

Chapter 8 Environment and Heritage

8.0 Introduction

Our environment comprising air, soil and water provides the basic building blocks for sustaining human life and the society and economy we occupy. A changing environment demands changing infrastructure and adapting policies and programmes to meet the challenges posed by the environment at a global, national and county scale. Key challenges in this regard include adaption to climate change and the related areas of Flood Risk Management and Coastal Zone Management. The Water Framework Directive and its associated River Basin District Management Plans and Programme of Measures set down significant challenges in attaining the required standard of water quality. The need to maintain water quality is key to conservation of biodiversity and water dependant habitats and species. Biodiversity loss is a serious threat as habitat degradation and species loss are often irreversible. The spread of invasive species is also threatening our native biodiversity areas. The provision and maintenance of sufficient infrastructure in the areas of wastewater treatment, water supply, flood prevention and control, renewable energy, sustainable transport and waste management are critical to ensure maintenance of a good quality environment.



River Brickey Salt Marsh

At a policy and project level, the requirement to screen and carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment serve to identify any adverse environmental impacts at an early stage and plan mitigation measures to offset or reduce such adverse effects and achieve sustainable and environmentally benign development as far as possible. This Chapter details policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of the County's environment and heritage.

Policy ENV 1

To comply with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment- The SEA Directive and associated Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 and carry out screening of all land use and non land use plans as required under the regulations.

8.1 Landscape

The landscape of Waterford is a valuable resource in that it sustains agriculture and fishing, forestry, mineral extraction and tourism and is the location of homes and communities, while providing the routes and corridors for vital infrastructure. Over time landscapes will change in response to society's evolving needs and uses.

The management of the County's landscape involves:

- Sustaining and conserving the landscape;
- Protecting the landscape from inappropriate and unsustainable development;
- Providing for development that will enhance and benefit the receiving environment; and
- Ensuring adequate protection to sensitive and vulnerable landscapes through appropriate policies and objectives.

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) promotes the protection, management and planning of all landscapes including, rural, peri-urban and degraded landscapes. Article 5 of the ELC urges recognition in law that landscape is an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of diversity of shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of identity. The convention advocates the establishment and implementation of landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning, and urges the participation of the general public, and local and regional authorities in these policies.

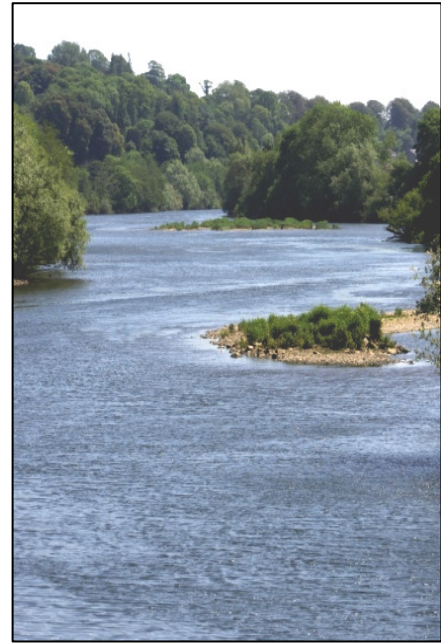
The concept of landscape character assessment (LCA), and landscape capacity, provides a means for integrating spatial planning and landscape management. The Draft Planning Guidelines on Landscape and Landscape Assessment (issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, June 2000), heighten awareness of the importance of landscape in all aspects of physical planning and identify a systematic approach to landscape appraisal.



Waterford Coastline

Changes in the landscape brought about by development are inevitable. Landscapes are not meant to be fossilised; they must however be respected. Landscape Character Assessment allows for a much more proactive approach to landscape protection. It allows us to view landscape for its ability to accommodate developments, gives indicators as to which developments might be most suited, under what conditions and using what design criteria.

Under Section 204 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), local authorities may designate Landscape Conservation Areas. A National Landscape Strategy is under preparation by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and will inform policy and management of landscapes in Ireland.



The River Blackwater

Policy ENV 2

To support provisions of the National Landscape Strategy and provide for the sustainable management of all of County Waterford's landscapes including archaeological landscapes, coastal, upland, rural and peri-urban landscapes.

Policy ENV 3

To develop the Comeragh Area into a National amenity and to promote the heritage and recreational features of the area for all users while conserving its natural habitats, protected species, flora, fauna, archaeology and landscape, and as a sustainable area for the local community.

Objective ENV 1

To prepare a Landscape Character Assessment of County Waterford in accordance with National guidance on landscape from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Waterford has a variety of landscapes and is characterised by the Comeragh and Knockmealdown mountains, several south-flowing river systems and a rugged coastline with many coves and beaches. The diversity of landscapes and natural heritage within the County enables views and prospects of areas of natural beauty from many public roads. Accordingly a number of scenic landscapes and routes, and sensitive and visually vulnerable areas are designated throughout the County and listed in

Appendix A9: Scenic Landscape Evaluation. This evaluation details landscape sensitivity based on the capacity of the environment to absorb new development and under the following classification:

- **Degraded** Areas characterised by breakdown of natural processes or pollution;
- **Robust** Areas of existing development and infrastructure;
- **Normal** A common character type with a potential to absorb a wide range of new developments;
- **Sensitive** Distinctive character with some capacity to absorb a limited range of new developments while sustaining its existing character; and
- **Vulnerable** Very distinct features with a very low capacity to absorb new development without significant alterations of existing character over an extended area.

Scenic routes indicate public roads from which views and prospects of areas of natural beauty and interest can be enjoyed. There is an onus on developers/applicants for planning permission to demonstrate that any proposed development shall not negatively impact on the character of a scenic route and that there shall be no obstruction or degradation of views towards visually vulnerable features or sensitive areas.

8.2 Landscape Protection

The protection of the rural landscape from inappropriate and unsustainable demands for single dwellings continues to be a challenge. In keeping with the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities* issued by the DoEHLG in 2004, the presumption against granting development in areas outside of designated settlements, in unserviced areas, in coastal and upland areas and in areas prone to flooding shall be a policy of this Plan. This restriction shall also apply to those areas in or adjacent to scenic routes, visually vulnerable areas or sensitive areas unless the applicant can demonstrate that the proposed development will not impact on such designated areas.



Policy ENV 4

The Council will assess all proposals for development in terms of the Scenic Landscape Evaluation map, the Development Management Standards (Chapter 10) and the Rural Housing Design Guidelines (that will be prepared within one year of the adoption of the Plan).

Policy ENV 5

Development in areas outside of settlements, along the coast road (from Youghal to Cheekpoint) and in upland areas, will only be considered where such proposals do not have an adverse impact on the landscape and where they satisfy the criteria set out under the settlement strategy policy contained in Chapter 4 County Settlement Strategy

8.3 Water

Water bodies form a valuable amenity and recreation resource throughout the County. However, such resources are often under-utilised. The Council will continue to promote the protection and enhancement of the waterways within the County and the utilisation of same as a tourist attraction for water based sports, fishing and cruising.

8.4 Ground Water Protection

County Waterford is heavily dependent on groundwater for its water supply. At present, groundwater is extracted as a source of public water supply at 85 locations throughout the County and serves approximately 20,000 people. Due to the fact that over large areas of the County the depth of bedrock is less than 3 metres, the continued preservation of the quality of the groundwater in these areas is essential to sustaining communities. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) compiled the Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Waterford which identified the main sources for groundwater within the County and the vulnerability of such resources to environmental pollution.

An effective on-site wastewater system requires regular maintenance and must be properly located in a setting that will not give rise to hydraulic issues or groundwater pollution. All proposals for development that entail the discharge of wastewater to ground will be discouraged and will be required to comply with the EPA Code of Practice for on-site wastewater treatment systems.

The Council will use statutory powers under relevant planning and environmental legislation to protect groundwater, including planning and environmental impact assessments, integrated pollution control and /or water pollution legislation in balancing the need for development with the need to protect the environment. The European Communities Environmental Objectives Groundwater Regulations 2010, S.I. No. 9 of 2010 have been issued by the Minister for the Environment and have been developed for the purpose of responding further to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC). The regulations provide for clear

environmental objectives and groundwater quality standards to strengthen the regime for the protection of groundwater.

Policy ENV 6

It is a policy of the Council to preserve and protect groundwater and surface water quality taking into consideration the Groundwater Protection Scheme prior to approving development. Proposals for new development shall comply with the relevant EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009).

8.5 Water Quality

European and Irish legislation continue to place a strong emphasis on achieving a high standard of water quality. The Water Framework Directive, which was adopted in 2000, required that “*good status*” is achieved in all water bodies by 2015. The eutrophication of rivers, lakes and tidal waters is one of the main threats to surface waters with agricultural runoff and municipal discharges being the key contributors.



