

Chapter 5 Housing

5.0 Introduction

The aims of Waterford County Council in regard to housing are to ensure sufficient land is zoned to meet projected housing requirements over the Plan period, to create high quality living environments and to ensure that all residents enjoy an acceptable standard of residential amenity. The Council will endeavor to ensure, insofar as its resources and remit permit, that suitable accommodation is available for each household within County Waterford, in an appropriate location and at a price or rent that they can afford, and to promote the development of stable and sustainable communities.

The population projections and the zoned land provisions for the County are set out in the Core Strategy in Chapter 3 and in Appendix A2.

Government Guidelines

Sustainable Residential Development on Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG, May 2009

Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide, DoEHLG, May 2009

Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities, DoEHLG, February 2007,

Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best Practice Guidelines, DoEHLG, 2007

Building for Everyone: Inclusion, Access and Use, National Disability Authority.

5.1 Housing Policy

The main elements of the Council's Housing Policy are to:

1. Ensure proper planning and sustainable development of the County, in terms of the location and quality of housing including housing type and mix, to secure the development of sustainable communities;
2. Implement Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended);
3. Meet the needs of persons with special needs such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, minority groups, etc;

4. Counteract social segregation through integration of public and private housing, assimilation of those with special needs into the community and supporting community development;
5. Co-operate with housing agencies in their delivery of housing for those seeking affordable housing and those with special needs; and
6. Promote sustainable energy efficient building construction and maintenance.

5.2 Sustainable Communities

Sustainable Communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and secure, well planned, constructed and maintained, inclusive and accessible to all.

In accordance with the DoEHLG publication, *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes, Sustainable Communities, 2007*, good quality, sustainable housing development should be:

- Socially and environmentally appropriate;
- Architecturally appropriate;
- Accessible and adaptable;
- Safe, secure and healthy;
- Affordable;
- Durable; and
- Resource efficient.

The Council will require that development proposals subscribe to *the principles of social integration and affordability*. In this context, new developments will provide a high quality living environment; have an appropriate mix of unit types, design and sizes to cater for all users, including first time buyers, and should be accessible by the elderly and persons with disabilities. Provision should be made for amenity and recreational areas and access to community facilities, childcare facilities, etc. All housing will be of a form and scale that is appropriate to the location.



Forest Haven. Dunmore East

As set out in the Housing Strategy, it is recommended that in private housing schemes the following mix should generally be provided to ensure the future provision of a suitable mix of housing types and sizes, to allow for an inclusive community:

Two bedroom houses	at least 30% of the total number of houses;
Three bedroom houses	at least 30% of the total number of houses; and
Four bedroom houses	maximum 20% of total number of houses.

Applications for planning permission for housing estates will be evaluated in accordance with the 12 criteria set out in the Best Practice Design Manual issued by the DoEHLG, which are:

1. **Context:** How does the development respond to its surroundings?
2. **Connections:** How well is the new neighbourhood/site connected?
3. **Inclusivity:** How easily can people use and access the development?
4. **Variety:** How does the development promote a good mix of activities?
5. **Efficiency:** How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?
6. **Distinctiveness:** How do the proposals create a sense of place?
7. **Layout:** How does the proposal create people-friendly streets and spaces?
8. **Public realm:** How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?
9. **Adaptability:** How will the buildings cope with change?
10. **Privacy/amenity:** How do the buildings provide a high quality amenity?
11. **Parking:** How will the parking be secure and attractive?
12. **Detailed design:** How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

Policy H1

To promote the development of sustainable communities by requiring all new residential development to comply with the principles set out in the DoEHLG publication, *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes, Sustainable Communities, 2007*.

Policy H2

To ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is provided to meet the needs of different categories of households, including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

5.3 Housing Strategy

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that a Planning Authority includes in its development plan, a strategy for the purpose of ensuring that the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area. The Housing Strategy for the Plan is set out in Appendix A1 and should be read in conjunction with this Chapter.

The Housing Strategy sets out in detail the Council's own housing programme, which is aimed at: providing suitable accommodation and assistance for those in need; providing loans and assistance for people housing themselves; and making provision for homeless people in the County. This also includes making provision for appropriate accommodation and assistance for the travelling community in the County.



