DRAFT

# Kilmacow

## Masterplan

Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

**Turley**

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**Acronyms**

| | |
|---|---|
| ACA | Architectural Conservation Area |
| c. | Circa (Approximately) |
| CSO | Central Statistics Office |
| DHC | Department of Health and Children |
| GAA | Gaelic Athletic Association |
| HSE | The Health Service Executive |
| K | Thousand |
| KCC | Kilkenny County Council |
| KCDP | Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020 |
| km | Kilometres |
| LAP | Local Area Plan |
| m | Meters |
| M | Motorway |
| NDF | Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan |
| NPF | Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework |
| No. | Number |
| Ref. | Reference |
| R | Regional |
| RSES | Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy |
| SRA | Southern Regional Assembly |

# Contents

"

# Vision

"The vision for Kilmacow is to embrace its unique rural village form, sense of community and strategic position between rolling Kilkenny countryside, the City of Waterford and strategic road network to enhance Kilmacow as a sustainable and attractive rural village to live, work and play for everyone in its community."

"

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Masterplan for Kilmacow

Kilkenny County Council appointed Turley in association with a multi-disciplinary team (see Section 1.3) to prepare a Masterplan for the village of Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny.

The purpose of the Masterplan is to guide the development of Kilmacow into the future and to influence and deliver on real change for the village in order to make it a more attractive destination in which to live, work, visit and do business.

Kilmacow is a village in south Kilkenny, within an area which is predominantly rural in character. By virtue of its location within an attractive rural hinterland, close to Waterford City, national and regional roads, the village has the potential to fulfil a more significant role which could see new business in the village, a growing population, attractive and distinctive place making and public realm. It is envisaged that this Masterplan will guide development and re-imagine Kilmacow so that it can ultimately realise its full potential.

The masterplan sets out an overall vision, strategy and most significantly, commitment for the proper planning and sustainable development of Kilmacow. A multi-disciplinary integrated approach bringing together the development of places using co-design, urban design, transport planning and landscape architecture were used to develop the masterplan for the village.

## 1.2 Context

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan was adopted on the 3rd September 2021. The Plan came into effect on the 15th October 2021. Objective 4La of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 stipulates the following:

> *"To develop a set of criteria and a programme to carry out an analysis of the Smaller Towns and Villages (Tier 4) to consider:*
>
> *a  The provision of zoning maps where appropriate (particularly for Ballyragget, Mooncoin, Paulstown, Piltown, Kilmacow and Urlingford)*
>
> *b  Developing specific objectives for core areas, focal spaces, amenities and opportunity sites etc.,*
>
> *c  Identify land with development constraints.*
>
> *This programme to be commenced within 12 months of the coming into effect of the Plan."*

We appreciate that this work builds on previous plans for the area including the Kilmacow Village Study (1998) and Local Area Plans (2002 and 2009) as well as the work of the Kilmacow Development Group (formed 1992).

**Our Emphasis**

Section 4.6 of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 highlights the needs of smaller towns and villages within the County to strengthen their provision of local services while respecting their existing character. The Council explicitly supports the development of economic activity, services and infrastructure provision in the smaller towns and villages of the county and allow for town renewal and serviced site housing provision in smaller towns which is proportionate, in order to sustain and renew population and services in these areas.

The Government supports the development of existing urban areas. This is expressed in the National Planning Framework's commitment to compact development and the Town Centre First Policy (February 2022) which is a major new policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction, and breathe new life into town and village centres. The policy lays the foundation for towns to develop a tailored plan by a Local Authority in collaboration with a Town Team. The policy is underpinned by a multi-billion-euro investment programme spread across Government schemes.

Upon adoption, the Kilmacow Village Masterplan will form the basis for the village to seek support from funding streams such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and Village Renewal Scheme, Active Travel Fund and Historic Towns Initiative.

The plan is developed within the context of national, regional, and local policy and through careful consideration of best practice publications.

## 1.3 Multi-disciplinary Team

The masterplan is visionary, ambitious, and creative in the design of new propositions for Kilmacow. A multi-disciplinary integrated approach was used bringing together the development of places and destinations, transport planning, urban design, mixed use architecture and landscape design to develop the masterplan strategy. The masterplan is holistic and addresses a wide range of issues as such, Kilkenny County Council commissioned a multi-specialist team which included:

- Turley – planning, urban design, landscape architecture, economics, and strategic communications consultancy services; and

- RSK – Environmental and ecology.

### Design Team

**Turley**

Turley
4 Pembroke Street Upper
Dublin 2
D02 VN24

**RSK**

RSK
Bluebell Business Centre
Old Naas Road
Bluebell
Dublin 12

Figure 1.1: Settlement Boundary for Kilmacow

**Legend:**
- ▬▬ Settlement Boundary for Kilmacow
- (A) Kilmacow Upper
- (B) Kimacow Lower

## 1.4    Project Objectives

The aim of this Masterplan is to ensure that Kilmacow has the right objectives and projects in place to tackle issues of dereliction, vacant properties, and above all, to become a better place to live, work and run a business, ensuring the vitality and vibrancy of the village into the future.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives were set:

• Positively address key issues and challenges in Kilmacow.

• Embrace the power of urban design and architecture in reimagining the plan area so that it can ultimately realise its full potential.

• Enhance connectivity within the existing built form, particularly between the Upper and Lower Villages.

• The vision for Kilmacow must look beyond its form, to the wider village context and connectivity to provide a holistic design approach from the outset.

• The Masterplan will set a new benchmark for public realm and village centre design, transforming Kilmacow and enabling it to realise its full potential.

• Provide longer-term adaptability and, robustness to survive everchanging economic and social conditions.

## 1.5    Methodology

The methodology for the project is informed by the established double-diamond design methodology (see Fig 1.1) as developed by the UK Design Council in 2005. The Double-Diamond methodology is a four-stage innovation process which captures the divergent and convergent nature of design, and offers flexibility as a foundation to designers, allowing shifts to the model to fit the specific needs of a project. Typically, the four phases are:

1. Discover phase (divergent): exploration of brief and hypothesis, contextual research and definition of project participants or communities.

2. Define phase (convergent): designing and conducting engagement and feasibility studies.

3. Develop phase (divergent): development of a number of ideas through co-creation and design ideation processes.

4. Deliver phase (convergent): selection of ideas to take forward and delivery of outputs in the form of prototypes, services ideas, or guidance.

Importantly, this is not a linear process as the arrows on the diagram show. The two diamonds indicate that a divergent and convergent creation process happens twice; once to define the problem (and in this case provide preliminary options – i.e., Stage 1) and once to create the solution (i.e., provide for design development and the preparation of a Masterplan – i.e., Stage 2).
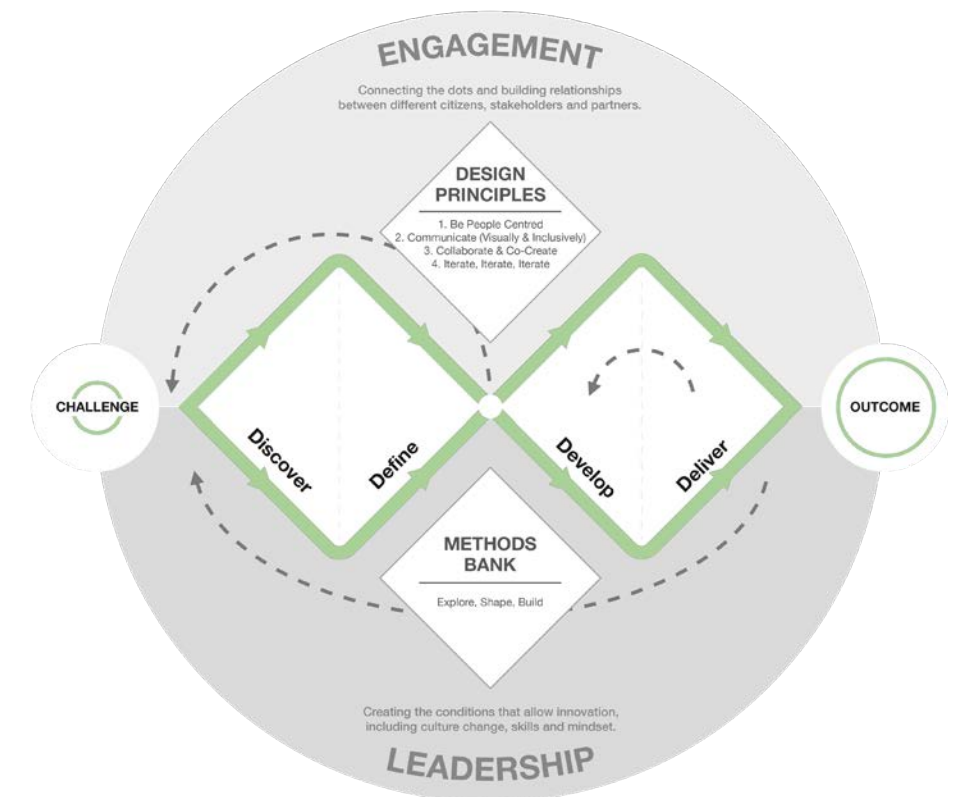


Figure 1.2: Design Council's Double Diamond Approach (Source: Design Council)

## 1.6 Stages of the Masterplan

Working closely with the community is a vital component of the plan process. The programme comprises of six key stages. Taking account of feedback received from the local community, it identifies opportunities for improvements by proposing strategies and projects in the short, medium, and long term.

Kilkenny County Council, will use the plan to implement improvements and seek funding to deliver positive change.

**1. Inception**

Kilkenny County Council appoint a design team led by Turley and including transport consultants and environmental consultants RSK

**2. Research & Analysis**

Site visits:

• Photo surveys
• Desktop research
• Baseline analysis
• Policy context analysis

**3. Engagement**

Initial information and ideas gathering stage with local community and stakeholders, including:

• A local community and stakeholder workshop event
• Draft Plan concept ideas and proposals were presented to the local community to seek approval

**4. Draft Plan**

Ideas development

• Analysis of public survey results
• Objectives identified
• Draft vision developed
• Draft Plan concept ideas and proposals were presented to seek approval.
• SEA/AA screening

**5. Consultation**

Public presentation of the draft Masterplan during which submissions are taken and a public drop in information session held.

**6. Masterplan published**

Plan report is updated in response to feedback.

• Production of Final Masterplan following consultation feedback
• Council review
• Final revisions, if required
• Publication of Final Masterplan

# 2.0    The Village

## 2.1    Village Context

Kilmacow is a village located in south Kilkenny, approximately 7km northwest of Waterford City. As a village with two centres, Kilmacow is unique. Kilmacow's Upper and Lower Villages provide two separate, yet linked village centres with one overall community which makes the village distinctive and gives it a unique identity – one that the local community is proud of. Today, it helps to retain a strong sense of community ownership and pride and adds to Kilmacow's distinctive local identity. While retaining the form of two villages, Kilmacow also manages to maintain a single, cohesive community that is proud of its regional identity and cultural heritage.

Set within a rural context of the South Kilkenny Lowlands but on the edge of Waterford City, Kilmacow enjoys easy access to the countryside with all the convenience of the urban area. The village is 10 minutes drive time (c7km) from Waterford City Centre, the M9 Motorway to Dublin (Junction 11), the N25 to Cork and the N24 to Limerick. In line with modern working practices, this brings major cities of Dublin, Limerick, and Cork within reach of the village, within a c2 hour travel time, including by rail from Waterford City Railway Station.

Kilmacow's pleasant rural setting and strong connections with the wider country, including urban areas, make it an attractive place to live for many people.

Kilmacow's Lower Village is reported to be one of the oldest villages in the country and has developed along the route of the River Blackwater, which is responsible for the village's industrial heritage. The village has developed along a series of narrow winding roads with the key entrances to Kilmacow consisting of stone bridges at the Lower Village and Dangan. The village has a scattering of protected structures throughout the Upper and Lower village with several features of cultural and natural heritage interest.

While Kilmacow's heritage features add to the attractiveness of the area, they also present challenges including connectivity between residential communities and their local services, particular by sustainable means.

Due to the village's advantageous positioning, strong connections, and rich social, industrial, and cultural heritage, Kilmacow is recognised as presenting a truly unique and exciting opportunity for furthering its development and potential.
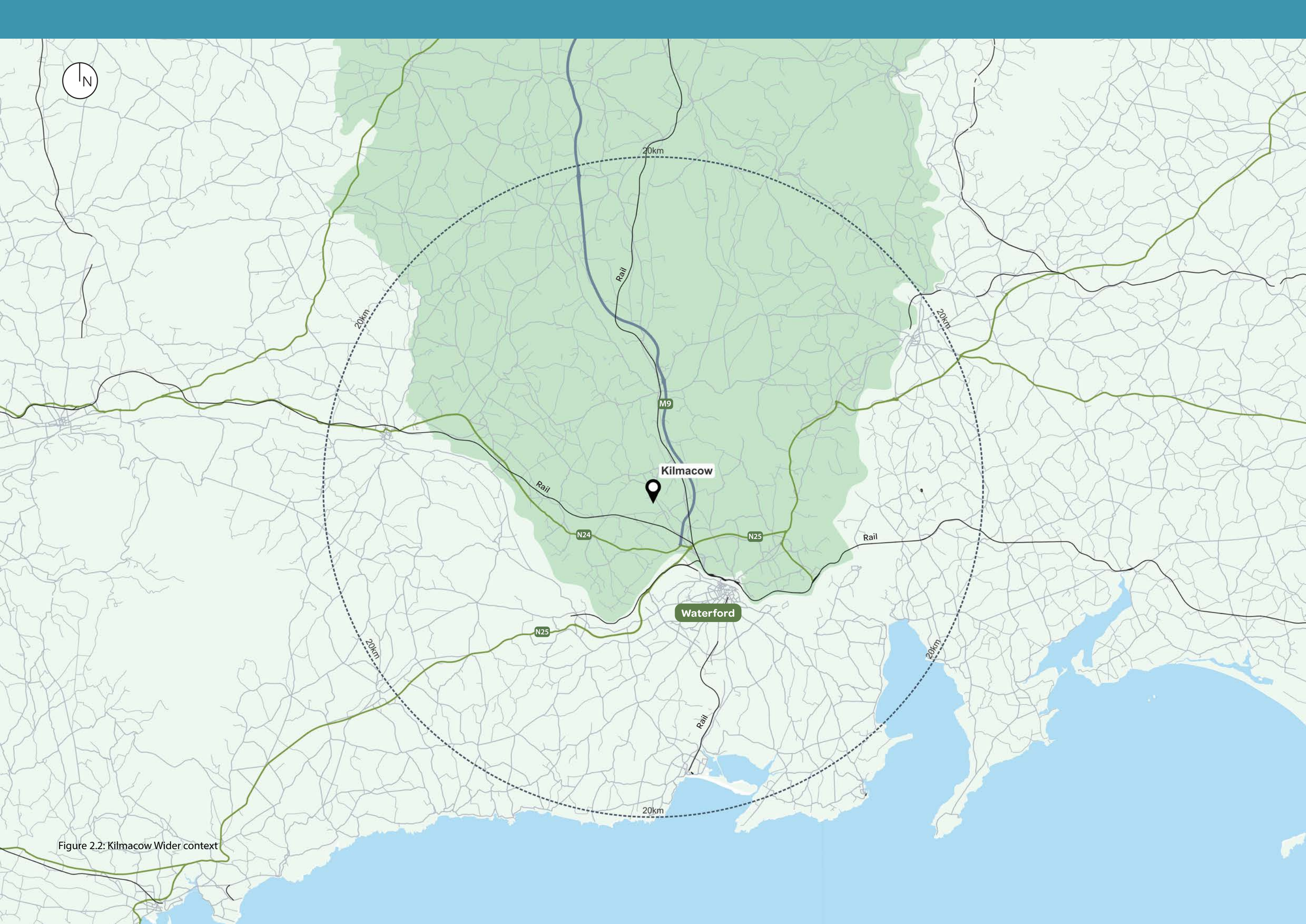


Figure 2.1: KIlmacow Ireland context

Figure 2.2: Kilmacow Wider context

## 2.2    Historical Development

Kilmacow, meaning 'Church of the son of Buadh' (Buadh being an Irish Chieftain, otherwise known in Irish as Cill Mhic Bhuith) originally developed on a series of small, curving roads, whose paths were dictated by the topography of the area and the River Blackwater. Stone bridges mark both the main entries into Kilmacow.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the upper village was opened as an alternative to the pre-Norman village of 'lower' Kilmacow and was one of the few industrial villages being built at the time in south Kilkenny.

During this time, a local landlord owned the townsland and constructed 9 no. Mills. Many of the first homes in the upper village are believed to have been constructed to accommodate mill and construction employees, as well as other early residents.

In 1803, after the Penal Time, a Catholic Church dedicated to St. Senan was built and gave a status to the newly developing village. A Constabulary Barracks was also added to the village and at the end of the 1800s alongside the Presentation Sisters National School in 1897 and the opening of Kilmacow's Co-operative Creamery in 1898.

By the turn of the century, the village boasted a Flour Mill, two bakeries, Post Office, a Dispensary two Public Houses, a local Hibernian Hall and three small shops; it had a population of 95.

The River Blackwater contributed significantly to Kilmacow's industrial past and is responsible for the number of mills that operated from the area in the past. It is recorded that total of 14 mills operated in Kilmacow in the late 1800s, when this form of industrial activity was at its highest. A few of the old mill buildings dispersed in and around the villages have visible remains today, with a small number occupied by local businesses or other related activities.



Figure 2.3: Kilmacow Bridge at River Blackwater (Source: Kilkenny County Council)



Figure 2.4: Kilmacow Bridge, Lower Kilmacow



Figure 2.5: Greenville Mill, Kilmacow (Source: Kilkenny County Council
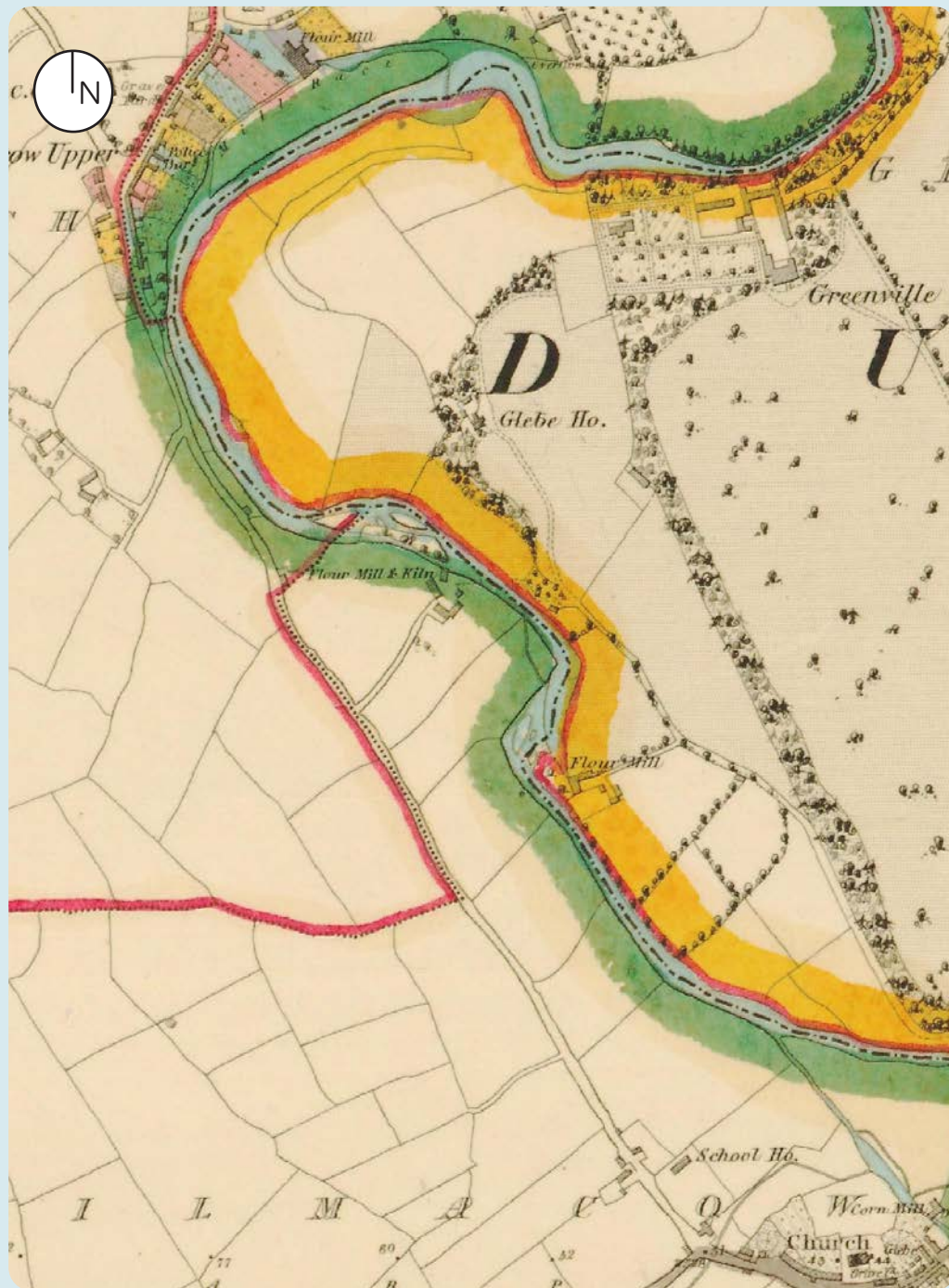


Figure 2.6: Kilmacow Sports Complex
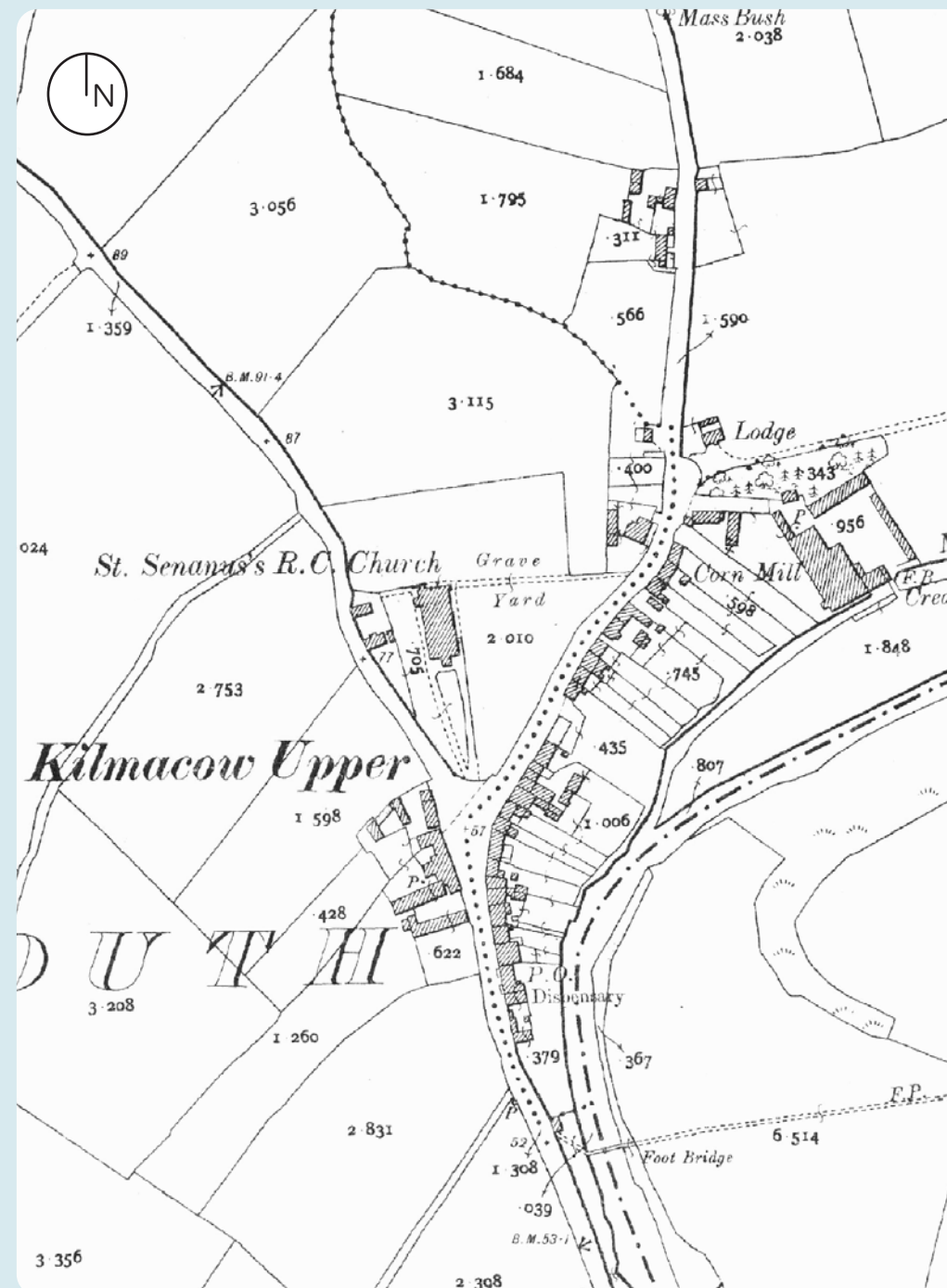
Figure 2.7: Historical First Edition OSI Map (1829-41)



Figure 2.8: Historical Second Edition OSI Map (1897-1913)

## 2.3    Landscape Character and Setting

Kilmacow is located in a region of broad lowlands with a pleasant topography. There are few trees in the area, which is characterized by wide plains with regular (medium-sized) field patterns and medium-sized hedgerows that serve as field boundaries. Rural Kilmacow's South Kilkenny lowlands are characterized by rock outcroppings. Visibility of the surroundings is good and extensive in open areas with medium-sized field patterns.

