

CHAPTER 4

Housing



Aim: *To facilitate the provision of high quality residential developments at appropriate locations in line with the settlement strategy. To ensure the provision of appropriate densities at suitable locations; to include an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet different household needs; and to promote balanced and integrated communities.*

4.1 Background

The Council has statutory obligations to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the projected housing requirements of the county over the Plan period. Chapter 3 of this Plan has outlined the county settlement strategy, including the quantum of land required for residential purposes over the period 2011–2017.

The pattern of new house completions in the county from 1996–2008 is outlined in Figure 4.1 Housing completion rates in the county peaked in 2006, with a total of 4,804 residential units being built. The DoEHLG House Completion figures indicate that 1,811 new houses were built in 2008. Between the end of 2006 and 2008 the house completion rate in the county dropped by 62%, reflecting a pattern evident throughout the country as a whole.

Figure 4.1 House Completions Co. Kildare 1996–2008⁷



⁷ Source: Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government: Annual Housing Statistics Bulletins.

It is anticipated that the level of output will remain low for the period 2011/2012 with an increase anticipated over the short-term. The Council will facilitate housing provision by ensuring that sufficient land is zoned in line with the settlement strategy and through the implementation of a sustainable rural housing policy. Appropriate policies, objectives and design standards are also in place to ensure the delivery of quality homes.

4.2 Strategy

The strategy for the provision of housing is based on achieving the following aims:

- Provide sufficient zoned land to accommodate the growing population;
- Promote sustainable communities that deliver quality well-designed housing;
- Counteract social segregation and facilitate the development of balanced communities through promoting mixed housing development and to minimise the extent of further social housing where there is a disproportionate concentration of social housing in a particular area;
- Provide for changing household sizes and promote an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sizes, and tenures to facilitate the creation of balanced communities;
- Promote residential densities to ensure the efficient use of land at appropriate locations. The efficient use of lands for residential purposes shall not compromise the need for social inclusion and shall provide for an appropriate mix of housing types;
- Secure the implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy and Traveller Accommodation Programme;
- Provide for changing housing needs and promote the provision of affordable and social housing and housing for groups with particular needs; and
- Promote the consolidation of existing built-up areas by facilitating good quality appropriate infill development, whilst protecting essential amenities and valued open space.



4.3 Housing Location and Density

The DoEHLG's Guidelines for Planning Authorities on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009) outline sustainable approaches to the development of urban areas. Appropriate locations for new residential development are:

- Large towns: populations of 5,000 or more people.
- Small towns and villages: population ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 persons
- Towns and villages ranging in population from 400 to 2000 persons.

Having regard to the guidelines, Table 4.1 categorises locations appropriate for new residential development in large towns, small towns and villages with indicative density levels set out in Table 4.2.

Sites under each category will be identified, where appropriate, under each local area plan and individual density targets will be attributed to particular sites as appropriate. Higher residential densities will be encouraged only at appropriate locations, subject to appropriate design and amenity standards. Such development must ensure a balance between reasonable protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of the areas. Design principles are outlined in Chapter 15, Urban Design Guidelines and Chapter 19, Development Management Standards.

Table 4.1 Guidance on Appropriate Locations for New Residential Development (informed by DoEHLG's Guidelines for Planning Authorities on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009))

Locations Appropriate for New Residential Development

Town Centre and Brownfield Sites

Large towns often contain central sites of strategic importance, some of which may be brownfield in nature. These sites have the greatest potential for the creation of sustainable patterns of development. They can also assist in regeneration, making more intensive use of existing infrastructure, support local services and employment, encourage affordable housing provision and sustain alternative modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Public Transport Corridors

To maximise the return on transport investment, it is important that land use planning underpins the efficiency of public transport services by sustainable settlement patterns – including appropriate densities – on lands within existing or planned transport corridors. Walking distances from public transport nodes (e.g. stations /bus stops) shall be used in defining such corridors within local area plans. Higher densities shall be determined on a site by site basis for sites within 500 metres walking distance of a bus stop, or within 1km of a rail station with decreasing densities with distance away from such nodes. These densities shall take into account the capacity of public transport.

Inner Suburban / Infill

The existing built fabric of large towns often contains residential areas where additional dwellings can be accommodated without compromising the existing residential amenity or residential character of the area. The provision of additional dwellings within inner suburban areas of towns can be provided either by infill or by sub-division. Infill residential development may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, up to larger residual sites or sites assembled from a multiplicity of ownerships. Sub-division of sites can be achieved where large houses on relatively extensive sites can accommodate new residential development without a dramatic alteration in the character of the area or a negative impact on existing residential amenities. Sub-division shall be considered subject to safeguards regarding residential amenity, internal space standards, private and public open space, car parking and maintenance of the public character of the area.

Institutional Lands

Institutional lands may be located in suburban areas and characterised by large buildings set in substantial open lands which in some cases may offer recreational or amenity open space opportunity to the wider community. Where a local area plan has indicated that such lands should be developed for residential purposes, it may be appropriate to retain some of the open character of the lands. The quantum, type and nature of open space to be retained shall be determined by an assessment of the nature of the existing site and the quality and provision of existing or proposed open space in the area generally. Proposed development must also have regard to the policies and objectives for architectural and archaeological heritage set out in Chapter 12 of this Plan. The relevant local area plan shall set targets for density yields, recreational uses and urban form with a clear objective of retaining the open character. In the absence of such detail, any application for development of institutional lands shall be accompanied by a masterplan outlining proposals for the entire landholding.

Locations Appropriate for New Residential Development continued

Outer Suburban / 'Greenfield' Sites

Outer Suburban or 'Greenfield' sites are the open lands on the edge of large towns. The development of these sites may require the provision of new infrastructure, roads, sewers and ancillary social and commercial facilities, schools, shops, employment and community facilities. It is therefore necessary to achieve net residential densities that make efficient use of these lands in the context of their location and provide a variety of housing types in order to justify the development of these sites. In certain cases, to facilitate a choice of housing types within the county, limited provision may be made within large towns for lower density schemes provided that, within a neighbourhood or district as a whole appropriate densities are achieved.

