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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 Freshford is part of that policy initiative.

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

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

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

The Local Area Plan will remain in statute for a period of six years from the date of adoption, notwithstanding any review of the County Development Plan. The Planning Authority may amend or revoke a Local Area Plan at any time. The Local Area Plan will cease to have effect in respect of the Freshford 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. Freshford 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.

## **1.3 Previous Plans and Studies**

Kilkenny County Council had prepared a Freshford Village Study for Freshford in the early 1980's. This was a non-statutory plan which gave guidance for development in the

town. The Heritage Council published a Conservation Plan for St. Lachtain's Church in Freshford, and this outlined some general policies for conservation in Freshford. The local development group, Freshford 20-20 have published a document entitled Freshford Development Plan.

All three plans have been considered in the making of this plan.

## **1.4 Locational Context**

Freshford lies approximately 14.5 kilometres northwest of Kilkenny city. It is situated on the R693 which is a Regional road linking Kilkenny to the N8 at Urlingford, and on the R694 which links Freshford to Castlecomer.

The town is situated on the River Nuenna, a tributary of the River Nore, in an area of lowland to the west of the Nore valley. The Slieveardagh hills are situated to the southwest of Freshford.

## **1.5 Historical Development**



The name of the town derives from the old Irish name for the village, Acadh Ur, which when literally translated means Fresh Fields. Due to the mispronunciation of the Irish word, "Acadh" as "Ath" meaning Ford, the town became known as Freshford<sup>1</sup>. An abbey was founded at Freshford in the seventh century by the abbot St. Lachtain. While no visual evidence of this 622AD structure can be seen today, elements of its successor, a c.1100AD church dedicated to Saint Lachtain, survive as incorporated features in the present Church of Ireland church<sup>2</sup>. The most notable element to endure from the twelfth century church is the magnificent Hiberno-Romanesque porch. The gabled porch with a deeply recessed doorway was carved from sandstone and decorated with chevron motifs and human heads.

### **St. Lachtain's Church of Ireland**

The soft sandstone is worn and some of the detailed carvings have been lost, however early accounts and descriptions of the porch carvings have been recorded for posterity. Of particular interest is the inscription in old Irish character and language around the door which translates as follows;

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<sup>1</sup> Canon Corrigan, History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory

<sup>2</sup> Egan, P.M, Egan's Kilkenny Guide, 1884

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*'A prayer for Niamh, daughter of Corc and for Mathgamhain O'Chiarmaic, for whom was made this church. A prayer for Gille mo Cholmoc O'Ceannuain who made it'<sup>3</sup>*

The present St. Lachtain's Church of Ireland Church stands today as a 1730's rebuild of the twelfth century church. The walls of the church include, as features, elements of the earlier church while the graveyard contains gravemarkers dating to the seventeenth century.

While St. Lachtain's Abbey was an important establishment in Freshford and undoubtedly contributed not only to the spiritual fabric of the town but also to the economic and social growth of the area, another important edifice in Freshford was Upper Court.

Built originally by Hugh Mapleton, Bishop of Ossory, in 1251, it was used as the Bishop's Palace. Though no longer the case today, in the thirteenth century, Freshford was attached to St. Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny as a prebend (shared revenues of a cathedral/collegiate church). Built as a castle, it is believed locally that Bishop de Ledredo wrote many of his letters there while prosecuting Alice Kytler as a witch<sup>4</sup>. Upper Court today stands as a nineteenth-century mansion in need of attention. Built by the Eyre family, the spacious and well-appointed house is neo-Classical in its style. Though no architect has been attributed to the design, it is undoubtedly the work of a professional familiar with the new fashion for the neo-Classical which was imported from Europe. The landscaped gardens and walks throughout the property contribute greatly to the setting of the wonderful house.

The Eyre family, and in particular Thomas Eyre, had a philanthropic interest in Freshford and built the male and female schools, funded the building of the Roman Catholic church and installed the pumps on The Square. The Eyre family remained at Upper Court until the early twentieth century when the property reverted back to religious ownership.

The Mill Hill College at Upper Court opened as a seminary in 1932. The fine building lent itself to use as an educational institute with ample space for accommodation and classrooms. However, as the number of vocations began to fall, Mill Hill was forced to close as a seminary and instead opened its doors to the local community as a secondary school. Developing as a large school, taking in boarders, Upper Court House became too small and the Mill Hill Brothers undertook a programme of extension. These large extensions are now unused. The Mill Hill Secondary School closed its doors in 1980 and the property has been in private ownership ever since.

The Square in Freshford is a focal point in the town. It was never formally laid out but rather developed organically until its formalisation in the nineteenth century by Thomas Eyre. He had planned to create an impressive entrance to his house at Upper Court from the Square. His plans entailed building a male and female school at either end of the south side of the Square and between them an entrance to his estate. Luckily for the town

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<sup>3</sup> Freshford Profile 1995

<sup>4</sup> Egan, P.M, Egan's Kilkenny Guide, 1884

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the schools were realised in 1885, however the entrance gates were not. It was the same member of the Eyre family who installed two pumps on the Square. Later in about 1913 Stanislaus Eyre planted the horse chestnut trees that give the Square its formal appearance<sup>5</sup>.

Another prominent member of the community whose philanthropic work changed the appearance and more particularly the architecture of the town is Emma Browne Clayton. Described as an eccentric, she built the town hall, located on the north side of The Square and donated it to the town. She also built eight two-storey houses on Kilkenny Street replacing run down thatched huts. These houses were given to the Jubilee Nursing Association to lease to deserving applicants at a very low rent.



Another historic feature on the square is the curious base of a cross on a stepped platform. The cross once stood at the back entrance to Upper Court House on the Ballylarkin road and was erected by Sir Lucas Shee in memory of his wife Eileen Butler, daughter of Viscount Mountgarret, who died in 1622. The road adjacent to the original site derives its name from this – Bunacresha street or base of the cross.

#### **Base of a cross on stepped platform at the Square**

The cross was moved at the end of the eighteenth century by Sir William Morris to The Square where the base remains. The cross no longer survives at that location and its whereabouts is not known.

### **1.6 Urban Structure**

Freshford is bounded to the north and west by the Nuenna River and to the south by Upper Court Demesne. The centre of the town is ‘The Square’ from which four streets lead creating a crossroads. These streets are the principal routes into and out of the town.

The town possesses one complete ‘urban block’ delineated on all four sides by streets. The south side of this block corresponds with the north side of the Square and the rest of the block is comprised of Newbridge Street, Creel Street and Old Bridge Street. It is perhaps this distinguishing feature that takes Freshford from the realm of a village to that

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<sup>5</sup> McCheane, Desmond, *We grew up around Freshford*, 1982



of a town. It is also the more traditional manner for extending a town, as opposed to the emphasis on cul-de-sacs that has occurred in more recent times (and as evident in the Woodview Estate). There are opportunities to extend this street network (of urban blocks) in the town's future development, particularly south of Bunacresha Street.

Most of the town's development has occurred as single frontage development along the town's principal streets and/or approach roads. This tends to limit the scope for opening up the rear of sites (backland areas) for development. This pattern of ribbon development is more pronounced along Bohergloss Street and on the eastern approach roads to the town, blurring the urban-rural divide, and the impression of a neat and compact town.

### **1.6.1 Kilkenny Street**

As the name suggests, Kilkenny Street is the road leading from Freshford to Kilkenny City. A wide straight street, it is mainly populated by two-storey houses. On the north



corner of the street at the centre of the town is St. Lachtain's Church of Ireland church. The church faces onto Newbridge Street but the graveyard and boundary wall forms the corner of Kilkenny Street. The south corner is formed by a newsagents/café with a chamfered entrance. This architectural device serves to formalise the corner and allows access from both the Square and Kilkenny Street.

#### **The Square with St. Lachtains in the background**

Further up the street on the north side is a modern garage. Set back off the road with a canopy over the service area, this modern infill development breaks the building line of the street. There is a public house located on the south side of the street and its brightly painted front elevation is an attractive feature. At the end of Kilkenny Street, a road known as Clintstown Road runs in a northerly direction. At their junction is a small triangular green area with parking spaces and the town's recycling facilities. This green area is bounded on two sides by the Nuenna River and a small tributary.



**Hospital Bridge, Clintstown Road**

Crossing the Nuenna River is Hospital Bridge, an eighteenth-century humpback bridge, so called because of its proximity to an old hospital. In Lewis' Topographical History of Ireland, 1837, he describes the town as having a 'fever hospital', probably referring to this structure dating to c.1780. Kilkenny Street graduates to a narrow road which naturally curves to follow the meandering river and is populated with modern housing. This road sees the heaviest traffic into Freshford as it is the main Kilkenny to Freshford route.

### **1.6.2 The Square**

The Square is a green of significant size though it is proportionately in keeping with the scale of development around its edges, being almost exclusively two storey in height (and

with little variation in actual building heights), with the sole exception of one premises on Kilkenny Street, which comprises three storeys. The general uniformity of the streetscape framing the square is punctuated at the northeast and southeast corners by the more prominent Church buildings.

The Square is not perfectly square, its north-south axis being longer than its width. It is also narrower at its southern end than it is on its northern side and this fact, whether by accident or more likely deliberately planned (by the Anglo Normans) it has the effect of accentuating the sense of perspective when viewed from the principal thoroughfare, Kilkenny Street (on the north side of the Square).

It is interesting to note that the Square is known as the Square, and not a 'green' or 'fair green'. In fact, the early Ordnance Survey Map from 1839, indicates that the space was originally a Square with no formal grassed area and no tree planting. Two features were indicated, though have long since disappeared – a market cross and a May Pole.

While most of the traditional buildings in the town are provided with either a side access to the rear of the plot or no access at all, there are a few examples on both the east and north side of the square where access has been provided by means of an archway.

### **1.6.3 Chapel Street**

Chapel Street is a continuation of the road running south from the Square leading to Upper Court. At the Square the road is straight and wide with parking on both sides. At Chapel Street the road widens to allow for a formal entrance to the church. Together with the church, there are two nursing homes located off Chapel Street, the parochial house and a primary school located to the rear of the church. A road to the south of the Roman Catholic church gives access to the town's primary school and some houses. Past the church, Chapel Street continues southward leading to Upper Court House.

### **1.6.4 Bunacresha Street**

Bunacresha Street runs in a westerly direction from the Square. It has an unusual mix of single-storey terraced cottages, a farm yard, an old cinema, local supermarket, private

two-storey detached houses and terraced two-storey houses. At the end of Bunacresha Street there are two recent housing developments. Woodview is a large estate of social housing, while on the north side of the street is a smaller development of private housing. Also at this end of the road is a Glanbia complex. Unlike Kilkenny Street that was at one time widened and straightened, Bunacresha Street remains uneven in width. The street appears only to receive local traffic and parking on the road side can restrict traffic flow.

### **1.6.5 Newbridge Street**

As the name suggests this street crosses the river over New Bridge, so called because it was an additional bridge built to accommodate modern traffic needs. At the southern end of Newbridge Street is located the famed St. Lachtain's Church of Ireland church, which forms the corner site. There are some commercial premises on Newbridge Street including a chemist and a bookkeeping service, though the concentration of commercial activity in the town is on the north side of the Square. A striking feature of Newbridge Street is the open green space afforded by the flood plains of the river. On the east side of the street are two large undeveloped fields while on the west side of the street, at the junction of Newbridge Street and Creel Street, is a shop and house on a large green corner site. Creel Street runs west off Newbridge Street, extending into Mill Street and is intersected by Old Bridge Street. Newbridge Street continues north into Bohergloss Street. Much of the heavy traffic coming into Freshford is through-traffic en route to or coming from Urlingford.

At present there is a mixture of residential and commercial building use on Creel Street and Mill Street.

### **1.6.6 Bohergloss Street**

With the bulk of the traffic diverted up Creel Street, Bohergloss Street is a quiet residential road. It leads to the meat factory which is located on the edge of the built up area..

### **1.6.7 Mill Street**



Millenium Park, Mill Street, Freshford

Mill Street is so called because of the Cascade Mills that once stood on the south side of the street. Beside the site of the former mills, the community have created a Millennium Park with a river walk. The park is landscaped and well maintained and provides a valuable recreational facility in the town. The entrance gates and bridge into the site are the only remaining remnants of the protected mill complex.

## **1.7 Population**

Freshford had a population of 756 recorded at the 2002 Census. The historical trends in population are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Population in Freshford between 1966 and 2002**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
1966	563
1971	595
1979	777
1981	747
1986	700
1991	651
1996	632
2002	756

The population had been declining from 1979, but between 1996 and 2002 Freshford experienced resurgence. The percentage growth in population between 1996 and 2002 was 19.6%, which is significantly higher than the percentage increase for the county as a whole of 6.7%.

