

Castlecomer Draft Local Area Plan

2008 - 2014

Castlecomer Draft Local Area Plan

Kilkenny County Council

July 2008

Castlecomer Local Area Plan

Castlecomer Draft Local Area Plan

Project No: 141061
June 2008

8 Windsor Place
Dublin 2
Ireland
Telephone: 01 669 0820
Fax: 01 669 0827
Email : Info@cbuchanan.ie

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Aislinn O'Brien

Alice

Charles

Status: Status

Issue no: 0

Date: 8th July 2008

document1

(C) Copyright Colin Buchanan and Partners Limited. All rights reserved.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Colin Buchanan and Partners Limited, no other party may copy, reproduce, distribute, make use of, or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Colin Buchanan and Partners Limited for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.

Opinions and information provided in this report are on the basis of Colin Buchanan and Partners Limited using due skill, care and diligence in the preparation of the same and no explicit warranty is provided as to their accuracy. It should be noted and is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to Colin Buchanan and Partners Limited has been made

Contents	<i>Page</i>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 What is a Local Area Plan?	1
1.3 Legal Status	1
1.4 Plan Implementation	2
1.5 Monitoring & Review	2
1.6 The Local Area Plan Preparation Process	2
1.7 Stakeholder consultation & Summary of issues raised	3
2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT	4
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 National Spatial Strategy	4
2.3 Draft Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Feb, 2008)	5
2.4 Retail Planning Guidelines	6
2.5 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Southeast Regional Authority	6
2.6 County Development Plan 2008 – 2014	7
3. GENERAL CONTEXT	10
3.1 Location	10
3.2 Historic Development	10
3.3 Urban Structure and Connectivity	11
3.4 Population Profile	11
3.5 Socio Economic Profile	11
3.6 Transport and Access	12
3.7 Topography and Geomorphology	13
3.8 Water Supply and Wastewater treatment	14
3.9 Drinking Water Quality	14
3.10 Economy and Employment	14
3.11 Flooding	15
3.12 Retail	16
3.13 Open space and amenity	19
3.14 Historic Environment	25
3.15 National Monuments and Record of Monuments and Places	25
3.16 The Record of Protected Structures	28
3.17 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage	29
3.18 Architectural Conservation Areas	30
3.19 Community facilities	30
4. DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY	32
4.1 General	32
4.2 Population Trends and Projections	32
4.3 Key Issues, Spatial Vision and Plan Objectives	33
4.4 Summary of SWOT analysis	34
4.5 Strategic vision	35
4.6 Development Strategy	35

4.7	Zoning Map	39
5.	PLAN POLICIES AND CONTROLS	40
5.1	Town Centre and Retail	40
5.2	Town Centre Improvements	40
5.3	Retail Strategy	40
5.4	New Retail Development	41
5.5	Quantity of New Retail Floorspace	42
5.6	Residential Development	42
5.7	Transport and Connectivity	43
5.8	Walking and Cycling	44
5.9	Employment and Industry	44
5.10	Flood risk	45
5.11	Infrastructure	45
5.12	Open Space Requirements	45
5.13	Architectural Conservation Areas	50
5.14	Play Space	53
5.15	Community Facilities	55
5.16	Educational Requirements	55
5.17	Childcare facilities	56
6.	URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN DESCRIPTION	60
6.1	Masterplan Description	60
7.	SITE DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS	64
7.1	Area 1: Riverside Quarter - Mixed Use Development	64
7.2	Area 2: Ardra Quarter - Residential Development site	66
7.3	Area 3: Barrack & Parish Lands - Residential development	68
7.4	Area 4: Glanbia Site – Mixed Use Development	70
7.5	Area 5: Kilkenny Road Employment area	72
7.6	Area 6: Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area	73
8.	IMPLEMENTATION	75
9.	MOVEMENT STRATEGY	78
	APPENDIX 1 OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT	80
	APPENDIX 2: EXISTING LAND USE SURVEY	83

Tables	Page
Table 4.1: Population Trends	33
Table 5.1: Open Space Requirements for Class II – Local Parks	47

Table 5.3: Land Use Zoning Objectives	57
Table 9.1: Open Space 1	80
Table 9.2: Open Space 2	81
Table 9.3 Open Space 3	82

Figures	<i>Page</i>
Figure 2.1: National Spatial Strategy	4
Figure 3.1: CDP Development Strategy	10
Figure 4.1: Castlecomer Draft Local Area Plan: Land use Zoning Map	39
Figure 6.1: Castlecomer Masterplan	62
Figure 8.1: Key Development Areas	77
Figure 9.1: Castlecomer Movement Strategy	79

1. Introduction

1.1.1 Castlecomer is situated 12 miles north of Kilkenny city in North-East County Kilkenny and is the third largest town in the County. The town is an important market and service centre for the agricultural hinterland, which is one of the most densely populated rural areas in the Country. Transport connections to the town are provided by the N78, a national secondary route that links the town with Kilkenny City, Athy and Dublin, the R694 route which links Castlecomer with Ballyragget and the R426 route links it with Abbeyleix. Castlecomer has been designated as a town by the 2006 Census of population.

1.2 What is a Local Area Plan?

1.2.1 The Castlecomer Local Area Plan 2008-2014 provides the written statement and accompanying maps that will manage the development and growth of Castlecomer over the six year plan period.

1.2.2 The Castlecomer Local Area Plan 2008-2014 (the Plan) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as Amended 2002 and 2006) and sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

1.2.3 The Plan will comprise the statutory land use plan for the town in the promotion and regulation of development and therefore provides a clear vision for Castlecomer, reflecting the needs of the existing and future population. It will provide for the development of Castlecomer by setting out zoning and other objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town, considering the needs of the town, and informing and coordinating decisions on planning applications. The Plan plays a key role in translating overarching County Development Plan policies and objectives at the local level.

1.2.4 Colin Buchanan & Partners have also, on behalf on the Kilkenny County Council, produced an Environmental Report in compliance with the European Union SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and related government guidelines¹ which accompanies this Draft LAP. The central purpose of this report is to provide information on any existing environmental problems in the town, to set out the likely significant effects of the plan on the environment and possible mitigation measures with a view to improving the environmental performance of the LAP.

1.3 Legal Status

1.3.1 The Plan is a legal document that replaces the Castlecomer Local Area Plan 2002 -2008. The Castlecomer Local Area Plan 2008-2014 is a separate statutory planning document from that of the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2008 - 2014. The areas adjoining the town boundary are governed by the policies of the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2008-2014, whilst the Castlecomer Local Area Plan governs any development within the town's administrative boundary.

1.3.2 The Plan covers the period from 2008 to 2014 and will be valid for a period of 6 years from the date of its adoption by Kilkenny County Council subject to any reviews, variations and alterations made in the future.

¹ *'Implementation of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment' Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2004)*

1.3.3 This Plan should be read in conjunction with relevant policies and objectives of the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2008 – 2014.

1.4 Plan Implementation

1.4.1 The Council will seek to implement the aims, policies and objectives of the plan in a proactive manner. The Council will engage with all relevant stakeholders, both statutory and non-statutory agencies and organisations through the development control process. The Plan is the main instrument for regulation and control of development. The Council is required to assess development proposals in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in the Plan.

1.5 Monitoring & Review

1.5.1 The Plan cannot foresee all events that may arise over the lifetime of the Plan, thus it is imperative that the Council regularly monitor the Plan and vary or amend the Plan if deemed appropriate.

1.6 The Local Area Plan Preparation Process

1.6.1 The pre draft stage comprised of collating baseline information, the preparation and publication of an Issues Paper, stakeholder consultation, a public consultation event and pre draft submissions which were invited from 17th Dec 07 – 7th February 08. The preparation of the Draft Plan including policies and objectives resulted from extensive research, site survey work and consideration of issues arising from the public and stakeholder consultation. The Draft Plan was then presented to the Castlecomer Area Elected Members prior to public display.

1.6.2 The Draft Plan will be on Public Display for a period of 6 weeks from **11th July until 22nd August 2008** during which submissions or observations will be invited from the public. No later than 12 weeks after the Draft Plan has been put on public display a Managers Report on the submissions or observations received will be produced. This report will list the persons who made submissions or observations, summarise the issues raised and will be presented to elected members. Elected Members will then vote to make or amend the plan according to the recommendations within the Managers report. If required, amendments will be made to the content of the Plan and it will be presented as an amended Draft to the Elected Members for their approval and put on public display for a period of 4 weeks during which time submissions or observations will be invited from the public on the amendments to Draft Plan.

1.6.3 Adoption of the Plan is the final stage of the plan process and will include the preparation and presentation of a Manager's report on observations so that they may vote to make or amend the Plan.

STAGES IN PREPARATION OF A LOCAL AREA PLAN

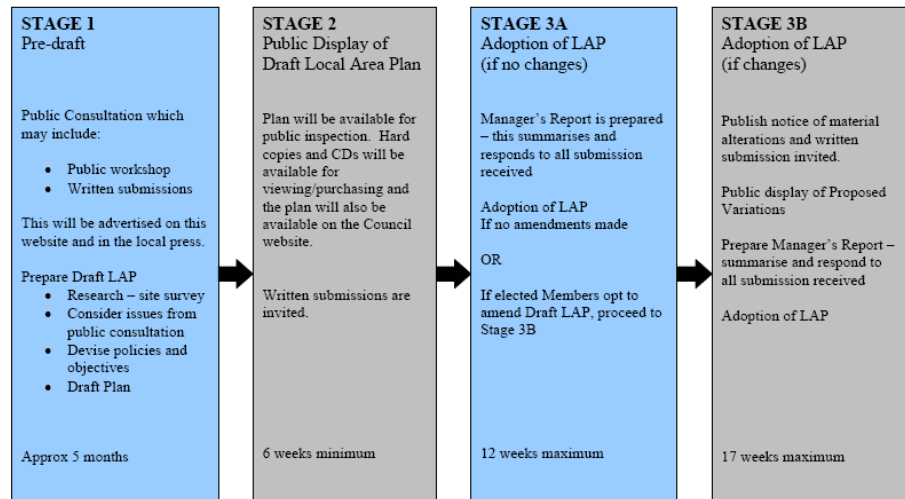


Figure 1.1: Stages in the Preparation of a Local Area Plan

- 1.7 Stakeholder consultation & Summary of issues raised
- 1.7.1 A pre draft consultation event for the Castlecomer Local Area Plan (LAP) took place on 10th January 2008 at Castlecomer Community School. The purpose of the meeting was to set out the process involved in producing a LAP, the work undertaken to date and provided an overview of the emerging issues that formed the basis of discussion with stakeholders and members of the local community in attendance.
- 1.7.2 Stakeholders and members of the local community formed discussion groups and discussed issues relating to the following topics:
- Population and Settlement
 - Housing
 - Employment and Industry
 - Retail
 - Community
 - Infrastructure
 - Heritage
 - Agriculture
 - Tourism
- 1.7.3 A summary of the consultation responses is set out in **Appendix 3**.

2. Strategic Context

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A number of policies at national, regional and county level set the context for the production of the Castlecomer Local Area Plan. These documents, which are summarised in the following section, describe the role that Castlecomer should play in achieving objectives and supporting strategies set at a national, regional and county level. The subsequent section sets out the general context and in doing so outlines the issues that this LAP will seek to address. These issues will directly influence the objectives and policies of this LAP.

2.2 National Spatial Strategy

2.2.1 The purpose of the National Spatial Strategy is to provide for sustainable development and ensure the long term coordination of land use planning throughout the country. To achieve this it seeks to reinforce the settlement structure of the Country and make efficient use of existing assets with a view to improving overall quality of life.



Figure 2.1: National Spatial Strategy

2.2.2 The NSS acknowledges that towns of 1,500 to 5,000 population range can contribute both economically and socially towards sustainable development. Specifically in terms of their potential to attract residential development together with small scale enterprises thereby bringing jobs closer to where people live.

2.2.3 This strategy also recognises changes in their economic function from centres that traditionally served a prosperous agricultural hinterland and highlights their unique qualities as opportunities for change. These include strengths such as townscape quality, compact form, rich built heritage, and quality of life

attractions which attract residential, small and medium enterprise development. Centres such as Castlecomer, located in a rural area, have a strong potential for diversification based around tourism, forestry and enterprise sectors. Backland areas generated through historic development and stemming from the towns original urban forms can provide significant development opportunities to reinforce these strengths.

2.3 Draft Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Feb, 2008)

2.3.1 The purpose of the Draft guidelines is to set out the key planning principles which should be reflected in development plans and local area plans which will ultimately guide the form of residential development in urban areas. Planning Authorities should have regard to the recommended standards for new residential development when preparing Local Area Plans.

2.3.2 The guidelines outline the overall aim of successful and sustainable residential development in urban areas and define the specific qualities that high quality places should incorporate. The development and zoning objectives in this LAP should therefore seek to

- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, and minimise the need to use cars;
- Deliver a quality of life which residents and visitors are entitled to expect, in terms of amenity, safety and experience;
- Provide a good range of community and support facilities, where and when they are needed;
- Present an attractive and well maintained appearance, with a distinct sense of place and a quality public realm;
- Are easy to access and to find one's way around;
- Promote a mix of land uses to minimise transport demand;
- Promote social integration and provide accommodation for a diverse range of household types and age groups; and
- Enhance and protect the built and natural heritage.

2.3.3 The guidelines clarify the role of Local Area Plans with respect to addressing the following issues at the beginning of the plan making process;

- The amount and type of new housing required to meet the needs of the area;
- The need to adopt a sequential approach to the zoning of residential lands extending outwards from the centre of an urban area;
- The relationship and linkages between the areas to be redeveloped and the new areas including the availability of community facilities and social infrastructure;
- The need to create an overall urban design framework for redevelopment areas;
- The setting of appropriate density levels;
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change;
- The avoidance of flood risk.

2.3.4 The guidelines advise that development in small towns with a population ranging from 400 – 5,000 should be plan led and should contribute to the creation of a compact urban structures with a view to increasing the levels of accessibility and making efficient use of infrastructure and services. Central to this approach will be the reuse of town centre sites and underused backland areas.

2.3.5 The Guidelines also consider that the scale of new development should be in proportion to existing development with preference for a number of smaller sites integrated within and throughout the urban centre rather than focusing on one very large site. For towns of this size, it is generally preferable that the Local Area Plan should only encourage individual residential proposals that would increase the housing stock of such urban areas by a maximum of 10% - 15% within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan.

2.4 Retail Planning Guidelines

2.4.1 The Retail Planning Guidelines defines the fourth tier of the retail hierarchy as comprising of small towns in the 1,500 to 5,000 population category, most of which provide basic convenience shopping, either in small supermarkets or convenience shops and in some cases, lower order comparison shopping such as hardware, pharmaceutical products and clothes. The guidelines recognise current trends for larger store sizes which are difficult to accommodate in traditional town centres, which comprise relatively small scale historic buildings in an attractive setting. However, central to the policy on retail, is the need to establish the optimum location for new retail development which is accessible to all sections of society and is of a scale which allows the continued prosperity of traditional town centres and existing retail centres.

2.4.2 The Local Area Plan should be in conformity with the five key objectives identified in the guidelines:

- all development plans incorporate clear policies and proposals for retail development;
- to facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retail industry of the future;
- to promote forms of development which are easily accessible - particularly by public transport - in locations which encourages multi-purpose shopping, business and leisure trips on the same journey; and
- to support the continuing role of town and district centres.

2.4.3 A key retail planning principle referred to extensively within the guidelines is the sequential approach. This approach establishes the town centre as the preferred location for developments that attract many trips with subsequent consideration for edge of the centre locations in cases where there are no sites available within a town centre.

2.5 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Southeast Regional Authority

2.5.1 Castlecomer is identified as a District Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines, Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East identify district towns as towns with a population of between 1,500 and 5,000 that should perform an important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component of the overall region.

2.5.2 The guidelines highlight agriculture, manufacturing, services sectors as key to economy in the South-East with the agriculture and food sector accounts for a significant proportion of output and employment. This is apparent in Castlecomer where these industries have a strong presence.

2.5.3 Future development considerations particularly with respect to employment land supply should take account of the shift towards service led rather than

agricultural employment. The changes in the international economy will have further consequences for manufacturing and internationally traded services as Ireland is no longer characterized as a low costs.

2.5.4 Attracting foreign direct investment is therefore increasingly focused on higher value employment. This is likely to be concentrated in existing locations where foreign-owned enterprises are located such as Waterford City and the county towns, reflecting the requirement of many IDA client companies to be based in areas of critical mass in terms of population, skills, and infrastructure.

2.5.5 Although it is preferable that employment land caters for exogenous as well as endogenous growth, indigenous industry and SMEs are generally spread throughout the region's small to medium sized towns as well as the larger urban centres. Economic development of this kind is particularly relevant to the future growth of towns such as Castlecomer as they hold the potential to provide support services to overseas industry which is concentrated mainly in electronics, precision engineering, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and in internationally traded services particularly in sectors such as ICT, Shared Services and Financially traded services.

2.5.6 Tourism, services and agricultural development also provide further opportunities for SMEs growth with potential for the LAP to support:

- Tourism though development of appropriately located facilities that strengthen the existing national profile linked to the high quality amenities of the region, such as its heritage, river valleys, angling and golf courses;
- Services such as banking, administration and consultancy and improvement in access and communications would support the continuation of that trend;
- Agriculture and food sector which is currently demonstrating a resurgence in profitability;
- Where applicable, highlight the potential demand for forests in the region to provide fuel for wood biomass energy production.

2.5.7 The capacity to support the growth of indigenous companies in the town will reflect the provision of a number of factors including the quality of infrastructure, including road and rail links, water, access and telecommunications improvements in addition to the availability of first class business/technology parks and industrial units.

2.5.8 The attractiveness of smaller towns and villages also lies in their capacity to accommodate employment, residential and other functions on the basis of their comparative advantage in terms of lower costs and a quality of life that is attractive to many people.

2.6 County Development Plan 2008 – 2014

2.6.1 Within the County Development Plan (CDP) Settlement Strategy, Castlecomer is defined as a district town. The CDP states that generally these towns have well developed services and community facilities and have the capacity to accommodate additional growth subject to certain physical infrastructural investments.

2.6.2 It also highlights the role of Local Area Plans in setting out in detail the Council's requirements for all new development, including such considerations as density, layout and design requirements, public transport and road infrastructure, community facilities, open space and recreational facilities etc.

CDP - Retail Policy

2.6.3 Policy within the development plan reflects the County Retail Strategy 2007 which sets out:

- the retail hierarchy, the role of centres;
- A broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floorspace;
- Strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development,
- Preparation of policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres;
- Identification of criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

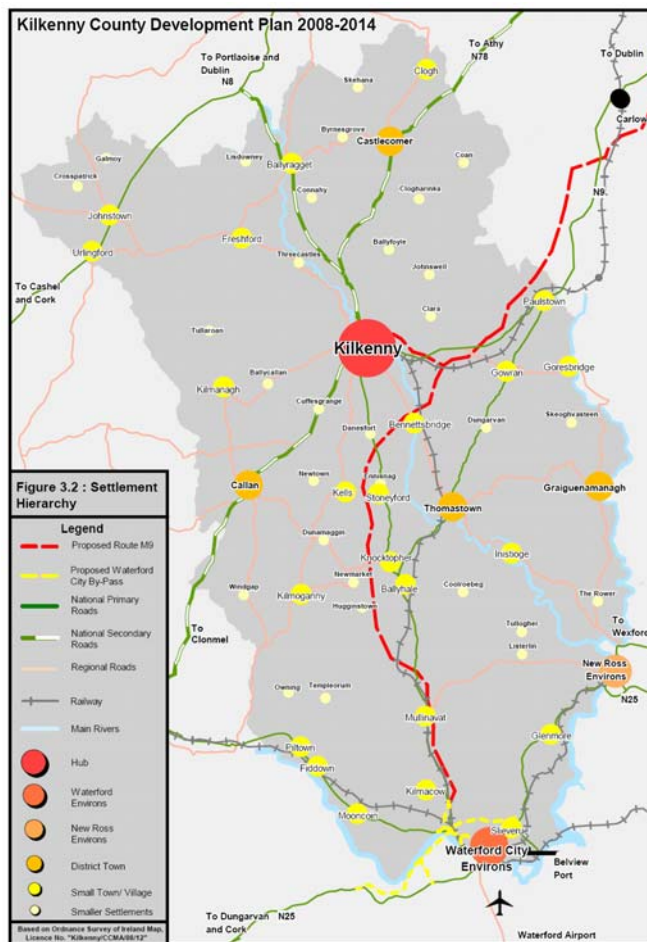


Figure 2.2: CDP Settlement Hierarchy

2.6.4 The location of new retail development is required to be consistent with the retail strategy and policies within the County Development Plan, particularly in that they must be in accordance with the sequential approach, established at the national level. This approach requires, where practicable, new retail development to be located within the district centre. Where this is not possible a consideration may be given to a site on the edge of the town centre (an edge of centre site is taken to be one that is unlikely to be more than 300 - 400 metres from the edge of the prime shopping area).

