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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Legal Basis

As part of Kilkenny County Council's settlement strategy adopted in the County Development Plan 2002 it is the policy of the Council to carry out an extensive programme of Local Area Plans for settlements throughout County Kilkenny. This Local Area Plan for Ballyragget is part of that policy initiative.

The legal basis for this plan is provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Sections 18 and 19). The Act provides for the preparation of Local Area Plans for any part of the functional area of a planning authority. A Local Area Plan must be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan.

It must contain a written statement and maps indicating the objectives of the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies including detail on community facilities and amenities and on standards of design of developments and structures.

In the text of this proposed plan the plan itself maybe referred to as "the Plan" or "this Plan". In this Plan "the Council" or "the Planning Authority" shall mean Kilkenny County Council.

The Local Area Plan will remain in statute for a period of six years from the date of adoption, notwithstanding any review of the County Development Plan. The Planning Authority may amend or revoke a Local Area Plan at any time. The Local Area Plan will cease to have effect in respect of the Ballyragget area where it is inconsistent with the provisions of the County Development Plan as reviewed. A Local Area Plan must be reviewed at least six years from the making of the previous Local Area Plan.

1.2 Planning Context

It is an objective of the County Development Plan, 2002, (CDP, 2002) Paragraph 7.8.2.1, to prepare Local Area Plans for particular areas, whether rural, urban or suburban as the need arises and as resources permit during the term of the Development Plan. Ballyragget is a designated centre under the CDP, 2002. It will be a policy of the Council to encourage housing development to locate in the designated towns and villages where infrastructural and social services exist or are planned to be provided.

The previous plan for Ballyragget prepared by Kilkenny County Council was the 'Draft Study and Action Plan for the Town of Ballyragget', which was published in the early 1980's.

1.3 Locational Context

Ballyragget is located in the north of the County, in the valley of the River Nore, where it flows between the Castlecomer Plateau on the east and the Slieveardagh Hills on the west. The land on which Ballyragget is situated has a fairly even gradient, sloping gently west and south to the river, and rising more steeply eastwards to the Castlecomer Plateau. West of the river the land rises gently northwestwards and westwards to outliers of the Slieveardagh Hills. The river meanders to within about 200 yards west of the town.

Ballyragget lies approximately 12 miles north of Kilkenny city. It is situated on the N77 which is a National secondary road linking Kilkenny to Durrow. A regional road, R694, linking Freshford to Castlecomer, also passes through the town.

1.4 Historical Development

Ballyragget owes its origin to the fording of the River Nore at this location. In Irish, it is known as ‘Beál átha Raghat’ – translated as the Mouth of Ragget’s ford. The Ragget after whom the town is named is Richard le Ragged, an Anglo-Norman, who is found to hold lands here as early as 1220, from which time the settlement may be said to date. Ballyragget was subsequently held by the Shortals and later by the Mountgarret Butlers.

The precise location of the medieval settlement is unclear, being possibly around the Castle, around the old parish church at Donaghmore or perhaps at Tullabarry or Kilcormick.

It is known that the town was reshaped around the Square c. 1650 and the Fair Green to the north of this may have been the site for weekly markets and annual fairs which occurred from the early 17th Century.

Although Ballyragget was a small village then, it came to fame due to the events of 10th April, 1600 when Black Tom, Earl of Ormond, Lieutenant General of Queen Elizabeth’s forces in Ireland was captured by Owny McRory O’More.

Ballyragget Castle is an impressive monument of the pre-1700 settlement. It is a late 15th Century five storey tower-house complete with bawn and fosse. A stone inscribed EM1591 commemorates Edmund, 2nd Viscount Mountgarret. The tower-house was an important stronghold for the Butler family, up until the late 18th Century. This branch of the Butler family remained Catholic throughout this period, and gave patronage to the Catholic clergy and laity alike. The prosperity of the Butlers gave security to prospective housebuilders in the town. James I constituted the town a manor in 1619 and granted the right to hold fairs. There are many fine eighteenth century houses in the town, which indicates the level of prosperity and expansionism of the town during this period.

Ballyragget appears to have prospered post 1700 and the Butlers continued to live in the Castle until the late 18th Century. This prosperity is evidenced by the fine 3-storey 18th

Century buildings at the east end of the Square and the comparatively high number of large 19th Century houses for a town of its size.

Somewhat unusually, there are no public buildings other than the Catholic Church of 1844 and this makes the historic houses, with their classical embellishments, all the more important in defining the civic spaces of the town.

The Church is a very fine example of the first period of Gothic Revival prevalent in the early 19th Centuries and the former school on the west side of the river is in the same style.

1.5 Urban Structure

Ballyragget has a distinctive, deliberate and somewhat formalised layout that is centred on two ‘squares’ – the Square and the Fair Green. The Square would have originally been laid out as a wide main street which could accommodate the town’s market – it is therefore a market square. Virtually all the approach roads to the town run into and alongside the edges of these two ‘squares’, which are not perfectly square, but slightly skewed, giving an informality to a somewhat formalised layout.

The position of the town square and the Fair Green give rise to an intervening block of land – the town’s only ‘urban block’. Except for this area, the more traditional and historic building formation is created in a frame of a single row of plots fronting onto the main approach roads, with no back streets or laneways (the exception being Chapel Avenue). Many of these plots run deep, with a significant amount of older outbuildings to the rear – access typically being provided through side passages, rather than archways.

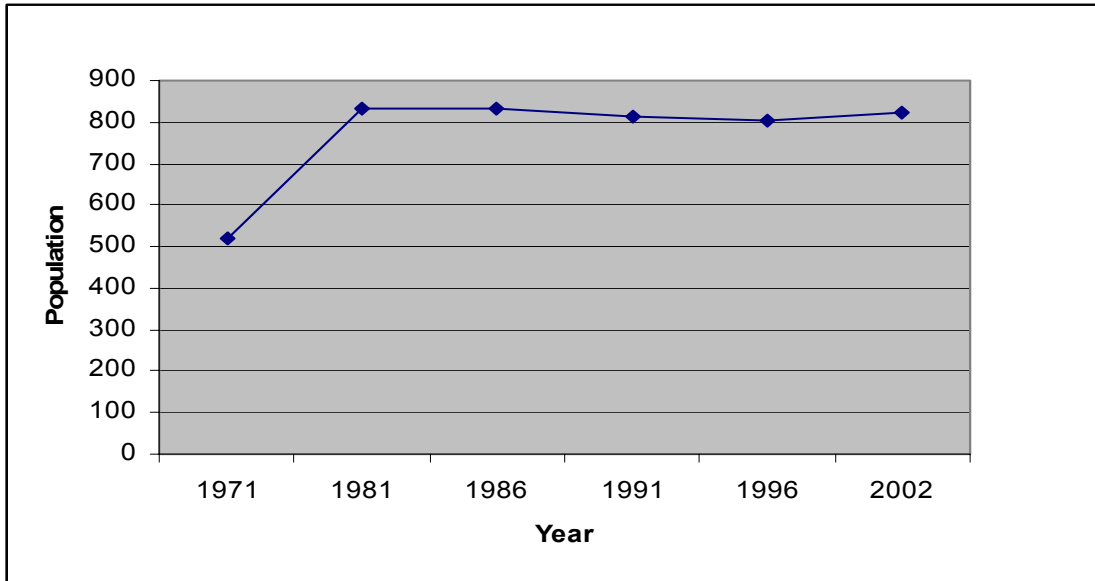
A few small housing estates have provided some in-depth development, virtually all of which focus on cul-de-sac rather than extending the existing street pattern further and opening up additional lands for more comprehensive development.

1.6 Population

Ballyragget had a population of 821 recorded at the 2002 Census. The recent trends in population are shown in Table 1 below and illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1: Population in Ballyragget between 1981 and 2002

Year	Population
1971	519
1981	834
1986	833
1991	814
1996	803
2002	821



From the graph, it can be seen that the population has decreased from the highest level of 834 in 1981 to its present level of 821. The large increase in population between 1971 and 1981 can be attributed to the Glanbia/Avonmore plant, which was established in 1968, and expanded significantly since 1972. The percentage growth in population between 1996 and 2002 was 2.2%, which is lower than the percentage increase for the county as a whole, of 6.7%.

1.7 Planning History

An examination of recent planning history in the town gives some indication of the development trend. Recent grants of permission include a residential development of 68 units and a crèche, and a development of 12 apartments and 10 shop units.

1.8 Designations

1.8.1 River Barrow and River Nore Proposed SAC (Code No. 2162)

Ballyragget is situated slightly to the east of the River Nore, which is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (NHA), and is also a candidate Special Area of Conservation, Site Code 002162, River Barrow and River Nore. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas are areas which are worthy of conservation for one or more species, communities, habitats, landforms or geological or geomorphological features, or for its diversity of natural attributes.

The site is a candidate SAC selected for a variety of habitats which occur along the length of the Rivers Barrow and Nore, although not all within the vicinity of Ballyragget. Habitats recorded include alluvial wet woodlands and petrifying springs, both priority habitats on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected as a candidate

SAC for old oak woodlands, floating river vegetation, estuary, tidal mudflats, Salicornia mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, dry heath and eutrophic tall herbs, all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Crayfish, Twaite Shad, Atlantic Salmon, Otter, *Vertigo moulinsiana* and the plant Killarney Fern.

The main threats to the site and current damaging activities include high inputs of nutrients into the river system from agricultural run-off and several sewage plants, overgrazing within the woodland areas, and invasion by non-native species, for example Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*). The water quality of the site remains vulnerable. Good quality water is necessary to maintain the populations of the Annex II animal species listed above. Good quality is dependent on controlling fertilisation of the grasslands, particularly along the Nore. It also requires that sewage be properly treated before discharge. Drainage activities in the catchment can lead to flash floods which can damage the many Annex II species present. Capital and maintenance dredging within the lower reaches of the system pose a threat to migrating fish species such as lamprey and shad. Land reclamation also poses a threat to the salt meadows and the populations of legally protected species therein.

Overall, the site is of considerable conservation significance for the occurrence of good examples of habitats and of populations of plant and animal species that are listed on Annexes I and II of the E.U. Habitats Directive respectively. Furthermore it is of high conservation value for the populations of bird species that use it. The occurrence of several Red Data Book plant species including three rare plants in the salt meadows and the population of the hard water form of the Pearl Mussel which is limited to a 10 km stretch of the Nore, add further interest to this site.

1.8.2 River Nore/Abbeyleix Woods complex (Site Code 002076)

An area to the northwest of Ballyragget is also a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), Site Code 002076, River Nore/Abbeyleix Woods complex. This pNHA stretches from Shanahoe in County Laois southwards along the River Nore to Ballyragget, County Kilkenny, and encompasses several features of great scientific importance.

Between the Abbeyleix estate and Attanagh Bridge, the River Nore contains a large population of the Irish Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera durrovensis*). This mussel is only found in the Nore river catchment and because of its rarity, it is of international importance. It is now protected under the Berne Convention.

The River Nore is also important spawning area for Twaite Shad which are listed as Vulnerable in the Irish Red Data Book published in 1993.

The margins of the River Nore contain a good diversity of habitats which are host to several plant species of interest. Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*) is possibly introduced at this site, but is a rare plant of marshes and damp meadows which is probably native in the south of Ireland and occurs near the old Durrrow Mill. Meadow Saffron (*Colchicum autumnale*), a legally protected Irish Red Data Book species (Flora Protection Order 1987), is locally common in damp meadows and on the river banks but has declined due to agricultural improvement.

The water quality of the River Nore has been affected by agricultural and some industrial pollution. The river is maintained by the local angling club who are interested in preserving its water quality but the threat from agricultural activities in this region is high. Livestock also pose a threat to the mussel beds in areas where they have open access to the river.

Despite these factors, this proposed Natural Heritage Area is of great importance for its rare fauna, flora and habitats. It contains an internationally protected species and a well documented ancient woodland which is of national importance.

1.8.3 Archaeology

Ballyragget is identified in the Urban Archaeological Survey, County Kilkenny, 1993, as having a Zone of Archaeological Potential. These zones have been identified by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Islands for general protection. Details of monuments within the zone of archaeological potential are shown on maps accompanying the Urban Archaeological Survey and these documents can be inspected at the County Council's planning office. The zone of archaeological potential is illustrated on Map 3.

The Records of Monuments and Places (RPM) of County Kilkenny identifies archaeological sites throughout the county. These recorded monuments are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The maps (i.e. the sites and Monuments record for County Kilkenny) showing the archaeological sites throughout County Kilkenny are subject to updating. The RMP is not an exhaustive list of all archaeology in existence. The RMP for County Kilkenny is available for inspection at the Planning Department in County Hall.

Several sites within Ballyragget are identified within the Record of Monuments and Places for County Kilkenny as the known or likely locations of pre-1700 activity. Besides the Castle, the likely sites of the first river crossing (KK010-139) and an early watermill (KK010-122) are plotted on the Record Maps.

1.8.4 Record of Protected Structures

Ballyragget has 14 protected structure recorded in the County Development Plan, 2002, Record of Protected Structures. As part of this plan an architectural assessment of the existing buildings in the town has been carried out, and the Record will be amended in

accordance with this assessment under a separate statutory process. The existing Record of Protected Structures is shown in Appendix 1.

1.9 National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy was published in 2003, and this has set out a strategy for the location of development in the region. This has identified Kilkenny City as a hub, and Waterford City as a gateway¹.

The Strategy also makes reference to the network of villages that has developed throughout the south east region, with the support of a traditionally prosperous agricultural base. In the context of falling farm-based employment the Strategy states that there is a need to address the development of these villages, and to enhance the attractiveness of them as residential areas and locations for other functions, such as tourism, drawn to the region by the Waterford gateway and the extensive network of larger urban centres throughout the region. Such initiatives could include local infrastructure servicing programmes either by local authorities or in partnership with the private sector, the acquisition of key sites that unlock potential for back-land development and complementary policies to encourage people to live in villages by making them more pleasant places to live.

1.10 Public Consultation

The Planning and Development Act 2000 introduced statutory Local Area Plans and a requirement that planning authorities take whatever steps they considered necessary to consult the public in preparing a Local Area Plan.

The first step undertaken in the public consultation process was the preparation of an information leaflet, which notified the public of the date and time of a consultation meeting. This leaflet also contained an explanation of the Local Area Plan process and some background information. Leaflets were distributed to local retail outlets and posted to representatives of local community groups and organisations which had been identified through the County Development Board. Statutory bodies and Government agencies were also notified and sent a leaflet. In addition, the meeting was advertised on the Council website, on local radio and in the local press.

A public consultation meeting was held on the 14th April 2003 in Ballyragget Community Hall, which was very well attended. This meeting was held in order to obtain local knowledge to assist in compiling a profile of the area, and to learn the views of the participants, which would be an input into the preparation of the Local Area plans. The entire group was divided into six smaller groups, to discuss a number of topics with the aid of a facilitator. Each group dealt with four headings from the following list:

¹ Gateway – a nationally significant centre, whose location and scale supports the achievement of the type of critical mass necessary to sustain strong levels of job growth
Hub – a town that links the capability of the gateways to other areas

Housing and Population
Infrastructure
Employment and Economy
Education and Training
Transport
Community Facilities – Recreation
Amenity Enhancement
Community Supports – Social Services

Much useful, detailed information was provided at the meeting, which was used to compile a profile of the area, and the views and recommendations raised by the participants in relation to each topic were recorded. These points have been considered in full, and have contributed to the drafting of the objectives and policies within this proposed Local Area Plan.

