make a positive contribution to the streetscape and does not detract from the historical environment/character of the surrounding area in general and/or neighbouring buildings in particular.

Development Management principles for increased height:
It is important to ensure that the Development Management process sufficiently considers all relative principles to achieve higher densities whilst having due regard to the context of the proposed development. **In this regard it is important that development proposals subscribe to the Development Management principles and satisfy Development management criteria as contained in the Ministerial Guidance document "Urban Development and Building Heights" (December 2018) when assessing applications for development.**

In accordance with the Guidelines, all applications for planning permission shall demonstrate to the Planning Authority that the following Development Management criteria are satisfied:

At the scale of the relevant city/town:

- *The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport.*
- *Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key views. Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect.*
- *On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.*

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street:

- *The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape*
- *The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered.*
- *The proposal enhances the urban design context for public spaces and key thoroughfares and inland waterway/ marine frontage, thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure while being*

in line with the requirements of "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (2009).

- *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site or wider urban area within which the development is situated and integrates in a cohesive manner.*
- *The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood.*

At the scale of the site/building:

- *The form, massing and height of proposed developments should be carefully modulated so as to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation and views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light.*
- *Appropriate and reasonable regard should be taken of quantitative performance approaches to daylight provision outlined in guides like the Building Research Establishment's 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight' (2nd edition) or BS 8206-2: 2008 – 'Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of Practice for Daylighting'.*
- *Where a proposal may not be able to fully meet all the requirements of the daylight provisions above, this must be clearly identified and a rationale for any alternative, compensatory design solutions must be set out, in respect of which the planning authority or An Bord Pleanála should apply their discretion, having regard to local factors including specific site constraints and the balancing of that assessment against the desirability of achieving wider planning objectives. Such objectives might include securing comprehensive urban regeneration and or an effective urban design and streetscape solution.*

Specific Assessments:

To support proposals at some or all of these scales, specific assessments may be required and these may include:

- *Specific impact assessment of the micro-climatic effects such as down-draft. Such assessments shall include measures to avoid/ mitigate such micro-climatic effects and, where appropriate, shall include an assessment of the cumulative micro-climatic effects where taller buildings are clustered.*
- *In development locations in proximity to sensitive bird and / or bat areas, proposed developments need to consider the potential interaction of the building location, building materials and artificial lighting to impact flight lines and / or collision.*
- *An assessment that the proposal allows for the retention of important telecommunication channels, such as microwave links.*
- *An assessment that the proposal maintains safe air navigation.*
- *An urban design statement including, as appropriate, impact on the historic built environment.*
- *Relevant environmental assessment requirements, including SEA, EIA, AA and Ecological Impact Assessment, as appropriate.*

A comprehensive Urban Design Statement should be submitted with all applications where potential exist to impact on the historical environment. The Planning Authority shall decide if proposals align with best practise and which design standards are to be used in certain circumstances. Reference can be had to *"Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities"* and *"Shaping the future – Case studies in Adaptation and Reuse in Historic Urban Environment (DAHG) 2012."*

13.7 Gated Communities

Gated communities serve to exclude and divide communities and in no way support the creation of permeable, connected and linked communities. The Council will discourage new housing developments that include gated communities in their plans.

13.8 Bin Storage Standards

Each residential unit shall have adequate storage for three wheeled bins. Residential units with no rear access shall provide adequate storage for the bins to the front of the development, in contained units. In apartment schemes, bin storage shall generally be on the ground floor level of development, be adequately ventilated, screened from public view and adjacent to the block it serves. Where appropriate, the bin storage area shall be a separate structure to the apartment building. (See Apartment Standards below.)

13.9 Separation Distance between Houses

In general, there should be adequate separation (traditionally about 22 m between 2-storey dwellings) between opposing first floor windows. However, relaxation of this standard will be considered where the careful positioning of opposing windows can prevent overlooking even with shorter back-to-back distances. Windows serving halls and landings do not require the same degree of privacy as, say, balconies and living rooms.

A minimum of 2.3 metres shall be provided between the side walls of detached, semi-detached and end of terrace dwellings to ensure privacy and ease of access. A property boundary should ideally occur mid-way along this dimension.

13.10 Boundary Treatment of House Sites

Where the flank or rear boundaries of house sites abut roads, pedestrian ways or public open space, suitably designed screen walls 1.8 metres in height shall be provided. Where concrete screen walls are proposed they shall be suitably rendered and capped in an acceptable manner.

13.11 Housing Developments and Noise

In 2006, the Government made regulations relating to Environmental noise (S.I. 140 of 2006). Environmental noise is defined in the Regulations as unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise emitted by means of transport, road traffic, rail traffic, air traffic, and from sites of industrial activity.

The Council will require (where necessary) that planning applications for future developments within the zone of influence of existing and planned national roads include noise mitigation measures and/or a sound impact assessment to guard against an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Developers should adhere to the Environmental Noise Regulations referred to above.

13.12 Naming of Housing Developments

The naming of new residential development should reflect the local and historical context of its siting as far as possible such as local names which reflect the landscape, its features, culture or history of the area in which the development is located. Also considered will be the names of historical persons associated with the area. The use of Irish names will be encouraged. The naming of residential developments shall be approved by the Planning Authority prior to the launching of any advertising campaign for a development (See Section 9.4.1 Placenames).

13.13 Apartments

The design and layout of new apartments should provide comfortable accommodation for a variety of household types and sizes – including families with children - over the medium to long term. Regard should be given to relevant Government Guidelines, including *Design Standards for new Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018*. All apartment schemes should provide for a mix of units; comprising of one bedroom, two-bedroom and family units.

A planning application for an apartment scheme shall be accompanied by a detailed schedule of the proposed development including total number of apartments proposed by type, apartment floor area, number of bedrooms, open space area, storage area etc. Failure to submit this schedule with the planning application may result in delays as a result of a request for further information.

All planning applications for apartments are required to demonstrate compliance with 'Sustainable Urban Housing; Design Standards for New Apartments', Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018) and any updates thereof. While these guidelines set out minimum design standards, the Council strongly encourage the provision of apartments above these standards, in the interest of creating attractive living environments and sustainable communities.

13.13.1 Apartment Development Management Requirements

The following standards shall generally apply to new apartment developments:

The standards apply to units on one floor; duplexes should provide the additional floor area required to provide for stairways and landings in accordance with the Building Regulations. All living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms should minimise overlooking of adjoining/adjacent residences and should be so located so to avoid facing towards nearby high boundary or gable walls.