Centrally located sites within Small Town / Village

The emphasis in designing and considering new proposals should be on achieving a good mixed quality development that reinforces the existing urban form, makes effective use of premium, centrally located land and contributes to a sense of place by strengthening, for example, the street pattern or creating new streets. Innovation and flexibility will be essential in the interpretation of standards so that they do not become inflexible obstacles to the achievement of an attractive village and small town character in new development.

Edge of centre sites within Small Town/Village

The emphasis is on achieving successful transition from central areas to areas at the edge of the smaller town or village. Development of such sites tends to be predominantly residential in character and given the transitional nature of such sites, densities in the range of 20–35 dwellings per hectare will be appropriate including a wide variety of housing types from detached dwellings to terraced type accommodation.

Edge of Small Town/Village

In order to offer an effective alternative to the provision of single houses in surrounding unserviced rural areas, it is appropriate to consider proposals for developments with densities of less than 15–20 dwellings per hectare along or inside the edge of smaller towns and villages, as long as such lower density development does not represent more than 20% of the total new planned housing stock of the small town or village in question. Such development also needs to ensure the definition of a strong urban edge that defines a clear distinction between urban and the open countryside. The quality of new development will also be key.

Rural Settlements

The emphasis is on the sequential development of lands in small rural settlements in a sequence extending outwards from the centre, with undeveloped lands closest to the settlement core being given first priority. In order to offer an effective alternative to the provision of single houses in surrounding unserviced rural areas, proposals for developments with densities of 15 dwellings per hectare will be considered. The sequencing of development should avoid significant "leap-frogging" where development of new residential areas takes place at some remove from the existing contiguous settlement. The overall expansion of larger rural settlements should proceed on the basis of a number of well-integrated sites within and around the village core.

Individual housing schemes will generally not be larger than about 10–12 units. A strong emphasis will also be placed on encouraging infill opportunities.

Table 4.2 Indicative Density Levels (informed by DoEHLG’s Guidelines for Planning Authorities on ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ (2009))

Category	Location for New Residential Development	General Density Parameters (Units per Ha)	
Large Towns (Pop >5,000)	Town Centre & Brownfield Sites	Site specific	Subject to the design principles and standards set out in Chapter 12 (Architecture & Archaeological Heritage), Chapter 16 (Urban Design Guide) and 19 (Development Management Standards) of this plan.
	Public Transport Corridors	50 units per ha	
	Inner suburban / infill	Site specific	
	Institutional lands	35–50 units per ha	
	Outer Suburban / ‘Greenfield’	30–50 units per ha	
Small Towns & Villages I (Pop 2,000–5,000) and Small Towns & Villages II (Pop 400–2,000)	Centrally located sites within Small Town/Village	30–40 units per ha	
	Edge of centre sites within Small Town/Village	20–35 units per ha	
	Edge of Small Town/Village	15–20 units per ha with lower density in some cases	
Rural Settlements (Pop 50–600)	Infill, backland and edge of centre sites within Rural Settlements	15 ha with lower density in some cases	

4.4 High Quality Design

The guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* published by the DoEHLG, identify sustainable neighbourhoods as areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure, combine to create places people want to live in. In planning for future development and in assessing future development proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that:

- The overall design approach is to create a community rather than a new housing development. While residentially zoned areas are intended primarily for housing development, a range of other uses, particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities, may be considered e.g. crèches, schools, nursing homes or elderly peoples’ homes, open space, recreation and amenity uses.
- To create high standards of layout, design, and landscaping, and to achieve a general segregation from roads used by through traffic from the outset.
- Appropriate provision is made for amenity and public open space as an integral part of new development proposals.
- The physical design of a proposed development should accord with the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 16 (Urban Design Guidelines) and the development standards set out in Chapter 19 (Development Management Standards) of this Plan.
- Proposed developments must also have regard to the policies and objectives for architectural and archaeological heritage set out in Chapter 12 of this Plan.
- Duplex Units will only be considered in very limited circumstances where it can be demonstrated that they are appropriately designed to the highest design standards.

The density levels set out in Table 4.2 are indicative and are subject to the design principles set out in Chapter 15 (Urban Design Guidelines), the development standards set out in Chapter 19 (Development Management Standards) and area specific densities set out in Local Area Plans / Village Plans.

4.4.1 Universal Design

High quality design should be guided by the principle of universal design – the design of an environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. The design of new residential communities should consider people’s diverse needs and abilities throughout the design process and design for adaptable environments that meet the needs of all. The universal design approach should be incorporated from the early stage of planning in order to reduce the need for costly and wasteful retrofits over the medium to long term.

4.5 Housing Mix

The average household size is continuing to decline with the average number of persons in private households in the county recorded as 3.01 in 2006, down from 3.19 in 2002. This trend indicates that a greater proportion of units to serve smaller settlements will be required in the future.

The mix of house types proposed in an area should therefore be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Consideration of the nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area;
- The desirability of providing for mixed communities;
- Provision of a range of housing types and tenures;
- The need to provide a choice of housing, suitable to all age groups and persons at different stages of the life cycle; and

- The need to cater for special needs groups such as the elderly, travellers and disabled and the marketability of different types of housing.

Housing variety and mix will be assessed when considering planning applications for multi-unit residential development. Where required a statement should detail the proposed housing mix and why it is considered appropriate, having regard to the issues outlined above.

4.6 Social and Affordable Housing

The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended requires each Local Authority to adopt a Housing Strategy for their administrative area. The Housing Strategy for County Kildare 2011–2017 is contained in Volume II. It has regard to national policies and guidelines on residential development and provides an estimate of existing and future need for social and affordable housing throughout the county.

The main purpose of the Housing Strategy is:

- To provide for social and affordable housing requirements within lands zoned for residential use, or a mixture of residential and other uses.
- To ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income by providing housing for a diverse range of housing needs.
- To address the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds by ensuring that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households.

The housing strategy outlines a 20% requirement for the provision of social and affordable housing. This may be provided in a number of ways:

- The transfer of completed dwellings on the site subject to the planning application.
- The transfer of fully or partially serviced sites on the site subject of the application.