- 2.6.5 For retail purposes, Castlecomer is designated as a Tier 2 Level 2 sub county Town centre where middle order convenience and tourism related comparison, retail floorspace is considered appropriate.
- 2.6.6 In Castlecomer, enhancing vitality and viability will require a substantial improvement in its retail floorspace and have as its objective over the timescale of the emerging City and County Development Plans achieving designation as a Tier 2 Level 2 Sub County Town Centre and, thus, parity with the other District Towns in the County Retail Hierarchy.
- 2.6.7 To achieve this, enhanced awareness of the market potential of the town and its hinterland is required. Castlecomer should harness its tourism potential which will serve to enhance the town's attraction as a place for living, working, leisure and shopping. Key building blocks are its proximity to Kilkenny City, the Dunmore Caves and Jenkinstown Park with the asset of the Castlecomer Estate Yard being a catalyst for further retail and tourism supporting infrastructure.

3. General Context

3.1 Location

3.1.1 Castlecomer is situated 12 miles north of Kilkenny city in North-East County Kilkenny. The N78 National secondary route links the town with Kilkenny City, Athy and Dublin. The R694 route links Castlecomer with Ballyragget while the R426 route links it with Abbeyleix.

3.1.2 From its earliest development, the topography and geology of the area has defined the town's history. The 'Castlecomer Plateau' is an upland plateau area that surrounds the town to form a discrete landscape unit. Its coal deposits has meant that it is one of the few areas in Ireland that experienced the coal-mining industry. The plateau is bounded on the east by the Barrow, the west by the Nore and bisected by the River Dinin.

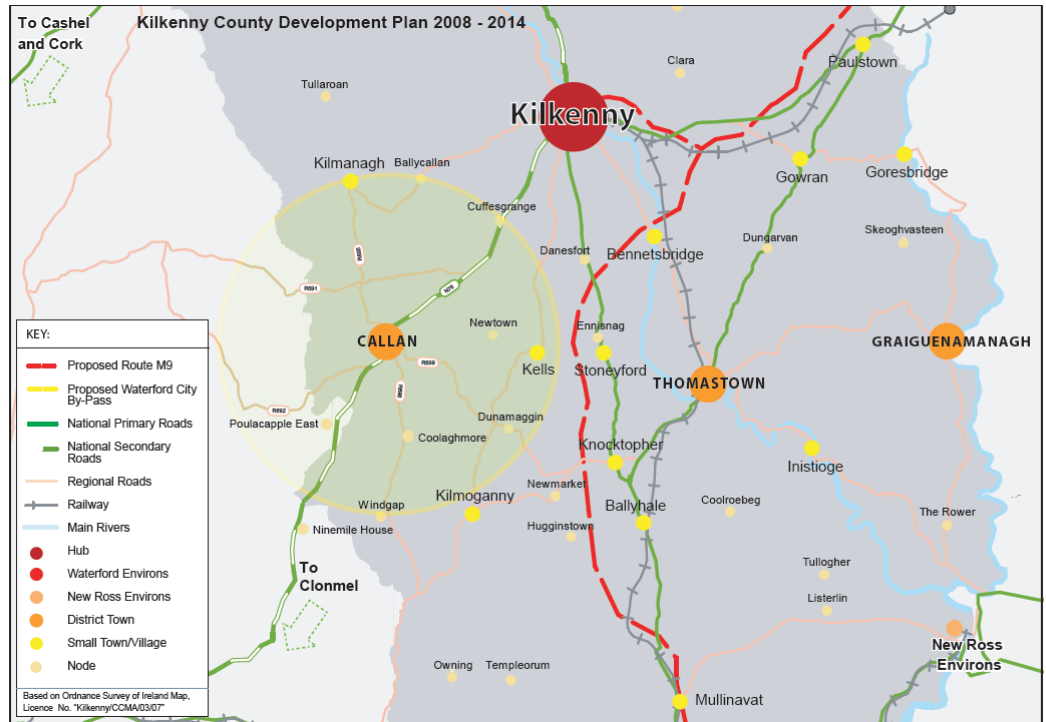


Figure 3.1: CDP Development Strategy

3.2 Historic Development

3.2.1 The earliest record of Castlecomer dates from 1200 when a Motte and Norman castle was erected east of the existing bridge. In 1685 Sir Christopher Wandesforde began the construction of the town and demesne near the site of the old Castle. During this time the town was formally planned and based on a central axis with a large marketplace, corresponding to the present square. The town's principal economic drivers included the wealth generated from the mining resources of the immediate area in addition to its role as a principal

market town for North Kilkenny². Since the loss of the mining industry as a major employer, the town's main role is service centre for a densely populated rural hinterland.

3.3 Urban Structure and Connectivity

3.3.1 The formal layout of the town remains with the main commercial areas centred on a cross roads development comprising a broad tree lined High Street and public space at market square. Development has been restricted by the Dinin River, the Castlecomer Demesne and Golf Course located on the eastern bank to the east of the town. The River Dinin runs through the town and it met by a tributary close to the ruins of a Norman Castle.

3.3.2 Historically, development of the town was also formerly restricted to the west by the railway line. However, as it is now abandoned and development has now spread beyond this along the town's main arterial routes and in some cases on upland areas.

3.4 Population Profile

3.4.1 In 2002, approximately 88% of the population in County Kilkenny lived in rural areas, with more significant increases in the population occurring in rural rather than urban centres. The share of population accounted for by urban centres remained stable, while that of the environs of the towns of Kilkenny, Callan, Thomastown and Castlecomer continued to rise.

3.4.2 The national demographic results provided by the Census 2006, point towards a number of demographic trends for consideration: These include:

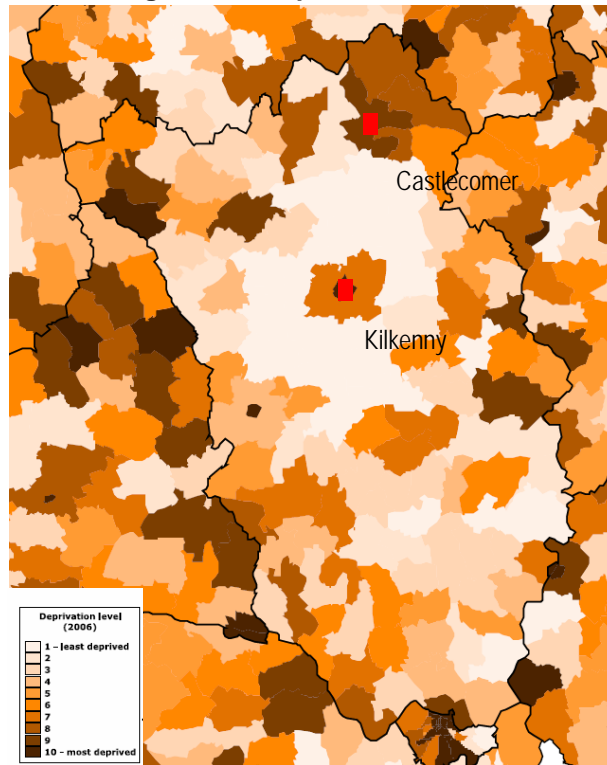
- An older population: the number of persons aged 65 and over has increased at every census since 1961 and now represents 11 per cent of the total population.
- Within a generation, therefore, the average number of children per woman has declined by 1.3 (from 3.5 to 2.2) giving rise to smaller family sizes. Although, current household size is estimated as 2.88, in Ireland more generally these are set to fall to 2.6 persons by 2011.

3.5 Socio Economic Profile

3.5.1 The original development of the Castlecomer estate and town was based on the wealth generated by the extensive mining in the locality. This industry provided significant employment opportunities for the town until their closure in the late 1960s. Current employment opportunities are provided by retail, auto and agricultural trades, hardware, mechanics, timber and manufacturing businesses in the town. A significant number of employment opportunities are likely to be located at some distance from the town. This assumption is based on census data which calculates that 40% of persons (aged 5 years and over) travel a distance of 10 km or greater to work, school or college.

² After the rebellion of 1798 an extensive rebuilding programme was commenced and records show that in 1802 the town included 211 houses, a new market house and an infantry barracks. Castlecomer House itself was built in 1802 on the site of an earlier destroyed residence.

Figure 3.2: Deprivation Index 2006



Source: SAHRU Technical Report December 2007

3.5.2 The Deprivation Index (SAHRU Technical Report, 2007) is a measure of relative material deprivation, can be defined as a state of ‘observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community to which an individual belongs’. The concept is applied to conditions rather than resources or income and can therefore be distinguished from the concept of poverty. **Figure 3.2** shows relatively high levels of deprivation in Castlecomer when compared to other areas in the Country.

3.6 Transport and Access

3.6.1 The main transport infrastructure is provided by the N78, which is a national road going through the centre of the town. It comes in through Ardra and Donaguile and heads back out through Ballyhimmin. Heading North-East, this road heads through Athy on the way to Dublin. Before Athy there is a junction with the N80, from which Carlow and Portlaoise are accessible. The road South out of Castlecomer heads to Kilkenny City. The main road north is the Clogh Road that heads toward Moyadd. The road West heads towards Ballyragget where it meets the N78.

Transport Services

3.6.2 Transport services in the town include a JJ Kavanagh service from Dublin to Clonmel and 007 Expressway Service, Dublin-Kilkenny-Clonmel-Cork which provide approximately four and six services a day respectively.

- 3.6.3 The town is 20 minutes by road to Kilkenny City which provides a rail link to Waterford and Dublin.
- 3.6.4 Castlecomer is among the areas served by the 'Ring a Link' scheme that is funded by the Rural Transport Initiative under Transport 21. The service is available from 8.00 till 19.00 on a Saturday and can take customers from door to door.
- 3.6.5 With the exception of those services described above, Castlecomer's public transport services are limited particularly for those living in rural locations within the catchment of the town. This is consistent with trends in the majority of small to medium sized towns and their catchment areas which are largely dependant on road transport and the use of the car.
- 3.6.6 Recent Census (2006) figures confirm that cars are the dominant means of transport in the town with over 50% using the car to travel to work, school or college. As the predominant mode of transport, car use has resulted in traffic and parking congestion in the town centre and for those who do not benefit from car ownership this can create barriers to the access of services and employment opportunities.
- 3.6.7 Within the town, the urban structure and topography have contributed to poor connectivity. Improving accessibility to services is important to support the long term vision of Castlecomer as a district town and increase the number of people travelling on foot and by bicycle.
- 3.6.8 Castlecomer faces particular issues with respect to traffic management and congestion. The main axis of the town is particularly car dominated which detracts from the visual appeal of the street and impacts on the availability of space for other uses. A lack of car parking facilities exacerbates this problem.

3.7 Topography and Geomorphology

- 3.7.1 The wider area surrounding the town is known as the Castlecomer Plateau, a large area of upland lying between the river valleys of the Barrow and Nore. The upland landscape is a unique feature in Kilkenny with significant landscape value that is subsequently most vulnerable and most sensitive to change³.
- 3.7.2 The plateau is almost circular, except where to the south-west where it is cut away to form the Dinin River Valley. The town has many of the visual characteristics of these upland areas such as undulating topography and steep slopes. Its attractive position between two wooded valleys create a backdrop and enclosure to the main body of the town. This visual richness is evident at a number of key viewing points within the town and include views:
- from Castlecomer Demesne;
 - from Golf Club to town and surrounding upland areas;
 - from the Clogh Road to Castlecomer Demesne;
 - from the bridge to the Creamery House;
 - of the Square from Bridge Street to the Creamery House;
 - from Oak hill residential area.

³ However, they also have areas of 'internal' visual robustness (due to high degree of enclosures) despite 'external' visual vulnerability - due to elevation, ridgelines and steep slopes. Therefore, upland areas are the most vulnerable in the County and are most sensitive to change.

3.8 Water Supply and Wastewater treatment

- 3.8.1 Waste water treatment in Castlecomer is presently provided for by secondary treatment which is a combined system that deals with both sewage and overflow resulting from periods of heavy rain.
- 3.8.2 Current waste water treatment capacity stands at 2,500 population equivalent (PE), with present loading of 4,000 PE and discharge is made to a freshwater (river) which is defined as a sensitive area⁴. The Waste Water Treatment Works are located towards the Southeast of the town and capacity is set to increase to 6,000 population equivalent by mid August 2009 which will provide the town with a tertiary treatment system to the standard required by the Urban Wastewater Treatment regulations.
- 3.8.3 The forthcoming improvement will address previous qualitative issues and provide additional capacity of 2,000 PE to facilitate further development in the town. Beyond this, there is a further opportunity to increase capacity to 9,000 PE through modular additions; however this may require additional lands.
- 3.8.4 Prior to the upgrade to 6,000 PE in mid August 2009, it is likely that the lack of capacity in the existing waste water treatment infrastructure will constrain development in the town and contribute to the deterioration of water quality.

3.9 Drinking Water Quality

- 3.9.1 In January 2008, the EPA reported on the '*Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland: A Report for the Years 2006 – 2007*'. This was the first report in response to the EC Drinking Water Regulations, which provides for a greater level of consumer protection by requiring public water suppliers to notify the EPA and the Health Service Executive where drinking water fails to meet the standards.
- 3.9.2 The report concluded that a number of public water supplies required examination from source to consumer in order to determine whether replacements or upgrades were needed, or whether operational practices should be improved
- 3.9.3 The Clogh-Castlecomer WS has been placed on the Remedial Action List due to elevated levels of THM's above the current standard in the Drinking Water Regulations. Trihalomethanes (THM) are formed along with other disinfection by products when chlorine or other disinfectants used to control microbial contaminants in drinking water react with naturally occurring organic and inorganic matter in water.
- 3.9.4 Water supply is currently at capacity, with difficulties in accessing ground water. Current studies underway to investigate new sources. Although these issues should be addressed within the lifetime of the plan it is likely to be in the latter stages. It is clear that future development will depend on expanding the future capacity of water supplies.

3.10 Economy and Employment

- 3.10.1 By 2020 the labour force in Kilkenny County is projected to increase by between 15% and 20%. This suggests that the labour force in Castlecomer could expand significantly in that period.

⁴ "sensitive areas" are those areas specified in the third schedule of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations, 2001 (S.I. 254 of 2001), Urban Waste Water Treatment (Amendment) Regulations, 2004 (S.I. 440 of 2004) and such other areas as may be identified pursuant to article 5 of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.

- 3.10.2 An Employment land survey, carried out as part of the evidence gathering stage, found that a number of businesses were operating on constrained sites and the majority of these businesses would consider relocation elsewhere in the town. A lack of industrial zoned land in the town was highlighted as a key issue for future economic development of the town.
- 3.10.3 The town's main role is to act as a service centre for its densely populated rural hinterland. Existing businesses in Castlecomer tend to be involved in auto trade, agricultural trade, hardware, mechanics, timber or manufacturing. This profile is consistent with key sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, services and tourism that are prevalent at the regional level. Of particular importance is the agriculture and food sector in addition to the opportunities provided by the Castlecomer Demesne and Golf Course in relation to tourism.
- 3.10.4 Indigenous industry and SMEs development is also relevant, given that the strengths of the smaller towns and villages lie in their capacity to accommodate employment, residential and other functions on the basis of their comparative advantage in terms of lower costs and a quality of life that is attractive to many people.
- 3.11 **Flooding**
- 3.11.1 The Plan can contribute substantially to the management of flooding related issues by showing consistency with guidelines provided by the OPW, 'Flood Risk & Development' which state that development that is sensitive to the effects of flooding will generally not be permitted in flood prone or marginal areas.
- 3.11.2 Flooding is a natural phenomenon, and where there is no risk to human life and property, it is beneficial as it provides fertile sediments for farmland, maintains valuable wildlife habitats and reduces flood risk elsewhere in the catchment. The floodplain, the flat land adjacent to a stream or river that experiences occasional or periodic flooding, plays a key role in this process acting as a temporary store of for flood waters facilitating their conveyance and flood levels downstream.
- 3.11.3 A number of human activities tend to restrict the capacity of rivers to accommodate large storm flows. These include:
- Greenfield Development and building on the floodplain: Paving over previously permeable areas for roads, housing, car parks, etc. can significantly restrict the potential infiltration rate of the area covered. This activity might have a minor or negligible impact in large river basins (due to flood peak timing and proportion of area developed), but could substantially increase runoff in small river basins
 - Changes in Land Use or Land Use Practices: Changes in the vegetation cover, the way in which land is used, or measures which impact negatively on natural flood retention areas (wetlands), can have impacts on both interception and infiltration.
- 3.11.4 **Figure 3.3** illustrates the surface water bodies in Castlecomer, including the main river traversing the town, is joined at various stages by a number of tributaries. It also shows the extent of 'benefitting lands' and recorded flood events at Ballyhemmin on the N78, close to the bridge crossing.
- 3.11.5 Benefitting land maps were prepared as part of the design of the OPW Arterial Drainage Schemes and indicate lands that were poorly drained and would benefit from drainage. While not developed as floodplain or flood extent maps, a

good correlation has been observed between these lands and those areas that may be prone to flooding. Within the town boundary, existing topographical features mean that these lands are primarily located towards the South of the town and coincide with areas of low lying land.

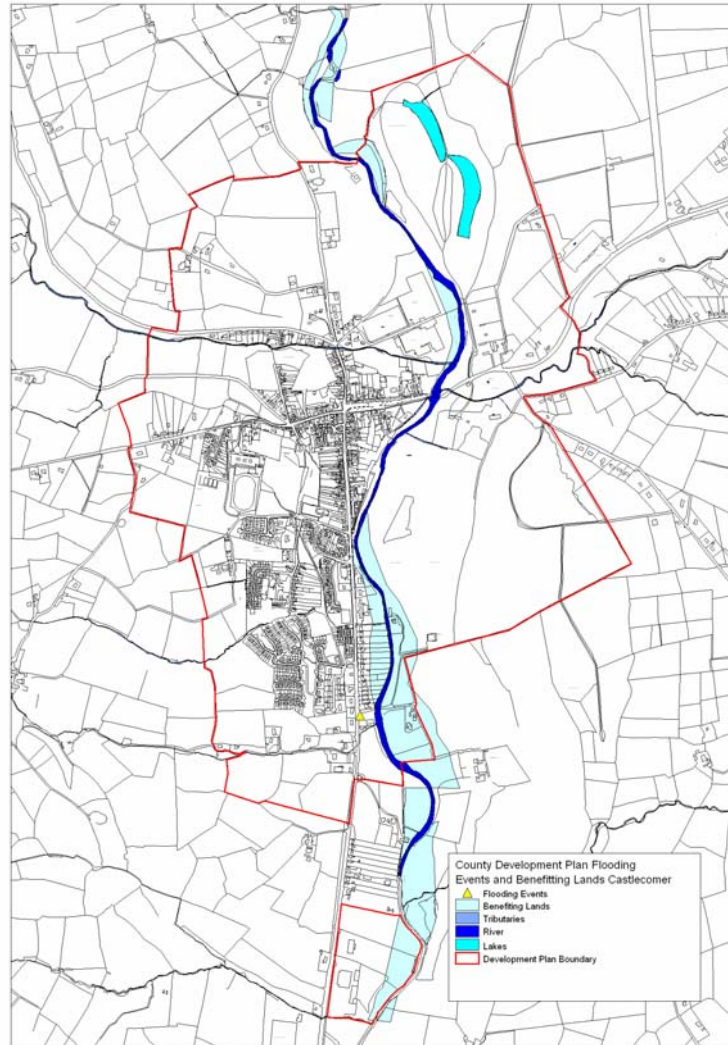


Figure 3.3: Recorded Flood Events in Castlecomer and Benefiting Lands (Source O.P.W.)

3.12 Retail

3.12.1 Retail activity is currently concentrated in the centre of the town which is currently centred on the High Street where the main stores are located. Pedestrian flows are concentrated primarily along this street and in the vicinity of the Glanbia Coop at the junction of Chatsworth Row and to a lesser extent along Barrack Street and Kilkenny Street. The town enjoys an attractive townscape with a number of high quality buildings.

3.12.2 In 2000, Castlecomer was the third largest of the main centres in the County. There was a minor increase in total floorspace between 2000 and 2004, with an increase of 102m² (3.9%). A more significant increase was recorded between 2004-2007, with an 8.4% increase.

3.12.3 Comparatively, these figures demonstrate a limited increase, as the current amount of retail floor space is below that of Thomastown and Callan. At present, Castlecomer's total retail floorspace only represents 57.8% and 72.2% of Thomastown and Callan's retail floorspace respectively.

Table 3.1: Net Retail floorspace in Castlecomer

Composition of Net Retail Floorspace in Castlecomer, Trading as at March 2007 (m²) (County Kilkenny retail strategy Review 2007)			
Vacant	Convenience	Comparison	Total
238	1381 ⁵	1383	3,002

3.12.4 Castlecomer has consequently slipped in the County's retail hierarchy from the third to the fourth largest retail centre. Statistics on vacant floorspace in the town, indicate that vacant floorspace has increased from 3.6% in 2000 to 7.9% in 2007. Whilst vacant floorspace below 10% is not normally cause for concern, 7.9% vacancy is relatively high in respect of the size of Castlecomer town centre.

3.12.5 Overall, Castlecomer has remained static in terms of retail offer and these limited retail growth levels and relatively high vacancy rates show that Castlecomer is performing poorly in terms of vitality and viability. The opportunities lost in terms of improving this position is demonstrated by food shopping patterns which highlight Castlecomer, Kilkenny City and Carlow as the main destinations for inhabitants in the town. **Table 3.2** shows the current pattern with evidence of considerable scope for reducing expenditure leakages.