Freshwater Pearl Mussel Habitat

The Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 came into effect in 2007 and has placed increased obligations on Water Services Authorities relating to the licensing of discharges from waste water treatment plants, facilitating greater implementation of the Water Framework Directive and other relevant EU Directives. The new licensing system which will be policed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will set strict limits on discharges allowed from these plants into our surface waters such as rivers, canals and lakes, and coastal waters and our groundwater.

Under the Water Framework Directive a management plan must be prepared for all River Basin Districts (RBDs). The South Eastern RBD encompasses most of County Waterford while the Blackwater River is covered in the South Western RBD. The final plans were adopted in May 2010 and outline the current status of our waters, environmental objectives for our waters, and the programme of measures which may be necessary in order to achieve these objectives. The Program of Measures includes a list of specific measures for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel where it is evident that particular environmental conditions require restoration to restore the pearl mussel to favourable conservation status. There are three Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchments in the County; the River Clodiagh, the River Blackwater and the River Licky.

The EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/ECC) requires member states to take specific measures to protect surface water and groundwater from nitrate contamination from agricultural activities. A Farm Waste Management Scheme introduced in 2006 provided grants to farmers to meet their slurry storage requirements and it is now the responsibility of individual farmers to ensure that they are compliant with the *Good Agricultural Practice Regulations*.

Nitrates Regulations have been signed into law by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2009. The European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2010 revise and replace the previous Regulations made in 2006 and 2007. They provide for strengthened enforcement provisions and for better farmyard management.

Policy ENV 7

It is a policy of the Council to comply with the objectives, policies and Programme of Measures of the Water Framework Directive and the South Eastern and South Western River Basin District Management Plans.

8.6 Wastewater

The 2001 Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations deal with the collection, treatment and discharge of urban wastewater and wastewater from certain industrial sectors. Environmental Objectives (Surface Water Regulations) came into effect in July 2009 and provide a basis for deciding on the appropriate treatment required in order to meet objectives in line with the Water Framework Directive Objectives. The regulations provide for legally binding quality objectives for all surface waters and the drawing up of pollution reduction plans by Local Authorities.

Policy ENV 8

It is a policy of the Council to comply with the 2009 Surface Water Regulations, Waste Water Discharge Regulations (2007), Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2004) and the EPA Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009).

Policy ENV 9

The Council will comply with the 2007 Waste Water (Discharge) Regulations and evaluate the adequacy of wastewater collection and disposal facilities prior to approving development.

8.7 Bathing Water Quality Regulations

Bathing Water Quality Regulations were made in March 2008 transposing the EU Bathing Water Directive of 2006 into Irish law. In 2010 Bunmahon and Clonea Beach were awarded Blue Flag status and Tramore has entered a pilot phase towards eligibility for Blue Flag Status.



Clonea Beach

Objective ENV 2

It is an objective of the Council to achieve Bathing Water standards in line with the EU Bathing Water Directive.

Objective ENV 3

It is an objective of the Council to maintain and increase the number of blue flag beaches in County Waterford to include Clonea and Bunmahon.

8.8 Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is any naturally occurring, theoretically inexhaustible source of energy such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, wood fuels, bio fuels, anaerobic digestion, landfill gas and geothermal heat which is not derived from fossil or nuclear fuel.

The Government White Paper “Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland” sets out the energy policy framework 2007-2020 to deliver a sustainable energy future for Ireland. Issues contained within the White Paper include:

- National security of energy supply;
- Development & implementation of a National Energy Efficiency Action Plan;
- Implementation & operation of an All-Ireland energy market;
- Targets of 15% electrical consumption by 2010 & 33% of electrical generation by 2020 to come from renewable energy technologies;
- Limiting Ireland’s relative dependency on Natural Gas for power generation to approximately 50% by 2020;
- Extension to the Gas & Electrical distribution Network; and
- Develop & implement a Bio Energy Action Plan for Ireland.

Policy ENV 10

To facilitate and encourage sustainable development proposals for alternative energy sources and energy efficient technologies.

Objective ENV 4

To support the development of hydroelectricity in appropriate areas of the County. Hydroelectric plants shall generally be favoured in agricultural/greenbelt lands or on other land uses which the Planning Authority may deem suitable.

8.9 Waterford Energy Bureau

The Waterford Energy Bureau established in 2003 provides a range of energy management, energy conservation and renewable energy services to the general public, businesses and to both Waterford County Council and Waterford City Council. The Bureau which is based in the Tramore Civic Offices seeks to:

- Undertake programmes of specific actions and implement plans for Waterford City and County in energy related issues;
- Assist in the development of an integrated approach to energy development in the City and County of Waterford;
- Promote the efficient and rational use of energy (electricity, oil, solid fuel etc);
- Provide an impartial energy information and assessment service to Waterford County Council, Waterford City Council and the general public;
- Source funding where applicable for energy related projects; and
- Advise both local authorities of Waterford on energy procurement, efficiency and renewable energy technology issues.

As part of the Council's commitment to the '*Energy Self-Supply in Rural Communities Project*', the Waterford Renewable Energy Co-operative was established in 2007. Research has been carried out by the co-operative into the use of biomass and wood pellets as potential energy sources in the County. The Council will continue to encourage and support the activities of the Co-operative in the future.



Wind Farm Development

Objective ENV 5

It is an objective of the Development Plan:

- a) To encourage, where appropriate, proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities;
- b) To promote and facilitate wind energy production in the County in accordance with the County Wind Energy Strategy and the Wind Energy Guidelines (2004) produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;
- c) To facilitate, where appropriate, the development of small scale hydroelectric power generation, in particular when developed in combination with other forms of energy infrastructure, such as wind farms; and
- d) To support and encourage the appropriate development of the bio-energy sector and facilitate its development for energy production, heat storage and distribution.

8.10 Wind Energy

The exploitation of renewable energy although still in its infancy, is very much at the forefront when considering means of satisfying our energy requirements over the life time of this Plan and beyond. The implementation of both National and EU renewable energy policies will result in the generation of renewable energy as per National and EU targets. Waterford County Council adopted a Wind Strategy as a variation to the 2005-2011 County Development Plan and it provides the basis for a planned approach to wind energy development in Waterford. The Wind Strategy categorises the County into areas based on their suitability to harness wind energy while taking into account the sensitivity of the landscape.

The wind map categorises the County into four areas of suitability for wind farm development:

1. **Strategic Areas:** Areas which are primarily suitable for wind energy and should be reserved for this purpose.
2. **Preferred Areas:** Areas which are suitable and should generally be considered for permission unless local circumstances dictate otherwise.
3. **Open to Consideration:** Proposals for wind farms will be assessed on their merits with the responsibility on the developer to demonstrate suitability of the site.
4. **No-Go Areas:** Areas which are unsuitable for wind farm development.

Prior to making an application for a wind farm development, prospective applicants are advised to consult with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Publication on

Wind Energy and with the Waterford County Wind Strategy to ascertain the suitability of the proposal.

Policy ENV 11

To promote and facilitate the sustainable development and use of wind energy in the County and to ensure all wind energy developments comply with the Waterford County Wind Energy Strategy and the DoEHLG guidance document on Wind Energy. Screening for Appropriate Assessment will be carried out where required to ensure that there is no negative impact on the integrity (defined by the structure and function and conservation objectives) of any Natura 2000 site located at or adjacent to a proposed site for wind energy development and that the requirements of Articles 6 (3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC are fully satisfied. The Planning Authority shall have regard to the possible visual impact of a wind farm development on towns and villages, protected views and amenity areas outside of the administrative area of Waterford County Council in the assessment of wind energy applications.

8.11 Micro-Renewables.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 were amended in 2007 to provide planning exemptions subject to limitations for the construction and provision of micro-renewables such as domestic wind turbines, solar water heating, biomass boilers etc. Further amendments were made to the Regulations in 2008 which allowed for planning exemptions for micro-renewable forms of energy in industrial buildings and on agricultural holdings.