Following this meeting, a leaflet was drawn up outlining the issues raised and the next steps in the Local Area Plan process. This was circulated to the attendants of the meeting, and copies were also made available in local retail outlets.

Each of the headings is discussed in the next section, with the results of the public consultation being used to devise policies and objectives for Ballyragget.

2 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

A total of eight headings were discussed at the public consultation meeting. Each heading is dealt with below, in a structured format. First, the issues raised by the participants at the public consultation are outlined. Second, the existing situation, based on survey, research work and local information gathered, is discussed. These are then used to formulate policies and objectives under each heading.

2.1 Housing and Population

At the public consultation there were a number of different views expressed in relation to population growth and housing development. It was emphasised that any population growth would have to proceed in a gradual, integrated manner, with service provision.

With regard to residential layout, the importance of amenity provision in all residential developments was noted. The new development known as Glenvale was cited as a pleasant example of a housing scheme. The importance of variety in design and housetype was discussed, particularly in relation to offering a range of affordability.

2.1.1 Development Strategy

Ballyragget had a population of 821 recorded at the 2002 Census. The capacity of Ballyragget to accommodate population growth can be examined by assessing the capacity of the services available, such as infrastructural, community and educational services.

With regard to the infrastructural services, at present there is no spare capacity available in either the water supply or sewerage networks. The sewerage network is being upgraded at present and spare capacity will be available in the near future.

Ballyragget has well developed community and educational services and a large demand for housing.

The development strategy for Ballyragget will provide for the consolidation of the existing built-up area and infill development, proportionate to the existing town, which will be socially cohesive and will support appropriate service expansion. The Council will encourage the planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary. Development on any zoned land must be at sustainable densities.

Policy:	To ensure the controlled development of Ballyragget which reflects the character of the existing town in terms of structure, pattern, scale, design and materials with adequate provision of open space
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Objectives:

1. To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings
2. To ensure a high standard in design, layout, provision of open space, landscaping and variation in house type and size in new residential developments
3. To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes
4. To control development of one off houses on the fringes of the Ballyragget development area in order to maintain a clear line between the built up area and the rural countryside.
5. To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within residential areas and the town centre
6. To implement the Housing Strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002
7. To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the town to cater for its expansion over the period of the plan
8. To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at sustainable densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilised where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the town

2.1.2 Urban Form

Most of the older buildings in the town centre date from the 19th century, though some of these may reflect earlier settlement patterns, which involved façade or other alterations to buildings of an earlier origin. Typically, the buildings are of two storeys and either two or three bays wide. Notable exceptions to this occur in the group of buildings that lie on the east end of the Square, and buildings in the immediate vicinity. Notable variations in building height occur within buildings of two storeys high – the smaller ones reflecting former artisan dwellings and the larger ones in the form of finer town houses, usually provided with side entrances – this is particularly evident along the north side of Bridge street and on the south side of the Square. Their backlands reflect some attractive old stone out-buildings, some of which could be suitable for conversion.

The important inter-relationship between buildings and spaces is reflected in distinctive areas around the town, including the Fair Green, The Square, the Castle Grounds and in the vicinity of the old bridge crossing the Nore.

Objectives:

9. To ensure that infill development is contextually compatible as is outlined in Appendix 4
10. To redevelop derelict sites for social and affordable housing as the opportunity arises
11. To ensure the maintenance and protection of housing within the town centre, and to encourage continued residential use of upper floors. To encourage the building of new infill development where vacant plots exist

12. To encourage sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation use of historic structures, including old industrial buildings, whose original use has become redundant

2.1.3 Social Mix

There are currently a total of 40 social houses in Ballyragget, and a further 20 are proposed. This figure does not represent the historical proportion of social housing in Ballyragget, as a large proportion of Local Authority constructed dwellings have been sold under the Tenant Purchasing Scheme.

There is a need to encourage a greater balance in the future development of Ballyragget. In any application for multiple unit residential schemes, in addition to implementing the Housing Strategy, the Council will seek a good social mix, and will seek to accommodate the needs of first time buyers.

Objective: To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes

2.1.4 Serviced sites

It will be an objective of this Plan to provide for serviced sites on the edge of Ballyragget which can allow people to design their own homes on their own sites. This would have the potential to alleviate pressure for ribbon development and urban generated rural housing on the approaches into Ballyragget. Maximum recommended densities for this zoning would be in the range of 2 to 5 per acre, depending on the quality of design. Design guidance on this is available in Chapter 4.

Objective: To zone an area of land for the sale of serviced sites for the development of large, detached, low density dwellings

2.1.5 Integration of Residential Developments

In assessing any new development in Ballyragget, the Council may have regard to the development potential of adjoining land, and will assess any application, with a view to providing for the development of these lands in an integrated manner. This applies to any land parcel, and relates to all aspects of development, including open space provision, access arrangements and pedestrian and cycle links.

The distinction between any residential schemes should be maintained by the use of design and detailing, to give each its own distinct identity.

Objective: To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land

Objective:	To ensure the integration of adjoining residential schemes, where appropriate, in relation to pedestrian and cycleway links, public open space provision and scheme layout
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2.2 Infrastructure

For development to proceed within the town, it will be necessary for development proposals to address the effects imposed on existing water services (water supply, foul drainage and storm drainage systems).

The Council will seek to secure the upgrading of the existing water services through agreements with developers and/or landowners as appropriate.

Objective:	To secure the upgrading of all water services through agreements with developers and/or landowners as appropriate
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2.2.1 Sewerage Network

Ballyragget is served by a sewerage scheme with primary treatment, which was constructed in 1965. This plant is currently operating over its design capacity and is being upgraded, with a Design population of 1,960 Population Equivalent (PE), including spare capacity. The upgraded plant is of a modular design and can be extended relatively easily to accommodate permitted development.

Policy:	To ensure that the necessary sewerage facilities to serve the needs of all development within the town and to prevent pollution are provided
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Objective:	To maintain and improve sewerage services
Objective:	To prohibit the connection to the sewerage system of any proposed development out of phase with the overall development of the town or where the existing services are committed for other development
Objective:	To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public sewers

2.2.2 Surface Water Drainage

At the public consultation, a number of areas were identified as being problematic with regard to surface water drainage.

Significant surface water drainage improvements were carried out in 2002, but it is essential that surface water be disposed of in a satisfactory manner from new developments. It is an objective of the Council to secure the disposal of surface water associated with developments to avoid increase in the risk of flooding. This objective is to be achieved in keeping with modern good practice and having regard to the characteristics and attributes of each site.

Policy:	To seek positive surface water drainage incorporating discharge flow attenuation for all green field site developments other than those that are isolated and small in scale and unlikely to increase the risk of flooding
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This means that all storm water shall be collected in a storm water pipe network with attenuation and disposed of to a watercourse, and shall not be directed to a soakpit. It will be the responsibility of the developer to prove that the pipe network and/or watercourse into which discharge is proposed has an adequate capacity, and will not give rise to flooding off site.

Ground soakage for roof water from houses may be permitted subject to the developer establishing that site is suitable.

The onus is on the developer to establish that the receiving drainage system and/or watercourse can cater for the discharge without increased risk of flooding off site.

It is important that any development that takes place within the area defined as the SAC does not adversely impact on the SAC which includes water quality. Therefore the nature and extent of development considered within the SAC lands will be determined by its likely environmental impact. The Council will consult with the Heritage Service of the DOEHLG and other relevant bodies with regard to any proposed development within the boundaries of the SAC designation.

2.2.3 Flooding

Flooding was occasionally an issue at the River Nore, as identified at the public consultation. The development strategy for the town should be to avoid areas for development which may be subject to flooding.

2.2.4 Water supply

At the public consultation concerns were expressed with the existing water supply, with issues relating to the quality, the pressure and the levels of limescale in the water.

Ballyragget is served by the Ballyragget Water Supply Scheme. At present, water supply volumes in the scheme are inadequate to meet any further development, and any new developments will be required to provide a temporary private water supply, which will be maintained indefinitely until the public water supply is upgraded.

Although the issue of water quality was raised at the public consultation, Water Quality Analyses over the years show that water quality in the area is high. However, as outlined in the County Development Plan, 2002, there is a policy of continuous monitoring by the Council of all water sources to ensure that water quality remains high. Limescale (caused by hardness) is not a health issue and for this reason funding for treating water for hardness is not generally made available.

Policy:	To provide water in sufficient quantity and quality to serve the needs of the existing and future population, and future commercial development
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Objective:	To provide sufficient water to serve all lands zoned for development in this plan
Objective:	To continuously monitor water quality in the area to ensure the maintenance of high water quality standards
Objective:	To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public water mains

2.2.5 Waste

Issues raised at the public consultation included an expression of support for the extension of recycling facilities, and for kerbside facilities. The existing monopoly with only one waste collector serving the area was criticised, and the high cost of waste collection was blamed for an increase in dumping. A suggestion for providing a skip collection was also made.

Kilkenny County Council has adopted the South East Regional Authority Waste Management Strategy, and the policy for Kilkenny is set out in the Waste Management Plan for the period 2000-2004.

Waste collection was privatised by the Council in the 1990's and waste is now collected in Ballyragget by private contractors. European Union environmental policy dictates that the 'Polluter pays principle' be applied, which means that the full costs associated with environmentally sound recovery and disposal of waste are charged to the customer.

With regard to recycling, it is Council and regional policy that bottle banks for clear, green and brown glass and aluminium cans are provided at villages throughout the county. There is a bottle bank in Ballyragget at present, located on Chapel Avenue, where glass bottles and drinks cans can be recycled. This is considered an appropriate location for a bottle bank and improvements to the site are planned in the near future. These will comprise kerbing, installing a concrete hardstand, signage and possible landscaping.

The aim is to have one bottle bank per 1000 head of population by the end of 2005. Kerbside collections for recyclables was introduced in late 2003. These collections cover newspapers, cardboard, magazines, food cans, drink cans and plastic. Glass is still disposed of at the Bottle banks.

The South East Regional Waste Management Plan has an objective to provide a civic amenity site for a full range of household recyclables including hazardous and non-hazardous waste. This will be located in Dunmore, at the existing landfill facility.

The importance of education and awareness in the encouragement of recycling and promoting more sustainable practices is acknowledged by Kilkenny County Council, and endorsed by the appointment of an Environmental Awareness Officer in 2002. This Officer provides regular dissemination of information through group meetings, leaflets and other promotional materials, and any community can access these services. These services will continue to improve the level of environmental awareness throughout the county.

Policy:	To continue to encourage and facilitate recycling and the minimisation of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan objectives
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Objective:	To ensure Ballyragget has an adequate solid waste collection system
Objective:	To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan

2.2.6 Telecommunications

Telecommunications have become centrally important to the prospects of any local economy, and their role in the development of Ballyragget is acknowledged. At the public consultation it was noted that there is poor mobile network coverage at present.

Policy:	To ensure that the necessary telecommunications and electricity supply are available for the existing and future development of Ballyragget
Objective:	To support the provision of broadband infrastructure in Ballyragget

2.3 Employment and Economy

At the public consultation, the importance of Glanbia as an employer for the town was noted. In addition it was noted that commuting to Kilkenny plays a significant in Ballyragget's economy.

The largest employer in Ballyragget is Glanbia, employing approximately 350 people. Glanbia's main activity is the production of food ingredients, such as milk and other dairy products, but there is also an administration and Information Technology section located in Ballyragget.

Thus the employment opportunities in the town are mainly in the secondary sector, and there is only a little service sector employment in the town. Any sustainable land-use policy must provide for a balance between the provision of housing and the provision of employment opportunities. If the provision of residentially zoned land exceeds the potential for employment opportunities, this will result in a high level of commuting, which is unsustainable. The creation of employment opportunities should be matched to the growth of the town.

The Council will ensure that sufficient land is zoned to allow for the provision of a suitable employment mix.

Objective:	To encourage job/employment creation initiatives on appropriately zoned and serviced land
Objective:	To facilitate, or assist in identifying agencies which can facilitate, community-led job creation schemes
Objective:	To have all new industrial developments appropriately landscaped and screened

2.3.1 Retail

The *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* sets out Government policy in relation to shops in small towns and rural areas². The vital role that foodstores and supermarkets play in maintaining the quality and range of shopping in smaller rural town centres and assisting in the anchoring of the surrounding local economy is recognised. Planning policies should be supportive of local facilities in small towns and villages which provide an effective and valuable service to the local economy.

The facilitation of additional commercial activities to serve future development will be done through appropriate zoning in accordance with the CDP 2002 and the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2000. There will be a clear presumption in favour of centre locations for new developments, i.e. in the town centre zone.

² Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2000 *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a site within the town centre, then consideration can be given to a site on the edge of the town centre. An edge of centre location is one within easy and convenient walking distance from the town centre, and providing parking facilities that serve the centre as well as the new development, thus enabling one trip to serve several purposes.

Out of centre retail developments will not be allowed if their provision is likely to lead to a reduction in the range of local facilities in towns and villages or affect the diversity of shops or lead to the loss of general food retailing from the centre of smaller towns. Out of centre locations are clearly separate from a town centre but within the urban area, including programmed extensions to the urban area.

Policy:	To facilitate the expansion of the retail base to serve the needs of the current and future population, in accordance with the policies as laid out by the County Development Plan 2002 and the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2000
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Objective:	To encourage the upgrading and expansion of existing retail outlets and the development of new outlets in the town centre to serve local need
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2.3.2 Tourism

The many attractions of Ballyragget for tourism development were discussed at the public consultation. These include the Tower House, fishing in the River Nore, Foulksrath Castle, and the availability of accommodation such as B & B's and self catering in the vicinity. In addition the one day Jonathan Swift Festival held in the town in August was seen as a very important tourism product for the town. Similarly, the development of an internet site for the town was seen as helpful for promotion and marketing purposes.

The River Nore is perhaps the most significant natural amenity in the town. Future development should preserve the river corridor as a broad linear park for passive recreational use. This would keep the floodplain free from development, and would also benefit wildlife along the riparian corridor. This should serve as a tourism attraction in the town.

Policy:	To co-operate in the development of a tourist development strategy for the town and its hinterland in association with Kilkenny City and County Tourism, SERTA, Bord Fáilte, The local Development Association, BNS and Leader, local community groups and business interests
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Objective:	To facilitate and encourage the development of facilities catering for tourists in Ballyragget
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2.4 Education and Training

At the public consultation there was satisfaction expressed with the existing primary schools in the town. The lack of a secondary school in the town was identified as leading to a loss of identity. Training for adults locally was identified as a need.

2.4.1 Primary Education

Ballyragget is served by two primary schools, Scoil Bríde, which is a mixed school, and Scoil Ciarán, which takes boys from Scoil Bríde from 2nd class on. Scoil Bríde has 116 pupils and Scoil Ciarán has 59. There are 6 classrooms and 2 prefabs in Scoil Bríde, 3 of which are used as permanent classrooms. Scoil Ciarán has 3 classrooms and a learning support room.

Scoil Bríde has an indoor hall, and a hard surfaced court for basketball, but has no sports field.

Scoil Ciarán has a basketball court, playground and sports field, but the sports field is not large enough for matches to be played.

2.4.2 Secondary Education

There is no secondary school in Ballyragget, and the nearest one is in Castlecomer.

2.4.3 Third level Education

The nearest third level institution is located in Carlow, the Carlow Institute of Technology, and this offers a wide range of courses.

