

8. IMPLICATIONS OF POPULATION GROWTH

This Plan provides for a substantial growth, in relative terms, of population throughout the area. There is a need for some housing in the area and a great demand in the wider region, which is still within commuting distance to Dublin, with the provision of a fast connection by the N9. It is a national objective to direct future growth into existing settlements to restrict urban sprawl and ribbon development in the countryside. The villages of Ballitore, Moone and Timolin and to a lesser degree Crookstown are suitable locations for future growth. Naturally the villages will attract potential house buyers, because of their close location to the N9 and pleasant rural surroundings.

It is very likely that the majority of the new inhabitants will not be native to the region. They may be working in Dublin or other urban centres, those who cannot afford to buy a house in the city or do not want to live in the buzz of a city and are searching for affordable and quieter alternatives. In particular young families will be drawn to new housing schemes, which provide gardens, larger numbers of bedrooms and a safe environment for their children. However, their lifestyles will be urban and they will spend most of their time in large urban centres at work. This will give them little time and possibilities to meet their new neighbours and to integrate into the existing community.

Rural communities are, in general tight structures of social interaction and network. People know each other for a long time and close relationships exist between them. The sudden intrusion of large numbers of new inhabitants in these neighbourhoods can cause social tensions.

The majority of people who will buy a new house in the area will be young families. The percentage of a specific age group might rise significantly. An imbalance in age groups within a community can cause a lot of problems in the future. A strong generation will go through the facilities like a wave, raising demand first and leaving unneeded capacities behind in crèches, schools etc.

To avoid these negative effects of a sudden population growth, it is of major importance to phase the development carefully. The erection of new buildings should be carried out over a period to achieve a sustainable community with a healthy mix of age groups, social groups and to give the existing community time to integrate their new members gradually. Infrastructure and facilities can cope better if growth is well directed. Apart from careful phasing of development it is necessary to implement a broad mix of house types. Housing schemes with large numbers of single type and size houses should be prevented. Different kind of tenure, house sizes, house types can help to provide for a good mixture from the start. Sheltered housing, houses for disabled and elderly should be included in every scheme.

The Development Strategy should be reviewed every five years and revised if necessary. Economic or demographic changes might reduce the demand for housing. Open rural land is environmentally very valuable and its wilful destruction by needless building should be prevented.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

The Local Area Plan, when approved, becomes an integral part of the County Development Plan. The various recommendations will then have statutory status. It is likely that most developments which contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Plan, will require planning permission and so will be assessed through the normal Development Plan Control Procedures. This Plan therefore, provides a background against which individual planning applications can be assessed.

The future aim should be to preserve and enhance the quality of the villages and the rural area in general. This Plan defines the areas where there is potential for significant improvements and development. In carrying out development in these areas it is important that the guidelines and provisions of the Plan will be implemented gradually, on an individual basis over the next few years. Best results can be achieved if the awareness of the local communities can be raised, and the County Council is available as a competent partner and advisor. The South Kildare Development Association and the Ballitore Development Association are key components in achieving this.

10. DURATION OF PLAN

The Area Plan will remain in force until 2008 unless revoked or amended by the County Council (Section 18.4(a) Local Government Planning and Development Act 2000).

11. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL STANDARDS

All future development will be carried out in accordance with the development control standards as laid down in the County Kildare Development Plan, in addition to the specific guidelines laid down in the Local Area Plan.

12. Environmental Effects

General

The Planning and Development Act 2000, Section 19, Sub-section 4A states, “that a local area plan shall contain information on the key likely effects on the environment of implementing the plan”.

1. *Natural Environment:*

South Kildare area consists generally of high quality agricultural land, supporting both grazing and tillage activities. The River Griese is an important amenity feature, together with the minor rural roads, landscaping, roadside boundaries, etc. Hedgerows and trees encourage wildlife and a variety of plant species.

It is considered that the Plan in seeking to concentrate new developments within the existing centre will help to preserve, protect and enhance the existing natural environment.

2. *Built Environment:*

The improvements and developments within the existing settlement will contribute to their social and economic renewal.

The conservation and design guidelines will ensure that the architectural and historic village centres will be protected and enhanced in the context of future developments.

3. *Services:*

No environmental problems can be anticipated on the provision of foul, surface water, drainage, water supply and services generally, to facilitate further development and achieve the overall objectives of the South Kildare Area Plan.

4. *Social Environment*

The development within the existing towns will encourage the provision of additional facilities, e.g. creche, library, medical clinic etc., in locations where they can be most efficient. It is also consistent with Government Policy on Sustainable Development (1995) and in accordance with Agenda 21.

The encouragement of pedestrian and cycle facilities between the centres and throughout the area will make a valuable contribution to the local environment and also contribute towards sustainable development.

13. Housing Density and Residential Mix

The overall density proposed for infill sites in the village centres is approximately 8-14 dwellings per acre, depending on detail designs. On peripheral sites it is envisaged that densities of up to 6 dwellings per acre would be acceptable depending on detailed design and the nature of adjacent developments. It is envisaged that this will be achieved by a mix of dwelling types. The County Council will encourage a mix of residential units to suit various stages of peoples lives and market demands, including townhouses, traditional family houses and apartments, as appropriate.

A mix of affordable/social housing shall be provided, as appropriate, and in accordance with the provision of the County Kildare Housing Strategy and appropriate Government Policy, Social Housing – The Way Ahead (DOELG 1995) and Social Housing Design Guidelines (DOELG 1999).

The detailed design of the housing layouts will not be determined as part of this Area Plan but will be determined in planning applications for the area and any proposals will conform to the design and other guidelines as proposed in the Area Plan. Conventional suburban type developments within the village centres generally will not be acceptable.

14. Archaeology

All developments within the village centres, where considered appropriate, may be required to carry out an archaeological survey and assessment to the requirements of Duchas – The Heritage Service and Kildare County Council.

15. Services

All future major developments are dependant on the availability of services, drainage, water, etc. Developers will be required to contribute to the cost of providing such services. In particular, new developments must be phased in conjunction with the provision of adequate sewage treatment facilities. Any proposals for temporary treatment facilities which are put forward to the Sanitary Services Department for approval must be capable of being integrated into an overall permanent treatment system for the area. The Council will pursue the provision of the necessary facilities through the Serviced Land Initiative and any other options.

16. Phasing

Future development may have to be phased to suit the availability of adequate services and the provision of social and community facilities.