Policy ENV 12

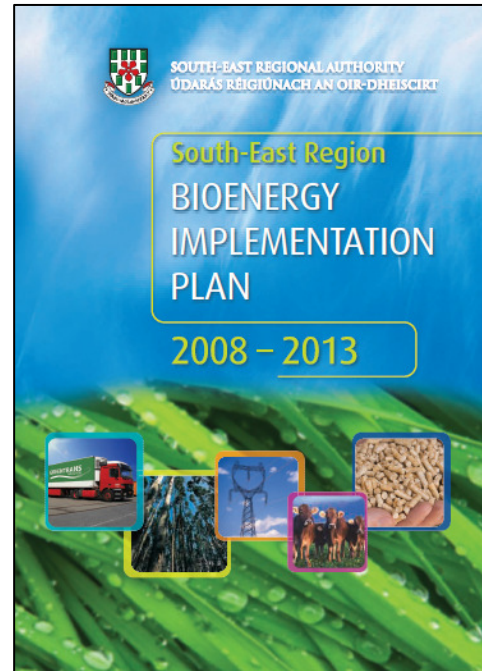
The Council will facilitate and promote the use of micro-renewable technologies in the generation of electricity where they will not have an adverse impact on residential amenities, biodiversity, water quality and landscape sensitivities. Screening for Appropriate Assessment will be carried out where required to ensure that there is no negative impact on the integrity (defined by the structure and function and conservation objectives) of any Natura 2000 site located at or adjacent to proposed site for micro renewable development and that the requirements of Articles 6 (3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC are fully satisfied.

8.12 Bio-Energy

The South East Region, which includes County Waterford, is primarily a rural region with significant bioenergy potential in the form of agricultural land, forestry and waste residual (from municipal,

agricultural and industrial sources) which can generate energy through the production of heat and electricity.

The South-East Regional Authority (SERA) in partnership with Sustainable Energy Ireland and a wide range of stakeholders in the Region have prepared a Bio Energy Implementation Plan for the South-East Region. This Plan outlines the bio-fuel policies and legislation that are driving development in the sector and the schemes that are supporting the supply side and stimulating the demand side of the market. The Plan sets out the targets for bio-energy consumption within the Region for 2010-2020 aiming to increase its contribution towards meeting the future total energy requirements of the Region. With a target of 5% of total energy supply from biomass by 2010, increasing to 17% by 2020, it is envisaged that the South East will become more self sufficient in its energy supply and will create opportunities to support employment creation and regional development.



Policy ENV 13

The Council will support and facilitate, where possible and at appropriate locations, the policies and objectives of the South East Region Bio-energy Implementation Plan 2008-2013.

8.13 Climate Change

Scientific evidence is growing that man-made greenhouse gas emissions are having significant effects on the earth's climate. Climate change scientists predict that temperatures in Ireland will increase by 1.25 - 1.50°C by 2040. Rainfall is expected to increase in winter by about 15% and summer projections range from no change to a 20% decrease.

Reducing greenhouse gas emission is a global priority and requires committed national and local action. The *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* builds on the commitment to sustainable development as set out in *Towards 2016* and the National Development Plan 2007-



2013. Ireland, as a member of the European Union, is committed to a concerned response to limit the growth of green house gas emissions to 13% above 1990 levels in the 2008 – 2012 period. Further targets of reduced CO₂ emissions will be set for 2020.

A Climate Change Forum was established by Waterford County Council in May 2007 to progress the initiation of energy efficient measures and sustainable energy projects to reduce CO₂ emissions. This is an internal Council forum, which meets periodically to develop policies and actions that can realistically and coherently make the maximum contribution to the National effort to address climate change.

As part of this, Waterford County Council Climate Change Forum has developed a Climate Change Strategy to implement policies and practices that will have significant influence over green house gas emissions in Waterford. It is a strategic goal for Waterford County Council to become carbon neutral by 2020.

To date, the Council has implemented a number of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including:

- Installation of a small scale wind turbine installed at the Civic amenity site in Tramore which is generating enough power to light the building;
- Establishment of Agri co-op business in 2007 with aims to encourage bio energy and generate investment in Biomass Energy services and to give farmers a viable enterprise on their land;
- Currently 67% of Waterford County Council's electricity consumption is powered by green energy from renewable sources;
- Use of renewable energy technologies in all of the Local Authority building projects; and
- Wood energy school project in partnership with South East Regional Authority.

Waterford County Council is supported by Waterford Energy Bureau, which provides technical support to implement the Climate Change Strategy and other energy policies and strategies within Waterford County Council and among the general public / Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Waterford.

Policy ENV 14

To support and implement the policies of the Waterford County Climate Change Strategy when assessing proposals for new development.

Policy ENV 15

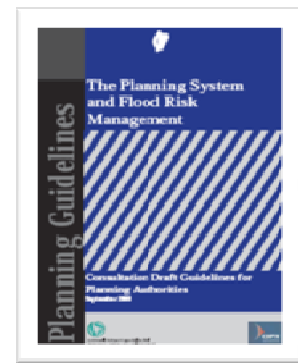
To continue to work effectively with the Waterford Energy Bureau (WEB) to reduce green house gas emissions and to support the objectives of the National Climate Change Strategy.

Objective ENV 6

To ensure that buildings are designed and constructed so as to maximise energy efficiency in line with Local Agenda 21 principles.

8.14 Flooding

Flooding is a natural process that can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations and plays a role in shaping the natural environment. Flooding from the sea and from rivers is probably best known but prolonged and intense rainfall can also cause sewer flooding, overland flow and flooding from groundwater. Where it impacts on human activities, it can threaten people, their property and the environment. Of increasing concern are the consequences of climate change which are impacting on sea levels, the nature and pattern of rainfall events and general weather patterns. While the exact impacts of change are not known, it is widely agreed that climate change will result in higher risk of flooding of both inland and coastal locations. It is important therefore that this issue is considered within the County Development Plan as decisions on the direction of future growth within the County can impact on flood risk.



The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Office of Public Works (OPW) published Planning Guidelines *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*, in 2009. These Guidelines recommend a clear and transparent assessment of flood risk at all stages in the planning process and set out that strategic flood risk assessment and management policy recommendations are necessary to set a policy framework for Development and Local Area Plans at the local level. The guidelines advocate that planning authorities avoid development in areas that are at risk from flooding in particular in floodplains unless in exceptional circumstances, where the flood risk can be managed and the development is sustainable in the wider context. A sequential approach to flood risk management is advocated based on avoidance, reduction and management/mitigation in assessing the location of new development in the development plan process. The Guidelines also require the incorporation of flood risk assessment into the assessment of planning applications.

The EU Floods Directive was transposed into Irish law in 2010 by the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010. The Directive sets out a best-practice framework for the assessment and management of flood risk, requiring the preparation by the State of flood maps by 2013 and flood risk management plans by 2015 aimed at managing flood risk in areas where the risk is potentially significant. Such areas will be identified through a preliminary flood risk assessment by 2011. The Floods Directive requires that these programmes are undertaken in a co-ordinated manner with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive to promote integrated river basin management.



The River Blackwater in Flood

The OPW has developed a Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme which lies at the core of the assessment of flood risk and the long term planning of the flood risk management measures throughout the Country. This programme is being delivered through the CFRAM studies which are catchment-based studies focused on Areas of Potentially Significant Risk with detailed flood maps and flood risk management measures collated in Flood Risk Management Plans. Catchment Flood Risk and Assessment Management Studies will be prepared for the River Suir Catchments and the South East and South West River Basin Districts.

A detailed strategic flood risk assessment is contained in the Environmental Report prepared for the Strategic Environmental Assessment process of the County Development Plan.

Policy ENV 16

It is the policy of Waterford County Council that flood risk be managed pro-actively at all stages in the planning process, by avoiding development in flood risk areas where possible, and by reducing the causes of flooding to and from existing and future development.

Policy ENV 17

The Council will have regard to the policies and guidelines of the DoEHLG and OPW in floodplains and areas sensitive to flooding.

Objective ENV 7

It is an objective to protect floodplains of river catchments in the County and retain them for their flood protection and natural heritage values.

Objective ENV 8

It is an objective to identify and consider flood hazard and potential risk of flooding in development applications at the earliest stages in the planning process and require the preparation of a Flood Risk Assessment where necessary.

Objective ENV 9

It is an objective to continue to support the preparation of all CFRAM Studies including the River Suir, South Eastern RBD CFRAM Study and South Western RBD CFRAM Study and incorporate measures to manage flood risk identified in these studies.

Objective ENV 10

It is an objective to include a Strategic Floodrisk Assessment for the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans.

Objective ENV 11

It is an objective to apply the sequential approach set out in the DoEHLG Guidance on Flood Risk to all future zoning of land for development.

Objective ENV 12

It is an objective to promote the use of SUDS in mitigating the effects of flood risk in both urban and rural areas subject to flood risk.

8.15 Coastal Zone Management

Waterford's coastline is a valuable natural resource providing a buffer for extreme weathers, an important wildlife area for a range of protected habitats and species, and a scenic landscape asset of tourism value. The coastal zone is generally taken as the area between Mean High Water Mark (MHWM) and the nearest continuous road.