2.4.4 Adult Education

There was a need identified for adult training courses in Ballyragget. There is no focal point for adult education. Computer classes are available in the hall. Other suggestions for classes included Business Start-Up courses.

The FÁS Community Employment Scheme operating in the area at present, provides employment for 13 people and has employees involved in the home for the elderly and the Aisling Centre, in addition to general maintenance work around the town.

Objective:	To facilitate the development of educational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population
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Objective:	To co-operate with the Department of Education in the provision of an adequate number of school places to serve the needs of the town's population
Objective:	To support the continuation of the FÁS Community Employment Scheme or other equivalent/replacement scheme

2.5 Transport

2.5.1 Roads

The main road running through Ballyragget is the N77, which is the National Secondary Route linking Kilkenny and Durrow. Two regional roads also converge on Ballyragget, the R694, the Castlecomer to Freshford road, the R432, the Abbeyleix to Ballyragget road.

A preliminary line has been identified for a possible relief road for the town, and this is shown on Map 2.

2.5.2 Footpaths and Lighting

The priority areas identified for footpaths at the public consultation were the Greenview Estate, Grove Terrace and Brookfield. The priority areas for public lighting included Greenview, the Kilkenny road and on the Square. It was noted that the public lighting in Abbeyleix enhanced the village very effectively.

In general, footpath surfaces throughout the town are in good condition, although there are some exceptions. Footpath repairs in Ballyragget are to be included in Special Works for 2004. Appropriate public lighting will be required as part of any new development. Any new developments in the area should be levied to improve both footpaths and public lighting throughout the town.

One of the suggestions arising from the public consultation was for the pedestrianisation of the old bridge. This was referred to Road Design, and they have no objection to this. The pedestrianisation of the old bridge would lead to the creation of a pleasant walking route and amenity area around the River Barrow and River Nore Proposed SAC.

Policy:	To provide quality lighting and footpaths throughout the town that will secure the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike
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Objective:	To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development
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Objective:	To pedestrianise the Old Bridge to contribute to the creation of a network of pleasant walking routes around the town
Objective:	To carry out repairs to footpaths in Ballyragget under a Special Works scheme

2.5.3 Traffic calming

There were a number of issues raised in relation to traffic calming. Speeding was identified as a problem, particularly on the Kilkenny road, and this was leading to a dangerous situation at the access to the hurling pitch.

A traffic calming scheme for Ballyragget will be designed in the near future, and this will address most of the identified issues. In relation to the Kilkenny road, the speed limits have recently been extended out, and the hurling pitch access is now within the speed limit. The design details of the access to the hurling pitch will be addressed as part of the traffic calming scheme.

Objective:	To prepare a Traffic Calming Scheme for Ballyragget within the period of this Plan
Objective:	To carry out a Traffic Management Plan for the town of Ballyragget

2.5.4 Traffic at the Schools

One of the issues raised at the public consultation meeting related to traffic at the schools.

Scoil Bríde is located down a cul-de-sac off the main road, to the rear of Castle Gardens housing estate. Buses use Castle Gardens for setting down and collecting students, who then use the footpath to the school. Cars drive down to the school where there is a roundabout system for them to drop off the children. The use of Castle Gardens as a set down area for buses does appear to cause a problem for the residents. This issue should be addressed through the redevelopment proposals for Castle Gardens.

Scoil Ciarán is located to the north east of the town, on High street. There is no staff car-parking provided with the curtilage, and the staff park on the street. There is no designated bus set down area at the school.

Objective:	To provide for a safe bus set down area for Scoil Bríde in an appropriate location in conjunction with the school and in agreement with local residents
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2.5.5 Linkages within the Town

As discussed in Section 2.1.5, in assessing any new development in Ballyragget, the Council may have regard to the development potential of adjoining land. One of the elements of this integration will be the provision of pedestrian and cycle linkages between all new developments, to provide for a pleasant network of routes and walkways interlinking the town.

Objective:	To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new and existing developments
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2.5.6 Public transport

At the public consultation, satisfaction was expressed with the level of bus service to the town. The need for a bus shelter in the town was identified, possibly located on the Square.

Objective:	To co-operate with bus operators to improve the safety and comfort of the existing bus stop
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2.5.7 Parking

At the public consultation it was noted that the Super-Valu car park was insufficient to serve the shop, and some other problems were arising in the town as a result of unregulated parking.

Parking in Ballyragget is mainly provided on street, with car parking available around the Square. There is a small car park to the rear of Super-Valu. Car parking takes place on both sides of Moat street, and

Policy:	The Council will consider proposals for additional car parking on suitable sites and seek appropriate provision of adequate car parking in any new developments
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Objective:	To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments
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Objective:	To identify an appropriate site for car parking within the town centre
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Objective:	To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the town
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2.6 Community Facilities – Recreation

At the public consultation meeting, it was considered that Ballyragget was well served by recreational facilities generally.

2.6.1 Open space

The Square and the Fair Green are the two most prominent areas of open space within the town. Today, their role is predominantly that of passive amenity (i.e. visual amenity, strolling, dog walking etc.) though the perimeter planting of the Fair Green enables informal active recreation (i.e. ball playing) to occur. The Square also contains a small area of open space, which is formally landscaped and contains a pump and some benches. The Green was cited as a good resource, and much work has been done on it recently by local groups and FÁS. There was a children's playground located on the Green previously, but this was removed. There is now a need for a new children's playground here or in an alternative appropriate location.

The carrying out of amenity or maintenance works could have an adverse impact on the quality of the SAC, and therefore prior to any works being carried out it is advisable to consult with the Wildlife service.

Policy:

1. The Planning Authority will not normally permit development which would result in the loss of public or private playing fields, parks, children's play space, amenity open space or land zoned for recreational or open space purposes. An exception may be considered where all of the following requirements are demonstrably met:

- a) 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 and recreational and amenity value and accessibility of such provision.
- b) Alternative compensatory provision is made which is both accessible to and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community.
- c) The continued use, proper maintenance and enhancement of the amenity/facility can best be achieved by the redevelopment of a small part of the site that will not adversely affect its overall sporting, recreational and/or amenity value of the facility.
- d) The site is indicated for an alternative use in the development plan.

2. It is the policy of the Council to provide, maintain and manage a children's play area in Ballyragget within public open spaces or other suitable locations where it is appropriate and as finance and resources permit.

3. The Council will investigate ways of improving the quality and capacity of existing sporting and recreational facilities.

4. The Council will investigate ways of assisting in the provision of new sporting recreational and leisure facilities through initiatives in both the public and private sector

Objective:	To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population
Objective:	To ensure that all residential developments address adjoining open space to provide for their passive supervision
Objective:	To protect the banks of the River Nore and develop a river walk along it, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups
Objective:	To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment by other uses

2.6.2 Recreation

There are a number of sporting groups in the town, as identified at the public consultation. Sports available include GAA, camogie, soccer, martial arts, angling, squash and badminton. One problem identified was that the soccer club do not own their own grounds at the moment.

There are two community halls in Ballyragget, one on Bridge Street, and one on Chapel Lane. Both are extensively used, by groups such as Foróige, card clubs, and for a country market. The hall at Chapel Lane has been renovated recently, and is now used for childcare.

The soccer club have no pitch, and it is an objective of this Plan to find an appropriate location for the soccer club, possibly through its incorporation into an existing facility to allow for dual use.

Having regard to the residential development recently constructed to the east of the Kilkenny road, (Glenvale) and the additional zoning to the south of that development, it is considered appropriate that an objective for the provision of a play area should be incorporated into the recreational open space provision at this location as part of any future residential development adjoining Glenvale to the south. At a minimum, the play area should be designed to service the Glenvale housing and the housing on the additionally zoned lands. It should be designed and located in such a manner so as to be accessible to the widest possible community with at least five types of playground equipment.

Objective:	To ensure the maximisation of the Community Centre as a facility for the community
Objective:	To facilitate the provision of facilities for the soccer club
Objective:	To provide a play area within the open space provision in the land zoned for residential development adjoining the Glenvale development to the south

2.7 Amenity Enhancement

A number of issues with regard to amenity enhancement in Ballyragget emerged at the public consultation. A number of positive remarks were made in relation to the amenity value of the river and the pleasant resource provided by the Green.

Dereliction, poor upkeep and maintenance were identified as some of the most significant problems. Litter was also identified as an issue.

Policy:	To protect and enhance the amenity and built environment of Ballyragget and to provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance for both the built and natural environment of the town
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2.7.1 Conservation

Ballyragget has 14 structures listed in the County Development Plan, 2002. As part of this plan an architectural assessment of the existing buildings in the town has been carried out, and the Record will be amended in accordance with this assessment under a separate statutory process. The existing Record of Protected Structures is shown in Appendix 1.

It is an objective of the Council to preserve Protected Structures. Alterations to Protected Structures normally require planning permission and should be subject to early consultation with Kilkenny County Council's Conservation Officer. Generally, all repair and maintenance works should be carried out on a 'like for like' basis and in accordance with the Conservation Guidelines published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, 1996. In addition, the Council will assess any application for redevelopment or infill for its contribution to the streetscape. Further guidance on this is available in Chapter 4.

Objective:	To seek the conservation and protection of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures.
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2.7.2 Architectural Conservation Area

The Planning & Development Act 2000 requires a Planning Authority to include in its Development Plans the objective of preserving the character of areas of special

architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

Kilkenny County Council considers that Ballyragget is such an area of special interest and believes that the central core of the settlement as defined on Map 3 encapsulates the various phases of the history of the town in an attractive streetscape which is worthy of protection.

Therefore it is proposed to designate this part of Ballyragget as an Architectural Conservation Area, having regard to its unique character which is formed by:

- 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.
- 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.
- The contrast between the town's two principal open spaces, in terms of use, surface treatment and planting as evidenced for instance by the formal tree planting along the south side of the Square as opposed to the informal parkland setting of mature specimens at the Fair Green.
- The well-contained space and triangular shape of the Square which allows attractive oblique views of complete streetscapes from most vantage points.
- By contrast, the open nature of the Fair Green which allows long views to landmark buildings like the Church and Stephouse.

These characteristics 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".

However, it is an identity or character that is also vulnerable to change in the current economic climate because various properties and sites within the central area are under-utilised and may be considered suitable for redevelopment.

The property at the west end of the Square is perhaps the most obvious example but there could also be redevelopment opportunities at other prominent locations such as the west end and the north-west corner of Fair Green, and on the land to the south of Fair Green behind old high stone wall.

How these areas are developed in the future will influence whether the character of Ballyragget as it exists today is reinforced or conversely is steered in a new direction.

The County Council believes the central core of Ballyragget has a character which merits protection and enhancement and designation of an Architectural Conservation Area would provide a legislative framework which would help ensure that new developments on visually prominent sites are designed to complement their surroundings.

Designation of the central core as an Architectural Conservation Area would also be a recognition of the good work done by the Ballyragget Development Association to date and may open up opportunities for the funding of improvements in the future as Government policy on ACA's progresses.

2.7.2.1 Development objectives for the ACA

The purpose of proposing the Ballyragget Architectural Conservation Area is to encourage the retention and restoration of the existing buildings and streetscape in a manner which respects its special character and to consolidate that character with appropriate new developments when opportunities arise.

These aims can be achieved by adherence to the following development objectives.

Objective:	To seek the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make up the streetscape of the Conservation Area. The cycle of repair and maintenance will provide opportunities for the restoration of original features in many cases and the enhancement of the original character of the buildings will be encouraged. In this respect, new roof or wall finishes should have the same colour and texture as the original material and replacement windows should have traditional glazing patterns and should be of similar profile to the original windows when closed.
Objective:	To seek the refurbishment of derelict or vacant properties which are of historic interest or which contribute to the visual coherence of the streetscape.
Objective:	New development should be appropriate in form and use to its corner, infill or backland location. Established views to local landmarks such as the Castle and the Church should be maintained.
Objective:	New development should relate closely to the established character of the town, respecting the disciplines of established building form, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions. Further guidance in this regard is contained in Appendix 4 of this plan.

2.7.2.2 Development Control within the Proposed Architectural Conservation Area

Within an Architectural Conservation Area, development which would materially affect the character of the Conservation Area requires Planning Permission (Planning & Development Act 2000, Section 82.1).

This effectively de-exempts the Classes of Exempt Developments contained in the (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001 and in some circumstances the construction of porches or small extensions, the creation of hard standings, window replacements or the display of advertisements, may require planning permission. If development is intended within an Architectural Conservation Area which would normally be exempt development, advice should be sought from the Planning Authority as to whether the proposal would have a material impact on the character of the Area.

2.7.3 Archaeology

It is Council policy, in considering development proposals which would affect the sites as outlined in Chapter 1, to have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government concerning archaeological assessment and the monitoring of excavations during construction.

Objective:	To have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, concerning archaeological assessment and the monitoring of excavations during construction, in considering development proposals which would affect any archaeologically designated sites
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2.7.4 Dereliction

Dereliction and the maintenance of buildings is an issue in Ballyragget. The main sites identified were the Hunter's Lodge site and the old hotel at the corner to Chapel Avenue. The Garda Station was also identified as an eyesore. Guidelines for the redevelopment of sites are outlined in Chapter 4.

There was a planning application lodged in 2002 for redevelopment of the Hunter's Lodge site, and this is still pending a decision. Action is being taken on this and a notice has been served under the Derelict Sites Act. In relation to the Garda station, the Gardai are currently seeking to relocate to a more appropriate location.

Policy:	To encourage and provide for the sensitive redevelopment of derelict sites in the town
Policy:	To implement the Derelict Sites Act 1990 in order to ensure the removal of dereliction within the Plan period as resources permit

2.7.5 Litter

Litter was identified as an important issue, and there were problems identified with the bins. The streets are cleaned by Council staff twice weekly.

The Draft Litter Management Plan 2003 – 2006 has been published recently, and this sets out the Council’s policy with regard to tackling the problem of litter over the next three years. One of the objectives of this is to provide additional and improved litter bins in strategic locations and to maintain, or to make arrangements for, the maintenance of existing bins.

Objective:	To provide additional and improved litter bins in strategic locations and to maintain, or to make arrangements for, the maintenance of existing bins
Objective:	To implement the provisions of the Litter Management Plan

2.7.6 The Square

There is scope for environmental improvements in Ballyragget, such as street trees, extended pavement, the provision of street furniture/ street sculpture and/or the delineation of car parking spaces. This is particularly true on the Square. The Square is an attractive feature in the centre of the town, though its prominence is obscured by the significant area given over to paved roadway, car parking and the parking of heavy goods vehicles. A more attractive approach would see the delineated green space extended on several sides (i.e. out at least to as far as the yellow dashed margin lines of the road, and possibly further with a reduction in the main carriageway). The current paved area gives way to a somewhat random pattern of car parking which could be improved with neatly delineated spaces – this would also give definition to the fine street trees on the southern side of the square, see Sketch 1, in Appendix 4, Guidelines for Future Development.

Objective:	To examine the feasibility of redesigning the Square, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enable the central amenity area to be extended,- reduce road carriageway widths,- delineate car parking spaces and define existing trees through appropriate pavement treatment- Formalise tree planting along the perimeter of central green space- provide additional tree planting on the south sides of the street/ the Square to extend the existing line of trees westwards
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2.7.7 The Fair Green

Historically the Fair Green had an almost continuous building line around the outer edge of the street that delineates it (as is evident on the 1839 Ordnance Survey Maps). As these buildings have become old and obsolete, they have been replaced in more recent times by a variety of building forms, including single and two storey dwellings, some of which have respected the former delineated building line, while many have ignored in completely. The varying of building lines (i.e. the distance a building is set back from the street edge) and the variety of building heights (some single storey and others two) is

less satisfactory in providing a frame for the intervening space of the green. There are significant infill development opportunities on the southern side of the Green, a significant redevelopment opportunity at the Ballinakill junction (northwest corner) and new development opportunities on the west side of the Green. In the future, developments should respect the historically established building line. A minimum of two storey developments should be encouraged on all sides and consideration should be given to three and even four storeys on both the southern and western sides so as to frame the intervening space contained within the Green.

