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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statutory Basis

This proposed Local Area Plan for the years 2003 - 2009 for the settlement of Piltown has been prepared by Kilkenny County Council under the provisions of the Planning & Development Act 2000 and the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 to 2002. The Plan also has regard to the policies and provisions of national guidance documents.

The purpose of this plan is to provide the framework for the physical development of Piltown during the six year lifetime of the plan, in a manner that will comply with the principles of sustainability and that will provide the basis for the long-term development of Piltown under the guidance of future Local Area Plans for this settlement.

This document sets out the policies and objectives of Kilkenny County Council in respect of the physical planning of Piltown as well as providing the framework for the co-ordination of the activities of the Council as the Housing, Sanitary and Roads Authority in this area.

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 Plan shall have effect within the development boundary shown on Map 2. The Local Area Plan will remain in statute for a period of six years from the date of adoption (20th October 2003), notwithstanding any review of the County Development Plan. The Planning Authority may amend or revoke a Local Area Plan at any time. The Local Area Plan will cease to have effect in respect of the Piltown 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. Piltown is a designated centre under the CDP, 2002. It will be a policy of the Council to encourage housing development to locate in the designated towns and villages where infrastructural and social services exist or are planned to be provided.

Kilkenny County Council previously prepared a 'Study and Action Plan' for the villages of Piltown and Fiddown in 1981. A Town Renewal Plan was prepared in 2000 by Fewer McGinley and Associates in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council for the purposes of the Town Renewal Scheme.

Piltown Community Project Committee produced a 'Piltown Parish Plan' in 1994. A report was also produced by 'Out-Side-In' Landscape Design consultants on behalf of the Piltown Tidy Towns Committee entitled 'Piltown Tidy Towns Development Plan for the new Millenium' in 1999.

1.3 Locational Context

Piltown is located in the southwest of County Kilkenny, in the valley of the River Suir. The River Pil, a tributary of the River Suir, runs through the centre of the town. Piltown is ringed by uplands, with Slievenamon to the northwest, an outlier of Slievenamon to the north and the Comeragh Mountains to the southwest.

Piltown is situated just off the N24, the National Primary Route linking Waterford City to Limerick via Carrick-on-Suir. The Piltown By-Pass has been completed recently, and runs to the south of the town. Piltown is approximately 15 miles from Waterford city and 24 miles from Kilkenny City. A regional road also runs through Piltown, the R698 linking Piltown to Callan via Owing.

1.4 Historical Development

The name Piltown derives from an Anglicisation of the Irish name, Muilcann Bhaile an Phoill, meaning 'Mill of the Town of the Hollow'. The town developed around the Bessborough Estate (now Kildalton College) to the northeast of the town centre. Piltown was established as an important location in transport through the use of Anthony's Inn as a staging post for the famous Biancone's Stagecoach line. It also had access to the waterway of the River Suir and barges transported the goods from the Creamery and mill downriver.

1.5 Urban Structure

The development of Piltown was largely linked to the development of the Bessborough Estate (now Kildalton college), which was designed by Francis Bindon and built in 1745. Piltown has many examples of 18th and 19th century buildings and structures, including Anthony's Inn, the Garda Station, Belline House and Ponsonby's Tower. The town is quite spread out, and is bisected by the River Pil.

The later development of the town took place along Main street, and this contains a number of attractive vernacular buildings, similar to those in most Irish towns. The mix

of these vernacular buildings combined with a number of picturesque buildings of unique design and detail, including the bow-fronted Anthony's Inn, contribute to Piltown's character.

The pre-1940 development of Piltown took place almost entirely along the Main street. In more recent years development has taken place on the periphery of the town, and some of these satellite residential developments, such as the Orchard estate and Kildalton Close appear to have poor linkages to the older town centre. The Fiddown road is characterised by substantial building units on large plots of land.

As is typical in a village context, there is a fairly low-density development along Main Street and there are several substantial gaps between the short terraces of dwellings which allow views into the agricultural lands which come right up to the street. These gaps, in tandem with the gentle slope up from east to west means that the sides of buildings along Main Street are often as prominent as their fronts. These gaps in the streetscape add to the special character of Piltown and provide a strong visual connection to the surrounding landscape.

1.6 Population

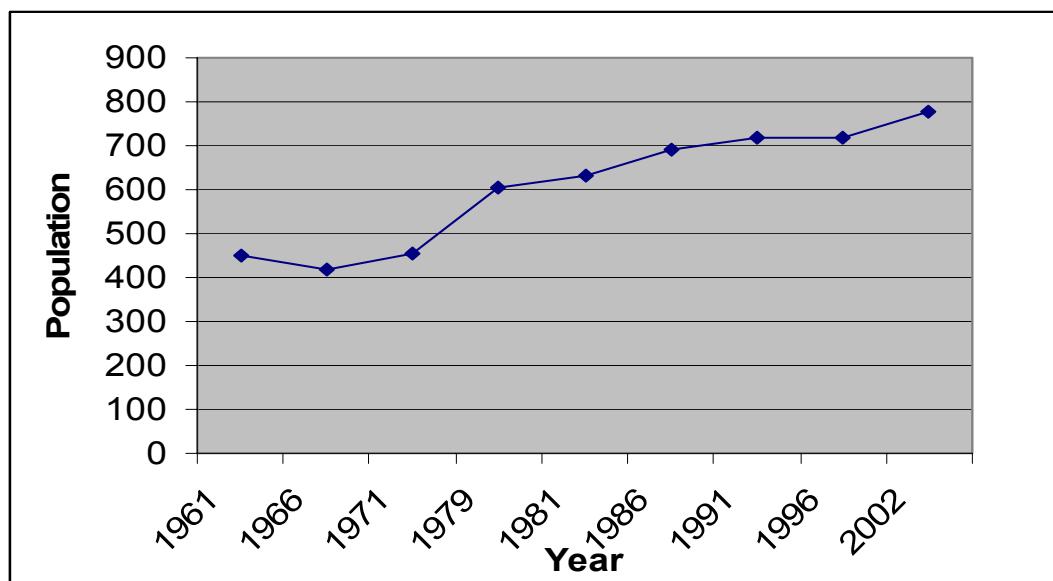
Piltown had a population of 778 recorded at the 2002 Census. The recent trends in population are shown in Table 1 below and illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1: Population in Piltown between 1961 and 2002

Year	Population
1961	449
1966	418
1971	456
1979	605
1981	634
1986	691
1991	717
1996	716
2002	778

From the graph, it can be seen that the population increased steadily from its lowest level of 418 in 1966 to its highest level of 778 in 2002. Between 1996 and 2002 the population increased from 716 to 778, an increase of 8.7%. This is higher than the percentage increase of 6.7% in the County as a whole.

Figure 1: Population Change in Piltown 1961 – 2002



1.7 Planning History

Piltown has been experiencing considerable development pressure recently. Recent grants of permission include a residential development of 32 dwellings at Banagher, and two developments of 17 dwellings and 28 dwellings at Belline and Rogerstown.

1.8 Designations

Tibberaghny Marshes, a Natural Heritage Area, Site code 000411, is located just to the west of Piltown. Natural Heritage Areas are landscape areas with particular scientific, amenity and natural interest. These are an extensive area of wetlands lying on the northern floodplains of the River Suir, and comprise very wet and undisturbed swamp, marsh and wet pasture. This site is a regionally important wintering site for duck, mainly Mallard, Wigeon and Teal. Greylag geese, a legally protected species, are also known to occasionally frequent this site. Drainage modifications and other agricultural activities may be threatening the habitat diversity and water quality on this site.

1.8.1 Record of Protected Structures

Piltown has many fine buildings and features which are recorded in the County Development Plan, 2002, Record of Protected Structures as shown in Table 2. As part of this plan an architectural assessment of the existing buildings in the town has been carried out. The Record of Protected Structures is shown in Appendix 1.

1.8.2 Archaeology

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

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

1.9 Town Renewal Scheme

Piltown is a designated town under the Town Renewal Scheme 2000. This is a scheme designed to encourage investment in the smaller towns throughout the country. As a designated town, areas in the town are eligible for tax relief on residential accommodation and for commercial property. This Scheme has been extended to December 31st 2004. In total 15 sites within Piltown have been designated as eligible for incentives.