Brideview Close, Tallow

5.4 Social and Affordable Housing

5.4.1 Direct Provision of Social Housing Including Special Needs

Waterford Housing Authorities will seek to meet the needs of households in need of housing through a range of social housing options, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, Housing Action Plan and other special programmes. The Council is committed to promoting and facilitating the use of the full range of these social housing options (as set out below), as resources permit:

- Provision of New Social Housing by Waterford Housing Authorities;
- Housing Acquisition Programme;
- Affordable Housing Schemes;
- Rental Accommodation Scheme;
- Leasing arrangements;
- Incremental purchase scheme; and
- Other social housing options which include shared ownership schemes, improvement works in lieu of local authority house scheme, traditional housing loans, mortgage allowance schemes, extensions to private houses, essential repairs grants and tenant purchase schemes.

It is important that social and affordable housing is properly integrated into existing communities. The Council will endeavour to accommodate all social housing applicants at, or as close as possible to, their location of choice.

Policy H3

To promote and facilitate the use of the full range of the social housing options available, as resources permit, to cater for the elderly, people with disabilities and those seeking affordable housing within developments, as close to their place of origin or preference, as is practicable.

Policy H4

To meet the need for Local Authority housing and assistance as identified in the Housing Strategy, or as may otherwise arise within the Plan period, and to evaluate the suitability of the accommodation available, or other housing options, to meet the needs of the public.

5.4.2 Part V Provision of Social and Affordable Housing

In accordance with Part V (Sections 96 & 97) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Waterford County Council will require social and/or affordable housing to be provided within housing developments on residentially zoned lands or on other land use zones which allow for a mix of uses including residential (i.e. tourism, town centre and depending on the circumstances, Masterplan or Special Use zones). Exemptions will be applicable for developments of 4 or less houses, or for housing on sites of 0.1 hectares or less.

Developers, to which the 20 % social/affordable housing provision¹ applies, will be required to enter into an agreement with the Council to:

- Transfer ownership of 20% of the site to the Council; or
- Build houses/apartments and transfer 20% of the floor area of same to the Council at an agreed cost; or
- Transfer a number of fully or partially serviced housing sites to the Council at an agreed cost; or
- Provide for the transfer to the Council of the ownership of any other appropriately zoned land within the functional area of the planning authority; or
- Make a monetary contribution equivalent in value to 20% of the value of the site.

¹ As set out in the Housing Strategy, Appendix A1, an analysis of the range of outcomes for Part V percentage fixing suggests that maintenance of the 20% Part V contributions is appropriate at this time.

The Council encourages housing developers, to whom the provisions of Part V will apply, to liaise, at the earliest possible opportunity, with the Housing Section of Waterford County Council to discuss the likely terms of the Part V agreements. All applications, which are subject to the provisions of Part V, must be accompanied by either a certificate of exemption or a proposal to comply with Part V. It shall be a condition of any such permission issued that the developer enter onto a formal agreement with the Council not later than 8 weeks from the date of grant of the permission.

Policy H5

To require a 20% quota of social and/or affordable housing to be provided within housing developments on residentially zoned lands or on other land use zones, which allow for a mix of uses which including residential, in accordance with the options set out in Section 5.4.2 of the Plan.

Policy H6

To ensure that any development arising from Part V is integrated into the overall development and that it is not distinguishable in terms of the location, design or quality of the houses.

5.5 Special Needs Accommodation**5.5.1 Housing for the Elderly**

With an ageing population, the requirement of provision of housing for the elderly is increasing. The main thrust of the housing policy in this regard will be to enable elderly people to choose between adapting their homes for the increasing disabilities of old age or to move to accommodation more suited to their needs.

Grant aid is available through the *Scheme of Housing Aid for Older People*, which assists older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out, and the *Mobility Aids Grant Scheme*, which fast tracks grant aid to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems.

Priority will be given to improving the accommodation of the elderly who lack the basic amenities of an indoor toilet, hot and cold water and a bath or shower. Wherever possible, elderly people will be housed in their own area, though dependent elderly people in isolated rural areas should be encouraged to move to suitable accommodation in nearby villages and towns.

Key housing issues that should be taken into consideration in the provision of housing for older persons are location and connectivity (ease of access to local community facilities and services such as a shop, church, pub, access to public transport, integration into the community or neighbourhood), accessibility (topography of the site, design of the dwellings and their environment).



Ballymacarbry Sheltered Housing Development

Part M of the Building Regulations, 2001 provides mandatory instructions that all new housing (private, affordable and social) must be designed to enable adaptable/lifelong housing at a later date if necessary.

The provision of accommodation for the elderly may also take the form of Nursing homes or Retirement Villages. The standards for these are set out in Section 10.17, Development Standards.

5.5.2 Housing for Persons with Disabilities

Social and affordable housing for people with disabilities is required with respect to appropriate crisis units, sheltered and supported housing and independent living options. This housing should not be segregated from the community; rather it must be integrated into housing estates and into the core of towns and villages to allow for a fully inclusive society.