Table 3.2: Main food shopping destinations

Main food shopping destinations		% of visits
Castlecomer	EuroSpar	28.8
Kilkenny City	Dunnes Stores	25.4
Carlow	Tesco	13.6

3.12.6 It is imperative to address the decline of Castlecomer's town centre. Addressing decline will have a number of benefits including improvement to the access of services and reducing the unsustainable patterns of transport. However, it is likely that the decline will persist unless trade is attracted back to the town centre. This can only be achieved by overcoming issues such as the lack of quality bulk food shopping provision, the limited selection of multiple retailers, parking constraints, traffic congestion and the lack of opportunity sites on the high street.

3.12.7 Particular issues such as high levels of vehicular traffic result in a very busy junction at the intersection of High street/ Barrack Street / Chatsworth Row. This is exacerbated by the location of a number bulky goods retail uses which may be better suited at the edge of centre locations. Improvements to the public realm and the location and capacity of parking and would enhance the quality of the local environment and restore the emphasis on the townscape. Castlecomer's unique retailing offer including Mealy's Auctioneers and the

⁵ More recently planning permission has been sought which will result in an increase of 266sq.m. of retail floor space at ground floor level.

Castlecomer Estate Yard also provide a unique base to expand retails services in the town.

3.13 Open space and amenity

3.13.1 Green space and trees and indeed all the environmental resources in the town comprising its green infrastructure, play a number of important functions including:

- Sustainable resource management in relation to land and water resources, and pollution control
- Supporting biodiversity, particularly relating to the importance of connectivity of habitats;
- Recreation e.g. greenways and the use of non-car routes to address public health and quality of life issues;
- Landscape, green spaces and corridors which provide aesthetic and visual richness;

3.13.2 Castlecomer currently has approximately 128 hectares of land zoned as open space which represents over 53.4% of land uses in the town. This open space includes the Castlecomer Demesne and Castlecomer Golf Club which are on the eastern side of the town and three areas of open space to the west of the Dinin River which are illustrated in **Figure 3.4**.

3.13.3 Quantity, quality, variety and accessibility of open space are all factors that influence the use of public space. Guidelines on ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ emphasise the importance of qualitative standards regarding open space. A qualitative assessment of open space can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Provision of New Public Open Space

3.13.4 Council policy as set out within the County Development Plan seeks to make provision for a hierarchy of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas within the County so that the population can participate in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits within easy reach of their homes and places of work. All residents should have reasonable access to a range of different types of open space, whereby day to day recreational provision to local communities will be provided by a series of district or neighbourhood parks.

3.13.5 This approach to the development of open space and recreation provision includes a minimum standard of open space provision of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population or greater within new residential development taking into account existing levels of provision⁶.

Site Capacity	No. of Dwellings	Minimum quantity and type of leisure facilities
< 25		Development Contributions or 2.4 hectares per 1,000 people (a minimum of 0.25 hectares must be provided
25 or over		Open space 2.4 hectares per 1,000 people
100 - 199		Public open space to include neighbourhood Play Area

Recreational facilities; Developers will be required to make provision for sports and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs generated by that development and the capacity of existing facilities in the area to cater for existing and future needs. Residential planning applications in excess of 200 units will require a recreational needs assessment.

- 3.13.6 To deliver quantity, quality, variety and accessibility, open space and recreational facilities must be located and designed on a hierarchical basis according to the needs of a defined population. The hierarchy of open space is as follows:
- Class I – Strategic Open Space
 - Class II – Local Parks
 - Class III – Informal/casual Open Space
 - Class IV – Buffer landscape

Class I – Strategic Open Space

- 3.13.7 Castlecomer Demesne is a significant amenity space in the town and makes up the Class I – Strategic Open Space. It makes up a large proportion of the open space in the town and is a significant tourism attraction; however its location on the east side of the River Dinin means that it is relatively inaccessible to the adjoining built environment.

- 3.13.8 The area of Donaguile to the west of the town is considered as an area of high landscape value.

Class II – Local Parks

- 3.13.9 The remaining open space, which can be considered as Class II within the hierarchy, is illustrated in **Figure 3.3** and provides a total of 6.02 hectares of space. They include outdoor sports facilities (GAA and Soccer pitches) to the north of the town, and two areas of amenity greenspace, one to the north west of the town and one opposite the boy's school in the southwest of the town.
- 3.13.10 To the south west of the town and linked to an amenity area is a green corridor on the path of the disused Castlecomer Railway. This acts as an existing linkage in the area and could provide the basis to enhance further connectivity.

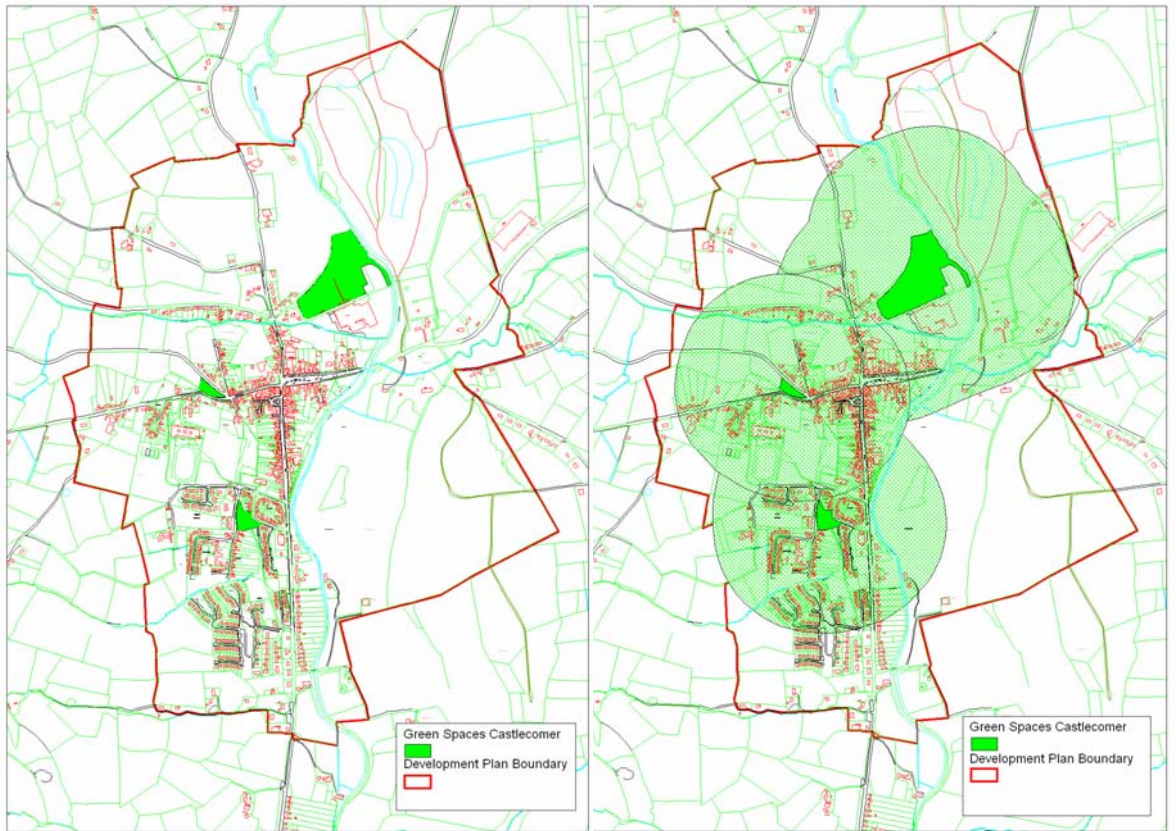


Figure 3.3: The Location of Class II Open Space and accessibility

Mature Trees and TPOs

3.13.11 A tree preservation order currently applies to an area of Sawney's Wood (T.P.O. 1/67 - See **Figure 3.4**). It comprises of 41 individual trees, four tree groupings and an area of specified woodland. The trees comprise a mixture of deciduous trees and conifers with species including beech, ash, cedar, oak, sycamore.

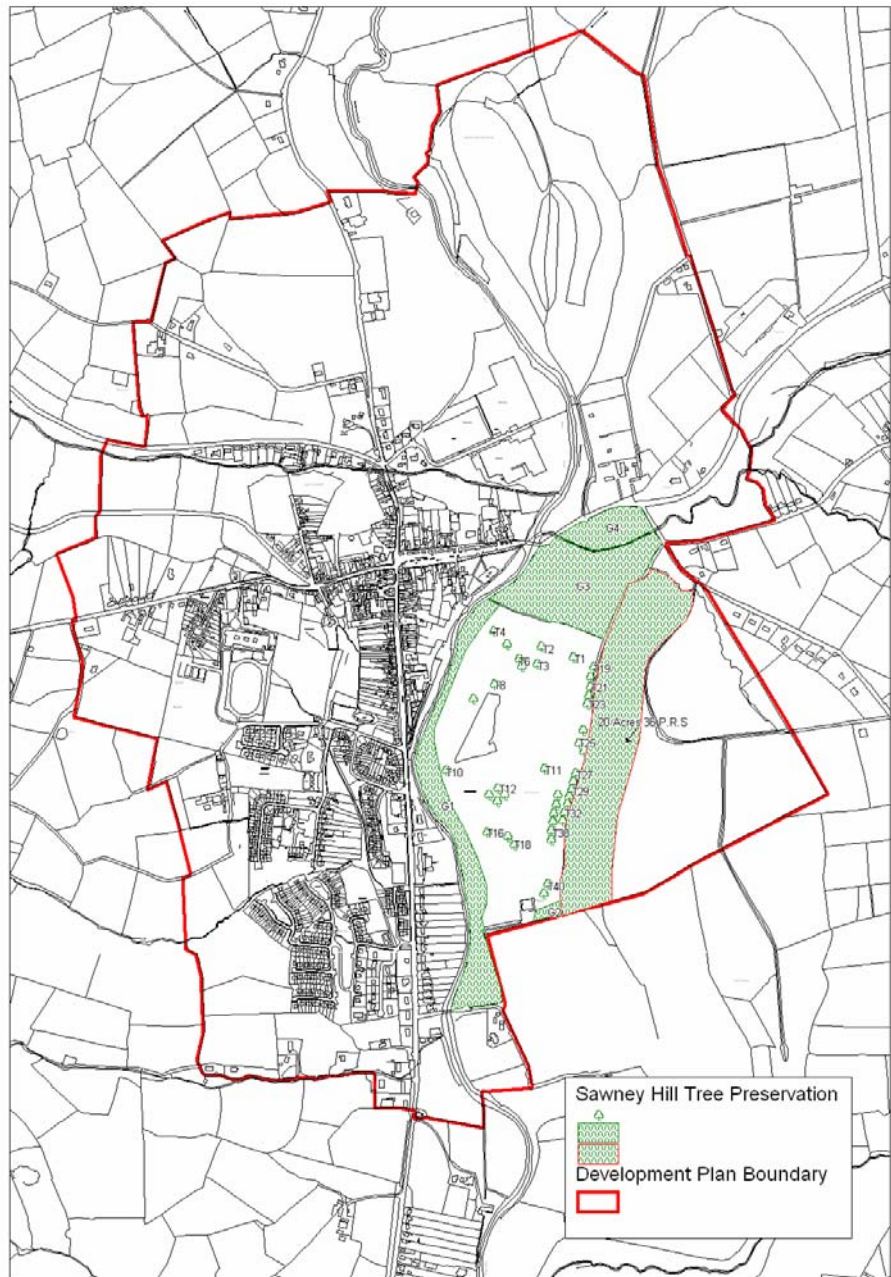


Figure 3.5 Sawney's Wood T.P.O

Children's Play Facilities

- 3.13.12 Children's play is important and provides key benefits to health such as promoting children's development, learning, creativity and independence and keeping children healthy and active.
- 3.13.13 The County Development Plan requires that a minimum standard of 10 sq. m. of dedicated playable space per residential unit should be provided as an integral part of each new development. This playable space can form part of the overall open space provision of a development but must be dedicated to play and should be distributed throughout the development taking into account existing off-site provision.
- 3.13.14 The total requirement should be broken down into the relevant typologies taking account of the maximum walking distances from residential units given below. All children and young people should have access to play space which should be within a reasonable and safe walking distance from home. To ensure that children and young people are guaranteed this access to play space the following standards should be observed when new residential developments are being laid out:
- Doorstep Playable Space 100m (Maximum walking distance from residential unit)
 - Local Playable Space 400m
 - Neighbourhood Playable Space 800m
 - Youth Space 800m
- 3.13.15 There are currently two play facilities in Castlecomer. **Figure 3.6** illustrates the location of these facilities and shows that some areas, particularly in the northwest of the town, could be described as deficient in play space. Whilst quality of existing facilities is good, accessibility, particularly for pedestrians, to the facility in the Castlecomer Demesne could be improved.
- 3.13.16 The County Development plan also requires that a Sub-County Scale recreational facility should be developed in Castlecomer and that these facilities should seek to serve a catchment of 10 – 20 km.

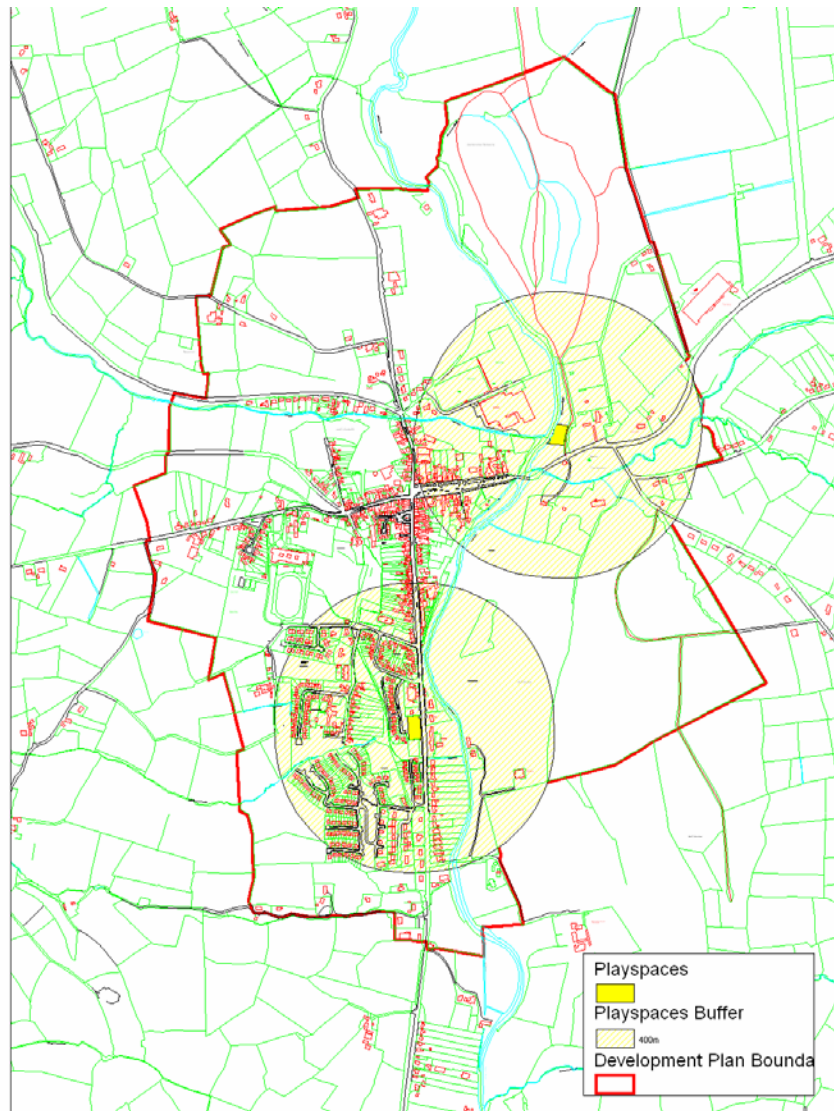


Figure 3.6: Existing provision of Children's Playspace

3.14 Historic Environment

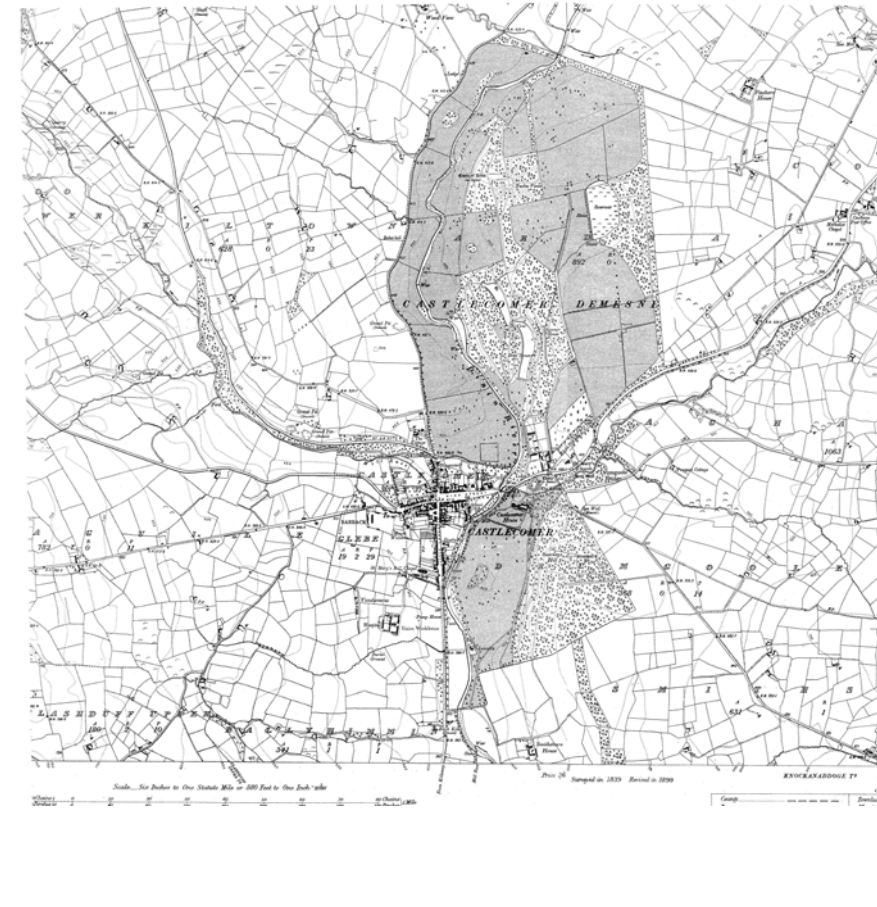
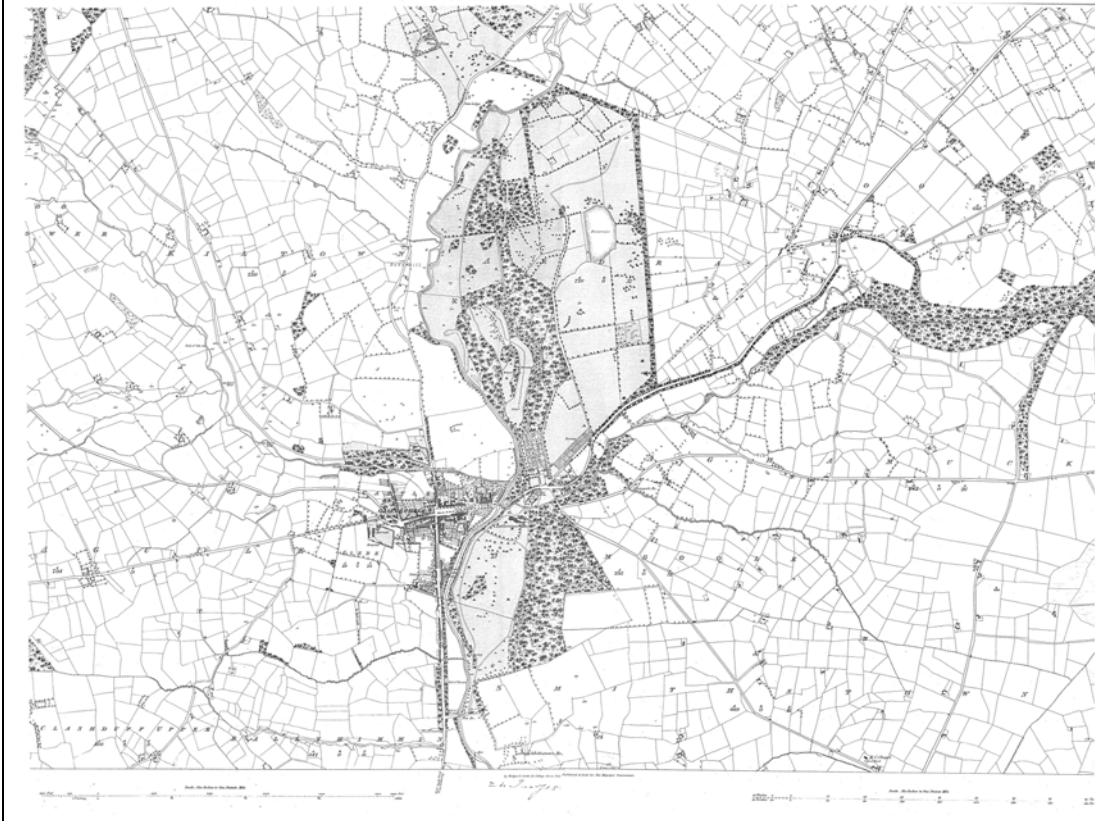
3.14.1 The earliest record of Castlecomer dates from 1200 when a Motte and Norman castle was erected east of the existing bridge and in 1685 Sir Christopher Wandesforde began the construction of the town and demesne near the site of the old Castle. **Figure 3.7** traces the town's historic development from 1842 to 1902. The towns surviving built fabric makes a significant contribution to the quality and character of the environment and townscape.