Dual-aspect apartments, as well as maximising the availability of sunlight, also provide for cross ventilation and should be provided.

13.13.2 Apartment Sizes

Apartment sizes and dimensions shall comply with the sizes set out in the Design Standards for new Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018. The following minimum floor areas shall apply to all new apartments:

Table 13.1: Minimum Overall Floor Areas for Apartments	
Apartment Type	**Minimum Floor Area**
Studio Apartment (1 person)	37 sq.m
One bedroom (2persons)	45 sq.m
Two bedrooms (3 persons)	63 sq.m
Two bedrooms (4 persons)	73 sq.m
Three Bedrooms (4 persons)	90 sq.m
Three bedrooms (5 persons)	99 sq.m

The floor area parameters set out in Policy 3 above shall generally apply to apartment schemes and do not apply to purpose-built and managed student housing. In relation to social housing, or purpose-built housing for older people it is considered necessary that these guidelines would also make provision for a two-bedroom apartment to accommodate 3 persons or more.

13.13.3 Private and Public Open Space

Private open space can be provided in the form of rear gardens or patios for ground floor units, and balconies at upper levels. Private amenity space should be located to optimise solar orientation and designed to minimise overshadowing and overlooking.

Balconies should adjoin and have a functional relationship with the main living areas of the apartment. In certain circumstances, glass-screened 'winter gardens' may be provided. It is important that in the latter case adequate semi-private or communal open space, in the form of landscaped areas, should also be provided. Roof gardens offer only limited potential in this regard, due to climatic and safety factors, and should not form the major share of such space. Roof gardens will only be considered provided they are easily accessible, secure and attractively landscaped. Private open space at ground floor level should receive some sunlight, but where provided at ground level, private amenity space shall incorporate boundary treatment appropriate to ensure privacy and security.

The following Private Amenity Space requirements apply:

Table 13.2: Private Amenity Space Requirements for Apartments	
Apartment Type	**Minimum Private amenity Space**
Studio	4 sq. m
One bedroom	5 sq. m
Two bedrooms (3 person)	6 sq. m
Two bedrooms (4 person)	7 sq. m
Three bedrooms	9 sq. m

Balconies (or glass-screened "winter gardens") need to be of a certain minimum width to be useful from an amenity viewpoint, being able to accommodate chairs and a small table.   A minimum width of 1.5 metres for one-bedroom units. While deeper balconies might be desirable in certain cases, this has to be balanced against the need to avoid overshadowing. It is preferable that balconies would be

primarily accessed from living rooms, although larger apartments may include wrap around and/or secondary balconies, which should also include screened clothes drying space.

Table 13.3 Minimum Floor Areas for Communal Open Space (per Apartment)	
Studio	4 sq. m
One bedroom	5 sq. m
Two bedrooms (3 person)	6 sq. m
Two bedrooms (4 person)	7 sq. m
Three bedrooms	9 sq. m

The recreational needs of children must be considered as part of communal amenity space within apartment schemes. As possible, their safety needs to be taken into consideration and protected throughout the entire site, particularly in terms of safe access to larger communal play spaces. Children's play needs around the apartment building should be catered for:

1   within the private open space associated with individual apartments (see table above);
2   within small play spaces (about 85 – 100 sq. metres) for the specific needs of toddlers and children up to the age of six, with suitable play equipment, seating for parents/guardians, and within sight of the apartment building, in a scheme that includes 25 or more units with two or more bedrooms; and
3   within play areas (200–400 sq. metres) for older children and young teenagers, in a scheme that includes 100 or more apartments with two or more bedrooms.

Site conditions, such as elevations facing north or overlooking busy streets, or tall buildings, may diminish the amenity value of balconies. Balconies may not be appropriate in historic areas. In such cases, it will be the designer's responsibility to provide some form of compensating amenity for the occupants. This might take the form, for instance, of above-average sized living rooms and generous landscaped communal open spaces.

Balustrading to balconies should be safe for children. Vertical privacy screens should generally be provided between adjoining balconies.

These are minimum standards and the Council will encourage developers to provide for greater than the minimum.

13.13.4 Daylight and Sunlight
The amount of sunlight reaching an apartment significantly affects the amenity of the occupants. Dual-aspect apartments are likely to maximise the availability of sunlight, but this solution may not always be possible (e.g. with corner units). Single-aspect apartments should allow the main living rooms to face south or west; north-facing units should be excluded. Particular care is needed where windows are located on lower floors which may be overshadowed by adjoining buildings. The orientation of buildings within the site should maximise energy efficiency.

In relation to the minimum number of dual aspect apartments that may be provided in any single apartment scheme, the following shall apply:

i.   A minimum of 33% of dual aspect units will be required in more central and accessible urban locations, where it is necessary to achieve a quality design in response to the subject site characteristics and ensure good street frontage where appropriate.

ii. In suburban or intermediate locations, it is an objective that there shall generally be a minimum of 50% dual aspect apartments in a single scheme.

iii. For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise further discretion to consider dual aspect unit provision at a level lower than the 33% minimum outlined above on a case-by-case basis, but subject to the achievement of overall high design quality in other aspects.

13.13.5 Storage Areas and Communal Facilities

Provision should be made in apartments for general storage areas (additional to minimum kitchen presses, bedroom furniture and hot presses) for bulky items such a child's buggy, a suitcase, sport equipment etc. As a rule, no individual storage room within an apartment should exceed 3.5 sq. metres.

Table 13.4: Minimum storage space requirements for apartments	
Apartment Type	Minimum Apartment Storage Space Required*
Studio	3 sq. m
One bedroom	3 sq. m
Two bedrooms (3 person)	5 sq. m
Two bedrooms (4 person)	6 sq. m
Three or more bedrooms	9 sq. m

*In addition to these minimum requirements the Planning Authority will seek adequate storage for items such as bicycles buggies and other bulky items to be available to apartments within any individual scheme.

