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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Legal Basis

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

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

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

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

The Local Area Plan will remain in statute for a period of six years from the date of adoption (20th October 2003), notwithstanding any review of the County Development Plan. The Planning Authority may amend or revoke a Local Area Plan at any time. The Local Area Plan will cease to have effect in respect of the Fiddown area where it is inconsistent with the provisions of the County Development Plan as reviewed. A Local Area Plan must be reviewed at least six years from the making of the previous Local Area Plan.

1.2 Planning Context

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

Kilkenny County Council previously prepared a combined ‘Study and Action Plan’ for the villages of Piltown and Fiddown, in 1981.

1.3 Locational Context

Fiddown is located in the southwest of County Kilkenny, in the valley of the River Suir. Fiddown is ringed by uplands, with Slievenamon to the northwest, an outlier of Slievenamon to the north and the Comeragh Mountains to the southwest. The village is located to the north of a bridge across the Suir, which is an important crossing route to County Waterford. The Limerick/Waterford railway line runs through Fiddown.

Fiddown is situated just off the N24, the National Primary Route linking Waterford City to Limerick via Carrick-on-Suir. The Fiddown By-Pass has been completed recently, and runs to the north of the village. Fiddown is approximately 14 miles from Waterford City and 25 miles from Kilkenny City.

1.4 Historical Development

The name Fiddown derives from an Anglicisation of the Irish name, Fiadh Dúin, meaning ‘Wood of the Fort’, which related to the old Moat beside the Suir. The development of Fiddown occurred mainly due to its location at a strategic point on the River Suir, defended by Fiddown Castle. The construction of a bridge across the Suir, combined with the presence of a railway station, ensured Fiddown’s development throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

1.5 Urban Structure

Fiddown has a small core, centred around the junction of the Rathmore Road and the former N24. This core is formed by a grouping of some dwellings around an impressive, two storey building, facing the junction - Meade’s Toll Bridge Tavern, which is Fiddown’s only licensed premises. The core includes Fiddown Stores - the only retail outlet, T. Butler Engineering, and the Railway station. Opposite Meades, the former RIC barracks (now used as two dwelling houses) is an interesting structure and a landmark at the centre of the village, in particular upon arrival from the west.

Further south, nearer the river, lies Fiddown’s historical core, comprising Fiddown House, the Church and graveyard, the toll house and bridge and the site of the Castle, now an amenity area. This entire area is now dominated by an oil storage facility, situated on the banks of the Suir, run by Morris Oil company.

There is an existing right of way linking the two parts of the village, accessed from a lane opposite Meade’s Tavern, leading south past a derelict cottage, across the railway

line and down to the Strand road. There are attractive stone walls and steps providing access to the railway line at both sides.

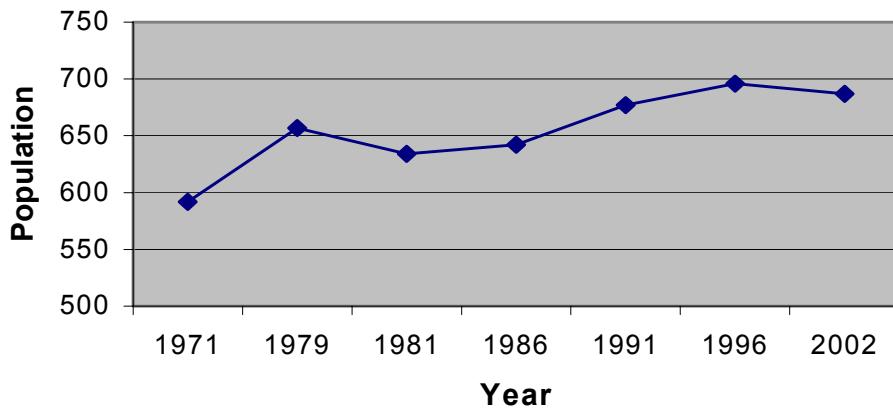
1.6 Population

The village of Fiddown has never been enumerated separately in the Census, but is included in the District Electoral Division of Fiddown. This DED had a population of 687 recorded at the 2002 Census. The recent trends in population are shown in Table 1 below and illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1: Population in Fiddown between 1961 and 1996

Year	Population
1971	592
1979	657
1981	634
1986	642
1991	677
1996	696
2002	687

**Figure 1 : Population change in Fiddown DED,
1971 - 2002**



From the above, it can be seen that the population within the ED has undergone numerous fluctuations from the lowest level of 592 in 1971 to the highest level of 696 in 1996. Between 1996 and 2002 the population of Fiddown ED fell from 696 to 687, a

decrease of 1.3%. This is in contrast to the trend being experienced by County Kilkenny as a whole, which saw an increase of 6.7% over the same period.

1.7 Planning History

An examination of recent planning history in the village gives some indication of the development trend. One housing development is under construction at the Fair Green, comprising 16 dwellings. One other multiple housing unit application was submitted in 2001, but withdrawn in 2002.

1.8 Designations

Fiddown is situated on the edge of an area designated as Area of High Amenity Number 10 in the County Development Plan, 2002. This area is bounded to the north by the N24 and to the south/ southeast by the River Suir. Areas of High Amenity are areas in the county, which have outstanding natural beauty and/or high interest value.

Fiddown Island Nature Reserve, a Natural Heritage Area (Site Code 000402), is situated to the south of the village. Natural Heritage Areas are landscape areas with particular scientific, amenity and natural interest. This Island is the property of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The site consists of a discrete island on the tidal reaches of the River Suir, a band of land on both sides of the river and a small stretch of tidal river and mudflats. This site is of national importance for its botanical assemblages and habitat rarity.

1.8.1 Record of Protected Structures

Fiddown has a historic character, and contains 7 features which are listed in the County Development Plan, 2002. As part of this plan an architectural assessment of the existing buildings in the village has been carried out. The Record of Protected Structures is shown in Appendix 1.

1.8.2 Archaeology

Duchas, the Heritage Service, advises that County Kilkenny is rich in archaeology. There are a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity of Fiddown, as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places.

The Records of Monuments and Places (RPM) of County Kilkenny identifies archaeological sites throughout the county. These recorded monuments are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The maps (i.e. the sites and Monuments Record for County Kilkenny) showing the archaeological sites throughout County Kilkenny are subject to updating. The RMP is not an exhaustive list of all

archaeology in existence. The RMP for County Kilkenny is available for inspection at the Planning Department in County Hall.

1.9 National Spatial Strategy

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

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

1.10 Public Consultation

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

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

A public consultation meeting was held on the 17th October 2002 in Piltown Community Centre, which was very well attended. This meeting was held in order to obtain local knowledge to assist in compiling a profile of the area, and to learn the views of the participants, which would be an input into the preparation of the Local Area plans. The

¹ Gateway – a nationally significant centre, whose location and scale supports the achievement of the type of critical mass necessary to sustain strong levels of job growth

Hub – a town that links the capability of the gateways to other areas

entire group was divided into six smaller groups, to discuss a number of topics with the aid of a facilitator. Each group dealt with four headings from the following list:

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

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

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

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

2 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

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

2.1 Housing and Population

At the public consultation, there was a general positive presumption in favour of development, which would allow for the development of ancillary services. However, it was emphasised that this development should be controlled, and should proceed only in an integrated manner, with services.

Another important view to emerge through consultation was that the public appreciated the consultation, and wanted to participate in decisions affecting their area. Increased community participation is an objective of the Kilkenny County Development Board Strategy, and consultation forms an integral part of this Local Area Plan process.

The DED of Fiddown had a population of 687 recorded at the 2002 Census, which encompasses a much broader area than the village of Fiddown, which only contains approximately 42 houses.

2.1.1 Development Strategy

There are two alternative approaches which could be adopted for the future development of Fiddown. The first is a policy of expansion for Fiddown, and the second is a policy of allowing for very limited or no growth. Both scenarios are discussed in order to illustrate their likely impacts on Fiddown.

2.1.1.1 Development Strategy A – Expansion of Fiddown

If a policy of encouraging a large amount of growth into Fiddown were to be adopted, this Plan could provide for the zoning of a large area of land in and around Fiddown.

At present, Fiddown has a small population, of approximately 140. The community and social services in Fiddown are limited to a shop and a pub. These are sufficient to serve the needs of its current population. A large expansion to Fiddown would require a concomitant provision of services, across a whole range, such as social, educational and recreational services within the expanded village. This would require large amounts of investment. Fiddown's unique historical character, which could be exploited more fully for income generation from tourism, could also come under threat from over-development of the village.

With any large expansion of the village it would be difficult to retain its character and scale as it is at present due to the relationship between the existing built form and any large expansion. The character and scale of the village would therefore be under threat and could be lost.

Fiddown's location, only a mile from the larger settlement of Piltown, places it in a close relationship with Piltown and as with any hierarchical arrangement, it has a dependence on Piltown for the provision of services. All the educational needs and most social as well as recreational needs are also met in Piltown (see the Piltown Proposed Local Area Plan).

Development Strategy A - The Expansion of Fiddown would result in:

- a) A demand for the duplication of services in both Fiddown and Piltown
- b) A possible threat to the historical character and tourist potential of the village from over-development
- c) A demand for upgrading and expansion of existing infrastructural services to meet the anticipated development expansion

2.1.1.2 Development Strategy B – Controlled growth of Fiddown

If a policy of controlled growth of Fiddown were to be adopted, this Plan would zone only a certain amount of land for development, and would instead provide mainly for consolidation of the existing built-up area and infill development.