- The transfer of a portion of the site which is the subject of the application.
- The payment of a monetary contribution.
- The transfer of serviced sites at another location.
- The transfer of land at another location.
- The transfer of completed dwellings at another location.

An agreement may provide for a combination of any of the above. It shall comply with the strategic objective of counteracting social segregation and facilitating the creation of balanced communities across the entire county. The agreement should also seek to avoid an over concentration of social housing in any particular town. Each proposal will be considered and assessed based on individual merit having regard to the housing strategy and in consultation with the planning authority.

4.7 Special Needs Housing

4.7.1 Special Needs Accommodation

Planning for the provision of housing for the overall population of the county includes provisions for the needs of persons with special needs, such as persons with physical disabilities and learning disabilities. The importance of access to public transport, local community services and facilities is a significant factor for a mobility-impaired person in improving quality of life. House design and compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations has expanded the range of options available to people with a disability. The Council will continue to address particular identified needs through the provision of purpose built, adaptable dwellings, where feasible.

4.7.2 Homelessness

The Council will continue to provide an important role alongside voluntary groups and other agencies in the provision of emergency accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of crisis facilities.

4.7.3 Elderly

The changing nature of the age profile of the county requires greater consideration of the housing needs of the elderly. Specific needs must be considered relating to access, public transport, provision of local services, medical care, security and personal safety among other issues. In this regard, dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes.

For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller or single storey dwelling or apartment unit). Chapter 11 of this Plan sets out the Council's policy in relation to nursing homes and elderly care facilities.

4.7.4 Traveller Accommodation

The Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the travelling community and it will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for travellers who are indigenous to the area. The Council will implement measures, as required by law and national policy, in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the Traveller Accommodation Programme, to provide accommodation for members of the travelling community.

This accommodation may be provided through the development of residential caravan sites/halting sites, or by housing, as may be appropriate. The Council currently has halting sites at Newbridge (Tankardsgarden), near Monasterevin (Cloncarlin), at Maynooth (Dublin road) and at Athy (Ardrew – within Athy Town Council). Group housing has been provided at Maynooth and Athy.

4.7.5 Student Accommodation

There are currently approximately 8,400 registered students attending the National University of Ireland (NUI) in Maynooth. NUI Maynooth has a target to reach 9,500 full time students over the short to medium term.

Purpose-built student accommodation is generally of a higher density with a range of ancillary facilities appropriate for student living. Student accommodation should be located convenient to the college, particularly by foot, bicycle and public transport and, generally, either within the college campus or appropriately zoned land within Maynooth town.

Kildare County Council will support the development of appropriately located and designed student accommodation to allow NUI Maynooth to continue to develop as a national and international centre for education, and research.

4.8 Housing in Existing Built-Up Areas

The development of new housing, which respects the amenity and character of the existing residential area and is coherent and well-designed, can contribute to enhancing the vibrancy and character of an existing area while also contributing to the efficient sustainable use of serviced lands.

4.8.1 Infill Development in Residential Areas

Infill developments are of limited scale. They may comprise small gap infill, unused or derelict land, backland areas, larger residual sites or sites assembled from multiple owners. A balance has to be struck between protection of amenities, privacy and established character and the need to provide residential infill. Innovative and contemporary design solutions will be encouraged to maximise the potential of the site, subject to the protection and enhancement of residential amenity.

4.8.2 Backland Development

The development of backland sites in a coherent and well-designed manner can contribute to enhancing the vibrancy and character of an existing settlement while also contributing to the efficient use of serviced lands. The development of backland sites on an individual basis (i.e. rear garden areas/ individual backlands with no frontage) can conflict with the established pattern and character of development in an area. Backland development will generally only be considered where the proposed development forms part of a comprehensive plan for development of the entire backland area.

4.8.3 Extensions to Dwelling Houses

Domestic extensions are an effective way for homeowners to provide extra space without having to move house when their accommodation needs change. Primarily the design and layout of extensions should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly as regards sunlight, daylight and privacy. Reference shall be made to Chapter 19, Development Management Standards.

4.8.4 Apartment Developments

The DoEHLG has issued guidelines *Sustainable Urban Housing, Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)*. The aim of these guidelines is to promote sustainable urban housing, by ensuring that the design and layout of new apartments will provide satisfactory accommodation for a variety of household types and sizes. Accordingly, these guidelines provide recommended minimum standards for:

- floor areas for different types of apartments,
- storage spaces,
- sizes for apartment balconies / patios, and
- room dimensions for certain rooms.

The provision of apartment schemes may be considered at appropriate locations in town centre, and specifically at locations close to public transport nodes or in exceptional circumstances where a significant demand for smaller units of accommodation is evident. Apartments within designated villages, rural settlements and rural nodes will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. For the purpose of this Plan a house and maisonette is defined as a dwelling with its own external access. An apartment or flat is a dwelling accessed from an internal lobby or hallway.

The design of apartment schemes should have regard to the provisions of Chapter 19 Development Management Standards in terms of layout, design, finishes and landscaping.

4.8.5 Family Flat

A 'family' flat refers to a temporary sub-division or extension of a single dwelling unit to accommodate a member of the immediate family for a temporary period (e.g. older parent or other dependent). Where it can be clearly established that there is a valid case, such development will be considered, provided that the proposal does not otherwise detract from the residential amenity of the area. Chapter 19 outlines Development Management Standards for such developments.

4.8.6 Sub-Division of Dwellings

New households in existing residential areas may be catered for through the sub-division of large houses on relatively extensive sites. The sub-division of dwellings will generally only be considered for exceptionally large houses on relatively extensive sites in urban areas that are well served by public transport and subject to adherence to all relevant Development Management Standards set out in Chapter 19.



4.9 Housing Policies in Towns/Villages

4.9.1 General Housing Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP 1: To ensure that sufficient and suitably located land is zoned to satisfy development needs within the period of this Plan and in accordance with the settlement strategy.
- HP 2: To implement the Kildare County Council Housing Strategy 2011–2017 prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- HP 3: To have regard to the provisions of the DoEHLG's *Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* and the accompanying *Urban Design Manual*, in assessing applications for housing development.
- HP 4: To require diversity in the form, size and type of dwelling within residential schemes.