## **1.8 Planning History**

An examination of recent planning history in the town gives some indication of the development trend. Recent grants of permission include a small residential development of 5 houses on Bunacresha Street and an extension to the GAA clubhouse with new dressing rooms, toilets, referee room, first floor committee room, etc at St. Lachtains GAA grounds and also an extension to the Freshford Town F.C. facilities at Tobernapeastia, Freshford.

## **1.9 Designations**

### **1.9.1 Archaeology**

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

The Records of Monuments and Places (RMP) 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 RPM is not an exhaustive list of all archaeology in existence. The RPM for County Kilkenny is available for inspection at the Planning Department in County Hall.

### **1.9.2 Record of Protected Structures**

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

## **1.10 National Spatial Strategy**

The National Spatial Strategy was published in 2002, and this has set out a strategy for the location of development within the County. This has identified Kilkenny City as a hub, and Waterford City as a gateway<sup>6</sup>. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East, published in 2004, set out a strategy for the location of development in the region.

These Planning Guidelines are designed to achieve a better spatial balance of social, economic and physical development throughout the region. The Guidelines are intended to strengthen local authority development plans and address issues such as settlement, transportation, industrial development, community facilities and environmental protection.

In terms of settlement strategies, it is the common aim of all the planning authorities in the south east to:

- Encourage new residential development to locate in existing towns, villages and smaller settlements, where services are already available or can be economically provided, in order to consolidate and strengthen the population base within those settlements and facilitate the maximum economic use of their physical and social infrastructure.
- Retain rural populations and support the sustainable development of rural communities and their services (such as schools, small shops etc.) in order to maintain their vitality.

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<sup>6</sup> 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

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## **1.11 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 local development association, known as Freshford 2020 Ltd., has conducted extensive surveys and research in the local community resulting in a Freshford Development Plan. The aim of the Freshford 2020 Development Plan is to form a basic framework and background for the appropriate development of Freshford and its environs over the period 2000 – 2020. The Plan contains much useful, detailed information, which was used to compile a profile of the area, and the views and recommendations which emerged from the research were examined. These points have been considered in full, and have contributed to the drafting of the objectives and policies within this proposed Local Area Plan.

Freshford 2020 has also prepared a project for rural regeneration through renewable energy called ‘Freshford Alive’. The aims of this project, as it evolved, have also been taken into consideration in the drafting of policies and objectives within this proposed Local Area Plan.

The information gathered was divided into a total of 8 headings as follows:

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

The next step in the public consultation process was the preparation of an information leaflet, which notified the public of the commencement of the Local Area Plan process. This leaflet explained the process, and gave a summary of the results of the issues identified to date. The leaflet encouraged the public to write submissions on any issue. Leaflets were distributed to local residences and local retail outlets.

Issues papers were also drawn up and circulated internally and to the relevant statutory bodies and Government agencies.

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 Freshford.

## **2 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES**

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

### **2.1 Housing and Population**

In general, there was a positive attitude towards development, but the importance of maintaining the nature and character of Freshford as a small rural town was emphasised. It is important to protect the residential character and function of the town centre, and infill sites should be the first sites to be developed. It was noted that development cannot proceed without an improvement to the sewerage services.

Other points noted was that there should be an emphasis on high standards, using quality design, environmentally sustainable methods, energy efficient technology and incorporating the use of renewable energy sources. Residential developments should have a good social mix.

#### **2.1.1 Development Strategy**

Freshford had a population of 756 recorded at the 2002 Census. The capacity of Freshford to accommodate population growth can be examined by assessing the capacity of the services available, such as infrastructural, community and educational services.

With regard to the infrastructural services, at present there is no spare capacity available in either the water supply or sewerage networks.

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

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

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

**2.1.2 Urban Form**

The town possesses one complete ‘urban block’ delineated on all four sides by streets. The south side of this block corresponds with the north side of the Square and the rest of the block is comprised of Newbridge Street, Creel Street and Old Bridge Street. It is perhaps this distinguishing feature that takes Freshford from the realm of a village to that of a town. It is also the more traditional manner for extending a town, as opposed to the emphasis on cul-de-sacs that has occurred in more recent times (and as evident in the Woodview Estate). There are opportunities to extend this street network (of urban blocks) in the town’s future development, particularly south of Bunacresha Street.

Most of the town’s development has occurred as single frontage development along the town’s principal streets and/or approach roads. This tends to limit the scope for opening up the rear of sites (backland areas) for development. This pattern of ribbon development is more pronounced along Bohergloss Street and on the eastern approach roads to the town, blurring the urban-rural divide and the impression of a neat and compact town.

When designing for infill development, consideration should be given to the existing building fabric, for it is the existing pattern and appearance of these buildings, related to the unique history and morphology of a place that makes one village or town different from the next. The building fabric therefore is a reflection of the character of a place and this character should not be eroded, either through dereliction, decay and/or demolition and replacement with insensitive new build, for then the uniqueness of the place is eroded.



Where possible, consideration should always be given to building conservation. Where conservation is not possible, as in cases where there is already a gap in the streetscape, or where a conservation architect or other specialist in the area considers a building as structurally unsound or prohibitively expensive to merit conservation, then consideration will need to be given to designing a new building. Guidance on this is given in Appendix A: Urban Design Guidelines on Future Development.

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

**Objectives:**

1. To ensure that infill development is contextually compatible as is outlined in Appendix 4
2. To encourage and provide for the sensitive redevelopment derelict sites as the opportunity arises.
3. To ensure the maintenance and protection of housing within the town centre, and to encourage continued residential use of upper floors. To encourage the building of new infill development where vacant plots exist
4. To encourage sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation use of historic structures whose original use has become redundant
5. To encourage the comprehensive development of backlands (sites to the rear of plots) and ensure that developers have regard to the possible need to provide access to these areas in any future development scheme

**2.1.3 Social Mix**

There are currently a total of 41 social houses in Freshford, and a further 2 are proposed. This figure does not represent the historical proportion of social housing in Freshford, as a large proportion of Local Authority constructed dwellings have been sold under the Tenant Purchasing Scheme.

There is a need to encourage a social mix in the future development of Freshford. In any application for multiple unit residential schemes, in addition to implementing the Housing Strategy, the Council will seek a good range of house types and design to achieve this.

<b>Objective:</b>	To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes
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**2.1.4 Serviced sites**

It will be an objective of this Plan to provide for serviced sites on the edge of Freshford which can allow people to design their own homes on their own sites. This would have the potential to alleviate pressure for ribbon development and urban generated rural housing on the approaches into Freshford. Maximum recommended densities for this

zoning would be in the range of 2 to 5 per acre, depending on the quality of design and servicing arrangements. Design guidance on this is available in Chapter 4.

<b>Objective:</b>	To zone an area of land for the development of serviced sites for the development of low density dwellings
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### **2.1.5 Integration of Residential Developments**

In assessing any new development in Freshford, 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.

<b>Objective:</b>	To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land
<b>Objective:</b>	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**

Issues raised in public consultation included the inadequacy of the sewage treatment plant in place at present in Freshford.

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

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

### **2.2.1 Sewerage Network**

Freshford is served by a sewerage scheme with primary treatment only, which was constructed in 1942. This plant is currently operating over its design capacity. During the public consultation the need to increase capacity to cater for future development was discussed. The possibility of developing an interim solution in the form of a reed bed system was also discussed.

An anaerobic digester is also proposed as part of the Freshford Alive project. It is envisaged that this anaerobic digester will be linked to the sewage treatment plant and

will receive and recycle slurry and silage effluent from surrounding farms, organic municipal and industrial waste and some non-hazardous wastes from the meat factory.

The digester plant will produce energy in the form of heat, which will be processed in a Combined Heat and Power plant to produce electricity for sale to the National Grid, and gas, which will be sold to local industry/housing, etc. The plant would also include secondary sewage treatment using water hyacinths.

<b>Policy:</b>	To ensure that the necessary sewerage facilities to serve the needs of all development within the town, and to prevent pollution, are provided
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<b>Objective:</b>	To secure the upgrading of all water services through agreements with developers and/or landowners as appropriate
<b>Objective:</b>	To prohibit the connection to the sewerage system of any proposed development out of phase with the overall development of the town or where the existing services are committed for other development
<b>Objective:</b>	To preserve, free from development, the way leaves of all public sewers

### **2.2.2 Surface Water Drainage**

It is the policy of the Council to secure the disposal of surface water associated with developments to avoid increase in the risk of flooding. This is to be achieved in keeping with modern good practice and having regard to the characteristics and attributes of each site.

<b>Objective:</b>	To seek positive surface water drainage incorporating discharge flow attenuation for all green field site developments other than those that are isolated and small in scale and unlikely to increase the risk of flooding.
<b>Objective:</b>	To secure the disposal of surface water associated with developments to avoid increase in the risk of flooding

This means that all storm water shall be collected in a storm water pipe network with attenuation and disposed of to a watercourse, and shall not be directed to a soakpit. It will be the responsibility of the developer to prove that the pipe network and/or watercourse into which discharge is proposed has an adequate capacity, and will not give rise to flooding off site.

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

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

### **2.2.3 Flooding**

Flooding was occasionally an issue on the Square, at Prague House and St. Catherine's Home and on the Boherkyle road.

The development strategy for the town should be to avoid areas for development which may be subject to flooding. Drainage works were carried out on the Square in 2003 which should have resolved the flooding problems there.

### **2.2.4 Water supply**

Concerns were expressed with the quality of water in the area.

Freshford is served by the Kilkenny City (Troywood) Water Supply Scheme. The public water supply will be upgraded as part of the National Water Services Investment Programme, as funding becomes available.

Although the issue of water quality was raised through 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.

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

In line with the environmental focus of this Plan, recycling of all waste is encouraged.

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 Freshford by private contractors. European Union environmental policy dictates that

the 'Polluter pays principle' be applied, which means that the full costs associated with environmentally sound recovery and disposal of waste are charged to the customer.

With regard to recycling, it is Council and regional policy that bottle banks for clear, green and brown glass and aluminium cans are provided at villages throughout the county. There is a bottle bank in Freshford at present, located off the Clintstown road, beside the bridge, where glass bottles and drinks cans can be recycled. This is considered an appropriate location for a bottle bank.

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

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

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

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

### **2.2.6 Telecommunications**

Telecommunications have become centrally important to the prospects of any local economy, and their role in the development of Freshford is acknowledged.

Freshford 2020 Ltd. is participating in an Intereg funded project that will offer wireless Broadband in the Freshford area.

<b>Policy:</b>	To ensure that the necessary telecommunications and electricity supply are available for the existing and future development of Freshford
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### **2.3 Employment and Economy**

The commercial businesses in Freshford include a cheese packaging plant, a meat factory, a printing press, builders, plumbers, carpenters, creamery, caterers and various other shops and offices.

Any sustainable land-use policy must provide for a balance between the provision of housing and the provision of employment opportunities. The creation of employment opportunities should be matched to the growth of the town. In particular, small industries which are both environmentally sustainable and provide satisfying and worthwhile employment should be encouraged.

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

Upper Court House and the lands surrounding it should be viewed as a potential resource which if developed in a sustainable manner could provide a significant economic driver for Freshford in particular and the northwest of the County in general.

Upper Court today stands as a nineteenth-century mansion in need of attention. Built by the Eyre family, the spacious and well-appointed house is neo-Classical in style. Though no architect has been attributed to the design, it is undoubtedly the work of a professional familiar with the new fashion for the neo-Classical which was imported from Europe. The landscaped gardens and walks throughout the property contribute greatly to the setting of the wonderful house.

The Eyre family, and in particular Thomas Eyre, had a philanthropic interest in Freshford and built the male and female schools, funded the building of the Roman Catholic church and installed the pumps on the Square. The Eyre family remained at Upper Court until the early twentieth century when the property was reverted back to religious ownership.

Development proposals for the house and its lands will be considered on its merits having regard to securing the future of the nineteenth century mansion and its landscaped gardens and walks, the amenity value contributed to the area by any development proposal and that any development proposal would be of an appropriate scale. The restoration of the house and buildings must be achieved in conjunction with any proposed development of the lands associated with Upper Court lands.

<b>Objective:</b>	To encourage job/employment creation initiatives
<b>Objective:</b>	To facilitate, or assist in identifying agencies which can facilitate, community-led job creation schemes

<b>Objective:</b>	To have all new industrial developments appropriately landscaped and screened
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### 2.3.1 Retail

The *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* sets out Government policy in relation to shops in small towns and rural areas<sup>7</sup>. The vital role that foodstores and supermarkets play in maintaining the quality and range of shopping in smaller rural town centres and assisting in the anchoring of the surrounding local economy is recognised. Planning policies should be supportive of local facilities in small towns and villages which provide an effective and valuable service to the local economy.