At present, Fiddown's infrastructural services are adequate to serve the village's population, and spare capacity is available in the sewerage network. Much of Fiddown's social, recreational and educational needs are met in nearby Piltown. A development strategy to improve the existing built environment in Fiddown, allowing for controlled development, and focusing on its strengths as a historical, scenic, tourist attraction, could be beneficial to both Fiddown and Piltown, as the concentration of growth into Piltown would allow for greater economies of scale, as a larger population there will support the expansion of services and the delivery of a better service to the wider community.

Development Strategy B - The Controlled Growth of Fiddown would result in:

- a) Efficient use of existing infrastructural services
- b) Protection of the historical character of Fiddown
- c) Secure existing social services and support appropriate expansion

From an examination of the two development strategies above the most sustainable option is that for Development Strategy B - the Controlled Growth of Fiddown. This will allow the development of Fiddown up to a level so as to absorb the spare infrastructural capacity that already exists. Piltown therefore will provide the main focus for the

provision of community and social needs for Fiddown. The controlled development of Fiddown will support Piltown's role in that regard.

The town of Piltown is in an ideal position for growth, as it has well developed community and infrastructural services, an under-utilised housing stock, problems of dereliction and large demand for housing. The Council's policy is to encourage housing development to locate in the designated towns and villages where infrastructural and social services exist or are planned to be provided, and therefore it will be Council policy to encourage the controlled expansion of Piltown, as is outlined in the Piltown Proposed Local Area Plan, and to allow for limited growth in Fiddown. To allow for this consolidation of Piltown, and to protect the historical character and existing nature of Fiddown, the Council will adopt a policy of allowing only limited development, up to a level to absorb the spare infrastructural capacity that already exists.

Policy:	To ensure the controlled development of Fiddown which reflects the character of the existing village in terms of structure, pattern, scale, design and materials with adequate provision of open space
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2.1.2 Character of Fiddown

The need for any new development to respect and reflect the existing scale and character of Fiddown was a view expressed at the public consultation.

Due to the small size of the village, the townscape is only one factor contributing to the character of Fiddown. Townscape qualities are not very well established in Fiddown but there are some common elements in design and detailing which contribute to the overall unity of the village. Traditional elements characteristic of Fiddown include:

- Walls – predominantly rendering, some limestone, some with quoins
- Roofs - were traditionally constructed of natural slate, pitched and gable ended
- Windows – up and down timber sash, vertical emphasis
- Chimneys – traditional
- Doors – simple square headed doorcase

Another factor contributing to the character of Fiddown is the views across and through the village, both along the railway line and up and down the river. In addition, the footpath connection from the main Street across the railway line to the quay is also a convenient connection worthy of enhancement.

While there are some fine historic structures forming an attractive ensemble at the crossroads, there are others which stand detached, for instance the Church and Fiddown House which can be viewed over long distances and from the Motte at the site of the old castle at the riverside. Taken together, these factors give Fiddown a certain character and

depth which is unusual in a village. The views up and down the river from the quay and the views back to the village and across to the Fiddown House are important amenities which should be recognised and protected. Despite the oil depot on the waterfront, the setting of Fiddown in the wider landscape is attractive and has potential for sensitive enhancement and development.

Any new development should take its proposed form from the village character, and should innovate by reinterpretation – making it look new and local. Any new residential development will be in the village centre, where the issue of contribution to streetscape is critical, and further guidance on this is available in Chapter 4.

The road connecting Fiddown and Piltown, which is a crucial link between the two inter-related settlements, currently remains free of roadside development, and this maintains the identity and distinctiveness of both settlements. This road is likely to come under pressure from ribbon development, but the clear definition between the two settlements is considered worthy of preservation, and in order to maintain the identity and distinctiveness of both settlements, it is critical that development on this road is restricted.

Objectives:

1. To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings
2. To apply the rural housing policy of the County Development Plan, 2002 outside the development boundary
3. To encourage the building of new residential infill development where vacant plots exist
4. To ensure that infill development is in keeping with existing development in the vicinity in terms of scale, character, finishes and architectural features
5. To ensure that the local community participates in and has access to the planning system
6. To implement the Housing Strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002
7. To encourage sensitive conversion and reuse of historic structures, possibly to residential or tourist accommodation, where an original use has become redundant
8. To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at sustainable densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilised where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the village
9. To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes
10. To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the village to cater for its planned expansion over the period of the plan
11. To ensure a high standard in design, layout, provision of open space, landscaping and variation in house type and size in new residential developments

12. To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within residential areas and the village centre

2.1.3 Integration of Residential Developments

In assessing any new development in Fiddown, the Council may have regard to the development potential of adjoining land and will assess any application, with a view to providing for the development of these lands in an integrated manner. This applies to any land parcel, and relates to all aspects of development including open space provision, access arrangements and pedestrian and cycle links. The distinction between any residential schemes should be maintained by the use of design and detailing, to give each its own distinct identity.

Objective:	To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land
Objective:	To ensure the integration of adjoining residential schemes, where appropriate, in relation to pedestrian and cycleway links, public open space provision and scheme layout

2.2 Infrastructure

2.2.1 Sewerage Network

Fiddown is served by a sewerage scheme with primary treatment, which was constructed in 1986. This has a design Population Equivalent of 731, and is currently operating with a population equivalent of 179. During the public consultation the need to increase capacity to cater for future development was discussed. At present there is no necessity for the upgrading of the scheme, but it is envisaged that any future demand would be met by means of a Partnership Agreement with private developers to upgrade the treatment to full secondary treatment. This type of treatment is likely to be modular and capable of extension as required to meet such future sewage disposal needs.

Policy:	To ensure that the necessary sewerage facilities to serve the needs of all development within the village and to prevent pollution are provided
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Objective:	To maintain and improve sewerage services and to upgrade the treatment system to full secondary treatment as resources and finance permit
Objective:	To prohibit the connection to the sewerage system of any proposed development out of phase with the overall development of the

<p>village or where the existing services are committed for other development</p>	
Objective:	To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public sewers

2.2.2 Surface Water Drainage

There is no existing system specifically for stormwater disposal in Fiddown. Positive disposal of storm water will be a condition of all permitted development. This means that all storm water shall be collected in a storm water pipe network and disposed of to a watercourse, and shall not be stored or directed to a soakpit. It will be the responsibility of the developer to prove that the pipe network and/or watercourse into which he is discharging, has an adequate capacity, and will not lead to flooding.

Objective:	To seek the positive disposal of storm water in all developments
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2.2.3 Water supply

At the public consultation concerns were expressed with the existing water supply, with problems identified with the age of the pipe network and the pressure, capacity and quality of supply.

Fiddown is served by the combined Mooncoin and Fiddown Water supply scheme. This scheme has a design population of 12,950 and is currently serving approximately 9,004. Although the issue of water quality was raised at the public consultation, Water Quality Analyses over the years show that water quality in the area is good. However, as outlined in the County Development Plan, 2002, there is a policy of continuous monitoring by the Council of all water sources to ensure that water quality remains high.

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

2.2.4 Waste

Issues raised at the public consultation included an expression of support for the provision of recycling facilities in Fiddown, and the extension of the facilities available in Piltown, to include the collection of more items such as plastics or newspapers. It was felt that the dissemination of information could be improved to raise awareness of environmental issues, particularly amongst the adult population. The fees charged by the waste collectors was also raised as an issue.

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

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

With regard to recycling, it is Council and regional policy that bottle banks for clear, green and brown glass and aluminium cans are provided at villages throughout the county. There is a bottle bank in Piltown at present, located at the Community Centre, where glass bottles and drinks cans can be recycled and this also serves Fiddown. The aim is to have one bottle bank per 1000 head of population by the end of 2005. A kerbside collection for recyclables is proposed for 2003. These collections will cover newspapers, cardboard, magazines, food cans, drink cans and plastic. Bottles will still be disposed of at the Bottle banks.

The South East Regional Waste Management Plan has an objective to provide a recycling centre for the South of the County, and a site will be identified for this centre in 2004. This will be a one-stop-shop centre for all recyclables including paper, cardboard, steel food cans, household hazardous waste etc.

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

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

2.2.5 Telecommunications

Telecommunications have become centrally important to the prospects of any local economy, and their role in the development of Fiddown is acknowledged. One issue raised at the public consultation was the lack of broadband infrastructure in Fiddown. This is a national issue, and is examined in the National Development Plan, 2000 - 2006. Broadband in Kilkenny will be rolled out in accordance with the funding available under the NDP, but is not expected to reach Fiddown in the short term.

Policy:	To ensure that the necessary telecommunications and electricity supply are available for the existing and future development of Fiddown
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2.3 Employment and Economy

At the public consultation, the advantages of Fiddown as a location for employment sources were discussed, which included good infrastructure and proximity to Waterford Port. The Enterprise Centre in Fiddown was noted as a good facility. One issue identified was that although there was a low level of unemployment, a lot of the employment opportunities were low value. It was considered that there was a need for a mix of employment sources to combat this.

Historically, Fiddown was a transportation hub, centred first on the River Suir and later on the railway line. These strategic advantages have been supplemented by the construction of the N24 – the main Waterford-Limerick road.

The two largest employers in Fiddown are T. Butler Engineering and Morris Oil Company. T. Butler Engineering, which operates from the Enterprise Centre, forms wire and currently has a workforce of 14. Morris Oil Company is a fuel importer and distributor and currently employs 20 people.

Any sustainable land-use policy must provide for a balance between the provision of housing and the provision of employment opportunities. If the provision of residentially zoned land exceeds the potential for employment opportunities, or vice versa, this will result in a high level of commuting, which is unsustainable. The creation of employment opportunities should be matched to the growth of the village. As the growth of the village is

to be controlled, similarly, the amount of land to be zoned for employment purposes shall be restricted. However, given the close inter-relationship between Fiddown and Piltown, land zoned for employment purposes could also serve Piltown, given that Piltown also serves as a service centre for Fiddown.