The region around Kilmacow is primarily flat, with some somewhat lower lying parts to the west of the lower and upper settlements, next to the River Blackwater. To the northwest, the Walsh Mountains are a group of low hills that rise to a height of 450 feet at Moolum Rock. Tory Hill rises to a height of 980 feet and is situated beyond the northeastern Kilmacow Parish line, past Dangan.

Overall, Kilmacow has a rural character, and farming has had a significant and defining impact on the community's identity as well as the terrain. Grass is mostly used on the terrain surrounding and separating the upper and lower settlements to support dairy and meat production.

The fact that Kilmacow has two village centres, Upper Kilmacow and Lower Kilmacow, is one of its most remarkable characteristics. Each is separated from the other by a sizable green wedge of mostly agricultural land that extends for about a kilometre. This is a distinctive aspect of Kilmacow's settlement layout that is uncommon in Irish settlements. This is an essential aspect of Kilmacow's history that has endured several generations.


Figure 2.9: View of the River Blackwater from below the weir
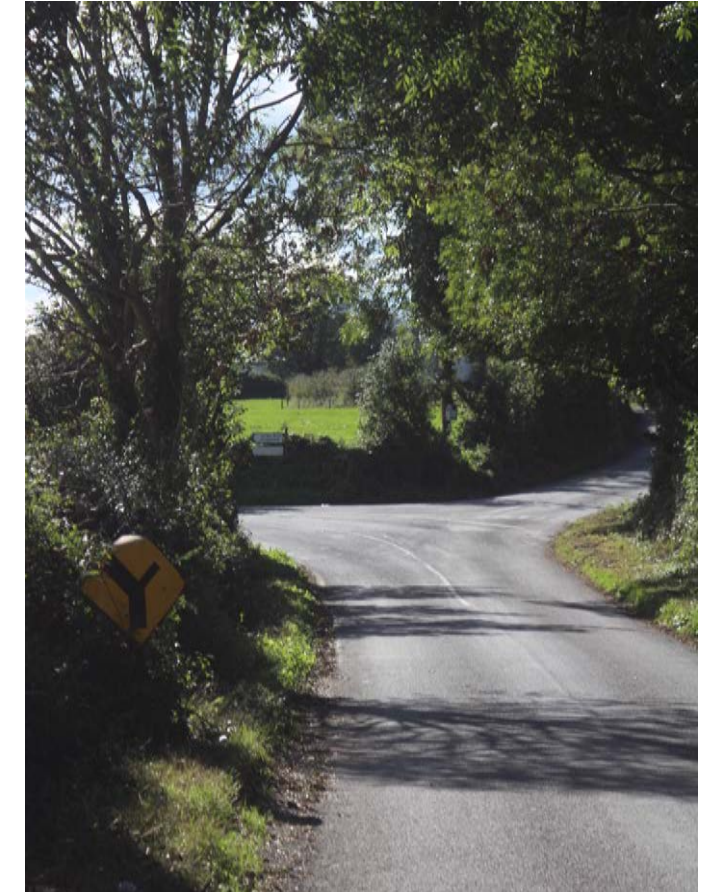

Figure 2.10: Roads at Dangan Cross


Figure 2.11: Roads at Dangan


Figure 2.12: Green fields near Kilmacow Community Centre

Figure 2.13: Kilmacow Community Centre
(and Protected Structure)


Figure 2.16: St Senan's Church, Kilmacow


Figure 2.14: Streetscape Lower Kilmacow


Figure 2.17: Kilmacow Sports Complex


Figure 2.15: Roads around Kilmacow


Figure 2.18: Kilcronagh Gate Lodge

## 2.4    Summary

The evolution of Kilmacow's built environment through the separate development of the upper village during the 18th century, and the pre-Norman settlement of the lower village, reflects the unique development of Kilmacow.

The industrial heritage of the village with the former Flour Mills, and bakeries, through the utilisation of the River Blackwater, also contribute to the tapestry of the historical and social heritage of the town, and are a great asset in the telling of Kilmacow's history.

# 3.0    Analysis

## 3.1    Policy Context

Kilmacow Village Masterplan has been developed within the national, regional, and local policy context and therefore aligns with these planning policy documents. The key policy documents are set out below. The Plan is an evidence based, non-statutory document which will facilitate access to funding moreso than a tool to guide growth and development. The plan has been developed in collaboration with the Kilmacow local community, and all other stakeholders.

It is intended that the strategy for development, and the key proposals as set out in the Plan, will enable a Kilmacow Town Team to be set up through this Masterplan, in collaboration with Kilkenny County Council, to leverage funding in order to implement the key actions for delivery as set out in Section 5 of the Plan.

In relation to the planning and development of the village, Volume 1 of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 would be the governing policy document.
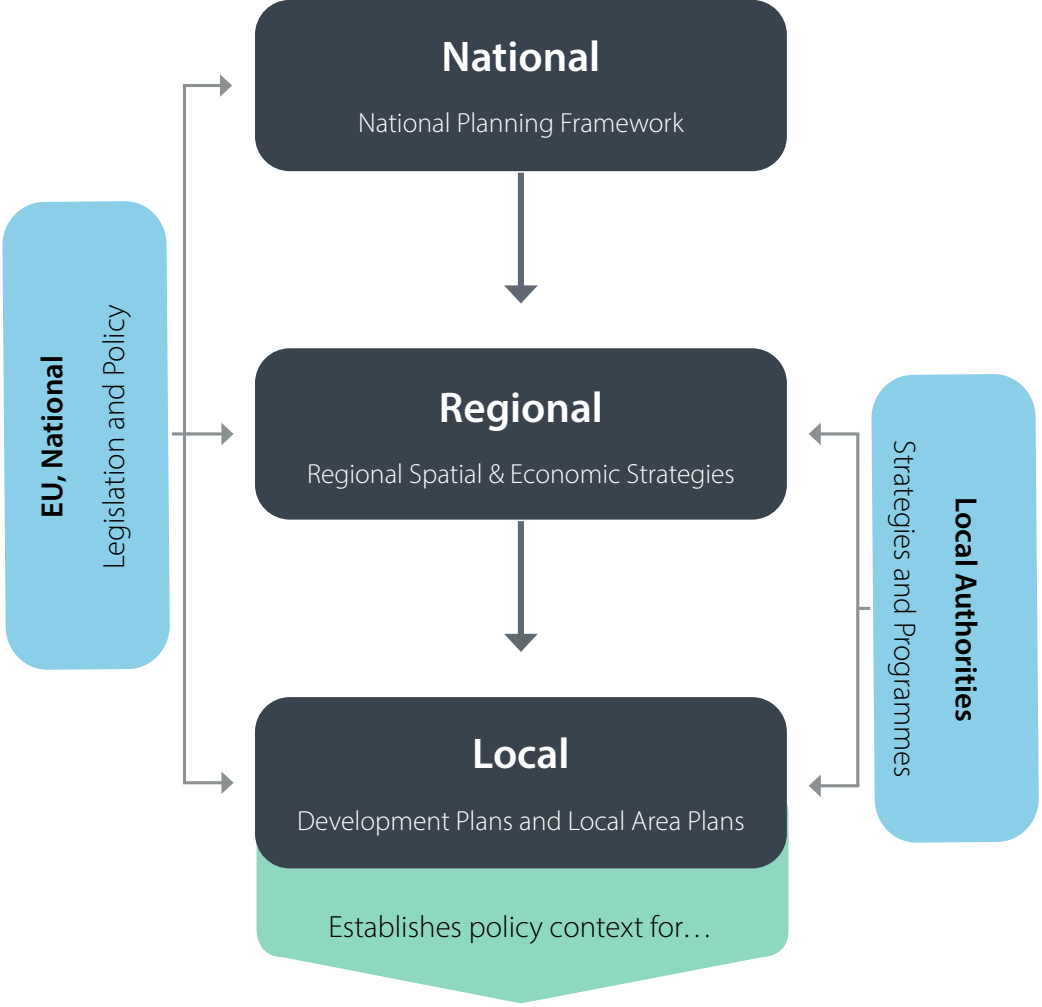


Figure 3.1: Planning Policy Hierarchy in Ireland
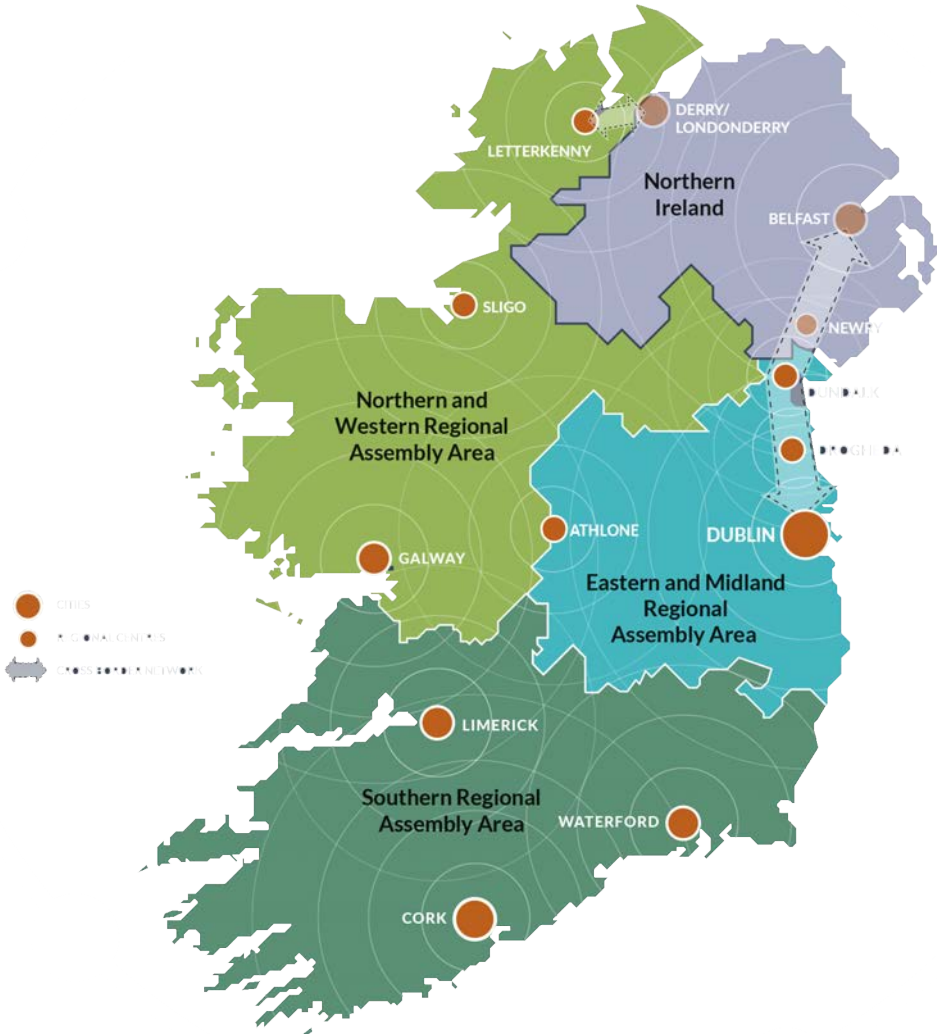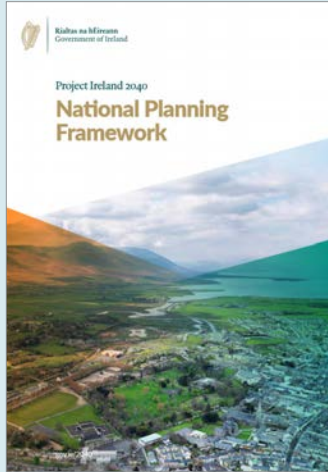Source:  Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework



Figure 3.2: Regional Assemblies with responsibility for Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
Source:  Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

### 3.1.1 Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework

The Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF) is a strategic framework to guide public and private investment, and to protect and enhance the environment. It sets out a spatial hierarchy of urban centres that are in line for significant population and economic growth over the period of the plan. It also sets out the key principles that will guide future development across the country, addressing issues such as compact growth, making stronger urban places, creating strong and vibrant communities, and ensuring a healthy, liveable environment. This will be achieved through 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and priorities for every community in the country..

### 3.1.2 Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 represents a blueprint for the post-COVID recovery and development of rural Ireland. It contains key commitments that deliver on the government's aim to support the regeneration, re-population and development of rural towns and villages to contribute to local and national economic recovery, and to enable people to live and work in a high quality environment.

### 3.1.3 National Development Plan 2021–2030

Aligned with the NPF, the National Development Plan 2021–2030 sets out the government's overarching investment strategy and budget for that period, enabling delivery of the NSOs and priorities set out in the NPF. This significant funding source will support both urban regeneration and rural rejuvenation through a €3 billion Regeneration and Development Fund.

### 3.1.4 Town Centre First - A Policy Approach for Irish Towns

The Town Centre First policy (2022) approach seeks to support and complement a wide range of government policies impacting on towns and is central to the vision of Our Rural Future. It is a core policy objective of Town Centre First to "*create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community*". The policy lays the foundation for towns to develop their own planned path forward through a tailored Plan. The policy is closely aligned with many National Strategic Outcomes such as Compact Growth, Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, Sustainable Mobility, Enhanced Amenities and the Transition to a Low Carbon Society.
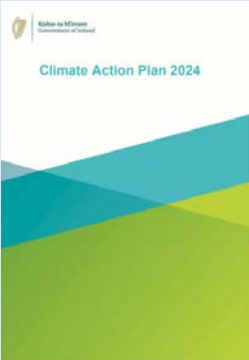
### 3.1.65   Climate Action Plan 2024

The Climate Action Plan 2024 (COP24)  is the third annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan 2024 sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by net by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2050. It further sets out how Ireland can accelerate the actions that are required to respond to the climate crisis. The compact growth agenda outlined in the National Planning Framework is reinforced which promotes extensive retrofitting of existing premises and housing stock and the prioritisation of brownfield and compact development.  Actions in CAP24 strongly align and support the regeneration and revitalisation of Ireland's towns, including through reducing demand for travel by car, sustaining economic and social activity at street level and increasing access to shops, employment, and amenities by sustainable transport modes.

### 3.1.6   Heritage Ireland 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is built around a vision of our heritage being at very centre of discourse, valued by all and cared for and protected for future generations. At the heart of this framework are three themes: communities, leadership and partnerships, reflecting the importance of ongoing collaboration between government and communities, heritage organisations, individuals and local authorities in caring and planning for our shared heritage.
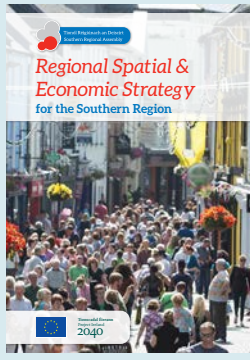
### 3.1.7   Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) provides a long-term, strategic framework for future physical, economic and social development and seeks to determine at a regional scale how best to achieve National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and NDP. To this end, the RSES sets out 11 Strategy Statements which are aligned with international, EU and national policy and which in turn set the framework for Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans.

Although the RSES does not specifically reference Kilmacow, it acknowledges that:

"*There is evidence of significant decline in some smaller towns and villages in  the Region. Investment and policy support is urgently needed to bolster and consolidate these vital settlements to arrest the decline and the consequent depletion of the physical fabric and provision of services in these areas*".

Table 3.2 of the RSES, entitled 'Settlement Typology', identifies Kilkenny City as a 'Key Town'. Kilkenny City is described as being the fourth largest settlement in the Region and it is identified as being centrally located within the Region with good road and rail links to Dublin and elsewhere.
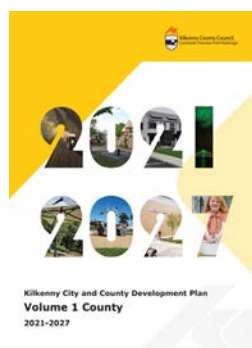
### 3.1.8    Kilkenny City and County Development Plan

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Kilkenny for six years whilst aligning with longer term national and regional objectives. As part of the Development Plan Core Strategy, Kilmacow is identified as a rural village within the Settlement Hierarchy (Table 4.3).

The Development Plan includes Objective 4La, which forms the basis for the preparation of this Masterplan. It states:

*"To develop a set of criteria and a programme to carry out an analysis of the Smaller Towns and Villages (Tier 4) to consider:*

*(a) The provision of zoning maps where appropriate (particularly for Ballyragget, Mooncoin, Paulstown, Piltown, Kilmacow and Urlingford)*
*(b) Developing specific objectives for core areas, focal spaces, amenities and opportunity sites etc.*
*(c) Identify land with development constraints.*

*This programme to be commenced within 12 months of the coming into effect of the Plan."*



Figure 3.3: (Settlement Boundary for Kilmacow Upper and Lower) from the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

### 3.1.9    Review of Kilmacow – Town Health Check

As part of the preparation of this Masterplan, a Town Centre Health Check was carried out to ensure that the analysis and objectives set out in that Plan remain valid.

In summary this confirms:

- The identification and assessment of the village's particular social and economic service centre functions, having due regard to its location and rural context is fit for purpose.

- The identification and assessment of the village's core (village centre).

- The identification and assessment of required social, economic, infrastructure and place making interventions identified.

- The village's position within the settlement hierarchy of the County and the expected population over the duration of the County Development Plan to 2027.

## 3.2    Socio-Economic Analysis

As of Census 2022, the population of Kilmacow stood at 671 residents. Previous Census data shows that the population has experienced minimal growth over the past two decades with the population being recorded as 647 in 2016 and 627 in 2011 (see Figure 3.4).

It is noted that compared to its fellow European member states, Ireland has a comparatively youthful population, with just under half (44%) of residents under the age of 25. The population of Kilmacow is relatively evenly spread across the age bands. 22% of Kilmacow's population are under the age of 19 years, 29% between 20 and 44 years, 26% between 45 and 64 years and 23% are 65 years+ According to Census 2022, 48% of Kilmacow's population is single, 41% married, 6% are divorced or separated and 5% is widowed.