3.15 National Monuments and Record of Monuments and Places

3.15.1 The relatively low levels of change has to the built fabric as evidenced by **Figure 3.6** has meant that some elements of the town's early history have survived. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland which holds the inventory of archaeological monuments contains records of all known or possible monuments pre-dating 1700 AD and also includes a selection of monuments from the post-1700 AD period. These are referred to as Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs) which formed the basis for the establishment of the statutory Record of Monuments and Places pursuant to Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The Record of Monuments and Places, consisting of lists of monuments and places is set out in **Figure 3.8**.

3.15.2 The survey also produced reports on all historic towns dating to before 1700 AD with a view to delineating zones of archaeological potential within which archaeological deposits may exist. Castlecomer was subject to this survey and is considered a zone of archaeological potential. The extent of the zone of potential in addition to the register of historic monuments is illustrated in **Figure 3.8**.

**Figure 3.7: Castlecomer 1842 and 1902 OSI Maps
(Source: Trinity Historic Maps Archive)**



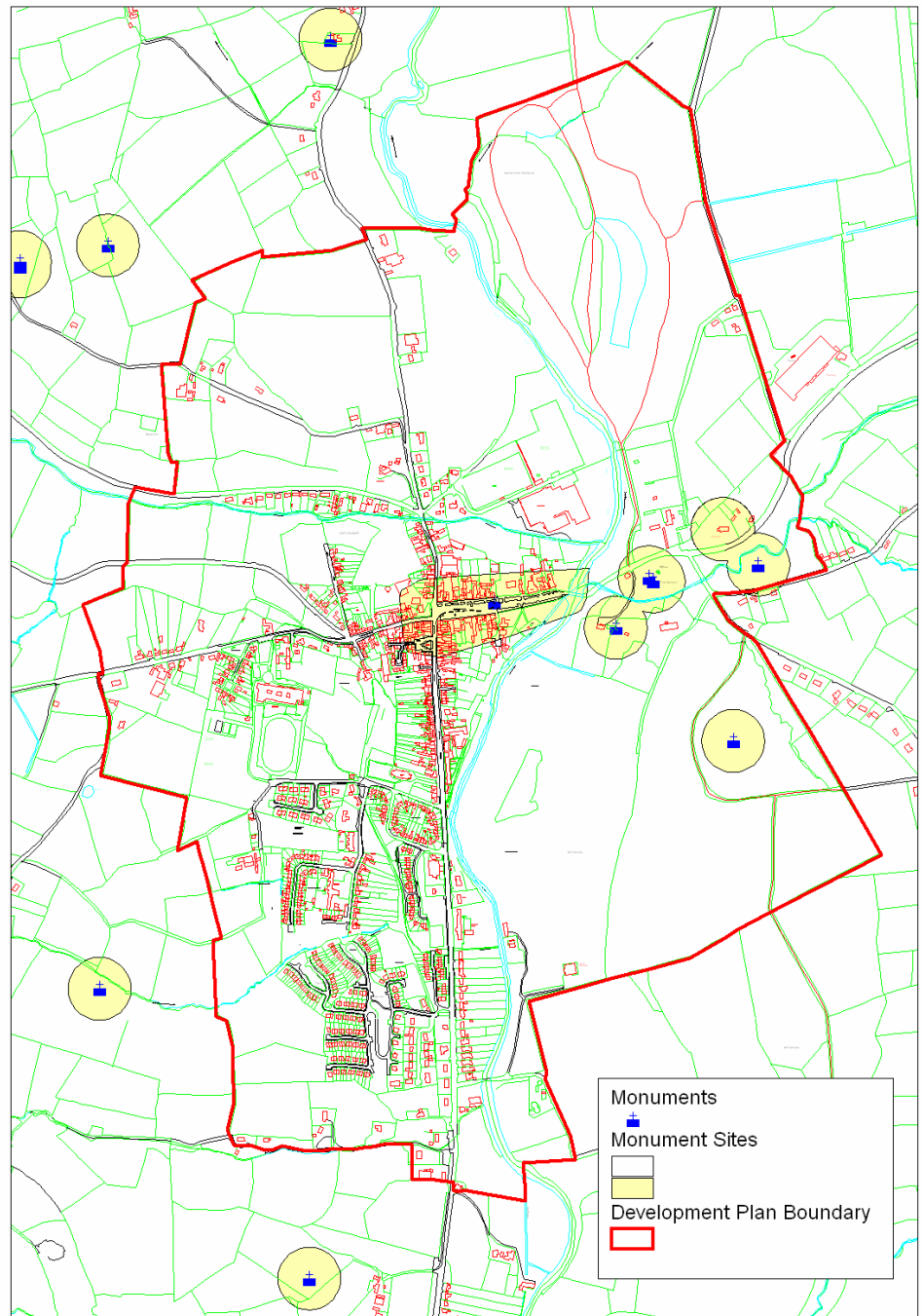


Figure 3.8: Castlecomer Nationally Important Monuments and Sites (Source Duchas)

3.16 The Record of Protected Structures

3.16.1 The Record of Protected Structures lists the structures that are given statutory protection through the County Development Plan. The current County Development Plan contains 26 structures Record of Protected Structures. Of these 26, 2 are of national importance, 10 are of regional importance and 14 are of local importance. These are shown in **Figure 3.9**.

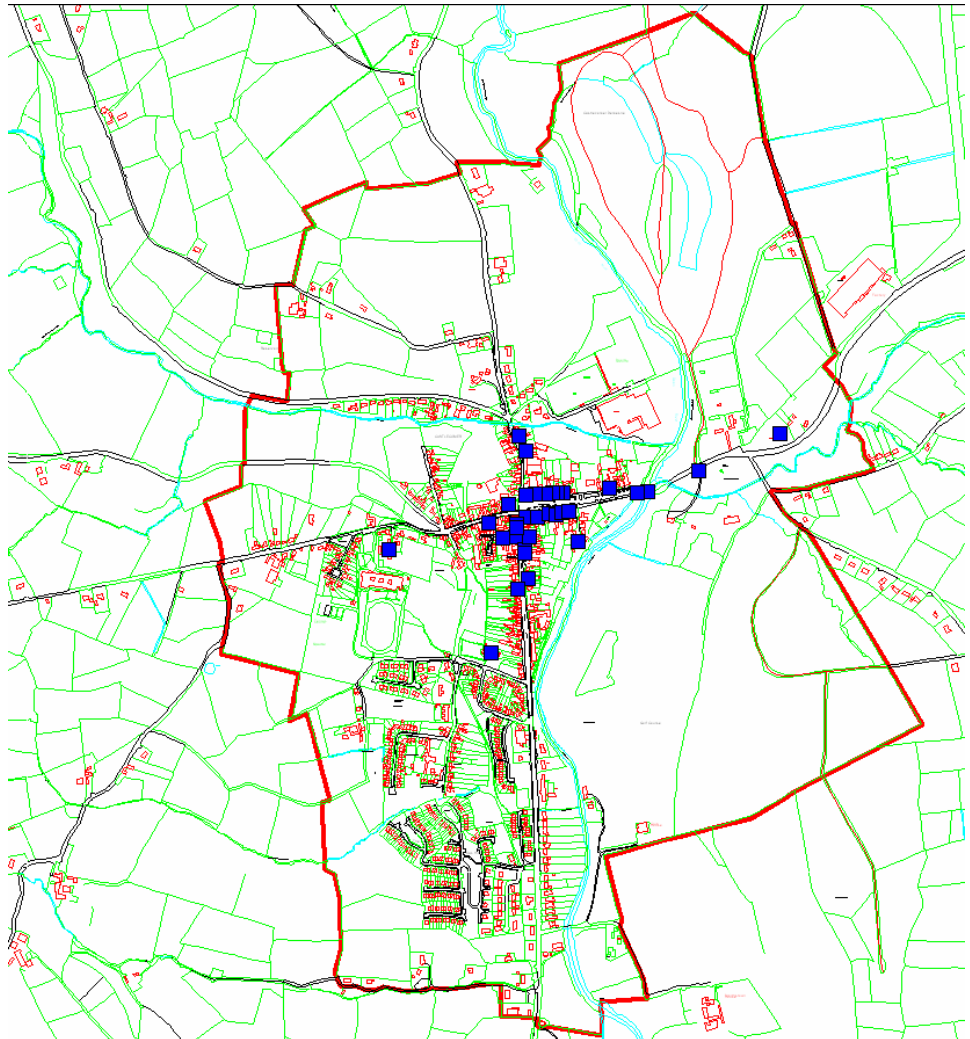


Figure 3.9: Castlecomer Record of Protected Structures

3.17 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

3.17.1 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage has also recorded a number of structures within Castlecomer. The purpose of the inventory is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH is mapped in **Figure 3.10**.

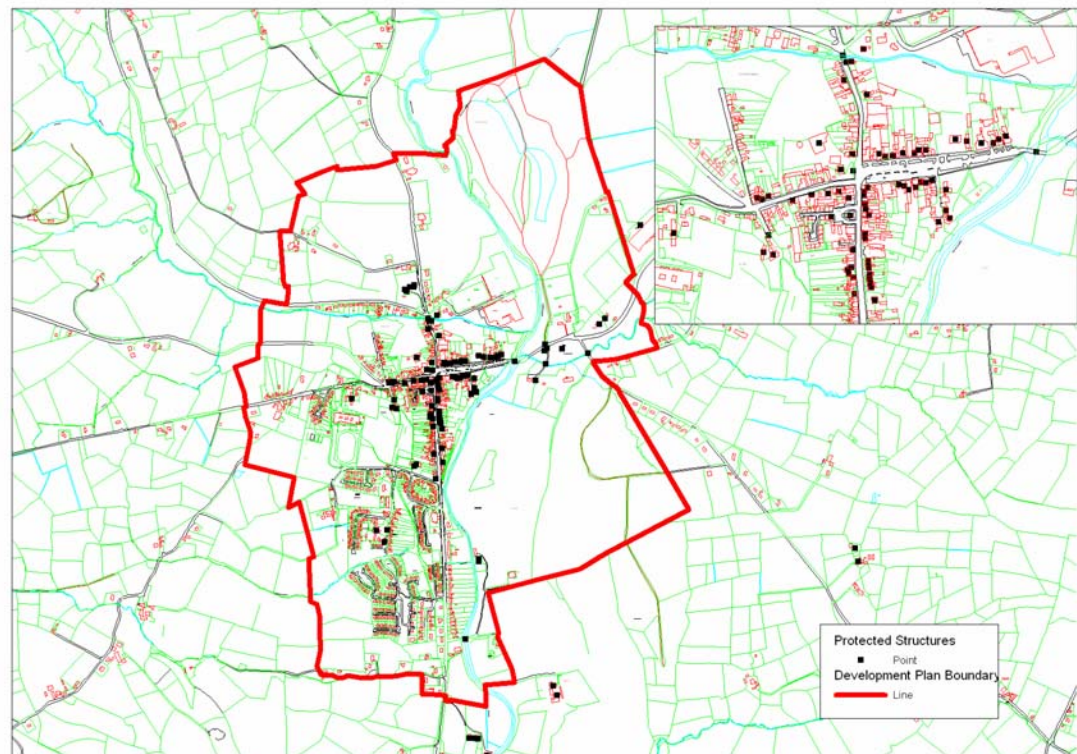


Figure 3.10: Castlecomer National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

3.18 Architectural Conservation Areas

3.18.1 The Planning and Development Act 2002 provides that Plans can designate Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) if the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscapes is of special architectural, historical, archaeological artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures in a planning authority's functional area.

3.18.2 ACAs can cover small groups of buildings or extend over sections of a town. ACAs safeguard our architectural heritage for the enjoyment of and benefit of future generations and ensure that any new development gives respect to and/or enhances the character of the ACA. There is currently no designated ACA in the town.

3.19 Community facilities

3.19.1 There is currently 17.02 hectares of land zoned for community infrastructure which accommodated churches, schools and health facilities. The location and capacity of existing facilities are set out in **Tables 3.3 and 3.4.**

Table 3.3: Existing childcare facilities

Existing Childcare facilities in the town	Location	Capacity
Oakhill housing Development	New residential area to south of the town	25 all day places
COI Community Hall	Town centre	15/ 20 sessional places
Equitable Healthcare childcare Project	Town centre	40 all day / 50 afterschool
	Total Spaces	85 / 95

Table 3.4: Existing Education Facilities and Capacity

School	Current No. of Pupils	School Capacity	No. of available School Places
Boys National School / SN Caislean An Cumair	86	86	0
Castlecomer Convent National School	195	216	21
Holycross National School, Firoda (outside development boundary)	66	70	4
Wandesforde National School	48	50	2
Lisnafuncheon National School (3km from Castlecomer)	39	40 – 45	1 - 6
Primary School Total	434	462 - 467	28 - 33
Castlecomer Community School	632	632	0

Secondary School Total	632	632	0
Total	1,066	1,094 – 1,099	Primary school 28 – 33 Secondary Schools – 0

Schools

- 3.19.2 National School places are provided by the Boys National School, Castlecomer Convent National School and Wandesford National School. In addition, Holycross National School and Lisnafuncheon National Schools, which are located outside the town also cater for students from the Castlecomer. The Boys National School is currently operating at capacity with 82 students in attendance. The Castlecomer Convent National School has 195 students in attendance; however numbers are expected to increase. The school has capacity for 216 students. The Wandesford National School has capacity for 50 students both girls and boys and is currently operating with 48 students in attendance. The Holycross National School has capacity for 70 students and currently operates with 66 students in attendant with boys and girls. Lisnafuncheon National School currently has 39 students and has capacity for between 40-45.
- 3.19.3 Post primary education is provided by Castlecomer Community School, which is currently operating at capacity with 632 students accommodating both male and female students. This school serves a wide catchment.
- 3.19.4 **Table 3.4** shows that are no significant capacity issues in relation to both childcare and schools facilities however, there is limited availability of new places for boys of national school going age.

Castlecomer District Hospital

- 3.19.5 Castlecomer District Hospital currently has 30 beds and the facility is currently operating at capacity. The hospital offers short-stay, step-down, convalescent, G.P. admissions, terminal, respite and care of the young chronically ill. It serves all of north Kilkenny. As this facility is currently operating at capacity and the population is aging, there is a need for additional facilities to cater for the elderly population in the town and surrounding area.

Primary Care Facilities

- 3.19.6 The Health Service Executive has indicated that the Castlecomer is an appropriate location for the provision of a Primary Health Care Facility. The Department of Health and Children strategy for primary care 'A New Direction Quality and Fairness - A Health System for You' (2001) sets out a strategy for their provision and highlights the need for primary care to be community based using an integrated team-based approach.
- 3.19.7 The primary care team⁷ will be the format by which primary care is provided and will serve population groups of 3,000-7,000 people, depending on whether a region is rural or urban.

1.1.1 ⁷ The Primary care team will usually comprise GP, Nurse/midwife, Health care assistant, Home help, Physiotherapist, Occupational therapist, Social worker, Receptionist, Clerical officer, Administrator. (Source: Department of Health and Children, 2001).

4. Development Plan Strategy

4.1 General

4.1.1 The previous chapter examined the general context of the study area highlighting the issues that should be central to the strategy set out in the Plan. This section sets out the preferred plan strategy for the plan period which is based on the policy context, issues and needs facing the town as identified in the previous section and projected growth. Population projections are therefore central to the strategy and together with other relevant considerations also form the basis of future zoning objectives in Castlecomer.

4.2 Population Trends and Projections

4.2.1 Within the Kilkenny County Development Plan Settlement Strategy, Castlecomer is defined as a district town. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East identify district towns as 'towns with a population of between 1,500 and 5,000 that may perform an important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component of the overall region'.

4.2.2 In the most recent Census in 2006, Castlecomer's population was recorded as 1,531 representing 3% growth in the town since 2002. Since then (April, 2006) 29 housing units have been completed. Using the Kilkenny County average household size (2.88 heads per household) this suggests an additional 83 persons should be added to the recorded population of 1,531. As a result the Local Area Plan assumes that there is an existing population of 1,614 residing in Castlecomer.

4.2.3 This figure provides a basis for the methodology for estimating population growth. This methodology relates to past trends in addition to future housing supply, which has been established through the review of planning permissions granted and the Kilkenny Population Study and Draft Housing Strategy (June 2007).

4.2.4 A review of planning permissions granted since the most recent census period indicates that there are approximately 130 permitted units to be constructed. Assuming that these are deliverable and applying Kilkenny County average household size (2.88 heads per household), it is estimated that this number of units will facilitate an increase in population of 374 persons in Castlecomer. This would project the population to 1988 over the next plan period which represents an increase of approximately 24%. This figure does not including remaining capacity of residential land zoned.

4.2.5 The Draft Housing Strategy (June 2007) generated a number of growth scenarios for the County as a whole, ranging from a minimum of 19.9% to a maximum of 34.3% growth, which can be applied to the figure of 1,614. The following projections for Castlecomer are based on the town's share of the county population applied to the increase projected under each scenario for Kilkenny. Based on pipeline supply, the high growth scenario is the preferred growth scenario for the town. This projects growth of 26.3% over the period till 2020, with the subsequent figure of 1,826, derived for 2014. This figure forms the basis of the Local Area Plan strategy.

Table 4.1: Population Trends

Population Trends					
Year	1996	2002	2006	2008 est.	Population on realising pipeline supply
Population	1,380	1,482	1,531	1,614	1988
% increase	-	7.39%	3.3%	5.42%	24%

Growth projections by 2020

4.2.6 Residential zoning capacity in this Plan will also influence the growth of Castlecomer. As detailed below, as part of the analysis of the existing and proposed residential zoning capacity, 23.57ha of residential land will be available for future development. Using residential density figures of 24.71 homes per hectare (Model Housing Strategy guide, 2000), and average household size in Kilkenny as 2.88 heads per household this capacity would be sufficient to accommodate an additional 582 households. This remaining zoning capacity in addition to the pipeline supply of 130 units will realise a total population of 3,664.

4.2.7 It is anticipated that this capacity will provide scope for development to 2020 which is consistent with the timescale of the South East Regional Planning Guidelines and supports the town's role as a District centre.

Table 4.2: Castlecomer (based on the 2008 estimate of current population 1,614)		
Growth scenario	2014	Population growth 2008 -2014
Low Scenario	1,705	92
Central (preferred) Scenario	1,760	146
High Scenario	1,826 ^b	212

4.3 Key Issues, Spatial Vision and Plan Objectives

4.3.1 The development of a vision and plan objectives for future development should reflect unique characteristics and issues in the town and have been generated to reflect the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats in addition to the policy context set at national, regional and county level.

^bThis figure is based on a growth scenario of 26.3% over a period till 2020 derived from the Kilkenny County Housing Strategy

4.4 Summary of SWOT analysis

Strengths

- The town enjoys areas of significant amenity value including Castlecomer Demesne and Golf Club and benefits from a unique setting provided by the surrounding upland landscape.
- Castlecomer's historic environment includes important features that together give the town its unique townscape character which is centred on the public space at market square, which is at the heart of the town centre.
- Its proximity to Kilkenny City.

Weaknesses

- A lack of employment opportunities in the town and scope for economic diversification.
- A demand for additional lands in support of these activities,
- Poor retail provision in the town.
- New housing developments that are poorly integrated and connected to the existing town.
- Areas of existing amenity are largely inaccessible with some areas of deficiency with respect to open space/ play space provision,
- Improvements needed for some community facilities, in particular, primary care facility, the district hospital and provision for the elderly

Opportunities

- Castlecomer Demesne and Golf Club.
- The disused railway line.
- Backland areas /opportunity sites in the town centre.
- Underused industrial land close to the town centre.
- The provision of additional pedestrian linkages crossing the river.
- Tourism industry.
- Riverside setting.

Threats

- Water supply may be constraining development in the town.
- The lack of water infrastructure in some areas outside the town boundary is contributing to poor water quality.
- Areas of flood risk.

4.4.2 In addition to reflecting the issues for the town the Plan is also required to be consistent with the Vision and Strategic Goals of Kilkenny County Development Plan 2008-2014.'

Local Area Plan Objectives

4.4.3 The following Local Area Plan objectives have been generated through analysis and reflection of the general and strategic context of the study area. The plan objectives provide the framework for the future development of Castlecomer:

1. To support town centre vitality and viability by extending the town centre;
2. To provide high quality residential areas with direct linkages to open space, community and retail facilities;

3. Address existing deficits within the recently established developments and provide for future community requirements in childcare, retail, open space and community services in the Castlecomer area;
4. Protect and enhance the character and integrity of existing natural and built environments;
5. Facilitate sustainable economic development through support for tourism development and provision of a new industrial area to the south of the town;
6. Improve linkages between the town and the Castlecomer Demesne;
7. Support the re use of land and buildings, particularly though backland development; and
8. To seek a high level of design quality in all new development.