The zoning of the village centre will include provision for a mix of employment sources, and additionally, a site specific for the development of industry will be designated. The Council will also encourage the creation of community led employment opportunities, similar to the Fiddown Enterprise Centre. The lands zoned for industrial purposes would be intended to facilitate the setting up or expansion of local enterprise initiatives and should not be used for warehousing/ distribution facilities which would have very low levels of employment relative to floor area and would also have relatively low levels of skills based employment.

Policy:	To promote enterprise creation opportunities and initiatives, in line with the growth of Fiddown
Objective:	To encourage job/employment creation initiatives on appropriately zoned and serviced land
Objective:	To facilitate, or assist in identifying agencies which can facilitate, community-led job creation schemes
Objective:	To have all new industrial developments appropriately landscaped and screened

2.3.1 Retail

One of the issues raised at the public meeting was that additional shopping facilities are required to serve the area. Fiddown only has one shop – Fiddown Stores, and other needs are catered for in Piltown, where there are some larger convenience outlets.

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

The facilitation of additional commercial activities to serve future development will be done through appropriate zoning in accordance with the CDP 2002 and the Retail

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

Planning Guidelines, 2000. Any new commercial developments in Fiddown will be catered for in the village centre zone.

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

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

2.3.2 Tourism

During the public consultation, the potential of Fiddown as an attractive settlement to tourists was discussed. It was felt that this potential was not being exploited. Some suggestions included that its location on the River Suir, could be exploited in the development of water-based recreational activities. The existing amenity area at the site of the Castle could be improved, possibly in line with this type of development. A river walk was also suggested, along both the River Suir and the Pill River, which could serve as a pleasant walking route to Piltown. The lack of facilities for tourists was identified as a restriction.

In relation to tourism, the National Spatial Strategy has made reference to the capacity of the areas of the south east to augment their established agricultural strength through specialist tourist attractions, based on the region's attractive coastline, river valleys and uplands.

Fiddown has much potential for the development of tourism, as a historic settlement, situated as it is on the River Suir. There are a number of feature structures in the village, including the Toll Gate and Toll House, in addition to the area of archaeology which is used as an amenity area at present.

This tourist potential could be harnessed by exploiting the River Suir and Pil Rivers' amenity value. Ancillary services for tourists would include the development of a café or craft shop. A possible location for this could be east of Fiddown Bridge, on the Morris

Oil site. If Morris Oil was to relocate in the future, this area could be developed for tourist facilities and water based recreational facilities.

The development of a river walk is discussed further under Section 2.6 Community facilities – Recreation.

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

At the public consultation the need for advance planning for educational facilities to serve any future expansion of the town was highlighted. The high cost of transporting children to Piltown from Fiddown was also mentioned.

There are at present no schools in Fiddown. The nearest primary school is located in Piltown, one mile away. The nearest secondary schools are located in Carrick-on-Suir and Mooncoin. There is a third level facility in Piltown, the Kildalton Agricultural College, which provides post Leaving Certificate qualifications in agriculture and agriculture-related areas.

Piltown National School, located to the north of Anthony's Inn, is the only school in Piltown. Piltown N.S. is a mixed school, with 8 teachers and a total of 213 pupils enrolled last year. The school has 9 classrooms, but only 8 are in use, so it can accommodate an additional 30-40 pupils. In addition, the school has approximately 2 acres to the rear, which could be used for an extension if the need arose.

A private bus operates to Piltown National School, which is not funded by the Department of Education. There is a funded bus available to Mooncoin, which is located approximately four miles away. This service is a result of the school amalgamation policy implemented in the 1970's. The reassessment of this situation by the Department of Education and the provision of funding for a bus to Piltown shall be supported by the Council.

Objective:	To facilitate the development of educational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population
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Objective:	To support the provision of funding for a bus to Piltown National School
Objective:	To co-operate with the Department of Education in the provision of an adequate number of school places to serve the needs of the village's population
Objective:	To co-operate with the Department of Education in the provision of adequate facilities to serve Piltown National School

2.4.1 Adult Education

The main topic discussed under this heading at the public consultation was the Fas Community Employment Scheme, for which there was a very positive feedback expressed.

The present Fás Community Employment scheme operating in the Piltown and Fiddown areas at present, provides employment for 12 people, including a supervisor, and has undertaken work with Piltown GAA, Fiddown Development Association and Iverk Show.

Adult education classes are currently available in Carrick-on-suir, Clonmel, Waterford and Mooncoin.

Objective:	To support the continuation of the Fás Community Employment Scheme or other equivalent/replacement scheme
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2.5 Transport

2.5.1 Roads

Fiddown has recently been bypassed. Some issues relating to the by-pass were raised at the public consultation meeting. These mainly related to safety issues with concerns regarding the adequacy of signage and sight lines at junctions. The tunnel was also a source of concern due to the surfacing, finishing and lighting. The piece of sculpture – the Bee Hive – was commented on as being interesting and pleasing.

Fiddown is located around three roads, the old N24, running through the centre, the Rathmore road to the west and the Strand Road to the south east leading to the amenity area by the river. The recently completed by-pass runs to the north of the village, and has successfully resulted in the removal of most heavy vehicle traffic from the village core.

A Final Stage 3 Safety Audit is to be carried out shortly on the By-pass and this will address any outstanding issues in relation to the completion of the by-pass. A Road Safety Audit involves the evaluation of road schemes during design and construction to identify potential hazards that may affect any type of road user, and the appropriate measures to eliminate or mitigate any such hazards.

Policy /Objective: To ensure that access to and from the by-pass is safe and convenient
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2.5.2 Footpaths and Lighting

Areas identified for footpaths and lighting at the public consultation included the main road through Fiddown, the Rathmore Road, Strand Road and the road between Fiddown and Piltown.

There is very little provision of footpaths in Fiddown, with the only continuous stretch being on the eastern side of the main street leading from Meade's Tavern to the junction with the Strand Road. There is also a new footpath provided at the fly-over.

The main road through Fiddown is well served by public lighting. Upgrading of public lighting was carried out in 1998. It is not intended to provide additional public lighting before the end of 2003, but the Strand road and Rathmore road have been placed on a list for consideration for when the public lighting programme resumes.

New public lighting will be required as part of any new residential development.

Considering the inter-dependency between Fiddown and Piltown, it is appropriate that a pedestrian and cycle linkage should be provided to link the two settlements.

Policy:	To provide quality lighting and footpaths throughout the village that will secure the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike
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Objective:	To provide a footpath on the main street through Fiddown
Objective:	To provide a footpath and public lighting at Rathmore Road and Strand road
Objective:	To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development
Objective:	To provide a safe pedestrian and cycleway linkage between Fiddown and Piltown

The securing of these objectives will be dependent on the availability of finance and the inclusion of the objectives in the Council's work programme for the area.

2.5.3 Traffic calming

With the recent completion of the by-pass, the issue of traffic through Fiddown is not as pressing as it has been in the past. However, some issues remain, as identified at the public consultation meeting.

It was felt that more warning is required that the 30 mph speed limit applies through the village, and the possibility of rumble strips or improved road markings was suggested. The need for a pedestrian crossing at a central location was also discussed. Another suggestion for traffic calming was that the 40 mph speed limit zone be extended.

In relation to speeding and speed limits, Kilkenny County Council carry out a general review of speed limits every two to three years and Fiddown's speed limits will be reviewed during the period of this Plan.

The removal of traffic from the town with the completion of the bypass has alleviated the situation for pedestrians. Nevertheless, a safe pedestrian crossing facility on the main road would be appropriate.

Policy:	To provide a safe management system in the village that will secure the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike
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Objective:	To investigate how a safe pedestrian crossing facility can be provided on the Main road in the village having regard to the need criteria and financing
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Objective:	To review the speed limits in Fiddown during the period of this Plan
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2.5.4 Linkages within the Village

As discussed in Section 2.1.5, in assessing any new development in Fiddown, the Council may have regard to the development potential of adjoining land. One of the elements of this integration will be the provision of pedestrian and cycle linkages between all new developments, to provide for a pleasant network of routes and walkways interlinking the village. There is an existing pleasant pedestrian link between the centre, at Meade's Tavern, and the Strand road, which crosses the railway line, and this historical link is an amenity feature of the village.

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

At the public consultation it was discussed that the existing bus stop, located in the forecourt area of Fiddown Stores is unsafe, as there is no designated bus set down or pick-up area. The need for a bus shelter at this location was mentioned.

In relation to rural transport, Kilkenny County Development Board recently published a report entitled 'Rural Transport Audit Report and Needs Assessment'³, which was carried out by WSP Ireland Ltd. This found that Fiddown was well serviced with scheduled bus services. The number of bus services daily are illustrated below. This good public transport service allows for the development of Fiddown as a commuter settlement for Waterford, in a more sustainable way than other similar settlements not served by public transport connections.

Frequency of Daily Bus Services serving Fiddown		
	From Fiddown	To Fiddown
Waterford	13	10
Limerick	6	7
Clonmel	2	3
Carrick-on-Suir	2	3

Objective:	To co-operate with bus operators to improve the safety and comfort of the existing bus stop
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In relation to local bus services, a recently launched initiative known as Ring-a-link bus service, provides a local bus service to parts of Carlow, Kilkenny and South Tipperary. This bus service offers a service to customers who ring in to avail of the service. This service currently covers parts of southwest Kilkenny.