4.9.2 Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP 5: To have regard to the DoEHLG Guidelines *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Design Guidelines* (2007), which provide guidance on the efficient use of land, infrastructure and energy, the design and orientation of dwellings, the optimum use of renewable sources of energy and the use of scarce natural resources in construction, maintenance and management of dwellings.
- HP 6: To encourage appropriate densities for new housing development in different locations through the local area plan process while recognising the need to protect existing residential communities and the established character of the area. Where appropriate local area plans may incorporate the need for the provision of additional guidance in the form of design briefs for important, sensitive or large scale development sites.
- HP 7: To recognise that lower densities in certain towns and villages may be appropriate on serviced land where the demand for the development of single houses in the rural area is particularly high.
- HP 8: To ensure that all new urban development is of a high design quality and supports the achievement of successful urban spaces and sustainable communities.
- HP 9: To require the submission of design statements with applications over 25 residential units in large growth towns/ moderate growth towns and small towns and greater than 10 units for villages and settlements.

4.9.3 Housing Mix

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP 10: To secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the county as a whole to meet the needs of the likely future population. A statement of mix may be required for multi unit schemes to demonstrate that the needs of the area are provided for within the scheme.
- HP11: To facilitate higher standard of apartments for life long living through the retrofitting and amalgamation of units where appropriate and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- HP 12: To require the submission of a *Statement of Housing Mix* for rural settlements over 10 units in order to ensure the specific housing needs of the settlement are catered for.

4.9.4 Special Needs Housing

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP 13: To provide adequate accommodation for Travellers in accordance with the Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- HP 14: To facilitate the provision of purpose built dwellings individually and within mixed schemes for those with special needs, including provision for the needs of the elderly, persons with physical disabilities and persons with learning disabilities and in conjunction with other voluntary bodies and the private sector.
- HP 15: To facilitate the development of appropriately located and designed student accommodation to allow NUI Maynooth to continue to develop as a national and international centre for further education and research.
- HP 16: To ensure the housing mix of new residential schemes takes account of the needs of the elderly in terms of appropriately designed and

sized units.

- HP 17: To provide for and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of the elderly and to encourage the provision of a range of housing options for elderly persons in central, convenient and easily accessible locations and to integrate such housing with mainstream housing where possible.
- HP 18: To provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of those with disabilities through the adaptation of appropriate accommodation.

4.9.5 Housing in Existing Built Up Areas

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP 19: To encourage the consolidation of existing settlements in the county through well designed, infill developments in existing residential areas, located where there are good connections to public transport and services, and which are compliant with the policies and objectives of this Plan.
- HP 20: To permit backland development generally only where development is carried out in a comprehensive redevelopment of the backland to secure a co-ordinated scheme. Each application will be considered on its merits.
- HP 21: To facilitate the extension of existing dwelling houses subject to standards outlined in Chapter 19 Development Management Standards.
- HP 22: To facilitate the provision of a family flat in circumstances where the planning authority is satisfied that there is a valid case and where the proposal has regard to the standards and requirements outlined in Chapter 19 Development Management.



HP 23: To facilitate sub-division of dwellings for exceptionally large houses on relatively extensive sites in urban areas that are well served by public transport and subject to adherence to all relevant Development Management standards set out in Chapter 19.

4.10 Housing Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

HO 1: To secure the implementation of the Housing Strategy 2011–2017 including the implementation of its policies and objectives, in particular through the reservation of 20% of land zoned solely for residential use, or a mixture of residential or other uses, to be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing provision.

HO 2: To allocate between social and affordable housing on a case by case basis depending on the identified social and affordable needs of the area within which the development is proposed to take place.

HO 3: To ensure that an appropriate mix of house types and sizes are provided in each residential development as part of the provision of social and affordable housing, where feasible.

HO 4: To provide adequate accommodation for Travellers in accordance with the Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme for County Kildare.

HO 5: To identify locations through the zoning of land in local area plans and village plans to cater for the needs of the elderly and promote co-location of other facilities where appropriate.

HO 6: To provide additional site specific guidance, including principles and policies, on urban design issues at a local level, through the local area plans as deemed appropriate.

HO 7: To carry out a survey of the existing housing stock as part of the review of Town Plans and LAPs and also to require this housing stock survey as part of the preparation of Masterplans and Action Area Plans within the county.

4.11 Rural Housing Provision

Aim: *To encourage the sustainable provision of one off rural housing in accordance with the settlement strategy and to ensure that development of rural areas takes place in a way that is compatible with the protection of key economic, environmental, natural and cultural heritage resources of the county.*

4.11.1 Context

As outlined in Chapter 3, population and housing targets in both urban and rural areas of the County have been allocated based on the strategic recommendations of the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010–2022*. As part of the settlement strategy, the rural countryside is allocated approximately 15% of the projected growth over the Plan period. The level of one-off dwellings permitted in the rural areas over the period 2005–2009 averages approximately 500 units per annum. This is 20% in excess of that anticipated over the period of this Plan.

Arising from an analysis of Census data it is evident that the scale of activity in the agricultural sector and level of employment in this area has dropped significantly, (Refer: Chapter 10 Rural Development). It is clear that the majority of rural residents have no fulltime employment association with the rural area within which they reside.

While there is a need to recognise the genuine needs of people living and working in rural areas and the contribution they make to rural community life, there is also a need to strike a reasonable balance between the need to support sustainable development, the diversification of the rural economy, the promotion of economic development, and the protection of the environmental and natural heritage resources of the county.

4.11.2 Policy Context

In recognition of the sustained pressure for one-off dwellings a number of policy documents have been issued over the past number of years. Key elements of the relevant policy documents are summarised in the following sections:

- The *NSS 2002–2020*, advises planning authorities to ensure that key assets in rural areas are protected and that account be taken of the different types of rural housing demands. It recognises that the demand for one off housing tends to come from two distinct areas – rural generated housing demand and urban generated housing demand.

Rural generated housing demand arises from persons who are indigenous to an area, have family links to the area and/or who work in a type of employment, intrinsic to the rural economy, which requires them to live in a rural area, to be close to their rural based employment.