The vast majority of residents at the time of the Census 2016 were Irish comprising 96% of the population, while 4% of the population were born outside of Ireland.  At the time of Census 2022 90.9% of Kilmacow's population were Irish born, while 9.1% were born in the United Kingdom, EU or rest off the world.
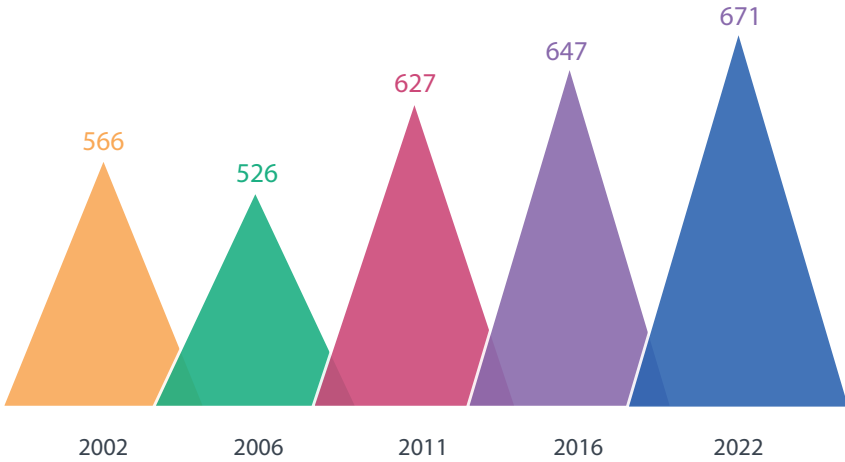


Figure 3.4: Population.    Source: Central Statistics Office, Census 2022
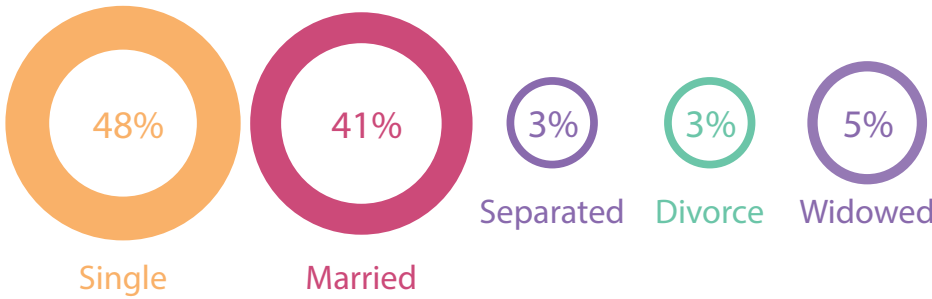


Figure 3.5: Martial Status.    Source: CSO, Census 2022
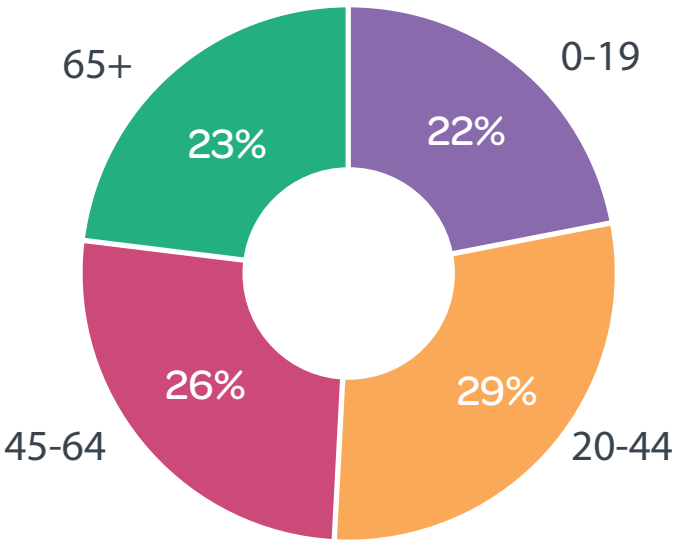


Figure 3.6: Age Breakdown.    Source: CSO, Census 2022

| Nationality | % |
|---|---|
| Ireland | 90.9% |
| United Kingdom | 4.87% |
| Poland | 0.61% |
| Other EU272020 (Exec Ireland & Poland) | 0.76% |
| Rest of World | 1.98% |
| Not stated | 0.88% |

Figure 3.7: Nationality. Source: CSO, Census 2022

### 3.2.1 Housing

The largest proportion of household formations in Kilmacow are 4 person households (23.9%), followed by 2-person households (23%) and then by 3-person households (22.5%). This is broadly similar to national averages with 4 person households being the most common across the state (25%), followed by 2-person (22%) and 3-person household (20%).

According to the 2022 Census, 99% of households live in a house or bungalow, with only 1% living in apartments. The level of owner occupiers (79%) is higher than the national average (59.1%) which is perhaps reflective of the older age structure of the settlement when compared to the demographics of the state.

Similarly, there is a lower combined representation of those renting accommodation (20%) from a private landlord, local authority, or voluntary body, than at national level (35.7%). A total 9% of households in Kilmacow live in social housing less than the national average (13.3%).

Significantly, the Census 2022 data reveals that nearly a quarter (23.51%) of Kilmacow's housing stock was developed between 2001 and 2010.

This demonstrates the volume of new house building which occurred in the settlement in a comparatively short amount of time which is in line with construction levels at the during this period (25%). Housebuilding in the village from 2011 to now has been relatively limited (2.79%).


Figure 3.8: Footpaths and Streetscape - Kilmacow Lower

Moving forward to 2027, Kilmacow is one of 27 small towns and villages which is set to deliver 10% of the housing requirement for Kilkenny City and County in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan (2021 to 2027). This would provide 467 no. dwellings for the small towns and villages with Kilmacow allocated units proportionale to its population growth.
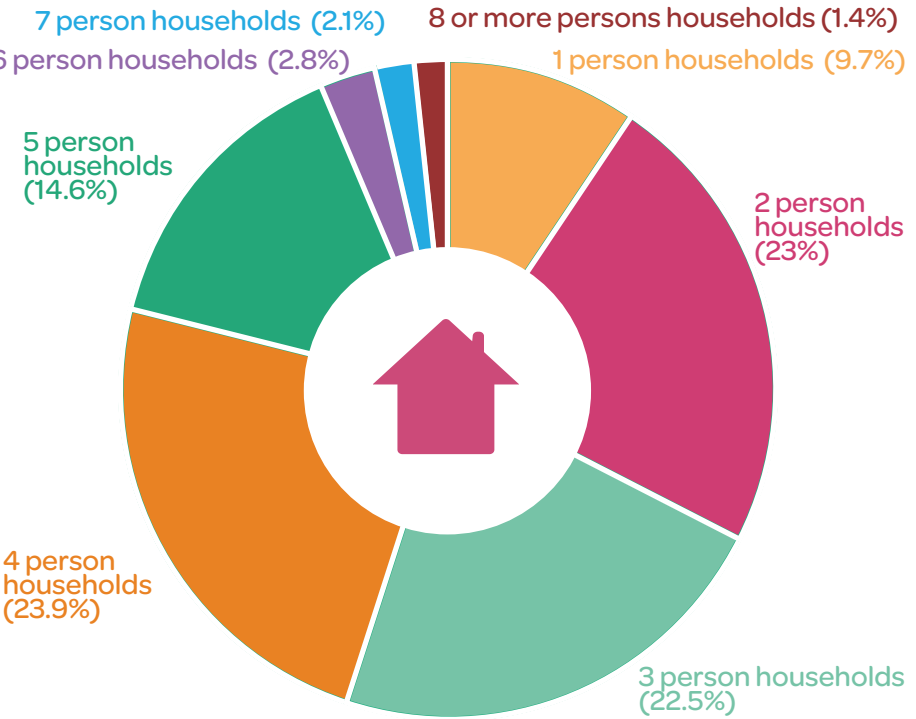


7 person households  (2.1%)
8 or more persons households (1.4%)
6 person households  (2.8%)
1 person households  (9.7%)
5 person households (14.6%)
2 person households (23%)
4 person households (23.9%)
3 person households (22.5%)

Figure 3.12: Type of Household Occupied. Source: CSO, Census 2022



| pre 1990 | 1991-2000 | 2001-2010 | 2011-2015 | 2016- |
| 59.76% | 8.76% | 23.51% | 5.18% | 2.79% |
| 150 houses | 22 houses | 59 Houses | 13 houses | 7 houses) |

Figure 3.11 Age of Housing Stock. Source: CSO, Census 2022

| Type of Occupancy | Kilmacow | Nationally |
|---|---|---|
| Owned with mortgage or loan | 31% | 33.9% |
| Owned outright | 48% | 25.2% |
| Rented from private landlord | 11% | 22.4% |
| Rented from Local Authority | 6% | 11.3% |
| Rented from voluntary/ co-operative housing body | 3% | 2% |
| Occupied free of rent | 0% | 1% |
| Not stated | 1% | 4% |
|  | 100% | 100% |

Figure 3.10: Household Occupation by Type. Source: CSO, Census 2022



House / Bungalow 99%
(National Average 82%)

Apartments 1%
(National Average 18%)

**Local housing scheme**


Figure 3.13: Absence of footpaths, Kilmacow lower


Figure 3.14: Footpaths and Streetscape - Kilmacow Upper


Figure 3.15: Residential Properties Chaplegate


Figure 3.16: Streetscape Lower Kilmacow

### 3.2.2 Education

According to the 2022 Census., levels of education in Kilmacow are broadly in line with national trends. 22% of people in Kilmacow completed their formal education at Junior Certificate level, compared to 12.3% of people across the state. 17% of people in Kilmacow terminated their formal education after Leaving Certificate, compared to 18% across the state. Kilmacow has a slightly higher level of people who completed their Honours bachelor degree, professional qualification or both (15%) compared to national averages (14), but has less people who completed a postgraduate or Ph.D (7.2% and 0.4% respectively), compared to the national average (12.2% and 1.3% respectively).

The 2022 Census results reveal that 53% of the population was working compared to 53% of the population at state level. The data shows that unemployment was low at 3% compared with the national average of 7%. 23% of residents were retired, and 6% of residents were described as unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability, higher than the national average (4%).

The highest representation of socio-economic group based on the Census results is non-manual at 29%, broadly aligned with the national average for this group (18%). The second highest group was Employers and Managers (20%), Manual Skilled (16%) and Semi-Skilled (11%). 2% of the population work as farmers.

Based on the National Deprivation Index, Kilmacow is considered 'marginally below average', with a national average of 0 and Kilmacow scoring - 1.42. Kilkenny as a County is classed as marginally below average, with a score of -0.41.
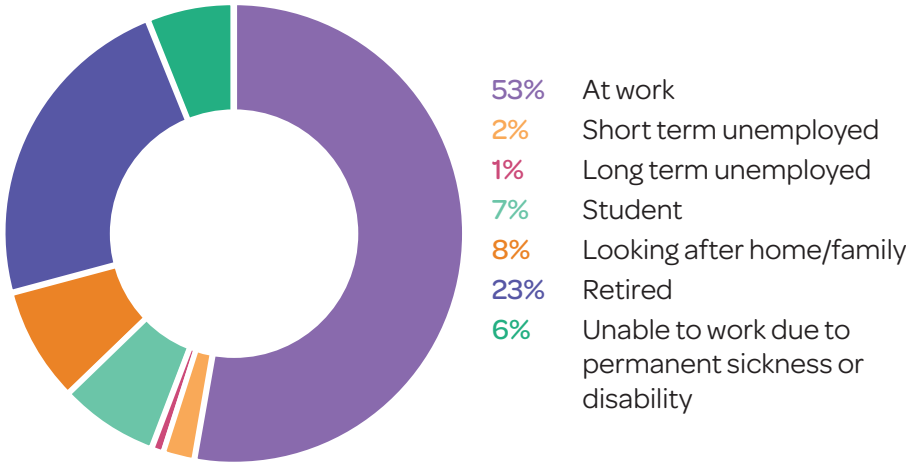


| | |
|---|---|
| 53% | At work |
| 2% | Short term unemployed |
| 1% | Long term unemployed |
| 7% | Student |
| 8% | Looking after home/family |
| 23% | Retired |
| 6% | Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability |

Figure 3.17: Principal Economic Status.
Source: CSO, Census 2022

| Persons at Work by Industry | Kilmacow | National |
|---|---|---|
| Non-manual | 29% | 18% |
| Manual skilled | 16% | 9% |
| Employers and managers | 20% | 16% |
| Semi-skilled | 11% | 8% |
| Unskilled | 6% | 12% |
| Lower professionals | 4% | 4% |
| Own account workers | 4% | 5% |
| Higher professionals | 2% | 7% |
| Farmers | 2% | 5% |
| Agricultural workers | 0% | 1% |
| Other/unknown | 6% | 15% |

Figure 3.19: Persons at Work by Industry.
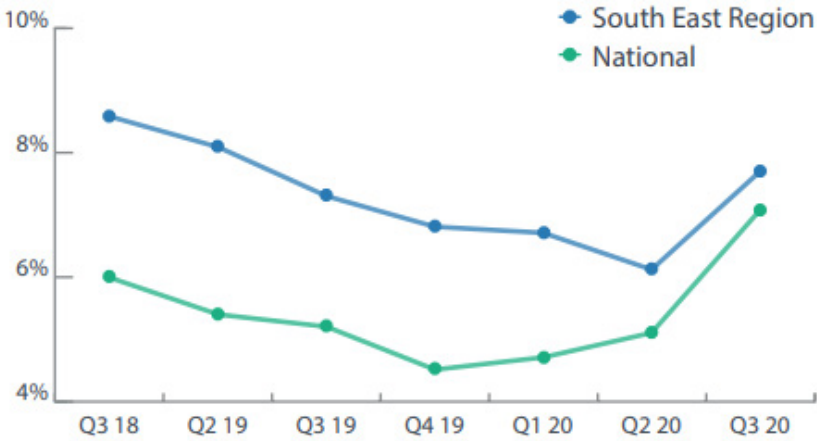Source: CSO, Census 2022



Figure 3.18: Levels of Unemployment -South East Region.
Source: CSO, Census 2016
Source: CSO Census 2022 Data

### 3.2.3 Summary of Socio-Economic Trends

The total population of Kilmacow in 2022 stood at 671 no. residents. As the Census data shows, the age profile of the town is slightly older compared with demographics at county and national level. In Kilmacow, the average age is 43, whilst across the state it is 38.8. Given that the population in Kilmacow, but also across Ireland is ageing rapidly, the older demographic of the town must be a key consideration moving forward.

Figure 3.20: Community Centre - Side Elevation



Figure 3.21: **Kilmacow Sports Complex**



Figure 3.22: St Senans National School Junior Building



Figure 3.23: St Senans National School Senior Building

## 3.3 Urban Analysis

### 3.3.1 Appreciating Kilmacow

The fact that Kilmacow has two separate, yet linked village centres with one overall community is an unusual feature that makes Kilmacow distinctive and gives it a unique identity – one that the local community is proud of. Today, it helps to retain a strong sense of community ownership and pride and adds to Kilmacow's particular local identity. While retaining the form of two villages, Kilmacow also manages to maintain a single, cohesive community that is proud of its regional identity and cultural heritage.

Set within a rural context of the South Kilkenny Lowlands and close to Waterford City, the settlement enjoys easy access to the countryside with all the convenience of the urban area. This includes the City of Waterford and the wider strategic road network which provide strong connections with the wider country. This has, in turn, made Kilmacow an attractive place for many people to live.



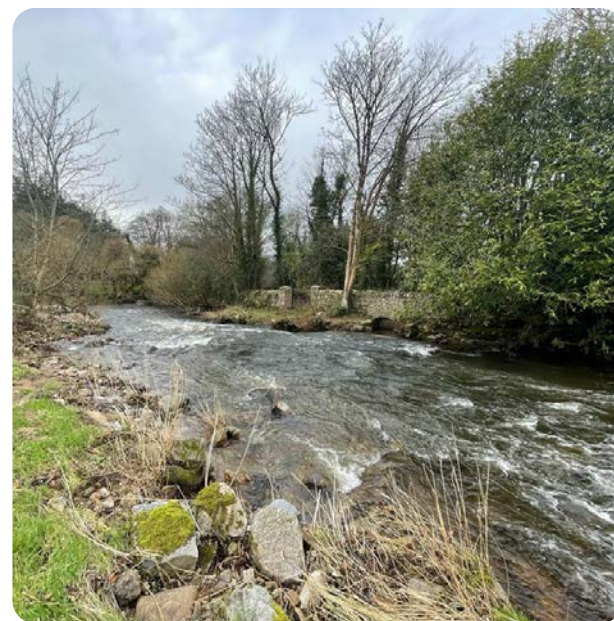Figure 3.24: Protected Structure - Narabane South



Figure 3.25: View across the river close to flood gate

## 3.4 Built Environment: Character Areas

Kilmacow village provides three separate character areas – the Upper Village, the Lower Village, and the Green Area in between:

1. **The Upper Village:** Is located to the north of the settlement and contains the bulk of development. This part of the village is mostly characterised by residential uses with several retail / commercial units and public and services facilities. It has also seen the majority of residential development in recent years. This includes medium density development on new estates such as the Old Creamery and linear, ribbon development along roads such as Dangan and Narrabaun North – linear 'one off house' development that has influenced the pattern of Kilmacow and its hinterland's in recent years. The prevailing building height in the Upper Village is 1-2 storeys.

2. **The Lower Village:** Is located to the south of the settlement. This part of the village is older in origin having been reported to be one of the oldest villages in the country and so has a greater selection of historic buildings, cultural and heritage interest. The Lower Village developed along the route of the River Blackwater, which is responsible for the village's industrial heritage. Historic mill buildings in the Lower Village including Browne's Mill at Lower Greenville and Gooch's Mill at Greenville are 3-4 storeys in height.

3. **The Green Area:** Is pre-dominantly rural in character providing a green 'wedge' in between the Upper and Lower Villages. This contains primarily agricultural lands with some community facilities including playing fields, changing facilities and related development known as the Sports Complex.

Both the Upper and Lower villages of Kilmacow have classified Kilmacow as a 'Village Character Area' a designation which is designed to preserve and improve the unique character of these village cores, including their protected structures

Figure 3.26: Protected Structures
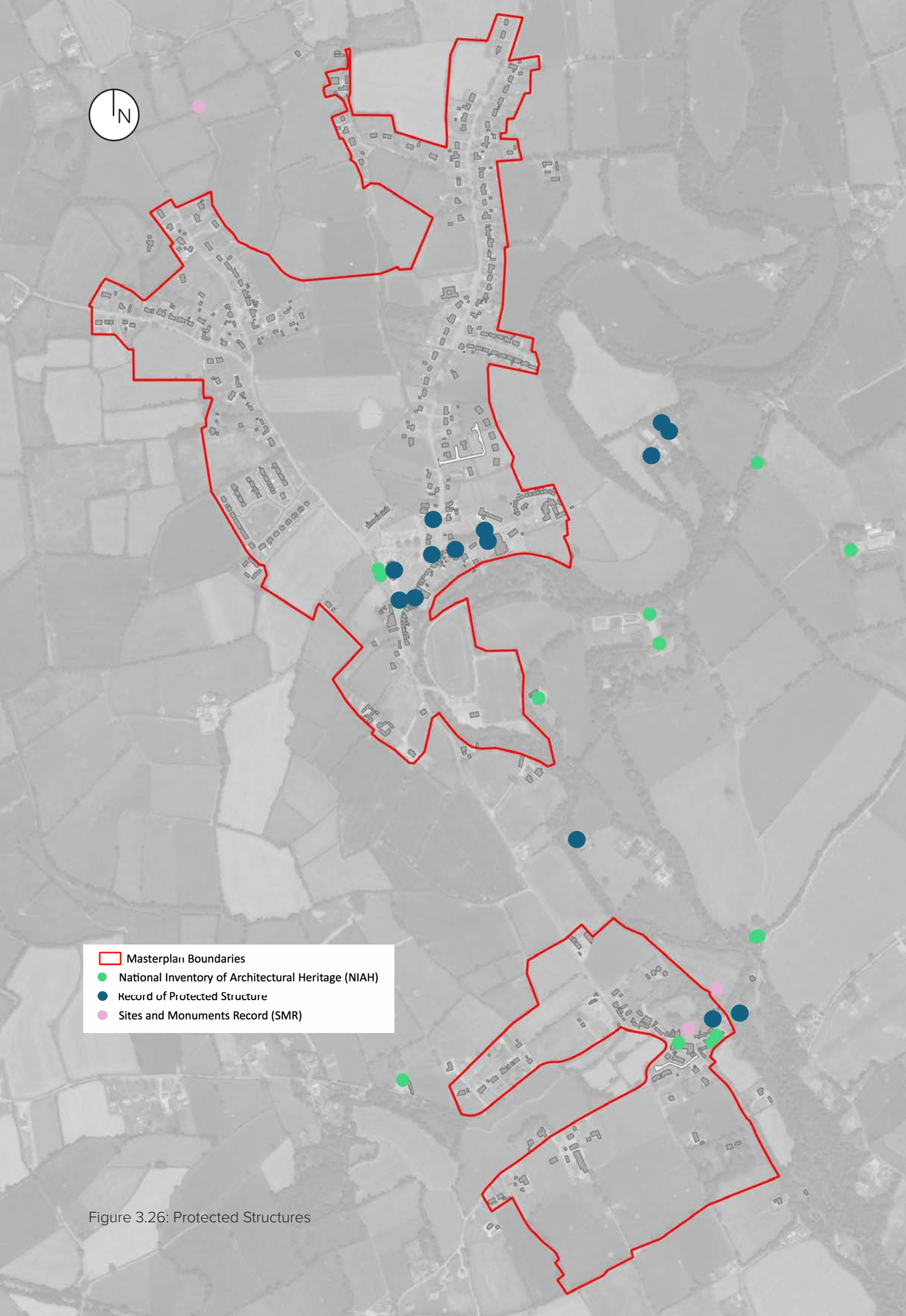
## 3.4.1 Architectural Heritage

Kilmacow has a strong architectural heritage with several Protected Structures and structures recorded in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Kilmacow contains items of archaeological interest which are on the Record of Monuments and Places including St Senan's Well, a church, and a graveyard.

The village has had a long relationship with the milling industry. The first mill opened in early 1700s, in Dangan, with 11 in total on the River Blackwater.

In addition, there are a number of attractive or unusual features that contribute to the local distinctiveness and character of Kilmacow, such as the stone walls.