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

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

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

<b>Policy:</b>	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, as varied and the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2005
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<b>Objective:</b>	To encourage the upgrading and expansion of existing retail outlets and the development of new outlets in the town centre to serve local need
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### 2.3.2 Tourism

There are many attractions in Freshford for tourism development including the river, hills, forests wild life, scenery, historical sites and availability of accommodation. St. Lachtain's Church is of great significance as an ecclesiastical site which has seen

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<sup>7</sup> Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2000 *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

continuity of worship since the sixth century. The church incorporates a porch of considerable historical and art historical interest.

The Annual Conker Championship, held in October, is now a well-established event, and has been very successful in attracting tourism to Freshford. A Freshford Alive Festival was also held for the first time in June 2004. The Freshford Connected Community website, powered by Claneire, is an important resource for the promotion of tourism in the area.

The development of sustainable tourism is to be encouraged. To achieve this, a tourism plan should be devised for the area.

The River Nuenna is perhaps the most significant natural amenity in the town. Future development should preserve an area around the river corridor for passive recreational use. In addition, the built heritage of the area should be conserved. This should serve as a tourism attraction in the town.

<b>Policy:</b>	To co-operate in the development of a tourist development strategy for the town and its hinterland in association with Kilkenny Tourism, Freshford 20/20, SERTA, Bord Fáilte, BNS Leader, local community groups and business interests
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<b>Objective:</b>	To facilitate and encourage the development of facilities catering for tourists in Freshford
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<b>Objective:</b>	In future developments, the Council will seek to retain an area along the river corridor for passive recreational use.
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## **2.4 Education and Training.**

### **2.4.1 Primary Education**

Freshford is served by one primary school, St. Lachtain's, which is a mixed school. There are 150 children on the role at present. There are 9 rooms – 6 classrooms, one computer room and one special needs room.

St. Lachtain's has an indoor hall, and a hard surfaced court for basketball and the school has the use of St. Lachtain's GAA club grounds for playing fields. The school grounds also consist of a large green area which could accommodate any future expansion of the school, if necessary.

### **2.4.2 Secondary Education**

There is no secondary school in Freshford, the nearest secondary schools are the VEC in Johnstown and the secondary schools in Kilkenny City.



### **2.4.3 Third level Education**

The nearest third level institutions are the Carlow Institute of Technology and the Tipperary Institute, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

### **2.4.4 Adult Education**

There was a need identified for further adult training courses in Freshford.

At present there are classes provided by Freshford 2020 in partnership with the VEC in Art/Traditional crafts and Health/Alternative Lifestyle stress management.

The priority area for additional training is for IT courses, and in conjunction with training it is important to increase accessibility to IT, and offer access to the internet and to other IT facilities.

The FAS Community Employment Scheme is also in operation in Freshford.

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

## **2.5 Transport**

### **2.5.1 Roads**

The main road running through Freshford is the R693, which is the Regional Road linking Kilkenny to the N8 at Urlingford. In the town, going from east to west, this is known as Kilkenny Street, New Bridge Street, Creel Street and Mill Street. The R694 runs to the north from the R693, known as New Bridge Street and Bohergloss Street and this links Freshford to Castlecomer.

Other streets in the town are Bunacrussia Street to the west from the Square, leading to Ballylarkin, Chapel Street to the south from the Square, leading to Curraghduff, Clinstown road to the northeast, and Moate road from Chapel Street to Clashacrow. Three of the bridges in the town are included on the Recorded of Protected Structures. These include Old Bridge at Old Bridge Street, a single arched bridge at Millenium Park and a single arched bridge at Mill Street.

<b>Objective:</b>	Development of lands zoned under this plan and which utilise Bunacrussia Street for vehicular access must ensure that the issues of footpaths, road capacity, public lighting, road widths, are addressed in the preparation of a planning application and must ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to address any short comings identified, before development is commenced.
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### **2.5.2 Footpaths and Lighting**

The priority areas identified for footpaths were at the Health centre on Kilkenny Street, on Bunacresha Street and on Creel Street, in addition to improvement works elsewhere. There was interest expressed in changing the colour of lighting used in the streetlights. It was considered that the bridges were too narrow and should be widened.

In general, footpath surfaces throughout the town are in good condition, although there are some exceptions. The extension of the footpath on Kilkenny Street to the Health Centre is included in the Special Works Scheme. The provision of footpaths on Bunacresha Street and Creel Street will also be examined.

Appropriate public lighting will be required as part of any new development. Public lighting must remain consistent, therefore all lighting must remain orange. Any new developments in the area should be levied to improve both footpaths and public lighting throughout the town.

There are no plans to widen the bridges in the town, as they are ideal for traffic calming purposes.

<b>Policy:</b>	To provide quality lighting and footpaths throughout the town that will secure the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike
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<b>Objective:</b>	To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development
<b>Objective:</b>	To carry out repairs to footpaths in Freshford under a Special Works scheme
<b>Objective:</b>	To extend the footpath on Kilkenny street as far out as the Health centre
<b>Objective:</b>	To extend the footpath and public lighting on the Johnstown Road to the graveyard as finances and resources permit.
<b>Objective:</b>	Vehicular and pedestrian access to the lands zoned residential on the Clinstown Road must be such that it does not have a significant

negative impact on the existing bridge on the Clinstown Road, which is a Protected Structure.

**Objective:** To provide for a new pedestrian linkage across the Nuenna River as shown on the zoning objectives map.

### **2.5.3 Traffic calming**

There were a number of issues raised in relation to traffic calming. The volume of traffic is an issue, which to a large extent is generated by Galmoy mines and Glanbia on Bunacresha Street. A bypass was suggested for the town. It was considered that there should be a review of the speed limits. The final issue was that there are no pedestrian crossings in the town at present.

A by-pass would provide a solution to removing the heavy commercial traffic through the town. However, it is unlikely that a by-pass for the town would be delivered in the short to medium term. In the short term the issue of commercial traffic passing through the town should be dealt with through traffic calming means. Speed limits in the town were updated in conjunction with the local Gardai in 2001 and with the metrification programme in 2005.

**Objective:** To review the possibility of providing a by-pass for the town.

**Objective:** To prepare a traffic calming scheme for the town

**Objective:** To review the speed limits on the approaches to the town during the life time of the plan.

**Objective:** To develop and carry out traffic management proposals (subject to the normal statutory procedures and adequate resources being made available) for reducing traffic speeds enhancing facilities and improving safety generally within the village.

### **2.5.4 Linkages within the Town**

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

**Objective:** To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new and existing developments

### **2.5.5 Public transport**

There is a private bus service (JJ Kavanagh's) to and from Urlingford and Kilkenny that serves Freshford twice daily. The bus stop is located outside the Community Hall in Freshford.

### **2.5.6 Parking**

Parking in Freshford is mainly provided on street, with car parking available around the Square. Some problems are caused with unregulated parking on the street. One of the issues that arose through the consultation is that there is inadequate parking for the graveyard on the Urlingford road.

As the majority of Freshford's houses and streets developed before the advent of car ownership, the Square suffers from a lack of private parking facilities. This has resulted in on-street parking by residents of the Square, a problem further exacerbated by the influx of shoppers, visitors to the town and those attending its churches. Off street parking has been provided at the northern end of the Square, but no additional parking should encroach on the green area of the Square. The development of additional parking near the Square and convenient to local businesses could relieve the current problem. Previous problems with regard to unregulated parking have been alleviated with the targeted use of double yellow lines. Any new developments will be required to provide adequate off street parking.

The issue of parking and traffic safety at the graveyard will be examined.

<b>Policy:</b>	The Council will consider proposals for additional car parking on suitable sites and seek appropriate provision of adequate car parking in any new developments
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<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments
<b>Objective:</b>	To identify an appropriate site for car parking within easy reach of the town centre
<b>Objective:</b>	To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the town
<b>Objective:</b>	To provide a carpark at the graveyard, subject to availability of land and finances.

### **2.5.7 Road surfaces**

The priority area for road surfacing is Old Bridge Street. A suggestion was made for resurfacing the west side of the Square, behind the trees, in cobblelock. There is an attractive cobblelock drainage channel evident here at present, which is an important historic detail and will be protected. Any resurfacing proposals should be developed in consultation with the local authority Conservation Officer and Heritage Officer.

The streets bounding the Square and Old Bridge Street are to be resurfaced within the period of the Plan. However, this resurfacing does not include cobble lock surfacing of

the west side of the Square as suggested. The cobble lock drainage channel at this location shall remain intact.

<b>Objective:</b>	To resurface Old Bridge Street within the period of the plan
<b>Objective:</b>	To resurface the streets around the Square within the period of the Plan
<b>Objective:</b>	To examine the resurfacing of the west side of the Square, in consultation with the Local Authority Conservation Officer and Heritage Officer

## **2.6 Community Facilities – Recreation**

### **2.6.1 Open space**

There are four principal areas of open space in the town, namely the Square, the town's public park - Millenium Park - on Mill Street, the sports fields to the east of the town and the open space associated with the Woodview Estate and comprising soccer facilities.

#### **2.6.1.1 The Square**

The Square is bisected by a diagonal road from its northwest corner to its southeast, effectively forming two triangular greens, each of which is delineated by a single perimeter row of mature trees. This formal planting creates a tree lined avenue to the dissecting road. Seating, litter bins, sculptural work, neo-traditional street lamps and a distinctive water pump comprise street furniture in the Square.

#### **2.6.1.2 The Millenium Park and River Nuenna**

The Millenium Park was officially opened in September 2003. This 2.2 acre site was donated to the community and landscaped and developed by the Freshford Heritage Committee. It is now an attractive and well maintained riverside park that is well landscaped with trees and a pergola – the Serpentine Walkway.

Two small informal areas of open space provide some passive amenity along the Nuenna River, with seating. One is situated by the bridge on Old Bridge Street, while the other is situated by the old stone bridge on the road leading to Clinstown, on the east end of the town. There are several opportunities to provide linear parks along the streams and rivers in the town, these could vary in width allowing for attractive stormwater retention ponds with wildlife benefit, which could add to their appeal.

#### **2.6.1.3 Woodview Green**

The open space in the Woodview Estate comprises a broad tree lined and landscaped median between the Bunacresha Street and the estate entrance road. A number of small incidental areas of open space, with individual tree stands, can be found throughout the estate with a larger significant area provided at the rear of the estate, which is used as a

soccer pitch. This space provides the west end of the town with some active playing fields.

The GAA club also have facilities in the town accessed off Chapel Street on the road to Clashacrow.

**Policy:**

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

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

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

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

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

2. It is the policy of the Council to provide, maintain and manage a children's play area in Freshford 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

<b>Objective:</b>	To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population
<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure that all residential developments address adjoining open space to provide for their passive supervision
<b>Objective:</b>	To protect the banks of the River Nuenna and develop a river walk along it, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups

<b>Objective:</b>	To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment by other uses
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### **2.6.2 Recreation**

There are a number of sporting groups in the town. Sports available include GAA, camogie, soccer, squash and basketball, angling, horse riding, hunting, bridge and Tai Chai.

The GAA pitch is situated on the east end of the town, adjacent to the Primary School and to the backlands off the south side of Kilkenny Street.

There are two community halls in Freshford, one on the north side of the Square, managed by a committee and trustees. This hall is used extensively for various activities such as meetings, bingo, indoor hurling, aerobics, evening classes, basketball, discos and other social functions. It is in need of some modernisation.

The other hall – the Parochial hall - is on the southwest corner of the Square adjacent to Prague House. Its use and management are under the control of the parish priest. This is used mainly for Bridge playing.

<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure the maximisation of the two Community halls as facilities for the community
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<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure adequate provision of sporting and recreational facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population of the town.
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## **2.7 Amenity Enhancement**

A number of issues with regard to amenity enhancement in Freshford were identified. The Millennium Park is seen as a valuable asset to the town, as is the River Nuenna.

Dereliction was identified as an issue.

<b>Policy:</b>	To protect and enhance the amenity and built environment of Freshford and to provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance for both the built and natural environment of the town
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### **2.7.1 Archaeology**

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

A Conservation Plan “Saint Lachtains Church Conservation Plan” has been prepared by the Heritage Council, in conjunction with the Church of Ireland, Kilkenny County

Council and the National Monuments and Historic Properties Division of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

<b>Policy:</b>	To have regard to the policies and recommendations in Saint Lachtain's Church Conservation Plan.
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<b>Objective:</b>	To have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, concerning archaeological assessment and the monitoring of excavations during construction, in considering development proposals which would affect any archaeologically designated sites
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### **2.7.2 Graveyards**

A graveyard, identified in the Sites and Monuments Record (KK013-02302), is located adjacent to St. Lachtain's Church.