Urban generated housing demand arises from persons who have no indigenous links with the rural area but who may currently live and/or work in the larger towns and villages or larger urban areas and who wish to live in a rural location.

- The *Regional Planning Guidelines 2010–2022* advise that where local needs assessment criteria have been satisfied and subject to satisfying good practices in relation to site location, landscape / environmental sensitivities and design, rural generated housing need should be accommodated where they arise.

- *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, issued by the DoEHLG in 2005 identify that Kildare falls within the areas under strong urban influence and also within the stronger rural areas. The guidelines advise that only people who are part of the rural community are facilitated for one-off housing and that there is careful management of the rural environs of major urban areas to ensure their orderly development in the future.
- The DoEHLG *Circular Letter SP5/08 (2007)* provides advice and guidance in relation to local need and occupancy conditions.

4.11.3 Rural Housing Strategy

The focus of this rural strategy is to facilitate the legitimate needs of rural Kildare people and / or those who by their occupation or employment, can make a significant contribution to community life in the county. It is equally also important to recognise the role of the rural countryside in the economic development of the county and the need to protect the rural area as an environmental and economic resource.

This strategy seeks to:

- Formulate policies which guide residential development to the most appropriate locations in rural areas, in the interests of protecting natural and manmade assets. Key assets in rural areas such as water quality, natural / cultural heritage and the quality of the landscape must be protected;
- Apply appropriate policy criteria to regulate the provision of rural housing in accordance with the relevant national and regional guidelines; and
- Ensure good practices regarding site location, landscape / environmental sensitivities, design, layout, access, drainage and impacts on soils, flood risk assessment and management, water table and water quality.

4.11.4 Local Need Criteria

As the resources of the county are limited there is a need to manage the demand for rural housing in a sustainable manner. In this regard, rural generated housing demand will be managed having regard, *inter alia*, to the applicant's local need, together with the protection of key economic, environmental, natural and heritage assets, such as the road network, water quality, important landscapes, habitats and the built heritage.

A schedule of Local Need is outlined at Table 4.3. It contains categories of local need, one of which must be complied with in order to satisfy the Council of an applicant's need for a dwelling. These categories should be read in conjunction with Map 4.1 (Rural Housing Policy Zones).

4.11.5 Rural Policy Zones

To facilitate the management of rural one off housing, Map 4.1 identifies two rural policy zones which have been identified on the basis of a number of key considerations. These comprise:

- (i) Consideration of environmental sensitivities as informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment which divides the county into four environmentally sensitive areas comprising:
 - Most sensitive being located to northwest of the county;
 - Sensitive being located to the east of the county, along the border with Wicklow;
 - Robust being located to the mid/south west of the county; and
 - Most robust area comprising the most populated areas in the mid/north east of the county (see Chapter 2).
- (ii) Consideration of landscape character areas and landscape sensitivities (see Chapter 14). A landscape sensitivity rating is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate

change or intervention without suffering unacceptable impacts. The sensitivity of the landscapes in the county is rated as low, medium and high. In general, the uplands and river valleys / water corridors have been given a high rating, transition lands, a medium rating and the lowland plains and boglands a mix of low and medium rating.

Additional to and located within the Landscape Character Areas, are the Areas of High Amenity. These are classified because of their outstanding natural beauty and/or unique interest value and are generally sensitive to the impacts of development and comprise the Curragh and environs, Pollardstown Fen; River Liffey Valley and Barrow Valley, Grand and Royal Canal corridors and the East Kildare Uplands.

- (iii) The ability of the rural area to absorb further development. This has been informed by considerations of the density of development arising from the 2006 Census and the Geo-Directory 2008 which maps one-off dwellings throughout the county. The highest concentrations of population are located in the north east of the county around the towns of Leixlip, Maynooth, Celbridge and Clane and further south in the areas surrounding the towns of Naas and Newbridge and a small pocket around Athy. There is evidence of significant one-off dwellings in the rural environs of the main towns and villages, including towns such as Allenwood, Athy, Celbridge, Clane, Derrinturn, Kilcock, Kilcullen, Kildare, Leixlip, Maynooth, Newbridge, Prosperous, Rathangan and Sallins and outside the smaller rural villages such as Allen, Caragh, Carbury, Cutbush, Kilmeague, Nurney, Rathcoffey, Suncroft and Two Mile House and in particular along the regional and local roads serving these areas.

Consideration of the foregoing results in a categorisation of the county into rural areas with particular characteristics. These characteristics have informed the classification of the county into the following *Rural Housing Policy Zones* (See Map 4.1):

- Rural Housing Policy Zone 1: Northern, central and eastern areas of the county (along the border with Wicklow) – more populated areas with higher levels of environmental sensitivity and significant development pressure.
- Rural Housing Policy Zone 2: South west of the county – areas under pressure for development but with lower concentrations of population and lower levels of environmental sensitivity.