**Legend:**
- Masterplan Boundaries
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)
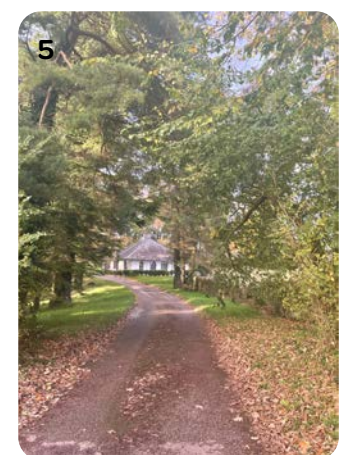- Record of Protected Structure
- Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)



Figure 3.27: From top to bottom, left to right (1) Browne's Mill, Greenville, (2) Kilmacow Bridge and stone walls, (3) Kilmacow Upper, (4) Kilmacow Upper and (5) Kilcronagh Lodge Protected Structure at Lower Greenville

| Protected Structure | Description | Location |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Kilmacow Creamery (NIAH Reg. No. 12329001) | Detached seven-bay double-height creamery, c.1900, with single-bay double-height gabled central entrance bay originally having square-headed carriageway, and two-bay double-height side elevations. | Kilmacow Upper |
| Narrabaun South (NIAH Ref. No. 12329002) | Detached three-bay two-storey house, c.1900, on an L-shaped plan with single-bay two-storey return to west. Pitched slate roofs on an L-shaped plan with clay ridge tiles, rendered chimney stacks, and cast-iron rainwater goods on rendered eaves | Kilmacow Upper |
| Dangan (NIAH Ref. No. 12329005) | Remains of flour mill complex, c.1750. Subsequently in use as creamery, 1903, including: (i: north range) Detached three-bay two-storey outbuilding with series of three square-headed carriageways to ground floor, and two-bay single-storey rear (north) elevation. Now disused. | Kilmacow Upper |
| Kilmacow National School (NIAH Re. No. 12329025) | Detached six-bay single-storey national school, c.1900, with two-bay single-storey gabled projecting central bay having single-bay single-storey lean-to lower flanking entrance bays. | Kilmacow Upper |
| Dangan (NIAH Ref. No. 12329026) | Section of iron railings, c.1900, on plinth. Set back from road in grounds shared with Kilmacow Presentation Convent. | Kilmacow Upper |
| Saint Senan's Catholic Church (NIAH Ref. No. 12329004) | Detached seven-bay double-height Catholic Church, built 1803, comprising six-bay double-height nave with single-bay double-height lower chancel to north, and single-bay two-stage entrance tower to south on a square plan. | Kilmacow Upper |
| House Saint Senan's Catholic Church Gates, Railings and Walls (NIAH Ref. No. 12329017) | Gateway, c.1875, comprising pair of limestone ashlar broach piers over having wrought iron cross finials, decorative wrought iron double gates, limestone ashlar flanking screen walls incorporating profiled square-headed pedestrian gateways with engaged colonettes, wrought iron gates. | Kilmacow Upper |
| Narrabaun South (NIAH Ref. No. 12329023) | Detached three-bay two-storey outbuilding, c.1825, with elliptical-headed carriageway to left ground floor. Refenestrated, c.1950, with some openings remodelled. Now disused. | Kilmacow Upper |
| Narrabaun South (NIAH Reg. No, 12329024) | Detached three-bay single-storey building, c.1825, possibly originally school with single-bay single-storey gabled projecting lower porch to centre. Refenestrated, c.1950, with some openings remodelled. Now disused | Kilmacow Upper |
| Kilcronagh, Greenville (NIAH Reg. No, 12329018) | Farmyard complex, extant 1839, on a U-shaped plan about a courtyard including (north): Attached eight-bay two-storey coach house-cum-stable outbuilding on a rectangular plan centred on two-bay double-height breakfront. | Kilmacow Lower |
| Kilcronagh, Greenville (NIAH Reg. No, 12329009) | Detached seven-bay (six-bay deep) two-storey over basement country house, built 1740, on a rectangular plan. | Kilmacow Lower |
| Ida House, Greenville (NIAH Reg. No. 12329012) | Detached three-bay two-storey part-double-pile Board of First Fruits glebe house, built 1818, with two-bay two-storey side (south) elevation (forming single-bay two-storey shallow return to west). Converted to private residential use, pre-1903. Renovated, c.1975, with single-bay single-storey gabled projecting open porch added to ground floor | Kilmacow Lower |
| Greenville, Kilmacow Lower (NIAH Reg. No. 12329011) | Flour mill complex, dated 1802. In use as Corn mill complex, 1903, including: (i) Attached six-bay two-storey mill owner's house. Extensively renovated, 2004. Hipped roof with replacement slate, 2004, terracotta ridge tiles, red brick Running bond chimney stacks, and replacement uPVC rainwater goods, 2004, on rendered eaves. | Kilmacow Lower |
| Kilmacow Bridge (NIAH Reg. No. 12329008) | Eight-arch rubble stone road bridge over river, c.1775, incorporating fabric of earlier bridge, c.1600. Random rubble stone walls with rubble stone triangular cut-waters to piers to north, and squared rubble stone coping to parapets. Series of eight pointed segmental arches with squared rubble stone voussoirs, and rubble stone soffits having render over. Sited spanning River Blackwater with overgrown grass banks to river. | Kilmacow Lower |
| Kilcronagh, Greenville, Kilmacow Lower: Gates and Piers (NIAH Reg. No. 12329019) | Gateway, extant 1902, on a symmetrical plan comprising pair of limestone ashlar piers on moulded plinths having ogee-detailed cornice capping supporting "Fleur-de-Lys"-detailed cast-iron double gates. Lane fronted at entrance to grounds of Kilcronagh. | Kilmacow Lower |
| Kilcronagh, Greenville, Kilmacow Lower (NIAH Reg. No. 12329010) | Detached three-bay (two-bay deep) single-storey gate lodge, extant 1902, on a square plan. Pyramidal slate roof with ridge tiles centred on rendered chimney stack having stepped capping supporting terracotta pots, and cast-iron rainwater goods on timber beams on chamfered timber posts on cut-limestone chamfered padstones. Roughcast walls | Kilmacow Lower |
| Kilmacow Corn Mill (NIAH Reg. No. 12329013) | Corn mill complex, c.1825, comprising: (i) Detached seven-bay two-storey corn mill on an L-shaped plan with round-headed carriageway to left ground floor, and two-bay single-storey projecting bay to right. In use, 1903. Now in ruins. | Kilmacow Lower |

Table 3.1: Record of Protected Structures as listed in Appendix 1 of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 - 2027

Figure 3.28: Land Use

Legend:
- Residential
- Commercial / Industrial
- Mixed Use / Town Centre
- Public / Community
- Healthcare
- Vacant
- Agriculture
- Retail / Commercial
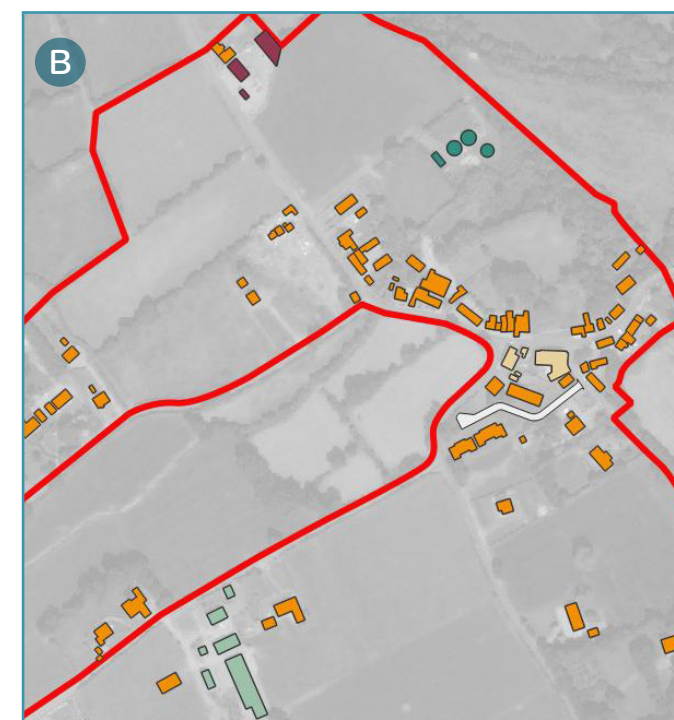

Figure 3.29: Land Use - Inset A


Figure 3.31: Land Use - Inset B

### 3.4.2 Land Use

Kilmacow is made up of residential properties together with local businesses, public services and facilities which are primarily located in the Upper Village. Local businesses include a grocery store / newsagent, supermarket, gas station, post office, pub, hair salon. Public services and facilities include a Medical Centre Kilmacow Montessori School, Rosedale Kilmacow Voluntary Housing Association, Kilmacow Community Hall, Kilmacow Sports Complex and St. Senan's National School.


Figure 3.30: Shop and Post Office Kilmacow Upper


Figure 3.32: Take Away Kilmacow Upper


Figure 3.33: Spinners Bar Kilmacow Lower

Vehicular Network and Parking
- **P** Off-Street Parking
- **🚌** Bus Stop
- **– –** On-Street Parking Areas
- **—** Local Roads

Figure 3.34: Vehicular Network and Parking

### 3.4.3   Vehicular Network and Parking

The village is organized around a number of local roads. Two local roads serve Kilmacow Upper, intersecting in the middle of the village at Kilmacow Church, and onward to link to Lower Kilmacow. The primary roads and secondary roads within the village are for two-way traffic, with no designated cycle routes provided in the village. There are also several residential roads that intersect the primary and secondary roads that end in cul-de-sacs.

Kilmacow does not include any designated on-street parking within the village due to the narrowness of the streets. All roads are for two-way traffic, with no designated cycle routes and no designated on-street parking. However, off-street parking is provided at several points, including at the main intersection of the village (in front of Kilmacow church), Kilmacow Sports Complex, and Kilmacow Community Centre and Primary School.

While we note that some traffic management measures were implemented as part of village renewal scheme measures and planning applications at the Old Creamery (Kilmacow Upper) and Blackwater Grove (Kilmacow Lower), additional traffic management measures in the village are still needed. There is no pedestrian crossing for any of the intersections in the village. The narrowness of these roads restricts ease of movement of traffic and provides limitations to road capacities.



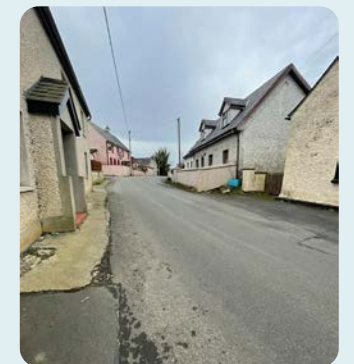Figure 3.35: Improved footpaths at the Old Creamery



Figure 3.37: Poor existing Footpath Arrangement at Kilmacow Lower



Figure 3.36: Existing footpath arrangements at Kilmacow Upper / Dangan
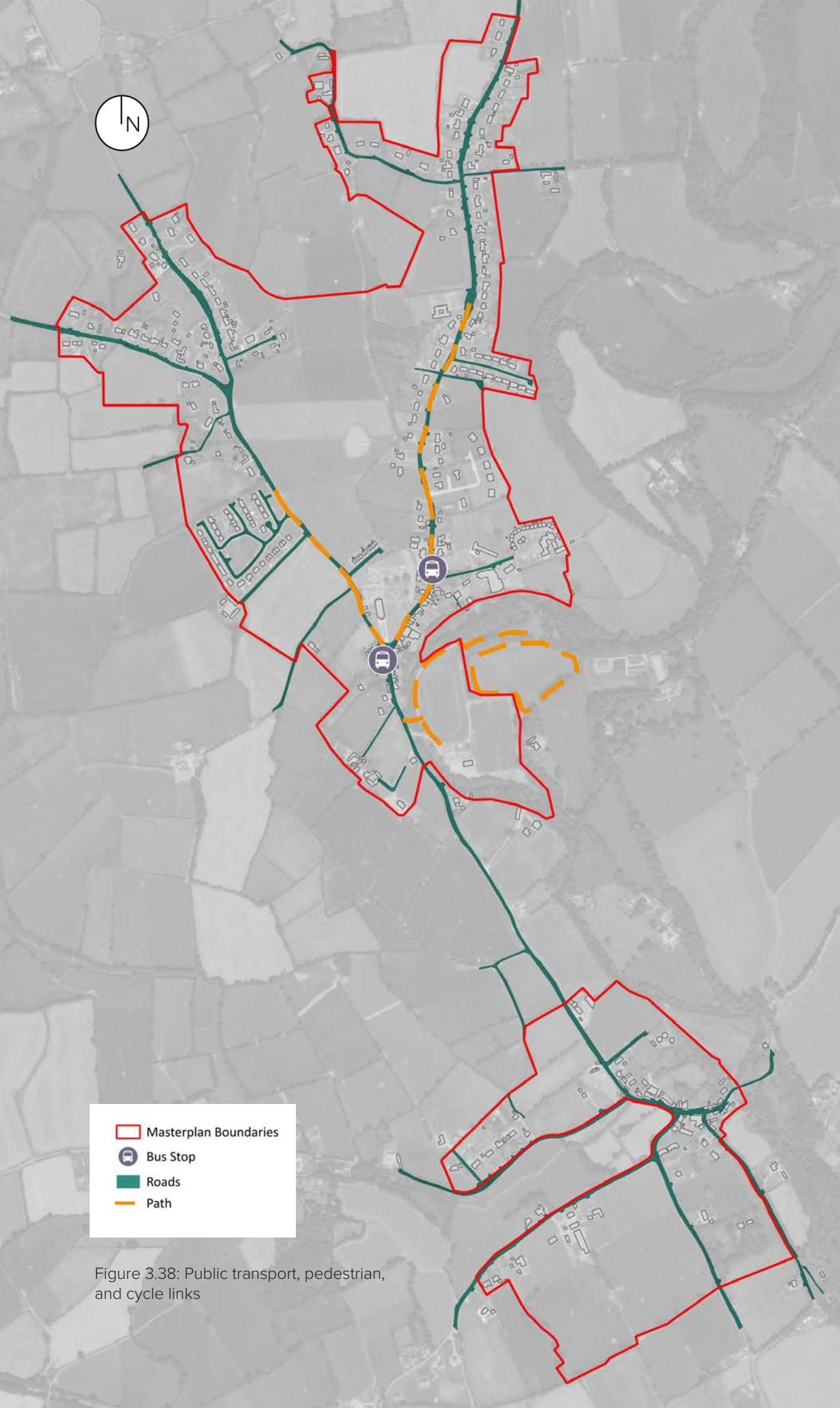
27

Figure 3.38: Public transport, pedestrian, and cycle links

**Legend:**
- Masterplan Boundaries
- Bus Stop
- Roads
- Path

### 3.4.4 Public transport, pedestrian, and cycle links

Kilmacow is served by 3 no. bus stops namely 'Kilmacow Cross – stop 351171', 'Kilmacow – stop 351501', and Kilmacow – stop 351511' which provides several bus services through Kilmacow. All of these bus routes stop at numerous villages and towns along their route, providing connectivity between the wider area and Kilmacow along arterial routes, on different days of the week, with an additional route planned in the NTA's Capital Programme.

Kilmacow also benefits from a local bus service (Ring a Link) which is a community based not for profit providing rural bus transport covering Mullinavat, Glenmore and Kilmacow with onwards journeys to Waterford City. Potential exists for the expansion of services having been identified in the National Transport Authority (NTA) Connecting Ireland Programme and the Waterford Area Metropolitan Transport Strategy.

The settlement of Kilmacow is difficult to access by foot and by bike. There are significant physical barriers within the village which reduce pedestrian / cyclist permeability and comfort, including lack of visibility and space along local roads, and the lack of connectivity between residential developments and local amenities / facilities.

Overall, few footpaths exist in the villages with the exception of those provided within individual housing developments and the footpaths in the Upper Village. Existing footpaths are really narrow at points reducing the potential for street furniture or people friendly meeting spaces. Furthermore, as stated previously, it is highlighted that most of the intersections within the village do not offer a pedestrian crossing.

Therefore, these fail to link up and so safe pedestrian movement in and around the villages is restricted for all members of the community.

With regards to cycling, there are no designated cycle routes within the village.

It is evident that Kilmacow requires the provision of additional traffic measures, enhanced public realm and landscape improvements, the provision of priority signalised junctions and upgraded public to better support the needs of all road users.



Figure 3.39: Existing Signage at Kilmacow River Walk



Figure 3.40:: Existing bench at Kilmacow River Walk

### 3.4.5 Recreational and Leisure

Kilmacow benefits from 'Kilmacow Sports Complex', a long-established and valuable community amenity in the village. The Sports Complex includes an athletic track, children's playground, hurling and football pitches, soccer pitch, tennis court, skittle ring and ancillary facilities including dressing rooms, stores, toilets, and car park.

The facilities are accessed via a separate road bridge or pedestrian bridge that crosses the River Blackwater from Upper Road. There is also a rear entrance from Lower Greenville Road (Gooche's Road).

Kilmacow Community Centre is also a key recreational asset for the village, being located in the heart of the Upper Village beside Kilmacow Primary School. It is a well used facility which includes yoga, craft classes, library, concerts, Foróige, discos, fitness classes, a Christmas Fair and dancing.

Indeed, Kilmacow has over 40 clubs and organisations, and the cooperation between them saw Kilmacow winning the 2019 'Pride of Place' competition in the Community and Wellbeing Category.

The River Blackwater is a further key asset for the village in terms of recreation and leisure with its existing paths being very well used by the local community.

Kilmacow and its surrounding areas have had very modest success attracting tourists, in part due to a lack of guest accommodation in the area.

### 3.4.6 Public Realm

The village offers a children's playground area, located within the Sports Complex. This facility is well-maintained and easily accessible via a separate road bridge or pedestrian bridge that crosses the River Blackwater from Upper Road.

Apart from the playground, the village lacks public open spaces for its residents and visitors. The materials and street furniture used in the public realm of Kilmacow vary significantly but remains poor within and surrounding the village.
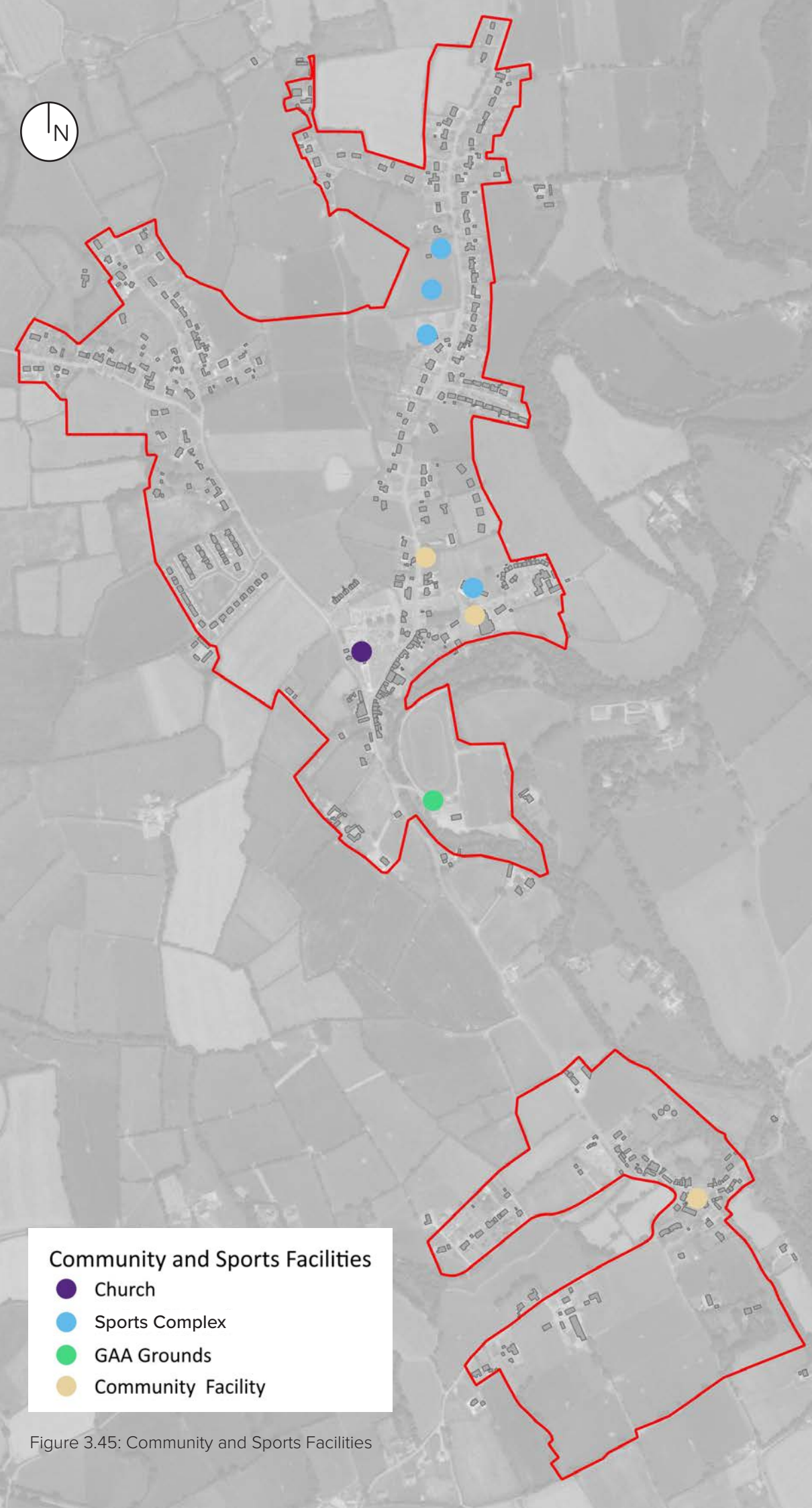


Figure 3.41: Kilmacow Sports Complex



Figure 3.42: Kilmacow Sports Complex



Figure 3.43:: Kilmacow GAA Club



Figure 3.44: Kilmacow Sports Complex



**Community and Sports Facilities**
- Church
- Sports Complex
- GAA Grounds
- Community Facility

Figure 3.45: Community and Sports Facilities

### 3.4.7    Landscape and Green Infrastructure

The landscape around Kilmacow is defined by the South Kilkenny lowlands and rural hinterland. While the village is primarily flat defined by the River Blackwater, the wider landscape is provided in wide plains, regular (medium sized) field patterns bounded by hedgerows and enclosed with a pleasant topography. It is bookended to the northwest by the Walsh Mountains, a group of low hills that rise to a height of 450 feet at Moolum Rock, and Tory Hill which rises to a height of 980 feet located beyond the north-eastern Kilmacow Parish line, past Dangan.

Farming has had a significant and defining impact on the landscape, terrain, and the community's identity.  The area surrounding and separating the Upper and Lower settlements is mainly grazing land, supporting dairy and beef farming.

In terms of green infrastructure, the village enjoys a number of features and amenities that offer both active and passive recreational opportunities and important wildlife habitats. These include:

- Greenville Parkland Village: The rural lands east of the main road, in the space between the upper and lower villages, are pleasant green spaces with a high local amenity value and historical significance for Kilmacow. They are frequently used by many locals as a place to wander and enjoy some green reprieve. They play a significant role in the cultural history and character of the villages as we know them today.

- The River Blackwater: A minor tributary of the River Suir, the River Blackwater enters the River Suir below the townland of Dunkitt, upstream of Waterford. The Blackwater is a noteworthy natural feature and an ecologically significant habitat in Kilmacow. There is a good variety of instream and riparian habitat along the Blackwater River. Several animal species can find refuge in the river and the mature forests, woodlands, and grasslands that surround its route. For aquatic flora and animals, the River Blackwater has great local ecological value.

- Field Patterns, Hedgerows and Stone Walls: The various ditches, hedgerows, old stone walls, and tree stands that historically served as field boundaries are still present in Kilmacow's terrain. These are visual components that are essential to the character and allure of the area and play a significant role in the visual identity of Kilmacow's landscape



Figure 3.46: Kilmacow Sports Complex

### 3.4.8    Employment

Although agriculture remains an important part of the local employment market and makes a significant contribution to the local rural economy, employment and culture, non-manual and manual skilled are the predominant sectors of employment.  Construction and tourism to a lesser extent make up the majority of Kilmacow's economy as well as local services, Residents in Kilmacow village who are not employed in these sectors tend to travel to Waterford City for their place of employment.

Despite having a long history of industry due to its location on the Blackwater and the several mills that once ran there, little homegrown industry remains in Kilmacow. Within its parish, the village does benefit from Roadstone Quarry at Grannagh which presently employs up to 100 people. It reportedly has in excess of 20 years in reserves of limestone available.