Objective: To ensure that all buildings on the south side of the Fair Green maintain the traditional building line

2.7.8 Shopfronts

There are some examples of very attractive traditional style shopfronts on the Square, for example the Medical Hall. However, minor alterations have been made to many of the facades of buildings in the town centre, which do not respect the character of the buildings, in the form of Pvc windows, doors and enlarged window openings. In order to retain the character of the town, it is important to ensure that the scale of shopfront signs and nameplates is neither out of scale with the ground floor façade area of a building nor out of character with the overall composition of the building.

Objective:	To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the town centre
Objective:	To preserve the character of the town, with control of shopfronts and advertising
Objective:	To ensure that the scale of shopfront signs and nameplates is not out of scale with the ground floor façade area of a building nor out of character with the overall composition of the building. See Appendix A.

2.7.9 Planting

Appropriate planting can be used to enhance the environment and additional planting would add to the amenity of the town, and would also add to any new developments. Further tree planting along the perimeter of the Fair Green should be encouraged so as to accentuate the space further and add to its visual amenity. Landscaping requirements for new developments are outlined in Chapter 4.

Objective:	To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees, using native species where appropriate, in any new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows
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Objective:	To encourage further tree planting along the perimeter of the Fair Green so as to accentuate the space further and add to its visual amenity
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Objective:	To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees through the town using native species where appropriate
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2.7.10 Ecology

An Ecological Survey of the Ballyragget area was carried out by an Ecologist as part of this plan process. Within the development boundary two areas of interest were identified, at the Tower House, whose walls are rich in flora, and which also has potential as a bat habitat, and at the River Nore, which is also designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation and a proposed Natural Heritage Area. The area around Eden Hall is also identified, but this is outside the development boundary.

This report is included as Appendix 2.

Objective:	To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character
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It is important that any development that takes place within the area defined as the SAC does not adversely impact on the SAC which includes water quality. Therefore the nature and extent of development considered within the SAC lands will be determined by its likely environmental impact. The Council will consult with the Heritage Service of the DOEHLG and other relevant bodies with regard to any proposed development within the boundaries of the SAC designation.

Some tree groups have also been identified as being of amenity significance and the preservation of these will be an objective of this plan.

Objective:	To retain the trees as identified in the zoning objectives map except where their removal is due to the interests of public safety and good design or the trees are in an unhealthy state
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2.8 Community Supports – Social Services

2.8.1 Services

At the public consultation, the lack of a bank, and the need for a funeral home in the town were identified as service deficits.

Ballyragget contains a variety of services, ranging from a hairdressers to Credit Union, and a few pubs. Its service base should expand to keep pace with development and to maintain its important role in the local rural area.

Objective:	To maintain and enhance the role of Ballyragget as a local market centre for its rural catchment area and as a centre to service the anticipated expansion during the period of the Plan
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2.8.1.1 Garda Síochána

Ballyragget has one resident Garda, and the Garda Barracks is located on Patrick street. The problem of vandalism was noted, and problem spots identified were the hurling field and the boys' school. These problems have been relayed to the Gardai.

2.8.1.2 Library Service

At the public consultation, the need for a permanent library service was mentioned. The Mobile Library Service serves Ballyragget regularly, and there are no plans to provide a permanent library in Ballyragget at present.

2.8.2 Youth

The public consultation identified year round facilities and activities suitable for all interests and age levels as a need in Ballyragget. This would help in combating some of the social problems identified, such as exposure to drugs and alcohol and anti-social behaviour.

There is a Foróige group active in the town.

Objective:	To support the development of youth services in co-operation with the community and with Foróige
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2.8.3 Elderly

The elderly are well catered for in Ballyragget at present. There is a nursing home, the O'Gorman Home in the centre of the town, and there is some sheltered housing provided along Chapel Lane. There is also a voluntarily run day care centre available.

Objective:	To facilitate and support the expansion of the range of facilities catering for the elderly population
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2.8.4 Healthcare

As set out in Section 7.15 of the County Development Plan 2002, it is the policy of the Council to facilitate the development by the South Eastern Health Board of a comprehensive range of health and social care services and in particular services for the

elderly including the development of community, hospital, community nursing and day care services throughout the County. There is a Health Centre in Ballyragget, on Chapel avenue, and a satisfactory health service is provided there.

Drugs were identified as a problem in the town. The Aislinn Adolescent Addiction Treatment Centre, provides treatment for people aged between 15 and 21 with drug and alcohol addictions.

Objective:	To co-operate with the SEHB in the provision of health services for the town
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2.8.5 Childcare

According to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities, “Government policy on childcare is to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community”³. Section 3.5.1. of the County Development Plan sets out the policies of Kilkenny County Council in relation to childcare provision. Kilkenny County Childcare committee which is a sub group of the Kilkenny County Development Board have also published a Childcare Strategy 2002-2006, to “inform the development and delivery of quality services for children in the County”⁴ between 2002 and 2006.

There is a private play school/ Montessori recently opened in the Canon Malone hall, but there is no full day-care service available. Permission has been granted for a crèche in the new housing scheme at Glenvale. The provision of quality childcare services will be facilitated and encouraged by the Council, in suitable locations. Regard will also be given to the Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities issued by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Policy:	To ensure the provision of an adequate range of quality childcare facilities in appropriate locations
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³ Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001, p. 3 *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Stationery Office

⁴ Kilkenny County Childcare Committee, 2002 *Childcare Development Plan 2002 - 2006*

3 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

This section of the Proposed Plan sets out specific objectives for the development of Ballyragget. Some of the objectives can be carried out directly by the County Council, but in others, for which the Council is not directly responsible, the Council will have a facilitative role.

Achievement of the objectives for which the Council is directly responsible, will, in many cases be dependent upon adequate finance being made available to the Council from the Department of the Environment and Local Government and other sources. For many of the other objectives, a co-ordinated approach will need to be taken by both the Council and local community. The Council, through its Planning and Community and Enterprise Departments, intend to facilitate and build the capacity in the community to follow these objectives through.

Where possible, specific objectives are illustrated on the map accompanying this plan. However some objectives are not site specific and therefore cannot be illustrated on the map.

3.2 The Development Boundary

The development boundary for the town has been designated taking into consideration the following factors:

- The need to provide a compact and accessible town in accordance with the principles of sustainable development
- The existing built environment and road structure
- Potential population growth and demand for housing
- The need to offer locational choice and housing mix
- Proximity to existing and potential community and commercial facilities and the need to encourage sustainable growth
- Linkages (transport) to other larger settlements
- The level of provision of existing infrastructure
- Existing planning permissions

3.3 Land Use Zoning

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. The land use zoning objectives are detailed below and are shown on the Land Use zoning and specific objectives map. 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. It is important that any development that takes place within the area defined as the SAC does not adversely impact on the SAC which includes water quality. Therefore the nature and extent of development considered within the SAC lands will be determined by its likely environmental impact. The Council will consult with the Heritage Service of the DOEHLG and other relevant bodies with regard to any proposed development within the boundaries of the SAC designation.

In the following paragraphs:

- **Permissible uses** 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.

3.3.1 Residential

Objective: To protect and improve residential amenities and to provide for new residential development appropriate to the scale and character of Ballyragget.

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 100m sq in gross area, hotel, 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 creche.

3.3.2 Low density residential

Objective: To provide for low density residential development appropriate to the scale and character of Ballyragget.

The maximum residential density to be permitted here shall be 5 dwellings to the acre.

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 not more than 100m sq in gross area, 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.

3.3.3 Town Centre

Objective: To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses and allow for the development of Ballyragget as a focus for local services, sustaining and strengthening its role as a population centre.

The purpose of this zone is to protect and enhance the centre of Ballyragget and to provide for and improve retailing, residential, commercial, office, cultural and other uses appropriate to the centre of a town. It will be an objective of the Council to encourage the development of backlands. Generally two storey buildings will be preferred.

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, retailing, retail warehousing, 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

3.3.4 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

Objective: 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.

3.3.5 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, 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.

3.3.6 Industrial/Warehousing

Objective: To provide for industrial and related uses.

Permissible Uses: Industrial premises and ancillary offices, open spaces, warehouses, car and heavy vehicle parks.

Open for Consideration: Petrol filling stations, service stations, car showrooms, advertisement structures, wholesale premises, public service installations, play school/creche.

3.3.7 Transitional Areas

While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land uses zones. In these areas, it is necessary to avoid developments, which would be detrimental to the amenities of the more environmentally sensitive zone. For instance, in zones abutting residential areas particular attention must be paid to the uses, scale and density and appearance of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals in order to protect the amenities of these residential areas.

3.4 Specific Objectives

As a result of the discussion under each of the eight headings as outlined in Section 2, certain objectives have been formulated. The objectives under each heading are set out below, in table form, in addition to the expected time frame for their realisation and the agencies responsible for their implementation.

3.4.1 Housing and Population

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support Services	Time scale
To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings	H1	Local Authority through the development control process	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure a high standard in design, layout, provision of open space, landscaping and variation in house type and size in new residential developments	H2	Developers, Landowners and Local Authority	Developers, Landowners and Local Authority through development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes	H3	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and Local Authority through	Ongoing from adoption of plan

			development control process	
To control development of one off houses on the fringes of the Ballyragget development area in order to maintain a clear line between the built up area and the rural countryside	H4	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing
To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within residential areas and the town centre	H5	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To implement the Housing Strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002	H6	Local Authority	N/A	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the town to cater for its expansion over the period of the plan	H7	Local Authority	N/A	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at sustainable densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilised where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the town	H8	Developers, Landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that infill development is contextually compatible as is outlined in Appendix 4	H9	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To redevelop derelict sites for social and affordable housing as the opportunity arises	H10	Local authority, landowners	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the maintenance and preservation of housing within the town centre, and to encourage continued residential use of upper floors. To encourage the building of new infill development where vacant plots exist	H11	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation use of historic structures, including old industrial buildings, whose original use has become redundant	H12	Local authority and developers, community organisations, Dúchas, DoEHLG	Local authority and developers, community organisations, Dúchas, DoEHLG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit	H13	Local authority and developers	Local authority, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan

To zone an area of land for the sale of serviced sites for the development of large, detached, low density dwellings	H14	Local authority	Landowners and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land	H15	Local authority	Landowners and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the integration of adjoining residential schemes, where appropriate, in relation to pedestrian and cycleway links, public open space provision and scheme layout	H16	Local authority, landowners and developers	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.2 Infrastructure

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To secure the upgrading of all water services through agreements with developers and/or landowners as appropriate	I1	Local Authority	Local Authority, landowners, developers & DoEHLG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To maintain and improve sewerage services	I2	Local Authority	Local Authority & DoEHLG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To prohibit the connection to the sewerage system of any proposed development out of phase with the overall development of the village or where the existing services are committed for other development	I3	Local authority through the development control process	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public sewers	I4	Local authority through the development control process	Local authority, developers, landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide sufficient water to serve all lands zoned for development in this plan	I5	Local authority	Local authority, DoEHLG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To continuously monitor water quality in the area to ensure the maintenance of high water quality standards	I6	Local authority	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public water mains	I7	Local authority through the development control process	Local authority, developers, landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure Ballyragget has an adequate solid waste collection system	I8	Local authority	Local authority, private waste collectors	Ongoing from adoption

				of plan
To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan	I9	Local authority, Tidy Towns, residents' associations, local community	Local authority, DoEHLG, local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the provision of broadband infrastructure in Ballyragget	I10	Local authority, Dept. of Marine, Communications and Natural Resources	Dept. of Marine, Communications and Natural Resources	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.3 Employment and Economy

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To encourage job/employment creation initiatives on appropriately zoned and serviced land	E1	Local Authority, BNS, Enterprise Ireland, CEB, IDA, Landowners, developers	Local authority, BNS, Enterprise Ireland, CEB, IDA, landowners and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To facilitate, or assist in identifying agencies which can facilitate, community-led job creation schemes	E2	Local authority, BNS, Enterprise Ireland, CEB, IDA, Landowners and developers	Local Authority, BNS, Enterprise Ireland, CEB, IDA, landowners and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To have all new industrial developments appropriately landscaped and screened	E3	Local authority in conjunction with developers	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage the upgrading and expansion of existing retail outlets and the development of new outlets in the town centre to serve local need	E4	Local authority, landowners and developers	Local authority, landowners and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To facilitate and encourage the development of facilities catering for tourists in Ballyragget	E5	Kilkenny Tourism, SERTA, Local authority, local community, developers	Kilkenny Tourism, SERTA, Local authority, local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.4 Education and Training

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To facilitate the development of educational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population	E & T 1	Local authority, school, in conjunction with Department of Education	Department of Education	Ongoing from adoption of plan

To co-operate with the Department of Education in the provision of an adequate number of school places to serve the needs of the village's population	E & T2	Local authority, school, in conjunction with the Department of Education	Department of Education	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the continuation of the FAS Community Employment Scheme or other equivalent/replacement scheme	E & T3	FAS, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	FAS, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.5 Transport

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development	T1	Local authority through development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To pedestrianise the Old Bridge to contribute to the creation of a network of pleasant walking routes around the town	T2	Local Authority, development association	Local authority	Long term
To carry out repairs to footpaths in Ballyragget under a Special Works scheme	T3	Local authority	Local authority, landowners, Tidy towns, Development Association	Medium term
To prepare a Traffic Calming scheme for Ballyragget within the period of this plan	T4	Local authority	Local authority, local community	Medium term
To carry out a Traffic Management Plan for the town of Ballyragget	T5	Local authority	Local authority, local community	Medium term
To provide for a safe bus set down area for Scoil Bride in an appropriate location in conjunction with the school and in agreement with local residents	T6	Local authority, Scoil Bride, Department of Education	Scoil Bride, local residents	Medium term
To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new and existing developments	T7	Local authority, developers through development control process	Local authority and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To co-operate with bus operators to improve the safety and comfort of the existing bus stop	T8	Local authority and bus operators	Bus operators	Medium term
To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments	T9	Local authority	Local authority, local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To identify an appropriate site for car parking within the town centre	T10	Local authority, local community, development association	Local authority, local community	Medium term
To provide disabled car parking spaces	T11	Local authority	Local authority	Ongoing

at appropriate locations throughout the town				from adoption of plan
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3.4.6 Community Facilities – Recreation

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population	R1	Local authority, landowners and Developers	Local authority and Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that all residential developments address adjoining open space to provide for their passive supervision	R2	Local authority, developers through development control process	Local authority and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To protect the banks of the River Nore and develop a river walk along it, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups	R3	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, development Associations	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, development Associations	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment by other uses	R4	Local authority, local organisations, local community	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To facilitate the provision of facilities for the soccer club	R5	Local authority, development association	Local authority, soccer club	Long term
To ensure the maximisation of the Community Centre as a facility for the community	R6	Local authority, local community	Local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide a play area within the open space provision in the land zoned for residential development adjoining the Glenvale development to the south	R7	Local authority, & developer	Local authority, developer, landowner	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.7 Amenity Enhancement