1.10 National Spatial Strategy

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

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

¹ 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

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

A public consultation meeting was held on the 17th October 2002 in Piltown Community Centre, which was very well attended. This meeting was held in order to obtain local knowledge to assist in compiling a profile of the area, and to learn the views of the participants, which would be an input into the preparation of the Local Area plans. The entire group was divided into six smaller groups, to discuss a number of topics with the aid of a facilitator. Each group dealt with four headings from the following list:

Employment and Economy

Education and Training

Infrastructure

Transport

Housing and Population

Community Facilities – Recreation

Amenity Enhancement

Community Supports – Social Services

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

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

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

2 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

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

2.1 Housing and Population

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

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

2.1.1 Development Strategy

Piltown had a population of 778 recorded at the 2002 Census. The capacity of Piltown to accommodate growth can be examined by assessing the capacity of the services available, such as infrastructural, community and educational services. With regard to infrastructural services, there is spare capacity in the sewerage network and there are adequate water sources in the area which can be developed to meet extra demand subject to adequate funding being available.

The Council's policy is to encourage housing development to locate in the designated towns and villages where infrastructural and social services exist or are planned to be provided, and therefore it will be Council policy to encourage the controlled expansion of Piltown and to provide for this growth by the appropriate zoning of land within the development boundary of Piltown.

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

Policy:	To ensure the controlled development of Piltown 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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2.1.2 Character of Piltown

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

Piltown has a distinctive character, which is largely derived from the mix of attractive vernacular buildings combined with a number of picturesque buildings of unique design and detail, including the bow-fronted Anthony's Inn. Any new development should take its proposed form from the town structure, and should innovate by reinterpretation – making it look new and local.

One of the styles recurring in the town is the dormer style dwelling. The unity and symmetry of these buildings, of which some are enhanced by a simple wooden porch, make them extremely attractive. These dwellings are typically three bay and gable ended with wide based gables on the front with pitched roofs. The roofs were traditionally of natural slate and are high pitched, single span with end stacks.

The use of simple, vertical proportions typically divided into three bays are an important feature in Piltown.

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

Varied roof lines are also characteristic of Piltown. Houses of one and two storey alternate and even amongst houses of two storeys there is often a difference in height. This diversity does not disrupt the harmony of the townscape because of the consistency in the other elements. The variety of rooflines convey a feeling of diversity, but unity is provided by their common domestic scale and common characteristics.

Traditional elements characteristic of Piltown include:

- Walls – predominantly rough-cast rendering, some brick and limestone
- Roofs - were traditionally constructed of natural slate, and pitched
- Windows – up and down timber sash, vertical emphasis
- Chimneys – traditional

- Doors – simple doorcase often with rectangular window over door
- Limestone window dressings

Generally, the buildings in Piltown are of short span and have narrow end-gables although there are some notable exceptions to this, such as the Old Market House (Garda Station) and the old Post Office, now converted to domestic use. The occasional gaps in the streetscape, providing access to agricultural lands or the surrounding areas, reveal the narrow end gables of the buildings along Main Street to good effect. Buildings with deeper plans generally have return wings perpendicular to the street and wide gables which would be discordant elements in the streetscape are generally thus avoided.

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 apply the rural housing policy of the County Development Plan, 2002 outside the development boundary
4. To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within residential areas and the town centre
5. To ensure that infill development is in keeping with existing development in the vicinity in terms of scale, character, finishes and architectural features
6. To ensure that the local community participates in and has access to the planning system
7. To implement the Housing Strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002
8. To redevelop derelict sites for social and affordable housing as the opportunity arises
9. 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
10. 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 residential infill development where vacant plots exist
11. To facilitate the improvement and enhancement of the existing council built housing estates in partnership with the residents
12. 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 utilized where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the town
13. To encourage sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation use of historic structures, including old industrial buildings, whose original use has become redundant e.g. the creamery
14. To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes

2.1.3 Integration of Residential Developments

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

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

2.2 Infrastructure

2.2.1 Sewerage Network

Piltown is served by a sewerage scheme with secondary treatment, which was constructed in 1985. This has a design Population Equivalent of 2280, and is currently operating with a population equivalent of 943. During the public consultation the need to increase capacity to cater for future development was discussed. There is adequate capacity in the Treatment works for future needs in the medium term, as it could cater for approximately 400 houses. It will also be possible to extend and upgrade the existing works in the future if this becomes necessary.

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

2.2.2 Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

Piltown is served by the Piltown Water supply scheme. This scheme has a design population of 2,464 and is currently serving approximately 2,260. At present, water supply volumes in the scheme are inadequate to meet any further development, and any new developments will be required to provide a temporary private water supply, which will be maintained indefinitely until the public water supply is upgraded. The public water supply will be upgraded, subject to adequate funding being available, and it is estimated that there are sufficient additional sources in the area to meet future demand up to 2026.

It is accepted that the water distribution network is old and in need of refurbishment. This is being addressed, and during the last five years approximately five kilometres of piping has been replaced under the Small Schemes Programme. Although the issue of water quality was raised at the public consultation, Water Quality Analyses over the years show that water quality in the area is excellent. However, as outlined in the County Development Plan, 2002, there is a policy of continuous monitoring by the Council of all water sources to ensure that water quality remains high.

Policy:	To provide water in sufficient quantity and quality to serve the needs of the existing and future population, and future commercial development
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Objective:	To provide sufficient water to serve all lands zoned for development in this plan
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Objective:	To continuously monitor water quality in the area to ensure the maintenance of high water quality standards
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Objective:	To continue the refurbishment of the water distribution network using funding from available sources including both the Small Schemes Programme and development contributions
Objective:	To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public water mains

2.2.4 Waste

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

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

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

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

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

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

services will continue to improve the level of environmental awareness throughout the county.

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

2.2.5 Flooding

Flooding of the Pil River occurs periodically, with the worst areas affected being the Main street and Creamery Road. A preliminary report has been prepared on this problem by the Council, and the funding for an expert examination and remedial defence works will be sought.

Policy/ Objective:	To obtain the necessary funding for the completion of an expert study into the ongoing flooding problems being experienced in Piltown, and the remedial defence works required to prevent its reoccurrence in the future
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2.2.6 Telecommunications

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

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

At the public consultation, the advantages of Piltown as a location for employment sources were discussed, which included good infrastructure and proximity to Waterford Port. The Enterprise Centre in Fiddown was noted as a good facility, and it was

suggested that similar ventures should be initiated in Piltown. One issue identified was that although there was a low level of unemployment, a lot of the employment opportunities were low value. It was considered that there was a need for a mix of employment sources to combat this.

At present, some of the largest employers in Piltown are Iverk Produce, Piltown Engineering, O'Shea Brothers and Kilkenny Water. Iverk Produce is a vegetable supply company which currently employs 18 full-time and 12 part-time employees. O'Shea Brothers are a wholesale fruit and vegetable company, who employ approximately 75 people. Piltown Engineering are steel manufacturers, and currently have a workforce of 10. Kilkenny Water has only been established recently and it currently employs 10 people.

Thus, the employment sources in the town are mainly in the secondary sector, and there is very little service sector employment in the town.

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

The Council will ensure that sufficient land is zoned to allow for the provision of a suitable employment mix. In addition, the Council will encourage the creation of community led employment opportunities, similar to the Fiddown Enterprise Centre.

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

2.3.1 Retail

One of the issues raised at the public meeting was that additional shopping facilities are required to serve the area. Piltown's commercial premises are spread along the length of Main street, and include Falvey's Food store, Side by Side Hair Salon, O'Keefe's Centra

and Post office, the Credit Union and Mace on the corner of Main Street and Creamery road.

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

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

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

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

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

During the public consultation, the potential of Piltown as an attractive settlement to tourists was discussed. It was felt that this potential was not being exploited. Some suggestions included that its location on the River Pil, and near the River Suir, could be exploited in the development of water-based recreational activities. A river walk was

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

also suggested, along both the River Suir and the Pil Rivers. The lack of facilities for tourists was identified as a restriction, and the possibility of a riverside development at the Creamery site was suggested. Problems were also pointed out in relation to the image of Piltown, with dereliction being the main issue.