13.13.6 Waste Storage Facilities at Apartments

The following general design considerations should be considered in the provision of refuse storage facilities at apartments:

- Sufficient communal storage area to satisfy the three-bin system for the collection of mixed dry recyclables, organic waste and residual waste;
- In larger apartment schemes, consideration should also be given to the provision of separate collection facilities for other recyclables such as glass and plastics;
- Waste storage areas must be adequately ventilated so as to minimise odours and potential nuisance from vermin/flies and taking account the avoidance of nuisance for habitable rooms nearby;
- Provision in the layout for sufficient access for waste collectors, proximity of, or ease of access to, waste storage areas from individual apartments, including access by disabled people;
- Waste storage areas should not present any safety risks to users and should be well-lit;

- Waste storage areas should not be on the public street, and should not be visible to or accessible by the general public. Appropriate visual screening should be provided, particularly in the vicinity of apartment buildings;
- Waste storage areas in basement car parks should be avoided where possible, but where provided, must ensure adequate manoeuvring space for collection vehicles;
- The capacity for washing down waste storage areas, with wastewater discharging to the sewer.

13.14 Home Based Economic Activities

With the rollout of Broadband across the County, the possibility to work at home will become a realistic option for people. The Council recognises that such working arrangements can benefit individuals, families and the local community in addition to contributing to more sustainable land use patterns by reducing the need for commuting. It is the policy of the Planning Authority to accommodate home based activities where they will not impact on the general residential amenity of the area. Home-based activities are defined as small-scale commercial activities, which are secondary to the use of the premises as a residence. They are permitted where the primary use of the dwelling remains residential and where the amenity of surrounding residences is not adversely affected. The planning authority, in considering applications for such uses, will consider the following:

- The nature and extent of the work;
- The effects on the amenities of adjoining properties particularly as regards hours of operation, noise and general disturbance;
- The anticipated levels of traffic generation; and
- The generation, storage and collection of waste.

Over the counter services, business signage, advertising hoardings, security gates/grills and excessive security lights are not normally appropriate in a residential area and should be subject to appropriate restrictions. The local authority may grant a temporary permission of two/three years for home-based economic activities to facilitate on-going monitoring of the activity. However, such use will not normally be permitted in apartments.

13.15 Family Flat

A 'family' flat refers to a sub-division or extension of a single dwelling unit to accommodate a member of the immediate family and is generally acceptable, provided it is not a separate detached unit and that it is possible to provide direct access to the remainder of the house. There shall be no permanent subdivision of the garden. The 'family' flat shall not be let or sold, other than as part of the overall property and shall revert to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by a family member. The design should ensure that the flat forms an integral part of the main dwelling unit capable of reintegration for single family use.

The principal requirement for any proposed family flat extension is that the family flat shall generally be less than 50% of the floor area of the main dwelling. In the case of a two-storey family flat, an internal connecting door will normally be required at both levels. External doors will normally only be permitted to the side and rear of the house, with the presumption against an independent front door.

Access shall be either from an internal door or by side door well screened from the front elevation. The design should have regard to the need for light and privacy of adjoining properties. The form and design of the existing building should be followed and the extension should integrate fully with the existing building by using similar detailing and window proportions, materials and finishes.

13.16 Domestic Extension

The principal requirement for any proposed domestic extension is that the design should have regard to the need for light and privacy of adjoining properties. The form and design of the existing building should be followed and the extension should integrate fully with the existing building by using similar detailing and window proportions. Where an existing dwelling is being remodelled and extended, the proposed extension will be considered on its own merits. A high standard of modern design and materials will be encouraged in this instance.

13.17 Off Street Parking in Residential areas

The cumulative effect of removal of front garden walls and railings damages the character and appearance of suburban streets, contributes to an overall reduction in permeable surfaces vital to flood relief and the introduction of multiple vehicular accesses reduces the level of communal on-street parking. Consequently, proposals for off street parking need to be balanced against the loss of amenity and communal spaces. The removal of front garden walls and railings will not generally be permitted where they have a negative impact on the character of streetscapes or reduce the level of communal parking to an unacceptable degree.

Where permitted, "drive-ins" should:

- Not have outward opening gates;
- Have a vehicular entrance not wider than 3m or 50 per cent of the width of the front boundary, whichever is the lesser;
- Have an area of hardstanding (parking space of 2.5m x 5m);
- Suitably landscape the balance of the space;
- Have gates, walls/fence and railings made good.

13.18 Subdivision of Existing Residential Units

Applications for permission to subdivide or change the use of existing residential will be considered on their merits. The design of developments shall be such that it complements the existing layout or streetscape and shall not interfere with the residential and other amenities of the area and shall provide a suitable quality of residential amenity for all the proposed units.

13.19 Phased Residential Development

The Council shall seek a phased approach to large housing developments. Applications for residential development shall illustrate the phasing for the scheme. Phasing proposals shall ensure that open space and infrastructure to serve dwellings in a given phase e.g. public lighting, footpaths, is completed to the satisfaction of the Council prior to the initiation of the succeeding phase. Each phase

must be completed in full (including infrastructure, public open space etc) before the next phase commences. The Council will apply a sequence to the phasing to ensure that each phase is served by adequate services and infrastructure.

13.20 Open space

13.20.1 Private Open Space

An adequate amount of private open space should be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling. In general, the requirement will be 60 to 75 sq.m minimum for 3/4/5 bedroom houses in order to ensure that most household activities are accommodated and at the same time offers visual delight, receive some sunshine and encourage plant growth. Private open space will be measured from behind the rear building line.

The boundaries of rear gardens should generally be provided with a permanent durable barrier with a minimum height of 1.8m.

Table 13.5 Private Open Space Requirements for houses	
Type of Unit	Minimum Private Open Space
1/2 bedroom houses	48 sqm
3 bedroom houses	60 -75sqm
4 + bedroom houses	60 - 75 sqm

13.20.2 Public Open Space Requirements

13.20.2.1 Design of Open Space

The Council will require a detailed high-quality open space and landscape design plan including specifications, prepared by suitably qualified professionals, to be submitted with all planning applications for multi-unit residential developments.

Developers should consider providing a variety of open spaces both formal and informal. Semi-natural areas should be provided such as wetlands, woodlands, meadows, green corridors as well as formal gardens, and seating areas. These elements work best as part of a structure to the provision of open space.

Applications shall have regard to the qualitative standards outlined in Section 4.18 of the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.*

The following must be taken into consideration when designing open space:
- Open space should be of a high visual standard so that it is functional and accessible to all;
- Open space should be designed so that passive surveillance is provided.
- Open spaces should not be located to the side or the rear of housing units.
- Provide multifunctional open spaces at locations deemed appropriate whereby both passive and active uses are delivered.