Before work is undertaken in a graveyard, ownership and legal status should be checked carefully. A licence is required from the Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government prior to undertaking any work on any graveyard that is a Recorded Monument. A useful publication is "*The Care and Conservation of Graveyards*" produced by the Office of Public Works.

The headstones have not been cleaned and show a variety of lichens.

### **2.7.3 Dereliction**

Dereliction and the maintenance of buildings is an issue in Freshford. This issue is now being pursued with six properties currently being investigated in Freshford.

Guidelines for the redevelopment of sites are outlined in Chapter 4.

<b>Policy:</b>	To encourage and provide for the sensitive redevelopment of derelict sites in the town
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<b>Policy:</b>	To implement the Derelict Sites Act 1990 in order to ensure the removal of dereliction within the Plan period as resources permit
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### **2.7.4 Litter**

The Litter Management Plan 2003 – 2006 is in place, and this sets out the Council's policy with regard to tackling the problem of litter over that period. One of the objectives

of this is to provide additional and improved litter bins in strategic locations and to maintain, or to make arrangements for, the maintenance of existing bins.



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

### **2.7.5 Planting**

Appropriate planting can be used to enhance the environment and additional planting would add to the amenity of the town, and would also add to any new developments. Landscaping requirements for new developments are outlined in Chapter 4.

<b>Objective:</b>	To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees, using native species where appropriate, in any new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows
<b>Objective:</b>	To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees through the town using native species where appropriate

### **2.7.6 Ecology**

An Ecological Survey of the Freshford area was carried out by an Ecologist as part of this plan process. Three areas of interest were identified, namely the Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland to the south of the Millennium Park, mixed Broadleaved woodland to the south of the town, on the eastern boundary of Upper Court Demesne and wet grassland to the east of the Health centre. The oak-ash woodland is of moderate ecological value and is noted for its potential as a bat habitat. The broadleaved woodland is noted for its potential for a variety of songbirds and is also of moderate local ecological value. The wet grassland is of high local ecological value and provides good habitat for ground-nesting birds.

This report is included as Appendix 2.

<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the 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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Some tree groups have also been identified as being of amenity significance and the preservation of these will be an objective of this plan.

<b>Objective:</b>	To retain the trees as identified in the conservation objectives map except where their removal is due to the interests of public safety and good design or the trees are in an unhealthy state
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### **2.7.7 Record of Protected Structures**

Freshford has 5 structures listed in the County Development Plan, 2002. As part of this plan an architectural assessment of the existing buildings in the town has been carried out, and the Record will be amended in accordance with this assessment under a separate statutory process. The existing Record of Protected Structures is shown in Appendix 1.

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

<b>Objective:</b> To seek the conservation and protection of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures.
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## **2.8 Architectural Conservation Area**

The Planning & Development Act 2000 requires a Planning Authority to include in its Development Plans the objective of preserving the character of areas of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

Kilkenny County Council considers that Freshford is such an area of special interest and believes that the central core of the settlement as defined on the Conservation Objectives Map encapsulates the various phases of the history of the town in an attractive streetscape which is worthy of protection. Therefore it is proposed to designate this part of Freshford, centred on the Square, as an Architectural Conservation Area.

The Square in Freshford forms not only the physical centre of the town but also its social and commercial heart. It is the hub from which all local roads radiate, bringing life into the community. In comparison to many linear Irish towns which comprise a main commercial street where banks, shops and barracks stand next to public houses and libraries, Freshford is arranged around a picturesque tree-lined square. The green is a focal point which is surrounded by nineteenth-century terraces and structures including the Roman Catholic Church, a community-run nursing home, a community hall, various shops and public houses. As a distinctive feature the Square at Freshford is one that must be protected and managed for the benefit of the community as a whole.

### **2.8.1 Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area**

The proposed ACA comprises the area contained within the rear boundaries of the buildings around the Square and the area between Old Bridge Street and New Bridge Street as far north as the river. Map 3 illustrates the location and boundaries of the proposed Architectural Conservation Area.

## **2.8.2 History and Development of the Square**

The Square in Freshford was not laid out as a planned space but instead developed and evolved organically as an urban centre to facilitate the needs of the community. Today it has the appearance of a purposely-designed town square thanks chiefly to the work of the Eyre Family of Upper Court Demesne and more specifically to Thomas Eyre.

Paris Anderson toured County Kilkenny in 1845 and recorded his findings in the newspaper of the day, 'The Kilkenny Moderator'. '*...by the time you drive into the large irregular market square of the village, you are impressed by the idea, that you are in a place at least very prettily situated.*' '*...the square itself is surrounded by houses of all kinds, high and low, rich and poor – here a mansion of some pretence – there a row of wretched cabins.*'

During the late nineteenth century, the landowner Thomas Eyre undertook a programme to formalise the centre of the village. His ambitious plans included the construction of two schools, housing for his estate workers, a new Roman Catholic Church, installation of water pumps and the construction of a new formal entrance on the south side of the Square to his property, Upper Court House.



Fortunately for the town, the plans for the two schools were realised. Separate male and female schools were built and were officially opened by their patron, Thomas Eyre on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1876. These fine two-storey rendered buildings with tooled limestone dressings continue to flank the south side of The Square. It was Thomas Eyre's intention to construct the new entrance to Upper Court House in the space between the schools.

### **Prague House, to the south of the Square**

This entrance was never built and instead the void was gradually filled with extensions to the schools. These buildings are now in use as a community nursing home called Prague House.

The town's water pumps were installed by the same member of the Eyre family in 1878. A large pump was installed in the centre of the Square with limestone slabs and drains around it. Thomas Eyre's patronage of the project is recorded on one of the limestone slabs. The second smaller water pump is located on the west side of the Square.

Another project undertaken by Thomas Eyre was the construction of estate workers' cottages on the west side of the Square. While it is not clear how many cottages were built, it is understood locally that he was responsible for the first four to six cottages at the south end of the west side of the Square, known as 'New Row'.

By the late nineteenth century the village green had become a considered and formalised space. It had become the central focus of the town, accommodating the schools, doctor's



house and the town's dispensary, the constabulary barracks, the canon's house, local shops and public houses. In c.1910 local philanthropist, Emma Browne Clayton, built a town hall and donated it to the community. Located on the north side of the square, this building is notable for its height, being the only three-storey structure on the Square.

### **Community Hall, to the north of the Square**

In c.1913 Stanislaus Eyre planted the horse chestnut trees around the green. These trees formalise the Square's character and contribute greatly to the setting of the architecture. In the past the Square was used as a public meeting area, recreational grounds and fair green. Charles Stewart Parnell took advantage of the Square's open space when he visited Freshford in 1890 and delivered his speech to the gathered people from the steps of Dr. Hourigan's house, a large detached house on the east side of the Square.

### **2.8.3 Street Furniture and Historical and Notable Features**

Today the Square at Freshford is predominantly used as recreational grounds. Features of note include an untitled piece of sculpture by Ian Lazarus, installed in 1996, consisting of five pieces of Kilkenny limestone. The artist describes it as '*...a contemplative piece for people to sit and dream on. It is based on a simple spiral going into itself with a complex skin.*'<sup>8</sup>



**Limestone sculpture on the Square**

<sup>8</sup> Kilkenny Sculpture Guide, Kilkenny County Council. 2001

Public art such as this installation enhances its setting while promoting the use of the space and creating visual interest on the Square. Unfortunately however, this piece of sculpture can sometimes be overlooked because of its location in the far corner on the quiet, southern end of the Square and because of its low-lying nature.

Further amenities that have facilitated the public's use of the open space as a place for recreation include the benches and litter bins. Installed over a number of years a variety of seating types can be seen. The maintenance of this public seating and the addition of new benches demonstrate the inhabitants' readiness to promote the Square as a recreational facility and to encourage its use.

The water pump in the centre is the prominent feature of the Square. Installed in 1878, it is no longer used and instead stands as an attractive piece of street furniture and a reminder of the history of the green.



The smaller water pump located opposite the terrace of former estate workers' houses on the west side of the Square complements the larger pump and together with the cobbled drain running along the west side of the Square are interesting survivals of nineteenth-century street furniture and road surface material.

#### **Traditional Water Pump on the Square**

Other remnants of earlier road finishes include some cobbled drains and sections of limestone paving on the north side of the Square. Efforts have been made in recent years to improve the Square by installing new 'old style' street lighting with glass lanterns. The cross that once stood in the centre of the north end of the Square must have been an impressive memorial, but today only its base survives on a raised stepped plinth.

#### **2.8.4 Road usage and Surfaces**

The grassy green is encompassed and bisected by a network of roads. The stretch of road running along the north side of the Square experiences the heaviest traffic usage, connecting the west side of the town to the main Kilkenny to Urlingford road. Parking spaces have been created on this side of the Square in recent years. The creation of the parking facility involved the removal of some trees. Located here also are public telephones and an information board. A narrow lane named Brewery Lane is accessed through an integral carriage-arch in the centre of the terrace of house and shops on the north side of the Square. There are footpaths on both side of the road.

The road on the east side of Freshford Square is wide and straight and used to access the Roman Catholic church located at the end of the road and the local primary school located to the rear of the church. This stretch of road is often used for parking as it is

wide with room for a single lane of cars to pass parked vehicles. The road widens at the church to create formal entrances to the church and the building opposite. The footpath to the side of the road accommodates pedestrians, while affording access to the terraced houses.



**Cobbled open gutter at New Row**

The Square's southern road is narrow and functions as an access to Prague House and the houses on New Row. Extensions to Prague House, formerly the Girls and Boys Schools built by Thomas Eyre, cast this road in shadow for most of the day. In the far south-westerly corner of the Square beside the former girl's school there is space for parking, which is used by the staff of the nursing home. A short lane, known as Pitcher Lane, runs along the side wall of the old girls school and is used to access the rear of that building and the cottages on New Row. There are no footpaths on this section of road.

The road to the west of the Square is the quietest in the locality. It is a straight narrow road with a terrace of houses, known as New Row, fronting directly onto it.

It is not used as a through-road but instead provides parking space for the residents of New Row. On the edge of the road nearest the green there is an open gutter that retains its original cobbled surface, a fine example of the town's nineteenth-century road surfaces. (See photo above)

A road runs diagonally through the Square from the north-western corner to the south-eastern corner. It is also used as an access road to the Roman Catholic Church and primary school. The tree-lined avenue makes an impressive formal approach to the church. There are footpaths provided on both sides of this stretch of road.

### **2.8.5 Prevailing uses**

The north side of the Square has a predominantly commercial character. Traditionally it was commercial centre of the town and remains so today. In the two-storey terrace are a public house, auctioneers office, butcher shop, electrical shop and a café. The community hall is also located on this side of Freshford Square.

The south side of the Square has a predominance of community uses. The old girls and boys schools were opened here in 1876 by their patron, Thomas Eyre. Since 1973 both schools have functioned as Prague House, a community-run nursing home. Located at the corner of the east and south sides is the Roman Catholic Church which also contributes to the character of this locality.

The east side of Freshford Square traditionally had a mixture of residential, community and commercial uses although today it is chiefly residential. (See photo right).

In the past this stretch of road housed the town's RIC barracks, the curate's house, the doctor's house, a petrol station, public house and shop. Today the doctor's house and barracks are private dwellings. The old curate's house, located beside the Roman Catholic Church, is in use as a private nursing home. While the public house and shop remain, the petrol station is closed but retains the old pumps to the former forecourt.



**East side of the Square**

The west side of the Square is residential in character. As the only side of the Square with a name on it, New Row consists of a terrace of eleven houses. The last house to the north had a commercial unit inserted into the ground floor at some time. This however has been reverted back to a private dwelling.

### **2.8.6 Streetscape Qualities**

The Square in Freshford is an open, well-defined space contained by terraces of houses and rows of buildings facing onto the Square. Its sub-rectangular plan is bisected diagonally by an avenue, which creates an impressive vista. Though of irregular shape, the planting of the dwarfed variety of horse chestnuts gives the square uniformity, formalising the green and positively contributing to the character of the space.



**Tree-lined avenue through the Square**

As the most uniform terrace on the Square, New Row creates a distinctive streetscape. Though some of the houses have undergone modernisation in recent years the window and door positions and roofline have remained intact. Though slight variations occur in the terrace the overall impression is one of consistency and homogeneity.

The most striking view is created by the long, straight tree-lined road running diagonally through the Square. This avenue starts at the north-east corner of the green and leads to the Roman Catholic Church at the south-west corner.

The east side of the Square feels considerably more open and expansive than the west side. The wide street clearly contributes to this openness but the positions of the houses also have an effect on this sense of space. In contrast to the terrace of houses located directly opposite on New Row, the houses on the east side of the Square are set back from the road and have front garden areas. Traditionally the front gardens of the terrace were enclosed by railings, however all but two have been removed. The front gardens and wide road create a buffer between the houses and the central green.

