

Thomastown

C o u n t y K i l k e n n y



LAP - Draft
Local Area Plan

July 2008



Kilkenny County Council
Forward Planning

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 How to Use this Plan

This Proposed Local Area Plan (LAP) for Thomastown puts forward ideas and proposals to guide the physical land use development of the town over the next six years. It is an important statutory document and will affect all those who live in Thomastown or have an interest in its development.

This Plan is the main public statement of local planning policies for Thomastown and contains guidance on:

- Where certain types of development should take place within the town;
- The standards that are required for such development;
- Illustrative ideas for the appropriate form of new development;
- Which areas are zoned for different uses; and
- Which buildings, trees, views or sites are of merit and need to be protected.

The LAP is prepared under a number of Section headings as follows:

Section 1 identifies the Plan area and considers the relationship between this LAP and other relevant plans and strategies; introduces the LAP in terms of its purpose and its legal basis; sets out the context of the town in relation to its geographical location, its physical setting and function, and the principal socio-economic factors influencing its future development; and provides an appraisal of the historical background and existing land use activities including the settlement structure, access and movement, community services, amenities and recreation, and the resultant planning issues.

Section 2 sets out a 'vision' for Thomastown, based on the analysis of issues identified in the previous Section, and introduces the objectives and policies for the town for the next 6 years which aim to achieve the consolidation of the urban area, encourage a diverse and vibrant local economy, respond to a strong sense of community, and facilitate an easily accessible town and a sustainable community.

Section 3 outlines the Land Use Zoning Objectives and defines the types of development that would be appropriate (in principal) in each zoning category.

Section 4 provides detailed development management guidelines necessary to achieve the Policies and Objectives described in Section 2. It also comprises the proposed Urban Development Framework, with development principles for the key identified development areas. It introduces specific site development briefs where opportunities for urban renewal or strategic development opportunities have been identified through the consultation and the plan review process.

Section 5 sets out how the plan will be implemented over its six-year period.

Appendix 1 contains the following Maps:

Map 1: Land Use Zoning Plan

Map 2: Natural Heritage

Map 3: Built Heritage

Map 4: Urban Development Framework Plan

Appendix 2 contains the following Lists:

- List 1: Record of Protected Structures
- List 2: Record of Recorded Monuments and Places
- List 3: List of Native Trees and Shrubs

1.2 Legal Basis and Purpose of the Local Area Plan

As part of Kilkenny County Council's settlement strategy in the County Development Plan (CDP) 2008 it is the policy of the Council to carry out an extensive programme of Local Area Plans for settlements throughout County Kilkenny. The Thomastown Local Area Plan (LAP) is part of this policy initiative.

The legal basis for the LAP is provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Sections 18 and 19). The Act makes provision for the preparation of LAPs for any part of the functional area of a planning authority. LAPs must be consistent with the objectives of the CDP, and must contain a written statement and maps indicating the objectives of the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies, including detail on community facilities and amenities and on standards of design of developments and structures.

The policies and objectives set out in the LAP remain in effect for a six year period but can be subject to amendment or review during this time where the County Council consider relevant in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the town. The LAP will cease to have effect in respect of the area where it is inconsistent with the provisions of the CDP as adopted. A LAP must be reviewed at least six years from the making of the previous LAP.

In the text of this plan the LAP itself maybe referred to as "the Plan" or "this Plan", and "the Council" or "the Planning Authority" will mean Kilkenny County Council.

The purpose of the LAP is to take a long-term view of the future development of Thomastown in order to manage change in the physical environment and provide for new development in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The Proposed LAP therefore sets out planning policies and objectives that articulate the vision for the future of the town. Although the lifetime of the LAP is for the next six years, the strategy is also intended to provide the foundation that will shape the future development of Thomastown beyond 2014.

The Main Purposes of the LAP:

- To identify key development issues informed by statutory requirements, issues from the Council's perspective and community and stakeholder participation;
- To develop policy objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town that are consistent as far as possible with the County Development Plan 2008, National Plans, Strategies and Policies;
- To provide a detailed and consistent framework for the use of land and the management and regulation of development that will guide planning decisions;
- To provide a basis for co-coordinating public and private development throughout the area;
- To ensure public participation through the statutory process governing its preparation; and
- To inform local communities on how their interests will be affected.

1.3 The Plan Area

The extent of the LAP boundary for Thomastown has been determined by the pattern of the existing urban area (including the railway), the preferred route corridor of the Proposed Relief Road, and the projected land use requirements for the period of the Plan.

The total LAP area extends to approximately 282 hectares (697 acres).

1.4 Locational Context

Thomastown is County Kilkenny's largest town, located at the crossing of the N9 National Primary Road linking Waterford to Dublin, the R700 from Kilkenny to New Ross and the R703 from Thomastown to Graiguehanamanagh and Ballybrophy. The town is located approximately 16km south west of Kilkenny City and 32km north east of Waterford City. The Mount Juliet Estate and Championship Golf Club lie around 6.5km to the east of the town. Thomastown also benefits from being located on the main Waterford/Dublin bus route and train line.

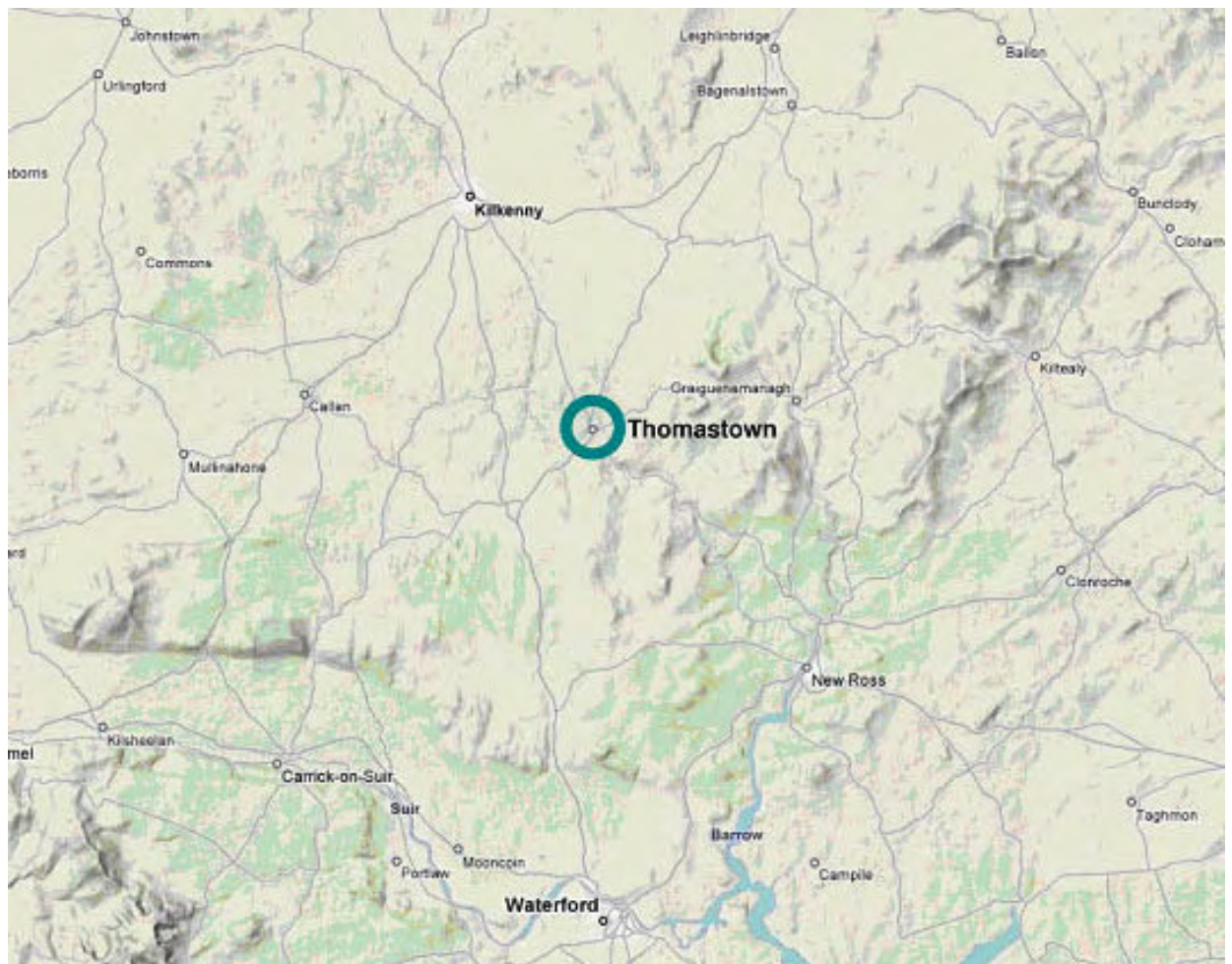


Figure 1: Thomastown Locational Context

1.5 Historical Development

Thomastown was named after Thomas Fitzanthy Walsh, Anglo-Norman Seneschal of Leinster - the Irish name being *Baile Mhic Andain* (Town of the son of Anthony). He is

recognized for his role in commissioning the 13th century wall around the town fortified by 14 towers, primarily to protect the religious house and castle built therein. The ruins of the church and an ancient High Cross still exist. The town was originally called Grennan but it was later renamed Thomastown after its founder.

The medieval town developed from its location as an important crossing point on the River Nore. During the first 100 years or so the settlement grew to about 1,000 persons, secured by the town wall. An area of approximately 16 acres was enclosed within the walls and it developed as an important market town for the rural hinterland. Livestock and farm produce were sold there until the mid-1950s in the main street (i.e. Market Street). Whereas the northern and eastern walls have now been lost, much of the western range survives (although in poor condition).

Other surviving features of the town's medieval defences are the Castle and the Tower House on either side of the Bridge, the remains of a circular tower on the western side and, behind the tennis court, a square tower which formed the north-west corner of the defences. Grennan Castle dates to the 13th century and comprises a 3-storey Norman structure attributed to Thomas FitzAnthony. It remained in good repair until the beginning of the 19th century.



Sweetman's Castle and line of western Town Walls

Jerpoint Abbey, 2km south of Thomastown on the N9, is the area's most notable historical feature, constructed around 1160 by the King of Ossory, Donal MacGillpatrick, for the Benedictine monks. In 1180 it was taken over by Cistercian monks from Baltinglass Abbey. By 1228 there were 36 monks and 50 brothers in the Abbey. It was self-contained, and included its own gardens, watermills, infirmary, cemetery, kitchens, granary, stables and other outbuildings. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540, the Abbey was granted on lease to James, the Earl of Ormond, by the English crown. The lease included around 6,000ha of land belonging to the Abbey, watermills, cottages, weirs, fisheries and a castle. The

extent of the remains of the Abbey and the quality of its ornamentation surpasses many other Irish foundations.



Jerpoint Abbey



Milling was important for the development of the town, and at its peak there were 12 water-powered mills in the parish producing grain and cloth. The last working mill in Thomastown was closed in 1963. Three notable examples of mill buildings survive upstream from the bridge.



Flour mill on island of River Nore

Fishing was also an important activity in the history of the town, mainly by fishing weirs or traps, and later by snap nets. Since 1947, only rod and line angling is permitted. The River Nore remains one of the most important salmon fisheries and spawning waters in the country, and attracts an important fishing tourism industry. The river also provided an important boat trade for produce carried to and from the port at New Ross. To help arrest a decline in trade at the end of the 18th century, due to problems with the flow of the Nore River, there was an attempt to build a canal from Kilkenny to New Ross, which was superseded by the arrival of the railway in 1848.



Figure 2: Historic OS Map (1837-1842)

1.6 Function

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) which sets out Government policy in relation to achieving balanced regional development over a twenty year time frame up to 2020, identifies Waterford as the Gateway for the region with Kilkenny and Wexford acting as Hubs which will support the national and international role of the gateways and in turn energise smaller towns and rural areas within their sphere of influence. Thomastown is the only other town in County Kilkenny that is recognised specifically in the NSS. It is identified as a town of equivalent importance for the Region to Tipperary Town, Cahir and Cashel (South Tipperary), Bagnelstown and Tullow (Carlow) and Gorey (Wexford), having a population of between 1,500 and 5,000 persons. The strategy proposes that the strengths of these towns should be capitalised on through, amongst other things, planning and development promotion activities.

The South East Regional Planning Guidelines (SERPG) identifies six District Towns with populations of between 1,500 and 3,000. District Towns are targeted for growth as centres that can perform an important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component of the overall region.

The CDP 2008 designates Thomastown as one of four District Towns in the County. Thomastown is recognised as having well developed services and community facilities for the surrounding hinterland and is capable of supporting additional residential development in the Carlow/Kilkenny area. Thomastown is also the location for the decentralisation of the Government's Health & Safety Authority (bringing an estimated 110 new jobs to the town).

1.7 Urban Structure

Thomastown is distinguished by its attractive compact townscape, the quantity, quality and diversity of its historic buildings, and by its riverside setting. The town is surrounded by

attractive countryside, and the River Nore provides an important visual and recreational resource.

The medieval core of the town, concentrated on the west bank of the River Nore, comprises a square block formed by Low Street, Pipe Street, Market Street and the Quays. The 13th century pattern of irregular streets and narrow-fronted plots, defined by 2-3 storey buildings from various ages, remain essentially unchanged and give the town its distinctive character. To the rear of the main streets lies a complex arrangement of outhouses, storehouses, yards and small gardens.

Beyond the central core, the town expanded in a more linear form along the Dublin and Kilkenny roads, mostly as terraced housing. Much of this later development responds to the topography of the river valley, providing impressive views over the River Nore.

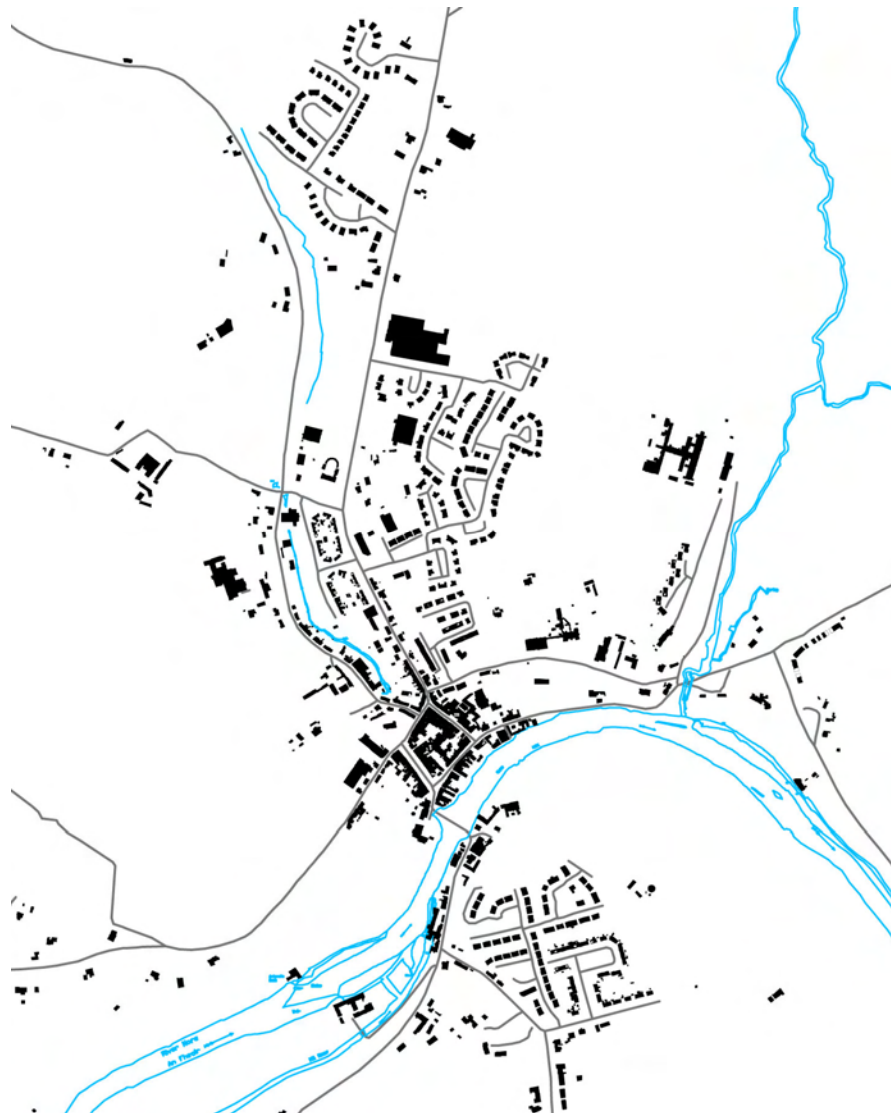


Figure 4: Thomastown's Urban Structure

The built form of the town includes large-scale structures (such as mills, hospital, churches, community buildings) contrasting strongly with small terraced houses and cottages. Traditional building features that contribute strongly to the character of the town centre include steeply sloping roofs with small slates, regular rectangular-paned sash and casement windows, ornate shop fronts and door cases with simple fanlights.

There are several new residential developments in and around Thomastown, including those recently completed off the Dublin road, Chapel Lane and the Mall (on the Waterford side of town). Recent planning applications reflect the potential of the town and its catchment area for continued development.

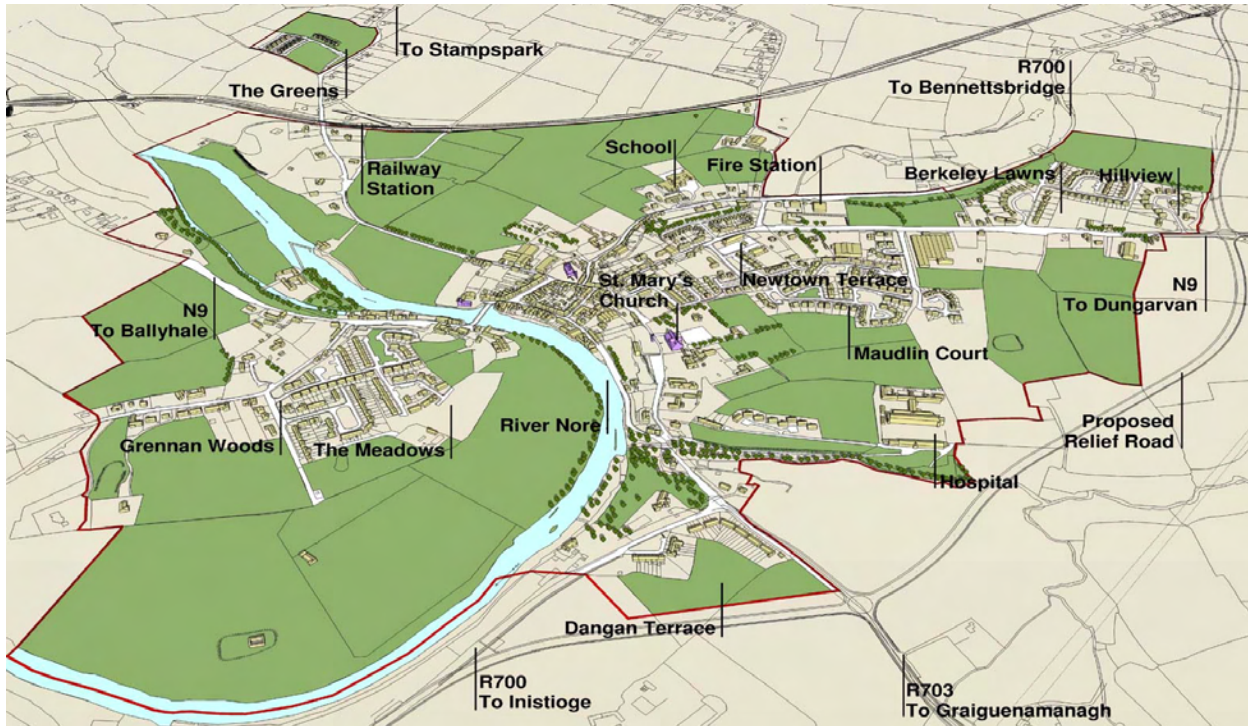


Figure 5: Main spaces and places (with Development Boundary from 2002 LAP shown in red)

1.8 Roads, Car Parking and Accessibility

Thomastown is located at the intersection of the N9 National Primary Route from Dublin to Waterford and R700 Regional Route to Inistioge. While the town has benefited in the past from its location on the N9, this has also more recently led to serious traffic congestion in the centre.

The development of the Waterford to Dublin (N9) road to motorway/high quality dual carriageway standard (expected completion 2010) will relieve much of the through traffic from Thomastown along the existing N9. In addition, a bypass line is reserved in the 2002 Plan to link the R700 and the N9 north of the town and the R700, to New Ross, south of the town.

Thomastown is served by the following public transport connections:

- Regular rail connections to Waterford, Kilkenny and Dublin;
- Bus services to Kilkenny City;
- Coach services to Waterford and Dublin; and
- Taxi services within the town.

Car parking is available in public car parks on Marsh Street and The Quay, and there is on-street parking on both sides of Market Street and Logan Street and also on The Quay, Chapel Lane and Mill Street. Convenient off-street provision is generally considered to be insufficient, while on-street parking can obstruct the free flow of traffic and interrupt pedestrian movement.

1.9 Principal Socio-Economic Demographics

1.9.1 Population

Thomastown is County Kilkenny's largest District Town. Following limited growth (1.2%) between 1996-2002, the population of the town increased substantially (14.8%) from 1,600 persons to 1,837 persons between 2002-2006¹, which is higher than the County growth rate for the same period (9%), and also the National rate (8%). The broader Thomastown Rural ED also experienced a 5.6% growth rate, from 12,117 to 12,792 persons - (this large Rural ED extends to an area of 43,656 hectares around the town).

As shown by the following table, the town has continued to sustain its population share of the County during the recent census periods.

Census Year	Thomastown Population	County Population	Town Population as % of the County
1981	1,477	70,806	2.08
1986	1,500	73,186	2.04
1991	1,487	73,635	2.01
1996	1,581	75,336	2.10
2002	1,600	80,339	1.99
2006	1,837	87,558	2.10

Source: CSO, Census of Population

The decentralisation of the Health & Safety Authority to Thomastown has the potential to increase the population by between 250-300 persons, providing an important boost for the future development of the town. Given the role of Thomastown as a District Town, and its potential to accommodate new development through land availability, the proposed relief road and the N9 bypass and employment improvements, it is anticipated that the population of the town will continue to grow in line with the most recent growth rates.

Based on the 'high', 'central' DoEHLG and 'low' population scenarios included in the Draft CDP, the projected population growth for Thomastown would be as follows:

	2006	%*	2008	%*	2014	%*	2020	%*
High Scenario	1,837	-	1916	4.3	2175	18.4	2467	34.3
Moderate Scenario	1,837	-	1922	4.6	2144	16.7	2329	26.8
Low Scenario	1,837	-	1903	3.6	2072	12.8	2203	19.9

*Percentage Change in Population Based on CDP Projections

The above predictions would equate to an increase in the town's population of a minimum 169 (8.9%) and a maximum 259 (13.5%) during the lifetime of the LAP. On this basis, in the longer term (up to 2020) the increase in the town's population would be a minimum 300 (15.8%) and a maximum 551 (28.8%).