4.5 Strategic vision

By 2020, Castlecomer will be a compact, sustainable and vibrant town of between 3,000 and 4,000 persons supported by a growth in retail services, jobs and community facilities. New Development will be well connected to the existing urban environment and of a high quality, reflecting and respecting existing character of the surrounding upland landscape in addition to the built and natural environment. Improved linkages between the town centre and Castlecomer Demesne will facilitate tourism development and benefit town centre vitality and

4.6 Development Strategy

4.6.1 To provide a planning framework which promotes the conservation of Castlecomer's natural and built heritage, unique upland setting, consolidate the town within the existing plan boundary making more efficient use of land and existing infrastructure, facilitating the sustainable growth and development of the town through the creation of high quality and permeable developments.

Population and settlement policy

- To promote growth and development of Castlecomer which reflects its role as a district town as set out within the South East Regional Planning Guidelines and in the County Development Plan;
- To promote sustainable and linked development with adequate provision of social and physical infrastructure, including recreation facilities.

Reassessment of existing zoning

4.6.2 The reassessment of existing zoning was completed following a survey of existing land uses and development capacity (See **Appendix 2**) and consideration of the following factors outlined in the Development Plan Guidelines:

- Need (derived from projected growth of the town)
- Policy Context
- Capacity of Water, Drainage and Roads Infrastructure
- Supporting Infrastructure and Facilities
- Physical Suitability
- Sequential Approach

- Environmental and Heritage policy, including conservation of habitats and other sensitive areas.

Existing zoning

4.6.3 Existing zoning for the town was set out under the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2002 -2008. The town boundary as defined in the Local Area Plan 2002 -2008 includes 312.9 hectares of land, 239.45 ha of which is zoned for a range of uses as specified in **Table 4.3**.

4.6.4 Under the existing County Development Plan 2002-2008, a total of 65.47 Ha. are zoned for residential use including established housing developments. This does not include opportunities to consolidate the town centre through additional backland development. There are a total of 21.23 ha of undeveloped residential lands in the town. In addition, the Local Area Plan 2002 – 2008 zoned a total of 13.19 Ha. for light industrial uses of which 0.62 ha are greenfield sites which remain undeveloped.

Proposed Zoning

4.6.5 The proposed amendments to the current zoning are set out in **Table 4.3** and indicated on the zoning map that accompanies this draft Local Area Plan. The Draft Local Area Plan includes a number of zoning amendments.

Table 4.3: Current and Proposed Zonings			
	Current	Proposed	Remaining Capacity (Proposed Zonings)
Residential	65.59	67.42	23.57 (excluding mixed use areas)
Industrial	13.39	23.04	13.20
Open Space	128.05	136.74	-
General Business	15.52	14.30	-
Community	17.02	18.57	
Mixed Use Existing and Prop	0	5.72	5.72
Total	239.57	265.79	

Mixed Use

4.6.6 5.72 hectares of land has been zoned for Mixed Use development to ensure that necessary facilities are located within walking distance of the town centre

and will allow for residential development in addition to commercial, retail and community uses including open space.

Employment Uses

- 4.6.7 As a consequence of changing central industrial use in the town centre to mixed use in support of town centre vitality, additional areas have been zoned for employment related uses to ensure this is replaced elsewhere in the town.
- 4.6.8 Overall, employment zoning will increase beyond this figure as a means of providing for the relocation of appropriate uses from the town centre and supporting wealth and employment creating uses in the town.

Community Facilities

- 4.6.9 An additional 1.55 hectares of land has been zoned for community facilities to accommodate the short term extension of Castlecomer District Hospital, the provision of an additional recreational space for the Castlecomer Community School and further grounds for the cemetery should it be required.

Residential

- 4.6.10 The consideration of residential zoning in the Plan reflects the factors in determining zoning as set in the Development Plan Guidelines referred to in section 2.1.18.
- 4.6.11 The plan proposes residential zoning of 67.42 hectares which represents an increase of 1.83 ha. This increase takes into account the considerable pipeline supply of 130 units and uncommitted capacity of 23.57ha within the town boundary. This figure excludes capacity in the town centre that will be provided as a part of the mixed use development and general business. This capacity is considered sufficient to meet the anticipated development requirements over the plan period and provide the flexibility and scope for development over the longer term in support the town's role as a district centre as set out within the South East Regional Planning Guidelines.
- 4.6.12 Using residential density figures of 24.71 homes per hectare (Model Housing Strategy guide, 2000), and average household size in Kilkenny as 2.88 people per household it would be reasonable to conclude that this capacity would be sufficient to accommodate an additional 582 households.
- 4.6.13 The pipeline supply of 130 units in addition to remaining zoning capacity of 582 units (capacity identified using residential density figures of 24.71 homes per hectare) has the potential to increase the population of Castlecomer by 2,050, realising a total population of 3,664. This clearly demonstrates that there is sufficient land for residential development over the long term which is consistent with the vision for the town as set out in the South East Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 – 2020 and Development Plan guidelines which requires sufficient zoned residential land to be available throughout the lifetime of the development plan and beyond to meet anticipated needs and allow for an element of choice.

Flood risk

- 4.6.14 In areas at risk from flooding, principally at riverside locations, the Land Use zoning map illustrates a setback of 10 metres where a precautionary approach applies that will result in development generally not being permitted and uses

will be constrained⁹. In all cases a flood impact analysis will be required and appropriate design measures will be required for applications on or adjacent to these areas.

Open Space

- 4.6.15 A further 8.69 hectares of open space has been designated based on topography, protection of visual amenity of upland areas and the provision and improvement of green walking routes.

⁹ Storage of substances such as fertiliser poses a threat to the water quality of the River Nore and Barrow SAC.

4.7 Zoning Map

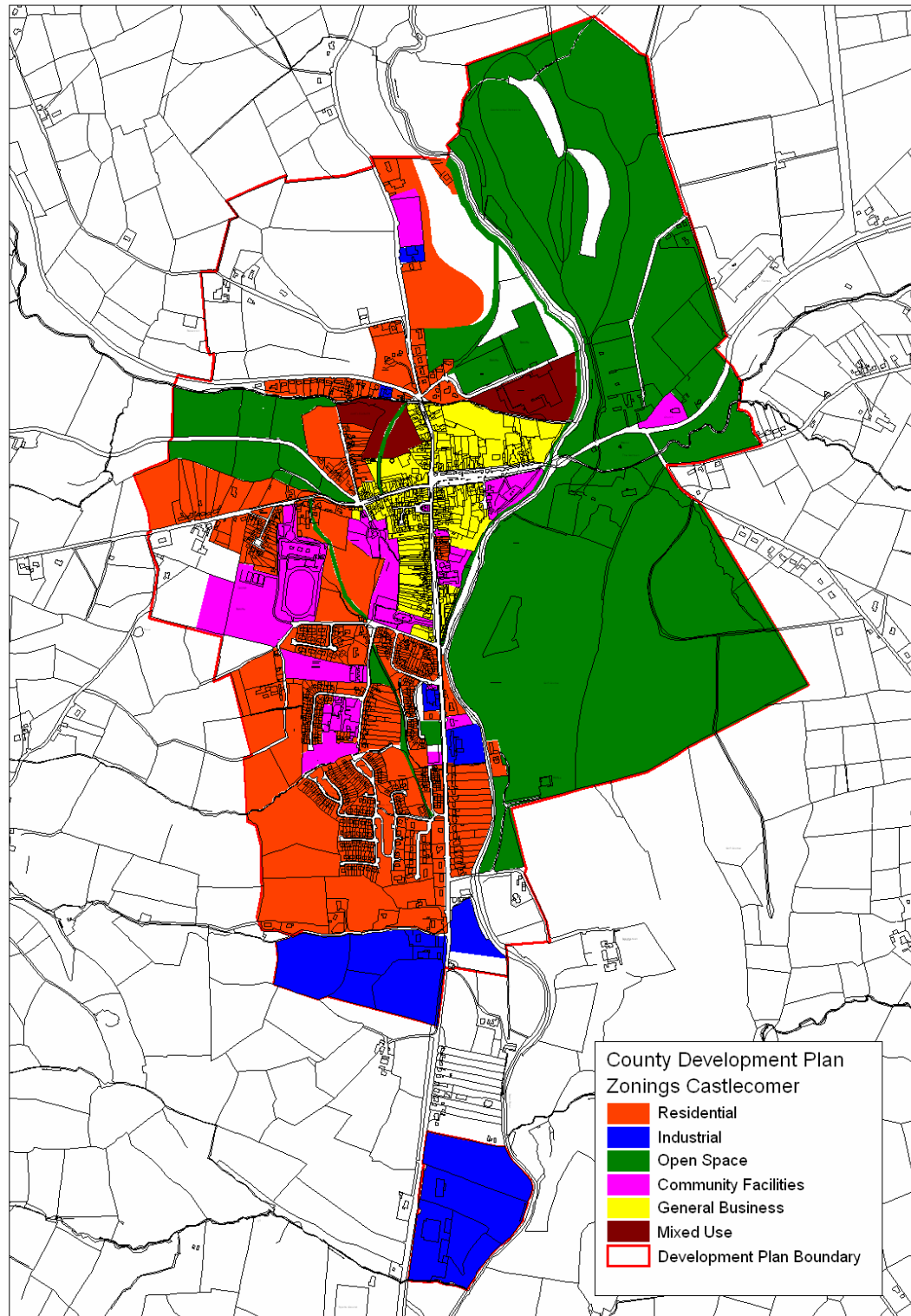


Figure 4.1: Castlecomer Draft Local Area Plan: Land use Zoning Map

5. Plan policies and Controls

5.1 Town Centre and Retail

5.1.1 It is the objective of the Plan to enhance the vitality and viability of Castlecomer and provide clear policies and proposals for retail development by seeking to address issues outlined in the Chapter 3. In accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines (2005) and National and County policy the sequential approach is central to the development strategy for the town.

5.2 Town Centre Improvements

TC1: Town centres should provide a high-quality and safe environment if they are to remain attractive and competitive. In order to maintain and enhance the quality of the town centre, the Council will seek to support developments that encourages the appropriate re-use, regeneration of derelict, vacant and underutilised sites, particularly where development seeks to restore features of the historic environment, improve or manage the quality of the public realm and facilitate access to and from the town centre by all modes of transport.

5.3 Retail Strategy

R1: The 2007 Review of the County Retail Strategy identifies the need to enhance vitality and viability of the town and to achieve this through a substantial improvement in its retail floorspace to achieve designation as a Tier 2 Level 2 Sub County Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. It is therefore the policy of this plan to:

- To deliver the objective of the County Retail Strategy and provide framework to ensure that the vitality and viability of Castlecomer is sustained and enhanced and retail needs are being met on an efficient, equitable and sustainable basis;
- Improve the retail offer and provide retail floorspace by identifying a number of town centre opportunity sites including the current IJM factory to the north of the High street and at the Glanbia premises;
- Ensure that new provision builds on opportunities provided by existing assets such as the Castlecomer Estate Yard; and
- maximise the opportunity for direct pedestrian links to the Square from significant redevelopment opportunities.

5.4 New Retail Development

R2: The centre of Castlecomer will be the focus of all major new retail development in the town centre and the Council will normally permit the proposal whereby the development:

- Is consistent with the County Retail Strategy;
- Improves and enhances pedestrian movement in the town, contributing to access for all;
- Is well integrated with the existing centre by respecting the building line of the existing urban environment and, where appropriate, building up to the edge of the curtilage, providing for linked trips to the remainder of the centre and contributing towards improving the environmental quality; and
- Positively reflects the town's historic fabric and significant townscape value.

Car Parking

New development should seek to provide suitable car parking capacity, in accordance with the Kilkenny County Development Plan car parking standards, which caters for the immediate and anticipated future demands of the development. Car parking should normally be located to the rear or where appropriate underneath subject to considerations for archaeological heritage. The layout of new parking should be conceived within the overall design of new proposals for the development and linked to demand from the wider area.

Action:

- 5.4.2 To carry out and implement a parking strategy for the town centre, which
- reduces and reconfigures existing surface level car parking provision where there is a reduction in the visual impact; and
 - enhances the proportion of short stay parking.

5.5 Quantity of New Retail Floorspace

R3: The County Retail Strategy sets out the role and function of Castlecomer within the retail hierarchy providing guidance on the distribution of new floorspace. The Retail Strategy defines Castlecomer as a Tier 2 Level 2 Sub County Town and recognises that the retail offer of the town needs to be improved substantially in order to meet its objectives to reach Tier 2, Level 2 status. The distribution of new floorspace should be linked to Castlecomer's role in the retail hierarchy for the County and should be appropriate in scale and character to the hierarchical role of the centre.

The type of shopping that is appropriate to this level of the hierarchy includes middle convenience and tourism related comparison.

It will not be appropriate to prescribe what the capacity potential for additional floorspace is in the town and in general it will be subject to the assessment criteria for retail developments being met where proposals are above the 500m² (gross) threshold set for both convenience and comparison floorspace.

5.6 Residential Development

RES1: In line with the Development and settlement strategy, it is a specific objective of the Plan to consolidate settlement within the town boundary and provide a number of opportunity sites within this area for new housing development.

RES2: Proposals for residential development should have regard to the Draft Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, and in particular, the objective of limiting the size of individual proposals to 10% - 15% of the existing housing stock. In Castlecomer, the existing housing stock is approximately 660 units, which provides a basis for an indicative maximum range of 66 – 99 units, for development proposals.

RES3: In terms of design and layout, new residential development that are considered significant should demonstrate good housing design and submit design statements in conjunction with planning applications, explaining the principles and concept behind the design, demonstrating how the proposal relates to its wider context, meets the following urban design objectives and principles:

- Consider and reflect the physical, social and environmental context of the town;
- Protect the Town's historic fabric and positively contribute towards its identity and character;
- Creating places of distinctive character and legibility;
- Improve the public realm and provide for public and private spaces that are clearly distinct and contribute to continuity and

enclosure;

- Contribute to improvements in safety by enhancing natural surveillance, providing active street frontages, and ensuring appropriate enclosure and overlooking of public spaces;
- Supporting increased permeability, strengthening the linkages between places and contributing to a well defined movement network particularly in relation to walking, cycling and access by public transport;
- Ensuring that buildings and spaces can adapt to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances, particularly climate change;
- Creating variety and choice to support mixed communities, develop the identity of a place and ensure that all new developments are accessible to all; and
- Supporting improvements to air and water quality through good quality landscaping which can support biodiversity.

5.7 Transport and Connectivity

T1: Based on a general assessment of connectivity and permeability with respect to new and existing zoning designations, it is the objective of the Castlecomer Local Area Plan to support and facilitate sustainable transport within the town through measures to improve connectivity, reduce traffic congestion, reconfigure car parking and providing for sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling.

Action:

- 5.7.2 To support the provision of pedestrian / cycle access, through provision of bridge infrastructure at two locations, specified in the Masterplan, in order to enhance connectivity between the town and the Demesne.

5.8 Walking and Cycling

T2: All development and in particular education facilities, retail and residential development, will be required to facilitate walking and cycling in Castlecomer by

- Providing safe and direct new routes where this would improve permeability;
- Improving the quality of existing routes in terms of overlooking, improved pavements and crossings, lighting, signage, appropriate traffic calming and speed reduction measures; and
- Where appropriate, providing covered cycle parking stands.

5.9 Employment and Industry

E1: Employment and industrial activity is important to securing the town's economic future and requires the timely and adequate provision of land for employment needs, including sites at suitable locations for employment related uses. Based on existing opportunities in the town, it is the policy of the Local Area Plan to promote a diverse and sustainable local economy through the designation of sufficient lands for the promotion of employment related uses including facilities to support SME growth, tourism related facilities in support of existing attractions such as the Castlecomer Demesne and Golf Course. This will be facilitated through the provision of an additional employment related area to the West of the Kilkenny Road in addition to mixed use areas within the town centre that, among other uses, can accommodate tourism related facilities.

E2: New development within newly designated employment areas will be supported where the proposal meets masterplan objectives (see Section 6) and:

- Provides high value employment and SME business development in key sectors such as agricultural related employment (e.g. timber, creameries, food processing and distribution, fishing) services and manufacturing
- Supports the relocation and expansion of existing industries that improve the local employment base; and
- Reflects urban design objectives and principles set out in Chapter 6, particularly with respect to landscaping and visual impacts given the prominence of the proposed employment area with respect to its location at the entrance to the town.

5.10 Flood risk

F1: In areas at risk from flooding, principally at riverside locations, a precautionary approach will apply and a setback of 10 metres will be required whereby development will not generally be permitted and uses will be constrained.

Examples of appropriate uses include recreational facilities, certain types of industry, with the exception those that require fertiliser storage, and warehousing designed to be flood resistant and/or insensitive. In all cases a flood impact analysis will be required and appropriate design measures will be required for applications on or adjacent to these areas.

F2: Appropriately designed development, which is not sensitive to the effects of flooding may be permissible in areas at risk of flooding provided it does not reduce the flood plain area or otherwise restrict flow across floodplains.

5.11 Infrastructure

Water Supply

IN1: The Council will endeavour to maintain an adequate water supply sufficient for the development needs of the plan.

Waste Water Treatment Works

IN2: The Council will endeavour to upgrade the existing Waste Water Treatment facility to accommodate development as proposed in the Draft LAP.

5.12 Open Space Requirements

5.12.1 Quantity, quality, variety and accessibility are all factors that influence the use of public open space. Guidelines on 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' emphasise the importance of qualitative standards regarding open space and sets out the key qualitative standards that open spaces should expect to achieve and assessment of quality can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Class I – Strategic Open Space

5.12.2 Castlecomer Demesne is a significant amenity space in the town and makes up the Class I – Strategic Open Space. It makes up a large proportion of the open space in the town and is a significant tourism attraction; however its location on

the east side of the River Dinin means that it is relatively inaccessible to the adjoining town.

- 5.12.3 To the south west of the town and linked to an amenity areas is a green corridor on the path of the disused Castlecomer Railway. This is a linkage through the area and provides a further opportunity for a continuous linkage through the area that would enhance permeability and connectivity in the town.

Class II – Local Parks.

- 5.12.4 Class II open space in the town varies in quality and there are a number of opportunities for their improvement particularly in terms of function and use. Open space assessments outlined in **Appendix 1** suggest ways in which existing areas could be improved where development contributions are deemed appropriate in lieu of open space provision.

Accessibility

- 5.12.5 Accessibility of open space is an important aspect of open space provision and influences the extent to which spaces are used. Based on accepted standards, it is the objective of the plan to provide access to local parks within 400m or 5 /10 minute walk of residential areas. Although, it does not take into account features such as rivers which act as barriers to access, **Figure 5.1** applies this standard and provided an indication current levels of accessibility with areas outside the 400m catchment described as deficient.

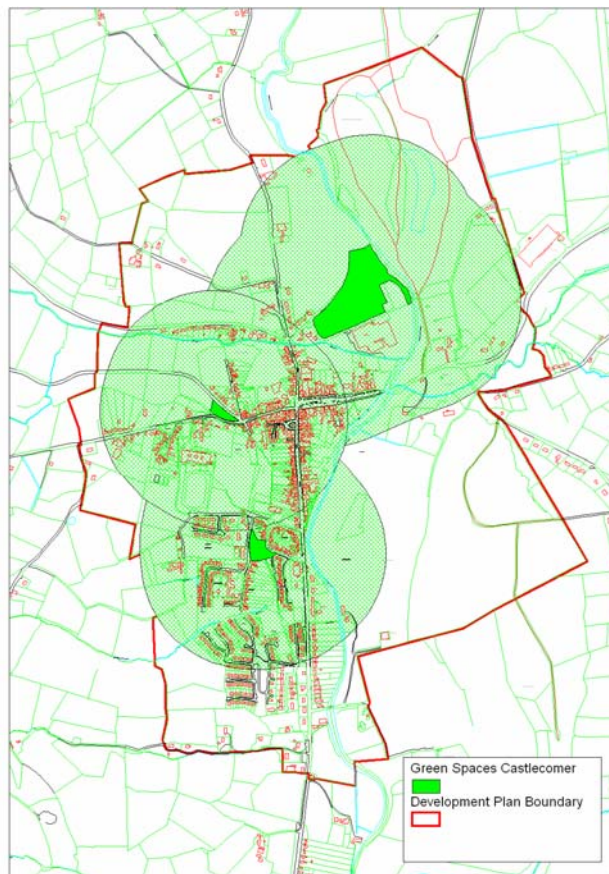


Figure 5.1: Location of existing open space areas / Open Space Deficiency Areas

Applying The Standards

5.12.6 The County Development Plan requires that outdoor recreation playing space should be provided at a ratio of 2.4 hectares per thousand persons. **Table 5.1** applies these standards to the projected population growth for the town between 2008 to 2014 and the longer term growth envisaged over a 12 year horizon.