- Ensure open space provision is suitably proportioned. Inappropriate narrow tracts of land are not acceptable and will not be included in the calculation of open space for a proposed development nor any area due to its nature (e.g. marshy) or topography (slope) which is deemed unsuitable.
- Include proposals for drainage of the public open space
- Hard landscaping elements should also be identified, such as paving or cobbled areas which play important role in the design and presentation of open space concepts
- Retention of existing natural features (which should be protected and incorporated into open space)
- Appropriate pedestrian and cycle linkages between open spaces should be shown on the site layout plan;
- All children and young people should have access to play space which should be within a reasonable and safe walking distance from home.
- Play spaces should be made identifiable by appropriate 'play' signage
- Pedestrianisation in the vicinity of such areas should be maximised, and traffic should be eliminated or traffic calming measures put in place
- Lanes within housing estates or connecting housing estates should be designed to allow for the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists and should be adequately overlooked and lit and not be excessive in length.

13.20.3 Open Space in new residential development

Applicants will be required to make provision for sports and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs generated by any development and the capacity of existing facilities in the area to cater for existing and future needs.

The Council will require a minimum public open space provision of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. **For the purposes of this calculation, public open space requirements are to be based on residential units with an occupancy rate of 2.8 persons per unit.**

A reduction to this standard will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances as determined by the local authority. Where such a relaxation occurs the provision of open space within any scheme should not be below 10% of the site area.

Residential planning applications in excess of 200 units will require a recreational needs assessment. Recreation provision should form an integral element of development proposals. The Council will apply the standards as set out in Table 13.6 as a minimum requirement for on-site provision as part of residential development or for off-site provision. The minimum standards for children's play spaces to be applied are set out in Section 13.18 Open Space below. In the interests of meeting strategic needs the Council may pool together the requirements of individual and relatively smaller developments to provide facilities and amenities of a strategic nature at the higher end of the hierarchy. Developer contributions may also be sought and may be applied to improve existing facilities nearby.

In areas where new development is proposed and the cumulative impact of the development of new houses will, or is expected to, exceed the volume of housing development identified in Table 13.6, developers will be required to provide financial contributions or lands towards the development of

sports and recreation facilities that will be developed to meet the needs of their development in conjunction with the expected needs of other nearby developments. In instances where this includes, or is expected to include the acquisition of lands this requirement will be specified.

Where on-site provision is not appropriate the County Council will levy a sum of money from each housing unit in lieu of the provision of public open space/recreation facilities.

Table 13.6 Amenity Development Thresholds	
Site Capacity No. of Dwellings	**Minimum quantity and type of leisure facilities required**
<25	A minimum of 0.25 hectares must be provided.
25 or over	Open space 2.4 hectares per 1,000 people (a minimum of 0.25 hectares must be provided)
100 – 199	Public open space One Tone Zone/Outdoor gym
200 – 499	Equipped public open space to include: One full size grass sports pitch; One court multi-use games area with Community association/club movement; and Two Tone Zones/Outdoor gyms.
500 – 599	Public space to include: One full size grass sports pitch; Two Tone Zones/Outdoor gyms One court multi-use games area; and Two tennis courts / basketball courts etc.
600 +	Equipped public open space to include: Two full size grass sports pitches; Three Tone Zones/Outdoor Gyms One court multi-use games area, and two tennis courts / basketball courts etc.
1,000+	One community / leisure Building including full size badminton / basketball court with community association / club movement within. Equipped public open space to include: Three Tone Zones/Outdoor Gyms; Two full size grass sports pitches; One court multi-use games area; and two tennis courts/ basketball courts etc.

Note: One piece of multifunctional equipment is to be provided within the Tone Zones/Outdoor Gyms for each 20 residential units or part thereof within the development.

Where a proposed development is located in close proximity to an established park area or zoned open space, the open space requirement may be relaxed depending on the nature and quality of existing provision. However, a financial contribution will be required towards the improvement and extension of the existing facility to cater for extra demand.

Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space required under this policy where spaces and facilities are not taken in charge by the Local Authority.

13.20.4 Play space

A standard of a minimum of 10 sq. m. of dedicated playable space per residential unit is to be provided as an integral part of the required open space for each new development. This playable space can form part of the overall open space provision of a development but must be dedicated to play.

This play space is to be distributed throughout the development and should consider the presence or lack of existing off-site provision. The total space requirement should be broken down into the relevant typologies taking account of the maximum walking distances from residential units given below.

Table 13.7 Play Space Distance Requirements	
Play Space Type	**Maximum walking distance from residential unit**
Doorstep Playable Space	100m
Local Playable Space	400m
Neighbourhood Playable Space	800m
Youth Space	800m

Doorstep playable space suitable for younger children can be included in smaller areas while the other play spaces will require larger areas. The doorstep playable space should be laid out to include a mixture of fixed equipment such as rockers, cradle swings, carousels, slides and junior multi units together with the use of sand, water and other materials for creative play.

The local playable space should include a mixture of rockers, swings, carousels, junior and senior multi units, slides, space nets and balance beams among other items of fixed equipment suitable for children up to 12 years of age together with the use of sand, water and other materials for creative play.

A neighbourhood playable space should be an extension of both the doorstep and local playable space with a wider range of play equipment and range of play opportunities providing a challenging, stimulating play environment.

Youth space should include detailed proposals to provide for the recreational requirements of young people over 12 of an area. Any set of proposals shall take into account the existing level of provision in the surrounding area and will attempt to deal with existing deficiencies.

Formal and informal games/recreational areas for adults and older persons should also be integrated within schemes (e.g. Tone Zones).

13.21 Scale of Development

13.21.1 Plot Ratio

Plot ratio is the relationship between site area and the total floor area of the buildings erected on it. The plot ratio is calculated by dividing the gross floor area of the building by the site area.

Plot ratio = Gross Floor Area divided by gross site area.

The purpose of plot ratio is to prevent adverse effects of both over-development and under-development on the amenity and the layout of buildings, to achieve desirable massing and height of buildings, to balance the capacity of the site and street frontages. It is recommended that a maximum plot ratio of 2.0 be set for urban areas and 1.0 for all other areas. The Planning Authority will permit higher plot ratios only in cases where exceptional standards of design are achieved.

13.21.2 Site Coverage

The purpose of site coverage control is to prevent over-development, to avoid overshadowing and to protect rights to light of adjoining properties. The maximum normal site coverage for uses in all areas is 65%. In urban areas, site coverage may be allowed to increase up to 85% or up to the existing site coverage. In some cases, a higher percentage may be allowed, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the site.