Knockhouse Stud Farm continues to operate from Kilmacow and is an important local enterprise, along with other local businesses such as Kilmacow Agri-Fuel, Ballymountain Builders Providers, Mallwood, various shops, services and fuel merchants.
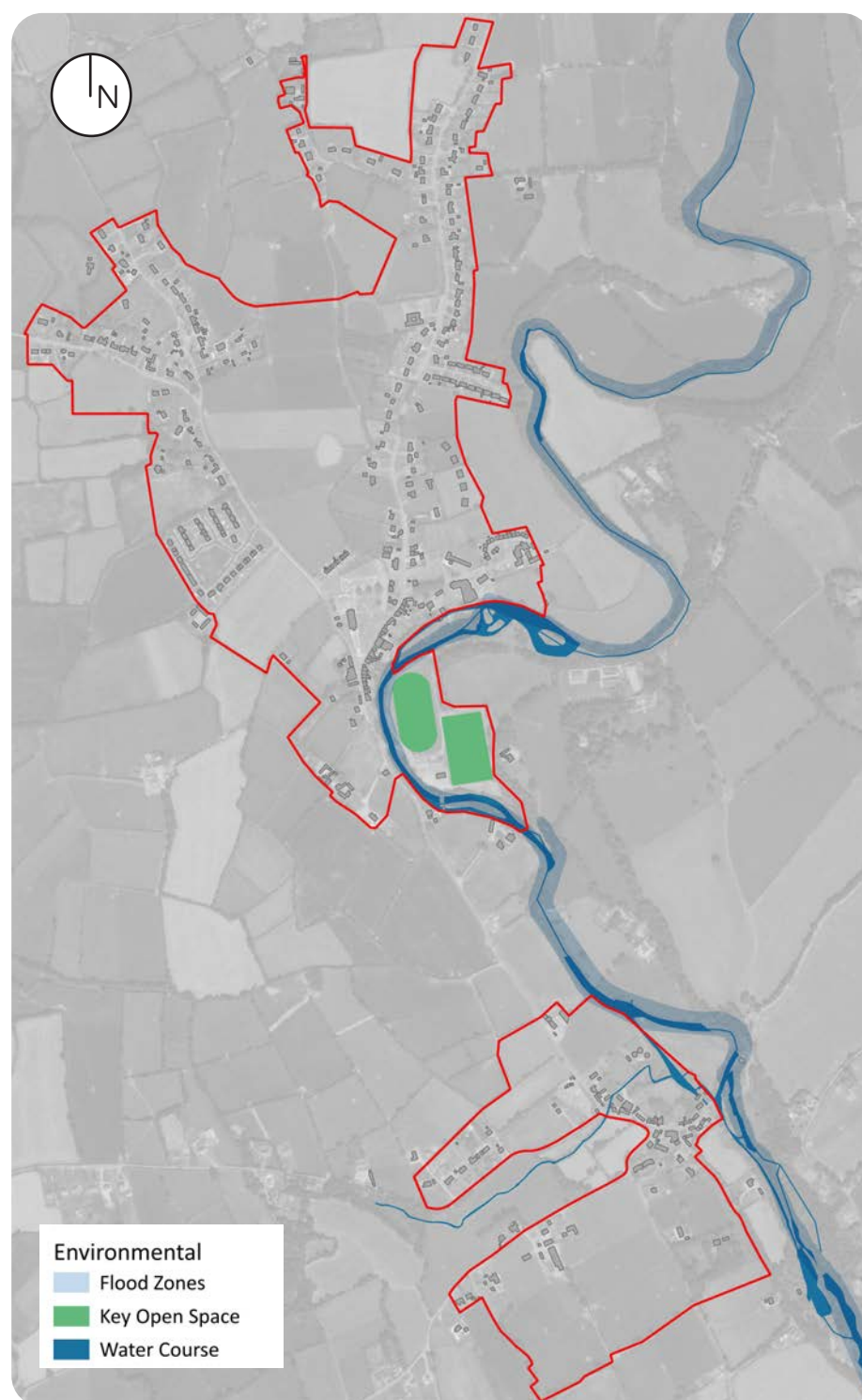
Figure 3.47 – Environment plan

**Environmental**
- Flood Zones
- Key Open Space
- Water Course

### 3.4.9 Environmental

A Strategic Level Flood Risk Assessment was carried out as part of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027, which identified small parts of the Upper Village settlement as being located within Flood Zone A, as identified in Figure 3.47.

Flood Zone A is where the probability of flooding is highest and where a wide range of receptors would be vulnerable. Any area within or adjoining Flood Zone A shall be subject to a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed.

Other areas of flooding within the village will be addressed as resources allow. It must be noted that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Kilkenny will be reviewed as part of the review of the current Kilkenny City and County Development Plan, due to commence in Q4 of 2025.



Figure 3.48: Kilmacow Aerial View

### Summary of Urban Environment

Kilmacow is a historic village with an attractive urban form and patterns. The Upper Village is located to the north of the settlement and contains the bulk of development. including residential and several retail / commercial units, public and services facilities. It has also seen the majority of residential development in recent years.

The Lower Village, located to the south of the settlement, is older in origin having been reported to be one of the oldest villages in the country and therefore contains a greater selection of historic buildings, and sites of cultural and historical importance. The Lower Village developed along the route of the River Blackwater, which is responsible for the village's industrial heritage. Historic mill buildings in the Lower Village including Brownes Mill in Greenville Lower and Gooch's Mill at Greenville are 3-4 storeys in height.

Between the Upper and Lower Village lies the green area which is rural in nature, and splits the Upper and Lower Villages in two. This contains primarily agricultural lands with some community facilities including playing fields, changing facilities and related development known as the Sports Complex.

# 4.0    Engagement

## 4.1    Overview

A stakeholder workshop took place on Friday 20th January 2023 from 18:30 to 20:30 in Kilmacow Community Hall.  The workshop was an opportunity to gather the views of local people on how Kilmacow should develop.

The following sections provide an overview of the workshop structure, a summary of the key points raised, followed by a more details record of the feedback received during the workshop exercises.

The workshop was open to the entire community to attend and was advertised widely to encourage attendance.  A total of 52 local people participated in workshop discussions.

## 4.2    Workshop Structure

Following a presentation of the proposed interventions, delivered by Turley, participants were asked to undertake a 'dream and draw' exercise in small groups.  This involved:

* Identifying spaces within the town that should be considered by the Masterplan proposals
* Drawing on ideas for interventions
* Highlighting priority areas for development

The second exercise involved two parts.  In the first, we asked participants to identify opportunities and challenges presented by the Kilmacow Masterplan.  These were to be written on post-it notes and stuck to the desk in front of them.  For the second part of the exercise, participants were asked to pick one for the challenges they had identified and come up with a proposed solution to this.

## 4.3    Engagement on Draft masterplan

A drop in information session was held on Wednesday 7th August, 2024 where the draft masterplan was on display and officials from the Council and Turleys available to answer any queries the public had on the plan.

This was attended by in excess of 70 persons.

The village appearance needs uplifting

Lovely rural charm

The community spirit

Beautiful scenery

Sense of community – everyone looks out for one another

Not too far from Waterford City

Great place to bring up children

# Challenges and Opportunities

A summary of key challenges and opportunities raised by residents of Kilmacow and stakeholders at the workshop on 20 January 2023 is provided below:

| Challenges | Opportunities |
|---|---|
| **Footpaths**<br>Many of the footpaths around the Upper and Lower Village require not only upgrading but need to be linked up. | **The River**<br>The river could potentially open up so many different improvements for the village including tourism, renewable energy, biodiversity, green public spaces, heritage. |
| **Roads**<br>Many of the surrounding roads are not wide enough and the number of dangerous bends is concerning. | **Mills**<br>The history of the local mills could potentially form the foundation of small business, heritage, and tourism initiatives. |
| **Infrastructure improvement**<br>While many aspects of the local infrastructure require upgrading and improvements locals need to be clear, if they lead to increased urbanisation, they should not lose the rural community feel. | **Reuse vacant property**<br>There are many vacant properties which could benefit the local community. |
| **Parking**<br>Improvement to the local facilities will inevitably increase the number of visitors to the area but there is limited parking to facilitate more visitors. | **Improved streetscape**<br>Improved streetscape and accessibility has the potential to improve the lives of locals and enhance the appearance of the area. |
| **Community Cohesion**<br>The natural split in the Upper and Lower Village means can lead to a feeling of division which requires addressing as part of a wider plan for the area. | **Schools**<br>Proper future-proofed planning to include scope for student numbers and keeping local traffic routes could really be positive. |
| **Commuters**<br>Covid has resulted in many locals working from home but long term there is not enough attractive facilities to keep people WFH. | **Property Prices**<br>Residential property prices are limited – enhancing the local area would make the area more attractive and potentially increase the value of local property . |
| **Bridges**<br>The current state and design of the existing bridges acts as a constraint on many of the improvements discussed e.g., additional visitors, road widening etc. | **Sports Facilities**<br>The existing facilities offer the perfect opportunity to develop the immediate area around the GAA club but with broader base appeal. |
| **Telecommunications**<br>Poor broadband and mobile signal coverage limit so many aspects of life e.g., business, work hubs, light industry. | **Location**<br>Proximity to road and rail infrastructure opens many opportunities but linking to outlying infrastructure is required to bring Kilmacow into the mix. |
| **Land Ownership**<br>Local land ownership is a challenge to further development, tourism, and road improvements. | **Existing layout**<br>Despite the separation in form between the Upper Village and the Lower Village positives exist to joining up the village and the current layout facilitates the unification of the while maintaining the overall form of the village. |
| **Limited Public Transport**<br>The limited connectivity to other areas is a major factor working against future village improvements. | |

A Question and Answer section took place to give participants an opportunity to comment on ideas, which are summarised below:

| Theme | Comments |
|---|---|
| Traffic and Parking | For such a small village, traffic and lack of parking can have a significant impact on accessibility. |
| Public Transport and Active Travel | Participants were critical of the poor public transport infrastructure serving Kilmacow, which contributes to car-dependence. |
| Lack of distinctive identify | Several participants pointed out that whilst the area has many unique features, there is a lack of distinctive identity for the village, either on the approach or in the centre of the village. |
| Lack of meaningful attractions | Participants felt there is very little to attract people to the area and that the existing sporting facilities do not cater for everyone. |

Participants were presented with a summary of the interventions proposed as part of the Masterplan, and the feedback on these is summarised below:

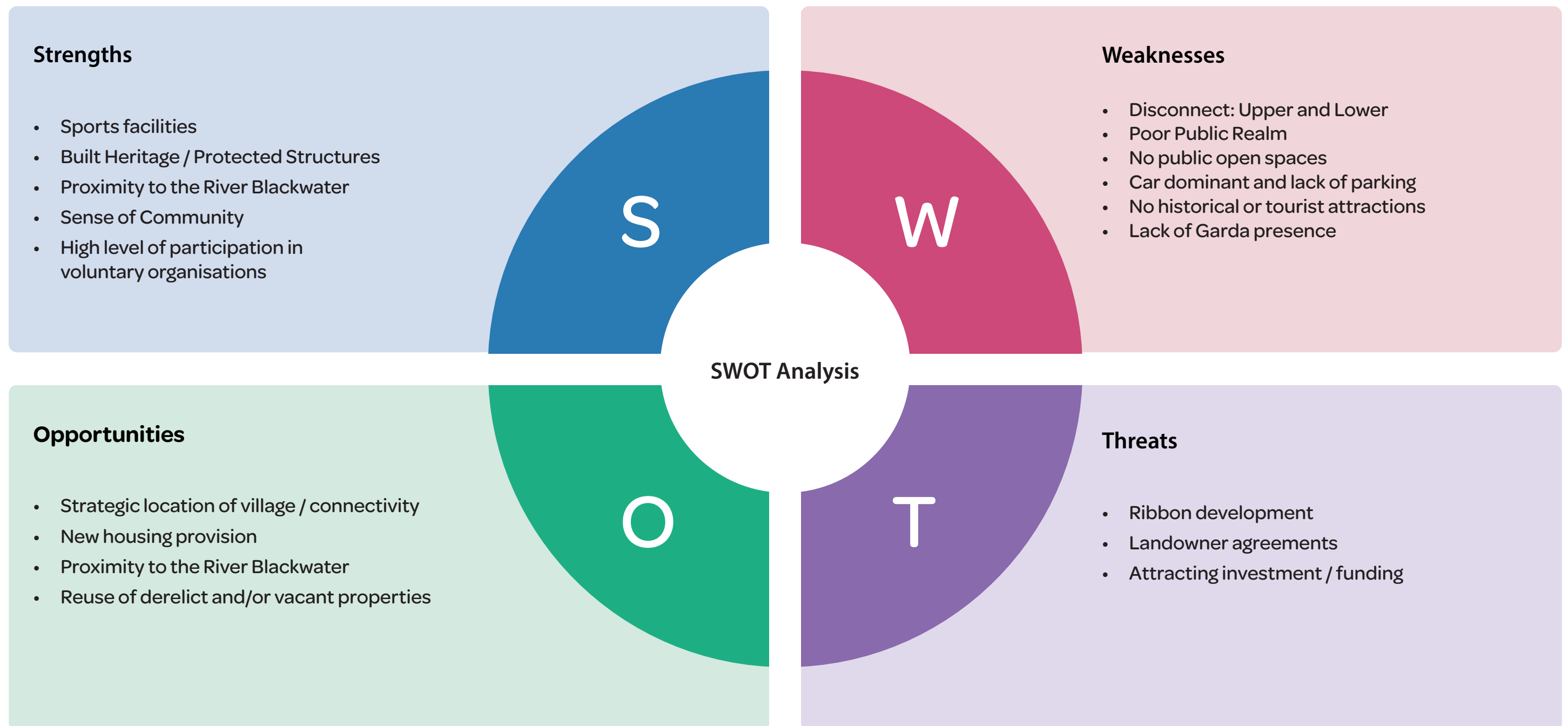| Theme | Comments |
|---|---|
| Traffic Flow | Consideration should be given to one kind of one-way system. |
| School Traffic Management | Even with some staggering of start / end times traffic congestion is still an issue and needs addressing. |
| Accessibility and Public Realm | Footpaths around the area require improvement, particularly with inconsistent surface levels. Footpaths in the lower village should be connected to create safer walking routes. Bike lanes should be considered. Some kind of walkway or continue paths should be used for connecting Upper and Lower Village areas. |



Figure 4.1 – Footpaths - Lack of - Kilmacow Lower



Figure 4.2 – Protected Structure - Narrabaun South



Figure 4.3 – Kilmacow Community Centre and Protected Structure

## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Sports facilities
- Built Heritage / Protected Structures
- Proximity to the River Blackwater
- Sense of Community
- High level of participation in voluntary organisations

### Weaknesses

- Disconnect: Upper and Lower
- Poor Public Realm
- No public open spaces
- Car dominant and lack of parking
- No historical or tourist attractions
- Lack of Garda presence

### Opportunities

- Strategic location of village / connectivity
- New housing provision
- Proximity to the River Blackwater
- Reuse of derelict and/or vacant properties

### Threats

- Ribbon development
- Landowner agreements
- Attracting investment / funding

# 5.0    Masterplan

## 5.1    Vision for Kilmacow

Kilmacow's village form, with two village centres within one overall community, gives a unique identity which the community is proud of. The vision for Kilmacow is to embrace its unique urban form and utilise landscape to define a "Green Heart". The green heart will harness the landscape features of the place to provide a unique identity, strengthen the social fabric of the village, and frame a plan for its future development.

Supported by measures to improve connectivity (in collaboration with the Council's Active Travel Team), including pedestrian and cycle access and improved through-traffic and parking measures, the village's key public spaces could be transformed. A revitalised public realm with more parking and transport will help to attract more people and activities to the centre; a new Village Park, extension to the Sports Complex, potential visitor accommodation and a working hub and upgraded Community Centre will help to bring together and support key local community facilities.

Kilmacow will become an increasingly vibrant, healthy, attractive, and inclusive village, enhanced by revitalisation in tandem with enhanced connectivity, urban form.

Kilmacow will be a place of choice, inspiring people, communities, visitors, and investors to locate and thrive.

# Vision

"The vision for Kilmacow is to embrace its unique rural village form, sense of community and strategic position between rolling Kilkenny countryside, the City of Waterford and strategic road network to enhance Kilmacow as a sustainable and attractive rural village to live, work and play for everyone in its community."
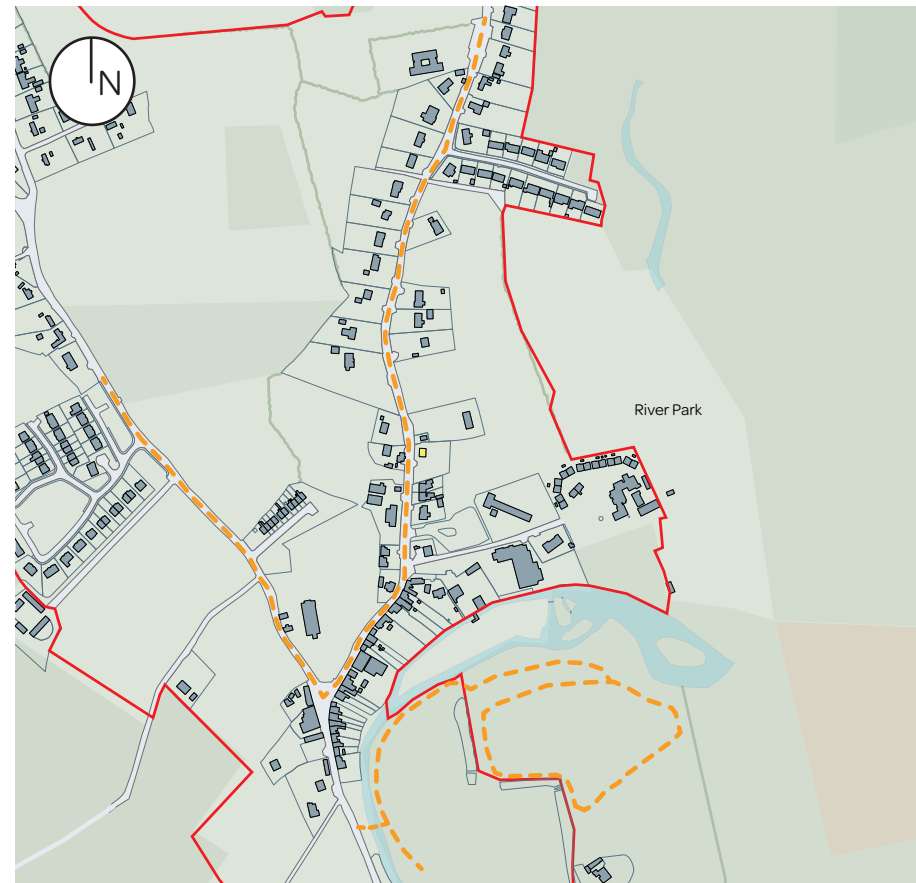
## 5.2    Key Spatial Elements

The spatial framework informing the masterplan comprises three key elements set out below.





River Park



### Key Arterial Routes

Kilmacow will retain its unique character of being structured around the two villages (Upper and Lower Kilmacow).  The Upper Villages local roads connect at the intersection at Kilmacow Chuch and the road network also connects the Upper Village to the Lower Village whilst showing its established urban grain and historic features. These provide access to several local roads with onwards journeys to Waterford and the strategic road network.

### River Park

A River Park will act as a secondary spatial element, its form informed by the location of the River Blackwater, linked to a new proposed 'green loop' linking Upper and Lower which will be defined in a future Feasibility Study. This green infrastructure will provide enhanced connectivity between Upper and Lower Kilmacow look at improved footpath connection and serve as a tourism asset promoting active tourism and enabling visitors to explore the village's rich built and natural heritage, whilst supporting the health and well-being of residents.

### Key Nodes

Community buildings, heritage assets, entrances to the villages and other focal points will act as key nodes within the village.  Key nodes are the strategic foci into which the observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which one is travelling.  These may be primarily junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths.

## 5.3 Guiding Principles

The aim of this Masterplan is to ensure that Kilmacow has the right objectives and projects in place to tackle issues of urban form and structure, connectivity, and identity and above all, to become a better place to live, work and run a business, ensuring the vitality and vibrancy of the village into the future.

It is important to note that any development in Kilmacow will need to adhere to guidance and policy contained within the governing Kilkenny City and County Development Plan, currently covering the period 2021 – 2027.  Chapter 4 of this Development Plan outlines the settlement boundary of Kilmacow and the guiding principles of development within this settlement.  Chapter 13 of the .current City and County Development Plan outlines the requirements of development.

Taking into account the Town Centre First policy objectives, our baseline analysis of the village and the feedback received from the local community, we have developed a set of principles to help guide the ideas, actions, and strategies for the masterplan.

These are:

**Streets and Public Spaces** – Provision of upgraded public realm and public amenity spaces to provide an attractive, vibrant core.

**Movement** – Improved connectivity between the Upper and Lower Kilmacow as well as its surrounds, as connectivity is fundamental to the social and economic success of the village.

**Heritage and identity** – celebrate the culture and heritage of Kilmacow, defining its image and making it a destination village for visitors.

**Built Form and Use** – Reuse of existing vacant / derelict buildings to provide new community facilities and /or tourism offerings.

**Vitality and Vibrancy** – ensure Kilmacow is an economically viable community with the capacity to generate income and employment necessary to maintain or improve the village.

**Sustainability and Climate Resilience** – Resilient towns promote sustainable development, well-being, and inclusive growth.

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### Streets and Public Spaces

Kilmacow will be characterised by an attractive public realm (streets, spaces, and parks) that are designed to invite people to meet, mingle and dwell.  The public realm will be carefully designed to serve the whole community, performing multiple roles as places to rest, meet, play, exercise, or host community events.

Develop a green loop walk with connection to the River Blackwater, for residents and visitors alike. The new loop walk will serve as a tourism asset, promoting active tourism and enabling visitors to explore the village's rich heritage and biodiverse hinterlands. This also presents a need for a footpath from Upper to Lower Kilmacow along the street lighting.

Enhance connectivity of streets and places to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements for short journeys, reducing car dominance and enhancing connectivity.

Ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to street furniture and materiality, including street lighting, within the public realm.

Provide a network of public and green spaces at varying scales to help strengthen community ties across all ages, offer space for activities and events, and improve the health and well-being of the community and visitors.

Assess the feasibility of undergrounding services, to reduce wirescape in the village.

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### Movement

Manage traffic through the villages at peak School times by introducing of traffic calming measures such as speed ramps, and new pedestrian crossing points at key intersections within the village to ensure pedestrian safety.