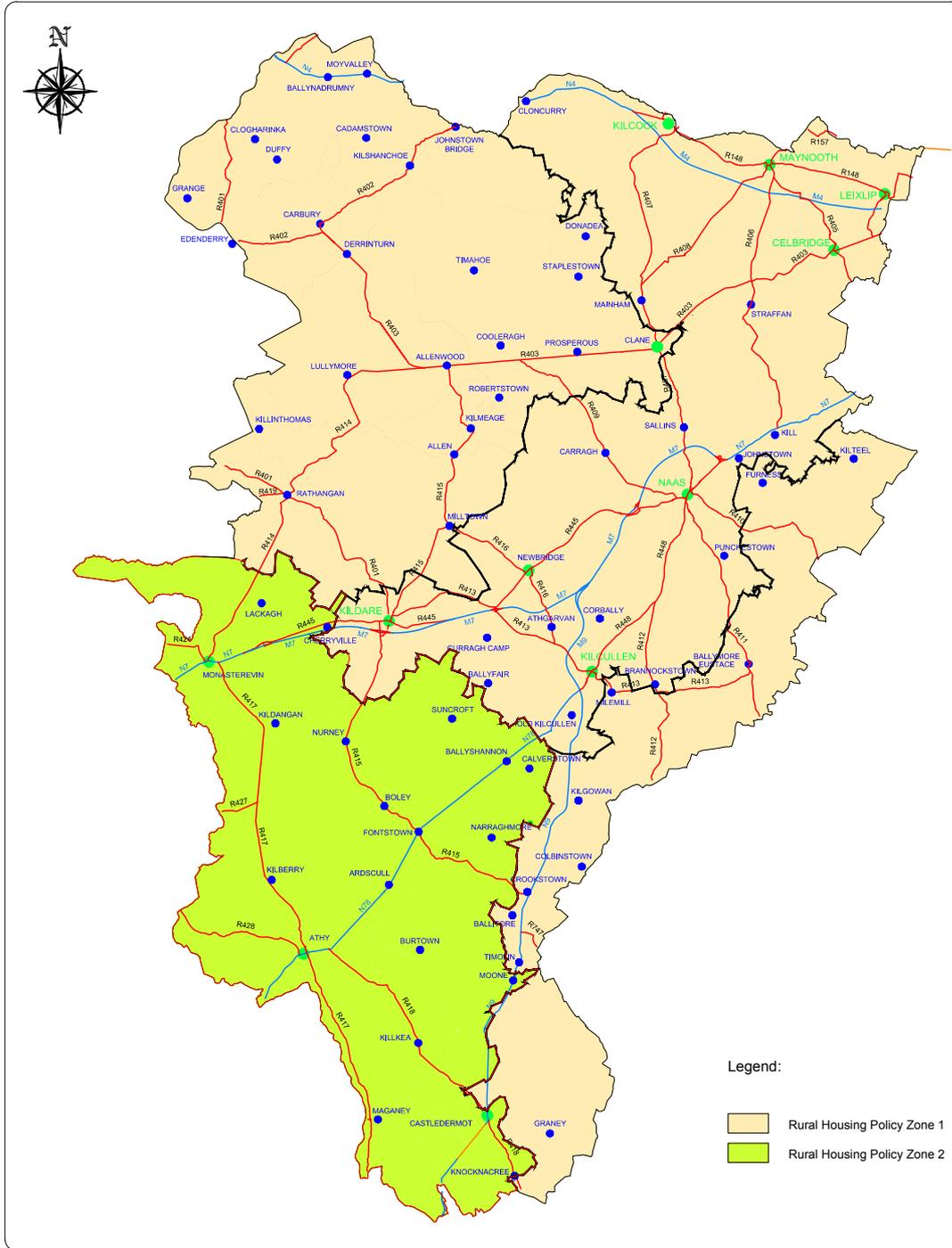
The two Rural Housing Policy Zones have different local need criteria, which have been tailored in accordance with the sensitivity of the location (see Table 4.3). Applicants for one-off dwellings must meet one of the local need criteria in order to be considered eligible for a one off rural house.



Table 4.3 Schedules of Local Need

Rural Housing Policy Zone 1	Rural Housing Policy Zone 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons engaged full time in agriculture (including commercial bloodstock / horticulture), wishing to build on their own landholding and who can demonstrate that they have been engaged in farming at that location for a continuous period of over 7 years, prior to making the application. • Persons who have grown up or spent substantial periods of their lives, (12 years), living in the area, as members of the rural community, seeking to build on family landholding or on a site within 5 km of the family home, and currently living in the area. • Persons who have grown up or spent substantial periods of their lives (12 years) living in the area, who have moved away and who now wish to return to reside near to, or to care for, immediate family members, seeking to build on the family landholding or on a site within 5 km of the original family home. Immediate family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or guardian. • Persons employed full time in farming (agriculture, bloodstock etc) in the locality, within 5 km of the site, where they need to reside close to their employment and have been engaged in such employment, at that location, for a continuous period of over 7 years, prior to making the application. • Persons who can satisfy the Planning Authority of their commitment to operate a small scale, full time business from their proposed home in the rural area and that the business will contribute to and enhance the rural community and that the nature of such business/employment is more appropriate to a rural location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons whose primary employment is in agriculture who wish to build on their own holding and who can demonstrate that they have been engaged in farming for over 5 years. • Persons who have grown up or who have spent substantial periods of their lives (c. 12 years) living in rural areas in Kildare as members of the rural community and who seek to build on their family landholding and who currently live in the area. Where no land is available in family ownership, a site near the family residence (8km) may be considered. • Persons who have grown up or who have spent substantial periods of their lives (c. 12 years) living in rural areas in Kildare as members of the rural community who have left the area but now wish to return to reside near (8 km) other immediate family members or to care for elderly immediate family members. Immediate family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or guardian. • Persons whose full time employment is in the commercial bloodstock industry, forestry or horticulture and who can demonstrate a need to live in a rural area in the immediate vicinity of their employment in order to carry out their employment and that they have been engaged in this form of employment for a period of over 5 years. • Persons who have been in employment in an occupation essential for the rural community and/or economy for 5 continuous years, where their employment is located within 8 km of the site, who can demonstrate a functional need to reside in proximity to their employment and who have not previously been granted permission for a rural dwelling. • Persons who can satisfy the Planning Authority of their commitment to operate a small scale, full time business from their proposed home in the rural area and that the business will contribute to and enhance the rural community and that the nature of such business/employment is more appropriate to a rural location.

Map 4.1 Rural Housing Policy Zones




Kildare County Council
 Planning & Economic
 Development Department
 Aras Chill Dara,
 Naas, Co Kildare.