Policy:	To improve the accessibility to public transport services
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³ Kilkenny County Development Board, 2002 *County Kilkenny Rural Transport Audit – Rural Transport Audit Report and Needs Assessment*

2.5.6 Rail

The Limerick/Waterford railway line runs through the village. At present there is one passenger return service daily between Limerick to Waterford. This train does not stop at Fiddown, and the nearest station is in Carrick-on-Suir.

2.5.7 Parking

At the public consultation, one of the issues raised was that parking posed a problem at Meade's Tavern.

There are no double yellow lines in the village at present and parking is mainly provided on street. Fiddown Stores has a forecourt area which provides sufficient car-parking for its customers. Having regard to the low level of commercial activity in Fiddown, there does not appear to be a significant need for additional car parking provision.

At Meade's Tavern, the junction is poorly defined, and is leading to disorganised parking. This situation can be improved with a more clearly defined junction arrangement and the relocation of all parking from the junction, possibly to the rear of Meade's Tavern.

Policy:	The Council will consider proposals for additional car parking on suitable sites and seek appropriate provision of adequate car parking in any new developments
Objective:	To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments
Objective:	To improve the junction arrangement at Meade's Tavern and seek alternative parking to serve the Tavern
Objective:	To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the village

2.6 Community Facilities – Recreation

2.6.1 Open space

At the public consultation meeting, the amenity area situated on the bank of the River Suir, off the Strand Road, was identified as being poorly maintained, and was considered unsafe by the locals. The need for the provision of seating, bins, planting and a maintenance plan was stated. This site was identified as having significant tourist and development potential.

The location of the amenity area would be ideal for water-based recreation, such as canoeing, boating and fishing. In addition, one of the recreational activities frequently

mentioned at the public consultation was walking, with suggestions for walking routes along both the River Suir and Pil Rivers. This amenity area would serve well as a starting point for any such walking route, with the development of seating and picnic area/ litter bins. Any development of open space requires a maintenance plan to ensure its upkeep.

The amenity area on the Strand road is the only area of open space provision in Fiddown. There is no other area of open space in the centre of Fiddown, and it is important to provide sufficient open space to meet the present and future needs of the population.

Policies:

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

a) There is a clear excess of playing fields or open space provision within the area. This should take into account the long-term needs of the community, the type and recreational and amenity value and accessibility of such provision.

b) Alternative compensatory provision is made which is both accessible to and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community.

c) The continued use, proper maintenance and enhancement of the amenity/facility can best be achieved by the redevelopment of a small part of the site that will not adversely affect its overall sporting, recreational and/or amenity value of the facility.

d) The site is indicated for an alternative use in the development plan.

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

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

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

Objective:	To improve the appearance and quality of the existing amenity area at the Strand Road
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Objective:	To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population
Objective:	To support the provision of a suitably equipped playground, in line with EU standard EN1176 for the design and management of play area equipment, in conjunction with the provision of open space, or in another appropriate location to serve the village's population

2.6.2 The River Suir

With regard to the River Suir, the view expressed at the public consultation meeting was that it was imperative to enhance and preserve this important feature. No development should impinge on the quality of the river, either via pollution or restriction of access. It was suggested that a river walk should be developed to link to the Pil River. The amenity area located on the Strand Road could also serve as a starting point for a River Suir Walk, which could connect Fiddown to Carrick-on-Suir. The possibility of this as a tourist attraction should be examined in conjunction with other relevant bodies such as Kilkenny City and County Tourism, SERTA, Bord Fáilte, Fiddown Development Association, BNS and Leader, local community groups and business interests.

An Amenity Scheme should be carried out for this area during the period of this Plan.

Policy:	To enhance and protect the quality of the River Suir, whilst maximising its amenity potential
Objective:	To protect the banks of the River Suir and to examine the possibility of developing a river walk along the bank, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups
Objective:	To assist in the provision of access points to the River Suir at appropriate locations by use of statutory powers
Objective:	To provide a river walk and cycleway along the River Suir to link to the River Pil
Objective:	To provide a river walk and cycleway along the River Pil
Objective:	To prepare an Amenity Scheme for the amenity area at the River Suir during the period of this Plan
Objective:	To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment by other uses

2.6.3 Recreation

The community of Fiddown use the facilities available in Piltown for many of their recreational needs, such as the hurling and soccer fields, and the Community centre.

Piltown is well served by recreational facilities generally. The GAA pitch is located north of the town centre, opposite the gates to Kildalton. The community centre provides a venue for local clubs and organisations to meet, and is very well used. There is a basketball court in the centre and some of the local organisations include a snooker club, squash club and table tennis club. The continued use of and expansion of uses should be encouraged in the Community Centre.

Objective:	To ensure the maximisation of the Community Centre as a facility for the community
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2.7 Amenity Enhancement

A number of issues with regard to amenity enhancement in Fiddown emerged at the public consultation. The need to protect and enhance the historical character of the village was discussed, with issues such as the need for control of design of shopfronts being highlighted. It was felt that litter was an issue, despite the best efforts of Tidy Towns, and that additional litter bins are required to be provided, with regular collections. Planting was also discussed as a method of improving the appearance of the village. The need for protection of the stone walls throughout the village was also stated.

2.7.1 Conservation

Fiddown has a unique historical character, with many features worthy of preservation and protection. As part of this Plan an assessment of the existing buildings in the town has been carried out with a view to revisiting the Record of Protected Structures. This may lead to the inclusion of additional structures in the Record, and the proposed additions to the list of Protected Structures are listed in Appendix 1.

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

In general, new development should relate closely to the established character of the village, respecting the disciplines of established building form, massing, height,

alignment, orientation and window proportions. Further details on this are set out in Chapter 4.

The stone walls in the village, along by the church and graveyard should be protected, as these add to the historical character of the village. At present, the chapel is a protected structure, identified in the County Development Plan. The meaning of the term structure includes the land lying within the curtilage of the structure and any other structures lying within that curtilage. This would include the boundary walls, and therefore they are protected. The pillbox which comprises part of this wall has been added as a proposed Protected Structure.

Policy:	To protect and enhance the historical character of Fiddown
Objective:	To seek the conservation and preservation of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures
Objective:	To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the village centre
Objective:	To conserve and protect the stone walls bordering the Church and Graveyard
Objective:	To preserve the character of the village, with control of shopfronts and advertising

2.7.2 General Appearance

The issue of litter has been dealt with under Infrastructure – Waste. Appropriate planting can be used to enhance the environment and additional planting would add to the amenity of the village, and would also add to any new developments. Landscaping requirements for new developments are outlined in Chapter 4.

Policy:	To provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance for both the built and natural environment of the village
Objective:	To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees in any new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows
Objective:	To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees through the village centre

2.7.3 Ecology

An Ecological Survey of the Fiddown area was carried out by an Ecologist as part of this Plan process. A number of areas were identified, and this report is included as Appendix 2. Within the development boundary, one area of interest was identified. This area is located to the south of the new overpass, and north of the railway line. There are remains of two quarries in this area and these form important habitats for numerous plant and animal species, such as fox, rabbit and birds. The area southwest of the quarries has been zoned for industrial development in this Plan, but the protection of these habitats and of all the areas of ecological interest will be an objective of this plan.

Objective:	To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character
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2.8 Community Supports – Social Services

2.8.1 Services

At present, Fiddown has the two commercial premises - one pub – Meade's Toll Bridge Tavern, and one shop – Fiddown Stores. Other services are provided for in Piltown. Fiddown's service base should expand to keep pace with development and to maintain its role in the local rural area.

Objective:	To maintain the role of Fiddown as a local market centre for its rural catchment area and to enhance its role as a centre to service its anticipated expansion during the period of the Plan
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2.8.2 Target groups

The two target groups identified at the public consultation were the youth and the elderly. Issues raised included the lack of a youth club in either Fiddown or Piltown, and problems with transportation to services for the elderly.

Although the youth are well catered for in terms of sports facilities provided at Piltown, there is at present no youth club in either Piltown or Fiddown. The Kilkenny County Development Board Strategy contains an objective for the development of youth services, which relies on the development of Youth Work Committees. Any community initiative for setting up a youth group would be supported by the Community and Enterprise Section of Kilkenny County Council.

Policy:	To support and facilitate the development of youth services in the Piltown and Fiddown area
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In the context of an ageing population, services for the elderly in the community are becoming more important. There is a Senior Citizens Club in Piltown catering for the elderly. The provision of transport to this club would result in the service being available to a wider range of people, including those from Fiddown.

Policy:	To facilitate the provision of a range of facilities to support the elderly population
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Objective:	To support the provision of a transport service for the elderly to the Senior Citizen's Club in Piltown
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2.8.3 Healthcare

As set out in Section 7.15 of the County Development Plan 2002, it is the policy of the Council to facilitate the development by the South Eastern Health Board of a comprehensive range of health and social care services and in particular services for the elderly including the development of community, hospital, community nursing and day care services throughout the County. There are three nursing homes at present in Carrick-on-Suir, which are adequate to serve an extended area. There is a modern Health Centre in Piltown, and two doctors available to cover the area. In addition, there is sheltered housing in Owning – Sue Ryder Homes – which offers suitable accommodation for the elderly.

Objective:	To co-operate with the SEHB in the provision of any health care services for the village
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2.8.4 Childcare

According to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities, “Government policy on childcare is to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community”⁴. Section 3.5.1 of the County Development Plan sets out the policies of Kilkenny County Council in relation to childcare provision. Kilkenny County Development Board have also published a Childcare Strategy 2002-2006, to “inform the development and delivery of quality services for children in the County”⁵ between 2002 and 2006.