Table 5.1: Open Space Requirements for Class II – Local Parks

Open Space Requirements	Current	2008- 2014	2008-2020
Population (Future Prediction)	1,614	1,826	3,664
Increase		+212	+2,050
Development Plan Standard (hectares per 1,000 population)	2.4	2.4	2.4
Open Space One	5.13	5.13	5.13
Open Space Two	0.58	0.58	0.58
Open Space Three	0.31	0.31	0.31
Total Open Space Recorded	6.02	6.02	6.02
Open Space Required for the town of Castlecomer	4.008	4.38	8.79
Surplus/Deficit of open space Future	2.01surplus	1.36 surplus	2.77 deficit

OS 1: Enhancing Open Space Provision

OS 1: New development should enhance quality of and access to existing open space and where necessary create areas of new open space. This will be achieved by:

- Creating new linkages between the town and the Castlecomer Demesne and ensuring that opportunities for riverside access are created and maintained;
- Where for smaller developments, financial contributions are deemed appropriate, improving the quality of existing Class II spaces;
- Extending the hierarchy of public open spaces within the plan and at a minimum require the provision of Class II / neighbourhood park within the Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area, and provide for a flood risk buffer and linear park, where appropriate, alongside the River Barrow and River Nore SAC;
- Class III Informal/ Casual open space will be provided within the majority of areas. These areas will be landscaped and will provide an informal amenity for the surrounding neighbourhood area;
- Address the quantitative deficiency in open space that is likely to result in the long term; and
- Meeting design principles set out in the County Development plan and specifically designing for active frontages and natural surveillance.

Action:

- To improve linkages and accessibility between the town and Castlecomer Demesne through the provision of pedestrian/cycling bridge infrastructure at locations highlighted within Castlecomer Masterplan (see **Chapter 6**).
- Develop a neighbourhood park within the Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area,

NH1: Natural Heritage / Biodiversity

NH1: In seeking to protect and enhance the natural environment, the Council will seek to;

- Protect natural heritage sites designated in National and European legislation, specifically the Rivers Nore and River Barrow SAC (See NH2);
- Protect and incorporate existing biodiversity features such as hedgerows and surface water features into the design and construction of new development and public realm; and
- Enhance the biodiversity value of existing open spaces.

Action

- In conjunction with assessment required by habitats regulations, designate an appropriate riverside buffer that protects conservation objectives and integrity of the SAC and assists in the management of flood risk.

NH2: The Rivers Nore and River Barrow SAC

NH2: The River Nore has considerable potential both waterside and landside to be used as recreational asset for the town and the Local Area Plan will seek to promote the natural amenity potential of this site subject to:

- To protection of this site in accordance with National and European legislation ensuring that and development in or near the SAC will avoid any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site has been designated.
- Consultation with the prescribed bodies and relevant government agencies when assessing developments which are likely to impact on designated natural heritage sites or those sites proposed to be designated.
- To require an appropriate environmental assessment in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a designated natural heritage site, or those sites proposed to be designated.

ER2: Efficient Use of Environmental Resources

ER2: New development should ensure the efficient and effective use of environmental resources by:

- Providing high levels of energy and water efficiency and a sustainable approach to the use of materials;
- Having regard to sustainable energy considerations set out in Department Guidelines on Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007) and Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan;
- Providing and supporting through continuing management sustainable drainage methods.

5.13 Architectural Conservation Areas

5.13.1 The Planning & Development Act 2000 requires a Planning Authority to include in its Development Plan the objective of preserving the character of areas of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Such areas are designated as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The County Development Plan requires the re-assessment of existing or the designation of new ACAs to form part of each Local Area Plan.

AC1: Kilkenny County Council considers that the historic core of Castlecomer town comprises an area of special architectural, archaeological, historic interest, presents an attractive townscape and is worthy of protection. It is therefore proposed to designate this part of the Square, as an Architectural Conservation Area.

A detailed character appraisal will be completed that will define in more detail the features of special interest. The purpose of this appraisal will be to define the exact boundary of the ACA and support the development of more detailed conservation objectives and guidance for this area. **Figure 5.2** illustrates the general location and boundary of the proposed Architectural Conservation Area

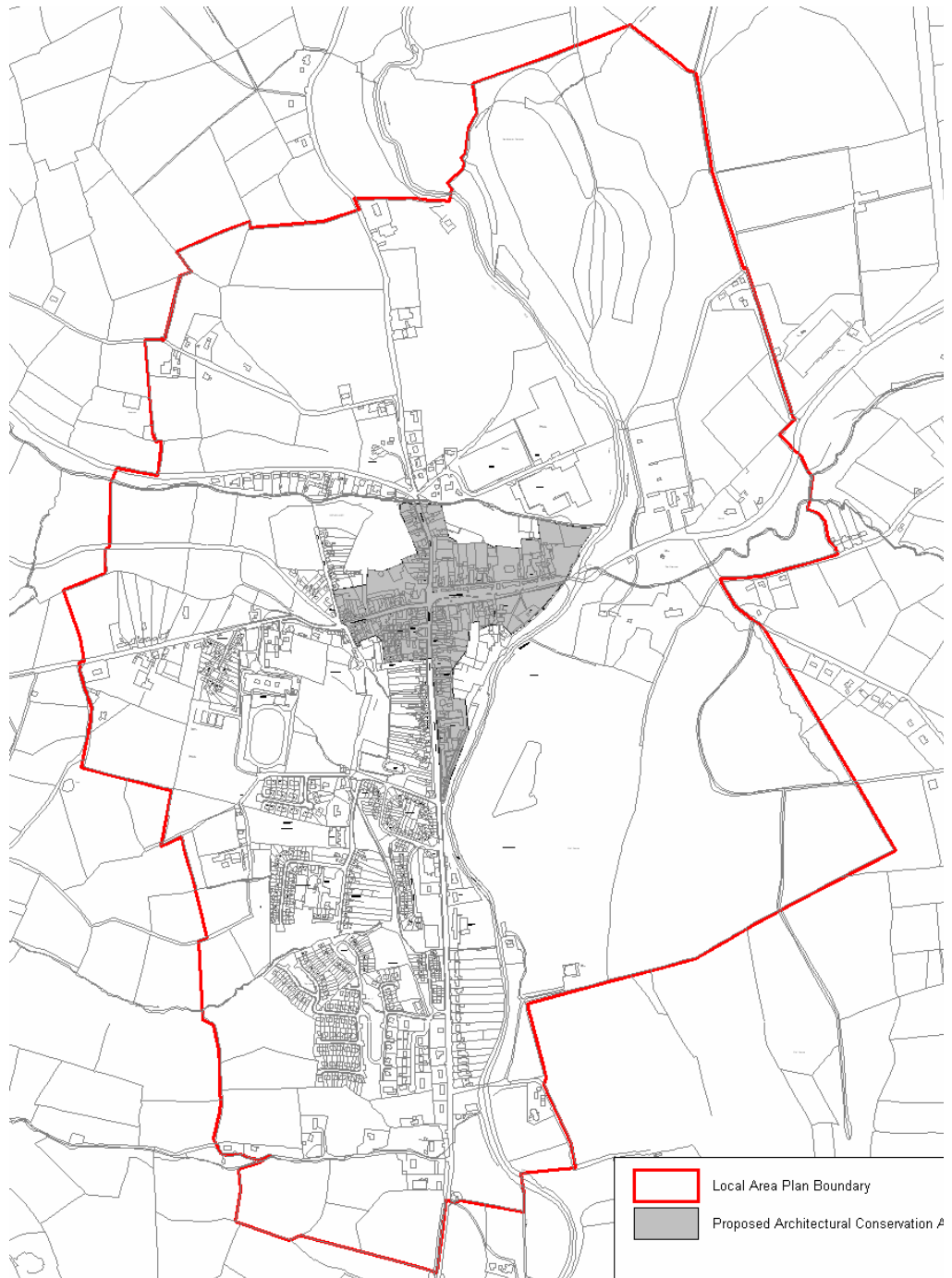


Figure 5.2: Proposed Architectural Conservation Area

AC2: The purpose the designating the 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 consolidates that character with appropriate new developments when opportunities arise. In order to preserve the special interest the Council will require

- the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance, quality and visual coherence of the streetscape of the Conservation Area;
- appropriate form of new development to reflect the existing building line and height;
- materials and finishes, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions that reflect the existing character of the area;
- the protection of the existing landscaping and features within the public realm that contribute to the character of the town, and
- the control of shopfronts and advertising.

Action:

5.13.2 A detailed survey, character appraisal will be completed that will define in more detail the features of special interest. The purpose of this appraisal will be to support the development of more detailed conservation objectives and guidance for the area.

5.14 Play Space

PS1: New residential development is required to be consistent with standards set out in the County Development Plan where a minimum of 10 sq. m. of dedicated playable space per residential unit is to be provided as an integral part of each new development. This playable space can form part of the overall open space provision of a development but must be dedicated to play.

PS2: A significant proportion of the town as indicated in **Figure 5.3** could be described as deficient in play space. As these primarily correlate to areas for future development, it is a specific objective of the Local Area Plan to ensure that new play facilities are provided at these locations.

I

Table 5.3: Play Space Standards CDP 2008 – 2014

Play Space Type Maximum walking distance from residential unit	
Doorstep Playable Space	100m
Local Playable Space	400m
Neighbourhood Playable Space	800m
Youth Space	800m

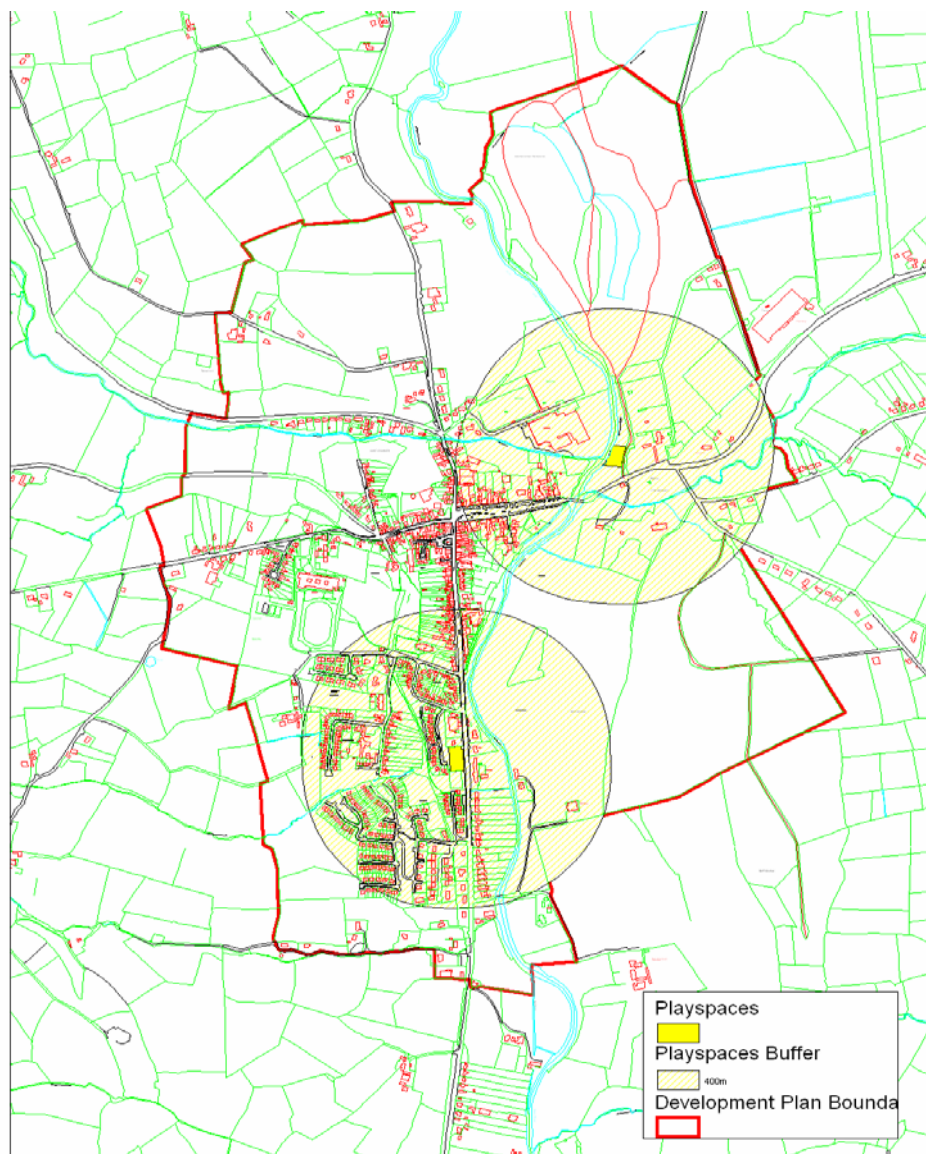


Figure 5.3: Existing provision of Children's Playspace and areas of deficiency

5.15 Community Facilities

CF1: Community facilities comprise health clinics, hospitals, schools, churches, shopping facilities, libraries, community halls, burial grounds. The Local Area Plan will ensure that sites are reserved for community facilities as appropriate and to seek to remedy the deficiency in existing developed areas. The provision of community facilities will be linked to the increases in the residential population through phasing arrangements in the plan to ensure timely provision.

CF2: It is a specific objective of the Plan to allow for the development of a new primary Health Care facility which will be provided by the Health Service Executive over the plan period which may be incorporated on the Riverside mixed use opportunity site. The development of this primary care facility should consider the development brief set out in **Chapter 7** and seek to a deliver high quality environment by incorporating:

- Quality internal environment and public realm;
- Functionality of the care facility whereby public consultation zones and staff zones should be kept separate and interlinked areas designed carefully;
- Adaptability of layout, structure and lighting whereby new operational practices can be accommodated;
- Inclusive design and access for all, creating a facility and place that everyone can use; and
- Landscape features, strengthening links to and improving quality of adjacent open space.

5.16 Educational Requirements

5.16.1 The Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas refers to the provision of community facilities and in terms of locating new school sites within residential neighbourhoods, planning authorities should have regard to:

- the need to reserve sites in local area plans;
- the need to maximise opportunities to walk or cycle to school, and to also ensure that post-primary schools (which may serve a larger catchment) are within walking distance of a bus route or rail station; and
- the potential to share public and school use of major public open spaces

5.16.2 It is estimated that 200 persons per thousand of the population are of school-going age and it is therefore estimated that approximately **323** children of school-going age live in the area at present. 60% (**194**) of them are at primary level and the remaining 40% (**129**) at secondary level.

5.16.3 Assuming that an additional **212** persons were in the Plan area, it can therefore be assumed that approximately **42** persons would be of school-going age, 60% (**25**) of whom would be at primary level and 40% (**17**) at secondary level.

5.16.4 In the longer term an increase in the population of **2,337** would result in **467** persons of school going age, **60% (280)** of whom would be at primary level and **40% (187)** at secondary level.¹⁰

5.16.5 The existing number of primary and secondary school places would be sufficient to meet the needs of the existing and projected population of Castlecomer town over the lifetime of the Plan. However, it must be acknowledged that Castlecomer Community School also accommodates students from a number of parishes in Castlecomer's rural hinterland. It is recommended that the Castlecomer Local Area Plan 2014-2020, review the capacity of all education facilities in the town to establish if there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the projected long term population increase.

5.17 Childcare facilities

CHF1: Having regard to the existing distribution of childcare facilities in the area, new residential development will be required to contribute to the provision of childcare facilities in accordance with the standards set out in the 2001 'Guidelines for planning authorities relating to childcare facilities', where an average of one childcare facility (minimum 20 childcare places) for each 75 dwellings will be appropriate. Consultation should be undertaken with the County Childcare Committee in this regard.

Table 5.4: Standards for provision of Childcare Facilities

Development Timescale	2008 - 2014	2014 - 2020
Additional Population	212	1,838
Additional housing units	74	638
Childcare facilities required	1	8.5
Childcare places required	20	170

¹⁰ The population in primary school going age is assumed to be 11 per cent of the total population / the population of the secondary school going age is assumed to be 8.26 per cent of the total population.

Table 5.2: Land Use Zoning Objectives

Land Use	Objective	Permissible Uses	Open for Consideration	Not permissible
Residential	To create a sustainable community and protect and enhance amenities in existing residential areas	Dwellings, open spaces, places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, Nursing home	Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages. local convenience shop, public house, 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 crèche.	Bad neighbour uses that may impact on levels of amenity in the area. These may include uses that have a high proportion of outside activities such as vehicle breaking, repair, spraying and storage; and processing and storing minerals, waste and building materials.
General Business	To allow a flexible approach to development that supports the vitality and viability of the town centre	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 space, workshop or light industry, small incubator uses provided that there is no adverse impact to the amenity of adjacent residential areas	

Land Use	Objective	Permissible Uses	Open for Consideration	Not permissible
Community facilities	To protect, provide and enhance community facilities	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,	Public service installations Open space	
Employment	To provide for employment and related uses	Industrial premises and ancillary offices, open spaces, warehouses, car and heavy vehicle parks,	Petrol filling stations, service stations, car showrooms, advertisement structures, wholesale premises, public service installations, play school/crèche.	
Employment Business Park	To provide for employment and service related uses that are	Offices, research and development, light industry and ancillary uses such as car parking, childcare facilities, community facility, enterprise centre, funeral home, light industry, medical and related consultants, offices, public service installations, restaurant, hotel, warehousing, including retail warehousing.*	Offices, research and development, light industry.	Retailing other than retail warehousing *Retail warehousing is defined as large single level stores specialising in the sale of bulky household goods or goods sold in bulk.

Land Use	Objective	Permissible Uses	Open for Consideration	Not permissible
<p>Mixed Use</p>	<p>To improve the vitality and viability of the town centre by encouraging a variety of uses in town centre locations and supporting the reuse of derelict and underutilised sites and buildings and as specified within the more detailed area profile provide uses that are identified as deficient in the town.</p>	<p>Dwellings, retailing, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, hotels, clubs, open spaces, medical and related consultants, restaurants, public houses, car parks, halls other uses as permitted and open for consideration in residential zoning.</p>	<p>Live work Units Wholesale outlets</p>	<p>The Council will resist the loss of small “incubator” units unless occupiers have given rise to consistent problems of disturbance for adjoining residents. There are many activities that are important to the local economy but which can have a detrimental environmental effect on neighbouring uses. As such, they are inappropriate in residential areas, town centres or industrial estates. These uses sometimes known as “bad neighbour” often include:- - vehicle breaking, repair, spraying and storage; and - processing and storing minerals, waste and building materials.</p>

6. Urban Design Framework and Masterplan description

6.1 Masterplan Description

6.1.1 The Masterplan sets out proposals for buildings, spaces, movement and land use in three dimensions and is an important element of the Local Area Plan. The masterplanning process brings a number of key benefits to the future development of the town. These include:

- Helping to shape the physical form of development so that it responds to local economic and social dynamics;
- Helping to identify the potential of an area or site for development;
- Unlocking previously under developed land;
- Helping to build consensus about the future of an area; and
- Defining proposals that will deliver high quality building, sustainable buildings and public spaces.

6.1.2 Masterplans are most useful where the scale of change is significant and the area subject to change consists of more than merely a few buildings. The proposed Castlecomer Masterplan, as set out in **Figure 6.1**, focuses on areas where significant new development is to be accommodated and in relation to these areas illustrates:

- How the streets, squares and open spaces of the development area could be connected;
- Sets out suggested relationships between buildings and public spaces; and
- Provides an understanding of how well new neighbourhoods are integrated with the surrounding urban context and natural environment.

6.1.3 **Chapter 7** provides a number of site development briefs or development blocks that reflect the proposals set out in this masterplan and structure the subsequent chapter concerning implementation.

6.1.4 Whilst the proposed linkages are likely to represent the most deliverable option on the ground, this masterplan is indicative in terms of layout. The exact elements e.g. access points of future proposals will be established at the more detailed design level.

Urban Design and Development Principles

UD1: A set of principles has been developed to inform the design of new development in the town. It is the objective of the Council that all new development should contribute to high quality, functional and well designed environments. To achieve this, new development will be required to:

- Consider and reflect the physical, social and environmental context of the town;
- Protect the town's historic fabric and positively contribute towards its identity and character;
- Improve the public realm and provide for public and private spaces that are clearly distinct and contribute to continuity and enclosure;
- Contribute to improvements in safety by enhancing natural surveillance, providing active street frontages, and ensuring appropriate enclosure and overlooking of public spaces;
- Supporting increased permeability, strengthening the linkages between places and contributing to a well defined movement network particularly in relation to walking, cycling and access by public transport;
- Ensuring that buildings and spaces can adapt to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances, particularly climate change;
- Creating variety and choice to support mixed communities, develop the identity of a place and ensure that all new developments are accessible to all; and
- Supporting improvements to air and water quality through good quality landscaping which can support biodiversity.