However, the total number of new housing units (approximately 296) presently with permission or under construction could already represent an increase of up to 790 persons when fully

¹ All figures from CSO Census of Population 2006.

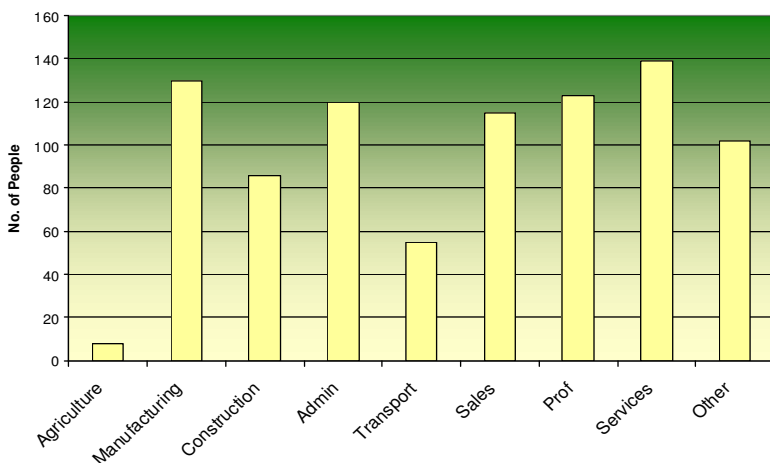
occupied (subject to household size), which would be equivalent to population growth in the town of 45% over the 2006 census figures.

1.9.2 Age Profile

The age profile of Thomastown shows that there is a high representation of people under 44 years old (63.7% of the towns population in 2006). This is likely to have important implications in terms of first time buyer housing provision. It is also likely that many younger people will be seeking full-time employment in the near future, and potentially faced with the option to either move out of or commute from the area.

1.9.3 Employment

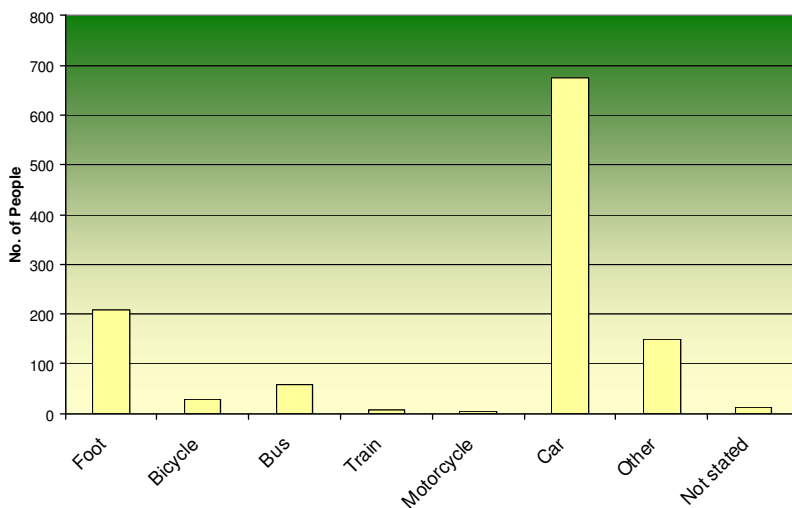
According to the 2006 Census the unemployment rate in Thomastown was 4.4%, which is lower than the national rate of 5.3% and the County rate of 4.7%. Employment by type is illustrated in the following chart:



Employment by Type

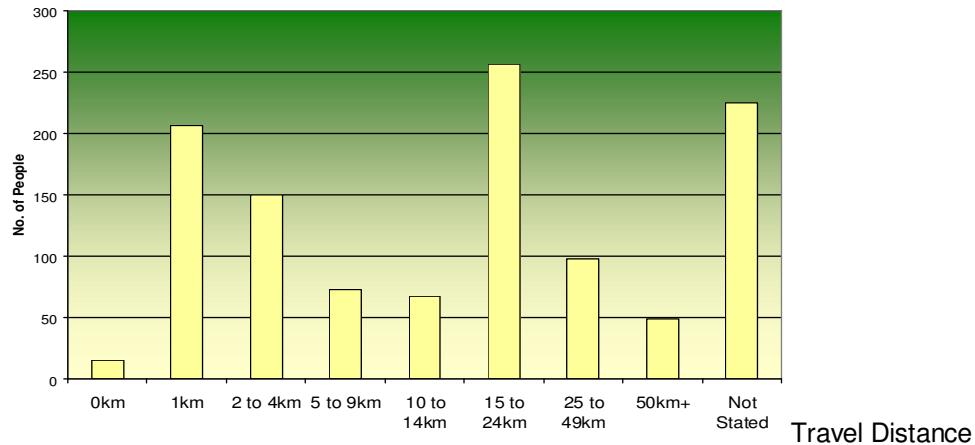
1.9.4 Travel Patterns

Predictably, the preferred mode of transport is the private car (676 persons), with the next most predominant mode being on foot (208 persons), suggesting that a reasonable portion of Thomastown’s population both live and work within the town.



Preferred Mode of Transport

The majority of people (257) travel a distance of 15 to 24km to work/school. It is likely that Kilkenny City is the destination of most of these journeys. Almost as many people (206) travel a distance of approximately 1km, and fewer (150) travel between 2 and 4km. The proportion of people travelling within 4km (356) combined with the number travelling by modes other than the car (235) suggests a reasonable willingness to adopt sustainable transport practice.



1.10 Service Infrastructure

Presently sewage effluent is pumped to a treatment facility at Grennan and discharged from there to the River Nore. Recent growth and regeneration of Thomastown has been restricted because of an inadequate waste water treatment plant (WWTP) for the town. The existing facility is at capacity, and the Council proposes to upgrade the plant to increase the population equivalent from its current 3,000 by an additional PE of 5,000 (total PE of 8,000). The scheme is proposed to serve the town of Thomastown only and does not envisage expansion of services beyond the town boundary. The proposed upgrade, a Sequential Batch Reactor Plant is currently at tender stage and the preliminary programme is expected by the end of July 08.

Presently there is no capacity in the public water supply network, but the town forms part of the Thomastown/Inistioge Water Supply Scheme under the DoEHLG 'Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009', with an anticipated start in 2009.

1.11 Housing

Much of the more recent development in Thomastown has taken place to the north of the town along the N9 Dublin to Waterford Road, and also south of the river along the N9. There are also a number of recent infill developments within the town centre.

Considerable residential development pressure exists outside the LAP area along the Mount Juliet Road both from ribbon development and proposed residential schemes.

The Kilkenny Population Study and Housing Strategy² estimates that the total housing capacity of all current residentially zoned lands in the County can accommodate the anticipated growth in household numbers in the period up to 2014 and well beyond. It also identifies that additional residential development will be accommodated through infill development in existing residential areas on sites of less than 0.2ha, as well as on land that is zoned for a mix of uses including residential.

² Kilkenny Local Authorities, Colin Buchanan, June 2007.

For Thomastown the Housing Strategy calculates that there were 50.4ha of Undeveloped Residential Zoned Lands as of April 2007, representing a potential capacity of 1,260 housing units (based on density averages of 25 units/ha). This could theoretically accommodate a maximum population increase of around 3,630 persons³, equivalent to an increase in the town's population over the 2006 figure of almost 100%.

Based on the High Scenario population projection of this LAP (refer Table 2), approximately 260 additional persons may need to be accommodated up to 2014. This figure could increase by a further 300 persons following decentralisation of the Health & Safety Authority, equivalent to a total 210 housing units by 2014, and 320 units by 2020. The undeveloped residentially zoned lands of the 2002 Thomastown LAP are therefore adequate to meet the population demand during the lifetime of the Plan and beyond to 2020.

1.12 Retail

Thomastown is the second largest retail centre in the County and performs an important convenience shopping centre for its immediate hinterland as well as for passing traffic.

Within the CDP 2008, detailed policies are provided for Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh, Thomastown, Waterford City Environs and the Environs of New Ross. Within each of the development plans for the District Towns, each settlement's role in the retail hierarchy, the thresholds above which retail development should be assessed and a general policy to maintain and enhance its role as local service centre, are stated.

Retail activity in Thomastown is concentrated on the Kilkenny side of the river. Presently the town has two main symbol retail outlets, SuperValu and Centra. There is also a range of comparison stores including Murray's Fashions, builders merchants, various hardware stores, two antique shops, chemists and gift shops, focused on the square of central streets - Logan, Low, Market and Pipe Streets. Bank of Ireland (with ATM) and an Allied Irish Bank branch are also located on Market Street.

The town further benefits from the presence of a County Council Area Office and a Gardai District Headquarters.

Since 2000, the town has experienced a considerable increase in its total floorspace (68.9%), generally equally split between 2000-2004 and 2004-2007. More recently, however, there has been a significant increase in vacant floorspace (from 3.9% to 22.6%), which is almost wholly attributable to the relocation of SuperValu from the town centre to new and larger premises at Cloghabrody.

There has also been a substantial increase in Thomastown's comparison floorspace since 2001 (although with a slight decrease during 2004-2007). This mainly comprises of two hardware stores, two antique shops and a craft shop. The town continues to have a limited amount of bulky goods floorspace (retail warehousing), which has remained static since 2004.

The following table provides a comparative analysis of changes in floorspace quantum in Thomastown over the period since 2000.

³ Household size in Kilkenny has declined on average by 0.04 persons per year since 1991 to an estimated 2.88 heads per household in 2006, compared to an average of 2.78 for the State. (Kilkenny Population Study and Housing Strategy)

**Table 3:
Composition of Net Retail Floorspace 2000-2007 (m²)**

Year	Vacant	Convenience	Comparison	Retail Warehousing	Total (m ²)
2000	116	1,658	1,154	-	2,928
2004	-	1,780	1,419	559	3,758
2007	1,481	2,867	1,637	559	6,544
2008*	1,481	2,867	1,637	1,564	7,549

**2008 figures estimated based on addition of recently approved LIDL store.
Source: extracted from Review of Kilkenny City and County Retail Strategy 2007, Tables 4.1 – 4.3.*

1.13 Employment and the Local Economy

The main employment sectors in Thomastown are health, education, agriculture and agricultural related services, tourism, craft production, professional services and retailing. Unemployment in the town has shown a steady decline over recent years in line with the improved economic performance of the country generally.

1.14 Community Facilities

Thomastown has a reasonable range of sports facilities, community organisations, education and health facilities.

Convent of Mercy School (375 pupils) and Lady Well Boys (111 Pupils) have recently merged to form St. Mary's School. There is also a Secondary School – Grennan College, Ladywell Street (250 pupils) and including the Grennan Mill Craft School, which was established as Thomastown Vocational School by Co. Kilkenny Vocational Education Committee in 1958.

To the east of the town, St. Columba's Hospital provides 150 beds for rehabilitation, the elderly, mentally infirm and extended care. Respite beds are also available. The Day Centre is open Monday to Friday and serves clients within a seven-mile radius of the hospital. There are also 10 sheltered houses under the remit of the hospital.

The Thomastown Concert Hall in Marshes Street (opened in 1910) provides a branch library in store rooms converted in the 1970s, with a part-time library service (recently extended to 25 hours per week), and indoor sports facilities.

Thomastown United AFC occupies approx. 10 acres of land to the north of the town, with 4 pitches, training areas, car parking, and changing rooms for 4 teams and officials. Two floodlit all-weather training areas were constructed in March 2007. The club has a membership of around 250.

To the south of the town, Thomastown GAA Club (founded 1905) occupies a scenic location within the river valley dominated by Grennan Castle. The Club has around 450 members. Following receipt of funding under the Sports Capital Fund 2007, recent major development work at the grounds has included Ball Stoppers on the two adult pitches and improved drainage of the playing surfaces. Other works will comprise a new Machinery Shed, two new dressing rooms and showers, improved public toilets and floodlighting.



GAA Grounds with Grennan Castle in the background

1.15 Tourism

Thomastown offers the attractions of a traditional historic Irish town at a strategic location at the intersection of the N9 and R700. The variety of architectural and archaeological features of interest is complemented by specialist shops, pubs, and the scenic valley of the River Nore. The Nore is one of the most important salmon fisheries and spawning waters in the country, and continues to attract an important fishing tourism industry.

Within the town, the Watergarden at Ladywell Street, managed by the Camphill Community, has developed as a popular visitor attraction and is noted within various guide books. The amenity of the gardens has been developed with a coffee and craft shop, and the garden also offers craft, catering and therapeutic facilities for the day attendees. The establishment of the Grennan Mill Craft College in 1999 has further contributed to the variety of craft production now available in the Thomastown area and reinforced a niche for specialist craft and local manufactured goods.

Other visitor attractions in close proximity to the town include Kilfane Glen and Waterfall (3.5km north of Thomastown off the N9), and Jerpoint Abbey (2km south of Thomastown on the N9). The Abbey is the town's most notable historical feature, and has a well equipped Visitor Centre).

Mount Juliet and the adjoining Ballylynch estate are situated in the Nore Valley, approximately 6.5km east of Thomastown on the Stonyford Road (19km south of Kilkenny City). Mount Juliet is recognised as a high quality tourism and sporting resource of significant local, national and international importance. It is also an important built, natural and cultural heritage resource. Thomastown is therefore both a visitor destination in its own right and well placed to provide a convenient and attractive base for tourism in the county and the region generally.

1.16 Recent Planning Approvals

Table 4: Recent Major Planning Approvals since 2002			
File No.	Development	Location	Status
03491	127 dwellings, commercial units, creche	Cloughabrody	Granted U/C
03960	118 houses	Mount Juliet	Granted
031559	44 houses	Cloughabrody	Granted Built
031863	7 houses	Jerpoint West	Granted
05658	Discount foodstore, 134 car parking spaces	Cloughabrody	Granted U/C
051078	16 classroom primary school	Maudlin Court	Granted Built
0822	Community Sports Hall	Grennan College	Pending

1.17 Designations

1.17.1 Natural Heritage

Thomastown is located within an attractive predominantly undulating agricultural landscape dominated by the valley of the River Nore. There is a variety of natural heritage sites in and around the town designated in National and European legislation, comprising:

The River Barrow and River Nore cSAC and pNHA (Site Code 002162) – which consists of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow/Nore River catchments as far upstream as the Slieve Bloom Mountains and including the tidal elements and estuary as far downstream as Creadun Head in Waterford. River Nore spring salmon fishing is specifically recognised as good in the vicinity of Thomastown include detail on flora and fauna.

Thomastown Quarry cSAC (Site Code 002252) - situated along the R700 road about 1 km north of Thomastown, and comprising a disused limestone quarry in which an excellent diversity of calcareous habitat types has developed. The site is a candidate SAC selected for petrifying springs, a habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Bare rock accounts for a significant area of the site, occurring both on cliff faces and the quarry floor.

Thomastown pNHA (Site Code 000410) – comprising a narrow strip of wet grassland and deciduous woodland adjacent to the River Nore. The main habitat consists of damp meadow comprising a species-rich assemblage of grasses and herbs.

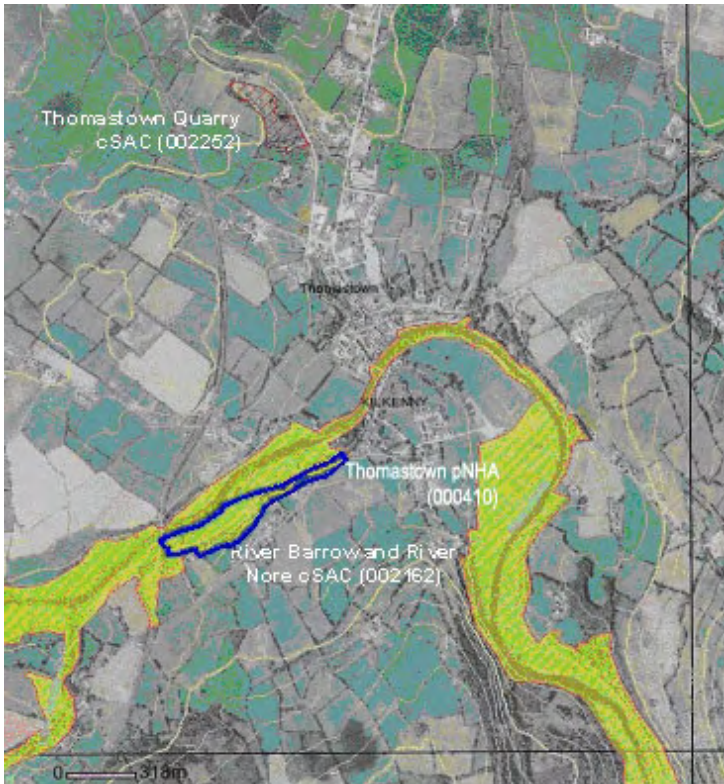


Figure 3: Candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Proposed Natural Heritage Area

In addition, to the east of the town, and along the edge of the River Nore cSAC, **Dangan Mill Wood** (County Woodland Survey Ref. 051, 1995), located approximately 1km south of the town centre and associated with Dangan Mill House and mill races, forms an important visual element to the edge of the River Nore with good views to Grennan Castle and Thomastown. Due to its small size (1.9ha) and confinement by a high stone wall, the ecological potential of the wood is limited.

1.17.2 Record of Protected Structures

There are 35no. structures on the Record of Protected Structures within the CDP 2002 for Thomastown. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage has identified 103no. structures of heritage interest within the town. As part of this plan an architectural assessment of all heritage buildings in the town will be carried out, and the Record amended accordingly under a separate statutory process. The location of Protected Structures is shown in Appendix 1 (Map 3), and the Record of Protected Structures in Appendix 2 (Lists 2).

1.17.3 Archaeology

Given the medieval legacy of Thomastown, a significant portion of the town centre is designated a Zone of Archaeological Potential, as well as three separate sites to the south east and north. Several sites within Thomastown are also identified on the Record of Monuments and Places (RPM) for County Kilkenny, protected under the National Monuments (Amendment Act) 1994 – refer Appendix 1 (Map 3) and Appendix 2 (List 4).

1.18 Public Consultation

Consultation has been carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2004, which requires that planning authorities take whatever steps they considered necessary to consult the public in preparing a LAP, as follows:

- Notice of commencement of the LAP process published in the Kilkenny People on 17th December 2007.
- Initial Public Information Evening and Workshop (pre-draft), held at the Grennan College, Thomastown, on the evening of 17th January 2008.
- Questionnaire responses following the Public Information Evening.
- Written submissions with respect to the Draft Development Plan for County Kilkenny (available for inspection from 10th August to 19th October 2007).
- Consultation material displayed and on the Kilkenny County Council website.

Much useful, detailed information was provided during the public consultation process. The issues raised and observations made have been considered in full, and have informed the drafting of the policies and objectives of this proposed Thomastown LAP.



Logan's Street



Lady's Well Street

2 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 LAP Strategy

The strategic vision for Thomastown for this LAP is based on the aspirations expressed and the submissions received during the public consultation exercise. The Draft LAP is intended to provide for the proper planning and sustainable development of Thomastown for a duration of six years, from adoption in 2008 until 2014, unless amended. The vision is aimed at the creation of a clean and safe, sustainable environment, in communities where people want to live, work or visit, and where residents have access to local job opportunities. The town should continue to develop as a good place to live, with high quality housing that meets local needs and with a good quality of life, and where leisure and recreational activities are available to all.

The Vision

“Thomastown should have a sustainable level of development appropriate to the character, heritage, amenity and strategic role of Thomastown as the main District Centre of the county, and that allows for the enhancement of the town character, services and amenities.”

The Council is committed to delivering the vision by working in partnership with local people and organisations so as to achieve a town that:

- Supports and protects the environment, heritage, character and amenity of the town, and in particular the River Nore floodplain and the medieval and industrial heritage of the town centre;
- Has a high quality built environment with a well developed public realm and appropriate building forms, materials, heights and associated landscaping that complement and enhance the distinctive character of the town;
- Has a suitable range of community facilities and amenities to serve all sections of the local community, the wider rural catchment area and visitors to the town;
- Is well connected to, but has a strong local identity separate from, nearby settlements, in particular Kilkenny City, Waterford City, Inistioge and New Ross;
- Has a pedestrian friendly town centre where conflict between the needs of pedestrian and motorist is minimised;
- Has a safe network of amenity walks within and through the town and linking the various natural and heritage features;
- Has a strong sense of community spirit, civic pride and social inclusiveness;
- Has an adequate level of service infrastructure to support existing and future populations in a manner that protects and complements the environment, including an adequate road network, traffic management and parking facilities, improved public transport and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage.

Achievement of the objectives for which the Council is directly responsible, will, in many cases be dependent upon adequate finance being made available from the Development Contribution Scheme, central government funding and other sources. For other objectives, a co-ordinated approach will need to be taken by both the Council and local community. The Council, through its Planning and Community and Enterprise Departments, intend to facilitate and build the capacity in the community to follow these objectives through.

Where possible, specific objectives are illustrated on the maps accompanying the LAP.

2.2 Sustainability

In line with national and county policy, it is necessary that towns achieve the critical mass required to sustain balanced regional development in order to be capable of attracting both people and investment. The Council's policy is to encourage housing development to locate in the designated towns and villages where infrastructural and social services exist or are planned to be provided. The vision for Thomastown is therefore based on the need to ensure the sustainable planning and development of the town as a balanced community with high quality standards in the provision of housing, employment social and community facilities, recreation and amenities, transport and the natural environment.

Policy 1: Sustainable Development

To adhere to the principles of sustainability through the promotion of development which makes a positive contribution to the development of Thomastown by recognising the importance of conserving and enhancing the quality of the built and natural environment, as well as the needs of all sections of the local community, in its decisions on the use of land and on other strategies that have an impact on the use of space.

In establishing an overall vision for Thomastown it is important to recognise economic and social, as well as the environmental aspects, and to place all three within the context of meeting the needs of communities in the Plan area. The future well-being of communities depends on all three aspects being fully addressed in the LAP. The approach also needs to be sustainable by taking a long-term perspective of these needs which is capable of being maintained, whilst also maintaining effective protection and enhancement of the environment and ensuring the prudent use of natural resources.

The quality of new urban residential development is central to the aim of creating sustainable communities. This will ensure that the town can develop as a positive and balanced community within a coherent physical framework that encourages an efficient use of land. This strategic aim is defined through a range of policies and land use designations that seek to manage, guide and encourage forms and types of development at appropriate locations within the town.

To aid the achievement of sustainability, applications for development will also need to demonstrate that they contribute to the revitalisation of the town in a manner that is sympathetic to its character and surroundings, through:

- Promoting the redevelopment of derelict, obsolete and brownfield sites;
- Encouraging the development of backlands where this strengthens the streetscape and continuity of the urban grain;
- Supporting the role of the town centre as the principal commercial area;
- Encouraging a mix of uses in the town centre;
- Enhancing the town centre through the promotion of appropriate infill development and increased densities subject to high standard of layout, design and finish and having regard to the town vernacular, location and heritage; and
- Ensuring that there is a sufficient mix of commercial and residential development in the interests of enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre.