Site coverage = Ground floor area divided by gross site area.

13.22 Rural Housing

The rural settlement policy is set out in Chapter 7. The Planning Authority has completed a County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide which is intended to provide assistance to people who are considering the development of a single house in the countryside.

County Kilkenny enjoys an especially rich rural landscape setting and character that has a value far beyond agricultural uses. Aside from the desire to protect the countryside as a natural asset, there is a need to preserve rural areas for their scenic beauty, historical significance, and environmental importance.

However, rural Kilkenny is much more than a beautiful landscape that we can all enjoy, it must also function as an environment in which we can live and work. The countryside needs to evolve whilst retaining the character that makes it special and unique. It is important that design in rural areas meets with the aspirations of those building new homes, without compromising the integrity of Kilkenny's long established rural signature.

The County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide aims to provide an insight into the key issues that will determine the success or failure of a new house in rural Kilkenny.

Its objectives are:
- To improve overall design quality
- To ensure maximum integration with the landscape
- To draw on and reinforce traditional patterns of buildings in rural Kilkenny
- To encourage innovation in design
- To emphasise the value of sustainable and energy conscious design
- To assist those involved in rural house building, by clarifying key design issues

Applicants and their agents are encouraged to consult with the guide before embarking on the rural housing project[4].

The following guidance may be of assistance in planning for a single house in the countryside:

- Existing mature landscaping, particularly trees and hedges, should be retained where possible. Existing trees, buildings, slopes and other natural features can provide a setting. Where possible, well established boundaries (on all sides) which assist in assimilating the site naturally into its surroundings is encouraged. Sites which are carved out of the centre of larger fields are discouraged.[5]
- Cutting and filling of sites is not desirable (see Kilkenny Rural Design Guide for positioning a house on a steep slope)
- Sites which lead to ribbon development is not considered to be in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development and is strongly discouraged
- Reuse, adapt or extend existing rural structures where possible. Where historic or vernacular buildings are located on the site or land holding, consideration should seriously be given to their retention, and incorporation into any proposed development.
- In siting a new dwelling, it is essential to look at the attributes and restrictions of the particular site, the site contours and the scale, form and orientation of any proximate or adjoining dwellings. The location, siting, orientation and the design of a proposed new dwelling in a rural location should be sensitive to its surroundings and should seek to integrate as much as possible into the landscape and not be a prominent feature that visually dominates its rural surroundings.[6]
- Full consideration should be given to solar gain. The orientation of the proposed dwelling and internal layout should seek to maximise energy efficiency.[7]
- Houses ideally should not break or significantly impose on the skyline when viewed from nearby roads or distant locations.
- Direction should be taken from the historic building stock of the area, reflecting regional or local patterns in terms of scale, height, mass, form, layout, proportions, materials and architectural details/features.
- Any proposed finish will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that such finishes are in harmony with the surrounding landscape and the vernacular architecture.
- Dwellings which are dominant, intrusive, or incongruous in a rural setting, will be discouraged.
- Driveways should follow the contours of the site

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[4] https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Planning/Rural-Design-Guide/
[5] Ibid page 34
[6] Ibid page 36-38
[7] https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Planning/Rural-Design-Guide page 82

- The design of entrance gates should be in keeping with the rural setting. Applications for a dwelling in a rural area should include detailed drawings and specifications for entrance treatments. The roadside boundary should ideally consist of a sod and stone wall/earth mound planted with a double row of native hedgerow species e.g. Hawthorn, field maple, holly, blackthorn, hazel etc. Block walls and ornamental features will be discouraged[8].
- The location for a house may impact on the exploitation of natural resources or vice versa, refer to Section 7.5 Extractive Industries in this regard.

13.22.1 Access and Sight Lines

The applicant must demonstrate that safe vehicular access to and from a proposed site is provided in terms of visibility from a proposed entrance, but also in terms of impact on road traffic on the adjoining public road, through generation of turning and stopping movements by vehicles leaving and entering the proposed site. Applicants must adhere to the TII document *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB) and TII Standard DN-GEO-03060 *Geometric Design of Junctions* when assessing planning applications and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DMURS) and TII Standard DN-GEO-03084 '*The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads*' where appropriate. Site entrances should be located so as to require the least amount of hedgerow removal in accordance with DMRB requirements. Excessive hedgerow removal will be resisted where setback is considered significant or roadside definition is compromised. Hedgerow removal will also be resisted where several entrances have over time denuded the extent of mature hedgerow along a particular stretch of road. All hedgerows that are required to be removed to achieve sightlines should be reinstated behind the applicable sightlines and maintained so as not to cause any reduction in the extent of sightlines achievable over time.

13.22.2 Wastewater Treatment Systems

Kilkenny County Council requires that sites will be assessed in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice *Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10)* (EPA Code of Practice 2021) or any subsequent revisions or replacement. The person carrying out the assessment must be suitable qualified. Water and wastewater systems for new rural developments shall be located within the subject site.

13.23 General Standards

13.23.1 Standards of Construction

Standards for site development works and, in particular, footpaths, sewers, drains and water supply shall be in accordance with the Building Regulations and the *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (1998) published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

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[8] Ibid pages 50-55

13.23.2 Rainwater Harvesting

The Planning Authority will normally require that all new large scale developments (such as commercial, mixed use and apartment schemes) include rainwater harvesting and/or grey water recycling in their design.

13.23.3 Building Regulations

All new dwellings must comply with the Building Regulations. The Planning and Building Regulations are independent of each other and therefore a grant of planning permission does not necessarily mean that any proposed structure complies with the Building Regulations. It is important that the Building Regulations inform and direct the pre-planning of any new structure as attempting to implement the Building Regulations at a later stage could significantly compromise any grant of planning permission.

13.23.4 Building Lines

The Planning Authority will normally seek to ensure that development is not carried out in front of established building lines. Generally, it will be an aim to create a continuous building line along a street edge. Consistent building lines will also be encouraged in the design of neighbourhood centres and in new industrial/business park developments, where buildings will have a clear relationship with each other. In built up areas, development which would infringe on an existing building line and would be prejudicial to residential amenity, or orderly development will not be allowed.