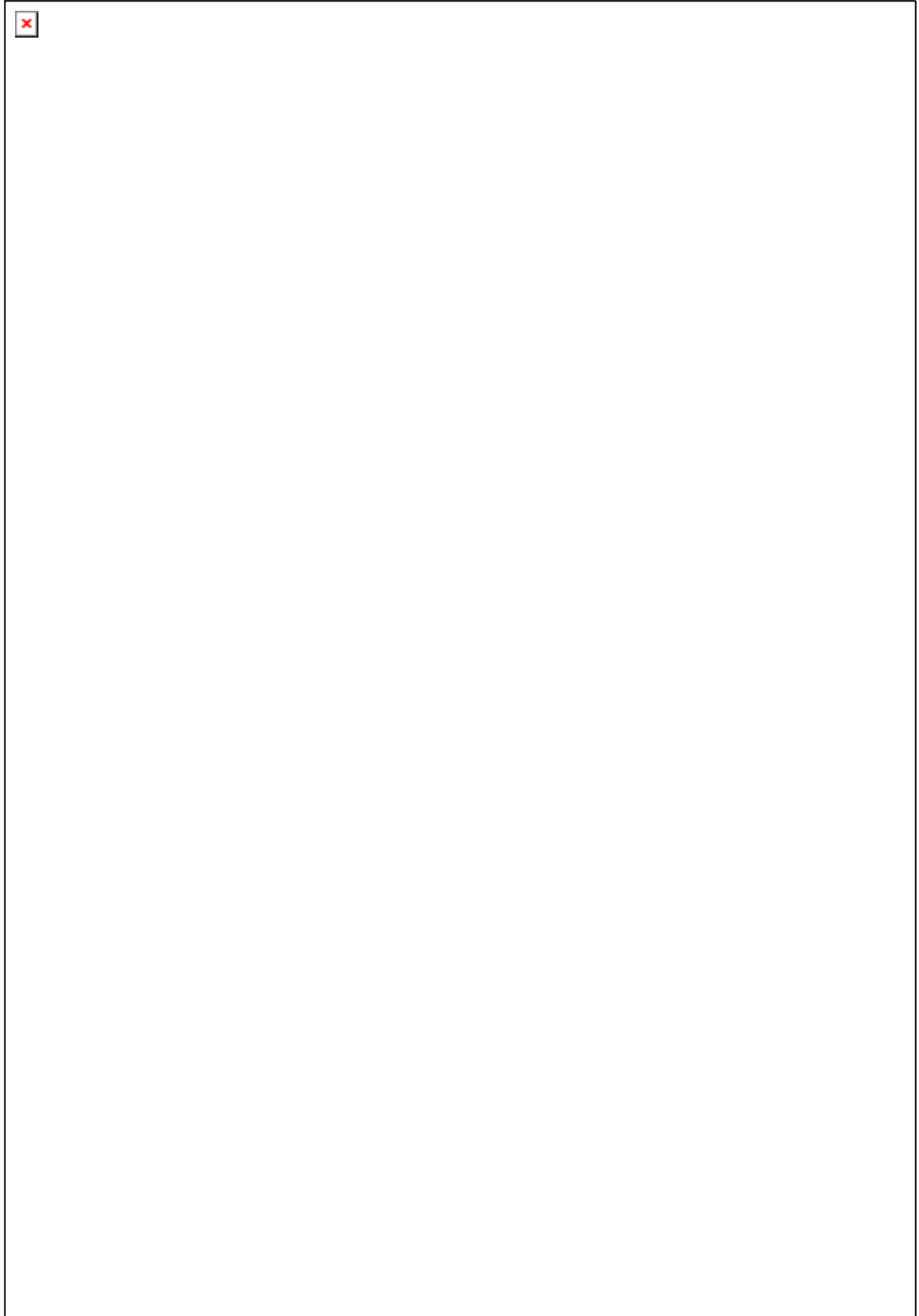


Figure 6.1: Castlecomer Masterplan

Urban Design Principles for Backland areas

UD2: Consolidation of the town is central to the Castlecomer Local Area Plan development strategy. Backland areas in the town present opportunities to support this strategy and enhance the role, function and activity in the town. By virtue of its location and the proximity of other uses, development proposals of this type require careful consideration of:

- Density, height and form of surrounding buildings;
- The need to maintain a consistent street frontage and common building line which will help to create continuity of frontage, reinforce streetscape and provide definition and enclosure to the public realm;
- Access arrangements that include measures to ensure traffic and pedestrian safety;
- The compatibility of uses with the established character of uses in the area;
- Site context and where appropriate, areas of archeological potential;
- Character, appearance of areas of significant townscape or conservation value; and
- Integration and linkages with the existing urban fabric.

7. Site Development Briefs

7.1 Area 1: Riverside Quarter - Mixed Use Development



7.1.1 Introduction and Context

The riverside quarter opportunity site is located north of the Square and is bounded to the east and north by the River Dinin and its tributary, and to the west by Chatsworth Street. It is located in close proximity to the retail core and Castlecomer Demesne.

The site is approximately 3.29 ha in size and is currently used as a timber frame factory. It has been identified as an opportunity site and has the potential for a range of uses including tourism, retail, community (primary care facility), residential, leisure and offices uses.

7.1.2 Development Influences

Key constraints that should be addressed in any development proposals include:

- Flood Risk – Part of the site is subject to flood risk as it is located adjacent to the River Dinin. It is recommended that a flood impact assessment is submitted in conjunction with any future planning applications.
- Proximity to the River Nore and River Barrow SAC.
- Visual Impact, taking into account visibility from key viewpoints in the town e.g. Castlecomer Demesne Discovery Park
- Car Parking – Redevelopment of the site should accommodate public car parking.
- Pedestrian Bridge – Realising the full development potential of this site depends on the provision of pedestrian linkages with the Castlecomer Demesne.
- Cycle ways and pedestrian routes - The riverside frontage should be considered as a continuous walking and cycling route.

The key opportunities that exist for the Riverside Quarter Mixed Use Development Area include:

- Linkages – Potential to improve permeability to the town centre, to improve links across the river to Castlecomer Demesne, through the provision of a new pedestrian bridge.
- Mix of Uses – Potential to provide high quality retail, residential, tourism, leisure and community uses
- Open space and Amenity – Improvement to quality and activity at nearby amenity locations

7.1.3 Site objectives

To provide:

- a publicly accessibility riverside space;
- improvements in the retail offer;
- high quality tourism uses; and
- a high quality primary care facility.

7.1.4 Development Principles

Land Use

Uses identified for the Riverside development area include retail (including shops and restaurants / bars), tourism, residential, leisure, office and community (primary care facility). Whilst it is envisaged that flexibility will facilitate delivery and allow for changes in market

demand, a careful balance in the mix of uses will be required and will be subject to negotiation with the Kilkenny County Council.

Transport & Access

Vehicular access to the Riverside development areas is currently provided via Chatsworth Street. It is proposed that two further access points to the site are provided. The appropriate location of these improvements is set out in **Figure 6.1**. Delivery will require support of adjacent landowners but will cause minimal alteration to the existing streetscape.

Proposals for the site will need to consider the need to enhance pedestrian access to the town centre and Castlecomer Demesne.

Urban Design

The Riverside Development Area is currently occupied by the IJM Timber frame factory which comprises a large warehouses structure.

The urban design strategy for the site is based upon the objective of maximising the potential of its riverfront location by creating a mixed-use district.

Building form provides for new linkages with the town and encourages connectivity within the site. Proposals must be subject to a more detailed masterplanning exercise that supports the following urban design objectives:

- Building height should generally be between 2 and 4 stories and massing sufficiently articulated to demonstrate a fine to medium grain of development, development should address the scale of existing development;
- Ensure development provides appropriate alignment to facilitate additional linkages with the surrounding area;
- The provision of a new pedestrian bridge across the river;
- Retain public riverside walk/ cycle route with active uses acknowledging its potential role as strategic cycle route;
- Active ground floor uses should be promoted along all key routes
- Important views, particular those along the river should be considered through submission of a visual impact assessment; and
- Consideration should be given to creating quality streets, blocks and plots within the scheme.

7.2 Area 2: Ardra Quarter - Residential Development site



7.2.1 Introduction and Context

The Ardra Quarter Residential opportunity site is situated to the North of the town and is currently undeveloped area in agricultural use. The site is bounded to the west by the Clogh Road and to the east by an area of sloping greenfield agricultural land which incorporates the remnants of the Castlecomer Railway line and sits between the development site and the Dinin River. To the south of the land there are also a number of mature trees.

The site is located in an area of sloping landscape which is clearly visible from a number of locations within the town and surrounding countryside and in particular the Castlecomer Discovery Park.

The site is approximately 3.273 ha and has been zoned for residential uses.

7.2.2 Development Influences

Key constraints to be addressed in any development proposals include:

- Visual Impact, taking into account visibility from key viewpoints in the town and surrounding countryside;
- The provision of access points and pedestrian routes that allow access through the site and provide for direct access to the centre of the town;
- Incorporate existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows; and
- Incorporate high quality landscaping and screening, maintaining where possible the open nature of the landscape

The key opportunities that exist for the Ardra Quarter Residential development site include:

- Mix of residential units – Potential to accommodate a variety of high quality residential units

- Open space and Amenity – Provide quality open space and improve nearby play facilities
- High quality viewing opportunities of the town and Discovery Park across the site
- Possibility to improve activity at nearby Prince recreational ground through active ground floor uses and overlooking

7.2.3 Site objectives

To provide:

- High quality, sustainable and accessible residential development;
- Provide for high quality open space and routes through the site

7.2.4 Development Principles

Land Use

Ardra Quarter Residential development site has been identified as an area for residential development.

Transport & Access

Access to the site will be from the Clogh Road and it is proposed to allow for pedestrian / cycle

access from the site to the Prince Grounds / riverside mixed use opportunity site. This is likely to provide for direct access to the town centre by sustainable means.

Urban Design

The Ardra Quarter residential development site is currently a greenfield site. The urban design strategy for the site is based upon the objective of maximising the potential for the site to provide for high quality, sustainable residential development that has a limited visual impact on

the existing environment and residential area by encouraging:

- Building form that provides for new linkages encouraged by permeability through the site; and
- Natural surveillance on any proposed routes through the site.

7.3 Area 3: Barrack & Parish Lands - Residential development



7.3.1 Introduction and Context

The site is situated in the South Western quadrant of the town and is bounded by the Castlecomer Community School to the west and a cemetery to the east.

It is currently a greenfield site with two access points from Barrack Street and Maryville.

The majority of the site was in Parish ownership, until earlier this year when it was purchased by Sue Ryder Homes which provide sheltered housing for the elderly. The remainder of the site

is owned by the Office of Public Works. The site is approximately 4.49 ha and has been zoned for residential uses.

7.3.2 Development Influences

Key constraints to be addressed in any development proposals include:

- Visual Impact, taking into account visibility from key viewpoints in the town;
- The provision of access points and pedestrian routes that allow access through the site and provide the most direct access route to the main shopping area;
- Incorporate existing historic structures into the development; and
- Incorporate natural features of the site.

The key opportunities that exist for the Sue Ryder Development Site include:

- Linkages – Potential to improve permeability in the town
- Mix of residential units – Potential to accommodate a variety of residential units that support independent living
- Open space and Amenity – Provide quality open space
- Renovate Historic Building – Potential to restore Castlecomer Barracks, a building

with Regional protected status and bring it into use.

7.3.3 Site objectives

To provide:

- High quality, sustainable and accessible residential development;
- High quality open space accommodating amenity space including opportunities for exercise and rest where appropriate;
- To support a range of house types and tenure;
- Increase linkages with the surrounding urban fabric; and
- Where possible housing design should seek to meet user needs and should refer to good practice in housing design for older people e.g. Older Persons Housing Design: A European Good Practice Guide (October 2007)¹¹

7.3.4 Development Principles

¹¹ Welfare Housing Policies for Senior Citizens is a European Union part funded project, which between 2005 and 2007, examined good practice in the design of older persons housing which led to the publication of 'Older Persons' Housing Design: A European Good Practice Guide.

Land Use

The development opportunity site has been identified as an area for residential development.

Transport & Access

Access to the site will be from Barrack Street and Maryville. It is proposed to allow for public access through the site which will require more detailed consideration in design terms to ensure that the route is sufficiently overlooked.

Urban Design

The development opportunity site is currently a Greenfield site. The urban design strategy for the site is based upon the objective of maximising the potential for the site to provide for high quality residential development that is accessible to all and provides an exemplar for developments of this type by focusing on older peoples need. This can be achieved through:

- Building form that provides for new linkages through the site;

- Building height should generally be between 2 and 4 stories and massing sufficiently articulated to demonstrate a fine to medium grain of development;
- Active ground floor uses should be promoted along all key routes and new public/ open space;
- Protected structures within the scheme should be retained and sensitively incorporated into the development; and
- Incorporating natural features of the site

7.4 Area 4: Glanbia Site – Mixed Use Development



7.4.1 Introduction and Context

The Glanbia site is situated in a central location within Castlecomer close to the Square. The site is bounded to the North by a tributary of the River Dinin and the Kiltown Road. It could be described as both Greenfield and brownfield in nature as it contains a number of existing buildings located to the south of the site and a greenfield area to the north. The current access is located at the junction of Chatsworth Street and The Square.

The site incorporates a number of unique features including a raised bank which formed part of the Castlecomer Railway and includes a number of buildings associated with the operations of Castlecomer Cooperative.

The site is approximately 1.54 ha and has been zoned for a mix of uses.

7.4.2 Development Influences

Key constraints to be addressed in any development proposals include:

- The potential for visual impact taking into account the potential impacts on townscape quality in the town;
- The need for pedestrian routes that allow for direct access routes to the main shopping area;
- Existing historic structures including the Castlecomer Co-Operative Creamery which has been recorded by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as having regional significance;
- Possible impacts on the zone of archaeological potential which underlies a portion of the site; and
- The possible removal of remnants of the old railway line e.g. topsoil.

The key opportunities that exist for the Glanbia Development Site include:

- Linkages – Potential to improve permeability in the town
- Mix of use– Potential to accommodate a variety of uses that would support town centre vitality and viability including residential and retail development

7.4.3 Site objectives

To provide:

- High quality and accessible environment;
- Efficient use of land and buildings whilst minimising visual impact on the surrounding townscape;
- To support compact development with a fine urban grain and associated amenity space; and
- Retail development that provides for linked trips to the surrounding town centre.

7.4.4 Development Principles

Land Use

The Glanbia site has been identified as an area for mixed use development.

Transport & Access

The current access located at the junction of Chatsworth Street and The Square, should be

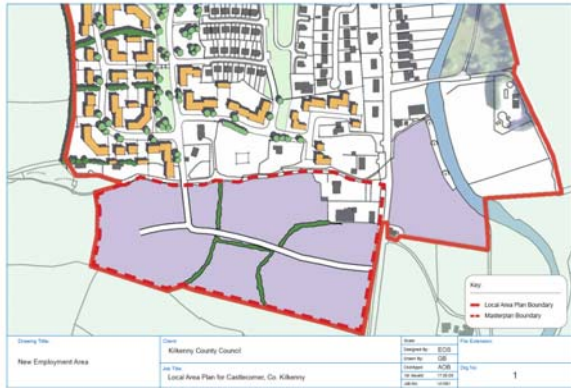
improved through further access points at Barrack Street and Kiltown Road. It is proposed to allow for public access through the site which will require more detailed consideration in design terms to ensure that the route is sufficiently overlooked.

Urban Design

The urban design strategy for the Glanbia site is based upon the objective of maximising the potential for the site to provide for high quality development that supports town centre vitality and viability. High quality development at this location should seek to:

- Provide new linkages that would encourage movement through the site;
- Minimise visual impact which will be determined through visual impact assessment;
- Provide active ground floor uses that complement public space and key routes through the site; and
- Retain protected structures within the scheme.

7.5 Area 5: Kilkenny Road Employment area



7.5.1 Introduction and Context

The Kilkenny Road Employment Area is located to the south of the town. It is currently agricultural land comprising of approximately 10.38 hectares.

The site is bounded to the north by a tributary of the River Dinin, to the south and west by agricultural lands and to the east by the Kilkenny Road / N78.

The site is characterised by a number of agricultural fields and hedgerow boundaries and slopes upwards from the Kilkenny Road.

7.5.2 Development Influences

Key constraints to be addressed in any development proposals include:

- The potential for visual impact taking into account visually prominent land at the entrance of the town;
- Existing natural features on the site;
- The need for access to the Kilkenny Road and linkages to adjacent residential areas

The key opportunities that exist for the Kilkenny Road Employment area include:

- Employment use– Potential to accommodate a variety of employment related uses
- Linkages – Potential to improve permeability in the town
- Improve access that maximises potential of the areas and makes efficient use of land.

7.5.3 Site objectives

To provide:

- High quality and accessible environment; and
- Efficient use of land and buildings whilst minimising visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

7.5.4 Development Principles

Land Use

The Kilkenny Road Employment area has been identified as an area for employment related development.

Transport & Access

As the site is currently undeveloped there is currently no access to this area. It is proposed future access is gained off the Kilkenny Road and linkages are provided to adjacent residential lands.

Urban Design

The urban design strategy for the Kilkenny Road Employment Area is based upon the objective of maximising the potential for the site to provide for high quality employment related development. High quality development at this location should seek to:

- Provide new linkages that would encourage movement through the site; and
- Minimise visual impact which will be determined through visual impact assessment.

7.6 Area 6: Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area



1. Introduction and Context

The Ballyhimmin development area is located to the South West of the town adjacent to a recently developed residential area. It is approximately 5.6 hectares in size and is predominantly a greenfield area with the exception of a number of existing agricultural buildings located to the north of the site.

Access to the site is currently limited but possible though the existing residential area in addition to a continuation of Van Diemens Lane.

The site is located in an upland area of the town and includes a number of fields with associated hedgerows and is currently in agricultural use.

2. Development Influences

Key constraints to be addressed in any development proposals include:

- The potential for visual impact taking into account the visually prominent site;
- Existing natural features on the site; and
- The need for improved access and permeability within the site and to the surrounding area

The key opportunities that exist for the Residential Development area at Ballyhimmin include:

- Residential use– Potential to accommodate a range of housing types; and
- Linkages – Potential to improve connectivity to the town centre

3. Site objectives

To provide

- High quality and accessible residential environment with associated amenity, community neighbourhood retail facilities; and
- Minimising visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

4. Development Principles

Land Use

The Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area has been identified as an area for future residential development.

Transport & Access

As the site is currently undeveloped there is currently limited access to this area.

Urban Design

The urban design strategy for the Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area is based upon the objective of maximising the potential for the site

to provide for high quality and sustainable residential development. High quality development at this location should seek to:

- Provide new linkages that would encourage movement through the site; and
- Minimise visual impact which will be determined through visual impact assessment.

8. Implementation

- 8.1.1 Zoned lands and areas, particularly those with the highest capacity for development, have been highlighted for specific guidance within the **Chapter 7**. More specific information on the infrastructure and services to be provided within each block is set out in **Table 8.1**. **Figure 8.1** illustrates the location of each block in the context of the overall plan.