Housing for people with disabilities should meet the following requirements:

- **Location** – accessible to public transport and community facilities and services;
- **Access** - pedestrian safety and ease of access should be catered for by ensuring that pavements are dished and best access practice is adhered to. (Refer to Section 10.5 Development Standards);
- **Connectivity** – housing should be integrated into the community to avoid social exclusion and to provide a support network; and
- **Accessible design** - should suit the requirements of individual residents.

Meeting the housing needs of people with a disability may also take the form of adapting an existing dwelling. Part M of the Building Regulations, 2001 sets out the provision that must be made in a

building to enable people with disabilities to safely and independently gain access to, and use a building. Guidance on how the requirements can be met is set out in *Technical Guidance Document M - Access for people with Disabilities*.

Policy H7

To require all new dwellings to have an accessible design and be constructed in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations, 2001 or any subsequent revisions, to enable adaptable and lifelong housing.

5.5.3 Housing for the Homeless

It is an objective of the Council to accommodate all people who are homeless. A homeless forum has been established. The Housing Authorities will continue to monitor the homelessness position in the County and take appropriate action as required.

5.5.4 Traveller Accommodation

The Council has adopted a Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 – 2013 which has put in place the necessary procedures, measures, resources and facilities to meet the accommodation needs of Traveller families in the County Council and Dungarvan Town Council areas. The Council will, within the period of the Plan, endeavor to meet the accommodation needs of Traveller families resident in the County by promoting the full range of Social Housing Options as outlined in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication *Accommodation Options for Travellers*. Families with special needs will be taken account of in all building programmes.

Policy H8

To implement National Policy on Traveller Accommodation; *Accommodation Options for Travellers*, and to provide accommodation for travellers in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 – 2013.

5.5.5 Refugees

Persons who have been granted refugee status have automatic rights to apply and be assessed for local authority housing. Consideration should be given in the provision of housing for refugees in terms of

household size and structure and the need for access to social supports in terms of language, education, employment etc.

5.6 Voluntary Housing Organisations and the Co-operative Sector

The voluntary housing sector represents a potentially valuable resource within the County, where it is currently represented by Focus Ireland, Newgrove Housing Association and Respond. Voluntary housing bodies are assisted under the Capital Assistance Scheme with non-repayment capital funding and Rental Subsidy Scheme to provide accommodation to meet the special housing needs such as those of the elderly, people with disabilities, homeless persons or small families. The Council recognises the important role and the particular resources and experience that voluntary housing organisations and the co-operative sector brings to the housing of these groups.

Policy H9

To support voluntary housing associations and the co-operative sector in the provision of housing for elderly, people with disabilities, homeless persons or small families at appropriate locations and to further develop relationships with these organisations over the period of the Plan.

5.7 Building Re-use and Brownfield Site Development

The house vacancy rate in the County, according to the last census (2006) was 20%, whilst in fifteen Electoral Divisions more than a quarter of the housing stock was vacant. This is the result of the conversion of existing habitable dwellings to second and holiday homes and the construction of new holiday homes or houses built for investment purposes and left empty. The Council will encourage the re-use of vacant dwellings for use as permanent homes. Where appropriate, and subject to resources, the Council will acquire derelict or vacant land within towns and villages for the purposes of providing new dwellings.

The Council will also will encourage the utilisation and redevelopment of obsolete and vacant sites by developers in preference to green-field development.

5.8 Sustainable Building Design

In line with Council's Climate Change Strategy, the Council will encourage Sustainable Energy considerations in the construction and maintenance of housing.

These measures include:

- Locating dwellings close to services and employment sources;
- Optimising the energy performance of the building to improve energy efficiency;
- Making optimum use of renewable materials and reducing the need for the use of natural resources and non-renewable materials in the construction and maintenance of a building;
- Reducing the consumption of natural and scarce resources during the lifetime of the building;
- Minimizing waste production during construction and provision for recycling in the construction and maintenance of the building;
- Design for flexibility and future adaption to meet the changing needs of the occupants;
- Greater use of materials from local, sustainable sources, where available; and
- Other factors including daylight and solar gain, thermal insulation, heating systems, construction materials, water (conservation, recycling), and waste minimization.

The Council has prepared and will implement an Energy Efficiency Plan with the aim of increasing the energy rating in existing housing stock.

Policy H10

To promote and facilitate the development of energy efficient dwellings.

5.9 Housing Design Guidelines

All residential development in urban areas should have regard to the *Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide*, DoEHLG, May 2009 and *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best Practice Guidelines*, DoEHLG, 2007.