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

Piltown's location in the Suir river valley endows it with much potential for the development of tourism. There are a number of feature structures in the town, including Anthony's Inn, Bessborough House – now Kildalton College, Piltown Tower and the two Churches. This tourist potential could be harnessed by exploiting the River Suir and Pil Rivers' amenity value. Ancillary services for tourists would include the development of a café or craft shop, which could be located on the Creamery site. The development of a river walk is discussed further under Section 2.6 Community facilities – Recreation.

The problem of dereliction is discussed under Section 2.7 Amenity Enhancement.

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

At the public consultation the need for advance planning for educational facilities to serve any future expansion of the town was highlighted.

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

2.4.1 Kildalton Agricultural College

Kildalton College is a third level facility in Piltown, which provides post Leaving Certificate qualifications in agriculture and agriculture-related areas. Some of the full time courses offered include Vocational Certificates in Agriculture, Horse Breeding and Training and Horticulture, a Diploma in Machinery and Arable Crops and also some courses run in conjunction with Waterford Institute of Technology such as the National Certificate in Agriculture, Agricultural Science and Horticulture. Some part time courses are run during the summer months.

The college has accommodation for 95 students on the grounds, and also relies on a number of local people who provide digs accommodation in Piltown, which caters for approximately 60/70 students. A bus service is laid on for students coming from WIT.

This facility is vital to the strength of the local economy.

Objective:	To support and facilitate the continued development of Kildalton College as an agricultural training institute and its role in the local economy
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2.4.2 Adult Education

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

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

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

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

2.5 Transport

2.5.1 Roads

Piltown has recently been bypassed. Some issues relating to the by-pass were raised at the public consultation meeting. These mainly related to safety issues with concerns regarding the adequacy of signage and sight lines at junctions.

The main road running through Piltown is the former N24, which has now been bypassed, and runs to the southwest of the town. A regional road, the R698 links Piltown to Callan, and terminates at Anthony's Inn at the junction with the former N24. The section of the R698 through Piltown is known as Banagher Road. There are a number of other local roads, along which most of the residential development has taken place. Tower road runs from Piltown Tower northeast to the junction with the R698 at Kildalton College gates. New road runs from the Main street north by the rectory and Hillcrest Avenue to join with Banagher road.

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

Policy /Objective: To ensure that access to and from the bypass is safe and convenient

2.5.2 Footpaths and Lighting

Priority areas identified for footpaths at the public consultation included from Piltown school to Hillcrest Avenue, the Tower road, and Kildalton.

There are continuous footpaths running along both sides of Main Street, from the Garda station to the speed limit boundary, and then on the northern side of Main Street to Piltown Tower.

Since the public consultation, a footpath has been constructed from Hillcrest Avenue to Piltown National School, which runs along New Road and Banagher road. Funding was made available under a 2002 Special Works Project. Further footpath provision will depend on available funding, but the provision of a footpath along Tower road and Banagher road as far as Kildalton will be an objective of this plan.

Most of Piltown is well served by public lighting, including Main street and Tower road. Upgrading of public lighting was carried out in 1998. It is not intended to provide additional public lighting before the end of 2003, but a review of public lighting will be carried out during the period of this Plan, with a view of identifying priority areas in need

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

Policy:	To provide quality lighting and footpaths throughout the town that will secure the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike
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Objective:	To provide a footpath at Tower road and Banagher road as far as the GAA complex
Objective:	To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development
Objective:	To carry out a review of public lighting after 2003

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

2.5.3 Traffic calming

With the recent completion of the by-pass, the issue of traffic through Piltown is not as pressing as it has been in the past. However, some issues remain, as identified at the public consultation meeting. The main safety concerns raised related to traffic at the school. It was considered that parking facilities were inadequate, and there was a need for a pick-up/drop-off area at the school. There was also a need identified for signage to warn of school, and pedestrian crossings at the school and on Main street.

Speeding was identified as a problem on the Tower road and the Creamery road and there was a suggestion that the speed limits be extended further out of the town.

Piltown National School does have a car park, which is inadequate to serve the staff and ancillary services, and as a result cars are parked on both sides of the road for the whole day. An extension to the staff car park is planned. This will provide sufficient spaces for staff and ancillary services and should remove long term parking from the street. A pick-up/drop off area is necessary at the school.

With regard to the signage at the school, at present, there is standard signage in place, both north and south of the school, to alert drivers to the location of the school. Road markings could be utilised in conjunction with the signage. The need for some type of crossing facility for the school is acknowledged.

Policy:	To provide a safe traffic system at Piltown National School that will prioritise and secure the safe movement of children
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Objective:	To provide an adequate car park at Piltown National School
Objective:	To provide road markings to improve the advance warning for the school
Objective:	To investigate how a safe pedestrian crossing facility can be provided at Piltown National School having regard to the need criteria and financing
Objective:	To provide for a pick-up/drop off area at Piltown National School

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

The removal of traffic from the town with the completion of the bypass has alleviated the situation for pedestrians. Nevertheless, a safe pedestrian crossing facility on Main Street is appropriate.

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

2.5.4 Linkages within the Town

As discussed in Section 2.1.3, in assessing any new development in Piltown, 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. In particular, in developing the lands zoned to the south of Main street, access points should be reserved free from development to allow for the creation of pedestrian and cycleway linkages to the Tybroughney road in the future.

Objective:	To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new developments
Objective:	To provide for access for pedestrian and cycle links to connect the lands zoned to the south of Main Street to the Tybroughney Road

2.5.5 Public transport

At the public consultation it was discussed that the existing bus stop, located at the Post office was quite dangerous, as there is no designated bus set down or pick-up area. The need for a bus shelter at this location was mentioned.

Kilkenny County Development Board recently published a report entitled ‘Rural Transport Audit Report and Needs Assessment’³, which was carried out by WSP Ireland Ltd. This found that Piltown was well serviced with scheduled bus services. The number of bus services daily are illustrated below.

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

Objective:	To co-operate with bus operators to review the number and location of bus stops within the town and to ensure the provision of an adequate level of comfort and safety at all bus stops
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In relation to local bus services, a recently launched initiative known as Ring-a-link bus service, provides a local bus service to parts of Carlow, Kilkenny and South Tipperary. This bus service offers a service to customers who ring in to avail of the service. This service currently covers parts of southwest Kilkenny.

Policy:	To improve the accessibility to public transport services
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2.5.6 Parking

Parking in Piltown is mainly provided on street. The only off street car park in the town is at the Community Centre, where there is ample space available. There are no double yellow lines in the town at present, and parking usually takes place on street.

³ Kilkenny County Development Board, 2002 *County Kilkenny Rural Transport Audit – Rural Transport Audit Report and Needs Assessment*

Policy:	The Council will consider proposals for additional car parking on suitable sites and seek appropriate provision of adequate car parking in any new developments
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Objective:	To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments
Objective:	To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the town

2.6 Community Facilities – Recreation

2.6.1 Open space

At the public consultation meetings, the Pound and Hatchet's well were identified as being in need of redevelopment and maintenance, with the provision of seating, bins, planting and a maintenance plan. In addition, the lime kiln at Ardclone was identified as having amenity value. It was noted that there is need for improvement of the existing level of open space provision in Piltown. With regard to the River Pil, the view expressed at the public consultation meeting was that it was imperative to enhance and preserve this important feature. It was suggested that a river walk should be developed.

There are two small areas of open space provision in Piltown, one at the Pound on the banks of the River Pil, east of Main street, and the other at Hatchet's well on the western side of Main street, both of which are in need of maintenance. One other public space area is associated with Hillcrest Avenue, leading down to the Pil River, and this is a very well maintained, pleasant open space area. There is no large area of open space in the centre of Piltown, and it is important to provide sufficient open space to meet the present and future needs of the population.

Policies:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Objective:	To improve the appearance and quality of the existing amenity areas at the Pound and Hatchet's well
Objective:	To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population
Objective:	To support the provision of a suitably equipped playground, in line with EU standard EN 1176 for the design and management of play area equipment, in conjunction with the provision of open space, or in another appropriate location to serve the town's population.