A growing body of evidence illustrates that rising sea levels, increasing storm frequency and wave energy will increase the rate of erosion, loss of habitats and incidence of flood-related events in vulnerable areas of the Waterford coast. The impacts of climate change may have wide reaching implications for the heritage and tourism value of the coastline. It is necessary that



Annestown Beach

future management and development of coastal areas is carried out in a manner that protects coastal functions and values including natural coastal defence, habitat value and landscape/seascape character.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management seeks to achieve a more effective and sustainable use of coastal resources by involving all coastal users in planning for appropriate management of the coast. Waterford County Council has carried out some baseline work on the principle of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in the east of the County and seeks to apply the process on a County and inter-County basis with the support of all the relevant agencies and organisations.

Objectives for Coastal Protection

Objective CP 1

To explore the process of ICZM in the future management and sustainable development of the Waterford Coastline.

Objective CP 2

To include seascape assessment as part of a Landscape Character Assessment of the County to be prepared during the lifetime of the Plan.

Objective CP 3

To recognise the value of the County's natural coastal defences including estuaries, dunes and sand dunes and ensure their protection.

Objective CP 4

To protect the scenic value of the Coastal Zone from Cheekpoint to Youghal including landward and seaward views and continuous views along the coastline and manage development so it will not materially detract from the visual amenity of the coast.

Objective CP 5

To facilitate appropriate public access to the coast and the sustainable development of coastal walkways including recognition of public rights of way.

Objective CP 6

To protect the designated shellfish waters in Waterford Harbour and Dungarvan Bay.

8.16 Noise and Lighting Management

In today's modern world, particularly with the pace of development, the nuisance factors associated with both noise and light have increased. In part these can be minimised through appropriate design and by ensuring that developments are not making use of unnecessary lighting. In terms of development proposals the Planning Authority will require a lighting plan for developments indicating that while sufficient light is being incorporated for safety purposes, that it is properly directed. In addition developments that seek to make the best possible use of natural light are inherently more cost effective than those that are designed in such a fashion so as to require lighting during normal daylight hours. Impacts resulting from lighting and noise from sites should be minimised. A detailed study may be required prior to the commencement of development in sensitive locations (e.g. adjacent dwelling houses, nursing home etc.) to outline probable impacts and mitigation measures.

Traffic using transport infrastructure can pollute clean air and surface drainage can pollute water bodies. Noise levels and exhaust fumes can intrude on the peace and quiet that residents and users of amenities should reasonably expect to enjoy. To address the noise impact of transport infrastructure, nominated authorities where relevant, are obliged to comply, and to secure compliance with Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (SI 140), which transposes EU Directive 2002/49/EC. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the National supervisory body charged with advising on the implementation of the Directive and with ensuring National compliance. Noise nuisance caused by commercial or industrial or other sources will be addressed under noise nuisance legislation.

Objective ENV 13

It is the objective of the Council to prevent public noise and light nuisance through the regulation of industrial, construction and commercial activities.

8.17 Heritage

8.17.1 Introduction

The conservation and management of Heritage is directed by National legislation which supports a range of international conventions that have been ratified by the Irish Government. The principal National legislation in relation to natural heritage is the Wildlife Act 1976, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and Part XIII of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The European Communities (Natural Heritage) Regulations 1997 give effect to the requirements of the Birds and

Habitats Directives including the requirement to designate Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas and the need for assessment of impacts on these sites from plans or projects by way of an appropriate assessment or Natura Impact Statement.

The principal National legislation in relation to the Built Environment is the National Monuments Act 1930-2004, and Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). At a County level, the County Waterford Heritage Plan (2004-2010) has guided the conservation, research, enhancement and access to the archaeological, architectural, natural and cultural heritage of the County and much survey work commissioned under this Plan has been used to inform heritage policy. The Plan was prepared in fulfilment of the requirements of the National Heritage Plan (2002) which calls for the preparation of Local Heritage Plans at a County level.



Fenor Bog

8.17.2 Biodiversity

Biodiversity, natural capital and the benefits we derive from nature now commonly referred to as Ecosystem Services are increasingly recognised as being integral to planning and land use policies, as these resources underpin the well being of the economy, society and individuals. Woodlands and forests store carbon, wetlands and coastal zones provide buffers against flood while a host of species enable pollination and maintain soil structure and fertility. It is clear that these ecosystem services are under threat and thus maintenance and enhancement of our biodiversity is a key requirement for policy makers and the wider community. Waterford County Council are committed to identifying the County's ecological infrastructure, maintaining the favourable conservation status of protected areas and restoring and enhancing degraded areas of biodiversity value.

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2008-2013) was published by the local authority in 2008 which sets out the objectives for conservation of biodiversity in the County and was prepared in fulfilment of the requirements of the National Biodiversity Plan (2002). The aims of the Biodiversity Plan are to address priority information gaps in the County, increase understanding and raise awareness of biodiversity and maintain and enhance biodiversity through management practices in key areas. Projects carried out under the Plan, such as habitat mapping, will continue to inform the County Development Plan.

Policy NH 1

To implement and review the County Waterford Heritage Plan and Local Biodiversity Action Plan in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and subject to available resources.

8.17.3 Heritage and Climate Change

Scientific evidence is growing that man-made greenhouse gas emissions are having a significant effect on the earth's climate. As stated in Section 8.13 climate change scientists predict that temperatures in Ireland will increase by 1.25-1.5°C by 2040 and winter rainfall is expected to increase by about 15%. The impact of climate change on all aspects of heritage- archaeology, architectural and natural is a key consideration for planning and development. Natural heritage sites and geological heritage sites which provide recreational benefits along with ecosystem services may be threatened with erosion and loss while archaeology and architectural heritage may also be at risk from increased weathering and erosion. Collation of baseline information, monitoring and development of policy on the impacts of climate change on heritage will be supported by the Council in this regard.



Tramore Sand Dunes

8.18 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is now recognised as an important concept in land use planning and environmental protection. It relates to the network of open spaces, parks, gardens, green corridors, woodlands, waterways, urban tree lines and open countryside. Green spaces provide environmental, social, economic and physical benefits and give added value where integrated in the development process.

Policy NH 2

To conserve, manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape and environment of County Waterford in recognition of its importance as a non-renewable resource, the unique identity and character of the County and as a natural resource asset.

Policy NH 3

To ensure as far as possible that development does not impact adversely on wildlife habitats and species. In the interests of sustainability, biodiversity should be conserved for the benefit of future generations.

Policy NH 4

To protect plant, animal species and habitats which have been identified by the Habitats Directive, Bird Directive, Wildlife Act (1976) and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Flora Protection order S.I. No. 94 of 1999.

Policy NH 5

To encourage the retention and creation of green corridors within and between built up urban areas.

8.19 Nature Conservation Sites

County Waterford supports a wide range of habitats and species including coastal habitats, uplands, water corridors and wetland habitats, grasslands, woodlands and hedgerows. The value of these habitats is recognised in the high number of sites in the County designated by the State for nature conservation.

The Habitats Directive places an obligation on member states of the EU to establish an EU wide network of special conservation sites including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). This network is known as Natura 2000. SPAs and candidate SACs are designated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoEHLG. These sites must be managed to ensure maintenance or restoration of their favourable conservation status. There are nine SACs and six SPAs designated in County Waterford.

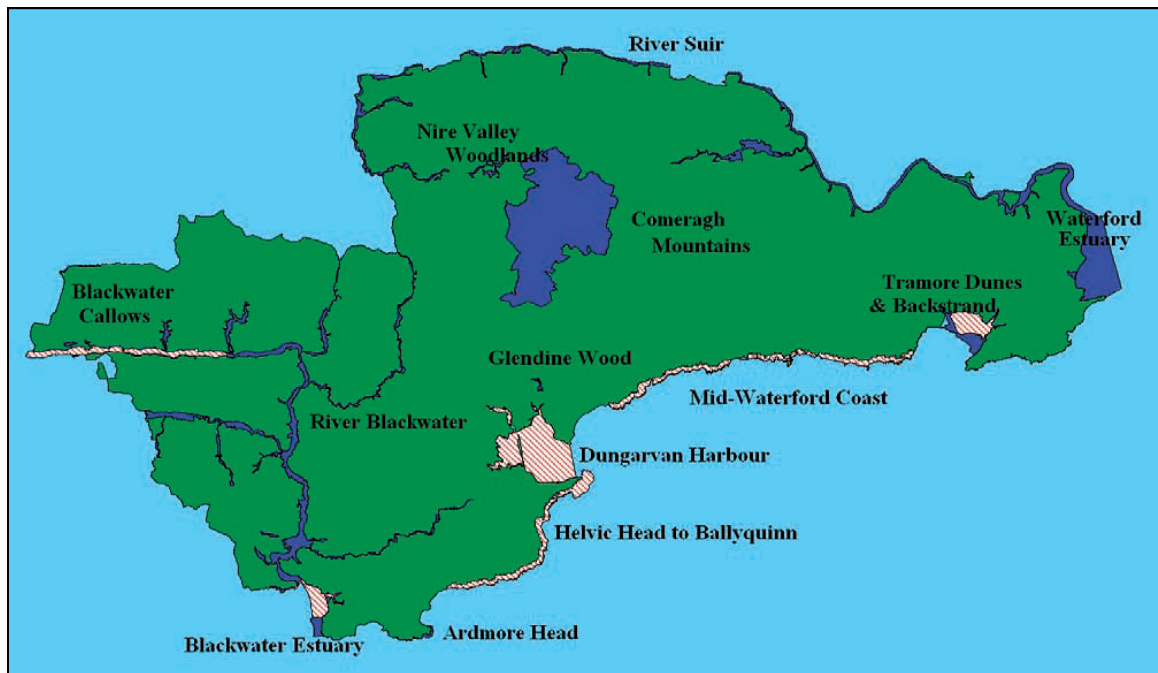


Figure 8.1 Map of SACs and SPAs in County Waterford.