The west side of New Bridge street, as far as the bridge, is consistent in character with the buildings around the Square with two storey, 19<sup>th</sup> Century structures accommodating a butcher's and chemist's shop, an accountant's office and a house.

The east side of old Bridge street has a short row of renovated houses and at the bridge there is pedestrian access to a small green area along the banks of the Nuenna which has the potential to link to Brewery Lane in the event of the redevelopment of the backlands, to the rear of the properties facing the Square.

### **2.8.6.1 Architectural Qualities**

The predominant building type on the Square is a terraced two-storey house with rendered finish to the exterior walls and a single-span pitched roof. A variation of this type is a terraced two-storey house with a pub or shopfront to the ground floor. Dating to the mid to late nineteenth century, this building type is commonly found throughout Ireland and makes up the architectural stock of many Irish towns and villages. Building materials typically found in these structures include stone, brick, timber, slate and lime or cement mortar and render. The building lines and rooflines of the structures were informally standardised while the position and form of door and window openings were usually duplicated throughout. The overall effect created by the standard building type and use of construction materials is one of consistency and uniformity.



**Terraced two-storey house**



Architectural features of particular note on The Square include:



- the fine, tooled limestone dressings on the former boys and girls schools,
- the detailing and quality of stone work on the Roman Catholic church,
- the chamfered corners to the shops on the north and east-side,
- the surviving pivot iron windows and irregularly-shaped stone sills on the former estate workers' cottages on the west side of The Square,
- the original cast-iron rainwater goods surviving on many of the structures,
- original fanlights and garden railings surviving on houses on the east-side of the square, and
- the original timber sash windows on the house also on the east side of the square.

#### **Pivot iron window**

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

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

#### **2.8.7 Development objectives for the ACA**

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

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

#### **Maintenance and Repair**

Maintenance works and repairs are the responsibility of the owner or occupier. Regular and correct maintenance are essential to the conservation of the structures within the

Architectural Conservation Area and to prevent them from becoming endangered. Residents should be informed of the significance of their terraced structures and encouraged to look after them in an appropriate and conservation-friendly manner.

### **Restoration of Character**

Where possible, the owner or occupier should be encouraged to restore the character of their structure. This in turn will have the effect of contributing positively to the overall character of the area. Individual owners or occupiers willing to restore the character of their building should be encouraged to research and establish the original style and materials used to construct their building. This information can be derived from local knowledge, old photographs, maps and looking at neighbouring houses to identify original features.

The cycle of repair and maintenance will provide opportunities for the restoration of original features in many cases and the enhancement of the original character of the buildings will be encouraged. In this respect, new roof or wall finishes should have the same colour and texture as the original material and replacement windows should have traditional glazing patterns and should be of similar profile to the original windows when closed.

<b>Objective:</b>	To seek the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make up the streetscape of the Conservation Area
<b>Objective:</b>	To seek the refurbishment of derelict or vacant properties which are of historic interest or which contribute to the visual coherence of the streetscape
<b>Objective:</b>	New development should be appropriate in form and use to its corner, infill or backland location.

### **Boundary treatment**

As the majority of Freshford's houses and streets developed before the advent of car ownership, the Square suffers from a lack of private parking facilities. In the past residents of the east side of The Square removed plinth walls and wrought-iron railings to their gardens to provide space for cars. Only two examples of the original enclosed front gardens survive and these should be retained. The reinstatement of the gardens should be encouraged as it would greatly enhance the character of the Square.

### **Views and Prospects to be preserved**

As identified in the character assessment of the area, the homogeneity of the nineteenth-century terraced houses is a feature of the Square. Development that would jeopardise that uniformity should be avoided. The existing building line and height of the terraces must be considered for proposed new developments. The vista created by the tree-lined road which bisects the Square should be respected and maintained.

**Demolition**

Where demolition of a building that contributes to the character of the area is proposed, the planning authority will consider the effect the demolition would have on the character of the area.

**New Development**

Where redevelopment or new-build is permitted, the planning authority will specify acceptable materials and finishes to be used. These will reflect the original and existing materials and finishes found in the Square, i.e. slate, timber sash windows, rendered walls with ruled-and-lined details, iron pivot windows to the estate worker's cottages. The addition of modern features including satellite dishes, signage, awnings, flagpoles etc. should be avoided as they may detract from the character of the Architectural Conservation Area. Further guidance in this regard is contained in Appendix 4 of this plan.

<b>Objective:</b>	New development should relate closely to the established character of the town, respecting existing materials and finishes and the disciplines of established building form, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions.
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**Provision for Maintenance of Green Areas**

The landscaping of the Square in Freshford contributes positively as a setting to the surrounding structures. This area must be maintained and promoted as an amenity in the town. Provisions for waste management, public seating, lighting and grass cutting should be encouraged to ensure the continued use of the space.

**Tree Preservation**

In addition, the Local Government Planning and Development Act 2000, section 205 states that 'a *planning authority may by order preserve any tree, group of trees or woodland in the interest of amenity or the environment*'. It is recognised in the character assessment of The Square that the trees planted on the periphery of the green are an important component of the setting of the structures on The Square. As such, measures should be taken to protect these trees as part of the efforts to protect and manage the Square in Freshford for the future.

<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure the protection of the future of the trees on the periphery of the Square
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**Shopfronts**

In order to retain the character of the town, it is important to ensure that the scale of shopfront signs and nameplates is neither out of scale with the ground floor façade area of a building nor out of character with the overall composition of the building. (See Appendix 4 for further guidelines)

<b>Objective:</b>	To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the town centre as the opportunity arises
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<b>Objective:</b>	To preserve the character of the town, with control of shopfronts and advertising
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<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure that the scale of shopfront signs and nameplates is not out of scale with the ground floor façade area of a building nor out of character with the overall composition of the building. See Appendix A.
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### **2.8.8 Development Control within the Proposed Architectural Conservation Area**

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

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

## **2.9 Community Supports – Social Services**

### **2.9.1 Services**

It is considered that a bank, credit union, information centre, IT facility, craft outlet and community enterprise centre were all service deficits in the town. The concept of an Eco Building, centrally located, incorporating a variety of sustainable building techniques and renewable energy aspects is envisaged by Freshford 2020 Ltd as part of their Freshford Alive project. The suggested uses for such a building include community meeting room, offices, family resource centre, a village library with a section devoted to sustainable building, renewable energy and other environmental issues, a one-stop shop for County Council services with an IT facility and third level outreach to facilitate distant learning.

Freshford contains a variety of services, ranging from an electrical shop, chemists, and a few pubs. Its service base should expand to keep pace with development and to maintain its important role in the local rural area.

<b>Objective:</b>	To maintain and enhance the role of Freshford as a local market centre for its rural catchment area and as a centre to service the anticipated expansion during the period of the Plan
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<b>Objective:</b>	To facilitate and encourage the development of an Eco Building for community purposes in Freshford
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#### **2.9.1.1 Garda Síochána**

Freshford has one Garda, and the Garda Barracks is located on Kilkenny Street. One patrol car is shared with Ballyragget. The Station is open for 6-7 hours a week. This is a reduction in the level of service provision from previous, when it was one Sergeant, two guards and the station was open full-time.

<b>Policy:</b>	To support the development of Garda services in Freshford in co-operation with the Garda Síochána
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#### **2.9.1.2 Library Service**

The Mobile Library Service serves Freshford for one and a half hours every three weeks, and there are no plans to provide a permanent library in Freshford at present. The possibility of incorporating a library with other facilities within a complex, such as an Eco Building, is a concept that should be fully explored as that project develops.

<b>Objective:</b>	To support the development of library services in a suitable venue in co-operation with the local community
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#### **2.9.2 Youth**

Year round facilities and activities suitable for all interests and age levels are identified as a need in Freshford. There is a bi-monthly disco for teenagers, snooker room, and an after school homework club.

There is no Scout and Guide Troop and no youth club.

<b>Policy:</b>	To support the development of youth services in co-operation with the local community and with Foróige
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#### **2.9.3 Elderly**

There are two nursing homes, Prague House, which is partially funded by the Health Executive and St. Catherine's Home which is privately funded.

<b>Policy:</b>	To facilitate and support the expansion of the range of facilities catering for the elderly population
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#### **2.9.4 Healthcare**

As set out in Section 7.15 of the County Development Plan 2002, it is the policy of the Council to facilitate the development by the Health Executive of a comprehensive range of health and social care services and in particular services for the elderly including the development of community, hospital, community nursing and day care services throughout the County. There is a Health Centre in Freshford, on Kilkenny Street, and a satisfactory health service is provided there, with one doctor. Pedestrian access to the

Health Centre is an issue at present, as there is no footpath and it is located between the 50 and 60kph speed limit.

<b>Objective:</b>	To co-operate with the Health Executive in the provision of health services for the town
<b>Objective:</b>	To provide a safe and convenient pedestrian access from the town to the Health Centre.

### **2.9.5 Childcare**

According to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities, “Government policy on childcare is to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community”<sup>9</sup>. Section 3.5.1. of the County Development Plan sets out the policies of Kilkenny County Council in relation to childcare provision. Kilkenny County Childcare committee which is a sub group of the Kilkenny County Development Board have also published a

Childcare Strategy 2002-2006, to “inform the development and delivery of quality services for children in the County”<sup>10</sup> between 2002 and 2006.

There is a play school housed in temporary accommodation in the Squash club. The provision of quality childcare services will be facilitated and encouraged by the Council, in suitable locations. Regard will also be given to the Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities issued by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

<b>Policy:</b>	To ensure the provision of an adequate range of quality childcare facilities in appropriate locations
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<sup>9</sup> Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001, p. 3 *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Stationery Office

<sup>10</sup> Kilkenny County Childcare Committee, 2002 *Childcare Development Plan 2002 - 2006*

## **3 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

### **3.2 The Development Boundary**

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

- The need to provide a compact and accessible town in accordance with the principles of sustainable development
- The existing built environment and road structure
- Potential population growth and demand for housing
- The need to offer location 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 Freshford, subject to any potential development restrictions which arise as a result of the flooding of the Nuenna River.

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, hotel, restaurant, and use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.

### **3.3.2 Low density residential**

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

The maximum residential density to be permitted here shall be 5 dwellings to the acre, depending on servicing arrangements.

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, open spaces

Open for Consideration: Places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, Nursing home, Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages, retail shop of local convenience, hotel, public house, restaurant, use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.



### **3.3.3 Town Centre**

Objective: To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses and allow for the development of Freshford 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 Freshford and to provide for and improve retailing, residential, commercial, office, cultural and other uses appropriate to the centre of a town. It will be an objective of the Council to encourage the development of backlands. Generally two storey buildings will be preferred.

Permissible Uses: Dwellings, retailing, retail warehousing, wholesale outlets, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, halting sites, hotels, motels, guest houses, clubs, private garages, open spaces, public service installations, medical and related consultants, restaurants, public houses, car parks, halls or discotheques, and other uses as permitted and open for consideration in residential zoning.

Open for Consideration: workshop or light industry

### **3.3.4 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space**

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

Permissible Uses: Open space

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

### **3.3.5 Community Facilities**

Objective: To protect, provide and improve community facilities.

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

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

### **3.3.6 Industrial/Warehousing**

Objective: To provide for industrial and related uses.