2.6.2 The River Walk

The Pil River is an important asset for the town of Piltown. No development should impinge on the quality of the river, either via pollution or restriction of access. A river walk should be developed, and this would be an attractive feature in the town, linking the residential areas of Tower road, New road and Banagher road with the town centre. A zoning objective has been included to provide for a linear park along the Pil River. Suitable access and crossing points should be provided along its length. In the town centre, where the river crosses Main street and Creamery road, access points should be provided, as shown on the zoning and objectives map.

Policy:	To enhance and protect the quality of the Pil River, whilst maximising its amenity potential
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Objective:	To protect the banks of the Pil River and develop a river walk along the Pil River through the town from Tower Road to the Creamery and to the Soccer Pitch, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups
Objective:	To provide access points to the River Pil at appropriate locations particularly to the east of the Garda station and on the old Creamery site
Objective:	To prepare an Amenity Scheme for the Pil Linear Park during the period of this plan
Objective:	To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment by other uses

2.6.3 Recreation

At present, there is a walking route through Kildalton College which is used locally, on an informal arrangement between the community and the college. In the public consultation, the view emerged that an objective should be inserted in the plan to retain this amenity value. There is potential for further expansion of this facility for the benefit of the community.

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

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

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

2.7.1 Conservation

Piltown has a unique historical character, with many features worthy of preservation and protection. In addition to the features as identified in the Record of Protected structures, there are a number of attractive vernacular buildings throughout the town, in particular along Main street, which merit protection for their contribution to the streetscape. These are set out in Appendix 1.

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

Policy:	To protect and enhance the historical character of Piltown
Objective:	To seek the conservation and preservation of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures
Objective:	To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the town
Objective:	To preserve the townscape character of the town, with control of shopfronts and advertising

2.7.2 Dereliction

Dereliction is an issue in Piltown with a number of derelict sites on Main Street. Areas in the town are designated under the Town Renewal Scheme 2000, for tax relief on residential accommodation and for commercial property, and this will run until the end of 2004. There has been a poor take-up of this scheme and it is important that it is promoted before the scheme expires. Guidelines for the redevelopment of sites are outlined in Chapter 4.

Policy:	To encourage and provide for the sensitive redevelopment of derelict sites in the town
Objective:	To promote take-up of the Town Renewal Scheme before the end of 2004

Policy:	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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2.7.3 General Appearance

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

Policy:	To provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance for both the built and natural environment of the town
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Objective:	To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees in any new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows
Objective:	To retain the trees in the grounds of Willmount House except where their removal is due to the interests of public safety and good design or the trees are in an unhealthy state
Objective:	To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees along Main street

2.7.4 Ecology

An Ecological Survey of the Piltown area was carried out by an Ecologist as part of this Plan process. A number of areas were identified, and this report is included as Appendix 2. Within the development boundary, two areas of interest were identified. The first area is located to the north of Main street, along the south bank of the Pil River, opposite the entrance to Kildalton Close. This is a woodland area of hazel, elm and sycamore. This area is an important habitat for small birds, such as goldfinch, redpoll, goldcrest, dunnock and robin. The second area is located along the banks of the Pil River south of Main street. This area is the upper part of the Tibberaghny Marshes, which is a Natural Heritage Area. The site consists of extensive willow woodlands and numerous plant species. It also supports some animal habitats. Both of these areas have been zoned for open space purposes, and their protection, and the protection of all the areas of ecological interest identified, is an objective of this plan.

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

2.8.1 Services

At the public consultation, the lack of a pharmacist in the town was emphasised as a service deficit. The lack of a bank ATM for the town was also mentioned.

Piltown contains a variety of services, ranging from a hairdressers to Credit Union and a pub, but its service base should expand to keep pace with development and to maintain its important role in the local rural area. The provision of a dispensing chemist for the town will be supported.

Objective:	To maintain and enhance the role of Piltown as a local market centre for its rural catchment area and as a centre to service its anticipated expansion during the period of the Plan
Objective:	To support the provision of a dispensing chemist to cater for the needs in the town

2.8.2 Target groups

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

Policy:	To support the development of youth services in conjunction with the Community and Enterprise section
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In the context of an ageing population, services for the elderly in the community are becoming more important. There is a Senior Citizens Club in Piltown catering for the elderly.

Policy:	To facilitate and support the expansion of the range of facilities catering for the elderly population
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2.8.3 Healthcare

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

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

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

There are some private play schools available in the area, but there is no full day-care service available. The provision of quality childcare services will be facilitated and encouraged by the Council, in suitable locations. Regard will also be given to the Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities issued by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Policy:	To ensure the provision of an adequate range of quality childcare facilities in appropriate locations
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Objective:	To facilitate the development of a crèche in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and the local community on a suitable site within the town in line with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities
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⁴ Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001, p. 3 *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Stationery Office

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

3 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

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

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

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

3.2 The Development Boundary

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

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

3.3 Land Use Zoning

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

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

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

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 Piltown.

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

Open for Consideration: Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages, retail shop of local convenience not more than 100m sq in gross area, public house, hotel, restaurant, use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.

3.3.2 Town Centre

Objective: To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses and allow for the development of Piltown as a focus for local services, sustaining and strengthening its role as a population centre, subject to any potential development restrictions which arise as a result of the flooding of the Pil River in the vicinity of Main street.

The purpose of this zone is to protect and enhance the centre of Piltown 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 sensitive re-use of existing derelict buildings and the development of backlands. Generally two storey buildings will be preferred.

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

Open for Consideration: workshop or light industry, and uses on sites designated in the Town Renewal Scheme 2000 – 2004.

3.3.3 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

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

Permissible Uses: Open space

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

3.3.4 Community Facilities

Objective: To protect, provide and improve community facilities.

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

Open for Consideration: Public service installations, 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.

3.3.5 Industrial

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

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

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

3.3.6 Public Utility

Objective: To provide for public service installations and ancillary services

Permissible Uses: Public service installations

Open for Consideration: Open space

3.3.7 Transitional Areas

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

3.4 Specific Objectives

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

3.4.1 Housing and Population

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support Services	Time scale
To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings	H1	Local Authority through the development control process	Developers, Landowners & Local Authority through development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To 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 & Local Authority	Developers, Landowners & Local Authority through development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To apply the rural housing policy of the County Development Plan, 2002 outside the development boundary	H3	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing
To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within residential areas and the town centre	H4	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan

To ensure that infill development is in keeping with existing development in the vicinity in terms of scale, character, finishes and architectural features	H5	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Developers, landowners & Local authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure that the local community participates and has access to the planning system	H6	Local Authority, local community, community development organisations	Local Authority, Community Development Organisations	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To implement the Housing Strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002	H7	Local Authority	N/A	Ongoing from adoption of the plan
To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the town to cater for its expansion over the period of the plan	H8	Local Authority	N/A	On going from adoption of the 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 rebuilding of new residential infill development where vacant plots exist	H9	Local authority through the development control process	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development control process	On going from adoption of the plan
To facilitate the improvement and enhancement of the existing council built housing estates in partnership with the residents	H10	Local authority housing section, SEHB and local residents association	Local authority housing section, SEHB & local residents association	On going from adoption of the plan
To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at sustainable densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilized where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the town	H11	Developers, landowners & local authority	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development control process	On going from adoption of the plan
To encourage sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation use of historic structures, including old industrial buildings, whose original use has become redundant e.g. the creamery	H12	Local Authority and Developers/ Community Organisations, Duchas, DoELG	Local Authority and Developers/ Community Organisations, Duchas, DoELG	On going from adoption of the plan
To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes	H13	Developers, landowners & local authority	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development	On going from adoption of the

			control process	plan
To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land	H14	Local Authority through the development Control process	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To ensure the integration of adjoining residential schemes, where appropriate, in relation to pedestrian and cycleway links, public open space provision and scheme layout	H15	Local Authority through the development Control process	Developers, landowners & local authority through the development control process	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.2 Infrastructure