There are some private play schools available in the area, but there is no full day-care service available. The provision of quality childcare services will be facilitated and

⁴ Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001, p. 3 *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Stationery Office

⁵ Kilkenny County Childcare Committee, 2002 *Childcare Development Plan 2002 - 2006*

encouraged by the Council, in suitable locations. Regard will also be given to the Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities issued by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Policy:	To ensure the provision of an adequate range of quality childcare facilities in appropriate locations
Objective:	To facilitate the development of a crèche in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and the local community on a suitable site within the village in line with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities

3 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

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

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

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

3.2 The Development Boundary

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

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

3.3 Land Use Zoning

The purpose of zoning is to indicate to property owners and the general public the types of development which the Council considers most appropriate in each land use category. The land use zoning objectives are detailed below and are shown on the Land Use zoning

and specific objectives map. It is the intention of the Planning Authority that the zoning of particular areas for a particular use shall not in itself exclude other uses in that area provided they are compatible with the dominant use.

Zoning is designed to reduce conflicting uses within areas, to protect resources and, in association with phasing, to ensure that land suitable for development is used to the best advantage of the community as a whole.

In the following paragraphs:

- **Permissible uses** means a use, which is acceptable in the relevant zone. However, it is still the subject of the normal planning process.
- **Open for consideration** means a use which may be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the individual proposal or development will be compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, and will not conflict with the permitted uses and also conforms with the proper planning and development of the area.

3.3.1 Residential

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

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, open spaces, places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, Nursing home.

Open for Consideration: Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages, retail shop of local convenience not more than 100m sq in gross area, public houses, 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.

3.3.2 Village Centre

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

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

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, retailing, retail warehousing, wholesale outlets, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, halting sites, hotels, motels, guest houses, clubs, private garages, open spaces,

public service installations, medical and related consultants, restaurants, public houses, car parks, halls or discotheques, and other uses as permitted and open for consideration in residential zoning.

Open for Consideration: workshop or light industry

3.3.3 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

Objective: To preserve, provide and improve recreational open space.

Permissible Uses: Open space

Open for Consideration: Sports clubs, recreational buildings, stands, pavilions, agricultural uses, public service installations.

3.3.4 Community Facilities

Objective: To protect, provide and improve community facilities.

Permissible Uses: Educational, religious and cultural facilities, public buildings, crèches, schools, churches, hospitals, convents, community centres and halls, school playing fields, colleges, orphanages, hostels, halting sites, cemeteries, libraries and medical centres, nursing homes.

Open for Consideration: Public service installations, Village centre uses which would not conflict with the other objectives of the Plan and which would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.3.5 Integrated Tourism and Leisure

Objective: To facilitate the development of an integrated tourism and leisure development which will not be inimical to the River Suir Special Area of Conservation or the setting of the protected structures.

Permissible Uses: Tourist accommodation and associated facilities, water-based recreational uses.

Open for Consideration: Limited residential accommodation linked to the integrated tourism and leisure facilities.

3.3.6 Industrial

Objective: To provide for industrial and related uses to provide for the employment needs of the local community.

Permissible Uses: Industrial premises and ancillary offices, open spaces.

Open for Consideration: Warehouses, car and heavy vehicle parks, Petrol filling stations, service stations, advertisement structures, wholesale premises, public service installations, play school/crèche.

3.3.7 Transitional Areas

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

3.4 Specific Objectives

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

3.4.1 Housing and Population

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support Services	Time scale
To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings	H1	Local Authority through the development control process	Developers, Landowners & Local Authority through development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To apply the rural housing policy of the County Development Plan, 2002 outside the development boundary	H2	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage the rebuilding of new residential infill development where vacant plots exist	H3	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that infill development is in keeping with existing development in the vicinity in terms of scale, character, finishes and architectural features	H4	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that the local community	H5	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing

participates in and has access to the planning system		local community, community development organisations	Community Development Organisations	from adoption of plan
To implement the Housing Strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002	H6	Local Authority	N/A	Ongoing from adoption of the plan
To encourage sensitive conversion and reuse of historic structures, possibly to residential or tourist accommodation, where an original use has become redundant	H7	Local Authority, Developers/ Community Organisations, Dúchas, DOELG	Local Authority, Developers/ Community Organisations, Dúchas, DOELG	On going from adoption of the plan
To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at sustainable densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilised where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the village	H8	Developers, landowners & local authority	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development control process	On going from adoption of the plan
To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes	H9	Developers, landowners & local authority	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development control process	On going from adoption of the plan
To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the village to cater for its planned expansion over the period of the plan	H10	Local Authority	N/A	On going from adoption of the plan
To ensure a high standard in design, layout, provision of open space, landscaping and variation in house type and size in new residential developments	H11	Developers, Landowners & Local Authority	Developers, Landowners & Local Authority through development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within residential areas and the village centre	H12	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land	H13	Local Authority through the development Control process	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the integration of adjoining residential schemes, where appropriate, in relation to pedestrian	H14	Local Authority through the development Control	Developers, landowners & local authority through	Ongoing from adoption

and cycleway links, public open space provision and scheme layout		process	the development control process	of plan
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3.4.2 Infrastructure

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To maintain and improve sewerage services and to upgrade the treatment system to full secondary treatment	I1	Local Authority	Local Authority, DOELG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To prohibit the connection to the sewerage system of any proposed development out of phase with the overall development of the village or where the existing services are committed for other development	I2	Local Authority through the development control process	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public sewers	I3	Local Authority through the development control process	Local Authority, Developers, Landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the positive disposal of storm water in all developments	I4	Local Authority, developers through development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide sufficient water to serve all lands zoned for development in this plan	I5	Local Authority	Local Authority, DOELG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To continuously monitor water quality in the area to ensure the maintenance of high water quality standards	I6	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public water mains	I7	Local Authority through the development control process	Local Authority, Developers, Landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure Fiddown has an adequate solid waste collection system	I8	Local Authority	Local Authority, Private Waste Collectors	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan	I9	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.3 Employment and Economy

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

3.4.4 Education and Training

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To facilitate the development of educational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population	E & T 1	Local Authority, school, in conjunction with Department of Education	Department of Education	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the provision of funding for a bus to Piltown National School	E & T2	Piltown National School, community, Department of Education	Department of Education/ Private bus operator/ Local Authority/ Piltown School	Short term
To co-operate with the Department of Education in the provision of an adequate number of school places to serve the needs of the village's population	E & T 3	Local Authority, school, in conjunction with Department of Education	Department of Education	Ongoing from adoption of plan

To co-operate with the Department of Education in the provision of adequate facilities to serve Piltown National School	E & T4	Department of Education/ Piltown National School	Department of Education/ Piltown National School	Long term
To support the continuation of the Fás Community Employment Scheme or other equivalent/ replacement scheme	E & T5	Fás, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Fás, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.5 Transport

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support Services	Time scale
To ensure that access to and from the by-pass is safe and convenient	T1	Local Authority and NRA	NRA	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide a footpath on the main street through Fiddown	T2	Local Authority, landowners, developers	Local Authority, landowners, developers	Long term
To provide a footpath and public lighting at Rathmore road and Strand road	T3	Local Authority, landowners, developers	Local Authority, landowners, developers	Long term
To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development	T4	Local Authority through development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide a pedestrian and cycleway linkage between Fiddown and Piltown	T5	Local Authority, Landowners, community groups	Local Authority, community groups	Long term
To investigate how a safe pedestrian crossing facility can be provided on the Main road in the village having regard to the need criteria and financing	T6	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term
To review the speed limits in Fiddown during the period of this plan	T7	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term
To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land	T8	Local Authority through development control process	Developers, landowners, Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new developments	T9	Local Authority, developers through development control process	Local Authority and Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To co-operate with bus operators to improve the safety and comfort of the existing bus stop	T10	Local Authority and Bus operators	Bus operators	Medium term

To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments	T11	Local Authority and Developers through development control process	Developers, Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To improve the junction arrangement at Meade's Tavern and seek alternative parking to serve the Tavern	T12	Local Authority, Meade's Tavern	Local Authority/ Land owners	Medium term
To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the town	T13	Local Authority	Local Authority, developers	Medium term

3.4.6 Community Facilities – Recreation

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support Services	Time scale
To improve the appearance and quality of the existing amenity area at the Strand Road	R1	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Development Association, Tourist bodies	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Development Association	Medium term
To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population	R2	Local Authority, landowners and Developers	Local Authority and Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the provision of a suitably equipped playground, in line with EU standard EN1176 for the design and management of play area equipment, in conjunction with the provision of open space, in an appropriate location to serve the village's population	R3	Local Authority, landowners and Developers	Local Authority and Developers	Medium term
To protect the banks of the River Suir and develop a river walk along the bank, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups	R4	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' Associations, Development association	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' Associations, Development association	Medium term
To assist in the provision of access points to the River Suir at appropriate locations by use of statutory powers	R5	Local Authority, Developers, landowners	Local Authority, Developers	Medium term
To provide a river walk and cycleway along the River Pil	R6	Local Authority, community groups	Local Authority, community groups	Long term
To provide a river walk along the River Suir to link to the River Pil	R7	Local Authority, community groups, tourism bodies	Local Authority, community groups, tourism bodies	Long term
To prepare an Amenity Scheme for the amenity area at the River Suir during the period of this Plan	R8	Local Authority, Community groups	Local authority, BNS	Long term
To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment	R9	Local Authority, developers through	Developers	Ongoing from

by other uses		development control process		adoption of plan
To ensure the maximisation of the Community Centre as a facility for the community	R10	Local Authority, Local community groups	Local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.7 Amenity Enhancement