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

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

<b>Specific Objective</b>	<b>Map Ref</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Funding and Support Services</b>	<b>Time scale</b>
To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings	H1	Local Authority through the development control process	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure a high standard in design, layout, provision of open space, landscaping and variation in house type and size in new residential developments	H2	Developers, Landowners and Local Authority	Developers, Landowners and Local Authority through development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes	H3	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and Local Authority through 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 town centre	H4	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To implement the Housing Strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002	H5	Local Authority	N/A	Ongoing from adoption of plan

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To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the town to cater for its expansion over the period of the plan	H6	Local Authority	N/A	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at appropriate densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilised where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the town	H7	Developers, Landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that infill development is contextually compatible as is outlined in Appendix 4	H8	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To redevelop derelict sites as the opportunity arises	H9	Local authority, landowners	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the maintenance and preservation of housing within the town centre, and to encourage continued residential use of upper floors. To encourage the building of new infill development where vacant plots exist	H10	Developers, landowners and local authority	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation use of historic structures, including old industrial buildings, whose original use has become redundant	H11	Local authority and developers, community organisations, Dúchas, DoEHLG	Local authority and developers, community organisations, Dúchas, DoEHLG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To zone an area of land for the development of serviced sites for the development of low density dwellings	H12	Local authority	Landowners and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land	H13	Local authority	Landowners and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the integration of adjoining residential schemes, where appropriate, in relation to pedestrian and cycleway links, public open space provision and scheme layout See appendix 4 of this Plan	H14	Local authority, landowners and developers	Developers, landowners and local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan

### 3.4.2 Infrastructure

<b>Specific Objective</b>	<b>Map Ref</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Funding and Support services</b>	<b>Time scale</b>
To secure the upgrading of all water services through agreements with developers and/or landowners as appropriate.	I1	Local Authority	Local Authority & DoEHLG	Ongoing form 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 form 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 form adoption of plan
To seek the positive disposal of storm water in all developments	I4	Local authority, developers through the development control process	Developers	Ongoing form adoption of plan
To provide sufficient water to serve all lands zoned for development in this plan	I5	Local authority	Local authority, DoEHLG	Ongoing form 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 form 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 form adoption of plan
To ensure Freshford has an adequate solid waste collection system	I8	Local authority	Local authority, private waste collectors	Ongoing form adoption of plan
To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan	I9	Local authority, Tidy Towns, residents' associations, local community	Local authority, DoEHLG, local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan

### 3.4.3 Employment and Economy

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

<b>Specific Objective</b>	<b>Map Ref</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Funding and Support services</b>	<b>Time scale</b>
To facilitate the development of educational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population	E & T1	Local authority, school, in conjunction with Department of Education	Department of Education	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To co-operate with the Department of Education in the provision of an adequate number of school places to serve the needs of the village's population	E & T2	Local authority, school, in conjunction with the Department of Education	Department of Education	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the continuation of the FAS Community Employment Scheme or other equivalent/replacement scheme	E & T3	FAS, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	FAS, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Ongoing from adoption of plan

### 3.4.5 Transport

<b>Specific Objective</b>	<b>Map Ref</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Funding and Support services</b>	<b>Time scale</b>
To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development	T1	Local authority through development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To extend the footpath on Kilkenny Road to the Health Centre	T2	Local authority	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To carry out repairs to footpaths in Freshford under a Special Works scheme	T3	Local authority	Local authority, landowners, Tidy towns, Development Association	Medium term
To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new and existing developments	T5	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	T6	Local authority and bus operators	Bus operators	Medium term
To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments	T7	Local authority	Local authority, local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To identify an appropriate site for car parking within easy reach of the town centre	T8	Local authority, local community, development association	Local authority, local community	Medium term
To resurface the streets around the Square within the period of the Plan	T9	Local authority	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To resurface Old Bridge Street within the period of the Plan	T10	Local authority	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To examine the resurfacing of the west side of the Square, in consultation with the Local Authority Conservation Officer and Heritage Officer	T11	Local authority	Local authority	Medium term
To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the town	T12	Local authority	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To extend the footpath and public lighting on the Johnstown Road to the graveyard as finances and resources permit.	T13	Local authority	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To Vehicular and pedestrian access to	T14	Local authority,	Local authority,	Ongoing

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lands zoned residential on the Clinstown Road must be such that it does not have a significant negative impact on the existing bridge on the Clinstown Road, which is a Protected Structure.		developers through development control process	developers	from adoption of plan
To provide for a new pedestrian linkage across the Nuenna River as shown on the zoning objectives map.	T15	Local authority, developers through development control process	Local authority, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To review the speed limits on the approaches to the town during the lifetime of the plan	T16	Local authority	Local authority	Medium Term
To develop and carryout traffic management proposals (subject to normal statutory procedures and adequate resources being made available) for reducing traffic speeds, enhancing facilities and improving safety generally within the village.	T17	Local authority	Local authority	Medium term

### 3.4.6 Community Facilities – Recreation

<b>Specific Objective</b>	<b>Map Ref</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Funding and Support services</b>	<b>Time scale</b>
To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population	R1	Local authority, landowners and Developers	Local authority and Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that all residential developments address adjoining open space to provide for their passive supervision	R2	Local authority, developers through development control process	Local authority and developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment by other uses	R3	Local authority, local organisations, local community	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure adequate provision of sporting and recreational facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population of the town.	R4	Local authority, local organisations, local community	Local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the maximisation of the Community Centre as a facility for the community	R5	Local authority, local community	Local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan

### 3.4.7 Amenity Enhancement

<b>Specific Objective</b>	<b>Map Ref</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Funding and Support services</b>	<b>Time scale</b>
To seek the conservation and protection of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures	A1	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners	Local authority, DoEHLG, landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan

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To have regard to the policies and recommendations in Saint Lachtain's Church Conservation Plan.	A2	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners	Local authority, DoEHLG, landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make up the streetscape of the Conservation Area. The cycle of repair and maintenance will provide opportunities for the restoration of original features in many cases and the enhancement of the original character of the buildings will be encouraged. In this respect, new roof or wall finishes should have the same colour and texture as the original material and replacement windows should have traditional glazing patterns and should be of similar profile to the original windows when closed.	A3	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Local authority, DoEHLG, landowners, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the refurbishment of derelict or vacant properties which are of historic interest or which contribute to the visual coherence of the streetscape	A4	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
New development should relate closely to the established character of the town, respecting the disciplines of established building form, massing, height, alignment, orientation and window proportions. Further guidance in this regard is contained in Appendix 4 of this plan	A5	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Local Authority, DoEHLG, Landowners, developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, concerning archaeological assessment and the monitoring of excavations during construction, in considering development proposals which would affect any archaeologically designated sites	A6	Local authority, developers, DoEHLG	DoEHLG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide additional and improved litter bins in strategic locations and to maintain, or to make arrangements for, the maintenance of existing bins	A7	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To implement the provisions of the Litter Management Plan	A8	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Association	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the town centre as the opportunity arises	A9	Local authority, service providers	Local Authority, service providers	Medium term



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To preserve the character of the town, with control of shopfronts and advertising	A10	Local authority through development control process	Local authority, developers, shop owners, businesses	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that the scale of shopfront signs and nameplates is not out of scale with the ground floor façade area of a building nor out of character with the overall composition of the building	A11	Local authority through development control process	Local authority, shop owners, businesses	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees in any new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows	A12	Local authority, developers	Local authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' associations, Development Associations	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees through the town using native species where appropriate	A13	Local authority, developers, Tidy towns, development association	Local authority, developers, Tidy Towns, Development assoc	Medium term
To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the 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	A14	Local authority, landowners, developers	Kilkenny Tourism, SERTA, An Bord Fáilte, BNS Leader	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the protection of the future of the trees on the periphery of the Square	A15	Local authority, developers, landowners, Tidy Towns, Development Association	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To retain the trees as identified in the conservation objectives map except where their removal is due to the interests of public safety and good design or the trees are in an unhealthy state	A16	Local authority, developers, landowners, Tidy Towns, Development Association	Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan

### 3.4.8 Community Supports – Social Services

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

### **3.5 Implementation**

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

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

This is intended to be an integrated plan, and the progression of formulating objectives from issues identified in the public consultation is the first step in enabling an integrated approach to implementation.

## **4 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

### **4.1 Introduction**

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

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

### **4.2 Design Guidance Principles**

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

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

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

### **4.3 Design Elements in Freshford**

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

### **4.3.1 Building line and Boundary Treatment**

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

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

On the Square, building lines were informally standardised. To the east side of the Square many of the plinth walls and wrought iron railings to the front of the houses have been removed, to provide space for parking. Only two examples of the original enclosed front sites survive and should be retained. The reinstatement of the front sites should be encouraged as it would greatly enhance the character of the Square.

### **4.3.2 Height and roofs**

Most buildings within the centre of the town are two storeys in height. There is a general consistency of building heights around the Square with the predominant building type being a terraced two storey house with rendered finish to the exterior walls and a single span pitched roof. The number of storeys is not a good judge of building heights. This is a very important principle of the Irish streetscape, as reflected in Kilkenny's towns and villages. This feature and the chimneys introduce a strong rhythm in the streetscape and should be acknowledged in new designs. This diversity does not disrupt the harmony of the streetscape because of the consistency in the other elements. The variety of rooflines conveys a feeling of diversity, but unity is provided by their common domestic scale and common characteristics.

Roofs are mainly of a traditional pitch, made of slate. The rooflines were informally standardised. New infill developments (or refurbishments that include new habitable roof space) should ensure that the pitch or angle of the roof is consistent with neighbouring properties.

#### **4.3.2.1 Chimneys**

The existence of chimneys in a streetscape creates a subtle, yet important, architectural rhythm, through vertical emphasis. When individual buildings in a streetscape are replaced or refurbished without the provision of chimneys the rhythm and traditional

character of the street is ‘dulled’ see Appendix 4. Chimneys should be retained in any refurbishment or replacement.

### **4.3.3 Materials**

Building materials typically found in Freshford include stone, brick, timber, slate and lime or cement mortar and render. Interesting details also include the fine, tooled limestone dressings on the former boys and girls schools, the detailing and quality of stone work on the Roman Catholic church, the chamfered corners to the shops on the north and east-side, the surviving pivot iron windows and irregularly-shaped stone sills on the former estate workers’ cottages on the west side of the Square, the original cast-iron rainwater goods surviving on many of the structures, original fanlights and front site railings surviving on houses on the east-side of the square, and the original timber sash windows on the house also on the east side of the square.

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

### **4.3.4 Proportions**

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

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

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

## **4.4 New Residential Development**

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

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

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

New development shall seek to:

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

#### **4.4.1 Building Layout and Orientation**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **4.4.2 Density**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **4.4.3 Design**

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

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

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

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

#### **4.4.4 Ecology & Bio-diversity**

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

- i. Retain and enhance existing vegetation including trees, shrubs and hedgerows, wherever possible and incorporate into the development. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, it is prohibited, with certain exemptions, to remove or cut hedgerows during the bird breeding season of March 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August.
- ii. Networks of wildlife sites are more ecologically valuable than isolated wildlife areas. Where possible create linking corridors of habitats.



- iii. Where possible, use native species. Trees and shrubs that grow naturally in the surrounding countryside are often the best choice for the town. A list of native trees and shrubs, with planting guidelines is contained in Appendix 3.
- iv. Where possible, use plants of local provenance (i.e. grown locally rather than imported)
- v. Tree and shrub species with berries are important for wintering birds
- vi. Trees and shrubs which support a high biomass of insects in summer are important for breeding birds
- vii. Where appropriate avoid the culverting of watercourses and provide new water areas.
- viii. Where possible, set aside maintenance free areas and avoid or limit the use of herbicides and pesticides

#### **4.4.5 Car Parking**

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

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

#### **4.4.6 Public Open Space**

Public open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. It provides passive as well as active amenity and has important ecological and environmental aspects. In calculating the area of open space, the area of roads, grass margins, roundabouts, footpaths, left over area, backlands, and visibility splays shall not be taken into account.

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

- Open space should be provided in a comprehensive and linked way, designed as an integral part of the development.
- Areas should be of a demonstrated recreational or amenity value. Small dysfunctional open spaces should be avoided.
- Wherever possible, the majority of open space should be multi-functional. Areas for informal amenity and children's play should be combined.
- Areas should be easily and safely accessible from all dwellings which the space is designed to serve

- The design, location and appearance of open space areas should have regard to the amenities of nearby dwellings, for example, areas where children may play should normally be overlooked by the fronts of nearby dwellings to provide for maximum surveillance and overlooking
- Public open space areas should not be located so close to adjoining dwellings so as to cause undue noise or nuisance to existing or proposed residents
- Attractive natural features should be protected and incorporated into open space areas. Tree planting should normally form an integral part of such open space areas.

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

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

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

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

Adequate areas of open space should be an integral part of any new residential development to meet the needs generated by that development. The overall standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population will normally be applied in assessing proposals for open space for children's play and informal amenity. In developments which are adjacent to and provide for easy access to significant areas of existing public open space a lesser standard of provision may be acceptable. This relaxation will only be considered where the developer pays a financial contribution towards the improvement of the existing public open space so as to improve its quality and carrying capacity.

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

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

professionals so as to ensure a high standard and consistency with good design and layout practice.

Developers should consider providing a variety of open spaces. Both formal and informal semi-natural areas should be provided, such as wetlands, woodlands, meadows, green corridors as well as formal gardens and seating areas. These elements work best as part of a structure to the provision of open space. Planting schemes should include native species, where possible. A list of native tree and shrub species, and planting guidelines, is contained in Appendix 3. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and incorporated into the development.

#### **4.4.6.1 The River Walk**

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

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

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

Any residential development bordering the linear park shall be designed to interact with the open space. The use of low walls and hedging should be stipulated, as high boundary walls can create a discouraging environment and pose a security risk. Tree planting should be undertaken, to provide a pleasant leafy environment, which provides weather protection, but does not provide opportunity for concealment. In addition, only low sparse shrubs and flowers should be planted. A playground could also be provided at a suitable location in the park. In order to protect and enhance the existing ecological value of this area, where possible, emphasis will be given to the use of measures which enhance the value of the area, including the use of native trees and shrubs in the park design.