Create an accessible and inclusive streetscape which supports ease of movement for children travelling to school, older people, and people with reduced mobility - minimising uneven surfaces and street clutter.

Provide an integrated pedestrian and cycle network to promote sustainable travel to, from and around the village centres.  The new network will allow for public realm enhancement and link to the new public amenity space and the River Blackwater.

Create an accessible and inclusive streetscape, supporting ease of movement for children travelling to the nearby school, through minimising uneven pavements and reducing clutter.

Promotion of enhanced bus services to and from the village.

Consider shared parking at the Sports Complex for any future water sports facility.

To provide a new link road, linking the Narrabaun Road to the Dangan Road, north of the church lands, which will create a new urban street, enhance pedestrian and vehicular connectivity and provide appropriate access to development lands.

**Heritage and Identity**

Tackle dereliction and improve the appearance of buildings, particularly façade improvements to buildings within the Upper and Lower Villages to improve the overall of the area

Identify, adapt, restore and/or reuse historic buildings for the benefit of the local community, creating a more inclusive, attractive environment, building on the strong community spirit.

Celebrate the village's heritage and history through signage, wayfinding, trails, events, and festivals, highlighting the historic assets with possible interventions including lighting, greening, accesses, and potential visitor centre associated with the river as defined by a future Feasibility Study.

Define Kilmacow's image as an alluring historical village which embraces its enduring character and treasures its rich built and natural heritage, whilst adapting to meet current needs as a destination in which to live, work and do business.

**Built Form and Use**

Make effective use of existing derelict / vacant building stock within the village to provide new spaces for new uses.

Enhance community facilities to provide a range of public and community spaces, to provide activities for the young and old, contributing to a more inclusive community and adding to the health and well-being of residents' and visitors.

Provide a strong mix of town centre uses which supports the needs of the community and provides opportunities for jobs and enterprise, including working hubs and experience-led retail, such as a food markets and light industry.

Enhance the energy efficiency of buildings including the thermal upgrading of the historic building stock.

Explore opportunities to expand water sports activities at the River Blackwater, which will support local businesses and contribute to the village's economic viability.

**Vitality and Vibrancy**

Kilmacow will provide attractive vibrant places

for enterprises to grow and develop. It will provide opportunities for jobs and enterprise, including working hubs.

The Parish of Kilmacow includes high speed broadband through the National Broadband Plan which is potentially available to all households locally, which has the potential to attract new economic opportunities whilst providing infrastructure for residents to work from home, therefore reducing car dominance within in the village.

Create an attractive and welcoming environment for the local community and visitors, through the provision of well-designed and considered planting, street furniture, lighting, signage, and wayfinding.

Create a programme of events for the village to include activities to celebrate aspects of the village's cultural identity (for example, a monthly market in the Green Heart , which in turn supports local businesses), and create new activities linked to the natural heritage assets – the River Blackwater, such as angling events and/or water-based activities, appealing to the local community as well as visitors.

**Sustainability and Climate Resilience**

Kilmacow will provide opportunities for the

amenity, health and well-being of residents, workers, and visitors.

Introduce additional planting and greening, with sustainable drainage, particularly at the proposed area for water sports activities, to create an attractive environment, enhance biodiversity and to mitigate against flooding and climate change.

Ensure Kilmacow has an urban framework and infrastructure that will support the anticipated population growth, in the most sustainable way.

Digital Technology - Kilmacow will embrace and utilise digital technology to enhance the experience of living and working in the village, enabling greater choices in terms of location and lifestyle. It will prioritise the installation of high-speed broadband.

Future-proofing- With population growth, Kilmacow needs to ensure it has an urban framework and infrastructure that will support this growth in the most sustainable way, including the provision of local services, businesses, and bus connections.

## 5.4    Plan Framework

This overall plan drawing brings together opportunities for investment, improvement, and development across a wide range of potential locations.  The plan is not a blueprint, rather a flexible framework which seeks to set out how opportunity sites might come forward in a manner which responds positively to its context and creates good quality, connected and integrated places.  Some particular ideas and opportunities are highlighted across the following two pages before the individual plan project ideas are outlined for the village.

## 5.5    Intervention Toolkit

The interventions toolkit has been arranged to align with the six placemaking themes (guiding principles), under which there are a broad range of intervention opportunities.

Within the following section are a series of ideas to reinforce these placemaking pillars, with a focus on physical enhancements to the public realm alongside opportunities for events, activation, and branding.

**5.5.1 'Physical Enhancement' vs 'Activation Interventions'**

All the projects are identified as either a 'physical enhancement' project or an 'activation intervention' project.

- Physical Enhancement will typically be interventions comprising physical development in the built or natural environments (e.g., public realm enhancement, a public park, or a new building).

- Activation Interventions will typically be interventions that do not result in changes to the physical environment per se but play an important role in supporting effective land use and activities in the village (e.g., events coordination, business development or feasibility studies).
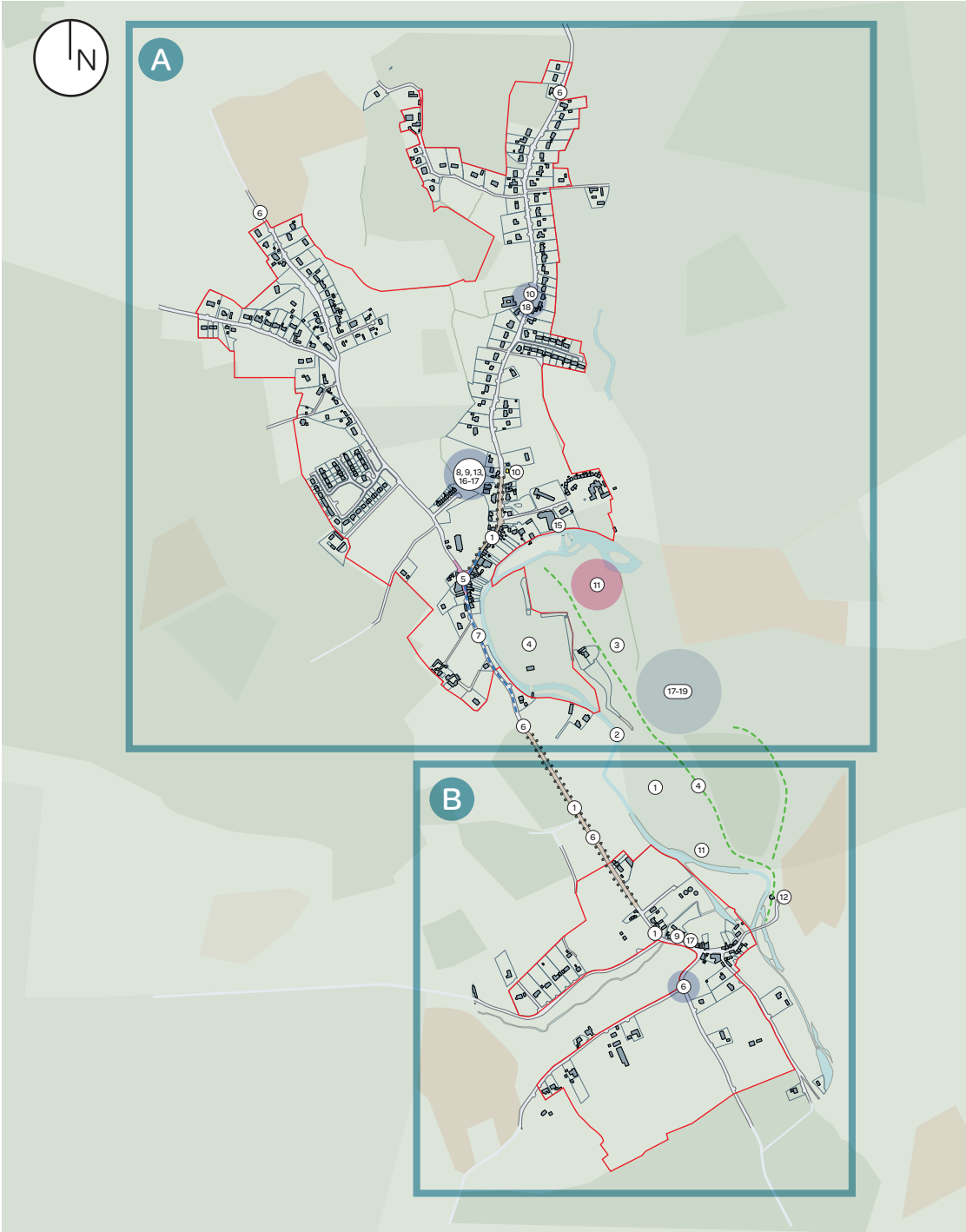


Figure 5.1: Kilmacow Masterplan – Key Interventions

Masterplan Key Interventions

**Streets and Public Spaces**
1    Public Realm Enhancement
2    River Blackwater
3    New Public Amenity

**Movement**
4    New Loop Walk
5    Road Improvements and Traffic Calming
6    Signage
7    Public Transport

**Heritage and Identity**
8    Celebrate heritage
9    Façade Improvements

**Built Form and Use**
10    Working Hub
11    Expansion of Sports Complex
12    Feasibility – Visitor Accommodation

**Vitality and Vibrancy**
13    Kilmacow Derelict Properties
14    Broadband
15    Heritage
16    Events

**Sustainability and Climate Resilience**
17    Landscaping
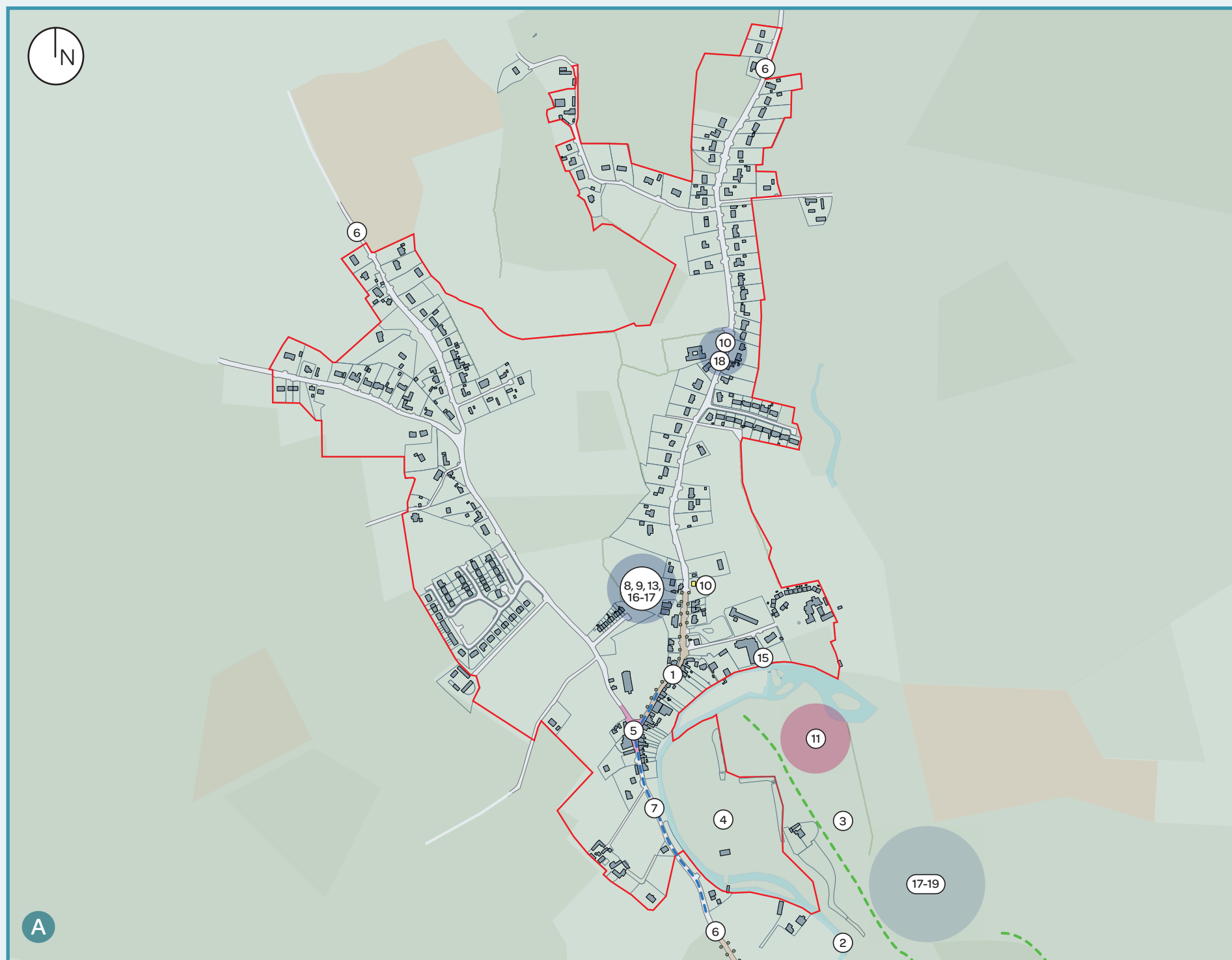18    EV Charging
19    Cycling and Walking

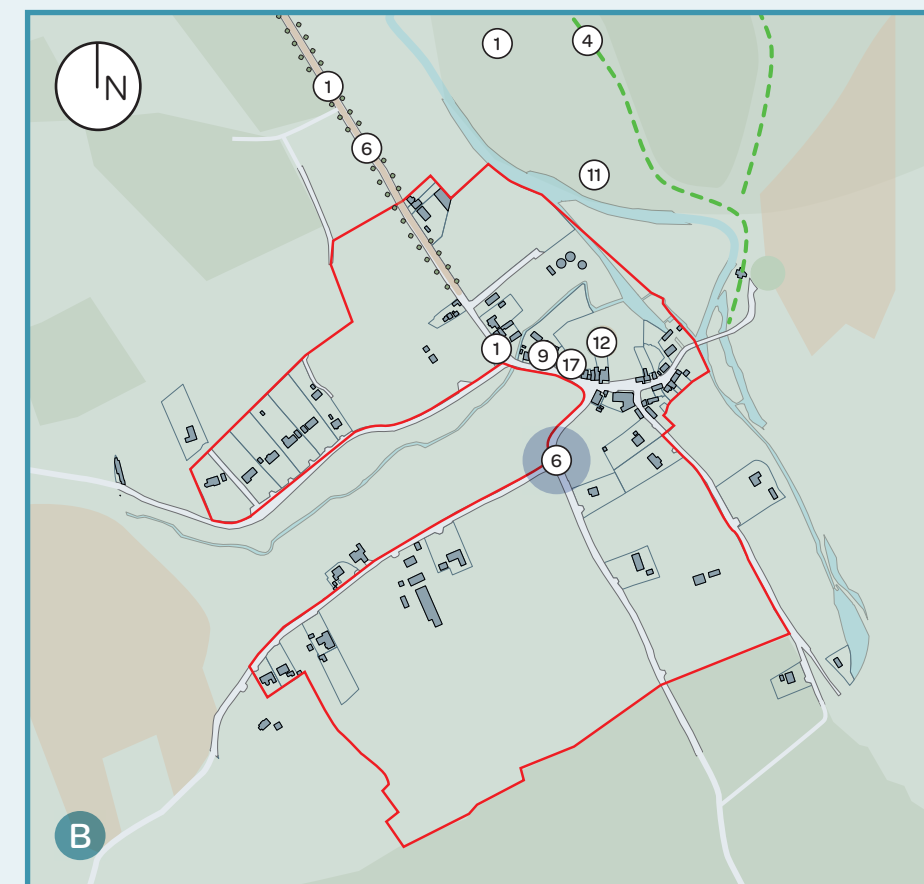Figure 5.2 Kilmacow Masterplan – Key Interventions - Kilmacow Upper



Figure 5.3: Kilmacow Masterplan – Key Interventions - Kilmacow Lower

Masterplan Interventions

# Streets and Public Spaces

## 01 Public Realm Enhancement

Preparation of a comprehensive public realm enhancement scheme to provide an attractive and vibrant village.

The scheme will include new, level pavements which will support active travel choices and will serve the community as a whole.

**Key Features:**

- Establishment of Town Team / Community Development Group for Kilmacow which would liaise with Kilkenny County Council and other agencies with regards the development of Kilmacow, with the view to achieving the objectives as set out in this masterplan.
- Improve the balance of quality of public spaces through enhanced public realm
- The need for new car and bicycle parking at the sports complex following any extension needs to be examined.
- High quality materials (local materials e.g., limestone paving and sets) and high-quality detailing.
- Resurfacing of uneven footpath and widening of footpaths to ensure accessibility for all residents' and visitors (level access).
- Introduction of new street lighting on all roads to support safe and active travel.
- Consistent approach to public realm to ensure continuity throughout the village, in terms of seating, bins, lighting columns etc.
- Reduction of street clutter – removal of overhead lines where possible and undergrounded.
- A Design Statement should be carried out for lands north of Church.
- Il new Public Realm enhancements / schemes should have regard to the Councils' Disability Inclusion Strategy and any associated guiding national documents.

**Short Term Interventions**

- Additional landscape features throughout the village and at key nodes – tree planting in selected locations, raised planters, and raised planters with benches, or colourful plant pots, to create a vibrant village.









Figure 5.4: From top to bottom, left to right - (1) Kilmacow Lower Streetscape, (2) Footpath Improvements at the Old Creamery, (3) and (4) Streetcape at Kilmacow Lower

## A good example...





**Abbeyleix**

Abbeyleix demonstrates the value of strategic infrastructure investment, including public realm enhancement, acting as a catalyst for regeneration. In 2009, Laois County Council began initiatives to address challenges to the vitality and viability, of Abbeyleix, including depopulation of the urban core, traffic congestion and limited car parking provision.

Laois County Council commissioned the adaptation of the market house into a new Library. Subsequently, a strategic plan was prepared for the town. The Plan highlights the importance of a sense of place, respect for the environment and a high quality public realm in the creation of sustainable communities. It also recognises the value of heritage – both in terms of historic buildings and public spaces – as a resource to be conserved, both for its own sake and to revitalise the town centre and its economy.

43

## 02 River Blackwater

The River Blackwater formed a significant part of the workshop discussions and it was felt that the river could potentially open up a variety of improvements for the village, including tourism, renewable energy, biodiversity, green public spaces, and heritage. Any recreational amenities on the river or walkways along the river will be subject to a Feasibility Study.

**Key Features:**

- A new centre dedicated to water-based activities such as kayaking, canoeing, swimming, fishing etc.
- Links to the proposed loop walk with potential heritage trails, extending the existing sports complex, improving permeability within the village, and supporting health and well-being of residents and visitors.
- Seating areas, landscaped areas, and lighting to be included, to provide an attractive area for rest and relaxation
- Examine the feasibility of providing Campervan parking spaces with basic services in a location proximate to the river within or bounding the village.
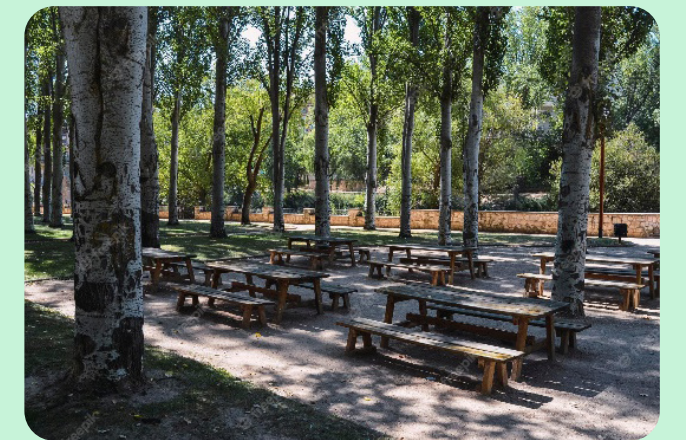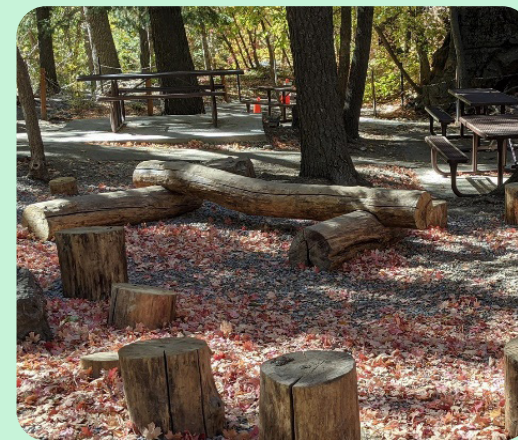


Figure 5.5: From Top to Bottom, Left to Right - (1) Blackwater River, Kilmacow (2) Potential River Activities, (3) and (4) Landscaping Options

## 03 New Public Amenity

A new public amenity will be explored on lands surrounding Kilmacow Community Centre to create a 'Green Heart' and improve permeability between Upper and Lower Kilmacow, This will be explored through a future Feasibility Study aligned with a study of the River Blackwater to optimise its use for recreational and leisure purposes while protecting and expanding its habitat

**Key Features:**

• C. 10 Hectares of new green space, with dedicated pedestrian and cycle trails, providing active travel choices.

• Connection to the River Blackwater and proposed new centre for water-based recreational activities.

• Potential to investigate the need for additional car parking to serve the new centre, which can also serve for parking for school collection, reducing traffic on the main through-fares.

**Key Actions:**

• Introduce wildlife friendly lighting to ensure pedestrian safety for residents and visitors along the River Blackwater

• Explore potential to create a focal point.

• Explore potential for rewilding in part of this area, contributing to the village's biodiversity.

• Careful landscaping interventions could be introduced such as formalised planting, raised planters and/or planters with benches, picnic benches, and introduction of SuDS.

• Addition of a bandstand or similiar structure to provide sheltered seating area, making this area an attractive space to meet, mingle and play.

• Explore the possibility of creating a new public amenity space within the village and /or securing lands with the view of providing allotments for use by local residents.