Kildare County Development
 Plan 2011 - 2017
 Rural Housing Policy Zones

Scale: N.T.S.	Map Ref.: 4.1
Date: 2-May-2011	Drawing No.: 200/09/396
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This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the written statement	

4.12 Rural Housing Policies

In order to maintain effective control over the number of one off houses permitted in the county, the Council will permit certain categories of applicant, subject to the normal siting and design considerations.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RH 1: To ensure that the planning system guides development to the appropriate locations in rural areas thereby protecting natural and man-made assets in those areas.
- RH: 2 To protect the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the county.
- RH 3: To implement policies in relation to rural areas to meet the needs of the indigenous rural population and those working in rural areas.
- RH 4: To manage the development of one off housing in conjunction with the rural housing policy zone map (Map 4.1) and accompanying Schedules of Local Need (Table 4.3). Documentary evidence of compliance with the rural housing policy must be submitted as part of the planning application, including a separate statement by the applicant on the need to reside in the area. Applicants must demonstrate, depending on the location of the site that they comply with one of the categories outlined in Table 4.3.
- RH 5: To ensure that, notwithstanding compliance with the local need criteria, applicants comply with all other normal siting and design considerations including the following:
- The location and design of a new dwelling shall take account of and integrate appropriately with its physical surroundings and the natural and cultural heritage of the area. Development shall have regard to Chapter 16, Rural Design Guidelines.
 - The protection of features that contribute to local attractiveness including; landscape features, historic and archaeological landscapes, water bodies, ridges, skylines, topographical features, geological features and important views and prospects.
- The capacity of the area to absorb further development. In particular, the following factors will be examined; the extent of existing ribbon development in the area, the degree of existing haphazard or piecemeal development in the area and the degree of development on a single original landholding.
 - The ability to provide safe vehicular access to the site.
 - The ability of a site in an unserviced area to accommodate an on-site waste water disposal system in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009), the County Kildare Groundwater Protection Scheme, and any other relevant documents / legislation as may be introduced during the Plan period;
 - The ability of a site in an unserviced area to accommodate an appropriate on-site surface water management system in accordance with the policies of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (2005), in particular those of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS); and
 - The need to comply with the requirements of *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in November 2009
- RH 6: To restrict new accesses for one-off dwellings onto regional roads, where the 80km/hr speed limit applies in order to avoid the premature obsolescence of regional roads, (see Chapter

6), through the creation of excessive levels of individual entrances and to secure investment in non-national roads. Where applicants comply with Policy RH 4 and cannot provide access onto a nearby county road and therefore need to access a Regional Road, permission will only be granted to maximise the potential of an existing entrance and the onus will be on applicants to demonstrate that there are no other accesses or suitable sites within the landowner's landholding.

RH 7: To prohibit residential development on a landholding, where there is a history of development through the speculative sale of sites, notwithstanding the applicant's compliance with the local need criteria.

RH 8: To restrict occupancy of the dwelling as a place of permanent residence for a period of seven years to the applicant / occupant who complies with the relevant provisions of the local need criteria.

RH 9: To require applicants to demonstrate that they are seeking to build their first home in a rural area in Kildare for their own full time occupation. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have not been previously granted permission for a one off rural dwelling in Kildare and have not sold this dwelling or site on to an unrelated third party. Exceptions to this policy may be made in exceptional cases, where an applicant is acting on foot of a Court order. Documentary evidence will be required in all instances.

RH 10: To recognise that exceptional health circumstances, supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical practitioner, may require a person to live in a particular environment or close to family support. Housing in such circumstances will generally be encouraged in areas close to existing services and facilities and in Rural Settlements as opposed to the rural countryside. All planning permissions for

such housing granted in rural areas shall be subject to an occupancy condition.

RH 11 To control the level of piecemeal and haphazard development of rural areas close to urban centres and settlements having regard to potential impacts on:

- The orderly and efficient development of newly developing areas on the edges of towns and villages;
- The future provision of infrastructure such as roads and electricity lines; and
- The potential to undermine the viability of urban public transport due to low density development.

RH 12: To discourage ribbon development (defined as five or more houses alongside 250 metres of road frontage)⁸. The Council will assess whether a given proposal will exacerbate such ribbon development, having regard to the following:

- The type of rural area and circumstances of the applicant;
- The degree to which the proposal might be considered infill development;
- The degree to which existing ribbon development would coalesce as a result of the proposed development; and
- Local circumstances, including the planning history of the area and development pressures.

Notwithstanding the above, special regard will be given to the circumstances of immediate family members of a landowner on single infill sites in a line of existing dwellings with 5 or more houses alongside 250 metres of road frontage.

8 Appendix 4 – Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005).

RH 13: To encourage the provision of a recessed cluster form of development. The cluster shall be appropriately set back into the landscape from the public road. Clusters shall not exceed five houses and will be subject to normal, planning, siting, design and local need considerations. Where there is a likelihood of more than one applicant seeking planning permission over a period of time, the Council will engage with the landowner to provide for an appropriate site layout capable of accommodating a recessed cluster development.

RH 14: To only positively consider family members for backland development. Such applications shall be explicitly supported by other family members with documentary evidence to this effect. The proposed development shall have no negative impact on third parties/ neighbouring property owners and viable sites with sufficient independent percolation areas will be required in order to meet technical guidelines. Sufficient screening will be required to screen the house from adjacent homes and this has to be in place prior to occupation of the house. Single storey bungalow type houses only will be allowed in such backland locations to limit visual impact and overlooking.

RH 15: To strictly control developments which require vehicular access from public roads that were formerly towpaths or from existing towpaths along the Grand Canal and Royal Canal. This is in addition to restrictions relevant to the Canals' designation as Natural Heritage Areas. It is policy to consider housing applications for established families only along roads that were formerly towpaths along the Canals and that such developments will be strictly controlled.

4.12.1 Refurbishment of Existing Dwellings

It is policy of the Council:

RH 16: To promote the re-use and sensitive restoration of existing dwellings, particularly those of traditional vernacular architecture. Regard should be had to Kildare County Council's "*Reusing Farm Buildings – A Kildare Perspective*", (2006).

RH 17: To encourage the sensitive restoration of a derelict⁹ traditional vernacular dwelling as an alternative to the construction of a one-off dwelling elsewhere. The vernacular dwelling must be capable of being suitably restored to habitable accommodation in keeping with its original character. Documentary evidence to this effect, including the submission of a structural survey and photographs must accompany an application. The applicants or proposed occupants will not be required to comply with local need criteria, identified in the Plan (Table 4.3). Normal planning, siting and design considerations will be taken into consideration.

⁹ The structure, including walls must be intact. Structure must be capable of restoration.