#### **4.4.6.2 Management plan for Public Open Space**

Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space required under this policy, where spaces and facilities are not taken in charge by the Council, either through management companies or agreements with the planning authority.

#### **4.4.7 Private Open Space**

An adequate amount of private open space should be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling. In general the requirement will be 60 to 75 sq.m minimum for 3/4/5

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

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

#### **4.4.8 Integration of Residential Developments**

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

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

#### **4.4.9 Serviced sites**

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

For any such development, there should be a continuity of design in terms of scale, compatibility and general harmony. Applicants will also be expected to employ the services of qualified architects (RIAI or equivalent) when applying for individual houses.

#### **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

<b>Apartment Type</b>	<b>Minimum Floor Area</b>
One Bed	46 m <sup>2</sup>
Two Bed	65 m <sup>2</sup>
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).

## **Car Parking Standards for Various Land Uses**

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Parking Spaces per Unit</i>
Dwelling House	2 car spaces per dwelling unit in suburban areas
Dwelling House (Residential areas)	1 space per unit in the city centre. 0.25 per dwelling for visitor parking
Flat or Bedsitter	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 20m <sup>2</sup> of bar and lounge floor area in the City Centre and 1 car space per 10 sq. m of bar and lounge floor area in all other locations.
Shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores	5 car spaces for every 93 m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor area.
Shops	1 car space per 30 sq. metres in City Centre and 1 space per 20 square metres outside
Restaurants, cafes	1 car space per 20 m <sup>2</sup> gross floor area
Banks and offices	1 car space per 15m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor area and additional space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Industry	1 car space for every 60m <sup>2</sup> of gross industrial floor area and operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Warehousing	Each application to be determined by the Planning Authority
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 sq. meters of net retail floor space
Full 18 hole Golf Course	4 car spaces per hole
Par 3 golf courses	2 car spaces per hole
Golf driving ranges, shooting ranges	1 space per bay/ trap plus 3 spaces
Sports grounds and sports clubs	Each application to be determined by the Planning Authority
Hospital	1.50 spaces per bed
Nursing Homes	1 space per 4 bedrooms plus staff
Clinics/Medical practices	3 spaces per consulting room plus staff

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

Where a number of uses are contained within one development, the various uses shall be separated and the overall parking requirements for the development shall be assessed relative to each separate use in order to compute the overall parking requirement for the

development (e.g. in a hotel the function rooms, bars etc. shall be assessed as separate from the bedroom provision).

**However, where a developer can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that parking spaces will be utilised throughout the day by a number of different users, availing of different facilities within a proposed development, the Planning Authority may, in the interest of sustainability, take this multi use into account when assessing parking needs.**

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

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

#### **4.6 Public Utilities**

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

#### **4.7 Shopfronts and Advertising**

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

### **4.8 The Likely Significant Effects on the Environment of Implementing the Proposed Freshford Local Area Plan**

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

#### **4.8.1 Description of the Proposed Local Area Plan**

The Local Area Plan lands comprise approximately 18 hectares (45 acres) of undeveloped residential zoned lands, 4 hectares (10 acres) of which are low density residential and additional area of mixed use development.

#### **4.8.2 Identification of likely significant effects on the environment**

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

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



- Archaeology and cultural heritage
- Landscape

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

#### **4.8.2.1 Human beings**

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

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

#### **4.8.2.2 Material Assets**

**Traffic:**

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

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

**Water Supply:**

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

Likely significant effects:

- Increased demand for water supply

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

**Foul and Surface Water Drainage:**

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

Likely significant effects:

Infrastructure will be improved through additional development

Proposed mitigation measures:

Improved foul drainage facilities to cater for new housing developments

**4.8.2.3 Flora and fauna**

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

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

**4.8.2.4 Archaeology and cultural heritage**

Environmental baseline:

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

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

- Policies and objectives to protect the archaeological heritage
- Architectural Conservation Area proposed for the area around the Square

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

#### **4.8.2.5 Other possible effects**

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

#### **4.8.3 Consideration of Alternatives: Could Development Take Place Elsewhere**

The development of Freshford will have a significant impact as a result of the change of use of areas from agricultural and fallow use to residential, employment and social uses.

It is a policy of the Council to encourage development within such designated towns and villages where the infrastructure and services exist. Development in such settlements constitutes a more efficient use of existing resources.

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

## **APPENDIX 1 – PROTECTED STRUCTURES**

### **Existing Protected Structures within the development boundary for Freshford**

<b>Protected Structure</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Map Ref. No.</b>	<b>RPS No.</b>
<b>Church of Ireland</b>	St. Lachtains, c. 1730, on site of 8 <sup>th</sup> century Abbey, incorporating 12 <sup>th</sup> century Hiberno-Romanesque porch	North east corner of square	1	C87
<b>Catholic Church</b>	St. Lachtains, By D.W. Butler – plain, built of limestone with octagonal turrets and pinnacle tops	South east corner of Square	2	C88
<b>Bridges</b>	Two single arched bridges - Princes Bridge and Hospital Bridge, carry the Freshford to Kilkenny Road and the Freshford to Clintstown Road respectively.	Kilkenny Street and Clintstown Road	3	C89
<b>Bridge</b>	Old Bridge. 1788 date inscribed on keystone of upper arch. Triple arch road bridge built by W.J.M Wern. Cut-stone voussoirs and coursed limestone walls and parapet.	Old Bridge street	4	D99

## **APPENDIX 2 – ECOLOGICAL SURVEY**

**Flora and Fauna Report  
Freshford Local Area Plan  
For  
Kilkenny County Council**

**February 2004**

Prepared by White Young Green Environmental Limited,  
Bracken Business Park,  
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the current survey was to examine the ecological value of the site and assess the likely significant impacts of implementing the proposed Freshford Local Area Plan. The assessment comprised a desk study and field survey.

The desk study comprised the following elements:

- Identification of all designated sites of nature conservation interest within the study area.
- Consultation with the Heritage Division, Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- Consultation with the Southern Regional Fisheries Board.
- Assessment of fisheries/aquatic value of adjacent surface water bodies.
- Review of Ordnance Survey maps, and aerial photos where available.
- Review of relevant reports and literature for the areas.

The field survey comprised of a habitat assessment of the study area. The habitat assessment was conducted in general accordance with Phase 1 Habitat Survey Methodology (JNCC, 1993) and habitats were identified according to Fossit (2000). Plant identification follows Webb *et al.* (1996) and Rose (1981). The site visit was conducted in January 2004.

### **1.1 Survey Constraints**

As this study was conducted in January, a full description of the flora and fauna within the study area is not available. Nevertheless, it is possible to assess the habitats within the study area in terms of their relative importance.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA**

Freshford is located approximately 15km north west of Kilkenny at the intersection between the regional roads, R694 and R693. The Nuenna River flows in an easterly direction through the village, merging with the Nore about 4km east of the study area.

## **3. DESIGNATED AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION**

A review of the Heritage Divisions datasets indicates that there are no existing or proposed nature designations within the study boundary.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

The Heritage Division, Dept. of Environment Heritage and Local Government, was consulted with respect to the Local Area Plan implementation (21<sup>st</sup> November 2003). The Local Conservation Ranger highlighted the presence of a pair of nesting Buzzards

(*Buteo buteo*) at Upperwood Demesne to the south of the study area in recent years (Local Conservation Ranger, *pers. comm.*).

The Southern Regional Fisheries Board (SRFB) was consulted with respect to the Local Area Plan (21<sup>st</sup> November 2003). In terms of the Local Area Plan, the three principle issues of concern that the SRFB highlighted are:

- That water quality not be adversely impacted as a consequence of development,
- That development is carried out so as not in any way to constitute a threat or barrier to the free movement of fish and fish life,
- That, in terms of water quantity, river flows and levels are maintained so as to ensure that all currently wetted areas remain so, that there is adequate dilution for such effluent and waste water discharges as are made.

The SRFB further state that there is a particular concern as regards levels of oxidized nitrogen in the Nuenna River. In addition, they regard the existing wastewater treatment facility serving Freshford and environs as inadequate, comprising only a septic tank facility. As a matter of policy, the SRFB objects to the granting of planning permission entailing new and increased discharges to the public foul sewer, based on the fact that treatment facilities available are considered inadequate and contribute to pollution of the Nuenna. A full copy of the written correspondence received from the SRFB is contained in Appendix A.

## **5. HABITAT ASSESSMENT**

An assessment of the habitats within the study area indicates that the predominant habitat found is Improved Agricultural Grassland (GA1). Other habitats occurring include amenity grassland, arable crops, horticultural land, wet grassland, woodlands, river and streams. These habitats are presented on Figure 1. Note that hedgerows were not recorded for the purposes of this study although they are widespread throughout the study area and are important as wildlife corridors.

Improved Agricultural Grassland (GA1) habitat typically consists of a predominance of perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) with white clover (*Trifolium repens*) abundant to frequent. Other broadleaved herbs may include daisy, (*Bellis perennis*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), and buttercup (*Ranunculus* sp.). Grazing is the principle use of this habitat type in the area. Amenity Grassland (Improved) (GA2) is similar in species composition to Improved Agricultural Grassland, though its function is for amenity use. Arable Crops (BC1) habitat type largely comprises of bare soil with light cover of stubble from last years harvest. Horticultural Land (BC2) habitat consists of a small patch of cultivated land used for growing vegetables probably for personal use.

The Nuenna River, though fast-flowing at the time of survey is classified as Depositing/Lowland Rivers (FW2). The width of the river varies considerably from 4m to 8m in places. The water has a high proportion of suspended solids. Some small islands occur in places which are dominated by herbs with *Epilobium* being the most

obvious. Bankside cover is generally limited along the river within the study area. Some cover is provided by ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), willow (*Salix* sp.) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) in places. Grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) and grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) were observed at or near the river.

Three areas of ecological significance were identified within the study area:

- Wet Grassland
- Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland
- (Mixed) Broadleaved Woodland

### **5.1 Wet Grassland (GS4)**

This habitat type is located just north and south of the River Nuenna, to the east of Freshford village. The area to the south of the river appears to be grazed occasionally. Nevertheless, the sward is very long and flattened in places. The habitat to the north of the river is fenced and not subject to grazing.

The habitat comprises of a mixture of grasses with scutch (*Elymus repens*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) abundant. Perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), fescues (*Festuca* sp.) and *Poa* sp. occur frequently. Common rush (*Juncus effusus*) is abundant particularly near the river. Goose-grass (*Galium aparine*) occurs frequently throughout the sward. Patches of *Phalaris arundinacea* dominate the sward in places, as does *Epilobium* sp. and yellow flag (*Iris pseudocorus*).

Pools of water found within this habitat are dominated by water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*). Some young willow (*Salix* sp.) occurs within the sward.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) (8 approximately) were noted nesting within or near the stands of *Epilobium* sp. and *Phalaris arundinacea*.

The long grasses and vegetation in this area provide a good habitat for ground-nesting birds. The area appears to have a good diversity of vegetation which would be more evident during the summer months. As a result, this area is considered of high local ecological value.

### **5.2 (Mixed) Broadleaved Woodland (WD1)**

This small woodland is part of the Upperwood Demesne to the south of the study area. It consists of a narrow strip of predominately beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) woodland with some birch (*Betula* sp.) occurring, especially along the boundaries. The understorey is dominated by holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) with bramble occurring occasionally. Willow (*Salix* sp.) and rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) were also noted. The ground cover is dominated by litter with ivy (*Hedera helix*) abundant. Ferns such as Hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*), soft shield fern (*Polystichum setiferum*), common polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*) and maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) occurs



frequently to occasionally. Wood brome (*Bromus ramosus*) occurs occasionally. Greater woodrush (*Luzula sylvatica*) was also recorded.

Blue and great tit (*Parus caeruleus* and *P. major*), blackbird, song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) were observed frequently

This woodland provides good cover for a variety of songbirds and though quite small should be considered of moderate local ecological value.

### **5.3 Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland (WN2)**

This small woodland strip occurs along the south bank of the Nuenna River to the west of Freshford. It is ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) dominated and appears to be in poor repair in places. It comprises mature ash trees reaching a maximum height of about 20m, with substantial ivy cover. Some of these trees were formerly coppiced. The understorey is sparse as the woodland appears to be regularly grazed. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) is abundant in places. Some mature willow trees (*Salix* sp.) grow alongside the river. Ground cover appears to be dominated by grassland species. Blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*) and blackbird (*Turdus merula*) were noted.

The value of this woodland principally lies in its potential as a bat habitat. Excluding grazing animals would improve the woodland structure over time. The woodland should be considered of moderate local ecological value.

## **6. FISHERIES AND WATER QUALITY**

According to data obtained from the EPA website, the Nuenna River was reasonably unpolluted around the Freshford area during the eighties but declined in the nineties. At a location directly east of the village, it has been moderately polluted from 1991 to 1998. Approximately 5km upstream at Barna, the water quality has been recorded as slightly polluted over the same time period. The SRFB comment that there is a particular concern as regards levels of oxidized nitrogen in the Nuenna River.