Site Name	Qualifying Interests of Site
Ardmore Head	Dry coastal heath and vegetated sea cliffs.
Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford)	Estuary, mudflats, shingle banks, salt meadows, floating river vegetation, old oak woods, alluvial woodland, Yew woodland, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, White-clawed Crayfish, Shad, Lamprey, Salmon, Otter, Killarney Fern
Comeragh Mountains	Blanket bog, dry, wet and alpine heath, rocky slopes, oligotrophic lakes, floating river vegetation, Shining Sicklemoss
Glendine Wood	Semi-natural woodland with rare assemblages of ground flora
Helvic Head	Vegetated sea cliffs and dry heath.
Lower River Suir	Salt meadows, floating river vegetation, marginal river vegetation, old oak woods, alluvial wet woodland, yew woods, Twaite Shad, Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, River Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, White-clawed Crayfish, Atlantic Salmon, Otter.
Nire Valley Woods	Old oak woodlands and dry heath.

River Nore and River Barrow (Waterford Estuary)	Estuary, mudflats, salt meadows, floating river vegetation, dry heath, marginal river vegetation, petrifying springs, old oak woods, alluvial woods, White-clawed Crayfish, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Whorl snail, Shad, Lamprey, Salmon, Otter, Killarney Fern
Tramore Dunes and Back Strand	Mudflats and sand flats, shingle banks, salt meadows, embryonic, white and fixed dunes.

Table 8.1 Special Areas of Conservations (SACs) in County Waterford

Site Name	Qualifying Interests of site
Tramore Backstrand	Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit
Dungarvan Bay	Great Northern Diver, Bar-tailed Godwit, Golden Plover
Blackwater Callows	Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan, Golden Plover, Kingfisher
Blackwater Estuary	Little Egret, Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Sandwich Tern, Roseate Tern, Common Tern
Helvick Head Coast	Peregrine, Chough
Mid Waterford Coast	Peregrine, Chough

Table 8.2 Special Protected Area (SPAs) in County Waterford

8.20 Appropriate Assessment

Development proposed within or affecting European Sites (cSAC's SAC's, SPA's, SPA's) will require screening for Appropriate Assessment, and if required Appropriate Assessment to determine if the proposed development is environmentally sustainable and to ensure it will not affect the integrity of the area or its habitats or the objectives for conservation of the site and species.

Where such a development would affect the integrity of a site, it will only be permitted where there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development or land-use change. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, development or land use change will not be permitted unless it is necessary for imperative reasons of human health or public safety or for benefits of primary importance for the environment.

Policy NH 6

To conserve the favourable conservation status of species and habitats within Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Policy NH 7

To assess all proposed developments which are likely to impact (directly or through indirect or cumulative impacts) on designated sites for nature conservation or sites proposed for designation and protected species in accordance with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland-Guidance for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009).

Policy NH 8

To ensure a sufficient level of information is provided in development applications to enable a comprehensive screening for Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken and to enable a fully informed assessment of impacts on biodiversity to be made. Ecological impact assessments submitted in support of development proposals shall be carried out by appropriately qualified professionals and ecological survey work carried out at optimal survey time to ensure accurate collation of ecological data.

Objective NH 1

It is an objective of the Council to comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive at each level of the development planning process from County Development Plan, Local Area Plan to project level to ensure that there is no significant adverse impact on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites and that the requirements of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive are fully satisfied.

8.21 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and Nature Reserves

There are 28 Natural Heritage Areas in County Waterford proposed for designation by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) under the provisions of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 in recognition of Nationally important habitats, species and sites of geological interest. Fenor Bog is also designated a Nature Reserve and is the only community owned Nature Reserve in the State. Figure 8.2 identifies the NHAs proposed for designation in County Waterford.

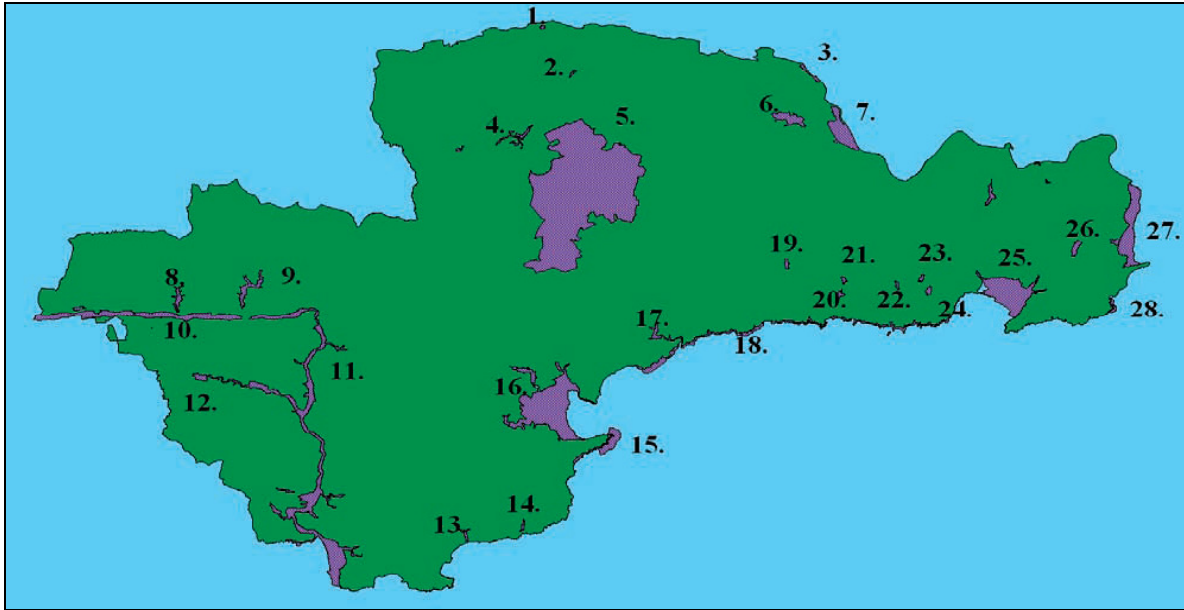


Figure 8.2 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas in County Waterford

Reference No.	pNHA	Reference No.	pNHA
1.	Kilsheelan Lake	15.	Heilbhic Head
2.	Toor Wood	16.	Dungarvan Harbour
3.	Fiddown Island	17.	Stradbally Woods
4.	Nire Valley Woods	18.	Ballyvoyle Head to Tramore
5.	Comeragh Mountains	19.	Ballinlough
6.	Portlaw Woods	20.	Lissaviron Bog
7.	Coolfin & Darrigle Marshes	21.	Castlecraddock Fen
8.	Glenmore Woods	22.	Fenor Bog
9.	Lismore Woods	23.	Carrickavrantry Reservoir & Marsh
10.	Blackwater Callows	24.	Islandtarsney Fen
11.	Blackwater River and Estuary	25.	Tramore Dunes & Backstrand
12.	Tallow Church of Ireland	26.	Belle Lake
13.	Ballyeelinan Wood	27.	Creadan Head
14.	Glen Anna Wood	28.	Dunmore East Cliffs

Table 8.3 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas in County Waterford

Policy NH 9

To ensure that development proposals in areas identified as being of nature conservation value will not impact adversely on the integrity and habitat value of the site.

Policy NH 10

To protect and conserve pNHAs and NHAs in the County.

8.22 Local Sites of Biodiversity Value

Many habitats that do not meet the criteria for designations as an NHA are still important on a local or county basis and some sites may be of regional importance but have not been fully surveyed or recognised as such. In order to inform this process, Waterford County Council supports ongoing surveys of key habitats such as wetlands and other habitats and the development of a County Habitat map.

Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive states that Member States shall endeavour in their land use planning and development policies, to encourage the management of features of the landscape, which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. Such features are those which by virtue of their linear and continuous structures such as rivers and riverbanks or hedgerows or by virtue of their functions as stepping-stones such as ponds or small woods are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.



Beautiful Demoiselle Damselfly

Policy NH 11

To encourage the retention and creation of sites of local biodiversity value, ecological corridors and networks that connect areas of high conservation value such as woodlands, hedgerows, earth banks and wetlands.

Policy NH 12

To develop a habitat map for County Waterford in collaboration with other agencies to record the range of habitats and network of ecological corridors and integrate this information in the development planning process.

8.23 Wetlands

Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing. Wetlands are significant habitats in County Waterford and much work has also been carried out on Integrated Constructed Wetlands in the Anne Valley. Wetlands provide habitats for communities of species that can survive in aquatic and semi-aquatic conditions. The amount of drainage and water present are their most important feature as increased

drainage or flooding can cause significant change in habitat value and species diversity. The Water Framework Directive and Ramsar Convention provide for the protection and wise use of Wetlands. A survey of the County's Wetlands was carried out in 2006 and recorded 21 wetlands of local biodiversity interest. These wetlands of county importance are listed in Appendix A11.

A key feature of the Waterford landscape is the range of watercourses from large rivers such as the Blackwater, Colligan, Tay, Mahon and Suir to smaller rivers and streams. Along with recreational benefits these watercourses provide habitat for a number of important and protected species such as Crayfish, Shad, Lamprey, Salmon and the Freshwater Pearl Mussel. Smaller rivers and streams may be valuable as spawning grounds. It is important that all watercourses and their associated riparian habitats are maintained in a semi-natural condition as far as possible. Maintenance of good water quality requires protection of the wider aquatic environment including the associated river bank and an appropriate ecological buffer zone to support maintenance of the physical habitat and hydrological processes. The Council will consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland on developments that may impact on watercourses and take account of *Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites*.

Policy NH 13

To ensure that the County's floodplains, wetlands and watercourses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values.

Policy NH 14

To protect wetland sites listed in Appendix A11 and other wetlands that may be identified of biodiversity value from infilling and other developments that may affect the biodiversity value of these sites.

Policy NH 15

To maintain good ecological status of wetlands and watercourses in support of the provisions of the Water Framework Directive and Ramsar Convention.

Policy NH 16

The preservation of riparian corridors is a requirement for the protection of aquatic habitats and facilitation of public access to waterways. No development shall take place within a buffer zone of 15m measured from the top of the riverbank.

Objective NH 2

To implement the Programme of Measures assigned for local authorities under the South Eastern and South Western River Basin District Management Plans.

Objective NH 3

To protect riparian habitats along watercourses by maintaining an ecological buffer zone of at least 15m from the top of the watercourse riverbank. The Council will consult with the Fisheries Authority on the establishment and protection of riparian habitats where appropriate.

8.24 Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a distinctive feature of the County Waterford landscape providing wildlife habitats, attractive scenery and shelter in exposed areas. They represent the most significant single habitat supporting plants, invertebrates, birds and mammals in County Waterford. The value of hedgerows as a habitat is dependant on both the quality and condition of the hedgerow and its linear integrity. The linear integrity or connectivity of the hedgerow in effect acts as a green corridor connecting larger habitats and enhancing the biodiversity of both the hedgerow and the larger habitats.



Hedgerow in Villierstown

In addition to the biodiversity value of hedgerows, there are broader benefits including retention of surface water run-off from land reducing the flood risk downstream, prevention of soil erosion and reduced risk of decreased migration between farms. They also function as carbon sinks, pollution filters and sound barriers between busy roads and housing developments. The loss of a section of hedgerow may have a significant environmental impact. It is therefore in our common interest to preserve and enhance hedgerows throughout the County.

The greatest threats to hedgerow habitat are considered to be a lack of appropriate maintenance and introduction of breaks in the linear integrity from new development. It is the policy of Waterford County Council to retain the natural roadside hedgerows as far as possible for the purposes of maintaining natural habitat, landscape character, and screening of new developments. The Council

will also seek to insure that all new development includes measures to preserve the linear integrity and enhance the quality of hedgerows.

Development standards for hedgerow replacement are set out in Section 10.2.6.

Policy NH 17

To protect hedgerows in all new developments, particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows.

Policy NH 18

To protect and preserve existing hedgerows and seek their replacement with new hedgerows with native species of local provenance where their removal is necessary during the course of road works or other works. There will be a presumption against the removal of hedgerows where there is a reasonable alternative.

8.25 Trees and Woodlands

Trees are a valuable feature of the landscape for their amenity and wildlife value and Waterford has one of the highest levels of tree cover in the State. The 2008 NPWS Native Woodlands Survey reports there are 6,990 ha of native woodland in Waterford representing 3.8% of the County land cover.

In recognition of their landscape value some trees are protected under Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). These are listed in A12. The Tree Register of Ireland maintains a register of champion trees and lists over 270 champion trees for County Waterford by virtue of their age, height and girth. Many of these trees are found within demesne landscapes which covered a significant area of land cover in the County in the past.



Woodland Area

Under Section 37 of the Forestry Act 1946, with certain exceptions, it is illegal to uproot a tree over ten years of age or cut down a tree of any age unless notice of intention to do so has been given in accordance with the Forestry Act. With the exception of an area located within the boundaries of a town or borough council area, a tree felling licence from the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and Food is required if it is proposed to fell trees.

Policy NH 19

To encourage the replanting and extension of woodland cover within the County, in particular mixed forests and broadleaf forests, in order to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the arboreal landscape in the County.

Policy NH 20

The Council will preserve and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the County by preserving as far as possible trees, woodlands and hedgerows and will consider Tree Preservation Orders in order to protect trees of significance throughout the County. Existing TPOs are listed in Appendix A12.

8.26 Forestry

Forestry provides benefits for the local economy, amenity and carbon sequestration which is significant at a time where reduction of carbon emissions is a priority. Approximately 22% of County Waterford is covered by coniferous forest plantations. Coillte manage 15% of the County while the remainder is in private ownership.

National Forestry policy is based on The Forest Service Strategy published in 1996, “*Growing for the Future – A Strategic Plan For the Development of The Forestry Sector in Ireland*” which sets out the aims for forestry up to the year 2030. The National target is to establish a forestry cover of 17% or 1.2 million ha by 2030. The 2000 CAP Rural Development Plan set the target of broadleaf planting of total afforestation to 30%, a target which is also supported by the National Biodiversity Plan 2002.

Currently, Ireland has approximately 10.5 % of land cover devoted to forestry compared to the EU average of approximately 40% and where on average 60% of all trees planted are broadleaves. Afforestation is carried out in accordance with Sustainable Forest management and 15% of all afforestation areas must be managed with particular regard to Biodiversity. Coillte manage 5 forest amenity areas in the County; Colligan, Dromana, Faithlegg, Glenshelane and Kilclooney.

Given the need to restructure agricultural practices, the Council will support the development of forestry, particularly deciduous forestry and Biomass as an alternative agricultural land use.

Policy NH 21

To support the economic, recreational and carbon sequestration potential of forestry. Forestry as a land use and its ancillary development will be encouraged in appropriate locations subject to such development not impacting on biodiversity/protected species such as Freshwater Pearl Mussel, interfering with significant views or prospects or being unduly obtrusive in the landscape.

Policy NH 22

To promote a greater mix of species in Forestry Plantations and to encourage greater structural and spatial diversity in plantation design. The Council will facilitate afforestation in appropriate locations in co-operation with the Forest Service and Coillte and in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Forest management and codes of best practice.

Policy NH 23

To co-operate with landowners, Coillte and the Forest Service in promoting greater public access and recreational use of state and privately owned forests in the County.

Policy NH 24

To ensure that linear felling of trees is not encouraged in exposed or scenic areas and also promote phased rather than clear felling.

8.27 Invasive Species

Many species of flora and fauna have been introduced to Ireland and pose a serious threat to native vegetation, wildlife and their ecosystems. Problematic species in Waterford include Grey Squirrel, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam. The control of and promotion of awareness is being driven by the All - Ireland Invasive Species Initiative www.invasivespeciesireland.com and a number of organizations based in County Waterford including the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Waterford Institute of Technology. A



Himalayan Balsam

useful guidance document relating to the management of invasive species is the NRA's *Guidance on The Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads*.

Policy NH 25

Where development is approved for sites containing known invasive species, the planning authority will consider, where appropriate, the use of conditions for control and eradication of invasive species.