Figure 5.6: Location of area that could be explored for the Proposed River Park and Loop Walk



Figure 5.7: View towards Weir from opposite the Salmon Run (former)



Figure 5.9: Example bandstand
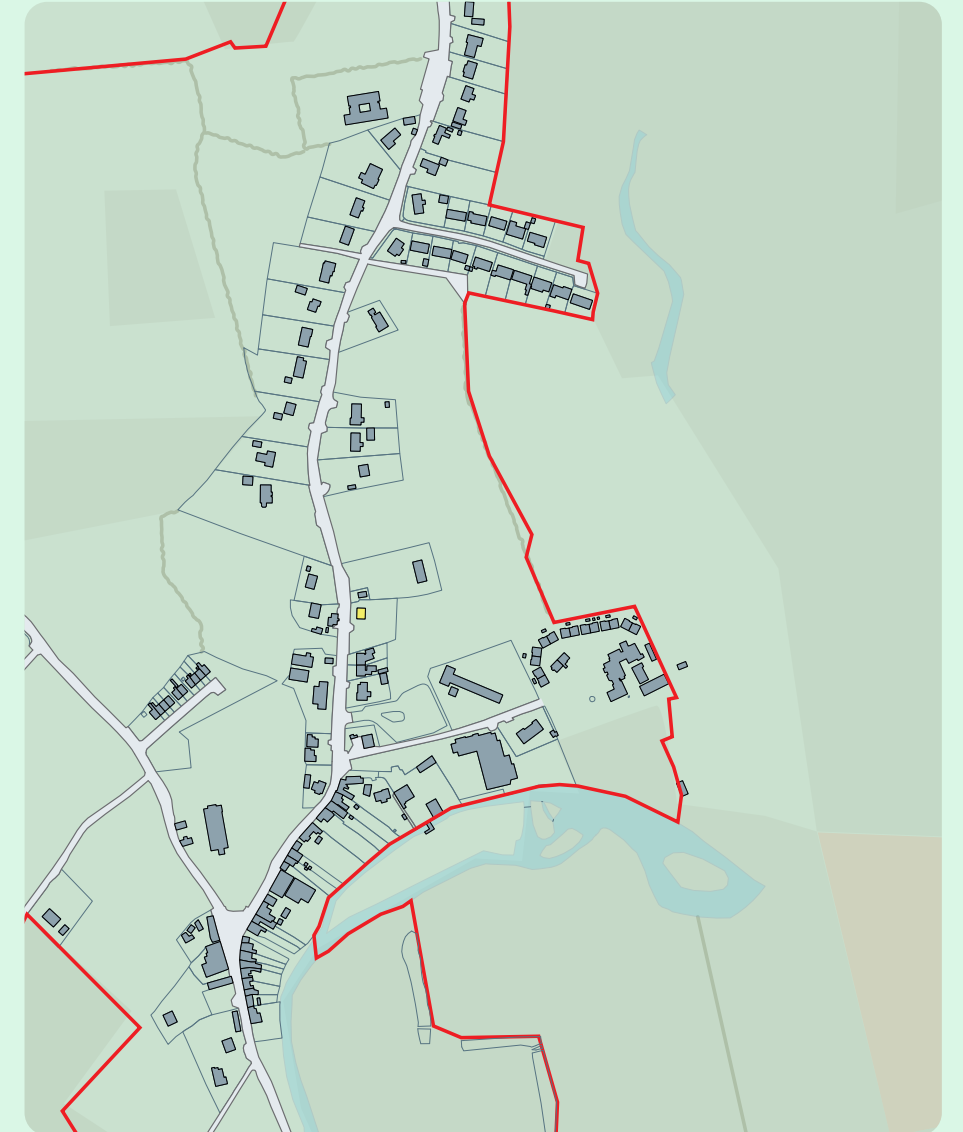


Figure 5.10: Example planting



Figure 5.8: Area alongside River Blackwater to be investigated for new water based recreational amenities.

# Masterplan Interventions

# Movement

## 04. Loop Walk

Residents suggested that Upper and Lower Kilmacow and the existing sports ground could be linked up via a formalised walkway to replace informal routes. The Loop Walk would be subject to a Feasibility Study to determine its location and function. A linked footpath/pedestrian route between the two villages would also require assessment.

**Key Features:**

- The location of the Loop Walk will be subject to a feasibility study and assessment prior to any specific route being selected.

- The aim of the Loop Walk will be to enhance connectivity between Upper and Lower Kilmacow, with the Sports Complex being central to the Loop Walk proposal.

- Investigate the possability of a crossing over the River Blackwater, this again would be subject to a feasibility study.

- Will support sustainable travel choices particularly for children and reduce car dominance.

- Create a highly attractive public realm scheme with select, small landscaped areas.

- Any future looped walk should consider the placement of information boards / signage outlining any historical information relevant to the location along the proposed route.







Figure 5.11: Landscaping examples

Figure 5.12 - 5:16: Images of lands that could be investigated as part of the potential river park and looped walk

## 05. Road Improvements and Traffic Calming

Feedback from stakeholders and a site visit revealed that many of the roads and footpaths are of a poor standard. In conjunction with the public realm upgrades, footpaths and roads should be widened, with footpaths interlinked to improve permeability and pedestrian safety, building upon improvements already made since 2019, including 9 no. ramps.

**Key Actions:**

- A new footpath link on the L3401 between Kilmacow Upper and Lower will be explored.

- To provide a new link road, linking the Narrabaun Road to the Dangan Road, north of the church lands, which will create a new urban street, enhance pedestrian and vehicular connectivity and provide appropriate access to development lands.

- Consideration of a one-way system through the village will also be explored.

- The introduction of new signage should be considered, indicating sharp bends, schools ahead, speed limit signs – these should all be village branded.

- Road marking should be introduced.

- Liaise with Kilkenny County Council Roads Design and Area Engineers explore opportunities to widen roads and footpaths.

- Will contribute to improving sustainable and active travel choices.

- Explore the introduction of pedestrian crossing points at junctions with schools and the Sports Complex, adding to proposals already in place in the village including several pedestrian ramps installed locally since 2019.

- Introduction of priority signalised junctions.

- Materials should be sympathetic to the rural setting.

- Street lighting should be improved in Kilmacow.

- Explore the feasibility of a new footpath on the L7434.



Figure 5.17: Kilmacow Upper - Streetscape

## 06. Signage

Several participants pointed out there is a lack of distinctive identity for the village, either on the approach or in the centre of the village. The introduction of wayfinding signage for visitors both on foot and car, in conjunction with proposed tourism initiatives to create a sense of place:

**Key Features:**

- Branded signage at key nodes to the entrance of Upper and Lower Kilmacow to create a sense of arrival and pride in Kimacow, defining its Upper and Lower Villages.
- Introduce signage to assist with identification of heritage assets and protected structures.
- Introduce wayfinding signage at the River Blackwater, improving visitor permeability throughout the villages.
- Consideration to introducing a crest and motto for Kilmacow.



Figure 5.18. Kilmacow Upper

## 07. Public Transport

As part of an upgrade of local bus routes, install modern bus shelters to include protection from the weather.

The Village's proximity to road infrastructure opens many opportunities and Kilkenny County Council will support and work with other agencies to help improve public transportation and infrastructure in and through the village.

**Key Actions**

- Liaise with Kilkenny County Council Roads Design and Area Engineers to investigate the feasibility of upgrading infrastructure to improve provision in Kilmacow.
- Liaise with Kilkenny County Council Roads Design and Area Engineers to establish connection points.
- Investigate if additional bus routes could be implemented in order to promote sustainable active travel and reduce car dominance.
- Liaise with the National Transport Authority on implementing the A60 service through Kilmacow.



Figure 5.19: Example of bus shelter

# Masterplan Interventions

# Heritage and Identity

## 08 Celebrate Heritage

The former Mills in Kilmacow were suggested as a potential foundation for small businesses, heritage, and tourism initiatives:

- Explore potential to open up the former Mills to tourists subject to landowner agreement.

- Promote an understanding of the village's heritage through online platforms and printed resources.

- Explore promotion through engagement with Waterways Ireland regarding the introduction of new water-based activities at the River Blackwater.

- Provision of Columbarium in Kilmacow Graveyard

- A Heritage Strategy for Kilmacow will be explored as a project worthy of consideration. The strategy could be open to all dimensions of heritage relevant to Kilmacow including landscape, social history, river, industry, craft, agriculture and sport.

- Consideration of introducing a crest and motto for Kilmacow


Figure 5.20: Former Greenvale Mill – National Archives


Figure 5.21: Former Greenvale Mill

## 09 Façade Improvement

Vacancy and dereliction have been highlighted as an issue within the village, with some protected structures boarded up.

The quality and appearance of buildings is important to ensure they contribute positively to the wider streetscape.

**Key Features:**

- Undertake heritage survey to identify those assets in need of sensitive refurbishment.
- Work with local businesses and property owners to explore options for improvement along with Kilkenny County Councils Regeneration Officer.
- Ensure any proposed works comply with Heritage Policies and Objectives set out by Kilkenny County Council.
- Support business owners to secure grant funding for implementation.



Figure 5.22: Properties along Dangan Road

## How this could be done...



**Ramelton Historic Towns Initiative Project**

Ramelton Historic Towns Initiative Project
The award winning Ramelton Historic Towns Initiative was a collaboration between Donegal County Council, Ramelton Georgian Society, Dedalus Architecture and local property owners. Conservation works were undertaken on fourteen properties and included roof and chimney repairs, addressing structural issues, the installation of cast-iron rainwater goods, reinstatement of windows and doors and the repair and reinstatement of shopfronts.



**Glove Factory, Tipperary Town**

Renovated as part of the Historic Towns Initiative (HTI), a programme led by the Heritage Council, in association with local authorities. Here a derelict factory in the town centre underwent a signifi cant upgrade to apartment building with potential ground fl oor retail unit, as part of the scheme. The funding allocated to the project by the HTI was 160,000, which was a substantial contribution toward the costs of the conservation works involved.

## Masterplan Interventions

# Built Form and Use

### 10. Working Hub

Respondents identified that there are not enough attractive facilities within the village to keep people from commuting to their place of employment, therefore it is proposed that a working hub is provided within the remit of this Masterplan, should a building become available or inconjunction with this building is handed over to the community, and converted to a remote working hub, with fibre broadband.

**Actions:**

• Work with Kilkenny County Council to identify a location for a working hub.

• Repurpose space for a remote working hub with deskspace, internet and kitchen facilities to support working from home and small businesses.



Figure 5.23: Working hub

### 11. Expansion of Sports Complex

Stakeholder feedback revealed there was an opportunity to develop the immediate lands around the Sports Complex to encourage a broader appeal.

The Sports Complex strives to be an all inclusive facility, catering for all members of the community and with this they will investigate increasing their provision to include new non-competitive sports, less-traditional sports (for example paddle tennis, bowls, angling) & other non-sporting activities (such as walking, yoga.)

**Key Actions:**

• Explore provision of additional soccer pitch / 3G pitch.

• Explore upgraded / additional changing facilities, flood lighting and all weather facilities.

• Explore the addition of a new all-weather athletics track.



5.24: Sports Pitches

Figure 5.25: Sports Pitches

## 12. Feasibility – Visitor Accommodation

A feasibility study should be carried out to explore the potential for bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation, which would support the active tourism initiatives proposed, once implemented, for the village and would contribute to the existing active street frontages.

The proposal should make use of existing vacant structures to ensure historic fabric is retained and to ensure streetscapes are active and vibrant.

**Actions include:**

- Engage with stakeholders to understand what level of accommodation could support the local tourism initiatives.
- Undertake a feasibility study to assess local provision and future demand.
- Examine the feasibility of providing Campervan parking spaces with basic services in a location proximate to the river within or bounding the village.


Figure 5.26: Example visitor accommodation
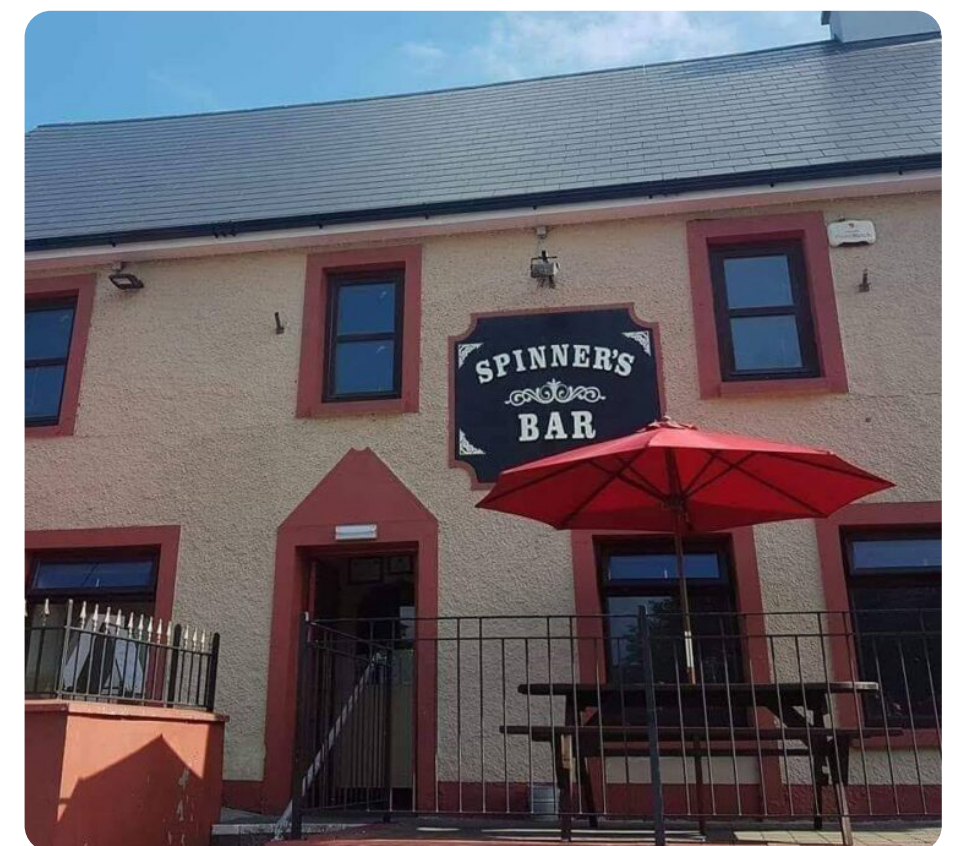

Figure 5.27: The Foxes Den Pub


Figure 5.28: Spinner Bar

# Masterplan Interventions

# Vitality and Vibrancy

## 13. Kilmacow Derelict Properties

Vacancy and dereliction are a key priority within the National Town Centre First Policy Framework. Feedback from the local community revealed that this is an issue for those who live and work in the village, although some work has been done to bring these back into use in recent years, further work is required

### Actions:

- Identifying owners of vacant and derelict properties.
- Engaging positively with building owners, landowners to discuss issues in restoring life to vacant / derelict properties and develop a plan to reactivate properties with the potential for commercial, heritage and/or community use.
- Explore potential of various uses for vacant and derelict buildings and other various bodies.
- A Community Energy Audit should be undertaken to disseminate information on the opportunities that exist for retrofitting homes and buildings locally and to explore opportunities for a community response to climate change.
- Work with Councils Towns Regeneration Officer to aid revitalisation in Kilmacow.



Figure 5.29: Derelict properties

## 14. Broadband

Respondents stated that the availability of broadband was poor and did not allow residents to avail of working from home for that reason. The Parish of Kilmacow includes high speed broadband through the National Broadband Plan which is available to all households locally, which has the potential to attract new economic opportunities whilst providing infrastructure for residents to work from home, therefore reducing car dominance within in the village.

Under the National Broadband Plan (NBP), most of Kilmacow is designated as blue areas, currently with poor broadband. The blue areas of the NBP represent areas where commercial providers are either currently delivering or have plans to deliver high speed broadband services. Operators are continuing to enhance their services in these areas to improve access to high speed broadband.

Open Eir has confirmed that there will be fibre available in these blue areas across Ireland by the end of the NBP in 2026/2027 via their Ireland Fibre Network (IFN) scheme (Open Eir Fibre to the Home Scheme).

Open Eir only schedule work in six months blocks and they are unable to advise when Kilmacow will be completed. It is anticipated that all the blue areas will be completed by the end of 2026.

## 15. Events

Several participants pointed out that while there is a strong community spirit, there is a lack of distinctive identity for the village. The Covid-19 Pandemic illustrated the value and importance of events to bring local communities together, and Kilmacow has a strong community spirit.

**Actions:**

- Production of an events programme in conjunction with the wider public realm improvements.
- Events could include farmers market, craft fairs in addition to the seasonal fairs which already take place in Kilmacow Community Centre.

## 16 Heritage

There is an opportunity to capitalise on the village's history through implementation of heritage trails through Upper and Lower Kilmacow, in conjunction within the new public amenity space and introduction of wayfinding signage.

**Key actions:**

- Identify riverside landowners to secure land for linear park and heritage trails.
- Liaise with heritage property owners on the possibility of introducing heritage plaques, and potential to open up heritage assets to the public (e.g., the Mill).
- Installation of interactive wayfinding with the potential to introduce digital technology (QR Codes) to provide more detail on the history of the heritage assets.
- A Heritage Strategy for Kilmacow will be explored as a project worthy of consideration with guidance from the Councils Heritage Office, The strategy could be open to all dimensions of heritage relevant to Kilmacow including landscape, social history, river, industry, craft, agriculture and sport.



Figure 5.30: Protected Structure: Saint Senans Church



Figure 5.31: Protected Structure: The cottage in Narabane



Figure 5.32: Protected Structure - Narabane South



Figure 5.33: Protected Structure: Mill in Lower Street

Masterplan Interventions

# Sustainability and Climate Resilience

## 17 Landscaping

Additional landscape measures throughout the village, particularly in the short term, will not only contribute to the biodiversity of the village, but will enhance the overall appearance, making it an attractive destination village.

- Short-term interventions to include introduction through the the maintenance regime of planted pots at junctions and along the main streets
- Ensure overgrown hedges and trees are maintained so not to obstruct traffic or become an eyesore
- Landscaping measures to be introduced during public realm works to ensure coordinated approach and reduce the impact of works on residents.





Figure 5.34: Street planting examples

## 18 EV Charging

EV charging should be provided at select areas; these could include the proposed remove working hub; and/or the extended sports facilities.

- Adhere to requirements contained in the Reginal and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024-2030.



Figure 5.35: EV Charging

## 19 Cycling and Walking

The village has no designated cycle routes, and footpaths are limited.  A new walking loop linked with the new public amenity space would fulfil the community aspirations and contribute to their well-being and contribute to more active travel choices.

Cycle lanes could be included through the villages but would be subject to the feasibility of the proposed road widening.

**Key actions:**

•  Engage with Kilkenny County Council and stakeholders to outline and agree loop walk / cycle route.

•  Explore opportunities to enhance relationship with the River Blackwater

•  Explore linear park linkages to new village cycle and pedestrian network.

•  Additional cycling and walking links are also needed within the village, including upgraded lighting and cycle facilities.

•  Any new cycling / walking routes should have regard to the Councils' Disability Inclusion Strategy and any associated guiding national documents.



Figure 5.36: Kilmacow River Walk Bench



Figure 5.38: Kilmacow River Walk Bench



Figure 5.37: Kilmacow lands for consideration for the Proposed Riverside Park and Walk



Figure 5.39: lands for consideration as part of the Riverside Park and Walk

# 6.0  Implementation

## 6.1  Delivery Action Plan

"Enabling the Place" is focused on prioritising investment and improvement opportunities. KCC will use the Action Plan matrix outlined below to help them coordinate their work programme and organise resources.

The majority of projects will require funding of some description to support delivery. The wide range of potential funding sources are reviewed, and the action plan highlights individual funding streams for individual projects.

The Delivery Action Plan strategy will be a tool for the Council to manage and keep under review.

Each of the identified projects in presented in the Plan Delivery Action Plan below. The projects are organised by theme and priority.

Additional funding streams that align with and support the delivery of these actions may arise over time and will be considered by the Council. The final part of the Action Plan links each project back to the objectives under each theme. This highlights how some projects will deliver benefits not only across multiple objectives, but sometimes across multiple themes.