The Nuenna River merges with the Nore, a designated Salmonid River, approximately 4km downstream of the study area. As such, appropriate measures need to be undertaken for its protection.

## **7. OVERALL EVALUATION**

There are no proposed or existing nature conservation designations within the study area.

The study area is dominated by agricultural land, of low ecological value. However, a number of areas of local ecological value were identified, namely:

- Wet Grassland
- Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland
- (Mixed) Broadleaved Woodland

The Nuenna River merges with the Nore, a designated Salmonid River, approximately 4km downstream of the study area.

## **8. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 Potential Impacts**

Impacts on ecology arising from the implementation of the Local Area Plan can be broadly categorised into 3 headings:

- i. Direct habitat loss
- ii. Indirect habitat changes
- iii. Habitat fragmentation

#### **i. Habitat loss**

This involves the removal/destruction of a habitat.

#### **ii. Indirect habitat changes**

This includes any changes brought about by alteration of drainage and discharges to surface water. The alteration of drainage can result in significant habitat changes to adjacent wetland habitats and the streams themselves. Furthermore, construction has the potential impacts of discharges to adversely impact on water quality of surface waters which will have knock-on effects on associated flora and fauna. For instance, discharges of cement, which has a very high pH value, or the washings of tools and equipment, can result in dramatic increases in pH of receiving waters, with lethal effects on fish and fish life.

#### **iii. Habitat Fragmentation**

This involves the break up of a habitat by a development, resulting in one or more smaller habitat areas. A reduction in the size of a habitat may cause a decline in species numbers, where the habitat area becomes too small to support viable populations. Particularly susceptible are those species such as birds and mammals with large ranges, and also short-lived species such as migratory insects and annual plants which need to re-invade each year.

These impacts are relevant to all uncultivated habitats within the study area but should be regarded as significant where the three mentioned ecological areas are concerned.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the potential impacts listed above be avoided where the three areas identified as being of ecological interest, namely the wet grassland area to the east of the study area and the two small woodland areas, are concerned. Furthermore, it is recommended that:

- Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland be fenced. This should allow the woodland structure to improve.

- The Wet Grassland area be subject to a light grazing regime with limited mowing. Artificial fertiliser application should be kept to a minimum where possible.

Throughout the study area, tree and scrub cover should be maintained where possible. Cutting of hedgerows and site clearance should ideally take place outside of the bird-nesting period which starts on March 1<sup>st</sup> and ends 31<sup>st</sup> of August.

Native trees should be used in new planting schemes. Further planting along the Nuenna River is recommended to increase bankside cover. Tree species planted should reflect the local species composition, including willow species and ash.

The SRFB suggest that the Local Area Plan recommend that developers make contact with the Regional Fisheries Board when carrying out any works on or adjacent to rivers. Issues of particular importance are as follows:

- It is an offence to interfere with the bed, bank or soil of any river, regardless of size, during the annual close season. This is to afford protection to adult spawning fish and to the young of such fish.
- People conducting construction works adjacent to waters should be made aware of the high pH of cement. Discharges of cement, or washings of tools and equipment in waters can result in the dramatic increase of the pH of the receiving waters, with lethal effects on fish and fish life.
- The Fisheries Board should be consulted where works such as the laying of pipelines across, including under the river bed level, are being carried out. Developers should be aware that no construction should be carried out which, particularly during low flow situations, might interfere with the free movement of fish and fish life.

## APPENDIX 3 – LIST OF NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS

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

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

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

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

## **Appendix 4 – Urban Design Study**

**and**

## **Urban Design Guidelines for Future Development**

Prepared for  
Kilkenny County Council

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NATIONAL  
BUILDING  
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## **Urban Design Study for Freshford**

### **1. Character of the Landscape Setting**

Freshford is situated in a relatively flat agricultural plain associated with the broader Nore Valley. There are hills to the west – the source of the Nuenna River and some of its tributaries. This river flows from west to east and it is fed by at least three other streams within the study area. The Nuenna River eventually feeds into the Arigna River which in turn feeds the Nore River some four kilometers east.

Although the study area is relatively flat some low lying hills are to be found to the immediate south of the town where the agricultural landscape gives way to deciduous woodlands (hence the name Upperwood Demense and Woodview Estate) and more recent forestry activity.

### **2. Pattern and Shape of the Settlement**

The village nucleus is centred on The Square. Two roads radiate north and south from the Square's west side and a further two roads radiate east and west from the north side of the square. This provides the basic frame for the development of the town, though it is supplemented by other roads leading in from the surrounding countryside and coming from the west, east and south.

The town possesses one complete 'urban block' delineated on all four sides by streets. The south side of this block corresponds with the north side of the Square and the rest of the block is comprised of Newbridge Street, Creel Street and Old Bridge Street. It is perhaps this distinguishing feature that takes Freshford from the realm of a village to that of a town. It is also the more traditional manner for extending a town, as opposed to the emphasis on cul-de-sacs that has occurred in more recent times (and as evident in the Woodview Estate). There are opportunities to extend this street network (of urban blocks) in the town's future development, particularly south of Bunacreshna Street.

Most of the town's development has occurred as single frontage development along the town's principal streets and/or approach roads. This tends to limit the scope for opening up the rear of sites (backland areas) for development. This pattern of ribbon development is more pronounced along Bothergloss Street and on the eastern approach roads to the town, blurring the urban-rural divide, and the impression of a neat and compact town.

### **3. Buildings and Spaces in the Town**

The Square is a green of significant size though it is proportionately in keeping with the scale of development around its edges, being almost exclusively two storey in height (and with little variation in actual building heights), with the sole exception of one premise on Kilkenny Street, which comprises three storeys. The general uniformity of the streetscape framing the square is punctuated at the northeast and southeast corners by the more prominent Church buildings.

The Square is not perfectly square, its north-south axis being longer than its width. It is also narrower at its southern end than it is on its northern side and this fact, whether by

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accident or more likely deliberately planned (by the Anglo Normans) it has the effect of accentuating the sense of perspective when viewed from the principal thoroughfare, Kilkenny Street (on the north side of the Square).

It is interesting to note that the Square is known as the Square, and not a 'green' or 'fair green'. In fact, the early Ordnance Survey Map from 1839, indicates that the space was originally a Square with no formal grassed area and no tree planting. Two features were indicated, though have long since disappeared – a market cross and a May Pole.

While most of the traditional buildings in the town are provided with either a side access to the rear of the plot or no access at all, there are a few examples on both the east and north side of the square where access has been provided by means of an archway.

Apart from the sole example cited on the Square, in addition to the religious buildings, the scale of buildings in the town does not appear to exceed two storeys in height. A considerable amount of the older building stock along Bunacreshna Street are of single storey, though many are in a state of disrepair. Single storeys are also noted north of the Nuenna River on Old Bridge Street and on Bohergloss Street. The existence of single storeys should not prevent the development of two storeys or more on these streets, so long as other design and streetscape considerations are met (refer to Appendix A - Urban Design Guidelines on Future Development).

Gaps in the streetscape are particularly noted on Bunacreshna Street and Kilkenny Street, in addition to Mill Street, and these sites provide ideal opportunities for new infill development. Consideration should also be given to the potential access and development of backland areas (sites to the rear).

#### **4. The Nature of Open Spaces**

There are four principal areas of open space in the town, namely the Square, the town's public park - Millenium Park - on Mill Street, the sports fields to the east of the town and the open space associated with the Woodview Estate and comprising soccer facilities.

The green is bisected by a diagonal road from its northwest corner to its southeast, effectively forming two triangular greens, each of which is delineated by a single perimeter row of mature trees. This formal planting creates a tree lined avenue to the dissecting road. Seating, litter bins, sculptural work, neo-traditional street lamps and a distinctive water pump comprise street furniture in the Square.

The public park on Mill Street is an attractive and well maintained riverside park, that is well landscaped with trees and a pergola.

The Woodview Housing Estate comprises a broad tree lined and landscaped median between the Bunacreshna Street and the estate entrance road. A number of small incidental areas of open space, with individual tree stands, can be found throughout the estate with a larger significant area provided at the rear of the estate, which is used as a

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soccer pitch.. This space provides the west end of the town with some active playing fields, while the GAA pitch is situated on the east end of the town, adjacent to the Primary School and to the backlands off the south side of Kilkenny Street.

Two small informal areas of open space provide some passive amenity along the Nuenna River, with seating. One is situated by the bridge on Old Bridge Street, while the other is situated by the old stone bridge on the road leading to Inchbeg, on the east end of the town. There are several opportunities to provide linear parks along the streams and rivers in the town, these could vary in width allowing for attractive stormwater retention ponds with wildlife benefit, which could add to their appeal.

The provision of parks and open space in the town is quite good.

### **5. Roads and Traffic**

Traffic flows in the town are not noticeably heavy and the condition of roads in the town is generally good, with the notable exception of an area on Chapel Street in front of the Catholic Church. Some resurfacing may be in order along the west side of the Square and along a portion of Old Bridge Street, north of the river. In a number of instances the road carriageway is in very good condition, but the edges or verges tend to be poorly maintained, possibly due to confusion as to whom direct responsibility rests with, the private owner or the County Council.

One notable feature in the town's streets is the presence of cobblestones on the road edge along a section of Kilkenny Street near the junction with Newbridge Street. The same pattern is evident on the west side of the Square, but here it appears to form a shallow gully.

Car parking is generally provided on-street in the town, though some of this has been provided in a portion of the Square. There should be a resistance to providing additional spaces in the Square, which should be maintained green.

Most footpaths in the town are in good condition, though they are extremely narrow in places, notably along the Bunacreshna Road where the road deflects. In other places they are absent or only present on one side of the road, notably on the east side of Bothergloss Street; on a portion of the north side of Kilkenny Street on the north side of the Square; on the Kilkenny Road beyond the turn-off for Inchbeg/Monabrika. The junction of Mill Street and Old Bridge Street is particularly tight, with no footpath provided on this sharp bend. Footpaths are not generally provided on the country lanes that approach the town and this is reasonable.

The condition and surface of paths could be improved/and or resurfaced in a few places, notably on a portion of Kilkenny Street, on its south side and also on Bunacreshna Street near the Square (refer to photos 24 & 25).

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## **6. Other Design Considerations**

Street Furniture in the town consists of a number of attractive circular benches that surround a number of trees in the Square and a number of standard benches at the Square and at the other waterside parks. Neo-traditional street lights, both wall-mounted and free-standing can be found in the centre of the town, both on Kilkenny Street and in the Square. These are neat and attractive and in keeping with the historical fabric of the town. Other notable features in the village include a number of water pumps, two of which are found on the Square and one being particularly distinguished, and a simple old stone stile on Chapel Street.

There are numerous planters throughout the town, all consistent in design and consisting of a half barrel and generally well maintained. The design of litter bins consists of adapted beer kegs (on the Square) in addition to the more traditional type. Both were well found to be well maintained. Many of the buildings in the town retain their original features, including slate roofs, timber sash windows and fan light windows over doors.

Other notable features that provide character to the town, include the stone walls, typically found on the approach roads to the town centre and the old bridges. Where possible the old stone walls should be retained in new developments.

Signage generally tends to be neat in the town and there are a few attractive traditional shopfronts too.

## **7. Design Principles Based on Distinctive Local Character**

- Maintain the presence of cobbles on the edge of the streets surrounding the Square as far as is practical.
  - Protect and maintain the scale, composition and character of the streetscapes that surround the Square as a matter of priority and consider its designation as an Architectural Conservation Area.
  - Consider tree preservation orders for the row of trees on the west side of the stream leading on the road leading into Chapel Street.
  - Protect and maintain the perimeter trees lining the Square and consider a tree preservation order for their protection.
  - Ensure the protection of stream courses and their incorporation into a series of linear parks. Where feasible, ensure that developments are orientated to overlook these new open spaces.
  - Ensure the continuation of existing building lines unless otherwise indicated on the Urban Design Map.
  - Encourage all focal sites and focal buildings to adopt good quality architectural designs. These sites are identified on the Urban Design Map.
  - Protect, reinstate and/or repair old stone walls in those areas identified, while allowing for necessary access to serve future development proposals.
  - Upgrade and resurface, as resources permit, those portions of footpaths along Kilkenny Street and Bunacreshna Street as indicated above.
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- Examine the feasibility of extending the footpaths along the east side of the Bothergloss Road (where it is currently absent).
- Protect and maintain the old water pumps as attractive features of the streetscape.
- Encourage the comprehensive development of backlands (sites to the rear of plots) and ensure that developers have regard to the possible need to provide access to these areas in any future development scheme.

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