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To seek the conservation and protection of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures	A1	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners	Local authority, DoEHLG, landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make up the streetscape of the	A2	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners,	Local authority, DoEHLG, landowners,	Ongoing from adoption

Conservation Area. The cycle of repair and maintenance will provide opportunities for the restoration of original features in many cases and the enhancement of the original character of the buildings will be encouraged. In this respect, new roof or wall finishes should have the same colour and texture as the original material and replacement windows should have traditional glazing patterns and should be of similar profile to the original windows when closed.		developers	developers	of plan
To seek the refurbishment of derelict or vacant properties which are of historic interest or which contribute to the visual coherence of the streetscape	A3	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
New development should be appropriate in form and use to its corner, infill or backland location. Established views to local landmarks such as the Castle and the Church should be maintained	A4	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
New development should relate closely to the established character of the town, respecting the disciplines of established building form, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions. Further guidance in this regard is contained in Appendix 4 of this plan	A5	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, concerning archaeological assessment and the monitoring of excavations during construction, in considering development proposals which would affect any archaeologically designated sites	A6	Local authority, developers, DoEHLG	DoEHLG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide additional and improved litter bins in strategic locations and to maintain, or to make arrangements for, the maintenance of existing bins	A7	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To implement the provisions of the Litter Management Plan	A8	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To examine the feasibility of redesigning the square, to enable the	A9	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Development	Local authority, Tidy Towns,	Long term

central amenity area to be extended, reduce road carriageway widths, delineate car parking spaces and define existing trees through appropriate pavement treatment and formalise tree planting along the perimeter of central green spaces, provide additional tree planting on the south sides of the street/square to extend the existing line of trees westwards		Association	Development Association	
To ensure that all buildings on the south side of the Fair Green maintain the traditional building line	A10	Local authority, developers through the development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the town centre	A11	Local authority, service providers	Local Authority, service providers	Medium term
To preserve the character of the town, with control of shopfronts and advertising	A12	Local authority through development control process	Local authority, developers, shop owners, businesses	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that the scale of shopfront signs and nameplates is not out of scale with the ground floor façade area of a building nor out of character with the overall composition of the building	A13	Local authority through development control process	Local authority, shop owners, businesses	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees in any new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows	A14	Local authority, developers	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Associations	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage further tree planting along the perimeter of the Fair Green so as to accentuate the space further and add to its visual amenity	A15	Local authority, developers, Tidy towns, development association	Local authority, developers, Tidy Towns, Development association	Medium term
To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees through the town using native species where appropriate	A16	Local authority, developers, Tidy towns, development association	Local authority, developers, Tidy Towns, Development association	Medium term
To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character	A17	Local authority, landowners, developers	Kilkenny tourism, SERTA, An Bord Fáilte, BNS	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To retain the trees as identified in the zoning objectives map except where their removal is due to the interests of public safety and good design or the trees are in an unhealthy state	A18	Local authority, developers, landowners, Tidy Towns, Development Association	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.8 Community Supports – Social Services

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and support services	Time scale
To maintain the role of Ballyragget as a local market centre for its rural catchment area and to enhance its role as a centre to service its anticipated expansion during the period of the Plan	S1	Local authority, local retailers	Local authority, local retailers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the development of youth services in co-operation with the community and with Foróige	S2	Local authority, local community, Foróige	Local authority, local community, Foróige	Long term
To facilitate and support the expansion of the range of facilities catering for the elderly population	S3	Local authority, SEHB, developers	Local authority, SEHB	Long term
To co-operate with the SEHB in the provision of any health care services for the town	S4	Local authority, SEHB	SEHB	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.5 Implementation

The realisation of these objectives over a period of time will, it is felt, significantly benefit the town, ensuring its orderly development and improvement.

The achievement of the objectives will be dependent on the availability of finance and the inclusion of the objectives in the work programmes of the County Council and the responsible agencies. The local community, through local associations such as Residents Associations and Tidy Towns, can play a huge role in contributing to the achievement of some of the objectives above. Kilkenny County Council's policy will be to facilitate and aid local organisations in this capacity.

This is intended to be an integrated plan, and the progression of formulating objectives from issues identified in the public consultation is the first step in enabling an integrated approach to implementation. Kilkenny County intends to fully participate in an Inter-Agency Working Group and to co-operate with other development and community agencies, such as Barrow Nore Suir Development to secure the implementation of this plan.

4 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section of the Proposed Plan is to ensure a high standard of design, layout and function for all new development, to conserve what is good in the existing built and natural environment, and to protect the amenities of the town.

In general, the development standards as outlined in Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan, 2002 will be adhered to in Ballyragget with the following stipulations attached. Where there is a conflict between the County Development Plan standards and the Ballyragget Plan the latter shall take precedence.

4.2 Design Guidance Principles

The aim for new development should be to enhance the traditional character of the town streetscape. This section of the plan, combined with Appendix 4, Urban Design Guidelines on Future Development, is aimed at giving landowners, developers and their architects a clear view as to how the design of new development should be considered. It will also be used by the Planning Authority when judging planning applications in the town.

In addition to the character of the built environment, the amenities of existing properties deserve protection. A balance must be found, therefore between the protection and enhancement of an area's urban form and the protection of the amenities of existing properties. Where new developments directly back onto existing residences on the periphery of the built-up area, the use of screen planting and/or walling in combination with similarly scaled buildings will ensure that existing residences are minimally impacted by new development. New development should be designed so as not to unduly reduce the amenities of existing properties.

When designing for new building, consideration should be given to the existing building fabric, for it is the existing pattern and appearance of these buildings, related to the unique history and morphology of a place, that makes one village or town different from the next. The building fabric therefore is a reflection of the character of a place and if we permit this character to be eroded, either through dereliction, decay and/or demolition and replacement with insensitive new build, then we erode the uniqueness of the place.

Therefore, where possible, consideration should always be given to building conservation. Where conservation is not possible, as in cases where there is already a gap in the streetscape, or where a conservation architect or other specialist in the area considers a building as structurally unsound or prohibitively expensive to merit conservation, then consideration will need to be given to designing a new building. Detailed design guidance on new development is given in Appendix 4.

4.3 Design Elements in Ballyragget

Streetscape refers to the look of a particular road, regarding the arrangement and design of plots, buildings and materials, roads and footpaths, street furniture, open spaces and planting. Attractive and coherent streetscapes happen when all of these features reinforce and work with one another.

4.3.1 Building line and Boundary Treatment

In some sections of the street, the building line and building heights will be consistent and almost perfectly straight. In such cases, new infill development will be expected to conform with the established building line. Typically however, the building line will be almost continuous, but will also be continuously deflecting, with subtle twists and turns. New infill development should respect this pattern and acknowledge it in its design. When a new infill opportunity spans across two traditional plots (as a result of plot amalgamation), the new design should consider introducing a deflection. Many examples exist in Kilkenny's towns and villages where an individual building façade introduces a deflection in its building line – typically on bends within the street. New infill development should avoid disrupting established building lines, as it reduces the sense of enclosure and composition of the streetscape.

Traditionally, a set-back in building lines was reserved only for important civic buildings, such as Churches, public libraries and other institutional buildings, and occasionally important town houses.

Historically the Fair Green had an almost continuous building line around the outer edge of the street that delineates it (as is evident on the 1839 Ordnance Survey Maps). As these buildings have become old and obsolete, they have been replaced in more recent times by a variety of building forms, including single and two storey dwellings, some of which have respected the former delineated building line, while many have ignored it completely. The varying of building lines (i.e. the distance a building is set back from the street edge) and the variety of building heights (some single storey and others two) is less satisfactory in providing a frame for the intervening space of the green. There are significant infill development opportunities on the southern side of the Green, a significant redevelopment opportunity at the Ballinakill junction (northwest corner) and new development opportunities on the west side of the Green. In the future, developments should respect the historically established building line. A minimum of two storey developments should be encouraged on all sides and consideration should be given to three and even four storeys on both the southern and western sides so as to frame the intervening space contained within the Green.

4.3.2 Height and roofs

Most buildings within the centre of the town are two storey in height. Notable exceptions to this occur in the group of buildings that lie on the east end of the Square, and buildings in the immediate vicinity. Notable variations in building height occur within buildings of

two storeys – the smaller ones reflecting former artisan dwellings and the larger ones in the form of finer town houses, usually provided with side entrances – this is particularly evident along the north side of Bridge street and on the south side of the Square.

The number of storeys is not a good judge of building heights. This is a very important principle of the Irish streetscape, as reflected in Kilkenny's towns and villages. This feature and the chimneys introduce a strong rhythm in the streetscape and should be acknowledged in new designs. This diversity does not disrupt the harmony of the streetscape because of the consistency in the other elements. The variety of rooflines conveys a feeling of diversity, but unity is provided by their common domestic scale and common characteristics.

Roofs are mainly of a traditional pitch, made of slate.

4.3.3 Materials

Ballyragget displays a significant number of fine town houses, of two storey, two storey over basement and/or three storeys high. Most are designed in the Georgian style. Some have attractive Ionic columns, fanlight windows and limestone pillars to front boundary railings.

Minor alterations have been made to many of the facades of the buildings in the town centre, which do not respect the character of the buildings, in the form of pvc windows, doors and enlarged window openings.

4.3.4 Proportions

A typical street consists of a series of vertically proportioned units linked together. In Ballyragget most of the vernacular buildings have simple, symmetrical proportions.

Large developments should be subdivided into a series of bays, especially at ground floor level, to be more in keeping with the pattern of the existing street frontage. Traditionally, plots in towns and villages are relatively long and narrow, reflecting medieval burgage plots. This is reflected in the facades of buildings and their narrow widths along the street front. Development that extends over more than one historic plot should address the plot through design, with variations in façade composition that echo the historical plot pattern (See Appendix 4).

Long horizontal lines look out of place and should be avoided; a fascia which extends across several bays should be broken up by pilasters or other vertical divisions. Strong emphasis at fascia level to form a distinct divide between ground and upper storeys is an important feature of streetscapes and should be included in any new development.

4.4 New Residential Development

The aim for greenfield sites on the edge of the existing built up area should be for the extension of spaces which are in harmony with the town character, and schemes should mainly be urban in form as opposed to suburban.

Where land is being developed for housing the following will be required to be incorporated:

- *All new buildings should be in harmony with existing old buildings in terms of architectural style and should reflect the style and materials of the older character of buildings within the town.*
- *The pattern of existing forms within the area where development is to be located should be used as a stimulus for creative adaptation so that it will fit more appropriately with the overall character of the town.*
- *Careful consideration shall be given to the design of components (such as doors, windows and the height, pitch and ridges of roofs) which should have regard to those already present in the vicinity of the site. This is particularly important with regard to the redevelopment and alterations to existing buildings which should strictly reflect the original building's characteristics in proportions of windows to walls and in the design of the roof.*

New development shall seek to:

- *Reflect the local development patterns*
- *Avoid substantial repetition of one house type*
- *Respect the local characteristics and context of the site*
- *Respond to typical setting and garden forms of the town*
- *Refer to local buildings and variety of proportions and design.*
- *Refer to local distinctive details and materials*
- *Provide adequate privacy for individual houses, flats etc*
- *Provide adequate provision for car parking, open space, landscaping and planting*
- *integrate with existing development and the preservation of features on site*

4.4.1 Building Layout and Orientation

It is intended to create a coherent and environmentally comfortable public realm throughout Ballyragget. Accordingly, proposed layouts shall optimise solar orientation to both adjoining buildings and outdoor spaces. Layouts shall also have careful regard to prevailing wind direction with a view to reducing wind speeds in outdoor areas.

It is an aim to discourage the enclosure and isolation of individual housing estates and to promote the physical and social connectivity in a permeable network of streets and public spaces. Layouts shall promote this connectivity between phases of development. Large

residential areas shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity.

Long straight roads are not desirable in residential estate developments. Estate roads should incorporate gentle curves and physical traffic calming measures within the estate should be included at the planning application stage.

The provision of services and road layout of the development must have regard to 'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas', Department of the Environment and Local Government.

All new residential development should take full account of the characteristics of the natural and built environment of the site, the views and vistas to and from the site, and its surrounding areas.

Passive supervision of the Public Realm is the most consistent and effective means of preventing anti-social behaviour. All public open spaces (hard and soft landscaped) shall be overlooked by adjoining accommodations to ensure passive surveillance. Back-land spaces, rear access lanes, blind corners and long side-garden walls shall be avoided so as to minimise the risk of anti-social activity.

Layouts, which give priority to the pedestrian and cyclists, will be encouraged. This can be achieved in smaller developments through shared surfaces for pedestrians and vehicles. Well-lit pedestrian links, separate from the main carriageways should be provided within the estate. These links should be overlooked as far as possible by dwellings and right angled bends should be avoided for security reasons.

Where large residential schemes are proposed, they shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity. These shall be designed to create safety for young children, facilitate social interaction and introduce a variety into the visual environment whilst avoiding a monotonous repetitive type development. Each group of houses should have its own visual identity, variation being achieved by layout, including building lines, house design, colour and hard and soft landscaping. New development designs should avoid monotonous repetition by inclusion of subtle variation.

4.4.2 Density

There is no set maximum or minimum density recommended. A high standard of architectural design and layout will be required in residential developments. The Council will seek to ensure that new developments have an 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. It is the policy of the County Council that this high standard should not be diluted in newly constructed developments and that designs and layouts will be welcome which pay regard to the qualities and appearance of the existing area.

In determining suitable density, the character and amenities of the site and of the surrounding area will be considered along with the need for a variety of site sizes and house designs to encourage social mix and choice. In infill sites or in areas adjacent to the town centre, higher densities will be permitted subject to exceptional quality of design and finishes, proper provision for active and passive recreation and good living conditions, including privacy and adequate natural light, within each accommodation unit.

Regard should be had to ‘Residential Density – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, Department of the Environment and Local Government, September 1999. This states (Par. 3.6.2) that on serviced lands in towns or villages not served by quality public transport, increased densities would be acceptable if they contributed to the enhancement of town or village form such as by reinforcing street patterns or assisting in the re-development of backlands.

As there will be no set minimum or maximum density specified in the Plan, the emphasis will be on providing a quality housing environment based on innovation and a design led approach.

In preparing applications for housing developments, designers and developers alike are advised to consult relevant publications for guidance such as

- *Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Department of the Environment and Local Government, September 1999,
- *Essex Design guidelines for Residential and Mixed use areas* by Essex County Council and Essex Planning Officers Association, 1997.

4.4.3 Design

A variety of house types in developments of multiple housing will be encouraged with variations in house size, colour, materials, and designs.

In support of the Council’s policy of reducing social exclusion, the Council will encourage developers to have regard to the requirements of people with disabilities, the elderly, and children in the supply, design and layout of residential development.

The design of dwellings should bear a relationship to the existing fabric of the settlement of Ballyragget. Natural features or landmarks such as mature trees or vistas should help to determine the layout and orientation of the housing. The creation of ‘land marks’ within the estate, whether through retention of existing features or by the introduction of new features will be encouraged.

New development must recognise and be sympathetic to the existing town and help to renew the specific architectural traditions of the area as outlined above.