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To maintain and improve sewerage services	I1	Local Authority	Local Authority, DOELG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To prohibit the connection to the sewerage system of any proposed development out of phase with the overall development of the town or where the existing services are committed for other development	I2	Local Authority through the development control process	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public sewers	I3	Local Authority through the development control process	Local Authority, Developers, Landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the positive disposal of storm water in all developments	I4	Local Authority, developers through development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide sufficient water to serve all lands zoned for development in this plan	I5	Local Authority	Local Authority, DOELG	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To continuously monitor water quality in the area to ensure the maintenance of high water quality standards	I6	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To continue the refurbishment of the water distribution network using funding from available sources including both the Small Schemes Programme and development contributions	I7	Local Authority	Local Authority, DoELG	Medium term
To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public water mains	I8	Local Authority through the development control	Local Authority, Developers, Landowners	Ongoing from adoption

		process		of plan
To ensure Piltown has an adequate solid waste collection system	I9	Local Authority	Local Authority, Private Waste Collectors	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan	I10	Local Authority	Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To obtain the necessary funding for the completion of an expert study into the ongoing flooding problems being experienced in Piltown, and the remedial defence works required to prevent its reoccurrence in the future	I11	Local Authority, Office of Public works	Office of Public Works	Medium term

3.4.3 Employment and Economy

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

3.4.4 Education and Training

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To support and facilitate the continued development of Kildalton College as an agricultural training institute and its role in the local economy	E & T 1	Local Authority in conjunction with Kildalton College	Kildalton College, Teagasc	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To facilitate the development of educational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population	E & T 2	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 town's population	E & T 3	Local Authority, school, in conjunction with Department of Education	Department of Education	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the continuation of the Fás Community Employment Scheme or other equivalent/ replacement scheme	E & T 4	Fás, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Fás, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.5 Transport

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To ensure that access to and from the by-pass is safe and convenient	T1	Local Authority and NRA	NRA	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide a footpath at Tower road and Banagher road as far as the GAA complex	T2	Local Authority, landowners, developers	Local Authority, landowners, developers	Medium term
To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development	T3	Local Authority through development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To carry out a review of public lighting after 2003	T4	Local Authority	Local Authority	Short term
To provide an adequate car park at Piltown National School	T5	Piltown National School, Local Authority	Piltown National School, Department of Education	Short term
To provide road markings to improve the advance warning for the school	T6	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term

To investigate how a safe pedestrian crossing facility can be provided at Piltown National School having regard to the need criteria and financing	T7	Local Authority, school	Local Authority, school, Dept. of Education	Short term
To provide for a pick-up/drop off area at Piltown National School	T8	Local Authority, Piltown National School	Piltown National School, Department of Education	Short term
To investigate how a safe pedestrian crossing facility can be provided on the Main Street in the village having regard to the need criteria and financing	T9	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term
To review the speed limits in Piltown during the period of this Plan	T10	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term
To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new developments	T11	Local Authority, developers through development control process	Local Authority and Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide for access for pedestrian and cycle links to connect the lands zoned to the south of Main Street to the Tybroughney Road	T12	Developers, landowners and local authority	Local authority and developers	Long term
To co-operate with bus operators to review the number and location of bus stops within the town and to ensure the provision of an adequate level of comfort and safety at all bus stops	T13	Local Authority and bus operators	Bus operators	Medium term
To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments	T14	Local Authority and Developers through development control process	Developers, Local Authority	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To provide disabled car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the town	T15	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term

3.4.6 Community Facilities – Recreation

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and Support services	Time scale
To improve the appearance and quality of the existing amenity areas at the Pound and Hatchet's well	R1	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Development Association	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Development Association	Medium term
To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population	R2	Local Authority, landowners and Developers	Local Authority and Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To support the provision of a suitable equipped playground, in line with EU standard EN 1176 for the design and	R3	Local Authority, landowners and Developers	Local Authority and Developers	Ongoing from adoption

management of play area equipment, in conjunction with the provision of open space, or in other appropriate location to serve the town's population				of plan
To protect the banks of the Pil River and develop a river walk along the Pil River through the town from Tower Road to the Creamery and to the Soccer Pitch, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups	R4	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' Associations, Development association	Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Residents' Associations, Development association	Medium term
To provide access points to the River Pil at appropriate locations particularly to the east of the Garda station and on the old Creamery site	R5	Local Authority, Developers and landowners	Local Authority, landowners Developers	Medium term
To prepare an Amenity Scheme for the Pil Linear Park during the period of this plan	R6	Local authority, Development Association	Local authority, BNS	Long term
To protect existing open spaces and recreational uses from encroachment by other uses	R7	Local Authority, Developers through development control process	Developers	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the use of Kildalton College as an amenity for the town in co-operation with the college	R8	Local Authority, Kildalton College	Local authority, Kildalton, Development association	Medium term
To ensure the maximisation of the Community Centre as a facility for the community	R9	Local Authority, Local Community	Local community	Ongoing from adoption of plan

3.4.7 Amenity Enhancement

Specific Objective	Map Ref	Action By	Funding and support services	Time scale
To seek the conservation and preservation of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures	A1	Local Authority, Duchas, DoELG, Landowners	Local Authority, Duchas, DoELG and landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To seek the undergrounding of all utility cables in the town	A2	Local Authority, Service Providers	Local Authority, Service Providers	Medium term
To preserve the townscape character of the town, with control of shopfronts and advertising	A3	Local Authority through development control process	Local Authority, Developers, Shop owners, businesses	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To promote take-up of the Town Renewal Scheme before the end of 2004	A4	Local Authority, Landowners, developers	Developers	Short term
To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees in any new development and to preserve and	A5	Local Authority, Developers, through development control	Local Authority, Developers	Ongoing from adoption

augment existing mature trees and hedgerows		process		of plan
To retain the trees in the grounds of Willmount House except where their removal is due to the interests of public safety and good design or the trees are in an unhealthy state	A6	Landowner, Local Authority	Local Authority, Landowners	Ongoing from adoption of plan
To encourage the appropriate planting of semi-mature trees along Main street	A7	Local Authority, Developers, Tidy towns, Development Association	Local Authority, Developers, Tidy towns, Dev. Association	Medium term
To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character	A8	Dúchas, Local Authority, local community, landowners	Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, SERTA, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader	On going from adoption of the plan

3.4.8 Community Supports – Social Services

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

3.5 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, Tidy Towns and the Piltown Development Association, can play a huge role in contributing to the achievement of some of the objectives above. Kilkenny County Council's policy will be to facilitate and aid local organisations in this capacity.

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

4 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

4.1 Introduction

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

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

4.2 Design Guidance Principles in Piltown

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

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

4.3 Design Elements of Piltown

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 Massing

The pattern of low density linear development in Piltown provides ample opportunities for new infill development. However, to be successfully assimilated into the existing streetscape, any new development will need to be carefully designed and be of appropriate scale and massing.

The combination of the sloping Main Street and significant stretches of undeveloped frontage results in many of the existing structures in the village being seen both from the front and the side. Oblique views of the stepped gables of the dwelling houses are an attractive characteristic of Piltown.

The massing of the existing structures along Main Street is simple and is essentially a reflection of the scale and dimensions of traditional building spans. New infill development in Piltown will also need to be of traditional massing in order to sit comfortably in its context.

Larger structures may be successfully inserted if laid out in bays of traditional span. Longer spans which result in wider gables and taller ridgelines should be avoided.

4.3.2 Building line and Boundary Treatment

Historically, there was a uniform building line on the Main street in Piltown, which has been reinforced by the treatment and location of front boundaries. The front boundaries are all located the same distance from the centre of the road, and this adds to the unity of the streetscape. Front boundaries are typically walls, and/or railings with gates.