2.3 Land Uses Generally

The Proposed LAP will facilitate a variety of land uses within the settlement boundary that can cater for existing and future needs of the population over the next six years and beyond.

Policy 2: Development Uses

It is the policy of Kilkenny County Council that new development uses will have regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of Thomastown and respect the amenities of the neighbouring properties as well as the character and visual appearance of the town. All new and proposed uses will also need to conform to the permissible uses as detailed in the Land Use Zoning Objectives.

The Land-use Zoning Plan encourages a variety of uses in a manner that promotes the concept of a balanced residential community with appropriate services and facilities, while ensuring that the town protects and retains its character and continues to function effectively as a compact physical place with good accessibility and high quality public spaces. The development of residential land will be carefully monitored by the Council to ensure that the overall requirements are being delivered during the lifetime of the Plan and the Strategy will be modified if necessary.

2.4 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

Natural heritage includes flora and fauna, wildlife habitats, waterways, landscapes and geology. There is a variety of natural heritage in and around Thomastown including the designated areas of the The River Barrow and River Nore cSAC and pNHA (Site Code 002162), Thomastown Quarry cSAC (Site Code 002252), Thomastown pNHA (Site Code 000410).

In addition, the main channel of the River Nore is designated a Salmonid Water under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1998 (SI No. 293 of 1988) which implements the European Freshwater Fish Directive 1978 (78/659/EEC). Designated Salmonid waters are capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*).

NHAs are national designations introduced by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Although these designations are not yet in force as the relevant legislation has not yet been enacted the Council policies in regard to these areas relate to their protection and conservation.

To the east of the town, and along the edge of the River Nore cSAC, is Dangan Mill Wood (County Woodland Survey Ref. 051, 1995).

It is the policy of the Council to protect all natural heritage sites designated in National and European legislation, including additions or alterations to sites that may arise during the lifetime of the plan. It is also the policy of the CDP to protect undesignated natural heritage features that contribute importantly to the variety of life, such as rivers, watercourses, trees, woodlands and hedgerows in and around Thomastown that are an integral part of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity.

Policy 3: Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

- (a) To protect, conserve and enhance Thomastown’s natural heritage and biodiversity, including watercourses; trees; woodlands and hedgerows; wetlands; geological and geomorphological sites/features; improved and semi-natural grasslands etc.;*
- (b) To protect and enhance existing landscape, ecological and other environmental amenities associated with the River Barrow/River Nore cSAC and Thomastown Quarry cSAC, and to provide for the protection of water quality and the ecological integrity of the watercourse;*
- (c) To protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to the character of Thomastown and its landscape setting and to ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management, when undertaking, approving or authorising development;*
- (d) To protect natural heritage sites designated in National and European legislation. This includes sites proposed to be designated or designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Nature Reserves and Wildfowl Sanctuaries. This protection will extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may arise during the lifetime of this plan.*
- (e) To conserve important trees, groups of trees or woodlands using Tree Preservation Orders as appropriate;*
- (f) To require a landscape and visual assessment of proposed development where appropriate, demonstrating that landscape impacts have been anticipated and avoided to a level consistent with the sensitivity of a particular landscape or view ;*
- (g) To require appropriate planting of semi-mature trees, with a preference for native species (of local provenance wherever possible), in all new development and to preserve and augment existing mature trees and hedgerows.*

Actions:

- (a) To encourage applicants for development to enhance existing ecological networks or create new networks (e.g. along proposed strategic footpath/cycle routes) between local biodiversity areas where such opportunities exist;
- (b) To promote the planting of semi-mature trees within the town centre where space permits as an integral part of streetscape improvements; and
- (c) To seek, where appropriate and feasible, the extension of existing woodlands and/or creation of new woodlands, based on planned planting and management schemes, and favouring the use of native species, especially on the approach roads to the town.

2.5 Town Centre

Thomastown is distinguished by its attractive compact townscape, the quantity, quality and diversity of its historic buildings, and from its riverside setting. Measures to increase the attractiveness of the town as a place to live in, to invest in and to visit, including land use policies, environmental improvements and infrastructure, are essential objectives of the LAP. The town centre is dependent on continuing confidence and investment, not only in new schemes but also in the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing properties. It is reasonable to promote and accommodate such schemes in order to stimulate investment and retail confidence in Thomastown, but the Council does not wish to detract from the historic character of the town centre in order to achieve this. Consequently all new development will need to be appropriate in terms of use and of the highest design quality.



Good quality town centre development

A number of buildings in the town centre are in variable condition and there is considerable scope for restoration and sensitive redevelopment and infill. The relocation of the SuperValu store from the town centre to Cloghbrody presents an opportunity for securing an appropriate redevelopment scheme at the core of the town. A current application (072045) for the site includes demolition of the old store and associated storage buildings and its replacement with a 3-storey primary healthcare facility incorporating a number of consultation/treatment rooms, offices and retail floorspace. The decision to grant planning permission is presently subject to appeal by An Bord Pleanala. Permission has also recently been granted for a new Lidl store at Cloghbrody, located along with a number of other small retail units.

The recent commercial/retail development at the St Mary's Church site, fronting onto Market Street, should greatly improve the visual appearance and use of the wider Market Street area. The former Comerford's Bakery Site in the town centre has also been redeveloped with a mixture of residential and small retail units. The old Garda Station on Low Street represents another potentially important redevelopment opportunity.

Policy 4: Town Centre Development

To strengthen the District Town function of Thomastown as a commercial, cultural, living and visitor centre by encouraging appropriate uses that support vibrant activity in the Town Centre whilst complementing its distinctive townscape character.

Actions:

- (a) To seek appropriate redevelopment proposals for the old Garda Station on Low Street for a mixed use residential and retail scheme;
- (b) To actively pursue the redevelopment of under-utilised sites on the northern bank of the river, between Low Street and The Quay for an appropriate mixed use residential and retail scheme, together with public realm improvements that would include pedestrian access along the waterfront (refer Opportunity Site 1);
- (c) To actively encourage the redevelopment of lands to the rear of Market Street (Slaughter House) for an appropriate infill scheme and car parking (refer Opportunity Site 2); and
- (d) To implement the Derelict Sites Act 1990 in order to ensure the removal of dereliction within the Plan period as resources permit.

The Council also recognises that it is important to continue to improve the public realm of the town centre for the benefit of both local people and visitors. Circulation around the town, by both vehicles and pedestrians, is compounded by the narrow street pattern, the volume of

traffic, the sharp bridge approaches and the internal intersections and junctions. Footpaths are generally narrow and in variable condition. Pedestrian crossing facilities are limited.



Traffic dominating much of the town centre

These issues are of particular concern to the local community as expressed through public consultation. The Council will therefore actively pursue measures for achieving a more pedestrian-friendly town centre, including pedestrian prioritisation and traffic calming schemes as resources permit, improved pedestrian access and circulation throughout the town centre area and to car parks and The Quay, and convenient and safe links to surrounding areas.

Policy 5: Traffic and the Public Realm

Improvements to the appearance of the town centre will continue to be sought, in conjunction with developers, property owners and relevant organisations. Particular attention will be given to:

- (a) Reducing pedestrian/vehicle conflict and improving pedestrian safety;***
- (b) Enhancing the appearance of the town centre through careful design and selection of appropriate surfacing and street furniture;***
- (c) Under-grounding of overhead cables, where feasible;***
- (d) Promoting the retention and enhancement of traditional shop fronts; and***
- (e) Safeguarding the structure and appearance of heritage buildings by reducing the impact of vehicles.***

Actions:

- (a)** To improve signage to existing car parks (especially on The Quay);
- (b)** To pursue a streetscape improvement initiative as resources permit, with particular emphasis on the town centre core (Low Street, Pipe Street, Market Street and The Quay), The Mall and Maudlin Street between the Garda Station and Chapel Lane junction, and along Mill Street, including rationalised on-street parking; pedestrian crossing facilities; improved surfaces, street furniture, street lighting and signage; under-grounding of cables; and street tree planting;
- (c)** To improve or relocate the existing public toilets on Low Street;
- (d)** To provide additional and improved litter bins in strategic locations and to maintain, or to make arrangements for, the maintenance of existing bins, and to implement the provisions of the Litter Management Plan;
- (e)** To explore proposals for lighting the bridge, with consideration to the Floodlighting Policies in the CDP Section 8.4.4; and
- (f)** To continue to support the Tidy Towns committee and other local development groups in

the maintenance and improvements to the town centre and the waterfront.

2.6 Built Heritage

Built heritage includes all built features, buildings, archaeological sites, industrial archaeology, and structures such as stone walls and bridges.

Thomastown contains many individual features of archaeological, historical and architectural interest, ranging from important medieval structures to fortified town houses, industrial archaeology and traditional single and terraced houses, which are worthy of protection. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance Thomastown's special architectural heritage by protecting historic buildings, groups of buildings, the existing street pattern, plot sizes and scales, while encouraging the development of appropriate mixed-use development where appropriate to the historic context. It is also an objective to develop the tourist and recreational potential of the built heritage where possible and appropriate. A large part of the town centre has been designated as an Architectural Conservation Area by this LAP in order to promote the enhancement and protection of the historic centre (refer MAP 3 Built Heritage).

2.6.1 Archaeology

It is Council policy, in considering development proposals that would affect archaeological sites, in particular those within the Zone of Archaeological Potential (delineated by the National Monuments Section of the DoEHLG) and listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, to have regard to the recommendations of the DoEHLG concerning archaeological assessment and the monitoring of excavations during construction. Developers are advised to consult the Heritage Council's 'Archaeology & Development: Guidelines for good practice for developers' (2000) in this regard.

Policy 6: Archaeology

- (a) ***Protect and enhance archaeological sites and monuments (including their settings), and extending to any additions or alterations that may arise during the lifetime of this plan;***
- (b) ***Require an appropriate archaeological assessment to be carried out in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a Recorded Monument, a Zone of Archaeological Potential, or their settings;***
- (c) ***Promote pre-planning consultations in relation to the archaeological heritage with the planning authority and with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in its capacity of being charged with the implementation of the National Monuments Acts;***
- (d) ***Require the retention of the surviving medieval plots and street patterns in the town centre, and to facilitate the recording of evidence of ancient boundaries, layouts etc in the course of development;***
- (e) ***Ensure retention of the surviving town defences, in particular on the south western side of the town from the river up to Mill View House;***
- (f) ***Promote the restoration of historic buildings and structures, with particular emphasis on Grennan Castle, Sweetman's Castle, and the warehouse on Mill Street; and***
- (g) ***Facilitate and where feasible create public rights of way to sites of archaeological and historical interest and to National Monuments in state and Local Authority ownership and in particular the surviving industrial heritage of mills and warehouses that are a distinctive feature in the town.***

2.6.2 Record of Protected Structures

A wide range of heritage buildings are listed in the CDP as Protected Structures. The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for Thomastown is listed in Appendix 2.

Works which affect the character of a Protected Structure require planning permission and this provision also applies to the interior of the building and any other buildings or structures within its curtilage. Proposed alterations to Protected Structures should be subject to early consultation with the County Council's Conservation Officer and/or the Heritage Service of the DoEHLG. Generally, all repair and maintenance works should be carried out on a 'like for like' basis and in accordance with the Conservation Guidelines published by the DoEHLG (1996).

Following the completion of an Architectural Inventory of Thomastown as part of the LAP process, which includes consideration of 103no. structures of heritage interest identified as part the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, proposals may be brought forward to add further buildings to the RPS because of their architectural or historic interest. It may also be proposed to remove certain buildings currently on the RPS either because refurbishment works have significantly diluted their historic character or because their contribution is primarily to the general townscape character and they lie within the proposed Thomastown Architectural Conservation Area.

The RPS will be amended in accordance with this assessment under a separate statutory process.

Policy 7: Record of Protected Structures

- | |
|--|
| <p>(a) <i>Protect structures entered onto the Record of Protected Structures, or listed to be entered onto the Record, and to encourage their appropriate use/re-use/conservation and restoration;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Protect items of architectural heritage and industrial archaeological interest associated with the river corridor which may not necessarily be listed on the RPS; and</i></p> <p>(c) <i>Develop the tourist and recreational potential of the built heritage where possible and appropriate.</i></p> |
|--|

The retention and re-use of the vernacular built heritage which are not protected will also be encouraged by the Council.

2.6.3 Architectural Conservation Area

The Planning & Development Act 2000 requires a Planning Authority to include in its Development Plans the objective of preserving the character of areas of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape with such special interest or which contributes to the appreciation of protected structures. In an ACA, protection is placed on the exterior of all structures, and any works that would have a material affect on the character of an ACA will require planning permission.

The Council considers that the medieval core of Thomastown together with the mills and associated traditional structures on the south of the river represent such areas of special interest (see Appendix 1 Map 3). The central core comprises a generally coherent streetscape around a square block formed by Low Street, Pipe Street, Market Street and the Quays. The 13th century pattern of irregular streets and narrow-fronted plots, defined by 2-3 storey buildings from various ages, remain essentially unchanged and give the town its distinctive

character. To the rear of the main streets lies a complex arrangement of outhouses, storehouses, yards and small gardens. Thomastown Bridge forms an important element of the 18th century civil engineering heritage of the town and links to the interesting composition of former industrial buildings that extend along Mill Street to the island.

The purpose of defining the Thomastown ACA is to ensure the retention and restoration of the traditional townscape, while promoting new development as appropriate opportunities arise in a manner that respects and reinforces the special heritage character (refer Map 3 Built Heritage).

Policy 8: Architectural Conservation Area

- (a) Designate the medieval core of Thomastown and Mill Street, having special architectural and townscape qualities which derive from the traditional layout, design and unity of character, as an Architectural Conservation Area;**
- (b) Ensure the preservation of the special character of the ACA particularly with regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, building materials, historic street furniture and paving;**
- (c) Ensure the retention, repair rather than replacement and the regular maintenance of original/early features in buildings which contribute to the character of the ACA such as chimney stacks, roof coverings, roof profiles, external wall treatments, doors and windows, shopfronts and pubfronts and to ensure the use of appropriate materials and repair techniques when repairs are being carried out;**
- (d) Ensure that inappropriate materials such as windows, doors and rainwater goods constructed in aluminium or uPVC are not introduced to buildings within the ACA;**
- (e) Encourage high quality, contemporary design and materials where appropriate when new buildings are being introduced into the ACA and the retention of the historic scale and plot size;**
- (f) Ensure the preservation of the character of the ACA when assessing proposals for advertising;**
- (g) Retain historic items of street furniture where they contribute to the character of the ACA and to protect historic items of street furniture and roadside items as appropriate;**
- (h) Ensure the conservation of historic shopfronts and pubfronts - where replacement is necessary, to encourage the introduction of shopfronts and pubfronts of contemporary high quality design and materials;**
- (i) Require planning applications within the ACA to be accompanied by an assessment undertaken by a certified conservation architect detailing the impacts of development upon the special interest and character of the surrounding architectural heritage; and**
- (j) Seek the retention of mature trees/significant planting (those in good condition) which contribute to the character of the ACA where appropriate.**

2.7 Housing and Population

Given the role of Thomastown as a District Town, and its potential to accommodate new development through land availability, as well as the proposed relief road and the N9 bypass and employment improvements such as decentralisation, it is anticipated that the population of the town will continue to grow in line with the most recent growth rates to around 2,175 persons by 2014 and 2,467 by 2020.

The total residential zoning proposed by this LAP extends to around 53ha, which represents a considerable capacity in the town to absorb future housing requirements (excluding lands zoned for mixed use and other ‘windfall’ sites of less than 0.2ha). Lands zoned for residential development exceeds that required to meet forecasted demand in order to make provision for the non-release of zoned lands for development within the lifetime of the LAP, to allow for locational choice, and to provide for lower density ‘serviced sites’ on suitable edge-of-town lands within the LAP boundary where such use would make an appropriate transition between higher density development and the open countryside.

2.7.1 Housing Development Generally

Future development in Thomastown needs to take advantage of the existing infrastructure and services, and to address the opportunities and constraints presented by the existing settlement pattern, the natural environment, infrastructure and service provision, the projected population change for the settlement and its location within the local and regional context.

Policy 9: Housing Location
<p>(a) <i>Ensure the managed development of Thomastown in a manner that reflects the character of the existing town in terms of structure, pattern, scale, design and materials, and with adequate provision of open space. The Council promotes the concept of a ‘compact town’ by encouraging appropriate forms of development in suitable locations and by resisting sporadic isolated developments; and</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings.</i></p>

Actions:
<p>(a) To implement the Housing Strategy contained in the CDP (2008);</p> <p>(b) To encourage the development of backlands with the creation of new vehicular and pedestrian linkages to existing streets, whilst facilitating the filling of gap and infill sites along the main routes within the built up area;</p> <p>(c) To encourage forms of development within the town centre that respect the established streetscape, building forms and historic context;</p> <p>(d) To promote the redevelopment of derelict sites in Thomastown, in a sensitive and appropriate way that reflects existing physical attributes, local character and historic urban form; and</p> <p>(e) To co-ordinate the provision of road, cycle and pedestrian networks and other services to new residential areas.</p>

A range of residential sites is required for development and this plan proposes six areas in order to provide for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of various households. The Council considers that future residential growth will occur generally in lands reserved in the following areas (for individual proposals refer Section 4.10).

- Area R1: Lands between Dungarvan Road (N9) and Bennetsbridge Road (R700)
- Area R2: Lands between Maudlin Court and the Hospital
- Area R3: Lands between Lady Well Street and the Railway
- Area R4: Lands at Stamps Park
- Area R5: Lands at Grennan Woods

In addition to the above-zoned lands, the Council will actively consider applications for small, unidentified sites in the town, which may include redevelopment sites, conversions and infill development. Such sites are generally less than 0.5 hectares in size, and can be important contributors to townscape improvement and vitality. The Council anticipates that such 'windfall' sites will add further variety to the total calculated area for residential uses.

Policy 10: New Housing Developments

All residential development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they satisfy the following requirements:

- (a) *Provide for a good social mix with a range of house types, sizes and tenures to meet varying housing needs;*
- (b) *Ensure a high standard in design, layout, provision of open space, landscaping and variation in house type and size;*
- (c) *The provision where appropriate of landscaped pedestrian and cycle links between and within residential areas and the town centre;*
- (d) *The provision of well-designed, attractive, functional and supervised amenity public open spaces;*
- (e) *Conformity with the guidelines set out by the DoEHLG in 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (February 2008)'; and*
- (f) *Promotion of sustainable transport by reducing the demand to travel.*

2.7.2 Social Mix

There are currently 72 Local Authority dwellings in Thomastown. This figure does not represent the historical proportion of social housing in Thomastown, as a large proportion of Local Authority constructed dwellings have been sold under the Tenant Purchasing Scheme.

In any application for multiple unit residential schemes, in addition to implementing the Housing Strategy, the Council will seek a good social mix, and will seek to accommodate the needs of first-time buyers.

Policy 12: Social and Affordable Housing

- (a) *To provide the necessary infrastructural investment to facilitate the overall level of housing output required to meet the current and anticipated levels of demand in a planned coherent fashion;*
- (b) *To zone adequate amounts of land for housing to provide a locational choice and allow for the probability that not all zoned land will be made available for development;*
- (c) *To strive for the highest quality built environment when assessing development proposals;*
- (d) *To encourage economy and efficiency in the use of land and services.*
- (e) *To promote a high standard of architecture in the siting and design of new housing developments;*
- (f) *To encourage a variety of house types, sizes and tenure in individual schemes and to encourage variety, interest and social mix in private and social housing developments; and*
- (g) *To ensure that the Council's housing policy and objectives are linked with employment, environmental, and infrastructural policies and objectives with the aim of improving the quality of life and the attractiveness of the county's towns, villages and open countryside.*

2.7.3 Serviced Sites

There is considerable pressure for development of single homes in the rural area surrounding Thomastown, and it is an objective of this Plan to provide for serviced sites at lower densities within the town environs in order to offer people, who would otherwise seek to develop a house in an un-serviced rural area, the option to develop in closer proximity to existing services and community facilities.

Policy 13: Serviced Sites
<p>(a) <i>In recognition of the demand for one-off urban generated rural housing, the Council have identified suitable edge of town lands within the LAP boundary that would provide the opportunity to cater for serviced sites so as to facilitate the optimum choice in housing type and location.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>In the case of a development where serviced sites are to be sold, a design brief and development programme for the execution and completion of the development for the cluster shall be submitted at planning application stage.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>Any serviced sites will not be less than 0.1 hectares (.25 acres) where a Masterplan should be produced by the developer showing the overall layout, infrastructure, services and landscaping for the whole site development.</i></p>

Any serviced sites should be context driven, respecting the setting and character of the area. The visual impact and appearance of new development should be fully considered when locating and designing new buildings. Any development should maximise the use of existing hedgerows and landscape features e.g. existing buildings, trees, stone walls.

2.7.4 Nursing Homes

The need for nursing homes is anticipated to grow into the future and these facilities should be integrated as appropriate in Thomastown where their residents, workers and visitors alike can avail of the demand for services generated by such facilities.

2.8 Service Infrastructure

For development to proceed within the town, it will be necessary for development proposals to address the effects imposed on existing water services (water supply, foul drainage and storm drainage systems).

Policy 14: Essential Services
<p><i>Secure the upgrading of all water services through capital projects as resources permit and by agreements with developers and/or landowners as appropriate.</i></p>

2.8.1 Sewerage Network

The Council proposes to upgrade the plant to increase the population equivalent from its current 3,000 by an additional PE of 5,000. The scheme design for the WWTP has been advertised and the preliminary programme expects the plant to be operational by mid-2009.

Policy 15: Sewerage Network

- (a) ***Ensure the provision of necessary sewerage facilities to serve the needs of all development within the town;***
- (b) ***Maintain and improve sewerage services;***
- (c) ***Prohibit the connection to the sewerage system of any proposed development out of phase with the overall development of the town or where the existing services are committed for other development;***
- (d) ***Preserve free from development the way leaves of all public sewers; and***
- (e) ***Ensure appropriate measures are taken to prevent pollution.***

Actions:

- (a) To upgrade the existing Waste Water Treatment Plant by an additional PE of 5000.

2.8.2 Surface Water Drainage

It is an objective of the Council to secure the disposal of surface water associated with developments to avoid increase in the risk of flooding. This objective is to be achieved in keeping with modern good practice and having regard to the characteristics and attributes of each site. Individual developments, where surface water drainage measures are necessary, will need to provide a surface water drainage system separated from the foul drainage system. For all green-field developments it is generally the policy of the Council to require the limitation of surface water run-off to pre-development levels. Where a developer can clearly demonstrate that capacity exists to accommodate run-off levels in excess of green-field levels then the planning authority will give consideration to such proposals on a case by case basis. For brown-field development, while existing surface water drainage measures will be taken into account, some attenuation measures for surface water may be required at the discretion of the planning authority in the interests of balanced and sustainable development.

Policy 16: Surface Water Drainage

Seek positive surface water drainage incorporating discharge flow attenuation for all green field site developments other than those that are isolated and small in scale and unlikely to increase the risk of flooding.