4.4.4 Ecology & Bio-diversity

Design layouts should aim to enhance and protect the biodiversity resources of the town. This can be achieved through the following:

- i. Retain and enhance existing vegetation including trees, shrubs and hedgerows, wherever possible and incorporate into the development. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, it is prohibited, with certain exemptions, to remove or cut hedgerows during the bird breeding season of March 1st to 31st August.
- ii. Networks of wildlife sites are more ecologically valuable than isolated wildlife areas. Where possible create linking corridors of habitats.
- iii. Where possible, use native species. Trees and shrubs that grow naturally in the surrounding countryside are often the best choice for the town. A list of native trees and shrubs, with planting guidelines is contained in Appendix 3.
- iv. Where possible, use plants of local provenance (i.e grown locally rather than imported)
- v. Tree and shrub species with berries are important for wintering birds
- vi. Trees and shrubs which support a high biomass of insects in summer are important for breeding birds
- vii. Where appropriate avoid the culverting of watercourses and provide new water areas.
- viii. Where possible, set aside maintenance free areas and avoid or limit the use of herbicides and pesticides

It is important that any development that takes place within the area defined as the SAC does not adversely impact on the SAC which includes water quality. Therefore the nature and extent of development considered within the SAC lands will be determined by its likely environmental impact. The Council will consult with the Heritage Service of the DOEHLG and other relevant bodies with regard to any proposed development within the boundaries of the SAC designation.

4.4.5 Car Parking

Car parking shall be carefully designed to integrate successfully into its location in terms of layout, surface treatment and screen planting. New development will normally be required by the Planning Authority to provide adequate off-street car parking facilities.

Communal car parking arrangements will also be acceptable in residential developments. For security reasons, car parking should always be overlooked by housing. There should not be an excessive amount of car parking grouped together. The visual impact of large areas of car parking can be reduced by the judicious use of screen planting, low walls and the use of textured or coloured paving for car parking bays.

4.4.6 Public Open Space

Public open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. It provides passive as well as active amenity and has important ecological and environmental aspects. In calculating the area of open space, the area of roads, grass

margins, roundabouts, footpaths, left over area, backlands, and visibility splays shall not be taken into account.

The Council will normally expect all open space provision to take account of the following principles:

- Open space should be provided in a comprehensive and linked way, designed as an integral part of the development.
- Areas should be of a demonstrated recreational or amenity value. Small dysfunctional open spaces should be avoided.
- Wherever possible, the majority of open space should be multi-functional. Areas for informal amenity and children's play should be combined.
- Areas should be easily and safely accessible from all dwellings which the space is designed to serve
- The design, location and appearance of open space areas should have regard to the amenities of nearby dwellings, for example, areas where children may play should normally be overlooked by the fronts of nearby dwellings to provide for maximum surveillance and overlooking
- Public open space areas should not be located so close to adjoining dwellings so as to cause undue noise or nuisance to existing or proposed residents
- Attractive natural features should be protected and incorporated into open space areas. Tree planting should normally form an integral part of such open space areas.

To ensure implementation of open space provision the Council will attach appropriate planning conditions to permissions, and where necessary will enter into agreements with developers. These will provide for the laying out and landscaping of open space areas in accordance with a detailed scheme to be agreed with the Council.

Reduced provisions may only be acceptable in urban locations where there are more sustainable patterns of development and maximum use can be made of urban land or redevelopment schemes where open space is already available. With relatively high densities such as flats, townhouses or apartments, good quality landscaped open space should be provided.

Open space provision for smaller residential developments and schemes catering for special needs such as accommodation for the elderly will be considered more flexibly on its merits and having regard to the requirements of likely future residents.

Developers may also be required to provide an equipped children's playground in association with open space provision where a development scheme would be greater than 800 metres from an existing easily accessible equipped children's playground.

Adequate areas of open space should be an integral part of any new residential development to meet the needs generated by that development. The overall standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population will normally be applied in assessing proposals for open

space for children's play and informal amenity. In developments which are adjacent to and provide for easy access to significant areas of existing public open space a lesser standard of provision may be acceptable. This relaxation will only be considered where the developer pays a financial contribution towards the improvement of the existing public open space so as to improve its quality and carrying capacity.

It is an objective of the Council to secure a high quality of design, layout and landscaping in all new residential developments consistent with the Residential Density Guidelines.

Integrated, pleasant, attractive and landscaped open space should form an intrinsic element of new residential development. The precise location, type and design of open space should be negotiated with developers according to the specific characteristics of the development, the sites and its context. All open spaces proposed by developers should be designed and set out by suitably qualified landscape architects or similar design professionals so as to ensure a high standard and consistency with good design and layout practice.

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. Planting schemes should include native species, where possible. A list of native tree and shrub species, and planting guidelines, is contained in Appendix 3. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and incorporated into the development.

4.4.6.1 The River Walk

The provision of an area of public open space – linear park - along the banks of the River Nore is an objective of this plan. The development control process will be utilised to secure the implementation of this objective.

This park will be an attractive feature in the town, linking some residential areas with the town centre. Safe and convenient access points should be provided to access this river walk.

It is an objective of this Plan to prepare an Amenity Scheme for this Park during the period of this Plan. The park should allow for a number of walks of varying lengths. A segregated cycle path should also be incorporated into this park. Any residential development bordering this linear park shall orient the maximum number of dwellings towards it, to allow for passive supervision.

Any residential development bordering the linear park shall be designed to interact with the open space. The use of low walls and hedging should be stipulated, as high boundary walls can create a discouraging environment and pose a security risk. Tree planting should be undertaken, to provide a pleasant leafy environment, which provides weather protection, but does not provide opportunity for concealment. In addition, only low sparse shrubs and flowers should be planted. A playground could also be provided at a

suitable location in the park. In order to protect and enhance the existing ecological value of this area, where possible, emphasis will be given to the use of measures which enhance the value of the area, including the use of native trees and shrubs in the park design.

4.4.6.2 Management plan for Public Open Space

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 Council, either through management companies or agreements with the planning authority.

4.4.7 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 bedroomed houses in order to ensure that most household activities are accommodated and at the same offers visual delight, receive some sunshine and encourage plant growth. A standard of 22 metres will normally be required between directly opposing first floor windows. However where adequate levels of privacy are provided this depth may be reduced.

The boundaries of rear gardens should generally be provided with a permanent durable barrier with a minimum height of 1.4 metres. Where rear gardens back onto public areas, excluding a public roadway, this height should be increased to 1.8 metres.

4.4.8 Integration of Residential Developments

In assessing any new development in Ballyragget, the Council may have regard to the development potential of adjoining land and will assess any application, with a view to providing for the development of these lands in an integrated manner.

This applies to any land parcel, and relates to all aspects of development including open space provision, access arrangements and pedestrian and cycle links. The distinction between residential schemes should be maintained by the use of design and detailing, to give each its own distinct identity.

4.4.9 Serviced sites

A site has been designated in the town for the development of serviced sites. Some dwellings have already been permitted on a portion of this site.

This site would provide for the development of sites for individuals seeking to build their own homes on large plots, and should provide for a range of house types and sizes. Maximum recommended densities for this zoning would be in the range of two to five to the acre, depending on the quality of design. The applicant for site development will be required to produce a house design brief in consultation with the Council which should be prepared by a qualified architect (RIAI or equivalent). The applicant for site development will also be required to seek permission for “other relevant works” which

will include works additional to roads and services – i.e. common landscaping, building platform formation etc..

For any such development, there should be a continuity of design in terms of scale, compatibility and general harmony. Applicants will also be expected to employ the services of qualified architects (RIAI or equivalent) when applying for individual houses. No house should exceed 7.5 metres in height.

4.4.10 Road and Estate Names

The naming of residential developments shall be approved by the County Council. The names of residential developments shall reflect local and Irish place names for the locality as far as possible. No development work or advertising of housing schemes shall be allowed until the name has been agreed with the Planning Authority.

4.4.11 Services

All services including electricity, public lighting cables, telephone and television cables shall be provided underground in new housing developments. Provision should be made for the unobtrusive siting of transformer stations, pumping stations and other necessary service buildings.

4.4.12 Apartments/Duplex Style

In general apartments will be required to have the following minimum floor areas

Apartment Type	Minimum Floor Area
One Bed	46 m2
Two Bed	65 m2
Three Bed	93sq.m

The internal dimensions of all rooms should be proportioned to allow for an adequate space for normal living purposes. The shape and layout of rooms should maximise the amenity of residents.

All living room, 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.

4.4.13 Access for People with Disabilities

Access requirements for physically disabled persons should be incorporated into the design of buildings and layouts of developments likely to be used by the general public and will be a material consideration of the Planning Authority in assessing applications.

Developers should have regard to the criteria set out in the following in the preparation of development proposals

- Access for the disabled – minimum design criteria, published by the National Rehabilitation Board
- Part M of the Building Regulations 1997 to 2000
- Buildings for Everyone – Access and uses for all the citizens, by the National Rehabilitation Board, 1998.

The needs of people with disabilities should be taken into account in the design and construction of footpaths and parking areas. Footpaths in private commercial and housing developments and public housing developments shall be dished at junctions. Parking areas should make provision for spaces for disabled drivers and such spaces should be located in the most convenient locations for ease of use.

Tactile indicators are becoming increasingly more common. Tactile paving surfaces can be used to convey important information to visually impaired pedestrians about their environment. The provision of tactile surfaces for the visually impaired in all developments will be encouraged.

4.5 Car parking and Loading

New development will normally be required by the Planning Authority to provide adequate off-street car parking facilities. Such facilities shall cater for the immediate and anticipated future demands of the development, and shall be located within the site or in close proximity to such development. Car parking facilities shall generally be provided behind in a manner that reduces its visual impact to a minimum such as behind the building line and the use of screening.

The dimension of car parking bays shall be a minimum of 4.8m by 2.4m.

Where parking space is proposed in front of existing premises, existing railings or boundary walls shall be retained. They should be provided with proper public lighting facilities and shall be clearly demarcated. 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. Parking bays shall be adequately delineated.

Where the developer is unable to comply with the car parking standards for the development set out in the table below, a financial contribution may be acceptable in lieu of car parking provision, which will be related to the cost of providing such facilities.

In 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

Kilkenny County Council may modify the requirements of loading and unloading facilities in any particular case where it considers it would be in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the area to do so. Parking and service spaces must be located on site so as to prevent street obstruction and should be located where

possible to the rear and side of the buildings and in such a manner to ensure minimal impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

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).

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.

Car Parking Standards for Various Land Uses

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Parking Spaces per Unit</i>
Dwelling House (Residential areas)	A minimum of 1 car space per dwelling unit 0.25 per dwelling for visitor parking
Flat or Bed-sitter	1.25 spaces per unit
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
Hotel function rooms	1 space per 10 sq. metres
Public houses, inc. hotel bar	1 car space for every 5 sq. m of bar and lounge floor area.
Shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores	5 car spaces for every 93 m ² of gross floor area.
Shops	1 car space per 10sq. metres
Restaurants, cafes	1 car space per 20 m ² gross floor area
Banks and offices	1 car space per 15m ² of gross floor area and additional space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Industry	1 car space for every 60m ² of gross industrial floor area and operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Warehousing	1 car space for every 100m ² of gross floor area and additional parking space to be determined by the Planning Authority for each individual development.
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 sq. meters of net retail floor space
Golf or Pitch and Putt courses	4 car spaces per hole.
Golf driving ranges, shooting ranges	1 space per 2m of base line/ per trap

Sports grounds and sports clubs	1 car space for every 15m ² of floor area and 6 spaces for each pitch and additional operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Hospital	1.50 spaces per bed
Clinics/Medical practices	2 spaces per consulting room

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.

In implementing the car parking standards, the Council will reserve the right to alter the requirements having regard to each particular development.

4.6 Public Utilities

The Planning Authority will require that all wires and cables for the provision of public utility services shall be ducted underground to preserve the amenity and visual character of an area, and in the interests of public safety.

4.7 Shopfronts and Advertising

The over-riding principle for the design of shopfronts and the design and placement of advertisements and signs should be restraint. Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan lays down specified standards, which will be adhered to in Ballyragget.

4.8 The Likely Significant Effects on the Environment of Implementing the Proposed Ballyragget Local Area Plan

The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a Local Area Plan shall include information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan.

4.8.1 Description of the Proposed Local Area Plan

The Local Area Plan lands comprise approximately 44 hectares (109 acres) of residential zoned land (both undeveloped and developed), and an additional area of mixed use development.

4.8.2 Identification of likely significant effects on the environment

The likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Ballyragget Local Area Plan are categorised as follows:

- Human beings (includes population, economic and social activity)
- Material assets (includes infrastructure)
- Flora and fauna
- Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Landscape

Information on each likely significant effect together with proposed mitigation measures is outlined below.

4.8.2.1 Human beings

Environmental baseline: The population of Ballyragget was recorded as 821 at the 2002 Census. The lands identified for development are all contiguous to the existing built up area of Ballyragget and are within walking distance of the Square. There is limited employment associated with the current agricultural use of much of the zoned lands.

Likely significant effects:

- Development of additional residential units
- Population increase
- Greater demand for retailing, services, leisure and community facilities and amenities
- Increased demand for transport and travel

Proposed mitigation measures:

- Objectives to ensure the provision of adequate supporting services, facilities and amenities in association with new residential development.
- Objectives for the provision of an adequate traffic management system to cater for increased traffic.
- Objectives for high quality architectural design, layout and landscape treatment of all buildings and spaces.

4.8.2.2 Material Assets

Traffic:

Environmental baseline: There are a number of roads existing in Ballyragget at present, including the N77, which is the National Secondary Route linking Kilkenny and Durrow. Two regional roads also converge on Ballyragget, the R694, the Castlecomer to Freshford road, the R432, the Abbeyleix to Ballyragget road.

Likely significant effects:

- The development of additional lands will increase the amount of local traffic

Proposed mitigation measures:

- Provision of an integrated network of walking and cycling routes
- Traffic calming – pedestrian crossings, footpath provision

Water Supply:

Environmental baseline: Ballyragget is served by the Ballyragget Water supply scheme. This scheme is at capacity.

Likely significant effects:

- Increased demand for water supply

Proposed mitigation measures:

- New water sources will be accessed and utilised to serve the area
- New developments will be required to provide a temporary private water supply, which will be maintained indefinitely until the public water supply is upgraded, or will only be permitted subject to adequate capacity in water supply being available

Foul and Surface Water Drainage:

Environmental baseline: The development of additional lands will lead to an increase in the demand for foul water and surface water drainage. Ballyragget is currently served by a primary sewerage treatment system, which is modular.

Likely significant effects:

Infrastructure will be improved through additional development

Proposed mitigation measures:

Improved foul drainage facilities to cater for new housing developments

4.8.2.3 Flora and fauna

Environmental baseline: Consultants carried out a Flora & Fauna study in order to survey and compile an inventory of the flora and fauna of the area.

Likely significant effects:

The principal effect will be the loss of habitat and biodiversity arising from developments on previously agricultural /rural lands.

Proposed mitigation measures:

- Identification of the significant areas of interest for flora and fauna.
- Objectives for the preservation of these areas through the zoning objectives of the plan.
- Much of any new development will occur on lands which are considered less important in terms of flora and fauna diversity.

4.8.2.4 Archaeology and cultural heritage

Environmental baseline:

There are a number of protected structures in the town. Consultants carried out an Urban Design Study and an Architectural Assessment of the town in order to compile a profile of the architectural character of the area.

Likely significant effects:

- Possible impact on sites of archaeological interest.
- Possible degradation of buildings of architectural interest.