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

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

4.3.3 Building Height

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

4.3.4 Roofs

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

4.3.5 Proportion

A typical street consists of a series of vertically proportioned units linked together. Large developments should be subdivided into a series of bays, especially at ground floor level,

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

4.3.6 Materials

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

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

Traditional elements characteristic of Piltown include:

- Walls – predominantly rough-cast rendering, some brick and limestone
- Roofs - were traditionally constructed of natural slate, and pitched
- Windows – up and down timber sash, vertical emphasis, Limestone window dressings
- Chimneys – traditional
- Doors – simple doorcase often with rectangular window over door

4.4 Residential Development

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 Piltown. Accordingly, proposed layouts shall optimize solar orientation to both adjoining buildings and outdoor spaces. Layouts shall also have careful regard to prevailing wind direction with a view to reducing wind speeds in outdoor areas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.1.1 Ecology & Bio-diversity

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

4.4.2 Car Parking

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

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

4.4.3 Density

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.4 Design

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

In support of the Council's policy of reducing social exclusion, the Council will encourage developers to have regard to the requirements of people with disabilities, the

elderly, and children are catered for in the supply design and layout of residential development.

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

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

4.4.5 Infill Development

Infill development will be required to maintain established building and rooflines and proportions. Infill within existing terraces will also be required to take cognisance of roof pitch, fascia level, parapet, eaves and cornice lines, the line of window heads and string courses. As a general principle the numbers of facing materials used on a building should be kept to a minimum.

4.4.6 Public Open Space

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.6.1 The River Walk

The provision of an area of public open space – linear park - along the banks of the River Pil 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 all the residential areas with the town centre. Safe and convenient access points should be provided to access this river walk. Objectives have been included in this plan for the creation of access points to the rear of the Garda Station, on the old Creamery site, and to the north of the Protestant church.

It is an objective of this Plan to prepare an Amenity Scheme for the Pil Linear Park during the period of this Plan. The River Walk should allow for a number of walks of varying lengths, e.g. from Tower road to New Road, and back along Main street, or from the soccer pitch to Main street. A number of pedestrian bridges would be necessary to provide a network of routes and connections. 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.

4.4.6.2 Management plan for Public Open Space

A detailed landscaping plan should be prepared as an integral part of the overall development of any residential estate and submitted as part of the planning application for the development. Landscaping is an integral part of any development, and should be designed for long term ease of maintenance. The potential of existing site features should be fully explored and planning applications should include an accurate landscape survey plan. Planting should be used as for screening purposes and as an essential element of visual amenity. Planting schemes should include characteristic varieties such as chestnut, oak, lime and beech trees. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and incorporated into the development.

A management plan for the maintenance of open space should be provided as part of the development proposal. This plan will outline how, and by whom (whether a management company or the residents themselves), the open space will be maintained.

The landscaping should be appropriate to the function of the space and proposed long term maintenance plan. Thus, while seeding with grass may be appropriate for larger 'kick about' spaces, grass requires high maintenance. Tree and shrub planting, or decorative paving, are lower maintenance alternatives which may be more appropriate in smaller and heavily trafficked spaces.

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

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 Piltown, 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 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.

4.4.10 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.

4.4.11 Apartments/Duplex Style

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

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

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

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

4.4.12 Access for People with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

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

4.5 Car parking and Loading

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Car Parking Standards for Various Land Uses

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Parking Spaces per Unit</i>
Dwelling House	A minimum of 1 car space per dwelling unit
(Residential areas)	0.25 per dwelling for visitor parking
Flat or Bed-sitter	1.25 spaces per unit
Schools	1 space for every classroom plus 4 additional spaces
Churches, theatres,	1 car space per 10 seats.
Public halls	
Hotels, hostels and	1 car space per bedroom
guesthouses	
Hotel function rooms	1 space per 10 sq. metres
Public houses, inc.	1 car space for every 5 sq. m of bar and lounge floor area.
hotel bar	
Shopping centres,	5 car spaces for every 93 m ² of gross floor area.
supermarkets,	
department stores	
Shops	1 car space per 10sq. metres
Restaurants, cafes	1 car space per 20 m ² gross floor area

Banks and offices	1 car space per 15m ² of gross floor area and additional space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Industry	1 car space for every 60m ² of gross industrial floor area and operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Warehousing	1 car space for every 100m ² of gross floor area and additional parking space to be determined by the Planning Authority for each individual development.
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 sq. meters of net retail floor space
Golf or Pitch and Putt courses	4 car spaces per hole.
Golf driving ranges, shooting ranges	1 space per 2m of base line/ per trap
Sports grounds and sports clubs	1 car space for every 15m ² of floor area and 6 spaces for each pitch and additional operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Hospital	1.50 spaces per bed
Clinics/Medical practices	2 spaces per consulting room

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

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

4.6 Public Utilities

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

4.7 Shopfronts and Advertising

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

4.8 The Likely Significant Effects on the Environment of Implementing the Proposed Piltown 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 61 hectares (151 acres) of residential development and 18 hectares (44 acres) 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 Piltown Local Area Plan are categorised as follows:

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

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

4.8.2.1 Human beings

Environmental baseline: The population of Piltown was recorded as 778 at the 2002 Census. The lands identified for development are all contiguous to the existing built up area of Piltown and are within walking distance of the Main Street. There is limited employment associated with the current agricultural use of much of the zoned lands.

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

4.8.2.2 Material Assets

Traffic:

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

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

Water Supply:

Environmental baseline: Piltown is served by the Piltown Water supply scheme. This scheme has a design population of 2,464 and is currently serving approximately 2,260, i.e. almost at capacity. At present, water supply volumes in the scheme are inadequate to meet future needs. However, it is estimated that there are sufficient additional sources in the area to meet future demand up to 2026, and these will be utilised subject to adequate funding being available.

Likely significant effects:

- Increased demand for water supply

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

Foul and Surface Water Drainage:

Environmental baseline: The development of additional lands will lead to an increase in the demand for foul water and surface water drainage.

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 studying 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 bio diversity 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 and sites of archaeology in the town.

Likely significant effects:

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

Proposed mitigation measures:

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

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

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

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APPENDIX 1 - PROTECTED STRUCTURES

Existing and Proposed Additions to Protected Structures in Piltown

PROTECTED STRUCTURES	Description	Location	Map ref. No.	RPS No.
Parochial House	Simple, rectangular plan house with 3 bay, 2 storey façade, a lower return and wing on the right-hand side	South of church	1	
Bellcote	Crenallated Turret of limestone ashlar with bellcote on top	Centre of graveyard	2	
Catholic church	Late C19th, hard gothic with aisles in a single cell	South of town centre	3	C207
Church of Ireland	Single cell, built of rusticated sandstone, the string course is carried round from the West to the sides	East of town centre	4	C208
Kildalton Bridge	Two semi-circular arches with dressed voussoirs carry Piltown-Fiddown road over tributary of Piltown River		5	D157
Entrance gates to Bessborough	Mid 18 th century gate piers of channelled limestone		6	
“The Anthony Inn”	Early C19th, a large bow on re-entrant corner		7	C210
Mill Building	2 rectangular plan warehouses lying parallel, of coursed rubble limestone	Creamery Road	8	
Willmount House	3 bay 2 storey rectangular plan main block with a large 2 storey return on the right hand side and an enclosed porch	South of Garda Station	9	
Lodge to Willmount House	2 storey, T-plan house with 3 bay façade	North of Willmount House	10	
Gate Piers to Willmount House	Pair of ashlar granite piers with strong cornice and ball on top	Beside Lodge	11	
Garda Barracks	Reconstruction of an arcaded market house	Opposite Anthony's Inn	12	C209
House	6 bay 2 storey rectangular plan house with shopfront – formerly PR Anthonys	Opposite Anthony's Inn	13	

House	Tall, 3 bay, 2 storey house with rectangular plan and an advanced, gabled bay giving the impression of being L plan	North side of Main street	14	
House	3 bay, 2 storey terrace house with rectangular plan	North side of Main Street	15	
House	4 bay, 2 storey rectangular plan, terrace house	North side of Main Street	16	
Old Post Office - House	Rectangular plan house with shorter end facing the street	South side of Main Street	17	
House	3 bay, 2 storey rectangular plan house with 2 wide based gables on front with pitched roofs	North side of Main Street	18	
House – former RIC barracks	5 bay, 2 storey, rectangular plan house with an enclosed, half octagon porch at the left hand side	South side of Main Street	19	
Piltown Tower	Ribbed octagonal tower	West end of town	20	C211
Gates to Kildalton – Bessborough House	Tall, main piers with gates, flanked by railings and piers	North of town centre	21	
Belline House	Late C18th house with dove lofts	Northwest of town	22	C318
Dovecot	Massive circular tower, upper portion given over to nesting birds. Tuscan barns and follies also important	Northwest of town	23	D73
Dovecot	Massive circular tower, upper portion given over to nesting birds. Tuscan barns and follies also important	Northwest of town	24	D74
House	3 bay, 2 storey house with tall porch and wide based gables. Garden contains gabled folly.	Banagher Road	25	
Bessborough House	Massive house, rebuilt as a monastery	Northeast of town	26	C319

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

APPENDIX 2 - ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

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

Prepared for

Kilkenny County Council

By:

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February 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

2. DESCRIPTION OF AREA

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

Piltown as a town arose at the lowest crossing point of the Pill River, a tributary of the Suir. The presence of Kildalton (Bessborough) Estate on the eastern side has inhibited the symmetrical growth of the town which instead is arranged on a NW-SE axis, along the (former) main road.