This means that all storm water will be collected in a storm water pipe network with attenuation and disposed of to a watercourse, and will not be directed to a soakpit. It will be the responsibility of the developer to prove that the pipe network and/or watercourse into which discharge is proposed has an adequate capacity, and will not give rise to flooding off site. Ground soakage for roof water from houses may be permitted subject to the developer establishing that the site is suitable. The responsibility is on the developer to establish that the receiving drainage system and/or watercourse can cater for the discharge without increased risk of flooding off site.

2.8.3 Water supply

Presently there is no capacity in the water supply network, but the town forms part of the Thomastown/Inistioge Water Supply Scheme under the DoEHLG 'Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009', with an anticipated start in 2009.

Policy 17: Water Supply
(a) <i>Provide water in sufficient quantity and quality to serve the needs of the existing and future population, and future commercial development;</i> (b) <i>Provide sufficient water to serve all lands zoned for development in this Plan;</i> (c) <i>Preserve free from development the way leaves of all public water mains; and</i> (d) <i>Where public supply is not available temporary private supply may be considered for new developments.</i>

Actions:
(a) To continuously monitor water quality in the area to ensure the maintenance of high water quality standards.

2.8.4 Waste Management

Kilkenny County Council has adopted the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East 2006 – 2011. Waste collection was privatised by the Council in the 1990’s and waste is now collected in Thomastown by private contractors. European Union environmental policy dictates that the ‘Polluter pays principle’ will be applied, which means that the full costs associated with environmentally sound recovery and disposal of waste are charged to the customer.

Policy 18: Waste and Recycling
(a) <i>To continue to encourage and facilitate recycling and the minimisation of waste in line with the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East 2006-2011;</i> (b) <i>To ensure Thomastown has an adequate solid waste collection system; and</i> (c) <i>To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East 2006-2011.</i>

2.8.5 Telecommunications

Telecommunications have become centrally important to the prospects of any local economy, and their role in the development of Thomastown is acknowledged. The South-East Regional Authority, in partnership with its constituent local authorities, is managing the roll-out of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources’ regional broadband programme in the South-East, known as SERPANT. This programme provides high speed, open access broadband networks in major towns and cities, known as Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs). The MANs are publicly owned, while allowing all telecommunication operators open access to the networks. Thomastown was included in the Phase 2 MANs and work is ongoing.

Policy 19: Telecommunications
<i>Ensure that competitive telecommunications supply is available for the existing and future development of Thomastown.</i>

2.9 Employment and Economy

This LAP recognises that any sustainable land-use policy must provide for a balance between the provision of housing and the provision of employment opportunities. The provision of residentially zoned land in excess of the potential for employment opportunities will result in a high level of commuting, which is unsustainable. The creation of employment opportunities in Thomastown therefore needs to be matched to the growth of the town. The importance of retaining existing employment and encouraging new investment was highlighted during public consultation.

This LAP includes for additional industrial zoning to the north of the town, up to the line of the proposed relief road, providing approximately 12has of land for industrial purposes. In addition, the plan allows for Mixed Use employment-generating zoning within the town centre and on key suitable sites along Maudlin Street and Lady's Well Street (including the site for the proposed decentralisation of the Health & Safety Authority - expected to bring an estimated 110 new jobs to the town). The Council will also continue to encourage the creation of community led employment opportunities.

Policy 20: Employment and Economy

Secure the sustainable and long term economic development and regeneration of Thomastown by actively promoting its unique characteristics as a visitor destination.

Actions:

- (a) Work in partnership with Waterways Ireland and others involved with the River Nore in promoting the assets of the River Nore as a visitor destination (fishing, walking and boating), and in developing suitable water-based facilities and activities;
- (b) Actively promote the redevelopment of redundant and derelict sites that can contribute to the tourism offer while enhancing the appearance and appreciation of the town;
- (c) Secure the provision of appropriate signage and access routes to the town centre;
- (d) Initiate riverside amenity improvements, including appropriate new development; improved waterfront amenities, such as boardwalks, waterside footpaths, picnic areas, and provision of a slipway;
- (e) Pursue a streetscape improvement initiative as resources permit, and including improved heritage interpretation and visitor signage; and
- (f) Seek the preparation of a heritage and interpretation strategy that describes and illustrates the story of the key attractions and the tourism offer of the town.
- (g) Seek the preparation of a tourist development strategy for the town and its hinterland, in association with Kilkenny County Tourism, SERTA, Fáilte Ireland and local community groups and business interests, that examines the scope and potential of the town for product development and sets out a clear action plan and implementation strategy; and
- (h) Facilitate parking provision for tourist buses where appropriate in the town.

2.9.1 Retail

The ‘Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ sets out Government policy in relation to shops in small towns and rural areas⁴. The vital role that foodstores play in maintaining the quality and range of shopping in rural town centres and assisting in the anchoring of the surrounding local economy is recognised.

The facilitation of additional commercial activities to serve the growing population will be secured through appropriate zoning in this LAP and through the County Retail Strategy and the Retail Planning Guidelines (2000).



Traditional town centre shops

Policy 21: Retail Provision

- (a) **To facilitate the expansion of the retail base to serve the needs of the current and future population, in accordance with the policies set out in the County Development Plan (2008) and the Retail Planning Guidelines (2000);**
- (b) **To encourage the upgrading and expansion of existing retail outlets and the development of appropriate new outlets within the town centre;**
- (c) **To ensure that proposals at ground level in the town centre area are restricted to shopping and closely related uses (e.g. banking and office);**
- (d) **To encourage the use of upper floors in retail premises for commercial or residential use; and**
- (e) **To facilitate the physical enhancement of the town centre as a location for shopping and business through public realm initiatives aimed at making the town centre a more pedestrian-friendly place.**

2.9.2 Tourism

Thomastown is a visitor destination in its own right as well as being well placed to provide a convenient and attractive base for tourism in the county and the region generally.

It is a policy of the Council to promote the development of tourism in Thomastown while simultaneously protecting those natural, built and cultural heritage features that form the resource on which the visitor attraction is based.

⁴ Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2005 *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

Policy 22: Tourism

- (a) *To enhance the tourism potential of the town, including the promotion of new tourism products, in an environmentally sustainable manner; and*
- (b) *To encourage and facilitate improvements, including appropriate new development; improved waterfront amenities, such as boardwalks, waterside footpaths, picnic areas, and provision of a slipway.*

Actions:

- (a) To co-operate in the development of a tourist development strategy for the town and its hinterland in association with Fáilte Ireland South East and Kilkenny County Development Board and local community groups and business interests;
- (b) To support the development of suitable visitor accommodation;
- (c) To promote the assets of the River Nore as a visitor destination (fishing and boating);
- (d) To facilitate parking provision for tourist buses where appropriate in the town; and
- (e) To secure the provision of appropriate signage and access routes to the town centre, particularly from the N9 bypass and the proposed relief road.

2.10 Community and Education

The provision of adequate community facilities is an essential element of sustainable and balanced development. Community needs include social, educational, religious, health, and sports facilities. A key objective of the LAP is to ensure that the community and education needs of the existing and future population of Thomastown can be provided for in relation to the expansion of the town.

2.10.1 Community Facilities

It was acknowledged through public consultation that although Thomastown has a good range of community organisations and facilities, there was a lack of provision in public recreational facilities (with the exception of the playground at Marshes Street).

A number of recent studies have been undertaken in relation to recreational and social needs in Thomastown⁵, which generally conclude that urban residential growth is not being matched by provision of an adequate social infrastructure. The County Council's 'Kilkenny Open Space and Recreational Study 2003' identified that there is an under-provision in the area's sports facilities and that additional facilities need to be developed.

Existing sporting facilities mostly consist of the GAA Club at Grennan and Thomastown United AFC to the north and outside the Development Boundary of the town. These clubs provide very valuable facilities used by a large number of people, but are generally considered to be at capacity. A sports hall was added to the Thomastown Concert Hall in the 1970s and caters for basketball, badminton, indoor soccer, etc, and has been in regular scheduled use by Grennan

⁵ "Community Needs Assessment Report No. 2 – Recreation & Leisure", Kilkenny County Development Board (2002).

"Kilkenny Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study", Kilkenny County Council (2003).

"An Action Plan for Thomastown", Thomastown Community Network (2006).

"Thomastown Sports and Leisure Plan – Critical Developments and Services to satisfy the needs associated with the doubling of Thomastown population 2002-2008", GC Community Leisure (2006).

College and the local primary schools as a gymnasium. The environs of the Hall were upgraded in 1996 under the Village Renewal Scheme and additional car parking and a children's play area provided. In 2002 a second ancillary building was converted by Thomastown Paddlers to clubhouse and storage facility.

The Sports and Leisure Development Plan (2006) identified that the Concert Hall premises non-repairable and unsuited to further sports use. Having provided for a wide range of social, cultural and sporting needs for the town for over 30 years, it was concluded that the Marshes Street site was now unsuitable both in terms of insufficient scale, poor condition and substandard specification to meet the scale of modern recreational needs in Thomastown.

Consequently, GC Community Leisure Trust was formed by Grennan College/Kilkenny VEC, Thomastown United AFC, Thomastown Community Council and Thomastown GAA, to address the need for indoor and related outdoor sports and recreational facilities in the town. A feasibility study and business plan⁶ undertaken on behalf of the Trust was prepared in March 2008 to develop a proposal for the construction and management (by GC Community Leisure Trust) of a Sub-County level Community Multi-Sports Centre on a site at Grennan VEC. The project aims at developing first class multi-functional indoor and outdoor sports space that will be available to students of the college and other schools in the area, to local community sports clubs, to community groups in the Thomastown area and to local residents.

The proposed complex will eventually comprise a sports hall, multi-purpose all-weather pitch and full-sized GAA pitch with ancillary indoor and outdoor changing rooms. In addition to a portion of the Grennan College/VEC lands, the Sports Complex Masterplan lands include part of adjacent landholdings to the north and south.

A planning application to Kilkenny County Council⁷ has been made for the first phase of the proposed development (i.e. the sports Hall).

To facilitate the development of the Sports Complex, and the future expansion requirements of Grennan College/VEC, extensive lands are zoned in this LAP for community/education purposes to the north of the existing College. Lands to the south are zoned for mixed use, to facilitate the decentralised Health and Safety Authority development and associated employment generating uses. Lands extending westwards to the railway line and southwards to Station road are zoned for new residential, and are currently the subject of an integrated framework plan for the complete community and residentially zoned area.

Policy 23: Community Facilities

- (a) ***To ensure that the provision of community facilities are related to increases in the population of the town and to reserve sites for community facilities as appropriate and to seek to remedy deficiencies in existing developed areas; and***
- (b) ***When assessing new applications for housing the Council will seek, where necessary, services that are required to meet the needs of the community, and/or to impose levies to assist in the provision of such facilities.***

⁶ "Proposal for Multi-Sports Hall and Sports Complex", GC Community Leisure Trust (March 2008).

⁷ KCC File No. 0822, Received and Validated 11/01/2008. Clarification of Further Information requested 19/06/2008 (not yet received by Kilkenny County Council).

Actions:

- (a) To support the proposed Multi-Sports Hall and Sports Club as a joint venture arrangement between the VEC, Thomastown Community Council, Thomastown AFC and Thomastown GAA, as an integral part of a comprehensive master plan for the wider area incorporating residential, mixed use and open space uses;
- (b) To continue to liaise with community groups and to assist community initiatives in the provision of sports and recreational facilities subject to the availability of resources;
- (c) To facilitate as necessary the review of existing library services and provisions by the Kilkenny County Library Service; and
- (d) To explore alternative uses for the CYMS building beside the graveyard.

2.10.2 Childcare Facilities

The provision of adequate childcare facilities is recognised by the Council as essential to enable people to participate more fully in society. In accordance with the National policy on childcare and the provisions of the CDP, the Council will promote through the planning system a continued increase in the number of childcare places available in Thomastown, and will seek to improve the quality of childcare services for the community whilst maintaining residential amenity.

2.10.3 Education

Thomastown is currently well served by two primary schools and a VEC secondary school (that includes the Grennan Mill Craft School), with adequate zoned land for potential expansion requirements.

Whereas the amalgamated primary schools have sufficient land for playing facilities, the VEC require new facilities to meet the increasing pupil numbers, and lands to the north of the school buildings are zoned community/education for this purpose. The grounds of the VEC College are the subject of a proposal for a Sub-County level Community Multi-Sports Centre (refer also Section 2.10.1), representing an appropriate dual use of educational facilities in close proximity to the town centre and established/future residential areas. A site to the immediate south of the College has been identified as the location of the future headquarters for the Health & Safety Authority as part of the Government's Decentralisation Programme.

The Council recognises that other educational premises represent a valuable resource in terms of land and buildings, where similar dual use would be encouraged where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service (outside school hours and during school holidays), helping to meet the wider needs of the community.

Policy 24: Education

- (a) To facilitate the development of educational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of existing and future populations of the town.**
- (b) To facilitate the future expansion requirements of the VEC through zoning of suitable land and in the context of a comprehensive masterplan for the wider area; and**
- (c) To promote the dual use of educational lands and buildings where these can be beneficially used by the community.**

Actions:
(a) To review from time to time the educational needs of the town's population with the Department of Education to ensure sufficient land is reserved for the provision of an adequate number of school places;
(b) To seek suitable redevelopment of the former Boys National School site; and
(c) To facilitate the development of a dedicated and safe footpath and cycle network, linking existing and planned residential areas to schools and other key community facilities.

2.11 Amenity and Open Space

The Council recognises the need to facilitate a range of amenity and open space facilities throughout the town to meet the needs of all residents as well as visitors. This LAP is concerned with the protection and enhancement of Thomastown's natural environment which represents an important part of the town's attraction as a place to live and work. The River Nore is the most attractive natural feature of the town, and yet its full amenity potential has not been fully realised.

The Council will continue to promote the amenity value of the river corridor through Thomastown, including investigating the potential of and opportunities for developing a District/Neighbourhood Park on the Thomastown floodplain, and advancing the River Nore Walking Route from Kilkenny to Inistioge (in accordance with the CDP 2008). It will be essential to ensure that the river corridor is protected and enhanced, and that all future development does not detract from the town's natural environment.

All forms of development, not just residential schemes, will be required to provide sufficient amenity space for their users to enjoy. Such provision will depend on the location and form of the proposed development and will be subject to negotiation with developers on an individual basis. In all cases, amenity open space will be an integral part of the overall design.

In accordance with the provisions of the CDP and the Development Management requirements of this LAP, the Council will seek the provision and suitable management of useable amenity space in new housing developments, including both children's play areas and incidental open spaces, and to implement measures to find suitable sites for similar provision as appropriate for existing housing areas.

Linkages between recreational open space and amenity areas is also especially important and can be achieved by means of linear parks along roads and riverbanks and through the improvement of pedestrian safety on routes to these areas, including provision of safe crossings over busy roads, improved lighting and signage, and new or enhanced public walkways and cycleways. Such linkage will serve to provide greater accessibility for the wider community to green areas, increased social interaction, and less reliance on the private car for leisure trips.

Policy 25: Amenity and Open Spaces
<i>To ensure adequate protection to the existing amenity and open spaces of the town and to promote the enhancement and provision of open spaces and associated open space links as the town continues to develop.</i>

Actions:

- (a) To seek to achieve a network of recreational open space and amenity areas by promoting linkage and accessibility between these areas and existing or proposed community facilities by walkways and cycleways;
- (b) To protect the banks of the River Nore and to complete river walks and associated amenity facilities, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies, private owners and voluntary groups;
- (c) To seek the development of a District/Neighbourhood Park on the floodplain, including bound footpaths, seats, picnic areas and signage;
- (d) To support the development of the proposed River Nore Walking Route (Kilkenny to Inistioge) through Thomastown, incorporating the mill races at Dangan Wood and linked to mills already open to the public as craft centres;
- (e) To explore the possibility of achieving a pedestrian/cycle bridge crossing over the river, linking The Quay to the proposed District/Neighbourhood Park;
- (f) To seek an alternative use for the dilapidated tennis courts off Marshes Street; and
- (g) To prepare an amenity improvement scheme for the existing Park during the lifetime of the plan.

2.12 Transport

It is recognised that traffic congestion has become a worsening feature of the town centre. The junctions at Logan Street/Pipe Street on the Dublin Road, and at Pipe Street/Kilkenny Road, can be especially congested.

The provision of the N9 bypass west of Thomastown is expected to remove a large proportion of traffic from the town (the N9 through traffic represents 43% of the total), while the proposed R700 Relief Road could remove a further 37% of through traffic. The relief road scheme is currently at land acquisition stage –check, with anticipated completion within the lifetime of the LAP. It is an objective of the Council to reserve the bypass line free from development, and its proposed alignment is carried forward in this LAP.

The scheme comprises 3.4 km of standard single carriageway from a proposed new T-junction on the R700 approximately 2km north of Thomastown to the R700 approximately 600m east of the existing junction of the R700 with the R703 in Thomastown, complete with a footpath on the Thomastown side of the carriageway and grass margins, hard shoulders and boundary treatment on both side of the new road. A new roundabout will be constructed at the junction of the proposed relief road and the existing N9 Dublin Road, and a bridge to cross the 'Kilfane' stream and its floodplain to the south east of the town. A further roundabout will be constructed at the junction of the relief road and the existing R703 Graiguenamanagh Road. The R703 will be realigned from the roundabout into the town with priority given to this route at the existing junction with the R700.

Thomastown is served by regular rail connections to Waterford, Kilkenny and Dublin; bus services to Kilkenny City and coach services to Waterford and Dublin.

Car parking is available in two public car parks and there is on-street parking on both sides of Market Street and Logan Street and also on The Quay, Chapel Lane and Mill Street. Convenient off-street provision is generally considered to be insufficient, while on-street parking can obstruct the free flow of traffic and interrupt pedestrian movement.

Policy 26: Transport

- (a) To encourage the development of a safe and efficient transport network that will cater for the needs of all users and encourage priority for town centre access, walking, cycling, public transport and safety.*
- (b) To preserve free from development the proposed relief road alignment to the east of the town and to actively seek the implementation of the road during the lifetime of this plan to allow for a reduction in town centre traffic and a more efficient local road network;*
- (c) To encourage off-street parking wherever practicable, including provision at educational and community facilities, and identify additional off-street parking sites in close proximity to retail and community uses;*
- (d) To seek appropriate provision of car parking in all new developments;*

Actions:

- (a) To improve pedestrian linkage between the town centre and surrounding residential areas, with particular emphasis on the route to the railway station; along the Dublin road; and the provision of a footpath along the Graiguenamanagh road to Dangan Terrace;
- (b) To provide quality lighting and footpaths throughout the town that will secure the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike;
- (c) To work closely with public and private agencies responsible for transport services in the provision of new services and supporting infrastructure, and to facilitate the provision of bus shelters as appropriate; and
- (d) To facilitate the provision of cycle links and cycle parking facilities, where appropriate.

3 LAND USE ZONING OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Development Boundary

The development boundary for the town has been defined according to the following factors:

- The need to provide a compact and accessible town in accordance with the principles of sustainable development;
- The natural environment;
- The existing built environment and road/rail structure;
- Alignment of the proposed relief road;
- Potential population growth and demand for housing and employment;
- Distance from existing and potential community and commercial facilities and the need to encourage sustainable growth;
- The capacity of existing and planned service infrastructure; and
- Existing planning permissions.
- Population projection – development strategy for the town over the lifetime of this Plan.



Figure 6: Proposed Development Boundary

3.2 Land Use Zoning

The purpose of zoning is to indicate to property owners and the general public the types of development which the Council considers most appropriate in each land use category. The land use zoning objectives are detailed below and shown on the Land Use Zoning Map. It is the intention of the Council that the zoning of particular areas for a particular use will not in itself exclude other uses in that area provided they are compatible with the dominant use.

In the following paragraphs:

- **Permissible uses** means a use which is acceptable in the relevant zone. However, it is still the subject of the normal planning process.
- **Open for consideration** means a use which may be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the individual proposal or development will be compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, and will not conflict with the permitted uses and also conforms with the proper planning and development of the wider area.

3.2.1 Residential

Objective:	To protect and improve residential amenities and to provide for new residential development appropriate to the scale and character of Thomastown.
Permissible Uses:	Dwellings, open spaces, places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, nursing home.
Open for Consideration:	Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages, local convenience shop, hotel, public house, restaurant, use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.

3.2.2 Low density residential (Serviced Sites)

Objective:	To provide for low density residential development appropriate to the scale and character of Thomastown.
Permissible Uses:	Dwellings, open spaces.
Open for Consideration:	Places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, nursing home, bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages, local convenience shop, hotel, public house, restaurant, use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.

3.2.3 Mixed Use

Objective:	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate mixed uses that allow for the development of Thomastown as a focus for local services, while sustaining and strengthening the function of the town centre as the principal location for retail and commercial uses.
Permissible Uses:	A wide range of uses may be accommodated subject to other policies of this plan, including smaller neighbourhood centre type services (e.g. local shops/convenience retail), and for other uses that would complement as opposed to unduly compete with the vitality and viability of the town centre. In accordance with 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities', the Council will seek to encourage the economic and environmental development of the town by focusing new retail/commercial uses in the town centre within the Mixed Use/Town

	Centre zoning areas, and by restricting developments in out-of-town locations to those which would not affect the viability of the town centre.
Open for Consideration:	Dwellings, retailing, wholesale outlets, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, hotels, motels, guest houses, clubs, private garages, open spaces, public service installations, medical and related consultants, restaurants, car parks, take-aways, workshop or light industry, retail warehousing, take-away, public houses, halls or discotheques, advertising panels and other uses as permitted and open for consideration in residential zoning.

3.2.4 Open Space

Objective:	To preserve, provide and improve recreational and amenity open space.
Permissible Uses:	Open space.
Open for Consideration:	Sports clubs, recreational buildings, stands, pavilions, agricultural uses, public service installations.

3.2.5 Community/Education

Objective:	To protect, provide and improve community facilities.
Permissible Uses:	Educational, religious and cultural facilities, public buildings, crèches, schools, churches, hospitals, convents, community centres and halls, school playing fields, colleges, orphanages, hostels, halting sites, cemeteries, libraries, medical centres, and nursing homes.
Open for Consideration:	Public service installations.

3.2.6 Industry

Objective:	To provide for industrial and related employment uses.
Permissible Uses:	Industrial premises and ancillary offices, open spaces, warehouses, car and heavy vehicle parks.
Open for Consideration:	Petrol filling stations, service stations, car showrooms, advertisement structures, wholesale premises, public service installations, play school/crèche.

3.2.7 Agriculture

Objective:	To provide for agricultural and related uses while protecting these lands for potential future development.
Permissible Uses:	Agriculture.

3.2.8 Transitional Areas

While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses generally suitable for each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land use zones. In these areas, developments which would be detrimental to the amenities of the more environmentally sensitive zone would not be appropriate. For instance, in zones abutting residential areas particular attention must be paid to the uses, scale and density and appearance of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals in order to protect the amenities of these residential areas.