Proposed mitigation measures:

- Policies and objectives to protect the archaeological heritage
- Architectural Conservation Area proposed for the area around the Square
- Archaeological assessment prior to the commencement of development, where required.
- The inclusion in the List of protected structures of the buildings of architectural and historic interest

4.8.2.5 Other possible effects

Other possible effects on the environment include those on air, water soils and climate. These are considered to be less significant in the context of the Local Area Plan than those outlined above.

4.8.3 Consideration of Alternatives: Could Development Take Place Elsewhere

The development of Ballyragget will have a significant impact as a result of the change of use of areas from agricultural and fallow use to residential, employment and social uses. It is a policy of the Council to encourage development within such designated towns and villages where the infrastructure and services exist. Development in such settlements constitutes a more efficient use of existing resources.

The development of land locally must however be seen in the context of providing for local development demands, and ensuring that realistic alternatives exist to the development of one off houses in the country side. The development of lands locally and in a centralised location is more sustainable type of development than the development of many individual houses in an uncoordinated manner.

APPENDIX 1 – PROTECTED STRUCTURES

Existing Protected Structures in Ballyragget

Protected Structure	Description	Location	Map Ref. No.	RPS No.
Tower House	Castle with rubble-stone rendered walls.		11	C5
Catholic Church	Tall, single cell with a rectangular plan. High pitched, single span roof with natural slates. An elaborate façade of limestone ashlar in an early gothic-revival style.		6	C6
Ballyragget Lodge	5-bay, 2 storey house with a deep rectangular plan and L plan wings. Hipped roof with a pair of centrally-placed stacks. Natural slates. Rough cast rendering with a limestone cornice. Sash windows with six panes each. Ionic doorcase with radial fanlight.	Beside the castle	12	C7
Houses	2 3-bay, 2 storey houses, one with inset Doric doorcase	Street to south of the square	10	C8
House	4-bay, 2 storey house with a square headed doorcase and leaded light, chamfered corner and door facing Catholic Church		9	C9
Public house – Fitzpatricks	Corner L plan 2 storey public house	On square	8	C10
House	Fine 5-bay, 2-storey house, over basement	On west end of square	4	C11
House	'Cantwells' – has Ionic pilasters on a very solid mid 18 th century house of 3-bays, 3 storeys plus another 2 bays	East end of square	7	C12
North square	Roughly rectangular green with good simple cottages		5	C13
Bridge	Long narrow bridge of 11 arches	Over the River Nore	2	C14
House	Mid 18 th Century 6-bay, 2 storey gable ended rendered house with segmental windows and a steep pitched roof		3	C15

Old National School		West end of bridge	1	C16
Eden hall		Northeast of town	13	C479

APPENDIX 2 – ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

Ecological Survey of the Area
to be Included in the
Ballyragget Local Area Plan

Prepared for
Kilkenny County Council

By:

CAAS (Environmental Services) Ltd.
6, Merrion Square,
Dublin 2
Tel. (01) 6618136 / 6621182
Fax. (01) 6769502

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1 Introduction

CAAS (Environmental Services) Ltd. have been commissioned by Kilkenny County Council to undertake a number of ecology studies for specific areas within the County, namely:

Ballyhale / Knocktopher;
Ballyragget;
The Grove, Graiguenamanagh;
Urlingford.

These reports have been prepared as base studies to inform the preparation of Local Area Plans in these areas. Based on fieldwork undertaken in July 2003 and previous knowledge of the areas concerned, they describe habitats within the environs of each of the villages and assess their ecological importance. All investigations were carried out after the breeding season for birds but at a time when most plants are recognizable. This report therefore outlines the ecological importance or interest of each area and, where appropriate, make comments on the existing or future land-use zoning of those lands.

2 Description of the Area

Ballraggett arose at a crossing point of the Nore and the river dominates the study area ecologically although the town has moved away from it. The largest areas of interest are in the valley and the entire floodplain above and below the bridge is included in the River Barrow and Nore SAC (Code No 2162). Elsewhere there are a few features of interest that should be taken account of in the future planning and development of the area.

3 Specific Areas of Interest

(See attached map)

3.1 The Nore River Floodplain

The designated area is narrow above the bridge being confined between the Durrow road on the west and rising ground on the east. Below the bridge the river swings eastward and its floodplain extends to about twice its previous width. It may be for this reason that it is generally drier and floods less often.

Above the bridge the field is wet, even in summer, and drains and old channel patterns remain in the surface. The eastern edge is marked by a ditch flowing beneath a hedge which contains an abundance of crab apple *Malus domestica*. The field vegetation is grazed by cattle and consists primarily of grasses *Glyceria fluitans*, *Phleum pratense*, *Phalaris arundinacea*, *Festuca arundinacea* and sedges *Carex disticha* and *C.hirta*. It is rich in species however, including:

Juncus articulatus

jointed rush

Filipendula ulmaria

meadowsweet

<i>Caltha palustris</i>	marsh marigold
<i>Galium palustre</i>	marsh bedstraw
<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	amphibious bistort
<i>Senecio aquaticus</i>	marsh ragwort
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	spike rush
<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	marsh pennywort
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	ragged robin
<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	creeping jenny
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	water plantain

The drain at the eastern edge adds water parsnip *Berula erecta*, purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, marsh valerian *Valeriana officinalis* and yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus* while it also contains four willow species *Salix cinerea*, *S.alba*, *S.fragilis* and a hybrid of *S.triandra* and *S.viminalis*.

The habitat is excellent for snipe - which may nest - and is used by swans and other wildfowl when flooded in winter. Sedge warbler also occur.

Below the bridge the river turns east and a small patch of alders grows on the bank with dewberry *Rubus caesius* beneath. Thereafter the floodplain is divided into a lower section with rushes *Juncus inflexus* and an upper of drier grassland. Within the rushes there is a little tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*, silverweed *Potentilla anserina*, brown sedge *Carex disticha* and creeping jenny *Lysimachia nummularia* and also a pond with forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, bog speedwell *Veronica scutellata* and marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus*. There is also a lot of broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and the vegetation would benefit from a lower grazing pressure.

The river itself is followed by a fringe of aquatic vegetation with bur reed *Sparganium erectum*, clubrush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* and reed grass *Phalaris arundinacea* prominent. Having a line of grey poplars *Populus canescens* and crack willow *Salix fragilis* and osier *S.viminalis* it offers good habitat for bats and water birds. Kingfishers, moorhen and grey wagtail were seen.

The triangle of land between the new and old bridges has little-grazed grassland with damp sections containing hairy sedge *Carex hirta* but the bank is probably the better part having alders as well as corn mint *Mentha arvensis*, water figwort *Scrophularia auriculata* and marsh ragwort *Senecio aquaticus*.

3.2 The Castle

The castle is well preserved and is surrounded by extensive walls and outbuildings, some modern. It is notable for the abundance of the naturalised Aubrieta deltoidea which covers all the old walls along with stonecrop *Sedum album* and pellitory *Parietaria judaica*. Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, barren brome *Anisantha sterilis* and rue-leaved saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites* are other plants. The wall flora is rich in fact and should be examined in spring before it dries up.

The chief value of the site is as potential bat habitat as the castle has suitable conditions for hibernation and roosting. A few lime trees occur to the south but they are dying and breaking the natural link with the riverside trees and those in the Aisling centre. Replanting of this or other species should be encouraged to maximise the habitat value of the Castle area.

3.3 Eden Hall

A tributary of the Nore flows through the town from the north-east, skirting a cornfield on the Castlecomer road. On the northern side there is an old house called Eden Hall on the 6" map which is being renovated. A small woodlot occurs in front and long, damp fields behind. The whole area is poorly drained - a ditch bordering the cornfield (now in set-aside) having meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, pond sedge *Carex acutiformis* and aspen *Populus tremula*.

The wood consists of some old beeches which have been thickened up by additional planting of this and ash. Although small it has a reasonable ground flora, containing hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, wood speedwell *Veronica montana*, wood sedge *Carex sylvatica*, lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*. Stock doves and spotted flycatcher breed there and it is likely to be used also by sparrowhawk, rook, jackdaw and some bat species. These could have a breeding roost in the house or out-buildings, many of which have roofs.

Behind the house there is a horse paddock with well-developed damp grassland based on timothy *Phleum pratense*, crested dogstail *Cynosurus cristatus*, oval sedge *Carex ovalis* and glaucous sedge *C.flacca*. It has been overgrazed but is now recovering well with such species as:

<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	autumn hawkbit
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	knapweed
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	self-heal
<i>Carex hirta</i>	hairy sedge
<i>C.otrubae</i>	fox sedge
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	red clover
<i>T.repens</i>	white clover
<i>Odontites vernus</i>	red bartsia
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	centaury
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	fleabane

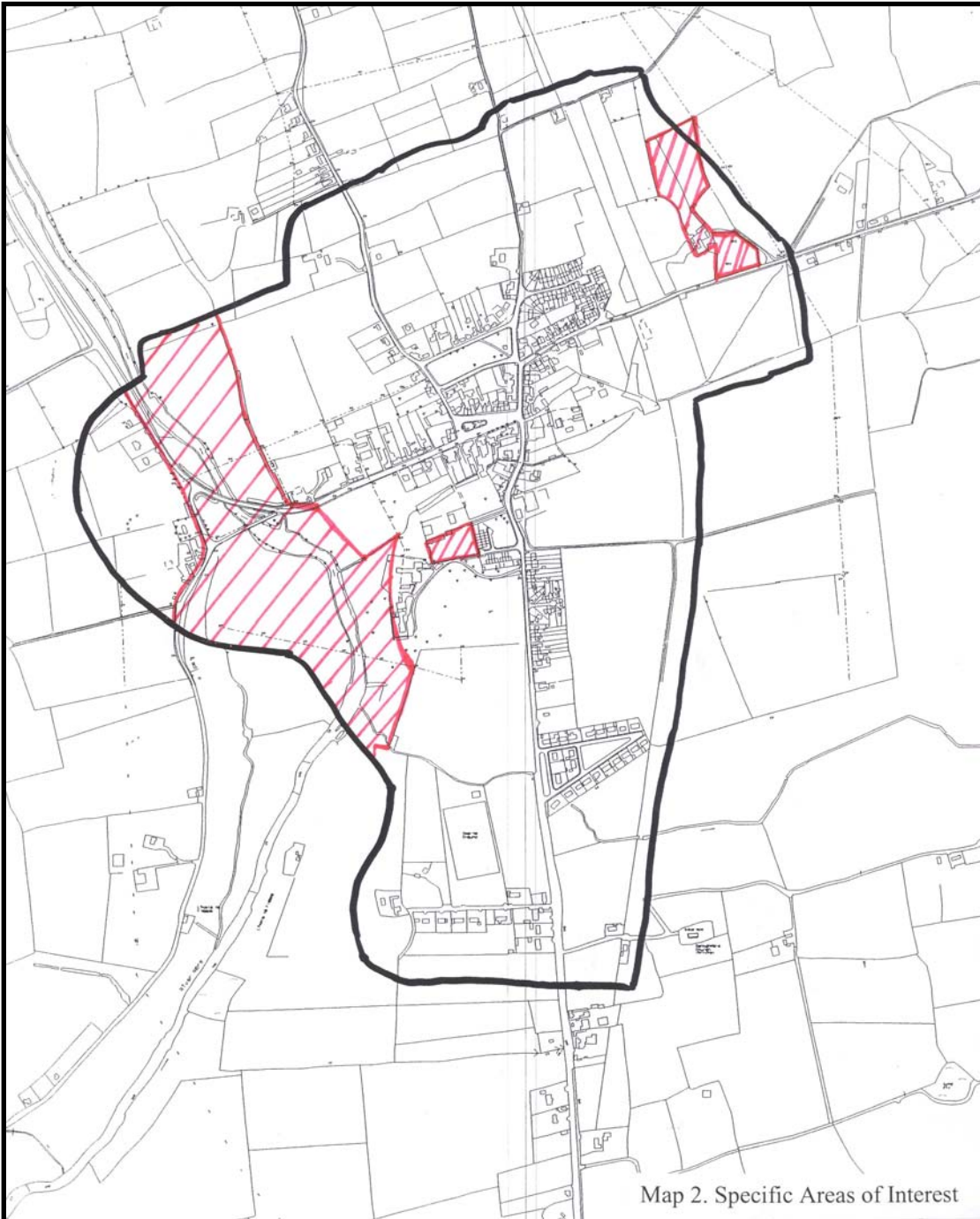
Just to the west there is some elecampane *Inula helenium* in the hedge and a major colony behind the farm buildings. This is one of the most impressive of naturalised herbs in the flora, growing to 1.5m or more. The plant has been grown in gardens for its medicinal properties since about 1000 A.D. It is not known elsewhere in the county currently though there is an old record from Goresbridge.

4 Conclusion

Two centres of biodiversity have been recognised in the area - the River Nore floodplain, especially above the bridge, and the area of small fields at the north-eastern corner around Eden Hall. The former is designated as a cSAC but the latter has no form of protection and could be modified as part of the on-going house improvement.

The buildings here have potential for a bat roost, as has Ballyragget castle, a well-preserved structure that may also hold a variety of naturalised invertebrates in its many walls and yards. Any development of the land south of and including the castle should be coupled with a proper ecological survey of it.

Map Areas of Interest in Ballyragget



SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE

SITE CODE: 002162

This site consists of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow/Nore River catchments as far upstream as the Slieve Bloom Mountains and it also includes the tidal elements and estuary as far downstream as Creadun Head in Waterford. The site passes through eight counties – Offaly, Kildare, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford and Waterford. Major towns along the edge of the site include Mountmellick, Portarlinton, Monasterevin, Stradbally, Athy, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Graiguenamanagh, New Ross, Inistioge, Thomastown, Callan, Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny and Durrow. The larger of the many tributaries include the Lerr, Fushoge, Mountain, Aughavaud, Owenass, Boherbaun and Stradbally Rivers of the Barrow and the Delour, Dinin, Erkina, Owveg, Munster, Arrigle and King’s Rivers on the Nore. Both rivers rise in the Old Red Sandstone of the Slieve Bloom Mountains before passing through a band of Carboniferous shales and sandstones. The Nore, for a large part of its course, traverses limestone plains and then Old Red Sandstone for a short stretch below Thomastown. Before joining the Barrow it runs over intrusive rocks poor in silica. The upper reaches of the Barrow also runs through limestone. The middle reaches and many of the eastern tributaries, sourced in the Blackstairs Mountains, run through Leinster Granite. The southern end, like the Nore runs over intrusive rocks poor in silica. Waterford Harbour is a deep valley excavated by glacial floodwaters when the sea level was lower than today. The coast shelves quite rapidly along much of the shore.

The site is a candidate SAC selected for alluvial wet woodlands and petrifying springs, priority habitats on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected as a candidate SAC for old oak woodlands, floating river vegetation, estuary, tidal mudflats, *Salicornia* mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, dry heath and eutrophic tall herbs, all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Crayfish, Twaite Shad, Atlantic Salmon, Otter, *Vertigo moulinsiana* and the plant Killarney Fern.

Good examples of Alluvial Forest are seen at Rathsnagadan, Murphy’s of the River, in Abbeyleix estate and along other shorter stretches of both the tidal and freshwater elements of the site. Typical species seen include Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Grey Willow (*S. cinerea*), Crack Willow (*S. fragilis*), Osier (*S. viminalis*), with Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Thin-spiked Wood-sedge (*Carex strigosa*), Pendulous Sedge (*C. pendula*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) and the Red Data Book species Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula*

trachelium). Three rare invertebrates have been recorded in this habitat at Murphy's of the River. These are: *Neoascia obliqua* (Diptera: Syrphidae), *Tetanocera freyi* (Diptera: Sciomyzidae) and *Dictya umbrarum* (Diptera: Sciomyzidae).