Policy NH 26

The Council will promote awareness of invasive species and their management, and work with other agencies in the County to address the issue.

8.28 Geology

Geology is now recognised as an intrinsic component of natural heritage and it is appropriate that due regard is given to conservation of geological heritage features. Geological heritage is significant in County Waterford due to its interesting mining history along the Copper Coast which was designated a UNESCO European Geo-Park in 2004, one of only two Geoparks on the island of Ireland.

The Geological Survey of Ireland established the Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) programme in 1998 with the objective of identifying and selecting sites that best represent the geological heritage of Ireland for designation as Natural Heritage Areas. The IGH have identified 37 County Geological Sites of Interest in County Waterford. Some of these sites may merit National designation as Natural Heritage Areas. These sites are listed in Appendix A14.



Copper Coast UNESCO European Geo-Park

Policy NH 27

To protect from inappropriate development the scheduled list of Geological Heritage Sites detailed in Appendix A14.

Policy NH 28

To promote the geological heritage of the Copper Coast Geopark and provide for the sustainable management of this coastal amenity.

8.29 Architectural Heritage & Archaeology**8.29.1 Introduction**

County Waterford has a unique and varied architectural heritage spanning many centuries. This heritage is a physical reminder of the culture, ideals and history of previous generations. It includes castles, country houses, churches and public buildings, some of which were designed by eminent architects. However, more modest structures such as town houses, thatched cottages and farm complexes also contribute significantly to the character of the County. Waterford also has a rich industrial and maritime heritage which includes mills, quays and lighthouses. This wide variety of building stock has, over time, contributed to the special character of the County and is a unique resource which, once lost or damaged, cannot be replaced. (Refer to Section 8.38 Archaeology)



Ardmore's Monastic Archaeological Heritage

8.30 Conservation of the Architectural Heritage

It is an objective of Waterford County Council to identify, conserve and protect elements of the architectural heritage. This not only includes structures on the Record of Protected Structures (as outlined in Appendix A13) but also elements of the built heritage such as vernacular heritage, industrial archaeology, streetscapes, walls, gardens, demesnes and landscapes.

Buildings by their very nature change over time (use, function, etc) and conservation can be considered the management of change. Sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and reuse of buildings of architectural or historical merit has the potential to generate aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits for future generations. The Council will adopt a partnership approach with regard to the appropriate renovation and improvement of protected structures, vernacular heritage and historic

buildings by offering practical advice. Owners of historic structures who wish to alter, extend or adapt their buildings are strongly encouraged to consult with the Council at pre-planning stage.

The Council is obliged to protect the architectural heritage of the County under the requirements of Section 10(2) and Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). To ensure best conservation practices are observed, the Planning Authority will take account of the conservation guidelines issued by the DoEHLG and other statutory bodies. In certain cases, an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment may also be required. Information on compiling same can be obtained from the DoEHLG publication; *Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. (A summary of this document is available on the Council's website www.waterfordcoco.ie under the Architectural Heritage section).

Further guidance on protecting the Architectural Heritage and appropriate development is set out in Chapter 10 (Development Standards), on the Council's website and in the following documents produced by Waterford County Council:

- Burial Grounds Survey(2007);
- FAQ's about Protected Structures and details of relevant legislation and publications are available on the Council website;
- Guidance Notes for the Appraisal of Historic Gardens, Demesne Estates and their Setting (2010);
- Guidelines for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards in County Waterford (2010);
- Industrial Heritage of County Waterford Survey (2008);
- Renovation of vernacular houses/farm complex - Design Guidelines (2010); and
- Thatch Houses Survey (2006).

Policy AH 1

It is a policy of the Council to protect the architectural heritage and to encourage sensitive development or appropriate reuse of buildings to promote economic development and regeneration.

Policy AH 2

It is the policy of the Council to administer incentives for the protection of the architectural heritage of the County through administration of the Conservation Grant Scheme and by way of reduction of development levies for improvements to Protected Structures.

8.31 Protected Structures

A protected structure is a structure that is considered by the Council to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Protected structure status includes the exterior, interior, fixtures, fittings and elements within the curtilage of the structure. The inclusion of a structure on the RPS does not preclude change of use, refurbishment or development. The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is included in Appendix A13 of this Plan.



Tourin Demense Country House

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) carried out a survey in 2003, which identified almost 1400 structures which the Minister for the Environment has recommended for addition onto the Record of Protected Structures (RPS)¹. The Council has added some of these structures to the RPS. Others are covered by *Streetscape of Distinctive Character* designations (refer to Chapter 10 Development Standards Section 10.46).

8.31.1 Declarations

Under the Planning Acts, many minor works to structures do not normally require planning permission. These works are known as exempted development. However, for a protected structure, such works can be carried out without planning permission only if the works would not affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interest.

Owners may seek a declaration under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), from the planning authority as to the type of works which would or would not materially affect the character of the structure and which would or would not require planning permission. Any works, which would materially affect the character of a protected structure, will require planning permission².

¹ An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Waterford, published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, May 2004. www.buildingsofireland.ie

² FAQs about Protected Structures, details of relevant legislation, publications and grants available on the Council website.

8.31.2 Alterations and Extensions

Proposed alterations and extensions to Protected Structures shall be permitted where they do not detract from the special character of the structure. High quality contemporary designs will also be considered if it respects the height, scale and massing of the receiving environment.

8.31.3 Demolitions

Section 57(10) (b) of the 2000 Act provides that permission may only be granted for the demolition of a protected structure or proposed protected structure in exceptional circumstances. This is a recognition that, within the context of the proper planning and sustainable development of a locality, there may well be a situation whereby exceptional circumstances do exist, which would lead to the removal or demolition of a protected structure, or indeed any other structure of architectural heritage merit.

Development of an Integrated Rural Tourism and Recreation Complex (IRTRC) and housing in association with a Protected Structure are dealt with in detail in Chapter 6 of this Plan under the Tourism section.

Policy AH 3

It is the policy of the Council to maintain a Record of Protected Structures within the County to protect all the structures or parts of structures which are of historical, architectural, artistic, archaeological, social, scientific, technical and cultural interest.

Policy AH 4

It is the policy of the Council to promote sympathetic reuse of structures. Proposed works to accommodate such change of use shall not detract from the building or not adversely damage or disturb protected species, and the new use shall make a positive contribution to the character of the building/streetscape or setting.

Policy AH 5

It is the policy of the Council to protect the main building and curtilage of Protected Structures from any works which would visually or physically detract from the special character of the main structure or any structures within the curtilage.

Demolition of a Protected Structure can only be considered in exceptional circumstances and the onus will be on the developer to provide the strongest justification for such an action.

8.32 Historic Landscapes

Historic landscapes, gardens and demesnes are usually, but not always, associated with Protected Structures. Estates and large demesnes have been seen as attractive locations for the development of hotels, golf courses and low density housing. The Department of Environment has carried out an interim desktop survey of Historic gardens and designed landscapes in the country which has identified 161 Gardens in County Waterford: www.buildingsofireland.ie/Surveys/Gardens/.



Mount Congreve Gardens

Objective AH 1

It is an objective of the Council to produce Guidance notes for the Appraisal of Historic Gardens, Demesne Estate's and their settings. These guidelines will provide advice on new development proposed in historic gardens and demesne estates and their impact on existing heritage.

8.33 Vernacular Heritage

In addition to the buildings of special interest included in the RPS, the Council recognises that there are many other structures throughout the County which, while they may never be added to the RPS, make a positive contribution to the landscape or streetscape and to the distinctive character of a particular area. The bulk of vernacular architecture in the County consists of domestic dwellings but also includes farmsteads, gate lodges, outbuildings, structures associated with industrial archaeology and maritime activity such as quays, and items of street furniture such as milestones, stone depots, gates, limekilns and walls. The rehabilitation and appropriate reuse of the vernacular building stock can play a vital role in the sustainable development of the County. The Council will seek to retain such structures where appropriate as their loss through demolition and replacement can considerably diminish the character of an area.

Policy AH 6

It is the policy of the Council to encourage the protection, appreciation, retention and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular architectural heritage of the County. The settings and features of vernacular buildings shall also be respected.

Policy AH 7

It is the policy of the Council to promote and retain original building fabric such as lime mortar slate, thatch, timber sash windows, render and joinery details such as doorways and bargeboards. Where traditional features such as sliding sash windows have been removed, their reinstatement shall be encouraged.

Policy AH 8

It is the policy of the Council to encourage the retention and development of the traditional skills base in County Waterford.

Objective AH 9

It is an objective of the Council to identify structures of vernacular architecture and protect such structures in a manner that allows for the sensitive evolution of an area.