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To seek the conservation and preservation of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures	A1	Local Authority, Dúchas, DoELG, Landowners	Local Authority, Dúchas, DoELG and landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the village centre	A2	Local Authority, Service Providers	Local Authority, Service Providers	Medium term
To conserve and protect the stone walls bordering the Church and Graveyard	A3	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To preserve the character of the village, with control of shopfronts and advertising	A4	Local Authority through development control process	Local Authority, Developers, Shop owners, businesses	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees in any new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows	A5	Local Authority, Developers, through development control process	Local Authority, Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees through the village centre	A6	Local Authority, Developers, Tidy towns, Development Association	Local Authority, Developers, Tidy towns, Development Association	Medium term
To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character	A7	Dúchas, Local Authority, community, landowners	Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, SERTA, An Bord Failte, BNS and Leader	Ongoing from adoption of the plan

3.4.8 Community Supports – Social Services

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and support services	Time scale
To maintain the role of Fiddown as a local market centre for its rural catchment area and to enhance its role as a centre to service its anticipated expansion during the period of the Plan	S1	Local Authority, Local retailers	Local Authority, Local retailers	Medium term
To support the provision of a transport service for the elderly to the Senior Citizen's Club in Piltown	S2	Local Authority, local community, SEHB, BNS	SEHB, local community, BNS	Medium term
To co-operate with the SEHB in the provision of any health care services for the village	S3	Local Authority, SEHB	SEHB	Ongoing from adoption of the plan
To facilitate the development of a crèche in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and the local community on a suitable site within the village in line with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities	S4	Local Authority / Local development group, County childcare committee	NDP county childcare committee, local authority, Department of Justice	Short Term

3.5 Conclusion

The realisation of these objectives over a period of time will, it is felt, significantly benefit the village, ensuring its orderly development and improvement. The achievement of the objectives will be dependent on the availability of finance and the inclusion of the objectives in the work programmes of the County Council and the responsible agencies. The local community, through local associations such as Residents Associations, Tidy Towns and the Fiddown Development Association, can play a huge role in contributing to the achievement of some of the objectives above. Kilkenny County Council's policy will be to facilitate and aid local organisations in this capacity.

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

4 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

4.1 Introduction

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

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

4.2 Design Guidance Principles in Fiddown

While it is recognised there is a need to embrace modern design there is also a need for new development to reflect and respect the existing character features within the village.

A principal aim for new development design should be a balance between innovation and local character, utilising the predominant forms within the village as a starting point for reference. Developments utilising the pattern of local forms as a stimulus for creativity will be encouraged.

4.3 Design Elements of Fiddown

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

4.3.1 Building line and Boundary Treatment

Although there is no uniform building line in Fiddown, buildings had traditionally very short set backs, and front boundaries are used to give a unity to the streetscape. Front boundaries are typically walls with gates.

These boundaries vary from the simple to the ornate, but are most successful when simple. One of the most effective is a low plastered wall. The removal of these boundaries to allow for the front to be used for parking detracts from the streetscape. The sense of order and enclosure is affected, and the parking of cars obscures the buildings and their amenity.

Redevelopment on sites where the front boundary has been removed or altered will provide an opportunity to restore street-line continuity by rebuilding to the building line and replacing the walls and/or railings.

4.3.2 Building Height

Houses of one and two storey alternate and even amongst houses of two storeys there is often a difference in height. This diversity does not disrupt the harmony of the streetscape because of the consistency in the other elements. The variety of rooflines convey a feeling of diversity, but unity is provided by their common domestic scale and common characteristics. New development should keep a level within the existing range of eaves and should have the same number of storeys as adjacent buildings.

4.3.3 Roofs

Varied roof lines are also characteristic of Fiddown. The roofs were traditionally of natural slate and are gabled, high pitched, single span with end stacks. Any new roof should be gabled and pitched and should match existing roofs in pitch, span and covering material. Gabled roofs are to be encouraged, instead of hipped roofs.

4.3.4 Proportion

A typical street consists of a series of vertically proportioned units linked together. Large developments should be subdivided into a series of bays, especially at ground floor level, to be more in keeping with the pattern of the existing street frontage. Long horizontal lines look out of place and should be avoided; a fascia which extends across several bays should be broken up by pilasters or other vertical divisions. Strong emphasis at fascia level to form a distinct divide between ground floor and upper storeys is an important feature of townscapes and should be included in any new development. The use of simple, vertical proportions are a feature in Fiddown. There is a unity and symmetry in most of the buildings in Fiddown, which should also be a characteristic of any new development.

4.3.5 Materials

When designing, the type of materials to be used in new developments or improvements to existing properties should

- a) Fit in with the prevailing character of Fiddown, and be designed to reflect and respect nearby colours, textures, materials, shapes, styles and proportions
- b) Utilise materials for extensions which match those of the existing property
- c) Ensure that replacement windows and doors respect the age and character of the building
- d) Encourage the re-use of appropriate building materials from buildings which have been unavoidably demolished

Traditional elements characteristic of Fiddown include:

- Walls – predominantly rendering, some limestone, some with quoins
- Roofs - were traditionally constructed of natural slate, pitched and gable ended
- Windows – up and down timber sash, vertical emphasis
- Chimneys – traditional
- Doors – simple square headed doorcase

4.4 Residential Development

While it is recognised there is a need to embrace modern design there is also a need for new development to reflect and respect the existing character features within the village.

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

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

New development shall seek to:

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

A principal aim for new development design should be a balance between innovation and local character, utilising the predominant forms within the village as a starting point for reference. Developments utilising the pattern of local forms as a stimulus for creativity will be encouraged.

4.4.1 Building Layout and Orientation

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

It is an aim to discourage the enclosure and isolation of individual housing estates and to promote the physical and social connectivity in a permeable network of streets and public spaces. Layouts shall promote this connectivity between phases of development. Large residential areas shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity.

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

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

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

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

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

Where large residential schemes are proposed, they shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity. These shall be designed to create safety for young children, facilitate social interaction and introduce a

variety into the visual environment whilst avoiding a monotonous repetitive type development. Each group of houses should have its own visual identity, variation being achieved by layout, including building lines, house design, colour and hard and soft landscaping. New development designs should avoid monotonous repetition by inclusion of subtle variation.

4.4.1.1 Ecology & Bio-diversity

Layouts should encourage bio-diversity by preserving and providing cover for species and where appropriate avoiding the culverting of watercourses and providing new water areas. Planting should normally use native trees and shrub species and native stock; tree species with berries are important for wintering birds; trees which support a high biomass of insects in summer are important for breeding birds; the setting aside of maintenance free areas and the avoidance or limitation of the use of herbicides and pesticides are all practices which will encourage bio-diversity.

4.4.2 Car Parking

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

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

4.4.3 Density

There is no set maximum or minimum density recommended. A high standard of architectural design and layout will be required in residential developments. The Council will seek to ensure that new developments have an individuality and a sense of place which is generated by the interaction between the physical characteristics and features of the site and its surroundings and the layout, landscaping and design of the new housing. It is the policy of the County Council that this high standard should not be diluted in newly constructed developments and that designs and layouts will be welcome which pay regard to the qualities and appearance of the existing area.

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.4 Design

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

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

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

New development must recognise and be sympathetic to the existing town and help to renew the specific architectural traditions of the area as outlined above e.g. lime plaster render, vertical fenestration, blue/black slate and boundary treatment to individual plots.

4.4.5 Infill Development

Infill development will be required to maintain established building and rooflines and proportions. Infill within existing terraces will also be required to take cognisance of roof pitch, fascia level, parapet, eaves and cornice lines, the line of window heads and

string courses. As a general principle the numbers of facing materials used on a building should be kept to a minimum.

4.4.6 Public Open Space

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

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

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

The Council will not normally permit new residential development unless open space is provided within the development to a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population (circa 300 dwellings) or greater. Where a proposed development is located in close proximity to an established park area or zoned open space this may be relaxed depending on the nature and quality of existing provision. This relaxation will only be considered where the development pays a financial contribution towards the improvement of the open space so as to improve its quality and carrying capacity

Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space required under this policy where spaces and facilities are not taken in charge by the Local Authority.

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

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

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

Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space required under this policy either through management companies or agreements with the planning authority.

Adequate areas of open space should be an integral part of any new residential development to meet the needs generated by that development. The overall standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population is recognised in the Residential Density Guidelines for Local Authorities and will normally be applied in assessing proposals for open space for children's play and informal amenity. In developments, which are adjacent to and provide for easy access to significant areas of existing public open space a lesser standard of provision may be acceptable.

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

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

Developers should consider providing a variety of open spaces both formal and informal semi-natural areas should be provided such as wetlands, woodlands, meadows, green corridors as well as formal gardens, and seating areas. These elements work best as part of a structure to the provision of open space.

4.4.7 The Amenity Area at the River Suir

The retention and improvement of the existing amenity area along the banks of the River Suir, on the site of Fiddown Castle, is an objective of this plan. The development control process will be utilised to secure the implementation of this objective.

This park will be an attractive feature in the village, making use of the amenity value of the River Suir, and could be used for the development of recreational activities. An area of land adjoining this site has been zoned as residential in this Plan, to provide for the passive supervision of this open space. Any residential development bordering this area shall orient the maximum number of dwellings towards it, to allow for passive supervision. This residential development should be designed to interact with the open space, and the use of low walls and hedging should be stipulated, as high boundary walls can create a discouraging environment and pose a security risk.

It is an objective of this Plan to prepare an Amenity Scheme for this area during the period of this Plan. Tree planting should be undertaken, to provide a pleasant leafy environment, which provides weather protection, but does not provide opportunity for concealment. In addition, only low sparse shrubs and flowers should be planted.