4 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND FRAMEWORK

This Development Framework sets out the vision and spatial strategy for the future development of Hospital. It identifies the key elements of the approach to change and growth in the town for the next six years and is also intended to provide the foundation that will shape the future development of Thomastown beyond 2014. The framework can be subject to amendment or review during this time where Kilkenny County Council consider relevant in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

4.1 Purpose and Basis of the Development Framework

The Planning Guidelines on Development Plans (2007) recommend that planning authorities should set out a strategic vision for their area. For urban plans, this vision will include the creation of sustainable, high quality residential environments – attractive, vibrant and safe places which function effectively. In addition to sustainability objectives, development plans for towns should include a range of urban design principles and policies which respond to local circumstances and which are capable of being expanded in more detail in LAPs.

To achieve sustainability it is considered that new development should be focussed within the defined settlement boundary of the town, with an emphasis on high quality design that reinforces the ‘urban village’ concept. The recent completion of the relief road around the western side of Thomastown provides an enhanced opportunity for new investment, helping to create more diverse housing provision and local job opportunities, whilst also ensuring a defensible physical edge to the boundary of the town. The Framework also recognises that people who live in the town value its quality of environment. This includes the historic and built environment and the countryside. The spatial strategy seeks to protect this environment but also to promote habitat creation and better management of the natural environment and the heritage resource.

The Development Framework (see Appendix 1 Map 4) is intended to illustrate how the expansion of Thomastown can be realised in a manner that meets the objectives of the LAP and the principles of development as set out in the following section.

The purpose of this section of the Proposed Plan is to ensure a high standard of design, layout and function for all new development, to conserve what is good in the existing built and natural environment, and to protect the amenities of the town.

In general, the development standards in the County Development Plan 2008 will be adhered to in Thomastown with the following stipulations attached.

4.2 Best Practice Design Guide Criteria

This Development Framework identifies the key elements of the approach to change and growth in the town for the next six years and is also intended to provide the foundation that will shape the pattern of development beyond 2014. The framework can be subject to amendment or review during this time where the County Council consider relevant in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development. It is guided by the Draft Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2008), and its companion document ‘Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide (2008)’.

The draft guidelines stress that planning authorities should promote good urban design in their policy documents and in their development management process. Clearly defined policies create more certainty for potential developers and their design teams, and also provide a basis for developing a shared, collaborative approach to pre-application consultations with the planning authority.

The companion urban design manual shows how urban design principles can be applied in the design and layout of new residential developments, at a variety of scales of development and in various urban settings. In particular, the design guide sets out a series of 12 criteria which can be used at pre-application meetings and in the assessment of planning applications and appeals (see below). Such guidelines are of fundamental importance to the future development of Thomastown, which has already seen considerable new residential development on the periphery of the town, as well as increasing pressure for infill development within the historic town centre.

1.	Context:	How does the development respond to its surrounding?
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 does the proposals create a sense of place?
7.	Layout:	How do the proposals 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 decent standard of amenity?
11.	Parking:	How will the parking be secure and attractive?
12.	Detailed Design:	How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

The Urban Development Framework Plan (Map 4, Appendix 1) identifies the main development areas within the town, and the existing and proposed open spaces and the links between them. A further description of each area, and where applicable guidance on the Councils' aspirations, is given in the following section. The guidance is not intended to be overly prescriptive, as it is recognised that future development also needs to respond to current market trends, but instead is intended to provide a general framework within which prospective development applications can be considered.

4.3 General Principles of Development

The development form promoted for Thomastown is based on the concept of a 'compact urban area'. This is a concept of a settlement that has all its facilities reasonably accessible to all sections of the community. The concept is to reduce dependence on the car, and plan for comfortable walking and cycling distances. High quality public realm, town squares, key community focal points, pedestrian and cycle linkages, and generous green spaces are essential components. Facilities within the compact urban form are intended to encourage the principles of sustainability and include for shopping, basic health, primary school, recreation and cultural facilities, pub, and employment.

The visual presence of vehicles should be minimised and private parking accommodated towards the rear of properties where possible, in attractive courts that are looked by houses and connected to the network of pedestrian routes. On all roads speeds should be constrained and a pedestrian-friendly environment created that increases the feeling of safety, without resorting to crude remedial treatments such as ramps. Horizontal alignment constraints combined with the careful positioning of buildings, landscaping and the use of different materials should be used to help reinforce the need to reduce speed and the dominance of motor vehicles. Traffic generating development should usually be located towards the edges, incorporated into the green landscape structure of the outer areas.

4.4 Design Guidance Principles

The aim for new development should be to enhance the traditional character of the town streetscape. This section of the plan is aimed at giving landowners, developers and their architects a clear view as to how the design of new development should be considered. It will also be used by the Planning Authority when judging planning applications in the town.

When designing for new building, consideration should be given to the existing building fabric, for it is the existing pattern and appearance of these buildings, related to the unique history and morphology of a place that makes one village or town different from the next. The building fabric therefore is a reflection of the character of a place and if we permit this character to be eroded, either through dereliction, decay and/or demolition and replacement with insensitive new build, then we erode the uniqueness of the place.

Therefore, where possible, consideration should always be given to building conservation. Where conservation is not possible, as in cases where there is already a gap in the streetscape, or where a conservation architect or other specialist in the area considers a building as structurally unsound or prohibitively expensive to merit conservation, then consideration will need to be given to designing a new building.

4.5 Design Elements in Thomastown

Streetscape refers to the look of a particular road, in respect of the arrangement and design of plots, buildings and materials, roads and footpaths, street furniture, open spaces and planting. Attractive and coherent streetscapes happen when all of these features reinforce and work with one another. Traditional building features that contribute strongly to the streetscape of the town centre include predominantly 2 (and some 3) storey terraced buildings with steeply sloping roofs of small slates, regular rectangular-paned sash and casement windows, ornate shop fronts and door cases with simple fanlights, and often brightly painted facades with traditional lettering.

4.5.1 Building line and Boundary Treatment

Market Street Street retains the medieval character of a typically winding medieval narrow street. The traditional development pattern is typically that of 3-storey buildings that run along the street edge. Traditional building lines in the town tend to be curved, following the course of the roads and rivers. Traditionally a set-back in building lines was reserved only for important civic buildings, such as Churches, libraries and other institutional buildings, and occasionally important town houses. The preferred option for infill development will be where the building line is re-established and backlands opened up for sensitive mixed use development.



Recent Infill development in the town centre

4.5.2 Height and roofs

Most buildings within the centre of the town are two storeys in height, though there are a few examples of larger three storey developments. Even with buildings of 2 or 3 storeys, actual heights can vary considerably within these ranges. The varying roof heights and the chimneys introduce a strong rhythm in the streetscape and should be acknowledged in new designs. This diversity does not disrupt the harmony of the streetscape because of the consistency in the other elements. The variety of rooflines conveys a feeling of diversity, but unity is provided by their common domestic scale and consistent characteristics.

4.5.3 Materials

Most buildings in Thomastown are rendered, and most of these have a painted finish although there are a number of buildings throughout the town that have had the render stripped to expose the underlying stonework. Certain architectural details are also evident, including pseudo hood mouldings around windows and doors and also brick trim surrounds to windows and doors.

4.5.4 Proportions

A typical street consists of a series of vertically proportioned units linked together. In Thomastown most of the vernacular buildings have simple, symmetrical proportions.

Large developments should be subdivided into a series of bays, especially at ground floor level, to be more in keeping with the pattern of the existing street frontage. Traditionally, plots in towns and villages are relatively long and narrow, reflecting medieval burgage plots. This is reflected in the facades of buildings and their narrow widths along the street front. Development that extends over more than one historic plot should address the plot through design, with variations in façade composition that echo the historical plot pattern.

Long horizontal lines look out of place and should be avoided; a fascia which extends across several bays should be broken up by pilasters or other vertical divisions. Strong emphasis at fascia level to form a distinct divide between ground and upper storeys is an important feature of streetscapes and should be included in any new development.

4.6 New Residential Development

The aim for greenfield sites on the edge of the existing built up area should be for the extension of spaces which are in harmony with the town character, and schemes should mainly be urban in form as opposed to suburban.

Where land is being developed for housing the following will be required to be incorporated:

- All new buildings should be in harmony with existing old buildings in terms of architectural style and should reflect the style and materials of the older character of buildings within the town.
- The pattern of existing forms within the area where development is to be located should be used as a stimulus for creative adaptation so that it will fit more appropriately with the overall character of the town.
- Careful consideration shall be given to the design of components (such as doors, windows and the height, pitch and ridges of roofs) which should have regard to those already present in the vicinity of the site. This is particularly important with regard to the redevelopment and alterations to existing buildings which should strictly reflect the original building's characteristics in proportions of windows to walls and in the design of the roof.

New development shall seek to:

- Reflect the local development patterns;
- Avoid substantial repetition of one house type;
- Respect the local characteristics and context of the site;
- Respond to typical setting and garden forms of the town;
- Refer to local buildings and variety of proportions and design;
- Refer to local distinctive details and materials;
- Provide adequate privacy for individual houses, flats etc;
- Provide adequate provision for car parking, open space, landscaping and planting; and
- Integrate with existing development and the preservation of features on site.

4.6.1 Development Form

The main objective for new residential development in Thomastown is to achieve high quality living environments that are more sustainable than many previous examples and can be enjoyed by all who use them. In the majority of cases, recent housing developments have tended to be repetitive and uniform. A similar mix of houses arranged to a standardised layout around a rigid road hierarchy results in sameness that lacks any local identity. One housing area looks very similar to any other. Based on examples of best practice, the attributes set out below are essential prerequisites for delivering residential environments of higher quality.

Movement	A movement framework that is safe, direct and attractive to all users.
Mix	A rich mix of housing opportunities.
Community	A sense of neighbourhood and community ownership.
Structure	A coherent structure of buildings, spaces, landscape and movement routes.
Layout	Street layout and design that is appropriate to use and context.
Place	Attractive and clearly defined public and private amenity space.
Parking	Convenient but unobtrusive parking.
Safety	A safe and secure environment.
Adaptability	Housing that is robust and adaptable to changing requirements.
Maintenance	An environment that can be well maintained over the long-term.
Sustainability	Housing designed to minimise resource consumption.
Detail	Well considered detailing of buildings and spaces.

4.6.2 Generic Development Layouts

The traditional building form of Thomastown is reflected in Market Street, whereby the majority of buildings are either two or three-storey and arranged as continuous terraces at back of footpath. Variety is provided by individual architectural detailing and the bold use of colour. Vitality is ensured by different building uses combined within single terraces and by front entrances and active uses facing directly onto the street.

Although such a built form defines the character of the town centre, and is highly appropriate given the date and function of the street, it is not necessarily an appropriate model on which new development should be replicated. As residential areas have particular requirements in terms of building types, access and privacy, a new built form is required that avoids the monotony of earlier housing schemes but delivers an attractive environment with a local identity. Whereas some of the details of traditional design can be incorporated into development, it is more the case of interpreting the principles in a manner that is appropriate to the new requirements.

This LAP does not seek to prescribe the form and appearance of every parcel of identified development land within Thomastown, but instead sets out guiding principles that the County Council wish to see embodied in new development.

A fundamental requirement will be the need to integrate all new development into the landscape setting, thereby reducing its impact on the local environment and reinforcing local distinctiveness. This can be achieved by retaining existing site features (such as trees, hedgerows, ponds, rock outcrops, etc) and by using strong structure planting that complements and reinforces the existing vegetation pattern.

A key requirement in structuring built form within development blocks will be the need to achieve a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs. Buildings that front streets, squares and parks present their public face to the outside world and give life to it. Public fronts and private backs are made more distinct when primary access is from the street, the principal frontage.

The scale, massing and height of proposed development needs to be considered in relation to that of adjoining buildings, the local topography, the general pattern of heights in the area, and views and landmarks. In the majority of cases, successful development is achieved by defining and enclosing space by buildings, structures and landscape. Buildings that follow a continuous building line around a street block and contain the private space within rear gardens or courtyards are usually more successful than individual buildings that stand in the middle of a plot.

The building forms should be arranged to define a variety of public spaces, such as squares, streets, parks, and other incidental areas, with the height of buildings related to the width and importance of the space. A continuous but varied building line can be created with a mix of dwelling frontages, garden and garage walls.

At key locations, such as street corners and other focal points, the building form should be articulated to reinforce the legibility of the layout (e.g. by varying the building height and/or architectural treatment).

Applications for new development will therefore be assessed by the County Council according to how well they respond to these guidelines and to the following general principles:

- Buildings should be two or three-storeys, terraced or semi-detached;

- Detached buildings may be appropriate at key locations where they can be incorporated in the general form of the street through the use of boundary walls and landscaping;
- The built form should be arranged in simple blocks as shown in the Development Guidelines, interpreted according to the building type and required density;
- Parking should be provided discreetly, in indented bays and parking courts wherever possible;
- Rear courtyard areas should be arranged to be over-looked by active frontages;
- The corners and other key focal points of blocks should be articulated through height and/or architectural treatment;
- Generally the plot ratio of development should be around 3:4 for higher densities and urban situations and 1:5 for low density (serviced sites);
- The plot width for individual units should vary (from between 4 to 8 metres) in order to reduce repetition;
- Occasional non-domestic buildings will be encouraged within residential areas at suitable locations as a means of encouraging mixed-use development.

It is intended to create a coherent and environmentally comfortable public realm throughout Thomastown. Accordingly, proposed layouts shall optimise solar orientation to both adjoining buildings and outdoor spaces. Layouts shall also have careful regard to prevailing wind direction with a view to reducing wind speeds in outdoor areas.

It is an aim to discourage the enclosure and isolation of individual housing estates and to promote the physical and social connectivity in a permeable network of streets and public spaces. Layouts shall promote this connectivity between phases of development. Large residential areas shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity.

Long straight roads are not desirable in residential estate developments. Estate roads should incorporate gentle curves and physical traffic calming measures within the estate should be included at the planning application stage.

The provision of services and road layout of the development must have regard to 'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas', DoEHLG.

All new residential development should take full account of the characteristics of the natural and built environment of the site, the views and vistas to and from the site, and its surrounding areas.

Passive supervision of the Public Realm is the most consistent and effective means of preventing anti-social behaviour. All public open spaces (hard and soft landscaped) shall be overlooked by adjoining accommodations to ensure passive surveillance. Back-land spaces, rear access lanes, blind corners and long side-garden walls shall be avoided so as to minimise the risk of anti-social activity.

Layouts, which give priority to the pedestrian and cyclists, will be encouraged. This can be achieved in smaller developments through shared surfaces for pedestrians and vehicles. Well-lit pedestrian links, separate from the main carriageways should be provided within the estate. These links should be overlooked as far as possible by dwellings and right angled bends should be avoided for security reasons.

Where large residential schemes are proposed, they shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity. These shall be designed to create safety for young children, facilitate social interaction and introduce a variety into the visual environment whilst avoiding a monotonous repetitive type development. Each group of

houses should have its own visual identity, variation being achieved by layout, including building lines, house design, colour and hard and soft landscaping. New development designs should avoid monotonous repetition by inclusion of subtle variation.

4.6.3 Density

There is no set maximum or minimum density recommended. A high standard of architectural design and layout will be required in residential developments. The Council will seek to ensure that new developments have individuality and a sense of place which is generated by the interaction between the physical characteristics and features of the site and its surroundings and the layout, landscaping and design of the new housing. It is the policy of the County Council that this high standard should not be diluted in newly constructed developments and that designs and layouts will be welcome which pay regard to the qualities and appearance of the existing area.

In determining suitable density, the character and amenities of the site and of the surrounding area will be considered along with the need for a variety of site sizes and house designs to encourage social mix and choice. In infill sites or in areas adjacent to the town centre, higher densities will be permitted subject to exceptional quality of design and finishes, proper provision for active and passive recreation and good living conditions, including privacy and adequate natural light, within each accommodation unit.

Regard should be had to 'Draft Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines' (2008). This states (Par. 6.3.(c)) that increased densities of development can be acceptable as long as they contribute to the enhancement of town or village form by reinforcing the street pattern or assisting in the redevelopment of backlands. As there will be no set minimum or maximum density specified in the Plan, the emphasis will be on providing a quality housing environment based on innovation and a design led approach.

In preparing applications for housing developments, designers and developers alike are advised to consult relevant publications for guidance such as:

- Draft Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines' 2008 (and the accompanying Urban Design Manual),
- Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment and Local Government, September 1999,
- Essex Design guidelines for Residential and Mixed use areas by Essex County Council and Essex Planning Officers Association, 1997.

4.6.4 Design

A variety of house types in developments of multiple housing will be encouraged with variations in house size, colour, materials, and designs.

In support of the Council's policy of reducing social exclusion, the Council will encourage developers to have regard to the requirements of people with disabilities, the elderly, and children in the supply, design and layout of residential development.

The design of dwellings should bear a relationship to the existing fabric of the settlement of Thomastown. Natural features or landmarks such as mature trees or vistas should help to determine the layout and orientation of the housing. The creation of 'land marks' within the estate, whether through retention of existing features or by the introduction of new features will be encouraged.

New development must recognise and be sympathetic to the existing town and help to renew the specific architectural traditions of the area as outlined above.

Some important fundamental design principals:

- It is of fundamental importance to the acceptability of higher density development by the public that the quality of design and finish extends also to the individual dwelling and its immediate surroundings.
- Residents are entitled to expect that their new homes will offer decent levels of amenity, privacy, security and energy efficiency.
- The orientation of the dwelling and its internal layout can affect levels of daylight and sunlight, and will thus influence not only the amenity of the occupants but the energy demand for heat and light.
- Privacy is an important element of residential amenity, and contributes towards the sense of security felt by people in their homes.
- Where possible, designers should seek to create child- and pedestrian friendly car-free areas, especially in higher density schemes, through the careful location of access streets and parking areas.
- All houses (terraced, semi-detached and detached) should have an area of private open space behind the building line. The provision of adequate and well-designed private open space for apartments is crucial in meeting the amenity needs of residents; in particular, usable outdoor space is a high priority for families.
- Circulation within housing layouts, including access to individual buildings, should have regard to the varying needs of occupants over their lifetimes, including needs associated with mobility difficulties and the normal frailty associated with old age.
- Adequate provision needs to be made for the storage and collection of waste materials.

4.6.5 Ecology & Bio-diversity

Design layouts should aim to enhance and protect the biodiversity resources of the town. This can be achieved through the following:

- Retain and enhance existing vegetation including trees, shrubs and hedgerows, wherever possible and incorporate into the development. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, it is prohibited, with certain exemptions, to remove or cut hedgerows during the bird breeding season of March 1st to 31st August;
- Networks of wildlife sites are more ecologically valuable than isolated wildlife areas. Where possible create linking corridors of habitats;
- Where possible, use native species. Trees and shrubs that grow naturally in the surrounding countryside are often the best choice for the town. A list of native trees and shrubs, with planting guidelines is contained in Appendix 2;
- Where possible, use plants of local provenance (i.e. grown locally rather than imported);
- Tree and shrub species with berries are important for wintering birds;
- Trees and shrubs which support a high biomass of insects in summer are important for breeding birds; and
- Where appropriate avoid the culverting of watercourses and provide new water areas.
- Where possible, set aside maintenance free areas and avoid or limit the use of herbicides and pesticides

4.6.6 Car Parking

Car parking shall be carefully designed to integrate successfully into its location in terms of layout, surface treatment and screen planting. New development will normally be required by the Planning Authority to provide adequate off-street car parking facilities.

Communal car parking arrangements will also be acceptable in residential developments. For security reasons, car parking should always be overlooked by housing. There should not be an excessive amount of car parking grouped together. The visual impact of large areas of car parking can be reduced by the judicious use of screen planting, low walls and the use of textured or coloured paving for car parking bays.

4.6.7 Public Open Space

Public open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. It provides passive as well as active amenity and has important ecological and environmental aspects. In calculating the area of open space, the area of roads, grass margins, roundabouts, footpaths, left over area, backlands, and visibility splays shall not be taken into account.

The Council will normally expect all open space provision to take account of the following principles:

- Open space should be provided in a comprehensive and linked way, designed as an integral part of the development.
- Areas should be of a demonstrated recreational or amenity value. Small dysfunctional open spaces should be avoided.
- Wherever possible, the majority of open space should be multi-functional. Areas for informal amenity and children's play should be combined.
- Areas should be easily and safely accessible from all dwellings which the space is designed to serve
- The design, location and appearance of open space areas should have regard to the amenities of nearby dwellings, for example, areas where children may play should normally be overlooked by the fronts of nearby dwellings to provide for maximum surveillance;
- Public open space areas should not be located so close to adjoining dwellings so as to cause undue noise or nuisance to existing or proposed residents
- Attractive natural features should be protected and incorporated into open space areas. Tree planting should normally form an integral part of such open space areas.

To ensure implementation of open space provision the Council will attach appropriate planning conditions to permissions, and where necessary will enter into agreements with developers. These will provide for the laying out and landscaping of open space areas in accordance with a detailed scheme to be agreed with the Council.

Reduced provisions may only be acceptable in urban locations where there are more sustainable patterns of development and maximum use can be made of urban land or redevelopment schemes where open space is already available. With relatively high densities such as flats, townhouses or apartments, good quality landscaped open space should be provided.

Open space provision for smaller residential developments and schemes catering for special needs such as accommodation for the elderly will be considered more flexibly on its merits and having regard to the requirements of likely future residents.

Developers may also be required to provide an equipped children's playground in association with open space provision where a development scheme would be greater than 800 metres from an existing easily accessible equipped children's playground.

Adequate areas of open space should be an integral part of any new residential development to meet the needs generated by that development. The overall standard of 2.4 hectares per

1000 population will normally be applied in assessing proposals for open space for children's play and informal amenity. In developments which are adjacent to and provide for easy access to significant areas of existing public open space a lesser standard of provision may be acceptable. This relaxation will only be considered where the developer pays a financial contribution towards the improvement of the existing public open space so as to improve its quality and carrying capacity.

Integrated, pleasant, attractive and landscaped open space should form an intrinsic element of new residential development. The precise location, type and design of open space should be negotiated with developers according to the specific characteristics of the development, the sites and its context. All open spaces proposed by developers should be designed and set out by suitably qualified landscape architects or similar design professionals so as to ensure a high standard and consistency with good design and layout practice.

Developers should consider providing a variety of open spaces. Both formal and informal semi-natural areas should be provided, such as wetlands, woodlands, meadows, green corridors as well as formal gardens and seating areas. These elements work best as part of a structure to the provision of open space.

4.6.7.1 District/Neighbourhood Park

The provision of a major public amenity on the floodplain of the southern bank of the river Nore, including picnic areas, walkways and seating is a key objective of this plan. The development management process will be utilised to secure the implementation of this objective. Safe and convenient access points should be provided to access the amenity area, including consideration of a new footbridge across the river.

4.6.7.2 Strategic Pedestrian/Cycle Routes

A network of convenient and safe pedestrian/cycle routes are proposed as linear open spaces linking existing and new residential areas to the town centre and community facilities. All residential development bordering the linear routes will be designed to overlook them where possible. The use of low walls and hedging should be stipulated, as high boundary walls can create a discouraging environment and pose a security risk. Tree planting should be undertaken, to provide a pleasant leafy environment, which provides weather protection, but does not provide opportunity for concealment. In addition, only low sparse shrubs and flowers should be planted. In order to protect and enhance the existing ecological value of this area, where possible, emphasis will be given to the use of measures which enhance the value of the area, including the use of native trees and shrubs in the park design.