Building lines may be relaxed in the following cases:
- to incorporate key landscape features into the development layout,
- to incorporate key landmark buildings,
- for innovative designs which can positively enhance the townscape,
- for innovative housing layouts, where the traditional set back from the public footpath is flexible due to new designs, with a decreasing emphasis on the minimum required space to the front of dwellings,
- to provide important areas of public open space, i.e. squares.

13.23.5 Telecommunications and Broadband

For new housing developments, the developer shall facilitate the installation of carrier neutral ducting for telecommunication and broadband services and all permissions will include conditions to facilitate this.

13.24 Shopfronts

Shopfronts are one of the most important elements in determining the character, quality and image of retail streets in urban areas.   In order to conserve this distinctive character, the Planning Authority will:
- Encourage the maintenance of original shopfronts.
- Encourage the reinstatement of traditional shopfronts where poor replacements have been installed.

- Promote modern design and high-quality materials where new shopfronts on new or modern buildings are being proposed. Where existing shopfronts are of no special merit, total replacement with a contemporary design is acceptable and if sensitively handled can greatly enhance the appearance of the street.
- Encourage the use of high-quality natural materials in shopfront design.

Modern 'multiple' formats which have adopted a corporate image will not necessarily be allowed to use their standardised shopfront design, corporate colours and materials. Such companies should be encouraged to ensure that their particular fascia takes account of the character of the street and local area. The removal of street doors giving separate access to upper floors will not be permitted unless alternative separate access is provided.

13.24.1 Fascia Signage

As a general principle, fascia signs should be simple in design and not excessive in illumination or size. The following basic guidelines will be applied in assessing planning applications for fascia signage in architectural conservation areas (the term 'shopfront' is used to refer to all commercial ground floor facades including restaurants, public houses etc.):

- Hand painted timber fascia's will be encouraged in existing traditional shopfronts.
- Plastic derived fascias will not be permitted in new or existing shopfronts.
- Internally illuminated box fascia's will not be permitted.
- Natural materials (e.g. wood, metal etc.) will be permitted. Man-made materials (e.g. plastic, uPVC etc.) will not be permitted.
- The construction of nameplate fascia's linking two or more buildings is generally unacceptable.

13.24.2 Security Shutters

The installation of security shutters on the external façade of a building can have a detrimental impact on the character of the shopping streets at night and thereby detract from the visual amenity of the area. The Planning Authority will discourage the use of such shutters.

Alternatives to roller shutters, such as the use of demountable open grilles, will be preferred where security needs are involved. Demountable grilles can be attractively designed and can positively contribute to the character of the shopfront and the street.

The erection of a security shutter and its associated screening requires planning permission. Where security shutters are considered to be essential because of the type of business transacted or goods stored, the Planning Authority may in exceptional circumstances permit them provided that they meet the following criteria:

- They must be open grille type (not perforated or solid)
- The colour must match the shopfront colour scheme.
- Where possible they must be located, together with their associated housing, behind the window display.

13.24.3 Canopies and Blinds

Planning permission is required for the erection of canopies. Each planning application will be considered on the basis of need for and function of the canopy. Full details of the canopy structure will be required at planning application stage, i.e. materials proposed, canopy size (open and closed), blind box location and arm design. The following basic guidelines will be applied in assessing planning applications for canopies and awnings:

- Canopies of traditional design and materials will be favoured, i.e. canvas canopy, wrought iron arms, timber blind box etc.
- The use of plastic and/or uPVC will not be permitted. Curved or Dutch canopies will not be permitted.
- Canopies and awnings shall not be used for advertising purposes other than the name of the premises.
- Canopies shall be positioned to avoid covering any distinctive architectural elements such as fascia or pilasters. They will not be permitted where they detract from the character of the shopfront or buildings of special architectural interest.

Blinds were traditionally incorporated into the shop front fascia and designed to retract into it when not required. This is still the best way to handle a blind where one is required.

13.24.4 Lighting

Internally illuminated facias or projecting box signs will not be permitted. Concealed strip or flood lighting and spotlights may be an acceptable alternative. The internal lighting of the shop window is preferable to the external lighting of the building or shopfront.

13.24.5 Signage and Advertising

The over-riding principle is the avoidance of visual clutter and an improvement in the quality of the commercial character of the towns and villages throughout the county. It is also regulated in the interests of road safety. Advice and guidance in respect of signage on national roads concerning major tourist and leisure features is outlined in the TII's *Policy on the Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads[9]*.

Advertising signs, either individually or particularly in groups, can have either a positive or negative impact on the character of a building, street or area depending on their design, size and location.

The Planning Authority will strictly control all advertising signs in relation to their location, design, materials and function and will restrict non-essential advertising structures or any advertising structure which would impact injuriously on amenity, the built environment or road safety. The following basic guidelines will be applied in assessing planning applications for signs and advertising structures:

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[9] National Roads Authority, *Policy on the Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads*, 2011

- Individual signs should be designed for the building it will be displayed on. A bespoke sign can be a piece of art in its own right if carefully designed and made of high-quality natural materials. Signs shall be sympathetic in design and colour both to the building and its surroundings.
- Plastic/Vinyl banner-type signs will be discouraged. Projecting signs, banners and flagpoles will be restricted in size and number to prevent clutter.
- Natural high-quality materials (e.g. wood, metal etc.) will be encouraged. Man-made materials (e.g. plastic, uPVC etc.) will not be permitted in ACA's. The use of neon, LED or similar lighting, plastic, PVC, Perspex flashing, reflectorized or glitter type signs on the exterior of buildings will be prohibited. Traditional painted signs and wrought iron hanging signs will be encouraged.
- The use of contact signage, applied directly to the glass of a shop window, is an undesirable form of signage as it creates a visual barrier between the shop floor and the street. This will be actively discouraged.
- Signs shall not obscure architectural features or details. Signs will not be permitted above eaves or parapet levels or to project above the roofline of buildings.
- Signs will not be permitted where they interfere with the safety of pedestrians, the safety and free flow of traffic or if they obscure road signs. Signs attached to buildings are preferable to those on freestanding hoardings. The Planning Authority will strictly control roadside signage in the interests of visual amenity and road safety. The [Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines](#) provide guidance in this regard, see Section 3.8.
- Favourable consideration may be given, in consultation with business groups, to the erection of composite advance signs on which the facilities available in the settlement will be declared. Due to the damage which a proliferation of large, competitive advance signs can cause to the appearance and image of the important entrance routes into an area, the local authorities will seek to phase out individual advance signage as the opportunity arises.