Planning permission or a Part 8 process may need to be secured for the potential delivery of some of the actions included in the Masterplan.
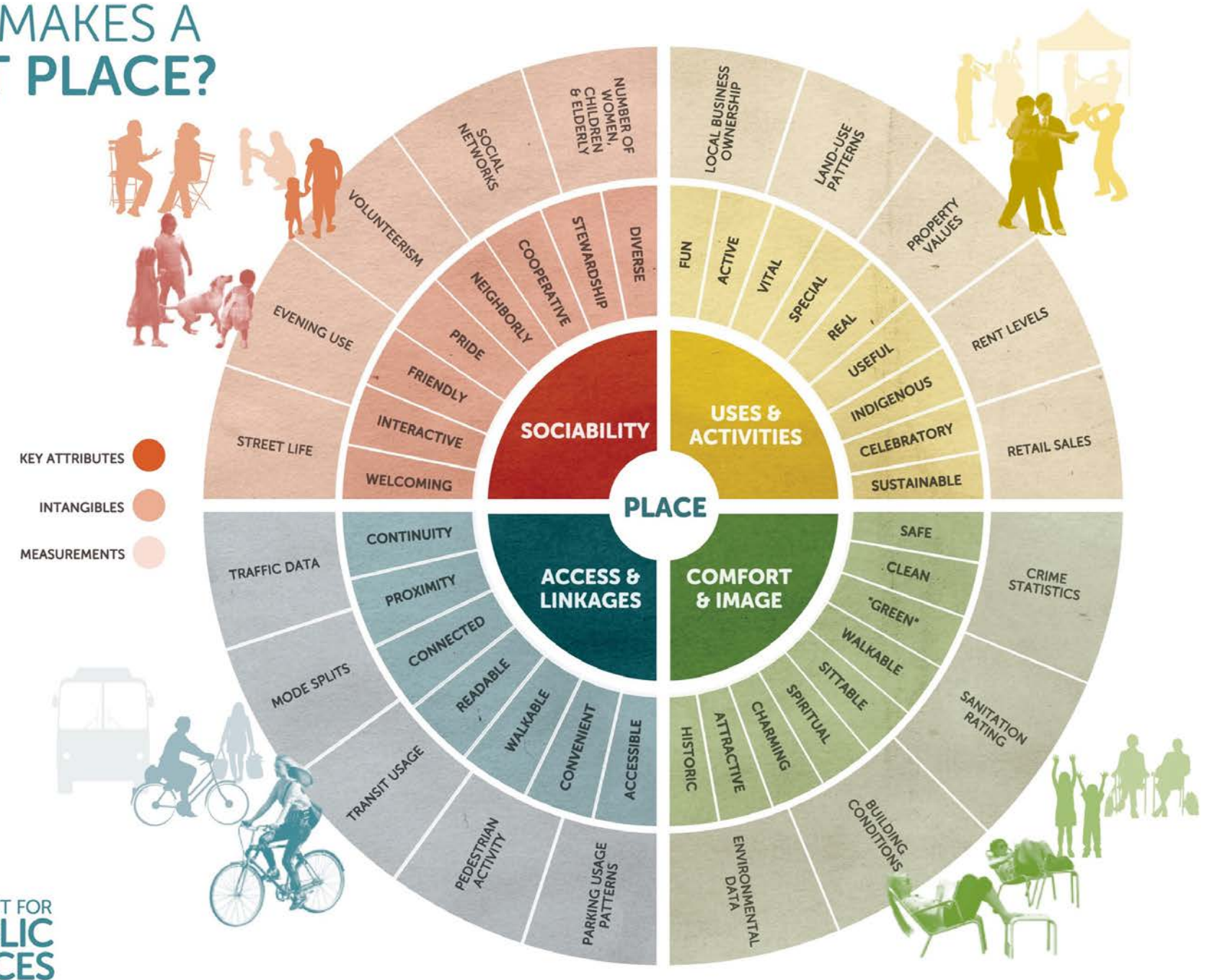


Figure 6.1: Implementation Graphic

| Placemaking Theme | ID | Project | Description | Priority |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Streets and Public Spaces | 1 | Public Realm Enhancements | Preparation of a comprehensive public realm enhancement scheme to provide an attractive village centre. The scheme will include new level pavements, widened pavements where applicable, street lighting upgrades and landscaping interventions. | ●●● |
| | 2 | River Blackwater | Creation of a centre to encourage water-based activities along the River Blackwater, which will contribute to active tourism and employ new recreational opportunities for residents. | ●●○ |
| | 3 | New Public Amenity Space | Creation of a new public amenity space, which will improve permeability between Upper and Lower Kilmacow, whilst contributing to the health and well-being of residents and potential visitors. | ●●○ |
| Movement | 4 | New Loop Walk | Develop a new loop walk where pedestrian connections are facilitated to enhance the connection between the village. The loop walk will contribute to more sustainable and active travel choices and provide safe walking routes for children travelling to local schools. | ●●● |
| | 5 | Road Improvements and Traffic Calming | In conjunction with the public realm upgrades, footpaths and roads should be widened where possible to ensure universal access, with footpaths interlinked to improve permeability and pedestrian safety. | ●●● |
| | 6 | Signage | Introduce new branded signage for the village, including entrance signs to both Upper and Lower Kilmacow to create a sense of arrival, introduce potential wayfinding signage in new public amenity space. | ●●○ |
| | 7 | Public Transport | As part of an upgrade of local bus routes, install modern bus shelters to include protection from the weather | ●●○ |
| Heritage and Identity | 8. | Celebrate Heritage | Explore tourism opportunities with existing natural and built assets such as the former Mill and River Blackwater | ●○○ |
| | 9. | Façade Improvements | Carry out façade improvements utilising government supports and funding. | ●●● |
| Built Form and Activity | 10 | Working Hub | It is proposed that a working hub is provided within the remit of this Masterplan and converted to a remote working hub, with fibre broadband, deskspace, and kitchen facilities to support working from home and small businesses. | ●●○ |
| | 11. | Extension to Sports Complex | Extension to existing Sports Complex to facilitate additional soccer pitch / 3G pitch and liaise with residents to ascertain types of uses required for the village, to promote health and well-being. | ●●● |
| | 12 | Feasibility – potential visitor accommodation | A feasibility should be undertaken to explore the potential for a new visitor accommodation through the use of existing building stock, that would support the proposed tourism initiatives and support local businesses within the village. | ●○○ |
| Vitality and Vibrancy | 13. | Kilmacow Derelict Properties | A key priority under the Town Centre First Policy. Feedback from community engagement revealed this is a priority for residents who live and work in the village. | ●●● |
| | 14. | Broadband | The installation of Fibre Broadband in the village is essential in promoting new economic opportunities and facilitating the proposed remote working hub. | ●●● |
| | 15. | Heritage | Create a dedicated events programme for the village and publicise through social media using village branding. | ●●○ |
| | 16. | Events | Install heritage trails in conjunction with other proposed interventions, including wayfinding signage and interactive signage, to tell the story of Kilmacow. | ●●○ |
| Sustainability and Climate Resilience | 17. | Landscaping | Additional landscape measures throughout the village, particularly in the short term, will not only contribute to the biodiversity of the village, but will enhance the overall appearance, making it an attractive destination village. | ●●○ |
| | 18 | EV Charging | EV charging infrastructure should be considered in any public realm enhancements. Charging points should be installed in car parking areas such as the Sports Complex and Community Hall. | ●●○ |
| | 19 | Cycling and Walking | Ensure cycle and walking provision through the introduction of new / enhanced public realm, along with the new loop walk and activities at River Blackwater, to provide active travel choices and support the health and well-being of residents and visitors. | ●●○ |

Priority
●○○  Lower priority desirable but not critical
●●○  Medium priority - an important local project
●●●  High priority - a project of strategic importance to the town

●●○

# Funding

## Introduction

Town Centre First Policy is supported by a targeted investment programme.  This includes the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, a dedicated fund committed by the Government in Project Ireland 2040 and through funding schemes within government programmes.  This report reviews funding options which may be targeted to support delivery of the plan proposals.

## 1. Key Town Centre First Funding Options

Key funding options identified in the Town Centre First Policy document that can deliver impactful change are as follows:

**Rural Regeneration and Development Fund**

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) supports the regeneration and development of rural towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000.  The fund is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development, with a commitment of €1 billion in funding up to 2027.  Funding is awarded by a competitive bid process.  The RRDF supports ambitious investments of scale to deliver town centre regeneration including projects which aim to repurpose derelict, disused or heritage buildings, deliver remote working and enterprise spaces, built or transform libraries, deliver tourism infrastructure and generally support greater activity, football, business and residency.

**Housing for All Crói Cónaithe (Towns) Fund**

Housing for All aims to improve Ireland's housing system and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs.  There are two schemes under the Housing for All Crói Cónaithe (Towns) Fund to support housing delivery which are managed and administered by Local Authorities on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.  The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant provides people with a grant to support the refurbishment of vacant properties.   Under the Ready to Build Scheme, Local Authorities make serviced sites available at a discounted rate to individuals who want to build their own home.

**European Regional Development Fund**

The European Regional Development Fund 2021-2027 programmes set out an investment strategy for €853 million, of which €396 million is financed by the EU.  Funding is managed by Regional Assemblies to ensure alignment with Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and to support Local Authorities in delivering the sustainable regeneration of towns and urban centres.  The fund aims to address regional imbalance, sustainable economic development, environmental sustainability and build low carbon and climate resilient communities.  Tackling vacancy and dereliction in towns in support of the TCF approach is a particular emphasis of this fund.
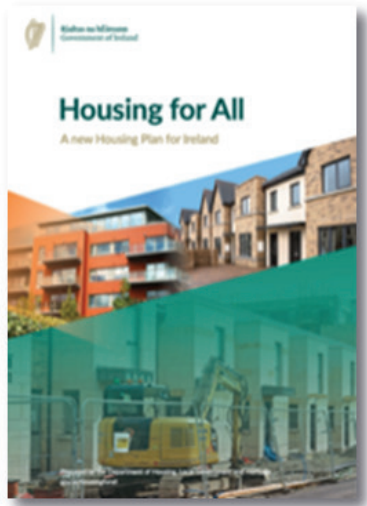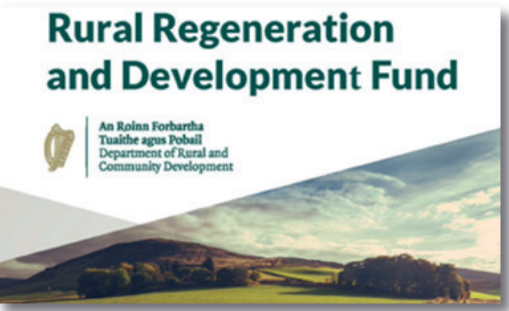
**Active Travel Grants Programme**

The Active Travel Grants Programme administered by the National Transport Authority supports strategic pedestrian and cyclist routes, access to schools, permeability links, urban greenways, minor public transport improvement projects, dedicated infrastructure schemes such as the Safe Routes to School Programme and behavioural change programmes such as Green Schools. In 2022, the programme allocated €289 million funds to Local Authorities for over 1200 walking and cycling infrastructure projects nationally.

**Town and Village Renewal Scheme**

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme provides grant funding to support the economic and social recovery of rural towns with a population of less than 10,000. Applications are submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development through Local Authorities and the scheme focuses on projects that have a positive impact in terms of place making and town centre regeneration. Projects funded have included the regeneration of banks, courthouses, cinemas and halls for community use, the development of public plazas, town parks, playgrounds, community gardens and dog parks. The scheme also funds projects are pre-development stage and the acquisition of suitable vacant or derelict properties that could be taken into public ownership and converted for community use. It has also provided specific funding to enhance streetscapes and shopfronts under the streetscape enhancement initiative.

**Climate Adaptation / Retrofitting Initiatives**

The government's commitment to climate action is supported by funding to meet 2030 and 2050 climate targets. For example, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland provide sustainable energy grants to help homeowners, business owners, communities and industry reduce energy costs and greenhouse emissions. Local Authorities are funded in undertaking a programme of insulation retrofitting of the least energy efficient social homes. The Regional and Local Road Grant Programme supports the maintenance of public roads in towns. The Active Travel Grants programme also provides support for more sustainable travel modes to local schools, residential areas and places of employment.

**Historic Towns Initiative**

The Historic Towns Initiative is a joint undertaking by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Heritage Council. It aims to promote the heritage-led regeneration of historic town centres. The initiative has two streams of funding: Capital works to repair and enhance the heritage of a town through heritage-led regeneration projects that address dereliction and residential vacancy, the conservation of landmark buildings, streetscape and public realm conservation led projects; Funding for heritage-led regeneration plans to determine conservation focused interventions for a town.

| Fund | Lead | Area of Focus | Funding Level | Operation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rural Regeneration & Development Fund | Department of Rural Community Development | Vacancy, dereliction, town centre residency, enterprise development | €500,000 minimum for projects. Up to 80% of the total project value. Contributions by applicants | Grant |
| Housing for All Crói Cónaithe (Towns) Fund | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage | Vacancy, dereliction, housing delivery | €30,000- €50,000 under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant<br><br>Up to €30,000 under the Ready to Build Scheme | Grant<br><br>Local Authorities make serviced sites available at a discounted rate. |
| European Regional Development Fund | Regional Assemblies | Regional imbalance, sustainable regeneration, environmental sustainability, low carbon and climate resilient communities | Determined on a case by case basis | EU funding matched by a set percentage of national funding. |
| Active Travel Grant Programme | National Transport Authority | Active Travel | Determined under various programmes | Grant |
| Town and Village Renewal Scheme | Department of Rural and Community Development | Place making, town centre regeneration | €20,000 - €500,000 under main scheme<br><br>Up to €400,000 under building acquisition measure<br><br>€100,000 to each town selected under streetscape enhancement initiative | Grant, 90% of the total cost of a project, the remaining 10% by Local Authority and/or community and/or Philanthropic contributions<br><br>Grant, 100% of purchase cost<br><br>Grant |
| Climate Adaptation / Retrofitting Initiatives | Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Local Authority, National Transport Authority | Climate adaptation | Determined under various programmes. Up to 100% of project value. | Grant |
| Historic Towns Initiative | Heritage Council, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage | Heritage-led regeneration | €150,000 - €250,000 for stream 1 heritage led regeneration projects<br><br>Up to €40,000 for heritage-led regeneration plans | Grant, match funding of 20% by Local Authority or owners<br><br>Grant, match funding of 20% from Local Authority |

**Table 6.1 – Overview of Key Town Centre First Funding Options**

Note: Table is based on current programmes.  Objectives and funding levels can vary per call for applications.

## 2. Other Funding Supports

There are a wide range of government schemes, many of which are administered at local level, that can provide investment and support the Town Centre First approach. These are advertised as they come available during the year. Key schemes administered or supported by the Local Authority are outlined in Table 6.2.

Local Authority resource allocations from its annual budget can support the plan and the Local Authority Development Contribution Scheme can provide contributions for the public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area. Specific state grants to Local Authorities by various government departments for particular services such as for roads or recreation facilities can, subject to availability, support the plan (Table 6.2).

Work with partners such as the Heritage Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, National Transport Authority, Fáilte Ireland, LEADER and initiatives such as Tidy Towns, can also support the delivery of the plan in collaboration with the community (Table 6.3).

| Fund | Details | Lead |
|---|---|---|
| Repair and Leasing Scheme | The Repair and Leasing Scheme provides upfront funding of up to €60,000 per unit (including VAT) for any works necessary to bring privately owned property up to standard and in return the property owner agrees to lease the dwelling to the Local Authority or an Approved Housing Body. | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| Buy and Renew Scheme | The Buy and Renew Scheme supports Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies in purchasing and renewing housing in need of repair and makes them available for social housing use. It is a complementary initiative to the Repair and Leasing Scheme. | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund | The Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund provides public off-site infrastructure to relieve critical infrastructure blockages. This is to enable the delivery of housing on key development sites and in urban areas of high demand for housing. Funding is provided on a matched funding basis, with the exchequer providing 75% of the cost of the infrastructure and the Local Authority providing the other 25%. | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| Affordable Housing Fund | The Affordable Housing Fund provides key funding to support the deliver social housing homes. | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| Community Enhancement Programme | The Community Enhancement Programme provides small grants to community groups to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas. It is managed by the Local Community Development Committee. | Department of Rural and Community Development |

| Fund | Details | Lead |
|------|---------|------|
| Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme | The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. It is co-funded by the government and European Social Fund Plus and managed by the Local Community Development Committee. | Department of Rural and Community Development |
| Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality Business Scheme | This scheme provided a level of financial support to tourism and hospitality businesses to purchase or upgrade equipment to provide additional outdoor seating in 2021. | Fáilte Ireland |
| Regional Festival and Event Fund | The Regional Festival and Event Fund supports festivals and participative events in County Kilkenny. The events must help to drive domestic and international tourism arrivals to Kilkenny, win bed nights, stimulate local economic activity, and help to improve the visitor experience. The fund has qualifying conditions and is evaluated on a competitive basis. | Fáilte Ireland |
| Destination Towns | The Destination Towns initiative seeks to develop the tourism potential of towns and to create a sense of place in towns, attracting visitors to the area and helping to provide the necessary infrastructure to support regional growth in the tourism industry. Fáilte Ireland's Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns provides a practical aid to guide the development of a destination town. | Fáilte Ireland |
| Community Centre Investment Fund | This fund supports community groups to upgrade and develop their community centre facilities. The scheme is administered directly by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Grants were available under 3 categories in 2022: Small scale projects/ improvements to facilities €10,000 to €25,000; Larger scale projects €25,001 to €100,000; Major projects €100,001 to €300,000. A minimum contribution of 5% of the total project costs was required from applicants own funds for category 2 and 3. | Department of Rural and Community Development |
| Sports Partnership | Funding provided through Sports Partnership includes for the provision of sports equipment such as kits for school children. In 2023, €10,365,000 was allocated to Local Sport Partnerships nationally. | Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media |
| Arts Programme | The Arts Office sets out a programme for funding, developing, and promoting the arts in County Kilkenny. Opportunities for funding arise throughout the year, as government departments offer funding schemes. | Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media<br><br>Arts Council |

| Fund | Details | Lead |
|------|---------|------|
| Creative Ireland Projects | Creativity in the Community projects enable local community engagement with creativity to support individual and community well-being, social cohesion, and economic development. Placemaking is central to the initiative. Grants range between €500 to €2,000 under the 2023 scheme. | Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Creative Ireland |
| Built Heritage Investment Scheme | The Built Heritage Investment Scheme assists owners of heritage structures, including those on the Record of Protected Structures and in Architectural Conservation Areas, to conserve and repair historic structures by providing match-funded grants. The 2023 scheme awarded up to €15,000 for a standard project and up to €20,000 for a thatched structure project | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| Historic Structures Fund | The Historic Structures Fund aims to conserve and enhance heritage structures and historic buildings, in both private and public ownership, for the benefit of communities and the public. Grants in 2023 were offered under three streams. Stream 1 offered grants from €15,000 up to €50,000, with a maximum of 80% awarded relative to eligible costs; Stream 2 offered grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment, or reuse projects, with a maximum of 50% awarded relative to eligible costs. Stream 3 offered grants of between €5,000 to €10,000 to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures. | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| Heritage Council Community Grant Scheme | Local Authorities support and facilitate community groups in their applications to the Heritage Council Community Grant Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to support capital projects that improve access and inclusion to heritage sites; that apply good heritage practice to the management of places, collections, or objects (including buildings). The scheme also supports the purchase of essential equipment. This scheme is intended to enable communities and heritage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to continue their work or to start new initiatives. The Heritage Council allocated in the region of €1.5 million to the 2023 scheme. | Heritage Council |
| Climate Action and Retrofitting Initiatives | Climate Action and Retrofitting Initiatives includes the target to upgrade 500,000 homes to a Building Energy Rating of B2 / cost optimal equivalent or carbon equivalent by 2030. Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland provide grants to help upgrade homes and Local Authorities are undertaking programmes to retrofit least energy efficient social homes. | Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland<br><br>Local Authority |
| Biodiversity Action Plan Grant Scheme | This scheme to Local Authorities supports biodiversity projects and the implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans that align with actions under the National Biodiversity Action Plan. €3m was made available to the 2023 scheme nationally. | National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |

| Fund | Details | Lead |
|---|---|---|
| Community Monuments Fund | The Community Monuments Fund aims to protect and promote archaeological heritage, supporting community development, traditional skills, jobs, tourism, regional and rural development. €6m was made available for the 2023 fund nationally. | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme | The Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme includes support for the rapid roll out of new and improved active travel infrastructure in towns and villages. | Department of Transport |
| Development Contribution Scheme | The Local Authority Development Contribution Scheme enables contributions to be levied on new development and provides funding towards capital work programmes on a range of services, including roads, amenity, community, recreation and parking. | Local Authority |
| Local Enterprise Office | The Local Enterprise Office provides training, mentoring programmes and a range of financial supports designed to assist with the establishment and/or growth of businesses including the LEO Client Stimulus Fund, LEAN Micro, feasibility grants and business expansion grants. | Development of Rural and Community Development<br><br>Enterprise Ireland |
| Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme | The Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme benefits smaller or start-up social enterprises which do not necessarily have the capacity to compete for larger grants, but which nonetheless have a need for upgraded/additional equipment to help them to deliver their services. It is managed by the Local Community Development Committee. | Department of Rural and Community Development |
| Local Area Grant Scheme | The Local Area Grant Scheme, previously known as the Community Support Scheme, provides funding for local communities to assist them with various projects that fall within the relevant categories of the scheme. It is managed by the Local Community Development Committee. For 2023, applications were invited under nine grant support categories:<br>• Public Realm Initiatives and Amenity Projects (Max Grant €2,000)<br>• Maintenance of Open Spaces in Private Housing Developments<br>• Community Playgrounds (Max Grant €3,000) • Burial Ground Maintenance and Provision (Max Grant €600 for maintenance and €8,000 for provision of extension) • Best Kept Local Authority Estate (Max Grant €500)<br>• Arts (4 categories of grants, €1,000 for 3 categories)<br>• Irish Language (Max Grant €800)<br>• Tourism Marketing and Promotion<br>• Sustainable Tourism | Development of Rural and Community Development |

| Fund | Details | Lead |
|---|---|---|
| Heart of the Community Fund 2023 | The Heart of the Community Fund is for not-for-profit organisations delivering vital services/support that promote and support peace, culture, education and community development. Grants between €5,000 and €25,000 were available in 2023. The fund also provides organisational investment grants. | The Ireland Funds |
| Community Water Development Fund | The Community Water Development Fund is open to community and voluntary groups to assist in the protection and management of water quality. Examples of projects funded include feasibility studies, surveys and plans, biodiversity signage, water conservation measures, invasive species control, riparian management and planting, training workshops and citizen science initiatives. The fund is administered by LAWPRO on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. €500,000 was available under the 2023 fund. | Local Authority Waters Programme |
| Play and Recreation Funding Scheme | The Play and Recreation Funding Scheme supports the refurbishment of existing play and recreation facilities and new play and recreation facilities. Under the 2023 scheme Local Authorities could nominate one project for funding and funding was capped at €18,000 per project. The award of funding was contingent on the Local Authority match funding at least 25% of the amount provided by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. | Department of Rural and Community Development |

**Table 6.2 – Overview of Funding Schemes.**

## 3. Other Funding Programmes and Initiatives that can Support Plan Delivery

| Fund | Details |
|------|---------|
| Rural Development Programme (LEADER) | The Rural Development Programme, widely known as LEADER, provides capital funding for rural development and job creation, with a focus on climate change and sustainability of the rural environment.  The programme applies to designated LEADER areas. |
| Dormant Accounts Fund | The Dormant Accounts Fund can support the development of services to support the personal and social development of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged; the educational development of persons who are educationally disadvantaged; persons with a disability. |
| Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways | Funding under this strategy to Local Authorities and state agencies aims to integrate Greenways into town centres by ensuring funded projects bring access from a Greenway to places of education, employment and entertainment in town centres. |
| Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme | The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme supports the provision of outdoor recreation infrastructure in the countryside that contributes to healthy active lifestyles and the economic and tourism potential of the area for both local communities and tourist visitors alike.  In particular, the scheme provides funding for trails, cycleways, greenways, blueways, bridleways, as well as outdoor amenities located near rivers, lakes and beaches.  The scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development in partnership with Fáilte Ireland.  Approximately €15 million was available under the 2022 scheme, with funding provided under four categories based on the size of the investment requirement. |
| Work with Fáilte Ireland | As the National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland's role is to assist the long-term sustainable growth of tourism and to help develop destinations.  It also provides consumer and buyer insights, mentoring, business initiatives and training programmes and buyer platforms to help tourism businesses innovate and grow. |
| Tidy Towns | The Local Authority works with community groups and Tidy Towns to enhance the environment and make it a safe, clean and greener place. Kilkenny Tidy Towns Network facilitates knowledge sharing, expertise led insights and coordinates actions to support Tidy Towns groups. |

**Table 6.3 – Other Funding Options.**

Note: Table is based on current programmes.  Objectives and funding levels can vary per call for applications.

# Environmental Assessments

## Appropriate Assessment

Under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive), where it cannot be excluded that a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects and plans, would have a significant effect on a European Site, the same shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Plan is not directly connected with, or is necessary for, the management of any European Site, and consequently was subject to the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening process.

The findings of the AA Screening were presented following the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

It was determined by Kilkenny County Council Planning Department that the Kilmacow Masterplan will not give rise to any potential for significant effects on European Sites, primarily due to its consistency with the policy objectives and environmental protective objectives contained with the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2022 to 2027 and associated documents including a full Appropriate Assessment. Therefore a full Appropriate Assessment is not required for the Masterplan.

All future projects and developments arising from the implementation of the Plan will be subject to the Appropriate Assessment process to ensure they will not adversely affect the integrity of these European Sites.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Applicability Assesment Report for the masterplan was prepared. The Application Assessmen Report had due regard to the criteria contained within Schedule 2A Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The SEA Applicability Report was undertaken in consideration of the findings contained with the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

**Turley**