4.6.7.3 Management plan for Public Open Space

Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space required under this policy, where spaces and facilities are not taken in charge by the Council, either through management companies or agreements with the planning authority.

4.6.8 Private Open Space

An adequate amount of private open space should be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling. In general the requirement will be 60 to 75 sq.m minimum for 3/4/5 bedroomed houses in order to ensure that most household activities are accommodated and at the same time offers visual delight, receive some sunshine and encourage plant growth. A standard of 22 metres will normally be required between directly opposing first floor windows. However where adequate levels of privacy are provided this depth may be reduced.

The boundaries of rear gardens should generally be provided with a permanent durable barrier with a minimum height of 1.4 metres. Where rear gardens back onto public areas, excluding a public roadway, this height should be increased to 1.8 metres.

4.6.9 Integration of Residential Developments

In assessing any new development in Thomastown, the Council may have regard to the development potential of adjoining land and will assess any application, with a view to providing for the development of these lands in an integrated manner.

This applies to any land parcel, and relates to all aspects of development including open space provision, access arrangements and pedestrian and cycle links. The distinction between residential schemes should be maintained by the use of design and detailing, to give each its own distinct identity.

4.6.10 Serviced Sites

Land has been designated in the town for the development of serviced residential sites. This would provide for the development of sites for individuals seeking to build their own homes on large plots, and should provide for a range of house types and sizes. Maximum recommended densities for this zoning would be in the range of two to five per acre, depending on the quality of design. The applicant for site development will be required to produce a house design brief in consultation with the Council which should be prepared by a qualified architect (RIAI or equivalent). The applicant for site development will also be required to seek permission for "other relevant works" which will include works additional to roads and services – i.e. common landscaping, building platform formation etc.

For any such development, there should be a continuity of design in terms of scale, compatibility and general harmony. Applicants will also be expected to employ the services of qualified architects (RIAI or equivalent) when applying for individual houses. No house should exceed 7.5 metres in height.

4.6.11 Road and Estate Names

The naming of residential developments shall be approved by the County Council. The names of residential developments shall reflect local and Irish place names for the locality as far as possible. No development work or advertising of housing schemes shall be allowed until the name has been agreed with the Planning Authority.

4.6.12 Services

All services including electricity, public lighting cables, telephone and television cables shall be provided underground in new housing developments. Provision should be made for the unobtrusive siting of transformer stations, pumping stations and other necessary service buildings.

4.6.13 Apartments/Duplex Style

In general apartments will be required to have the following minimum floor areas:

Apartment Type	Minimum Floor Area
One Bed	46 m ²
Two Bed	65 m ²
Three Bed	93 m ²

The internal dimensions of all rooms should be proportioned to allow for an adequate space for normal living purposes. The shape and layout of rooms should maximise the amenity of residents.

All living room, kitchens and bedrooms should minimise overlooking of adjoining/adjacent residences and should be so located so to avoid facing towards nearby high boundary or gable walls.

4.6.14 Access for People with Disabilities

Access requirements for physically disabled persons should be incorporated into the design of buildings and layouts of developments likely to be used by the general public and will be a material consideration of the Planning Authority in assessing applications.

Developers should have regard to the criteria set out in the following in the preparation of development proposals

- Access for the disabled – minimum design criteria, published by the National Rehabilitation Board;
- Part M of the Building Regulations 1997 to 2000; and
- Buildings for Everyone – Access and uses for all the citizens, by the National Rehabilitation Board, 1998.

The needs of people with disabilities should be taken into account in the design and construction of footpaths and parking areas. Footpaths in private commercial and housing developments and public housing developments shall be dished at junctions. Parking areas should make provision for spaces for disabled drivers and such spaces should be located in the most convenient locations for ease of use.

Tactile indicators are becoming increasingly more common. Tactile paving surfaces can be used to convey important information to visually impaired pedestrians about their environment. The provision of tactile surfaces for the visually impaired in all developments will be encouraged.

4.7 Car Parking and Loading

New development will normally be required by the Planning Authority to provide adequate off-street car parking facilities. Such facilities shall cater for the immediate and anticipated future demands of the development, and shall be located within the site or in close proximity to such development. Car parking facilities shall generally be provided behind in a manner that reduces its visual impact to a minimum such as behind the building line and the use of screening.

The dimension of car parking bays shall be a minimum of 4.8m by 2.4m.

Where parking space is proposed in front of existing premises, existing railings or boundary walls shall be retained. They should be provided with proper public lighting facilities and shall be clearly demarcated. Car parking areas should be properly landscaped by the provision of trees, shrubs and grassed areas in order to ensure that damage to the visual amenities is avoided. Parking bays shall be adequately delineated.

Where the developer is unable to comply with the car parking standards for the development set out in the table below, a financial contribution may be acceptable in lieu of car parking provision, which will be related to the cost of providing such facilities.

In developments of an industrial or commercial nature, developers will be required to provide loading or unloading facilities sufficient to meet the demand of such development

The Council may modify the requirements of loading and unloading facilities in any particular case where it considers it would be in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the area to do so. Parking and service spaces must be located on site so as to prevent street obstruction and should be located where possible to the rear and side of the buildings and in such a manner to ensure minimal impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

Where a number of uses are contained within one development, the various uses shall be separated and the overall parking requirements for the development shall be assessed relative to each separate use in order to compute the overall parking requirement for the development (e.g. in a hotel the function rooms, bars etc. shall be assessed as separate from the bedroom provision).

In addition to the above requirements, developers will be required to provide and maintain loading and circulation facilities sufficient to meet the likely demand of each development.

Car Parking Standards for Various Land Uses

Land Use	Parking Spaces per Unit
Dwelling House (Residential areas)	2 car space per dwelling unit 0.25 per dwelling for visitor parking
Apartments	1.25 spaces per unit <i>0.25 spaces per unit for visitor parking</i>
Schools	1 space for every classroom plus 4 additional spaces
Churches, theatres, public halls	1 car space per 10 seats
Hotels, hostels and guesthouses	1 car space per bedroom
Hotel function rooms	1 space per 10 sq. metres
Public houses, incl. hotel bar	1 car space for every 5 sq. m of bar and lounge floor area
Shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores.	1 car space for every 25 m ² of gross floor area
Shops	1 car space per 20sq. metres
Restaurants, cafes	1 car space per 20 m ² gross floor area
Banks and offices	1 car space per 15m ² of gross floor area and additional space to be determined by the Planning Authority
Industry	1 car space for every 60m ² of gross industrial floor area and operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority
Warehousing	Each application will be determined by the planning authority.
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 m ² of net retail floor space
Golf	4 car spaces per hole
Par 3 Golf courses or Pitch and Putt courses	2 car spaces per hole
Golf driving ranges, shooting ranges	1 space per bay/ trap plus 3 spaces
Sports grounds and sports clubs	Each application will be determined by the planning authority.
Hospital	1.50 car spaces per bed
Clinics/Medical practices	3 spaces per consulting room plus staff
Nursing Home	1 space per 4 bedrooms plus staff

In the case of any use not specified above, the Planning Authority will determine the parking requirements, having regard to the traffic levels likely to be generated as a result of the development.

In implementing the car parking standards, the Council will reserve the right to alter the requirements having regard to each particular development.

4.8 Public Utilities

The Planning Authority will require that all wires and cables for the provision of public utility services shall be ducted underground to preserve the amenity and visual character of an area, and in the interests of public safety.

4.9 Shopfronts and Advertising

The over-riding principle for the design of shopfronts and the design and placement of advertisements and signs should be restraint. Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan 2008 lays down specified standards, which will be adhered to in Thomastown.



Examples of traditional shopfronts in Thomastown

4.10 Key Development Areas

There are several development considerations and proposals that need to be incorporated in the Framework, comprising both approved or committed schemes, the Proposed Thomastown Relief Road, and the following proposed Opportunity Sites and Residential Zonings of this Proposed LAP:

Opportunity Site 1: Low Street/The Quay
Opportunity Site 2: Rear of Market Street (Slaughter House)

R1: Lands between Dungarvan Road (N9) and Bennetsbridge Road (R700)
R2: Lands between Maudlin Court and the Hospital
R3: Lands between Lady's Well Street and the Railway
R4: Lands at Stamps Park
R5: Lands at Grennan Woods

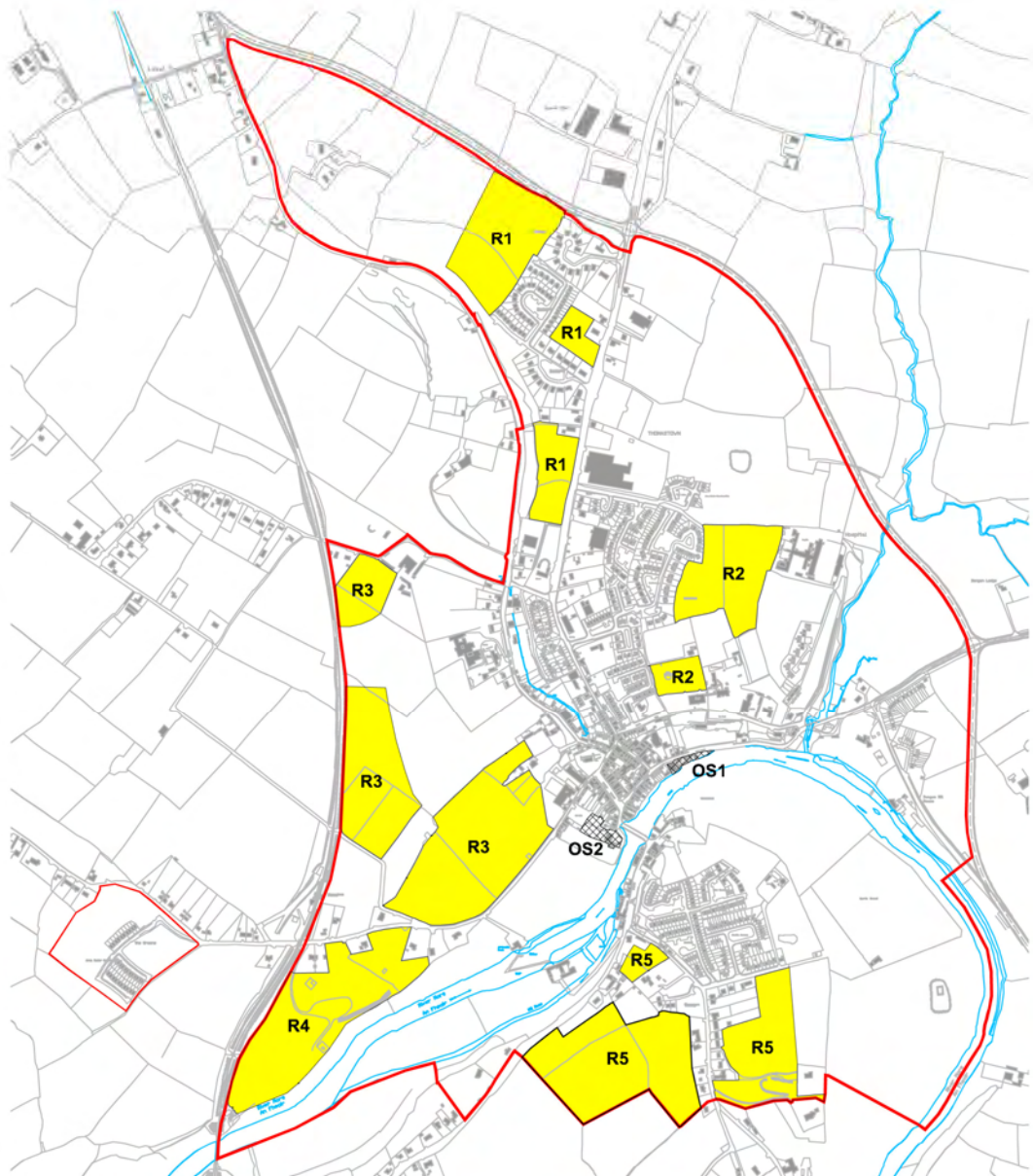
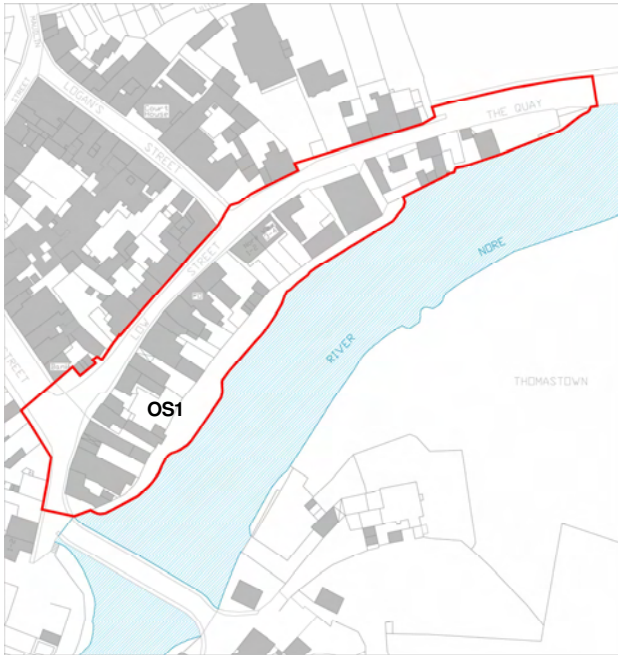


Figure 7: Location of Key Development Areas

4.10.1 Opportunity Site 1: Low Street/The Quay



Location Plan



Low Street looking east

Key Characteristics

Low Street mostly comprises traditional 2-storey shops, bars and businesses, with more recent housing infill close to the Logan's Street junction. A mixture of building types and under-utilised sites extend to The Quay, including a Post Office, a timber warehouse, an undertaker and a service station. Various outbuildings and sheds occupy the backlands between Low Street and the river, presenting a haphazard appearance when viewed from the bridge. Low Street itself is narrow and often congested, and would benefit from public realm improvements such as shared surface treatment, improved footpaths, streetlights and signage, and under-grounding of cables.

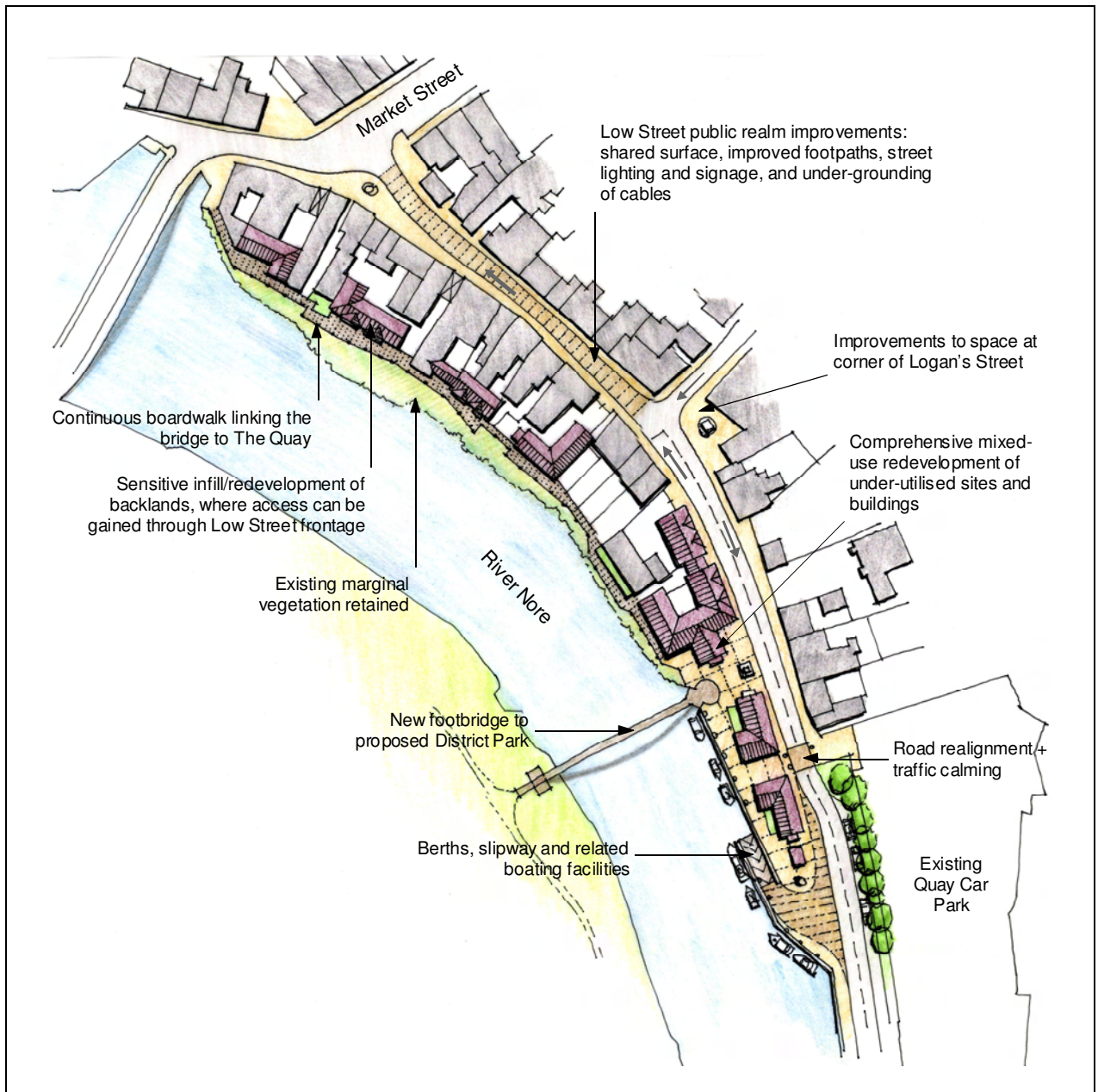
The opportunity exists to consider sensitive 2-storey infill and/or redevelopment of the backlands (e.g. cafes, restaurants, visitor accommodation) where access can be gained through the Low Street frontage, thereby creating a more coherent building form along the river edge. Towards The Quay, a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment could be appropriate, comprising 2+3-storey apartments, shops, cafes and boating facilities, including berths and a slipway. A continuous boardwalk could be introduced, linking the new uses and providing an attractive pedestrian route between the bridge and the existing Quay Car Park. A new footbridge could provide access to the proposed District Park on the south side of the river.



Outbuildings to rear of Low Street along north bank of River Nore

Development Framework

Context	Several buildings along Low Street are Protected Structures, including buildings or structures within their curtilage. The area falls within the Zone of Archaeological Potential, and the proposed Architectural Conservation Area. The river corridor forms part of a designated cSAC.				
Site	Area (ha)	Access	Density	Content	Indicative Qty.
Backlands Infill	N/A	From Low Street	High	2-storey cafes, restaurants, visitor accommodation, craft shops, etc.	N/A
The Quay Redevelopment	0.22ha	Low Street/The Quay	High	2+3-storey apartments, shops/cafes and boating facilities	Total 1,800m ²



Concept Plan

4.10.2 Opportunity Site 2: Rear of Market Street (Slaughter House)



Location Plan



View to Sweetman's Castle

Key Characteristics

The area comprises mostly under-utilised sites to the south and rear of Market Street, and including Sweetman's Castle, recent new development at the western end of the bridge, a modern warehouse and the former 'slaughterhouse'. Marsh's Street Car Park adjoins the western edge, and an open field extends to the south up to the line of the Western Town Walls.

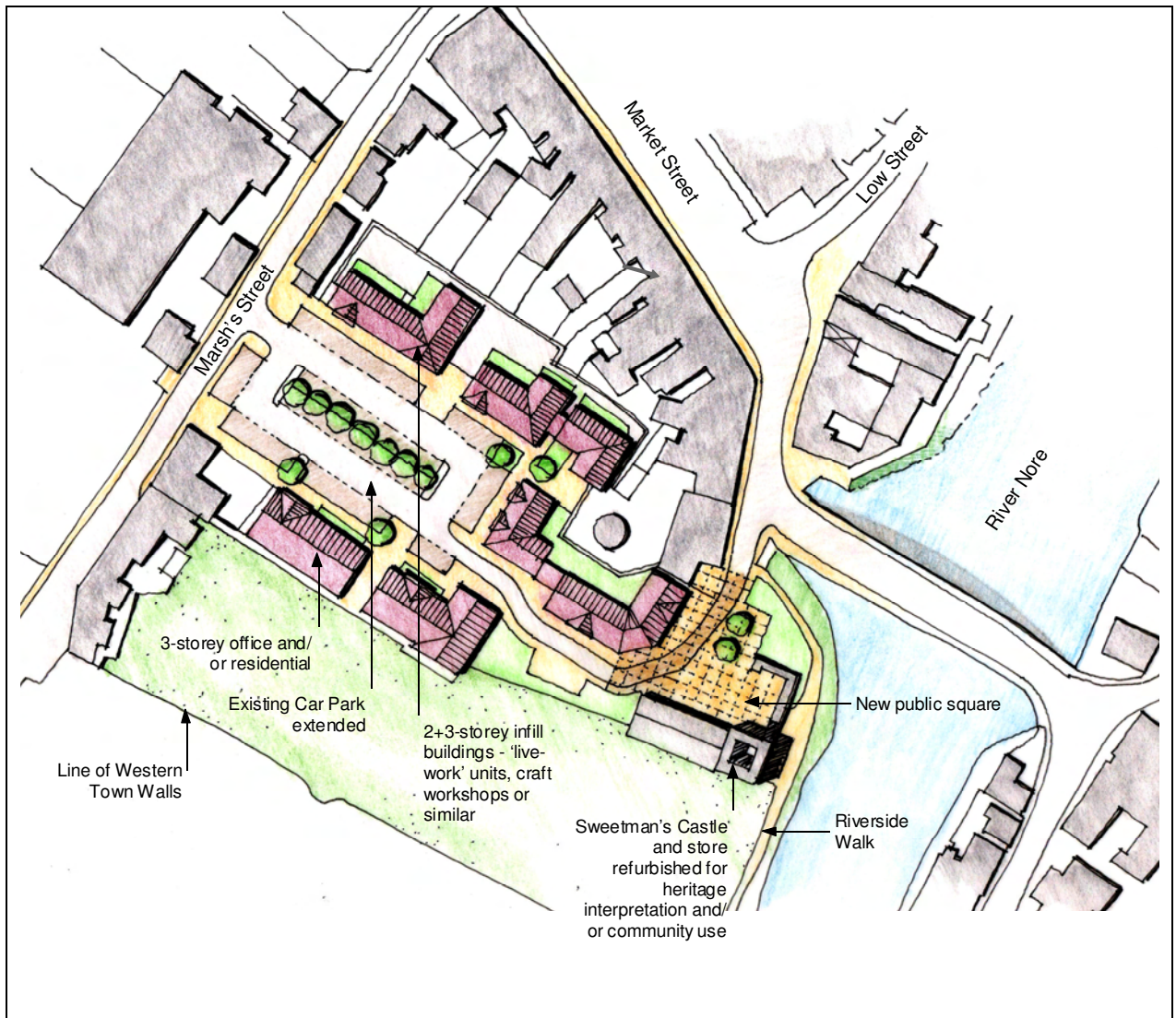
Given its proximity to the Market Street, and the presence of a prominent heritage building that requires refurbishment and positive use, a comprehensive redevelopment of the area could be appropriate in order to realise the full potential of the site. The presently neglected space in front of the castle could be transformed into a new public square, linked to the bridge and the Riverside Walk and forming a more suitable setting for the heritage structure. The merchants tower house and store could be refurbished for heritage interpretation and/or community use. One-way traffic circulation through the space (shared surface treatment) would allow vehicle access to the new development and to an extended Marsh's Street Car Park.