Applicants should note that signposting requires a licence from the Local Authority and the requirements of the Traffic Signs Manual (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports, 2010) should be adhered to.

13.24.6 Fast Food Take Away
Proposals for the development of these facilities will generally only be acceptable in areas of mixed-use activity such as town or village or neighbourhood centres. Planning applications for new fast food take-away uses will be considered on their own merits. Regard will be had to the impact of the take-away on the amenities of the area, including noise, odour and litter.

The Planning Authority may impose restrictions on opening hours of such uses as a condition of a planning permission. Full shopfront details will be required at application stage to assess the visual suitability of proposals in the area.

13.25 Seveso sites

(Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 209 of 2015) (the "COMAH Regulations"), implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU). Part 7 of the COMAH regulations 2015 provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place to

ensure that before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of:

(a) the siting and development of new establishments;

(b) modifications to establishments of the type described in Regulation 12(1);

(c) new developments including transport routes, locations of public use and residential areas in the vicinity of establishments, where the siting, modifications or developments may be the source of, or increase the risk or consequences of, a major accident.

There are three Seveso sites within the County as follows, on the Tullaroan Road in Kilkenny city, Raheen, Rosbercon, New Ross and at Christendom in the Ferrybank area in the environs of Waterford City. In considering alterations, extensions etc. within existing Seveso sites the Council will be guided by technical advice provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) in respect of any planning applications in addition to normal planning considerations.

Similarly, for planning applications within the Seveso Consultation Distance of the perimeter of the Seveso site the Planning Authority will be guided by advice provided by the HAS in addition to normal planning criteria.

13.26 Service Stations

The role of service stations has evolved over the years with the expansion into small scale retail and rest/food areas from merely selling fuel. Ancillary uses may include tyre repair, collection points for online retail activity and self-service launderettes.

In assessing planning applications for new or redeveloped service stations, the following considerations will be considered

- All new petrol stations and refurbished existing stations will require a high standard of design and layout. The forecourt canopy should be integrated into the overall design and sited so that it does not dominate the surrounding buildings.
- Rapid EV charging point(s) will be required and to be clearly demarcated with appropriate signage, in line with the Climate Mitigation strategy on electric vehicles.
- Petrol stations will not generally be permitted in residential areas, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that no significant damage to residential amenities will occur by reason of factors such as noise, visual obtrusion, safety considerations or fumes and smells. Consideration may also be given to the limiting of the hours of operation of petrol stations in these circumstances. Car washing facilities should be sited so as not to interfere with residential amenities.
- Any application for a new petrol filling station should provide sufficient road frontage, clear visibility, two points of access, sanitary convenience for public use
- Landscaping and suitable screening shall be required to protect the amenity of the surrounding area and enhance the appearance of the development
- In rural areas petrol stations will not be permitted where they will have a detrimental impact on the surrounding views and prospects, scenery or general amenities.
- Signs should be limited in number and design and located so as to generally form part of the buildings or other structures on site. The placing of signs of any description on footpaths, grass verges or any part of a public roadway will not be permitted. In certain circumstances and

depending on the location, the use of standard corporate designs and signage for petrol stations may not be acceptable

- Forecourt lighting, including canopy lighting, should be limited to that which is necessary for the safe operation of a petrol station and should not interfere with the amenities of adjoining premises
- The sale of goods from a petrol station may only be permitted as an ancillary small-scale facility which would remain secondary to the use as a petrol filling station where it would not adversely affect local amenities. As per the Retail Planning Guidelines (DECLG, 2012), the petrol/filling station shops floorspace cap is 100m^2 net. Planning applications for the provision of such shops shall be specifically applied for.
- Parking bays/aisles must be located so as to minimise pedestrian/vehicular conflict.
- As regards service stations, the Council will have regard to the provisions of Section 2.8 of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* 2012.

13.27 Development Contributions

The Council will require financial contributions in accordance with a development contributions scheme adopted by the Council under S.48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011 (or other relevant legislation as may be enacted from time to time). Such contributions are in respect of the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the County, and that is provided, or that it is intended will be provided, by or on behalf of the Council.

13.28 Bonds

To ensure that developments undertaken by private developers are satisfactorily completed, developers will be required to provide cash deposits or submit a bond from an insurance company or other financial institution acceptable to the Planning Authority for the satisfactory completion of developments and their ancillary services. This bond or surety is to be submitted before development is commenced. In the case of residential developments, the bond will only be released when the estate has been fully completed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and has been formally taken in charge by the Planning Authority.

13.29 Tree and Hedgerow Preservation

To ensure that trees and hedgerows are protected on a site which has been the subject of a grant of planning permission, a cash lodgement/bond may be required, the amount of which shall be determined by the Planning Authority.

Development will not generally be permitted where there is likely damage or destruction either to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or those which have a particular local amenity or nature conservation value, or are listed in the Survey of Mature Trees in City and Environs.

Development that requires the felling of mature trees of amenity value, conservation value or special interest, even though they may not be listed in the Development Plan, will be discouraged.

The replacement of hedgerows/trees shall have due regard to the ecological function of hedgerows as a wildlife corridor. When planting new hedgerows, a mixture of native species shall be proposed and this shall occur at the commencement of building works and should link to existing hedgerows to aid ecological networks.

Where trees and hedgerows are identified and affected by a proposed development, a survey will be required and completed in accordance with BS 5837 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations 2012*.

In general, the following requirements should be addressed where the protection of existing trees and landscaping issues arise:

- Topographical Survey - Accurately measured showing all relevant site features.

- Soil assessment – where appropriate to determine whether a soil is shrinkable, that may cause the potential for indirect damage. Soil structure composition and PH for the provisions of new planting.

- A tree survey - details trees and hedgerows identified on the topographical survey and on land adjacent to the development site, including individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands. Identifying tree dimensions, quality and retention value in accordance with the context of the proposed development (see sections 4.5 Table 1+2 of BS 5837).

- The tree survey - should identify the constraints posed by trees, both above and below ground, which will inform the site layout design. Constraints include, the presence of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), the existing and eventual crown spreads of trees and their unreasonable obstruction of light etc.

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment - a report should be compiled by an arboriculturist using the data collated from the site survey. The report should assess the impact and the effects the proposed design has directly and indirectly on the trees and where necessary recommends mitigation.

- A Tree Protection Plan – details the proposed design layout shown on a plan with all trees clearly identified with their root protection areas (RPA) annotated based on the topographical survey to include all trees. The classification of each tree and the required protection measures during development.