4.4.8 Private Open Space

An adequate amount of private open space should be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling. In general the requirement will be 60 to 75 sq.m minimum for 3/4/5 bedoomed houses in order to ensure that most household activities are accommodated and at the same offers visual delight, receive some sunshine and encourage plant growth. A standard of 22 metres will normally be required between directly opposing first floor windows. However where adequate levels of privacy are provided this depth may be reduced.

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

4.4.9 Integration of Residential Developments

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

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

4.4.10 Road and Estate Names

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

4.4.11 Services

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

4.4.12 Apartments/Duplex Style

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

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

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

All living room, kitchens and bedrooms should minimise overlooking of adjoining/adjacent residences and should be so located so to avoid facing towards nearby high boundary or gable walls.

4.4.13 Access for People with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

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

4.5 Car parking and Loading

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

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

Where parking space is proposed in front of existing premises, existing railings or boundary walls shall be retained. They should be provided with proper public lighting facilities and shall be clearly demarcated. Car parking areas should be properly landscaped by the provision of trees, shrubs and grassed areas in order to ensure that damage to the visual amenities is avoided. Parking bays shall be adequately delineated.

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

In developments of an industrial or commercial nature, developers will be required to provide loading or unloading facilities sufficient to meet the demand of such development

Kilkenny County Council may modify the requirements of loading and unloading facilities in any particular case where it considers it would be in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the area to do so. Parking and service spaces must be located on site so as to prevent street obstruction and should be located where possible to the rear and side of the buildings and in such a manner to ensure minimal impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

Where a number of uses are contained within one development, the various uses shall be separated and the overall parking requirements for the development shall be assessed relative to each separate use in order to compute the overall parking requirement for the development (e.g. in a hotel the function rooms, bars etc. shall be assessed as separate from the bedroom provision).

In addition to the above requirements, developers will be required to provide and maintain loading and circulation facilities sufficient to meet the likely demand of each development.

Car Parking Standards for Various Land Uses

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Parking Spaces per Unit</i>
Dwelling House (Residential areas)	A minimum of 1 car space per dwelling unit 0.25 per dwelling for visitor parking
Flat or Bed-sitter	1.25 spaces per unit
Schools	1 space for every classroom plus 4 additional spaces
Churches, theatres, Public halls	1 car space per 10 seats.
Hotels, hostels and guesthouses	1 car space per bedroom
Hotel function rooms	1 space per 10 sq. metres
Public houses, inc. hotel bar	1 car space for every 5 sq. m of bar and lounge floor area.
Shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores	5 car spaces for every 93 m ² of gross floor area.
Shops	1 car space per 10sq. metres
Restaurants, cafes	1 car space per 20 m ² gross floor area
Banks and offices	1 car space per 15m ² of gross floor area and additional space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Industry	1 car space for every 60m ² of gross industrial floor area and operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Warehousing	1 car space for every 100m ² of gross floor area and additional parking space to be determined by the Planning Authority for each individual development.
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 sq. meters of net retail floor space
Golf or Pitch and Putt courses	4 car spaces per hole.
Golf driving ranges, shooting ranges	1 space per 2m of base line/ per trap
Sports grounds and sports clubs	1 car space for every 15m ² of floor area and 6 spaces for each pitch and additional operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Hospital	1.50 spaces per bed
Clinics/Medical practices	2 spaces per consulting room

In the case of any use not specified above, the Planning Authority will determine the parking requirements, having regard to the traffic levels likely to be generated as a result of the development.

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

4.6 Shopfronts and Advertising

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

4.7 The Likely Significant Effects on the Environment of Implementing the Proposed Fiddown Local Area Plan

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

4.7.1 Description of the Proposed Local Area Plan

The Local Area Plan lands comprise approximately 4 hectares (9.8 acres) of residential development, and 8 hectares (19.76 acres) of mixed use development.

4.7.2 Identification of likely significant effects on the environment

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

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

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

4.7.2.1 Human beings

Environmental baseline: The population of Fiddown ED was recorded as 687 at the 2002 Census. The lands identified for development are all contiguous to the existing built up area of Fiddown and are within walking distance of the Main Street. There is limited employment associated with the current agricultural use of much of the zoned lands.

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

4.7.2.2 Material Assets

Traffic:

Environmental baseline: There are a number of roads existing in Fiddown at present.

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

Water Supply:

Environmental baseline: Fiddown is served by the Mooncoin and Fiddown Water supply scheme. This scheme has a design population of 12,950 and is currently serving approximately 9,004.

Likely significant effects:

- Increased demand for water supply

Proposed mitigation measures:

- New water sources will be accessed and utilised to serve the area
- New developments will only be permitted subject to adequate capacity in water supply being available

Foul and Surface Water Drainage:

Environmental baseline: The development of additional lands will lead to an increase in the demand for foul water and surface water drainage. Fiddown is currently served by a primary sewerage treatment system with capacity for a PE of 552.

Likely significant effects:

Infrastructure will be improved through additional development

Proposed mitigation measures:

Improved foul drainage facilities to cater for new housing developments

4.7.2.3 Flora and fauna

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

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

4.7.2.4 Archaeology and cultural heritage

Environmental baseline:

There are a number of protected structures and sites of archaeology in the village.

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

- Policies and objectives to protect the archaeological heritage
- Archaeological assessment prior to the commencement of development, where required.
- The inclusion in the List of protected structures of the buildings of architectural and historic interest

4.7.2.5 Other possible effects

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

4.7.3 Consideration of Alternatives: Could Development Take Place Elsewhere

The development of Fiddown will have a significant impact as a result of the change of use of areas from agricultural and fallow use to residential, employment and social uses. It is a policy of the Council to encourage development within such designated towns and

villages where the infrastructure and services exist. Development in such settlements constitutes a more efficient use of existing resources.

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

APPENDIX 1 – PROTECTED STRUCTURES

Existing and Proposed Additions to Protected Structures in Fiddown

Protected Structure	Description	Location	Map Ref.	RPS No.
Road Bridge	Low arched road bridge which carries the road approach to the Suir Bridge		1	
Toll gate and Toll House	Toll gate and toll house with hood moulds over windows, eaves and pierced barge boarding	North end	2	C83
Pillbox	Rectangular plan, concrete military installation	Opposite the bridge, part of boundary wall to chapel	3	
Mausoleum	Mausoleum in Church Grounds	North of Fiddown Bridge	4	C480
Chapel	Little chapel built from an earlier church by Reverend Robert Watts, vicar of Fiddown, 1747	North of Fiddown Bridge	5	C79
Fiddown House	5 Bay, 3 storey gable ended house with a good rhythm of fenestration, the door case obscured by later porch	Behind the Chapel	6	C82
Railway Station	Large two-storey house (probably incorporating station master's house) with platform, canopied goods shed, signal box and level crossing		7	D123
House	Simple gable ended early C19 th house with gothic fenestration and two diagonally placed towers.	E. corner	8	C81
Former Shop	Small three bay single storey house and two storey gabled former shop		9	
House	Three bay, two storey house with rectangular plan		10	
Meade Bridge Tavern	5 Bays, 2 storeys	Village Centre	11	C80
Rathmore House	Country house with deep rectangular plan and façade of five bays and two storeys		12	

Note: Items with an RPS number are existing Protected Structures, those without are proposed additions.

APPENDIX 2 – ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

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

Prepared for
Kilkenny County Council

By:

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared on behalf of Kilkenny County Council prior to the preparation of a Local Area Plan for the village of Fiddown, Co Kilkenny.

This study was undertaken by Roger Goodwillie, Ecologist, of CAAS (Environmental Services) Ltd. It gives an account of habitats within the environs of the village and assesses their ecological importance. It is based on fieldwork carried out in the early part of 2003 so cannot give a full description of flora and fauna. However the relative value of habitats can be assessed even at this time. Additional information from Padraig Comerford (Dúchas) is acknowledged with thanks.

2. DESCRIPTION OF AREA

Note: Areas referenced are approximately indicated on Map 1 attached.

Fiddown is situated on the north-eastern bank of the Suir River at the crossing place that runs through Fiddown Island. It is bisected by the railway which has had an important role in exporting stone from quarries north-west of the town. The town is also sited at the upper limit of navigation for sea-going ships so has been a quay for imported coal and latterly for oil.

The study area is confined between the river and the new N24 by-pass so is long and narrow. Its main feature is the estuarine river channel which is tidal, and from this the ground rises slightly to the by-pass. The rise is more noticeable at the western end where the railway is in a cutting for a short distance.

The only feature of significant interest from the ecological point of view is the river itself which is a candidate SAC as the Lower River Suir (Code 2137). Elsewhere there are a few features at Fiddown House - a tiny pond, adjacent church and treelines which could have some value to bats. The old quarry system at the north-west end of the area (south of the railway) is interesting topographically and has a limited wildlife importance while the broad belt of scrub around the railway has a local concentration of small birds.

2.1 Suir Estuary (Area 1)

Apart from the oil terminal, the river bank consists of a fringe of willows that is frequently inundated and therefore full of plant and human litter. Willows *Salix triandra*, *S.fragilis*, *S.alba* and *S.cinerea* form most of the tree cover and grow above muddy ground that is partially vegetated with

<i>Senecio aquaticus</i>	marsh ragwort
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	marsh marigold
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	hemlock water dropwort
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	wild angelica
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	fool's watercress

<i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	reed grass
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	water figwort
<i>Leucojum aestivum</i>	summer snowflake

Drier sites at the back carry cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. Downstream of the bridge the trees become confined to a fringe along the estuary and the field on the inside is grassy, of reed grass *Phalaris arundinacea*, tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata* and false oat *Arrhenatherum elatius*. Presumably it was once mown for hay. The full site synopsis is appended to this report.