Table 8.1: Infrastructure and Services Required

	Area 1: Riverside Quarter - Mixed Use Development	Area 2: Ardra Quarter - Residential Development site	Area 3: Barrack & Parish Lands - Residential development	Area 4: Glanbia Site – Mixed Use Development	Area 5: Kilkenny Road Employment area	Area 6: Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area
Required infrastructure to be delivered in tandem with development in the parcel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Car Parking ▪ Pedestrian Bridge - the provision of pedestrian crossings to the Castlecomer Demesne. ▪ Riverside Cycle ways and pedestrian routes ▪ Additional vehicular access for Chatsworth Street ▪ New pedestrian Access from the Square ▪ Facilitate location of primary care facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of access points and pedestrian routes that allow access through the site and provide for direct access to the centre of the town/riverside mixed use opportunity site.; ▪ Provide quality open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of access points and pedestrian routes that allow access through the site and provide the most direct access route to the main shopping area; ▪ Provide quality open space and improve nearby play facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The need for pedestrian routes that allow for direct access routes to the main shopping area; ▪ High Quality public Realm ▪ Car Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of new road infrastructure as providing links to N78 and adjacent residential area as indicated on the associated masterplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of improved road infrastructure with adjoining areas ▪ Develop a Class II / neighbourhood park within the Ballyhimmin Residential Development Area ▪ Children's play facilities

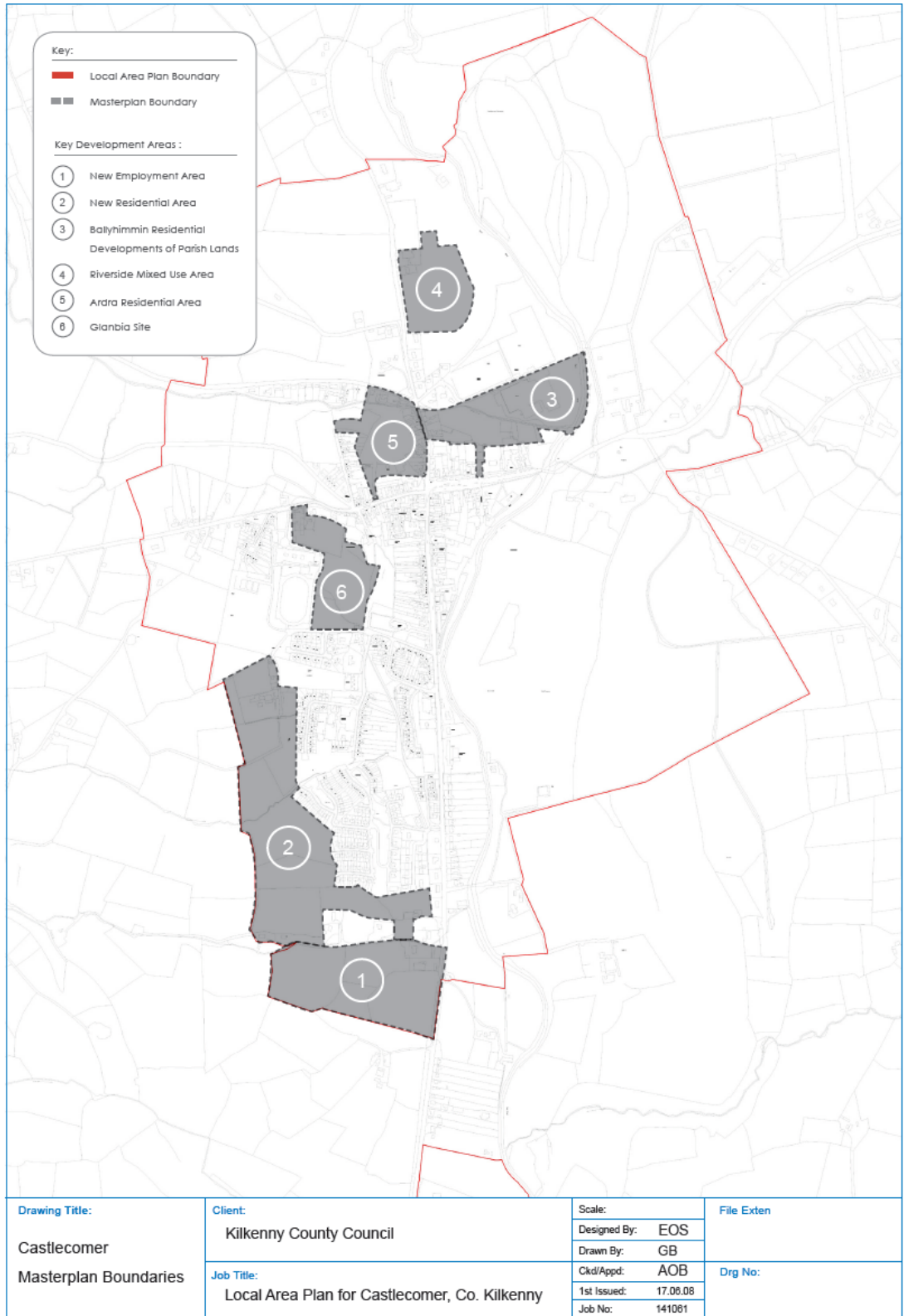


Figure 8.1: Key Development Areas

9. Movement Strategy

- 9.1.1 The purpose of the movement strategy is to identify the network of movement patterns for people moving by foot, cycle or car and show linkages between existing areas / nodes of activity such as the Castlecomer Demesne, Golf Club and other facilities such as schools in addition to the new movement patterns to be created by the key development areas.
-

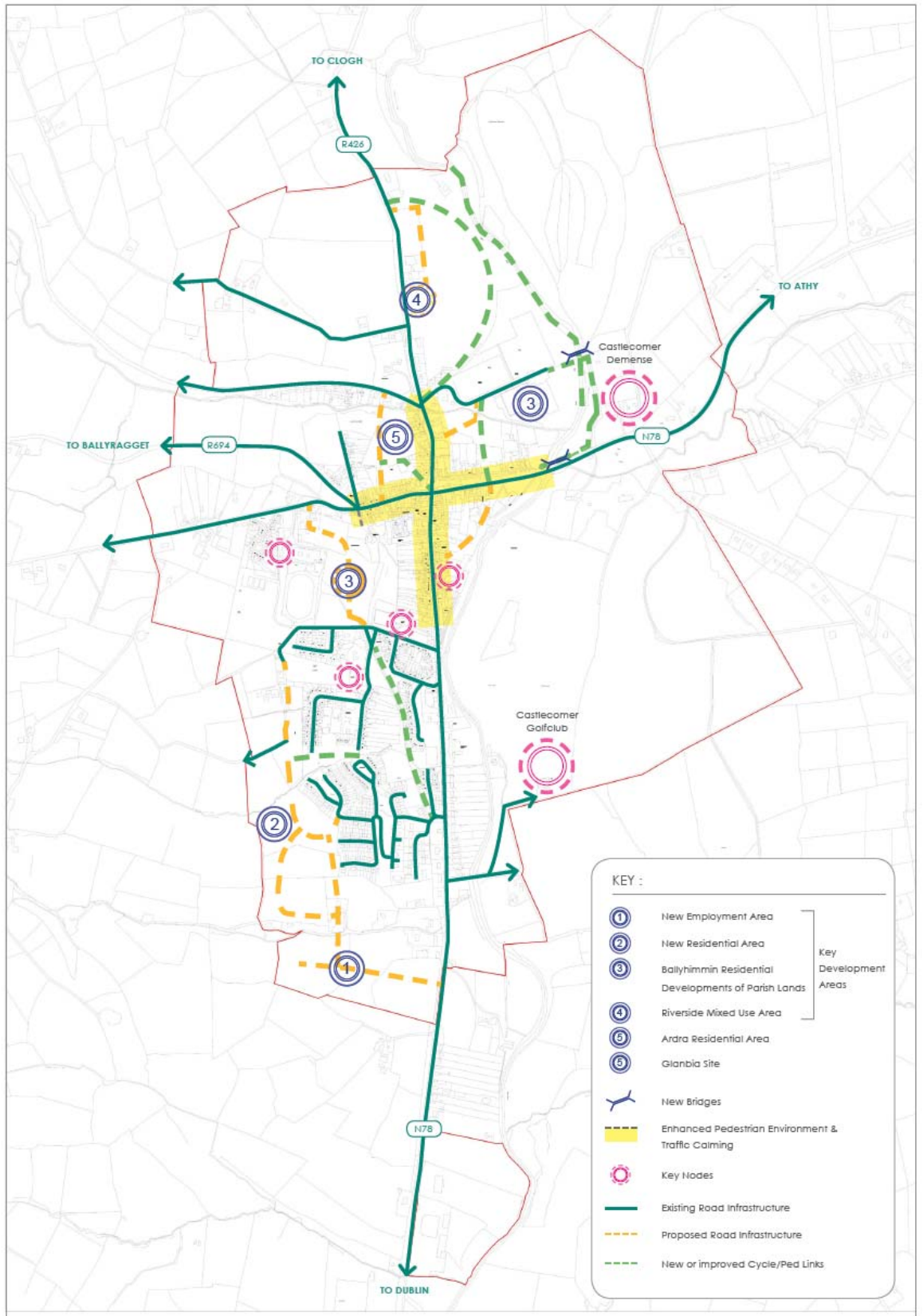


Figure 9.1: Castlecomer Movement Strategy

Appendix 1 Open Space Assessment

Table 9.1: Open Space 1

Open Space 1

Location:
Corner Of
Barrack St
Size: 0.31 Ha
Type: Amenity



Accessibility	This site is an informal open space accessible to the public. Physical accessibility is limited due to the steep slopes surrounding it.
Quality	It is a visually attractive site which is visible from the surrounding area. It is situated on the edge of the built up area at a junction of four roads and the visual prominence of the site is reinforced by a religious statue, located at the corner of the site. There is no formal recreational value to the space, however it is well maintained and benefits from public seating and litter bin. The central area comprises informal grassland with a group of trees towards the back of the site. An informal pathway begins towards the south west edge of the site leading to adjacent agricultural lands.
Primary purpose Management and Maintenance Value ¹²	Amenity The site is well maintained. This site is valuable in terms of its informal recreation, amenity, social role.

¹² Recreational, structural Role, amenity, education cultural heritage, social and cultural, ecological role nature conservation designations

Table 9.2: Open Space 2

Open Space 2

Location: Open Space Opposite Boys National School

Size: 0.58 Ha

Type: Amenity / Linear



Accessibility Quality

This site is an informal open space accessible to the public. It is a visually attractive site and benefits from good viewing points to the upland landscape that surrounds the town. The path of the disused railway traverses the site from its northern extent. There no formal recreational value to the space, however it is well maintained and benefits from public seating at the centre of the viewing area.

Primary purpose Management and Maintenance Value

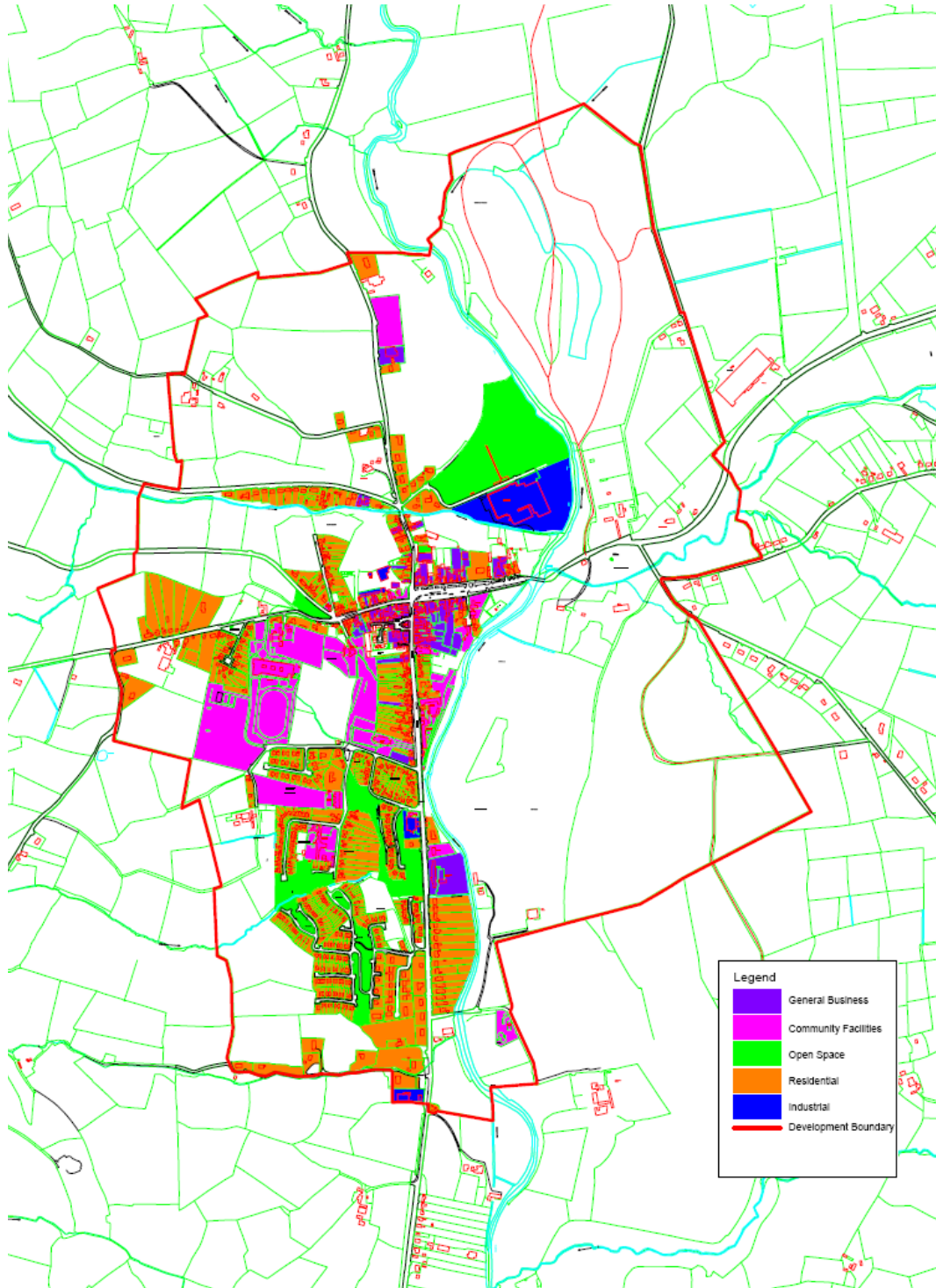
Amenity and green corridor. The site is well maintained.

This site is valuable in terms of its informal recreation, amenity and structural role.

Table 9.3 Open Space 3

<p>Open Space 3 Location: Size: 5.13 Ha Type: Amenity</p>	
<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>This site comprise of two areas for outdoor formal recreation including a soccer and GAA pitch. It is voluntary sectors owned and managed although use for GAA purpose is in decline due to new facilities located on the Kilkenny road outside the town boundary. This site is in good proximity to the town and reasonably accessible from surrounding residential and commercial area.</p>
<p>Quality</p>	<p>The site is poorly overlooked as it is located adjacent to industrial buildings and the backlands of the commercial zone of the town centre. There is currently limited opportunity for amenity use but the quality of the of the space could be improved by providing for additional functions and increasing activity on the space.</p>
<p>Primary purpose</p>	<p>Formal outdoor recreational</p>
<p>Management and Maintenance</p>	<p>The sites are well maintained.</p>
<p>Value</p>	<p>This site is valuable in terms of its informal recreation, amenity, and social role.</p>

Appendix 2: Existing Land Use Survey



Legend	
	General Business
	Community Facilities
	Open Space
	Residential
	Industrial
	Development Boundary

Map Title Castlecomer Land Use Survey	Client Kilkenny County Council	8 Waterloo Place Dublin 2 T: 01 506 9030 F: 01 506 9037 www.buchanan.co.uk		Scale N.T.S.	Designed by: Joanna Chadwick Drawn by: Joanna Chadwick Checked by: Ailish O'Shea Issued: 12/05/08 Job No: 041281
	Job Title Castlecomer Local Area Plan			Dip No. 1	

Appendix 3: Summary of Consultation Responses

This chapter summarises the issues raised during a pre draft consultation event for the Castlecomer Local Area Plan (LAP). The event took place on the evening of the 10th January 2008 at Castlecomer Community School. The meeting was well attended by a range of stakeholders and members of the local community in Castlecomer and the results of the event will be considered during the preparation of the Draft LAP.

The evening included introductory comments from Caitriona Reilly, Executive Planner at Kilkenny County Council and a presentation given by Alice Charles, Associate Planner, Colin Buchanan who has been appointed by the County Council to produce the Local Area Plan (LAP). The presentation set out the process involved in producing a LAP, the work undertaken to date and provided an overview of the emerging issues that the LAP should seek to address.

Stakeholders and members of the local community formed discussion groups and focusing on the following topics:

-
- Population and Settlement
- Housing
- Employment and Industry
- Retail
- Community
- Infrastructure
- Heritage
- Agriculture
- Tourism

The summary reflects the feedback received on these subjects and is structured accordingly.

Population and Settlement

The Demesne is a significant feature of the town which needs protection and some suggested that the designation should be extended to the east. In terms of the location of the new development options included areas to the west of the town, around the Kilkenny Road, and at Kiltown /Crosshill.

Some consultees were concerned that Castlecomer had not grown and felt that constraints included the town's topography and the fact that an insufficient amount of land is zoned. They considered that additional land would be required for residential, providing further opportunities for new and better quality housing to keep people in Castlecomer. Consultation results also highlighted the limited employment and business opportunities in the town, the need for additional industrial zoning that would accommodate business uses and supporting uses such as hotel and leisure facilities.

Results confirmed the need for infrastructure; in particular better water management which should be provided in conjunction with new development, and highlighted the role that infrastructure would play in facilitating new development. Comments raised options for improving the town centre and these included the additional car parking and the provision of new infrastructure that would facilitate use of backlands and curb linear development.

Housing

A considerable range of views were gathered in relation to housing in the town. For some, demand for new housing is strong and additional land should be zoned. However, other consultees felt that there is currently sufficient land zoned considering service constraints. There was a general consensus that a range of housing types should be sought however a low take up of affordable housing was mentioned. Other housing types considered included retirement homes and social housing however housing design that maintained and enhanced character through the provision of smaller clusters should be provided.

In terms of location, physical constraints were preventing additional housing near the town centre and housing on the outskirts of amenity areas in the east of the town should be pursued. Access and parking are important to facilitate further housing development particularly in the town centre.

Given the different views concerning the strength of housing demand some suggested that phasing a way of managing the supply of housing.

Employment and Industry

A majority of views concerning employment and industry highlighted a deficiency in employment uses and land zoned for employment in the town. In employment terms, there should be a focus on highly skilled jobs with improvements to the provision for industry, including start up incubator units, distribution and tourism sectors.

There was a general consensus that new employment development should be located on the Kilkenny Road on the outskirts of the town. Consultees considered that the town centre was too congested and as a result not suitable for further employment uses. Mixed use areas in the town centre should be extended to the outskirts.

The Local Area Plan should proactively address economic activity and provide for new business to locate in the town, however some felt that residential land should not be rezoned for industry.

Retail

A considerable number of comments focused on the issues of parking and parking management in the town centre. Comments considered that the LAP should identify sites where further parking could be provided. The Glanbia site was suggested as an area where this provision could be enhanced, and depending on site constraints, underground or multistorey parking provided. The bridge at the end of the town was identified as an effective traffic calming measure but dangerous particularly with respect to pedestrian movement.

In relation to the retail in the town, general improvements to the retail offer and services are required. Responses highlighted a need for dentists, travel agents, sports shop, electrical and tools providers. In addition to these smaller units the town centre could also be improved through the provision of a bigger supermarket / shopping centre if anchor tenants could be found and potential sites for this should be identified.

Community

A range of views were raised concerning open space. Although some respondents considered that provision in the town was sufficient with respect to the Demesne and the

Golf Club, others considered that open space was deficient within the built up and access to open space should be improved.

The consultation highlighted a significant deficiency in walking routes in the town with possible improvements, particularly in terms of safety to be made to lighting, footpaths (main road), and signposting. Options for improvements to walking routes include Killtown land, the golf course, the welly race route and riverside route which could incorporate the provision of an additional river crossing.

In terms of built community facilities, developers should be required to provide these as part of new development. The consultation highlighted a deficiency with respect to indoor leisure facilities (swimming pool, gym, walking track, soccer, and handball), youth centres and play areas. The route to Ballycomey GAA was highlighted as presenting safety issues and should be improved through the addition of bicycle or footpath route.

The LAP should facilitate the provision of a long stay retirement village and the amalgamation of girls and boys national schools which could be located either near school or soccer/GAA pitch. Concerns were also raised with respect to the old Garda Barracks which some consultees felt needed to be upgraded, rezoned or delisted to provide for school uses.

Some results also highlighted issues of anti social behaviour which in areas could be addressed by CCTV.

Infrastructure

Traffic management was a major concern highlighted during the consultation. Responses referred to the existing traffic management plan which is inadequate and would need to be reviewed to deal with issues at Chatsworth Street, Market Square, and Barrack Street which needs to accommodate school traffic.

Parking issues were also raised to a similar extent and feedback highlighted the need for off street parking at the following locations: barrack street, post office, credit union and on the Kilkenny road before and after mass.

The provision of a taxi rank, the relocation of the bus stop from the square to school and the provision of bus shelters are measures that could improve movement in the town centre. More generally, pedestrian crossings need to be improved and some crossings could be relocated e.g. from Hassey's to community hall and courthouse. A relief road was suggested as a major infrastructural project that could reduce congestion in the town centre.

In terms of pedestrian movement, results highlighted a deficiency in the provision of footpaths to/from new estates. Pedestrian safety was confirmed as a particular issue with respect to the bridge, however some suggested alternatives including the provision of a footpath along a boardwalk, improving pedestrian access through new bridge crossings at the south/centre or at the north end of the town near to the timber factory.

Issues with regards to sewage and water were highlighted as urgent although plans for improvement may be on the horizon. However, these improvements are unlikely to address water issues for housing that is located on the other side of the demesne. A water scheme is therefore needed for this area.

Some concern was also raised with respect to mast development.

Heritage

Responses established a general consensus that the historic character of the town should be preserved and enhanced. Some suggestions made reference to the need to encourage the re use of buildings to prevent dereliction, identify sites for further protection and areas where conservation status could be pursued. There was support for the protection and restoration of the Creamery House, old fever hospital and workhouse, and Dysart bridges. Some considered that Kilkenny Street and Square should be proposed as a possible conservation area and that the barracks should be demolished, given its state of repair.

General controls to preserve the character included measures to remove and / or prevent plastic shop fronts and signage, improve signage more generally, ensure public lighting reflects the historic character of the town and control of masts in the town.

Agriculture

The consultation confirmed that dairy is the most prevalent agricultural sector in and surrounding the town, with honey production also forming part of the local industry. Farming has benefitted from the new farm shop at the Glanbia development but further support to the industry could be provided by a farmer's market in the town and more services that cater for agriculture in the town.

The topography in the town also impacts on agriculture, however further threats to the industry in close proximity to the town stems from the septic tanks which adversely impact quality of agricultural land and water.

Tourism

There was a consensus that the demesne/ discovery park holds vast potential for the town and a number of measures were suggested as a means of capitalizing on this asset. Within the grounds, activity could be increased by including leisure as well academic activities for schools, increasing the focus on eco tourism, improve the walking routes in the Demesne, and making more use of the lake in terms of angling/fishing. Increasing awareness of and access to the park should also be enhanced through additional signage and access by a footbridge from Princes grounds. Castlecomer town should also benefit from the park and signage could be provided to direct visitors from the demesne back to the town centre.

More generally, responses highlighted a deficiency in signage throughout the town. In particular, areas such as the approach roads and town centre could benefit from additional provision. The town centre experience could also be improved through additional street lighting and maps promoting the history of the town (mining etc.). Responses also referred to the lack of hotel facilities, restaurants and function/conference facilities and the possibility of introducing a nature walk by the river to improve the visitor's experience.