    New Planting – takes account of existing landscape features and is essential for consideration in the layout, design and future use of a proposed development. New planting should account for the future growth of canopies, stems and root systems to maturity and their potential effects on existing site structures.

- Arboricultural Method Statements – demonstrates how unavoidable construction operations may take place within the RPA or crown spread of trees (whichever is greatest), clearly demonstrating how these operations will have a little detriment to retained trees. These operations may include but are not exclusive to: -
    a. Temporary access
    b. Installation of service runs

      c.   Construction of hard standing
      d.   Foundation excavations
      e.   Subterranean structures e.g. basement extensions

13.30 Zoning objectives (See Figure 4.3 New Ross Environs)

The purpose of zoning is to indicate to property owners and the general public the types of development which the Council considers most appropriate in each land use category. It is the intention of the Planning Authority that the zoning of particular areas for a particular use shall not in itself exclude other uses in that area provided they are compatible with the dominant use.

Zoning is designed to reduce conflicting uses within areas, to protect resources and, in association with phasing, to ensure that land suitable for development is used to the best advantage of the community as a whole.

In the following paragraphs:

- **Permissible use** means a use, which is acceptable in the relevant zone. However, it is still the subject of the normal planning process.
- **Open for consideration** means a use which may be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the individual proposal or development will be compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, and will not conflict with the permitted uses and also conforms with the proper planning and development of the area.

13.30.1 Agriculture

Objective: To conserve and protect agricultural land from interference from non-agricultural uses. To prevent development of agricultural land adjacent to development areas.

Permissible uses: Agriculture, horticulture, public service installations

Open for consideration: Public open space, guesthouse, restaurant, nursing home, dwelling houses in certain limited cases, halting site, private open space

Housing on lands zoned Agriculture:
Housing on lands zoned "Agriculture" will be restricted to the following categories of persons:
•   Immediate members of farmer's families (sons /daughters) and/or;
•   Person whose primary employment is in agriculture, horticulture, forestry or bloodstock, or other rural based activity in the area in which they wish to build)

13.30.2 Community Facilities

Objective: To protect, provide and improve community facilities.

Permissible Uses: Educational, religious and cultural facilities, public buildings, crèches, schools, churches, hospitals, convents, community centres and halls, school playing fields, colleges, orphanages, hostels, halting sites, cemeteries, libraries and medical centres, nursing homes

Open for Consideration: Public service installations, Gymnasiums, Town Centre uses which would not conflict with the other objectives of the Plan and which would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

13.30.3 General Development New Ross

Objective: To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate uses in areas where existing commercial uses have established and allow for the development of the settlement as a focus for local services, sustaining and strengthening its role as a population centre.

The purpose of this zone is mainly to reflect the existing uses that have established in this zone and to allow for their improvement and expansion as necessary to improve retailing, residential, commercial, office, cultural and other uses appropriate to the further development of the settlement.

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, retailing, wholesale outlets, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, halting sites, hotels, motels, guest houses, clubs, private garages, open spaces, public service installations, medical and related consultants, restaurants, public houses, car parks, halls or discotheques, and other uses as permitted and open for consideration in residential zoning.

Open for Consideration: workshop or light industry, retail warehousing, gymnasium.

13.30.4 Industrial

Objective: To provide for industrial and related uses and at Raheen, New Ross uses related to the development and enhancement of the Kilkenny Greenway.

Permissible Uses: Industrial premises and ancillary offices, open spaces, warehouses, car and heavy vehicle parks. In New Ross developments related to the operation and enhancement and enjoyment of the Kilkenny Greenway such as tourist accommodation, restaurant, bicycle hire etc.

Open for Consideration: Petrol filling stations, service stations, car showrooms, advertisement structures, wholesale premises, public service installations, play school/crèche.

Flood Risk: All proposed development within this zone which falls within flood zone A or B shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment. No highly vulnerable uses (as set out in the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines*) other than extensions to existing structures and uses, will be permitted

within Flood Zone A or B. Less vulnerable uses will also not be allowed within Flood Zone A other than extensions to existing structures and uses as set out in the *Flood Risk Management guidelines*.

13.30.5 Mixed Use (New Ross Environs)

Objective: To encourage the development of underutilised and brownfield lands with a view to consolidating and adding vitality to these areas and ensuring the efficient use of urban lands. A mix of uses such as residential, commercial, community, tourism and recreation are envisaged. Any retail development proposed shall comply with the requirements of the Retail Strategy.

Significant development proposals on this site must be made in the context of a masterplan/design statement for the former Albatross site, situated in both the Kilkenny County Council and New Ross Town Council jurisdictions. This master plan shall be prepared in consultation with both these authorities. There shall be an emphasis on the attainment of an appropriate mix of uses to include recreation, leisure, tourism, offices, residential and public open spaces.

Uses open for consideration will reflect the zoning objective above and will be agreed through the Master Plan process. Gymnasiums shall be open for consideration.

13.30.6 Amenity / Green links/Biodiversity conservation/ Open Space/Recreation

Objective: To allow for green links and biodiversity conservation and to preserve, provide and improve recreational open space.

Permissible Uses: Open space

Open for Consideration: Sports clubs, recreational buildings, stands, pavilions, agricultural uses, public service installations.

13.30.7 Existing Residential

Objective: To protect and improve residential amenities and to provide for new residential development appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement.

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, open spaces, places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, Nursing home.

Open for Consideration: Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages, retail shop of local convenience not more than 100 sqm in gross area, hotel, restaurant, and use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, gymnasium or as a playgroup or crèche.

13.30.8 Residential (low density)

Objective: To provide for low density residential development appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement. The maximum residential density to be permitted here shall be 5 dwellings to the acre, depending on servicing arrangements.

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, open spaces

Open for Consideration: Places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, Nursing home, Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages, retail shop of local convenience, hotel, public house, restaurant, use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.

13.30.9 New Residential

Objective: To provide for new residential development and communities at appropriate densities and protect and enhance amenities of existing residential areas.

Open for Consideration: Gymnasiums

13.31 Non-Conforming Uses

Throughout the county there are uses which do not conform to the zoning objectives for the area. Extensions and improvement of premises accommodating these uses may be permitted where the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or prejudice the proper planning and development of the area.   In some cases, the Planning Authority may encourage relocation of permitted incompatible uses, for example by exchange of sites.