Appropriate redevelopment of backlands to Market Street, such as 2+3-storey 'live-work units', craft workshops or similar, would help define the public car park while affording passive surveillance. Along the western boundary, 3-storey apartments and/or office development would further contribute to the enclosure of the car park while providing a more coherent built form to this edge of the town. The open field extending to the line of the Western Town Walls should be retained as existing to provide a suitable setting to the walls and to Sweetman's Castle.

Development proposals should acknowledge and retain the current car parking use at Marsh's Street (or an equivalent capacity in another appropriate location) in addition to providing parking for the proposed uses as set in the parking requirements of this plan.

Development Framework

Context	Sweetman's Caste (merchants tower house and store) is a Protected Structure. The area falls within the Zone of Archaeological Potential, and the proposed Architectural Conservation Area. The river corridor forms part of a designated cSAC.				
Site	Area (ha)	Access	Density	Content	Approx Floor Area.
Merchants tower house and store	N/A	New public square	N/A	Refurbished for heritage interpretation and/or community use	N/A
Infill to rear of Market Street	0.16ha	Marsh's Street Car Park	High	2+3-storey 'live-work units', craft workshops or similar	1,853m ²
West of new public square	0.11ha	Marsh's Street Car Park	High	2+3-storey 'live-work units', craft workshops or similar	1270m ²
Western Boundary	0.12ha	Marsh's Street Car Park	High	3-storey apartments and/or office development	1515m ²

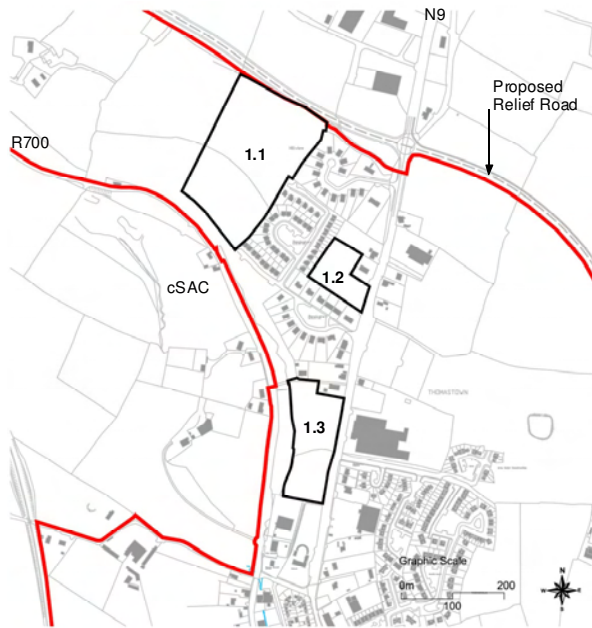


Concept Plan



Illustrative View of proposals for Opportunity Sites 1+ 2

4.10.3 Area R1: Lands between Dungarvan Road (N9) and Bennetsbridge Road (R700)



Location Plan



Aerial View

Key Characteristics

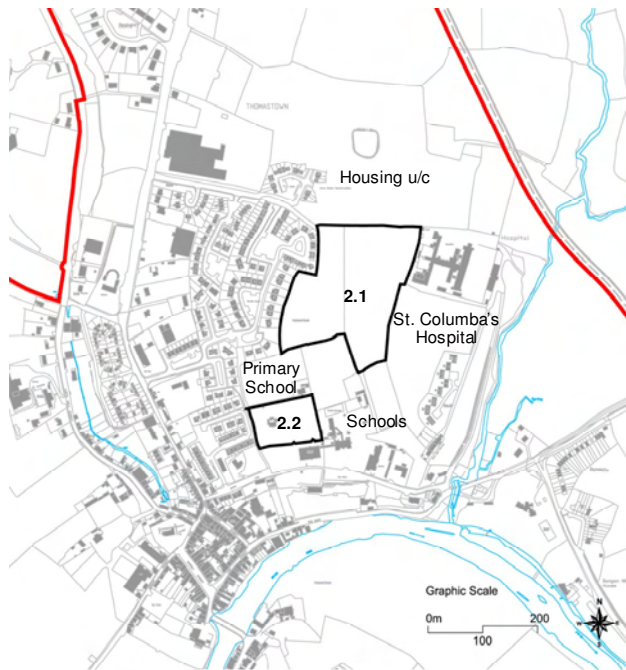
Area 1 comprises three sites located to the north of the town between the Dungarvan Road to the east and the Bennetsbridge Road to the west. The line of the proposed relief road bounds the northern edge of Site 1.1. Existing medium/low density residential development (Berkeley Lawns and Hillview), accessed from the Dungarvan road, separate the three sites. The Thomastown United AFC lies to the north of the proposed relief road. The sites are presently agricultural, relatively flat and with vegetation cover limited to remnant hedges. The Bennetsbridge Road is at a lower level than the sites, from where new development would be visually prominent when approaching the town. Thomastown Quarry cSAC is located to the western side of the Bennetsbridge road.

Development Framework

Context		Pedestrian/cycle spine extending eastwards across Dungarvan road. Open space buffer with woodland planting between Bennetsbridge road and sites. Existing residential amenity to be retained by suitable landscaping.			
Site	Area (ha)	Access	Density	Content	Indicative Qty.
1.1	3.15	Berkeley Lawns	Medium	3/4-bed detached + semi-detached houses (2-storey)	60
	1.75		Low	Serviced sites to north-west boundary	12
1.2	0.85	Dungarvan road	Medium	3/4-bed detached (2-storey)	15
1.3	1.90	Dungarvan road	Medium	3/4-bed detached + semi-detached houses (2-storey)	35



4.10.4 Area R2: Lands between Maudlin Court and the Hospital



Location Plan



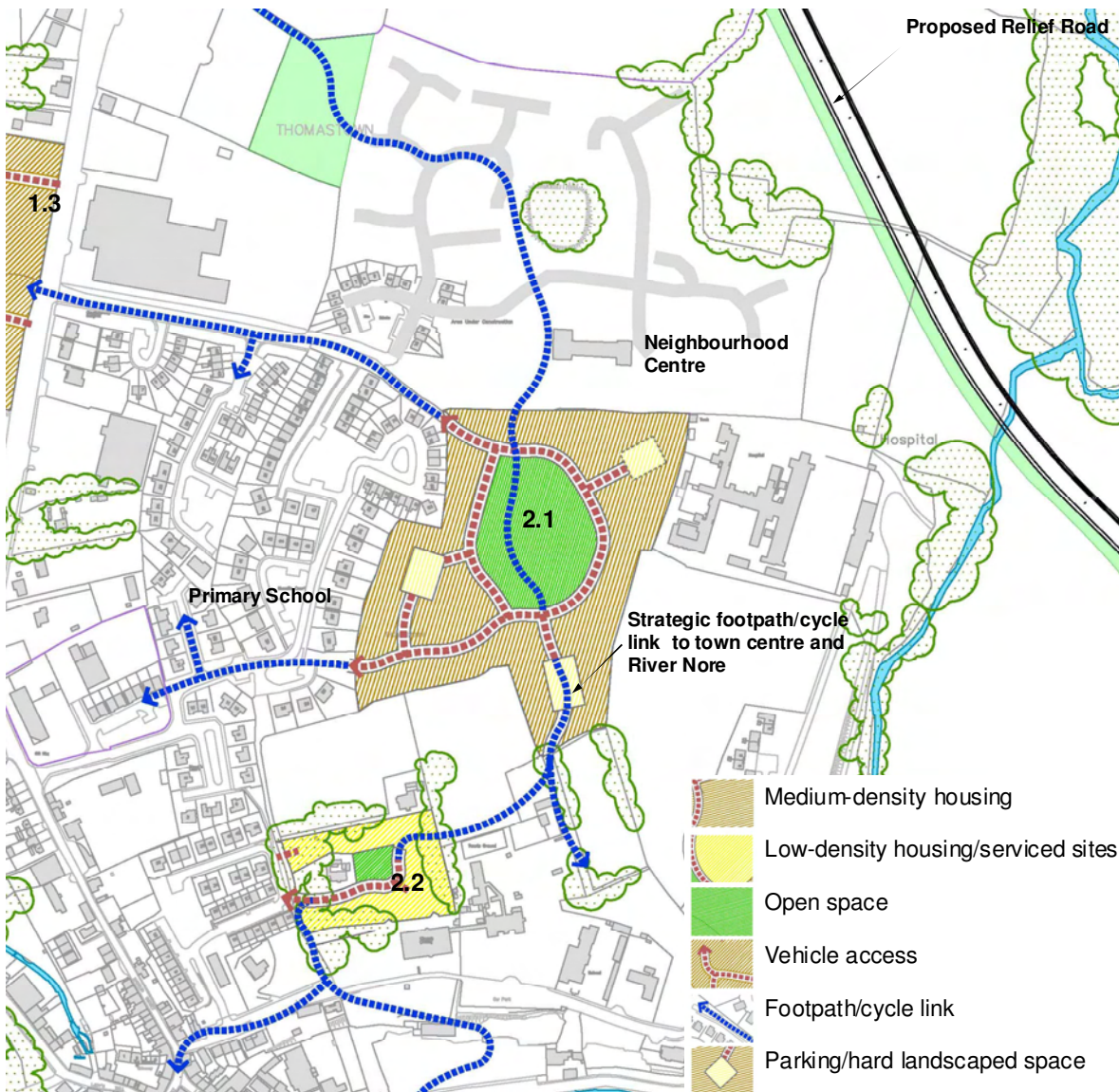
Aerial View

Key Characteristics

Area 2 comprises two sites located between recent medium density housing development to the west and north (127 dwellings, commercial units and crèche), by a new 16 classroom Primary School between the two sites, and by the grounds of St. Columba's Hospital to the east. Existing school grounds extend to the south-east. The sites are presently agricultural, relatively flat. Vegetation cover on Site 2.1 is limited to remnant boundary hedgerows, and there are substantial mature trees on Site 2.2.

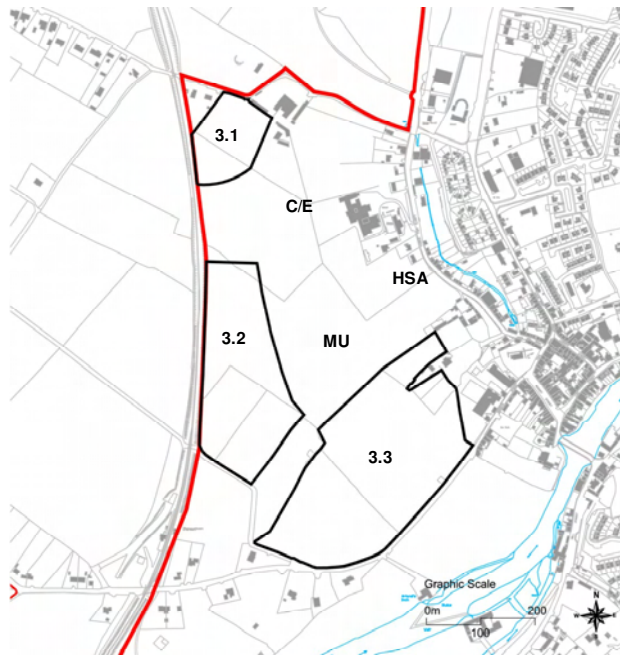
Development Framework

Context		Comprehensive Masterplan required. Pedestrian/cycle spine extending northwards to link with new neighbourhood centre and southwards to schools. Existing trees on Site 2.2 to be retained. Existing residential amenity to be retained by suitable landscaping.			
Site	Area (ha)	Access	Density	Content	Indicative Qty.
2.1	4.35	Maudlin Court	Medium	3/4-bed detached, semi-detached + terrace houses (2-storey)	80
2.2	0.92	Laneway from Chapel Lane	Low	3/5-bed detached (2-storey)	7

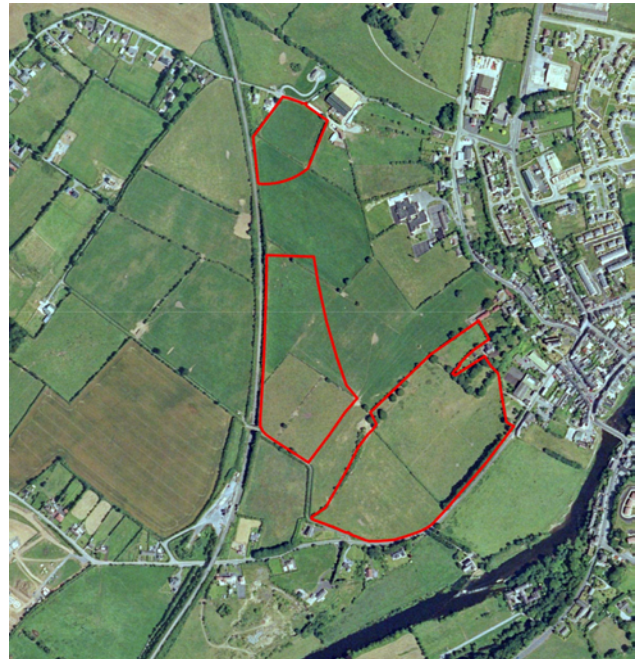


Concept Plan

4.10.5 Area R3: Lands between Lady's Well Street and the Railway



Location Plan



Aerial View

Key Characteristics

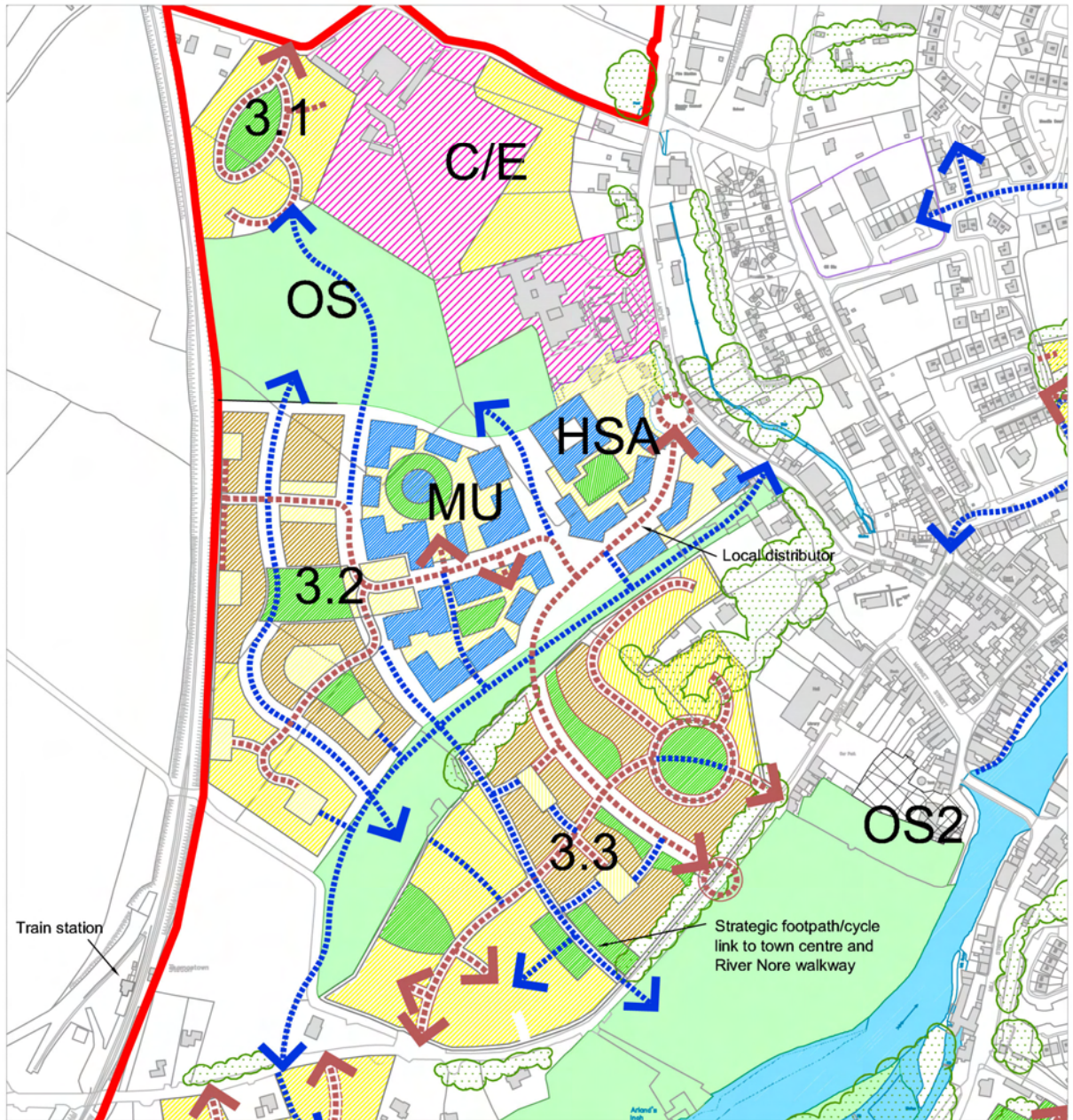
Area 3 incorporates an extensive potential development area extending to approx. 31.50ha to the west of the town and east of the railway, comprising housing, educational uses (Grennan College), open space, and mixed uses (including new OPW offices for the decentralised HSA). The majority of the landholding is in private ownership (Brennan), excluding the College Grounds. There are frontages to the east onto Lady's Well Street, to the south onto Station road, to the north onto a minor public road and to the south west onto a laneway. Abbeyview House (a Recorded Monument) and the town's Zone of Archaeological Potential adjoin the south eastern corner.

The lands are mostly agricultural, rising significantly towards the mid-point of the western boundary. There is a pronounced hollow close to the southern boundary. Vegetation cover includes sparse native hedges between the large fields, mature hedgerows to the railway and along the lane to the south west, a line of mature trees along the northern boundary of Site 3.3, and a single mature tree in the field closest to Lady's Well Street. Much of the central part of the area is prominent in views from Station road and to a lesser extent from Thomastown Bridge and Grennan Mill.







Planning permission (ref. P05/592) for site development works on the Lady's Well Street frontage was granted in November 2006 – Condition No. 2 of the permission required a detailed masterplan for the overall landholding, submitted in January 2008 (Bluett & O'Donoghue Architects). A planning application (ref. 0822) for a Community Sports Hall at Grennan College is currently pending.

Development Framework

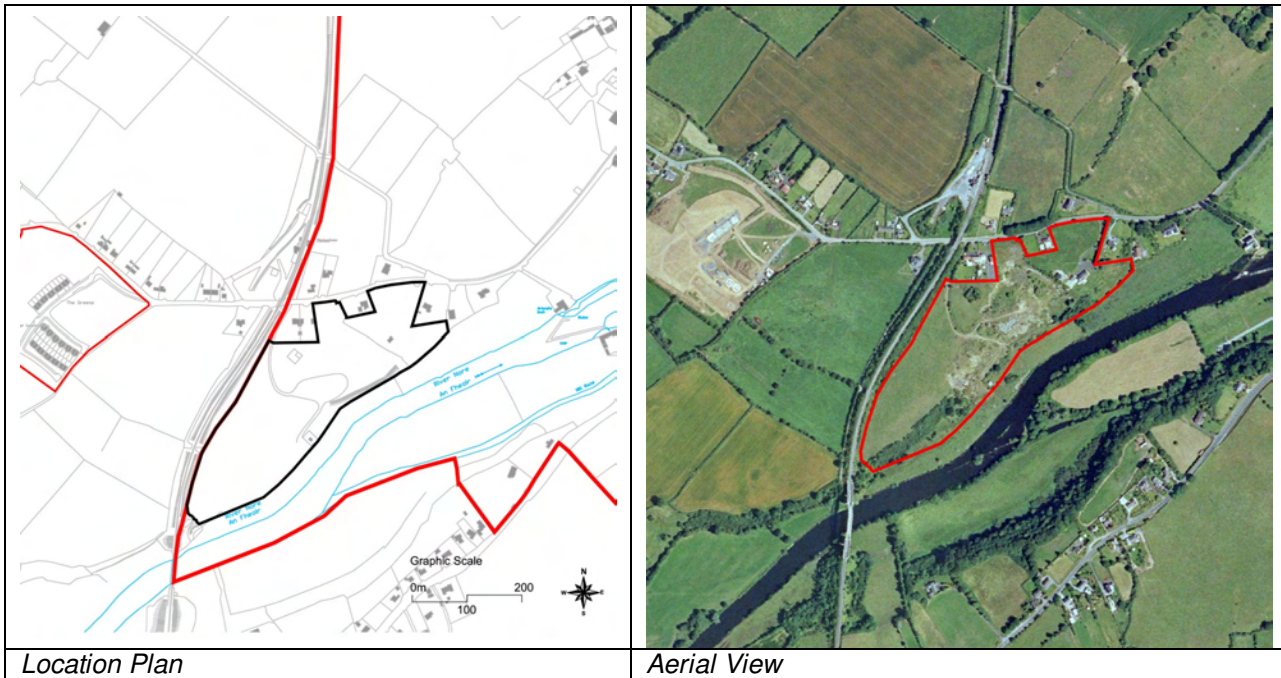
Context					
<p>Comprehensive Masterplan required (as PP Ref. PO5/592 Condition 2), Pedestrian/cycle spine extending through the area and linking eastwards to the town centre and southwards to the River Nore walkway. Steeper land (in excess of 10%) to remain undeveloped. Existing trees and mature hedgerows to be retained. Road to north boundary and laneway to south boundary unsuitable for increased traffic flows. Dual use of educational facilities to be encouraged. Open space (OS) to occupy most prominent parts of the area, and with generous linear open spaces permeating the development sites. Storm water drainage constraints to the northern part of the area. Mixed use zone (MU) must include HSA offices, neighbourhood-type facilities, car parking, a crèche facility in consultation with the county child care committee, provide for access to the college lands and medium-high density housing. Community/Education (C/E) zone to accommodate playing fields and future expansion requirements of VEC/Grennan College. Housing density to decrease outwards from mixed use zone towards northern and southern boundaries. Setting of Abbeyview House to be retained and enhanced. The development of the lands R3 must provide for a new road linking Lady's Well Street and station Road.</p>					
Site	Area (ha)	Access	Density	Content	Indicative Qty.
3.1	1.70	Internal	Low	Serviced sites	12
3.2	3.30	From local distributor – Lady's Well Street	Medium	3/4-bed detached, semi-detached + terrace houses (2-storey)	70
	1.85		Low	Serviced Sites to south west	12
3.3	5.70	From local distributor – Station road	Medium	3/4-bed semi-detached + terrace houses to east (2-storey)	105
	3.00		Low	Serviced Sites to south west	22
MU	4.50	From local distributor – Lady's Well Street	1.24ha 0.20ha 2.00ha High	HSA building and car park Creche (1-storey) Neighbourhood Centre (2/3-storey) 2/4-bed terrace houses (3/4-storey)	c3,350m ² c2,000m ² c5,000m ² 150
C/E	5.60	From local distributor – Lady's Well Street	N/A	Playing fields and future expansion requirements of VEC/Grennan College	
OS	5.82	Internal	N/A	Strategic open space linked to linear open space and footpath/cycle network. Local spaces within housing areas for amenity and play, and civic spaces within MU areas.	