8.34 Streetscapes of Distinctive Character

It is acknowledged that the historic towns and villages in County Waterford have their own unique and distinctive architectural character. As part of this Plan, the Council has prepared a set of Development Objectives for each of the settlements. This identifies objectives for the future development of the village or town and the elements the town or village which should be protected, enhanced or strengthened. As part of this strategy, areas with a unique character and which enhance an urban area or streetscape have been identified and designated as *Streetscapes of Distinctive Character*. The Council's objective is to set out clear design principles for development in these areas, to encourage appropriate development and to protect the sense of place. The town and village development strategies are outlined in the Development Objectives on the accompanying maps and in Section 10.46 of the Plan.



Lismore Streetscape

Owners of buildings within Streetscapes of Distinctive Character, who wish to alter or renovate their properties, or construct infill development, are strongly encouraged to consult with the Council at pre-planning stage. The Council will assist property owners by providing guidance on design, elements of the streetscape to be protected/replicated, appropriate uses, etc.

Policy AH 10

Within Streetscapes of Distinctive Character, it is the policy of the Council to:

- Identify, protect and enhance the unique character of a streetscape by providing guidelines on appropriate development to retain its distinctive character;
- Protect elements of landscapes and streetscape such as stonewalls, limekilns and street furniture such as water pumps etc. which make a positive contribution to the architectural heritage;
- Promote sensitive reuse and/or alterations of buildings of historic character. Proposed works shall not detract from the building and shall make a positive contribution to the character of the building/streetscape or setting; and
- Ensure that the design of new buildings within such a streetscape respects the established character of the area in height, scale and massing.

8.35 Improving the Public Realm

The term '*Public Realm*' incorporates all areas to which the public has open access including streets, public parks, civic buildings and facilities. Whilst this area extends beyond the specific areas identified above as Streetscapes of Distinctive Character, it is the same historic elements such as walls, tree lined avenues, green areas located within the public realm which can contribute to the special interest and distinct character of an area.

Policy AH 11

It is the policy of the Council to promote a high standard of civic amenity and design and to respect existing open spaces, urban spaces, vistas and streetscape and to encourage the sensitive redevelopment of vacant or derelict sites in the streetscape.

Policy AH 12

The Council shall support the preparation of Village Design Statements to contribute to a greater understanding of the townscape resources of the County and plan for future appropriate development.

Objective AH 2

It is an objective of the Council to consider the receiving environment when erecting signage, undertaking road markings, parking spaces, planting and road and footpath access works, and ensures that all such works are sensitive to the character of the public realm.

8.36 Non-Habitable Structures and Outbuildings

The sensitive restoration and appropriate reuse of the vernacular buildings of architectural or historic merit can play a vital role in the sustainable development of the County. Refer to Section 10.20 & 10.21 of Chapter 10 Development Standards for guidance in relation to same.

8.37 Industrial Heritage

Waterford has an impressive industrial landscape spanning medieval to modern times. A survey of the industrial heritage of Waterford County was conducted in 2007. Some of finest examples in the Country of industrial archaeological sites are the Tankardstown Mine Complex and the Portlaw Cotton Mills and industrial town. Other features include mills, millers' houses, store/warehouses, bakery, forges, canals, creameries, ice houses, limekilns, mines, waterworks, water pumps, workers houses, and features of river and coastal industrial heritage.



Tankardstown's Industrial Heritage

Policy AH 13

It is the Policy of the Council to identify, protect and encourage the sympathetic reuse of elements of the industrial heritage and to encourage sustainable reuse of empty industrial buildings.

8.38 Archaeology

Recorded settlements in County Waterford date back 7,000 years. Waterford's diverse archaeology includes Bronze Age burials, standing stones, early Christian burial grounds, and medieval towns and castles. There are over 2,700 archaeological sites and monuments in County Waterford. One of the most important discoveries was the Viking site at Woodstown during the construction of the N25 – Waterford City By-Pass. (Refer to Section 8.29 Architectural Heritage and Archaeology)

In 1999, the then Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and Islands, set out policies in the publication *'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage'*, which stated that archaeological considerations need to be taken full account of in the development process.

The archaeological heritage of the County is composed of structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects, situated both on land and under water.³ This includes:

- Recorded sites and features of historical and archaeological importance included in the Record of Monuments and Places;
- Major sites of archaeological importance in state ownership and guardianship;
- National Monuments which are the subject of preservation orders in County Waterford; and
- All previously unknown archaeology that becomes known (e.g. through ground disturbance, fieldwork or the discovery of sites underwater).

The National Monuments Acts 1930-1994 provide for the protection of the archaeological heritage.

8.38.1 Record of Monuments and Places

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) consists of a county by county set of marked-up Ordnance Survey maps and a manual listing basic information in relation to each monument or area included. Structures, features, sites or objects listed in the RMP are known as Recorded Monuments.⁴ There are currently over 2,470 such sites in the jurisdiction of Waterford County Council, highlighting the wealth of archaeology to be found in the County both above and below ground.

8.38.2 Other Archaeological Sites

The RMP is not an exhaustive list of all archaeology. It should be noted that the archaeological heritage is not solely confined to the known sites but includes any archaeological site that may not yet have been recorded.

Under the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994, all shipwrecks over one hundred years old, underwater archaeological structures, features and objects are protected. The quantification of the underwater archaeological resource is at a preliminary stage with the National Shipwreck Inventory currently being compiled. This source indicates areas of high archaeological potential within marine environments.

³ The European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, Valetta, 1992

⁴ The Record of Monuments and Places is published by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and is available for inspection in council offices and county libraries. Also available on www.archaeology.ie

Policy AH 14

It is the policy of the Council to protect, conserve and preserve the integrity of archaeological monuments and their settings and archaeological objects within the County, and those buildings and sites which have been identified on the RMP.

Policy AH 15

It will be an objective of the planning authority to secure the preservation (ie: preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of site features and objects of archaeological interest generally.

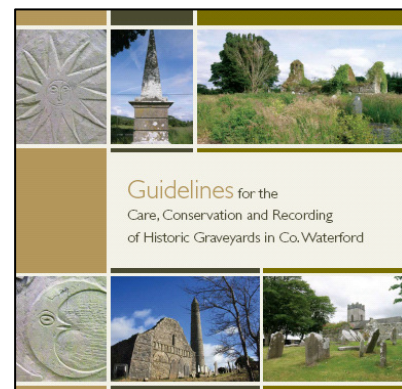
In securing such preservation the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, both in respect of whether or not to grant planning permission and in respect of the conditions to which permission, if granted, should be granted.

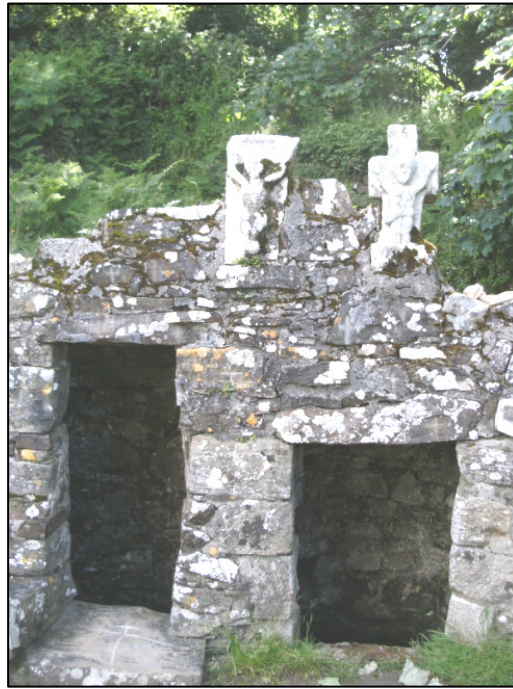
Objective AH 3

It is an objective of the Plan to ensure that development in the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting by reason of its location, scale, bulk or detailing. When considering development in the vicinity of all archaeological sites including town defences, the planning authority will require the preparation of an archaeological assessment detailing the potential impact of any development on upstanding structures, buried structures and deposits. The report will also include a visual impact assessment to ensure adequate consideration of any potential visual impact the proposed development may have on any upstanding remains.

8.39 Historic Graveyards

Historic graveyards include all graveyards and burial grounds used prior to the 20th Century. A distinction is made between the terms “burial grounds” and “graveyards” where burial grounds are areas of land used for burials while graveyards are burial grounds associated with churches. There are over one hundred historic graveyards located in the County. Graveyards dating from pre 1700 A.D. are given statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1930-2004.





Historic Graveyard – Ardmore

Policy AH 16

It is the policy of the Council to apply best practice in the care and management of historic graveyards as detailed in the guidance document on the “*Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards in County Waterford*” published by Waterford County Council in 2009.