4.12.2 Replacement of Existing Dwellings

It is the policy of the Council:

- RH 18: To accept the replacement of a dwelling other than a vernacular dwelling in circumstances where such a dwelling house is habitable, subject to the following:
- a) The structure must last have been used as a dwelling and the internal and external walls and roof must be intact.
 - b) A report from a suitably qualified competent person shall be submitted to verify that the dwelling is habitable but that replacement of the dwelling is the most sustainable option.
 - c) Documentary evidence of the most recent date of occupation should be submitted with the application.
 - d) The scale, character and design of the proposed replacement house shall be appropriate to the character of the area and existing development in the vicinity.
 - e) Normally a condition to demolish the existing dwelling shall be included in any grant of permission.
 - f) To require applicants to comply with the local need criteria identified in the Plan. Normal planning considerations will be taken into account in the assessment of planning applications for replacement dwellings.
 - g) In cases where an applicant/occupant wishes to replace an existing habitable dwelling on the same footprint and of the same floor size as the original dwelling, there will be no requirement to comply with the local need criteria identified in the Plan.

4.12.3 Replacement of Derelict Dwellings

It is the policy of the Council:

- RH 19: To facilitate the sensitive replacement of a structurally unsound derelict dwelling¹⁰ as an alternative to the construction of a one off dwelling elsewhere in the countryside. The scale of the replacement dwelling shall have regard to the scale of the existing dwelling to be replaced and site size. Documentary evidence in the form of a structural survey and photographs shall be submitted to accompany the application. The proposed applicant / occupant shall comply with local need criteria identified in the Plan and shall use the dwelling for his/her own occupation and not for resale.

4.12.4 Housing and Bloodstock Applications

It is the policy of the Council:

- RH 20: That planning applications for rural dwellings (or other development), which include the establishment of a commercial bloodstock enterprise element on site, will generally be favourably considered, where the landholding comprises a minimum of 5ha. All other local need, siting and design considerations will be taken into account in assessing the application.

4.12.5 Areas Bordering Neighbouring Counties

Where an applicant seeks permission for a one-off house on family land in County Kildare but is indigenous to a neighbouring county, the Council will consider facilitating such applicants.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RH 21: To assess applications for one-off housing, in areas bordering neighbouring counties, where the proposed site is located on family land within County Kildare, at a distance of up to

¹⁰ Structure in a ruinous or dangerous condition, incapable of restoration.

5km from the county boundary and to facilitate applicants who can demonstrate that no suitable family owned site is available in the adjoining county and that all other aspects of rural housing policy including local need*, siting and design are complied with. The applicant shall also fully demonstrate that they are building their first rural dwelling and that it will be for their permanent place of residence.

** Applicants will be required to demonstrate that their local need albeit relevant to the adjoining county, is similar to that required under Table 4.3 (Schedule of Local Need), with appropriate supporting documentation demonstrating same.*

4.12.6 Rural Nodes

Rural nodes, (see Table 4.4) comprise largely unserviced areas with limited social and community infrastructure. It is anticipated that each rural node can cater for a 10–15% population growth from their current population base over the period of the plan. Rural nodes are designated for limited development at a sustainable scale for immediate local need through the development of clusters.

Table 4.4 Rural Nodes

Ballyroe	Killina
Ballyshannon	Kilshanchoe
Ballyteague	Lackagh / Mountrice
Booleigh	Lullymore
Cadamstown	Newtown
Carbury	Newtownmoneenluggagh
Castlemitchell	Ticknevin
Clogherinka	Timahoe
Clongorey/Blacktrench	Tipperkevin
Ellistown	Tirmoghan
Kildoon	Williamstown
Kilkea	

It is the policy of the Council:

RH 22: To facilitate the following types of applications for housing in the rural nodes:

- Individual one-off houses subject to applicants meeting the local need criteria identified in the Plan (refer to Map 4.1 and Table 4.3).
- Small scale clusters of dwellings / serviced sites of not more than 5 housing units for applicants / occupants complying with local need criteria (refer to Map 4.1 and Table 4.3), and subject to the provision of appropriate physical infrastructure.

RH 23: To encourage design and layouts to have regard to the design principles outlined in Chapter 16, Rural Design Guidelines.

RH 24: To ensure that all new developments in the rural nodes, particularly cluster development, contribute to and integrate successfully with the existing settlement and to promote the development of central brownfield sites, if existing, as appropriate.

RH 25: To require, in all cases, that special care is taken to protect the architectural and environmental quality identifying the character of the existing settlement form.

4.12.7 Specialised Care Facilities

It is the policy of the Council:

RH 26: To manage the provision of specialised care facilities, such as care homes, nursing homes etc in rural areas by encouraging applicants to locate in villages and settlements where services/facilities are more readily available and accessible.

4.12.8 Holiday Homes

It is the policy of the Council:

RH 27: To facilitate well located and appropriately scaled holiday home developments in locations that can best accommodate them, such as villages and settlements, where services / facilities are more readily available and accessible.

RH 28: To restrict tourist accommodation on greenfield sites in the rural countryside. However, some tourist development, by its nature, may require a rural location and in this regard consideration may be given to:

- (i) The re-use of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for owner run agri-tourism enterprises. It will normally be a condition of permission that housing associated with agri-tourism enterprises should be retained within the farm complex ownership and shall not be sold.

- (ii) Housing for tourists at golf courses, established equestrian centres, or as part of a major integrated tourism development proposals will only be acceptable in the rural countryside in exceptional circumstances where the proposal is of such strategic significance that it is of benefit on a county, regional or national scale. In such circumstances, all housing shall be retained within the ownership of the tourism enterprise and shall not be sold.

RH 29: To require applications for holiday home development in demesne areas to be accompanied by an overall Masterplan for the entire demesne landscape.

RH 30: To require planning permission for holiday home and tourist development on unzoned lands to be subject to an agreement pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, prohibiting the sale of individual units.

4.13 Rural Housing Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RO 1: To monitor and map the trends and take up of one off housing in rural areas and rural nodes during the period of the Development Plan as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of the rural housing policy.

RO 2: To implement the provisions of the Rural Housing Policy through the management of the provision of one-off housing in order to protect the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the county, in conjunction with providing for rural housing for those persons who comply with the “Local Need” provision of the plan.