The underlying rock is limestone which has been considerably folded by the rise of the adjacent mountain groups of Slievenamon and the Comeraghs. It is occasionally exposed in the river valleys but more often is covered deeply by glacial drift. A feature of the river system is its incision into the landscape: even quite small streams have cut deep valleys when sea level was substantially lower in the past.

The river and the estate are the dominant influences on the ecology of the area and all the sites described below are related to one or the other.

Two branches of the Pill River join in the town, having collected water from the hills between Mullinavat and Ahenny. The western branch falls through agricultural grazing land in the north-western part of the study area before cutting a deep valley beside the R698. This has been partly drained and its valley infilled, in common with much of its lower course, and so has unstable communities of scrub and rough ground which extend down to the middle of the town. A small section on the **south-west bank (Site 1)** shows the natural vegetation of such sites - a base-rich woodland with wild garlic *Allium ursinum*, germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* and ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea* under hazel, elm and sycamore. Alders grow at river level on seasonally flooded ground with golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, water figwort *Scrophularia auriculata*, pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* and hemlock water dropwort *Oenanthe crocata*. The extent of this vegetation is too small to be of much value and the valley is more important for its populations of small birds. Goldfinch, redpoll, goldcrest, dunnoek and robin were particularly noticeable.

After joining with the other tributary the river turns south-west to reach the Suir, meeting its base level under the church where tidal flooding inundates its margins (**Site 2**). This is the upper part of the Tibberaghny marshes, a site of interest now included in the Lower River Suir cSAC (Code 2137). The site synopsis is included at the end of this report though it does not mention this area specifically.

Site 2 consists of extensive willow woods, probably derived from former planting of osier *Salix viminalis* and white willow *S.alba* with the more natural grey willow *S.cinerea*. The ground below is muddy, supporting such species as

<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	hemlock water dropwort
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	marsh marigold
<i>Senecio aquaticus</i>	marsh ragwort
<i>Galium palustre</i>	marsh bedstraw
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	wild angelica
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	water forget-me-not
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	brooklime
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	fool's watercress

Hérons fish there and there are some mute swan also. Otters must be regular and could have breeding sites somewhere in the valley. The general wooded nature of the area would make it suitable also for bats.

At the head of the valley beside the town a low-lying field is occasionally inundated and is included in the cSAC for this reason.

Parts of the valley floor have been raised by dumping and the mapped area goes around much of this. It includes some drier woodland of ash, alder and sycamore and parts have abundant traveller's joy *Clematis vitalba*.

The **river wood (Site 3)** beside the central entrance to Kildalton is an interesting site, rather different to the tidal Suir. Situated under a wooded slope of horse chestnut, oak, sycamore and hazel with a dry ground flora of barren strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*, lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum* and ground elder *Aegopodium podagraria* there is a flat section of the valley, flooded at times in winter and richly covered by starved wood sedge *Carex strigosa* - an uncommon species. Here also grow

<i>Veronica montana</i>	wood speedwell
<i>Allium ursinum</i>	wild garlic
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	meadowsweet
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	cow parsley
<i>Carex remota</i>	distant sedge

<i>C.pendula</i>	pendulous sedge
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	celandine
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	marsh marigold
<i>Thamnobryum alopecurum</i>	a moss

There is also some *Rhododendron ponticum*, traveller's joy *Clematis vitalba* and grey poplar *Populus canescens*.

Long-tailed tit, blackbird, treecreeper, blue tit, and chaffinch were in evidence in this section and there are many signs of otters and badgers. The habitat conditions favour bats as there is a continuous line of trees along the river, with links to the main woodland block and gardens (see below).

The eastern end of the wood (3A) is all sloping so does not have the wet fringe along the river.

Kildalton wood (Site 4) is distinguished from other woodland because of its distinct form of management though it also includes the formal gardens south of the college buildings and the artificial lake. The gardens consist of a collection of very well grown trees, predominantly beech and lime with a number of conifers - firs, cypress and cedar. This changes southwards into a 'game' woodland with a low, clipped canopy of laurel through which the taller trees grow. Soon this is transformed into less managed woodland, mainly of oak, ash, pines and spruce. *Rhododendron* and laurel are frequent beneath, as are brambles *Rubus fruticosus* and there is some field rose *Rosa arvensis*, Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, and red osier *Cornus stolonifera* as well as hazel.

There is little of botanical interest in this woodland - part is enclosed for grazing deer - and the ecological value is mainly that of the associated birds and mammals. In summer blackcap, chiffchaff and spotted flycatcher would be abundant. There are also resident raven, rook, woodpigeon, mistle thrush, great tit, treecreeper and probably long-eared owl. The site is very suitable for bats which are likely to have roosting sites in the college attics. A tree roost of Leisler's bat has been recorded near the house (P.Comerford).

The pond is in an open site and has a ring of bur reed *Sparganium erectum*, purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, bulrush *Typha latifolia* and yellow waterlily *Nuphar luteum* around its edge. It also supports 20-30 mallard and is probably visited by herons. In spring otters are attracted to feed on frogs in this waterbody (P.Comerford).

Kildalton farm is also of considerable value to birdlife, not least because of the variety of its farming enterprises. Thus there are fields retaining cereal stubbles, rich grassland and vegetable crops - a mixture that allows a diverse bird fauna to persist through the winter. The numbers of wintering thrushes (300-400 of mixed fieldfare and redwing) were

particularly prominent and would roost in the woodlands nearby. There were also starlings, linnets and chaffinches and gulls (120), both lesser black-backed and black-headed. Golden plover or lapwing may occur at times also.

Additional tree belts of minor value to animals occur west of the Kildalton avenue (**Site 5**) and in the adjoining property (**Site 6**). Both have waterbodies to add to their habitat diversity, the former has an alder-fringed lake with mute swans, the latter a shaded pond, carpeted with duckweed *Lemna minor* and supporting moorhen. Site 5 has a traditional nesting site for the sparrowhawk.

Summary

Two sites in the study area are of significant ecological value. They are both related to the Pill River: one includes the tidal section below the town (**Site 2**) and is part of the Lower Suir pSAC, the other lies along the southern edge of Kildalton (**Site 3**).

More generally the Kildalton woods and estate support significant numbers of birds because of the mixture of farmland and the juxtaposition of woodland and waterbodies. Four additional sites have a small, local value.

APPENDIX

SAC SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME : LOWER RIVER SUIR

SITE CODE : 002137

This site consists of the freshwater stretches of the River Suir immediately south of Thurles, the tidal stretches as far as the confluence with the Barrow/Nore immediately east of Cheekpoint in Co. Waterford and many tributaries including the Clodiagh in Co. Waterford, the Lingaun, Anner, Nier, Tar, Aherlow, Multeen and Clodiagh in Co. Tipperary. The Suir and its tributaries flows through the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and Waterford. Upstream of Waterford city, the swinging meanders of the Suir criss-cross the Devonian sandstone rim of hard rocks no less than three times as they leave the limestone-floored downfold below Carrick. In the vicinity of Carrick-on-Suir the river follows the limestone floor of the Carrick Syncline. Upstream of Clonmel the river and its tributaries traverse Upper Palaeozoic Rocks, mainly the Lower Carboniferous Visean and Tournaisian. The freshwater stretches of the Clodiagh River in Co. Waterford traverse Silurian rocks, through narrow bands of Old Red Sandstone and Lower Avonian Shales before reaching the carboniferous limestone close to its confluence with the Suir. The Aherlow River flows through a Carboniferous limestone valley, with outcrops of Old Red Sandstone forming the Galtee Mountains to the south and the Slievenamuck range to the north. Glacial deposits of sands and gravels are common along the valley bottom, flanking the present-day river course.