Concept Plan

-  Medium-density housing
-  Low-density housing/serviced sites
-  Open space
-  Vehicle access
-  Footpath/cycle link
-  Parking/hard landscaped space

4.10.6 Area R4: Lands at Stamps Park

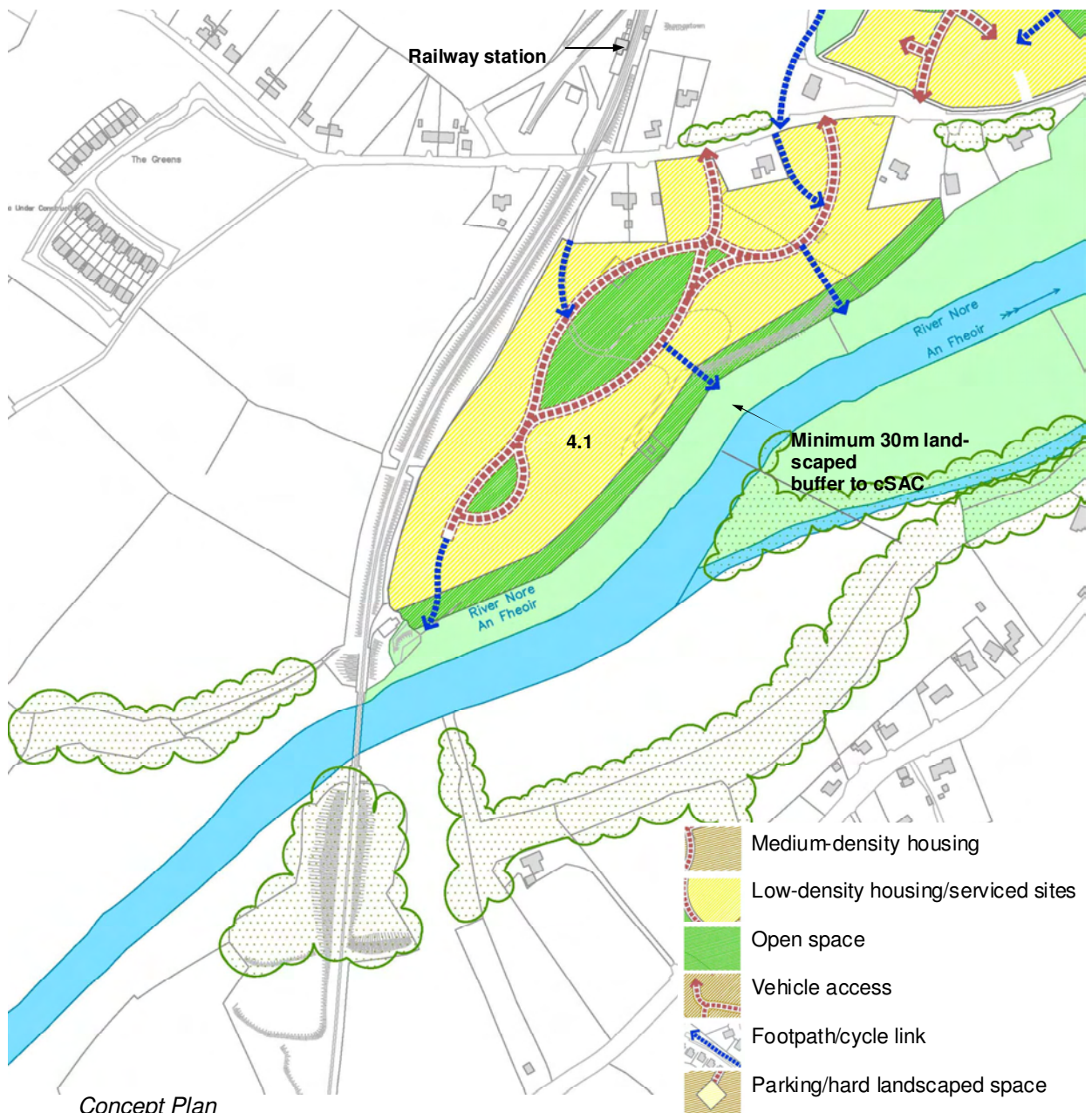


Key Characteristics

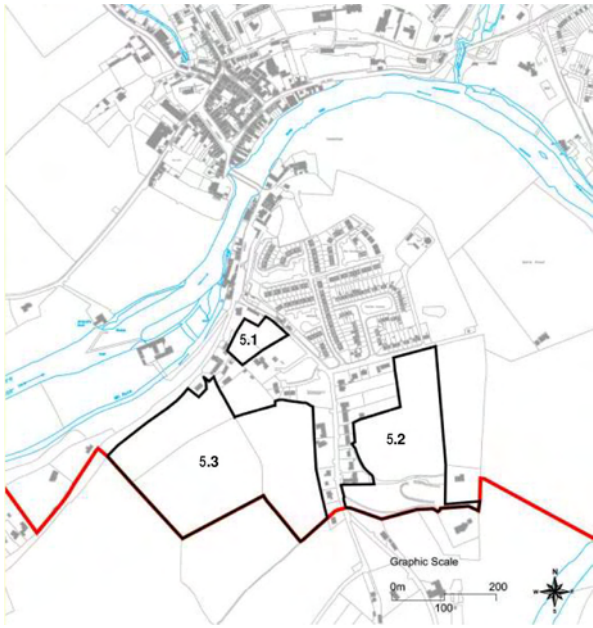
Area 4 comprises a large field located between the railway line, Station road and the River Nore. Much of the central and eastern parts of the site have been disturbed by quarrying and manufacturing. The western part is proposed by this LAP to be included within the extended Development Boundary. The River Nore cSAC extends along the southern edge of the site. Existing low density detached and semi-detached houses extend along Station road. The railway line (on embankment) forms a visual and physical edge to the town. There are views of the area from the railway station towards the river. The land slopes steadily southwards, becoming more steep along the edge of the river corridor. Vegetation cover includes small dispersed trees and scrub along the river corridor, and a hedgerow along the railway line. A row of substantial mature trees is located on the north side of Station road.

Development Framework

Context		Improved pedestrian/cycle link sought between town centre and station. River Nore walkway to be enhanced and completed. Low density residential and Serviced Sites within high quality landscape setting appropriate due to sensitive riverside location and prominence from views, with potential for Nursing Home to eastern side of site. River Nore cSAC to be protected and appropriate open space buffer (min. 30m width) incorporated in site layout. Existing residential amenity to be retained by suitable landscaping.			
Site	Area (ha)	Access	Density	Content	Indicative Qty.
4.1	8.20	Station road	Low	3/5-bed detached houses (1.5-storey) and/or Serviced Sites. Possible Nursing Home to east.	40



4.10.7 Area R5: Lands at Grennan Woods



Location Plan



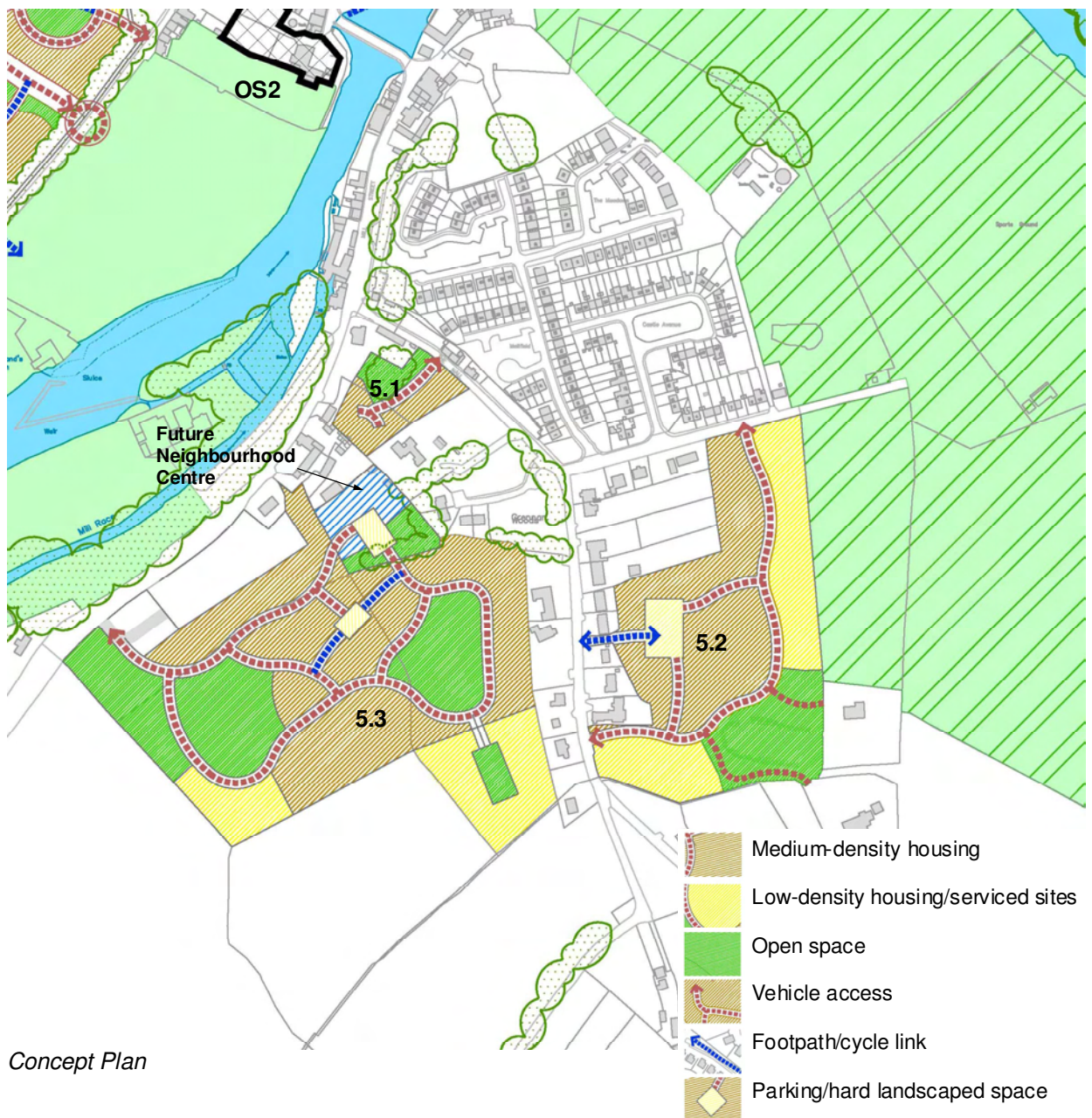
Aerial View

Key Characteristics

Area 5 comprises three sites to the south of the river, located around and to the rear of existing housing development at Grennan Woods. The area is agricultural, rising steadily from the road, and with vegetation cover limited to sparse boundary hedges, and a mature tree in site 5.1. Sites 5.1 and 5.2 have limited frontage access to the minor roads through Grennan, while Site 5.3 has substantial frontage access on the N9 Ballyhale road. A Mixed Use zoning (0.60ha) lies between Sites 5.1 and 5.2 to facilitate the development of a neighbourhood centre to serve the immediate needs of the expanding area.

Development Framework

Context		Housing development to relate to Mixed Use zoning (neighbourhood centre). Existing hedgerows to be retained and to form basis of new landscape structure. Existing residential amenity to be retained by suitable landscaping.			
Site	Area (ha)	Access	Density	Content	Indicative Qty.
5.1	0.60	Grennan road	Medium-high	3/4-bed terraced houses or apartments (3-storey)	20
5.2	1.80	Grennan road	Medium	3/5-bed detached and semi-detached (2-storey)	35
	2.40		Low	Serviced Sites to south and east portions.	20
5.3	5.30	Ballyhale road	Medium	3/5-bed detached and semi-detached (2-storey)	95
	2.35		Low	Serviced Sites to south west portion.	17



Concept Plan

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The Process

The benefits of the LAP will only be achieved if its policies and objectives are translated into action. The implementation of the Plan will be through:

- The development management process;
- Developing partnerships with other agencies;
- Ongoing management of the plan; and
- Monitoring and reviewing the plan regularly.

This LAP sets out certain policies and objectives in an attempt to promote, facilitate and guide development in the town of Thomastown. It also seeks to make Thomastown a more attractive place to live and recreate in and seeks to enhance quality of life. This Plan puts forward many ideas and it is important that it is implemented on the ground. Once adopted, the LAP will be used as a basis for guiding investment decisions for the public and private sector.

If Thomastown is to grow and expand it will need additional support services such as shops, employment provision and recreational facilities. The provision of such facilities will be made through a collaborative partnership between the local residential and economic community and Kilkenny County Council.

It must be remembered that this LAP is not only a Plan for the Planning Authority, but it is more importantly a Plan for the people of Thomastown. The local community contributed to the contents of the LAP through the submission of comment sheets and attendance at the public consultation events.

5.2 How the LAP will be Implemented

There are some proposals set out in this LAP over which the Council would have no direct responsibility or control. The expansion of primary and post-primary schools, for example, are essentially the responsibility of the Department of Education, whilst the provision of health services falls under the auspices of the Department of Health. Whilst the Council will use whatever it can to facilitate the provision of social community and transport infrastructure, it is not in all instances the direct provider of such services.

The Council is also constrained in its implementation efforts by limited resources. This factor underlies the need to maximise both financial and human resources in consultation with Government and Non-Government organisations and individuals.

Furthermore, there is a need to combine the statutory powers of the Council with proactive and voluntary sector investment.

5.3 Development Contribution Scheme

The Planning and Development Act 2000 provides for the adoption of a development contribution scheme and Section 48 (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 outlines that a planning authority, when making a grant of permission may include a condition requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities throughout the County. Some exceptions apply to certain development under the contribution scheme and contribution cannot be levied, for example, in regard to existing properties and in respect of

residential units which are provided in accordance with an agreement made under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, or those provided by approved housing bodies.

5.4 Monitoring

The Council will keep all matters which affect development and the planning of development under regular review. Monitoring is an essential part of the overall development LAP process. There is a requirement therefore, to identify the extent to which the LAP is being implemented and the effectiveness of its policies and proposals, particularly in relation to sustainability. In addition, the assumptions and forecasts, which underpin the LAP, will require continued assessment to detect any fundamental changes which impact upon the policies within the plan.

5.5 Community Participation

Public confidence in the planning system relies heavily on community participation and in transparency of the system itself. While it is important that the public are adequately informed of the roles and actions of the regulatory bodies, it is also important that public and regulatory bodies be kept informed of public opinion. The Council engaged the community at the initial stages in the LAP process with a successful community consultation event in January 2008. It is necessary to continue to promote community participation in all aspects of the Plan implementation process and the Council promotes the active involvement of local development association and other parties in the implementation of specific objectives and policies in the LAP.

5.6 Pre-Planning Advice

Kilkenny County Council offers an advisory service to potential developers in the form of pre-planning advice. The Area Planner is available for consultation by appointment for any prospective developments in the town of Thomastown. Advice is given on design and the ability of existing services to accommodate the proposed development. This advice is given subject to the stipulations of Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, where the carrying out of consultations shall not prejudice the performance of a planning authority or any of its functions. This service is available from the earliest stage of a project and intending developers are recommended to avail of the service and to ring the County Council, Thomastown Area Office for information and an appointment.

APPENDIX 1 – MAPS

Map 1: Land Use Zoning Plan

Map 2: Natural Heritage

Map 3: Built Heritage

Map 4: Urban Development Framework Plan

APPENDIX 2 – LISTS

List 1: Record of Protected Structures

List 2: Record of Recorded Monuments

List 3: List of Native Trees and Shrubs

List 1: Record of Protected Structures

	Record of Protected Structures (2002)	Rating	Location	RPS Reference	NIAH Reference
1	C. 13th Medieval Church with C of I Church camping out in the ruins.	N	Market Street (N.)	C218	12317019
2	Catholic Church, 1862.	N	Chapel Lane (E)	C219	12317048
3	Earlier tower beside the church and castellated school butressed from below.	R	Chapel Lane (S)	C220	12317046
4	Church of Ireland -"First Fruits" type.	N	Market Street (N.)	C221	12317019
5	"J. O'Reilly" bootmaker shop and shopfront.	I	Main Street (W.)	C222	12317018
6	"O Murchada" gothic shopfront.	R	Market Street (W)	C223	12317016
7	"Ryan and Sons" shopfront.	L	Pipe Street (Cnr.)	C224	12317036
8	Housing facing down Pipe Street.	L	Logan St.	C225	
9	"Pete Lennon" shopfront and house.	L	Logan St. (E.)	C226	
10	Terraced three bay two storey house c1850 with original shopfront nap rendered walls and timber sash windows, pitched natural slate roof."	L	Logan St. (E)	C227	12317059
11	The Sessions House.	R	LoganSt. (E)	C228	12317058
12	"W Walsh" shopfront.	R	Logan Street (W)	C229	
13	"E Fenlon" grocer.	L	Low Street	C230	
14	"K Mullins" 4 bays, two storeys with cornice and segmental headed windows.	R	Low Street	C231	
15	Building opposite Garda Station/good front.	L	Low Street	C232	
16	"L Mullins" - good lettering and colour and next house (3 bays).	R	Low Street (S.)	C233	
17	"D. Murphy" has good Edwardian shopfront with gilded lettering on glass and ceramic panels.	R	Low Street (S.)	C234	
18	Next house is 3 bays, 2 storeys.	L	Low St. (S.)	C235	
19	Tower house, low, only three storeys, but upto full height joined to 17th C house.	I	Low St (S.)	C236	
20	F. McConville 3 bays 3 storeys.	L	Low Street (S.)	C237	
21	Garda Barracks -5 bays-, 3 storeys with advanced end bays.	R	Low Street (S)	C238	
22	Beside the bridge and N. of River "Sweetman's Castle" - merchants tower house and store.	I		C239	

	Record of Protected Structures (2002)	Rating	Location	RPS Reference	NIAH Reference
23	Bridge.	I		C240	
24	“The Bridge House” 3 bays, 3 storeys, with an arch, gable ended and facing the bridge.	R	Mill St. (S.)	C241	
25	Two small 2-storey houses.	L	Mill St. (S.)	C242	
26	Public house T-plan building, unusual in presenting a large gable to the street.	R	MillSt. (S.)	C243	
27	Four-bay, 2 storey house with carriage arch.	L	Mill Street (S.)	C244	
28	A rendered C 18th house with hipped roof bow Venetian window.	R	Mill St (S.)	C245	
29	A four bay, 2-storey house.	L	Mill St (N.)	C246	
30	Row of three houses that follow.	L		C247	
31	Mill owner’s house, 3 bays, 2 storeys, hipped roof with eaves and single storey wing at rear.	R	Mill Street (N)	C248	
32	Flour mill on the island and mill owners house; a long 2 storey building with wide doorcase dating from the early C 19 th .	N		C249	
33	Pilsworth Four Mill.	N		C250	
34	Old Union workhouse, now St. Columba’s Hospital.	R	East of the town	C251	
35	Grennan Castle, simple late C 18th. 5 bay, 3 storey house with a fluted doric porch town.	R	Banks of the Nore	C252	

List 2: Record of Recorded Monuments

No.	Item	RM Reference
1	Town	KK028-040----
2	Road / Road Trackway	KK028-040015-
3	Bridge	KK028-040016-
4	Church	KK028-040001-
5	High Cross	KK028-040002-
6	Tomb	KK028-040003-
7	Ogham Stone	KK028-040004-
8	House – Fortified House	KK028-040005-
9	Architectural Fragment	KK028-040006-
10	Architectural Fragment	KK028-040007-
11	Font	KK028-040008-
12	Cross possible	KK028-040009-
13	House – Fortified House	KK028-040010-
14	Town Defences	KK028-040011-
15	Redundant Record	KK028-040017-
16	Market Cross	KK028-040018-
17	Armorial Plaque	KK028-040019-
18	Armorial Plaque	KK028-040020-
19	Graveyard	KK028-040021-
20	Castle – Unclassified	KK028-090---
21	House 16 th /17 th Century	KK028-090----

List 3: List of Native Trees and Shrubs

Choosing the right species of tree and shrub is very important in urban areas where there are restrictions on space. Where possible, always use native species. Below is a list of the trees and shrubs native to Ireland, and advice on the locations to which they are suited.

Common name	Latin name	Height (max)	Suitable for public open spaces	Suitable for streets and confined spaces	Suitable for tubs, containers, raised beds etc.	Guide to planting: see key below
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	22m	Yes	No	Yes	ADPS
Alder buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>	6m	Yes	No	Yes	D
Arbutus (strawberry tree)	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	8m	Yes	No	Yes	Not frost hardy
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	28m	Yes	No	No	ADIPS
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>	24m	Yes	No	No	DPSV Not close to buildings or any services
Bird cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>	14m	Yes	Yes	Yes	P
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	2m	No	No	No	C/H note: tends to be invasive
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes	*
Burnet rose	<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes, but vigorous	C/H
Common (or European) gorse	<i>Ulex europeus</i>	2.5m	Yes	No	In a rural setting	HV
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	AHIP
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes. Vigorous	C/H
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	6m	In hedge	No	No	V
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	4.5m	Yes	No	No	DH
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHIPS
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	AHS
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHPS
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i>	climb	Yes	On walls	No	C

	<i>periclymenum</i>	er				
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	climber	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	S
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	3m	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Purging buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	4.5m	No	No	No	AHPV
Rowan or mountain ash	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADHIP
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	24m	Yes	No	No	AI
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Sloe, blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	3m	Yes	No	No	AHPV
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	7.5m	Yes	No	No	H
Western (or mountain) gorse	<i>Ulex gallii</i>	1.5m	Yes	No	Yes	*
Whitebeam spp.	<i>Sorbus aria/S. anglica/S. devoniensis /S.hibernica/S. latifolia/S. rupicola</i>	12m	Yes	Yes	Yes	IPS
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHI
Willow spp.	<i>Salix spp.</i>	6m	Some	No	No	V Not suitable near buildings or services
Wych elm	<i>Ulmus glabr</i>	30m	Yes		No	PS
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	14m	Yes	No	Yes	AIPS

- A – Grows in a wide variety of soils
 C – Climber
 H – Suitable for hedging
 I – Suitable as an individual tree
 D – Tolerates or prefers damp conditions
 P – Tolerates smoke or pollution
 S – Tolerates shade
 V – Invasive
 * - Tolerates dry conditions

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