2.2 Fiddown House (Area 2)

This is a Georgian house formerly set in wooded grounds with a church on the roadside to the west. A number of mature trees remain around the front field. They are mostly beech, sycamore and horse chestnut though some gaps have been planted with individual ash trees. A significant copse of elm is gathered around a small pond, also on the roadside. Here celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*, lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum* and wild raspberry *Rubus idaeus* form a community that shades the pond and reduces its wildlife significance. However moorhen are likely to occur with passerines (song birds) in the bushes. Great tit, blue tit and goldcrest were noted.

The general habitat is suitable for bats though their numbers are not known.

2.3 North-Western Quarries (Area 3)

Most of the workings have been filled in and converted to intensive grassland so that few habitat features remain except for occasional steep slopes of gorse and hollows that flood in winter. South of the railway there is one such hollow filled largely with creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and curled dock *Rumex crispus* but also with some algae. The more interesting ground occurs north of the line where there are the remains of two separate quarries both marked on the map. The smaller is a scrubby mix of gorse *Ulex europaeus*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and willow *Salix cinerea* with a single crab apple *Malus domestica* in it. Although the site continues to be dumped in, a modest flora of celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*, lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*, hartstongue *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, shield fern *Polystichum setiferum* and bush vetch *Vicia sepium* occurs with a fine sheet of the moss *Thamnobryum alopecurum* at the base on ground that floods occasionally.

The larger quarry lies close under the bypass and consists of a ring of scrub around a grassy floor. Hawthorn *Craategus monogyna*, blackthorn, gorse and holly *Ilex aquifolium* occur with a little traveller's joy *Clematis vitalba*. The floor has creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, scutch *Elytrigia repens*, false oat *Arrhenatherum elatius*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, nettle *Urtica dioica* and broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* as well as

<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	false brome
<i>Carex divulsa</i>	grey sedge
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
<i>T.pratense</i>	red clover
<i>Odontites vernus</i>	red bartsia
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	common bent
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	herb robert
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	dog daisy
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	self-heal
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	thyme-leaved speedwell

A small amount of dumping is taking place in the north-east corner through a ring of newly planted Leyland cypress and poplar which will visually accentuate the edge.

The site has fox and rabbit as well as numerous bird species - song thrush, blackbird, robin, chaffinch, blue tit etc.

2.4 Railway Line West of Town

The strip of land taken by the railway west of the level crossing is relatively broad, probably because of the former quarrying activity. It consists mostly of a cutting overgrown with the typical scrub of hawthorn, blackthorn and gorse. A notable feature is the amount of traveller's joy *Clematis vitalba* which swamps many bushes and, with bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, makes many parts impenetrable. In openings rose-bay *Chamerion angustifolium*, field rose *Rosa arvensis*, figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*, wild carrot *Daucus carota* and cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans* grow with woodland plants such as germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys* and barren strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*.

Towards the western end this habitat runs off into a gully, the relic of a former quarry.

The area supports song birds, especially dunnock, robin and blackbird with the possibility of whitethroat in summer. It also is a useful wildlife link from which plants or animals may colonise new sites in hedges or elsewhere.

3. CONCLUSION

The Fiddown area is an integral part of the Lower River Suir which is a candidate SAC and of international interest. It takes in the river and its tree- or grass-covered margins that regularly flood. Apart from this the sites have a local value only but their wildlife role should be taken into account when new development is planned. The larger quarry beside the N24 bypass provides a useful habitat whose value could be much improved by management. It should not therefore be filled in.

APPENDIX

SAC SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME : LOWER RIVER SUIR

SITE CODE : 002137

This site consists of the tidal stretches of the River Suir, some of its tidal tributaries and a relatively long freshwater stretch of the Clodiagh River. The Suir flows through the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and Waterford before joining the Barrow/Nore at Cheekpoint. In the vicinity Carrick-on-Suir the river follows the limestone floor of the Carrick Syncline. This ribbon of limestone, however, dies out before the Suir reaches the sea and in its lower portion the river traverses through Old Red Sandstone and Ordovician rocks in the region of Waterford. The freshwater stretches of the Clodiagh River traverse Silurian rocks, through narrow bands of Old Red Sandstone and Lower Avonian Shales before reaching the carboniferous limestone close to its confluence with the Suir.

There are a number of Annex I habitats (EU Habitats Directive) contained within the site, including the priority habitat Alluvial Forest. This habitat is declining in Europe as a result of drainage and reclamation. The best examples of this type of woodland are found on the islands just below Carrick-on-Suir and at Fiddown Island. Species occurring here include Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Grey Willow (*S. cinerea*), Osier (*S. viminalis*), with Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Pendulus Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*). The terrain is littered with dead trunks and branches and intersected with small channels which carry small streams to the river. The bryophyte and lichen floras appear to be rich and require further investigation. A small plot is currently being coppiced and managed by National Parks and Wildlife. In the drier areas the wet woodland species merge with other tree and shrub species including Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Whitethorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). This adds further to the ecological interest of this site.

Old oak woodlands are also of importance at the site. The best examples are seen in Portlaw Wood which lies on both sides of the Clodiagh River. On the south-facing side the stand is more open and the Oaks (mainly *Quercus robur*) are well grown and spreading. Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) are common on the ground, indicating relatively high light conditions. Oak regeneration is dense, varying in age from 0-40 years and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is fairly common but mostly quite young. Across the valley, by contrast, the trees are much more closely spaced and though taller are poorly grown on average. There are no clearings; large

Oaks extend to the boundary wall. In the darker conditions, Ivy is much rarer and Holly much more frequent, forming a closed canopy in places. Oak regeneration is uncommon since there are as yet few natural clearings. The shallowness of the soil on the north-facing slope probably contributes to the poor tree growth there. The acid nature of the substrate has induced a "mountain" type Oakwood community to develop. There is an extensive species list present throughout including an abundance of mosses, liverworts and lichens. The rare lichen *Lobaria pulmonaria*, an indicator of ancient woodlands, is found.

Floating river vegetation is evident in the freshwater stretches of the River Suir. Typical species found include Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Milfoil (*Myriophyllum* spp.), Fennel Pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*), Curled Pondweed (*P. crispus*), Perfoliate Pondweed (*P. perfoliatus*), Pond Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*), other Crowfoots (*Ranunculus* spp.) and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. At a couple of locations along the river, Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*) occurs. This species is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

Salt meadows occur below Waterford city in old meadows where the embankment is absent, or has been breached, and along the tidal stretches of some of the in-flowing rivers below Little Island. There are very narrow, non-continuous bands of this habitat along both banks. More extensive areas are also seen along the south bank at Ballynakill, the east side of Little Island, and in three large salt meadows between Ballynakill and Cheekpoint. The Atlantic and Mediterranean sub types are generally intermixed. The species list is extensive and includes Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Oraches (*Atriplex* spp.), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Sea Couch Grass (*Elymus pycnanthus*), frequent Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*), occasional Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*), Parsley Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*), English Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia anglica*) and Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*). These species are more representative of the Atlantic sub-type of the habitat. Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*), is rather frequent along the main channel edge and up the internal channels. The legally protected (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999) Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) grows at the landward transition of the saltmarsh. Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*), an indicator of the Mediterranean salt meadows, also occurs.

Other habitats at the site include wet and dry grassland, marsh, reed swamp, improved grassland, coniferous plantations, deciduous woodland, scrub, tidal river, stony shore and mudflats.

The site is of particular conservation interest for the presence of a number of Annex II animal species, including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera* and *M. m. durrovensis*), Freshwater Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), Salmon (*Salmo salar*), Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax*), three speceis of Lampreys - Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) and River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and Otter (*Lutra lutra*). This is one of only three known spawning grounds in the country for Twaite Shad.

The site also supports populations of several other animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Natterer's Bat (*M. nattereri*), Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*), Badger (*Meles meles*), the Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) and the Frog (*Rana temporaria*).

Parts of the site have also been identified as of ornithological importance for a number of Annex I (EU Birds Directive) bird species, including Greenland White-fronted Goose (10), Golden Plover (1490), Whooper Swan (7) and Kingfisher. Figures given in brackets are the average maximum counts from 4 count areas within the site for the three winters between 1994 and 1997. Wintering populations of migratory birds use the site. Flocks are seen in Coolfinn Marsh and also along the reedbeds and saltmarsh areas of the Suir. Coolfinn supports nationally important numbers of Greylag Geese on a regular basis. Numbers between 600 and 700 are recorded. Other species occurring include Mallard (21), Teal (159), Wigeon (26), Tufted Duck (60), Pintail (4), Pochard (2), Little Grebe (2), Black-tailed Godwit (20), Oystercatcher (16), Lapwing (993), Dunlin (101), Curlew (195), Redshank (28), Greenshank (4) and Green Sandpiper (1). Nationally important numbers of Lapwing (2750) were recorded at Faithlegg in the winter of 1996/97.

Landuse at the site consists mainly of agricultural activities including grazing, silage production, fertilising and land reclamation. Arable crops are also grown. Both professional and leisure fishing takes place on the rivers. Recreational activities such as boating and walking are also popular. Several industrial developments border the site, which discharge into the river, including three dairy related operations and a tannery.

The Lower River Suir contains excellent examples of a number of Annex I habitats, including the priority habitat Alluvial Forest. The site also supports populations of several Annex II animal species and a number of Red Data Book animal species. The presence of two legally protected plants (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999) and the ornithological importance of the river adds further to the ecological interest of this site.

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