The site is a candidate SAC selected for the presence of the priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive - alluvial wet woodlands. The site is also selected as a candidate SAC for floating river vegetation, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, old oak woodlands and eutrophic tall herbs, all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Crayfish, Twaite Shad, Atlantic Salmon and Otter.

Alluvial wet woodland is declining habitat in Europe as a result of drainage and reclamation. The best examples of this type of woodland in the site are found on the islands just below Carrick-on-Suir and at Fiddown Island. Species occurring here include Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Grey Willow (*S. cinerea*), Osier (*S. viminalis*), with Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Pendulus Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*). The terrain is littered with dead trunks and branches and intersected with small channels which carry small streams to the river. The bryophyte and lichen floras appear to be rich and require further investigation. A small plot is currently being coppiced and managed by National Parks

and Wildlife. In the drier areas the wet woodland species merge with other tree and shrub species including Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). This adds further to the ecological interest of this site.

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

Old oak woodlands are also of importance at the site. The best examples are seen in Portlaw Wood which lies on both sides of the Clodiagh River. On the south-facing side the stand is more open and the Oaks (mainly *Quercus robur*) are well grown and spreading. Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) are common on the ground, indicating relatively high light conditions. Oak regeneration is dense, varying in age from 0-40 years and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is fairly common but mostly quite young. Across the valley, by contrast, the trees are much more closely spaced and though taller are poorly grown on average. There are no clearings; large Oaks extend to the boundary wall. In the darker conditions, Ivy is much rarer and Holly much more frequent, forming a closed canopy in places. Oak regeneration is uncommon since there are as yet few natural clearings. The shallowness of the soil on the north-facing slope probably contributes to the poor tree growth there. The acid nature of the substrate has induced a “mountain” type Oakwood community to develop. There is an extensive species list present throughout including an abundance of mosses, liverworts and lichens. The rare lichen *Lobaria pulmonaria*, an indicator of ancient woodlands, is found.

Inchinsquillib Wood consists of three small separate sloping blocks of woodland in a valley cut by the young Multeen River and its tributaries through acidic Old Red Sandstone, and Silurian rocks. Two blocks, both with an eastern aspect, located to the north of the road, are predominantly of Sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) and Hazel, with Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Ash and Holly. The ground flora is quite mixed with for example Wood sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*). The base poor nature of the underlying rock is, to some extent masked by the overlying drift. The third block, to the south of the road, and with a northern aspect, is a similar although less mature mixture of Sessile Oak, Birch and Holly, the influence of the drift is more marked, with the occurrence of Wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) amongst the ground flora.

Floating river vegetation is evident in the freshwater stretches of the River Suir and along many of its tributaries. Typical species found include Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Milfoil (*Myriophyllum* spp.), Fennel Pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*), Curled Pondweed (*P. crispus*), Perfoliate Pondweed (*P. perfoliatus*), Pond Water-

crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*), other Crowfoots (*Ranunculus* spp.) and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. At a couple of locations along the river, Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*) occurs. This species is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

The Aherlow River is fast-flowing and mostly follows a natural unmodified river channel. Submerged vegetation includes the aquatic moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* and Stream Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus pencillatus*), while shallow areas support species such as Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*). The river bank is fringed in places with Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Willows (*Salix* spp.).

The Multeen River is fast flowing, mostly gravel-bottomed and appears to follow a natural unmodified river channel. Water Crowfoots occur in abundance and the aquatic moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* is also common. In sheltered shallows, species such as Water-cress (*Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum*) and Water-starworts (*Callitriche* spp.) occur. The river channel is fringed for most of its length with Alder, Willow and a narrow strip of marshy vegetation.

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

Other habitats at the site include wet and dry grassland, marsh, reed swamp, improved grassland, coniferous plantations, deciduous woodland, scrub, tidal river, stony shore and mudflats. The most dominant habitat adjoining the river is improved grassland, although there are wet fields with species such as Yellow Flag (*Iris pseudacorus*), Meadow Sweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Rushes (*Juncus* spp.), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine pratensis*).

Cabragh marshes, just below Thurles, lie in a low-lying tributary valley into which the main river floods in winter. Here there is an extensive area of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) with associated marshland and peaty fen. The transition between vegetation types is often well displayed. A number of wetland plants of interest occur, in particular the Narrow-leaved Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Blunt-flowered Rush (*Juncus subnodulosus*). The marsh is naturally eutrophic but it has also the nutritional legacy of the former sugar factory which discharged into it through a number of holding lagoons, now removed. Production is high which is seen in the size of such species as Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*) as well as in the reeds themselves.

Throughout the Lower River Suir site are small areas of woodland other than those described above. These tend to be a mixture of native and non-native species, although there are some areas of semi-natural wet woodland with species such as Ash and Willow. Cahir Park Woodlands is a narrow tract of mixed deciduous woodland lying on the flat-lying floodplain of the River Suir. This estate woodland was planted over one hundred years ago and it contains a large component of exotic tree species. However, due to original planting and natural regeneration there is now a good mix of native and exotic species. About 5km north west of Cashel, Ardmayle pond is a long, possibly artificial water body running parallel to the River Suir. It is partly shaded by planted Lime (*Tilia* hybrids), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and the native Alder. Growing beneath the trees are shade tolerant species such as Remote sedge (*Carex remota*).

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

The site also supports populations of several other animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*), Natterer's Bat (*M. nattereri*), Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*), Badger (*Meles meles*), the Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) and the Frog (*Rana temporaria*). Breeding stocks of Carp are found in Kilsheelan Lake. This is one of only two lakes in the country which is known to have supported breeding Carp. Carp require unusually high summer water temperatures to breed in Ireland and the site may therefore support interesting invertebrate populations.

Parts of the site have also been identified as of ornithological importance for a number of Annex I (EU Birds Directive) bird species, including Greenland White-fronted Goose (10), Golden Plover (1490), Whooper Swan (7) and Kingfisher. Figures given in brackets are the average maximum counts from 4 count areas within the site for the three

winters between 1994 and 1997. Wintering populations of migratory birds use the site. Flocks are seen in Coolfinn Marsh and also along the reedbeds and saltmarsh areas of the Suir. Coolfinn supports nationally important numbers of Greylag Geese on a regular basis. Numbers between 600 and 700 are recorded. Other species occurring include Mallard (21), Teal (159), Widgeon (26), Tufted Duck (60), Pintail (4), Pochard (2), Little Grebe (2), Black-tailed Godwit (20), Oystercatcher (16), Lapwing (993), Dunlin (101), Curlew (195), Redshank (28), Greenshank (4) and Green Sandpiper (1). Nationally important numbers of Lapwing (2750) were recorded at Faithlegg in the winter of 1996/97. In Cabragh marshes there is abundant food for surface feeding wildfowl which total at 1,000 or so in winter. Widgeon, Teal and Mallard are numerous and the latter has a large breeding population - with up to 400 in summer. In addition, less frequent species like Shoveler and Pintail occur and there are records for both Whooper and Bewick's swans.

Kingfisher, a species that is listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, occurs along some of the many tributaries throughout the site.

Landuse at the site consists mainly of agricultural activities including grazing, silage production, fertilising and land reclamation. The grassland is intensively managed and the rivers are therefore vulnerable to pollution from run-off of fertilisers and slurry. Arable crops are also grown. Fishing is a main tourist attraction on stretches of the Suir and some of its tributaries and there are a number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. Both commercial and leisure fishing takes place on the rivers. The Aherlow River is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive. Other recreational activities such as boating, golfing and walking are also popular. Several industrial developments, which discharge into the river, border the site including three dairy related operations and a tannery.

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

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