A good example of petrifying springs with tufa formations occurs at Dysart Wood along the Nore. This is a rare habitat in Ireland and one listed with priority status on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. These hard water springs are characterised by lime encrustations, often associated with small waterfalls. A rich bryophyte flora is typical of the habitat and two diagnostic species, *Cratoneuron commutatum* var. *commutatum* and *Eucladium verticillatum*, have been recorded.

The best examples of old Oak woodlands are seen in the ancient Park Hill woodland in the estate at Abbeyleix; at Kyleadohir, on the Delour, Forest Wood House, Kylecorragh and Brownstown Woods on the Nore; and at Cloghristic Wood, Drummond Wood and Borris Demesne on the Barrow, though other patches occur throughout the site. Abbeyleix Woods is a large tract of mixed deciduous woodland which is one of the only remaining true ancient woodlands in Ireland. Historical records show that Park Hill has been continuously wooded since the sixteenth century and has the most complete written record of any woodland in the country. It supports a variety of woodland habitats and an exceptional diversity of species including 22 native trees, 44 bryophytes and 92 lichens. It also contains eight indicator species of ancient woodlands. Park Hill is also the site of two rare plants, Nettle-leaved Bellflower and the moss *Leucodon sciuroides*. It has a typical bird fauna including Jay, Long-eared Owl and Raven. A rare invertebrate, *Mitostoma chrysomelas*, occurs in Abbeyleix and only two other sites in the country. Two flies *Chrysogaster virescens* and *Hybomitra muhlfeldi* also occur. The rare Myxomycete fungus, *Licea minima* has been recorded from woodland at Abbeyleix.

Oak woodland covers parts of the valley side south of Woodstock and is well developed at Brownsford where the Nore takes several sharp bends. The steep valley side is covered by Oak (*Quercus* spp.), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Birch (*Betula pubescens*) with some Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). All the trees are regenerating through a cover of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) Wood Rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*).

On the steeply sloping banks of the River Nore about 5 km west of New Ross, in County Kilkenny, Kylecorragh Woods form a prominent feature in the landscape. This is an excellent example of a relatively undisturbed, relict Oak woodland with a very good tree canopy. The wood is quite damp and there is a rich and varied ground flora. At Brownstown a small, mature Oak-dominant woodland occurs on a steep slope. There is younger woodland to the north and east of it. Regeneration throughout is evident. The understorey is similar to the woods at Brownsford. The ground flora of this woodland is developed on acidic, brown earth type soil and comprises a thick carpet of Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum* spp.) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*).

Borris Demesne contains a very good example of a semi-natural broad-leaved woodland in very good condition. There is quite a high degree of natural re-generation of Oak and Ash through the woodland. At the northern end of the estate Oak species predominate. Drummond Wood, also on the Barrow, consists of three blocks of deciduous woods situated on steep slopes above the river. The deciduous trees are mostly Oak species. The woods have a well established understorey of Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and the herb layer is varied, with Brambles abundant. Whitebeam (*Sorbus devoniensis*) has also been recorded.

Eutrophic tall herb vegetation occurs in association with the various areas of alluvial forest and elsewhere where the flood-plain of the river is intact. Characteristic species of the habitat include Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*). Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), an introduced and invasive species, is abundant in places.

Floating River Vegetation is well represented in the Barrow and in the many tributaries of the site. In the Barrow the species found include Water Starworts (*Callitriche* spp.), Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), Milfoil (*Myriophyllum* spp.), *Potamogeton x nitens*, Broad-leaved Pondweed (*P. natans*), Fennel Pondweed (*P. pectinatus*), Perfoliated Pondweed (*P. perfoliatus*) and Crowfoots (*Ranunculus* spp.). The water quality of the Barrow has improved since the vegetation survey was carried out (EPA, 1996).

Dry Heath at the site occurs in pockets along the steep valley sides of the rivers especially in the Barrow Valley and along the Barrow tributaries where they occur in the foothills of the Blackstairs Mountains. The dry heath vegetation along the slopes of the river bank consists of Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) species with patches of acidic grassland vegetation. Additional typical species include Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and Bent Grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*). On the steep slopes above New Ross the Red Data Book species Greater Broomrape (*Orobanche rapum-genistae*) has been recorded. Where rocky outcrops are shown on the maps Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and Wood Rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) are present. At Ballyhack a small area of dry heath is interspersed with patches of lowland dry grassland. These support a number of Clover species including the legally protected Clustered Clover (*Trifolium glomeratum*) - a species known from only one other site in Ireland. This grassland community is especially well developed on the west side of the mud-capped walls by the road. On the east of the cliffs a group of rock-dwelling species occur, i.e. English Stonecrop (*Sedum anglicum*), Sheep's-bit (*Jasione montana*) and Wild Madder (*Rubia peregrina*). These rocks also support good lichen and moss assemblages with *Ramalina subfarinacea* and *Hedwigia ciliata*.

Dry Heath at the site generally grades into wet woodland or wet swamp vegetation lower down the slopes on the river bank. Close to the Blackstairs Mountains, in the foothills associated with the Aughnabrisky, Aughavaud and Mountain Rivers there are small

patches of wet heath dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*).

Saltmeadows occur at the southern section of the site in old meadows where the embankment has been breached, along the tidal stretches of in-flowing rivers below Stokestown House, in a narrow band on the channel side of Common Reed (*Phragmites*) beds and in narrow fragmented strips along the open shoreline. In the larger areas of salt meadow, notably at Carrickcloney, Ballinlaw Ferry and Rochestown on the west bank; Fisherstown, Alderton and Great Island to Dunbrody on the east bank, the Atlantic and Mediterranean sub types are generally intermixed. At the upper edge of the salt meadow in the narrow ecotonal areas bordering the grasslands where there is significant percolation of salt water, the legally protected species Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*) and Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) (Flora Protection Order, 1987) are found. The very rare Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) is also found. Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*) is also present. Other plants recorded and associated with salt meadows include Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Sea Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Sea Couch (*Elymus pycnanthus*), Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) and Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*).

Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand are found in the creeks of the saltmarshes and at the seaward edges of them. The habitat also occurs in small amounts on some stretches of the shore free of stones.

The estuary and the other Habitats Directive Annex I habitats within it form a large component of the site. Extensive areas of intertidal flats, comprised of substrates ranging from fine, silty mud to coarse sand with pebbles/stones are present. Good quality intertidal sand and mudflats have developed on a linear shelf on the western side of Waterford Harbour, extending for over 6 km from north to south between Passage East and Creadaun Head, and in places are over 1 km wide. The sediments are mostly firm sands, though grade into muddy sands towards the upper shore. They have a typical macro-invertebrate fauna, characterised by polychaetes and bivalves. Common species include *Arenicola marina*, *Nephtys hombergii*, *Scoloplos armiger*, *Lanice conchilega* and *Cerastoderma edule*.

The western shore of the harbour is generally stony and backed by low cliffs of glacial drift. At Woodstown there is a sandy beach, now much influenced by recreation pressure and erosion. Behind it a lagoonal marsh has been impounded which runs westwards from Gaultiere Lodge along the course of a slow stream. An extensive reedbed occurs here. At the edges is a tall fen dominated by sedges (*Carex* spp.), Meadowsweet, Willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.) and rushes (*Juncus* spp.). Wet woodland also occurs. This area supports populations of typical waterbirds including Mallard, Snipe, Sedge Warbler and Water Rail.

The dunes which fringe the strand at Duncannon are dominated by Marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) towards the sea. Other species present include Wild Sage (*Salvia verbenaca*), a rare Red Data Book species. The rocks around Duncannon ford have a rich flora of seaweeds typical of a moderately exposed shore and the cliffs themselves support a number of coastal species on ledges, including Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*).

Other habitats which occur throughout the site include wet grassland, marsh, reed swamp, improved grassland, arable land, quarries, coniferous plantations, deciduous woodland, scrub and ponds.

Seventeen Red Data Book plant species have been recorded within the site, most in the recent past. These are Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*), Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*), Clustered Clover (*Trifolium glomeratum*), Basil Thyme (*Acinos arvensis*), Hemp nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*), Borrer's Saltmarsh Grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*), Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*), Wild Sage (*Salvia verbenaca*), Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*), Saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*), Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*), Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*), Fly Orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*), Broomrape (*Orobanche hederæ*) and Greater Broomrape (*Orobanche rapum-genistæ*). Of these the first nine are protected under the Flora Protection Order 1999. Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) was thought to be extinct but has been found in a few locations in the site since 1990. In addition plants which do not have a very wide distribution in the country are found in the site including Thin-spiked Wood-sedge (*Carex strigosa*), Field Garlic (*Allium oleraceum*) and Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*). Six rare lichens, indicators of ancient woodland, are found including *Lobaria laetevirens* and *L. pulmonaria*. The rare moss *Leucodon sciuroides* also occurs.

The site is very important for the presence of a number of EU Habitats Directive Annex II animal species including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera* and *M. m. durrovensis*), Freshwater Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), Salmon (*Salmo salar*), Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax*), three Lamprey species - Sea (*Petromyzon marinus*), Brook (*Lampetra planeri*) and River (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), the marsh snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* and Otter (*Lutra lutra*). This is the only site in the world for the hard water form of the Pearl Mussel *M. m. durrovensis* and one of only a handful of spawning grounds in the country for Twaite Shad. The freshwater stretches of the River Nore main channel is a designated salmonid river. The Barrow/Nore is mainly a grilse fishery though spring salmon fishing is good in the vicinity of Thomastown and Inistioge on the Nore. The upper stretches of the Barrow and Nore, particularly the Owenass River, are very important for spawning.

The site supports many other important animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*), Badger (*Meles meles*), Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*) and Frog (*Rana temporaria*). The rare Red Data Book fish species Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) occurs in estuarine stretches of the

site. In addition to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, the site also supports two other freshwater Mussel species, *Anodonta anatina* and *A. cygnea*.

The site is of ornithological importance for a number of E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species including Greenland White-fronted Goose, Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan, Bar-tailed Godwit, Peregrine and Kingfisher. Nationally important numbers of Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are found during the winter. Wintering flocks of migratory birds are seen in Shanahoe Marsh and the Curragh and Goul Marsh, both in Co. Laois and also along the Barrow Estuary in Waterford Harbour. There is also an extensive autumnal roosting site in the reedbeds of the Barrow Estuary used by Swallows before they leave the country.

Landuse at the site consists mainly of agricultural activities – many intensive, principally grazing and silage production. Slurry is spread over much of this area. Arable crops are also grown. The spreading of slurry and fertiliser poses a threat to the water quality of the salmonid river and to the populations of Habitats Directive Annex II animal species within the site. Many of the woodlands along the rivers belong to old estates and support many non-native species. Little active woodland management occurs. Fishing is a main tourist attraction along stretches of the main rivers and their tributaries and there are a number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. Both commercial and leisure fishing takes place on the rivers. There is net fishing in the estuary and a mussel bed also. Other recreational activities such as boating, golfing and walking, particularly along the Barrow towpath are also popular. There is a golf course on the banks of the Nore at Mount Juliet and GAA pitches on the banks at Inistioge and Thomastown. There are active and disused sand and gravel pits throughout the site. Several industrial developments, which discharge into the river, border the site. New Ross is an important shipping port. Shipping to and from Waterford and Belview ports also passes through the estuary.

The main threats to the site and current damaging activities include high inputs of nutrients into the river system from agricultural run-off and several sewage plants, overgrazing within the woodland areas, and invasion by non-native species, for example Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*). The water quality of the site remains vulnerable. Good quality water is necessary to maintain the populations of the Annex II animal species listed above. Good quality is dependent on controlling fertilisation of the grasslands, particularly along the Nore. It also requires that sewage be properly treated before discharge. Drainage activities in the catchment can lead to flash floods which can damage the many Annex II species present. Capital and maintenance dredging within the lower reaches of the system pose a threat to migrating fish species such as lamprey and shad. Land reclamation also poses a threat to the salt meadows and the populations of legally protected species therein.

Overall, the site is of considerable conservation significance for the occurrence of good examples of habitats and of populations of plant and animal species that are listed on Annexes I and II of the E.U. Habitats Directive respectively. Furthermore it is of high conservation value for the populations of bird species that use it. The occurrence of

several Red Data Book plant species including three rare plants in the salt meadows and the population of the hard water form of the Pearl Mussel which is limited to a 10 km stretch of the Nore, add further interest to this site.

16.1.03

APPENDIX 3 – LIST OF NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS

Choosing the right species of tree and shrub is very important in urban areas where there are restrictions on space. Where possible, always use native species. Below is a list of the trees and shrubs native to Ireland, and advice on the locations to which they are suited.

Common name	Latin name	Height (max)	Suitable for public open spaces	Suitable for streets and confined spaces	Suitable for tubs, containers, raised beds etc.	Guide to planting: see key below
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	22m	Yes	No	Yes	ADPS
Alder buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>	6m	Yes	No	Yes	D
Arbutus (strawberry tree)	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	8m	Yes	No	Yes	Not frost hardy
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	28m	Yes	No	No	ADIPS
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>	24m	Yes	No	No	DPSV Not close to buildings or any services
Bird cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>	14m	Yes	Yes	Yes	P
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	2m	No	No	No	C/H note: tends to be invasive
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes	*
Burnet rose	<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes, but vigorous	C/H
Common (or European) gorse	<i>Ulex europeaus</i>	2.5m	Yes	No	In a rural setting	HV
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	AHIP
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes. Vigorous	C/H
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	6m	In hedge	No	No	V
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	4.5m	Yes	No	No	DH
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHIPS

Common	Latin name	Height	Suit-	Suitable	Suitable for	Guide to
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name		(max)	able for public open spaces	for streets and confined spaces	tubs, containers, raised beds etc.	planting: see key below
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	AHS
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHPS
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	climber	Yes	On walls	No	C
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	climber	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	S
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	3m	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Purging buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	4.5m	No	No	No	AHPV
Rowan or mountain ash	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADHIP
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	24m	Yes	No	No	AI
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Sloe, blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	3m	Yes	No	No	AHPV
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	7.5m	Yes	No	No	H
Western (or mountain) gorse	<i>Ulex gallii</i>	1.5m	Yes	No	Yes	*
Whitebeam spp.	<i>Sorbus aria/S. anglica/S. devoniensis /S.hibernica/S. latifolia/S. rupicola</i>	12m	Yes	Yes	Yes	IPS
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHI
Willow spp.	<i>Salix spp.</i>	6m	Some	No	No	V suitable buildings or services
Wych elm	<i>Ulmus glabr</i>	30m	Yes		No	PS
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	14m	Yes	No	Yes	AIPS

- A – Grows in a wide variety of soils
- C – Climber
- H – Suitable for hedging
- I – Suitable as an individual tree
- D – Tolerates or prefers damp conditions
- P – Tolerates smoke or pollution
- S – Tolerates shade
- V – Invasive
- * - Tolerates dry conditions

APPENDIX 4– URBAN DESIGN STUDY

and

Urban Design Guidelines for Future Development

Prepared for
Kilkenny County Council

By

National Building Agency
'Hatherton'
Richmond Avenue South
Milltown
Dublin 6
Tel. 01 497 9654
Fax. 01 497 2540
Web. www.nba.ie
E-mail. info@nba.ie

NATIONAL
BUILDING
AGENCY

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