

Variation No. 1 of the County Wexford Development Plan 2007-2013

**Made by the Members of Wexford County Council
on 12 December 2011**



Wexford County Council
Planning & Development

Introduction

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 requires planning authorities to include Core Strategies in their development plans. The purpose of a Core Strategy is to articulate a medium to long term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of an area. The Core Strategy is required to include details of a 'settlement hierarchy' for the area and provide population projections for settlements and rural areas in the hierarchy. These projections must be derived from the population targets set down by the parent Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). The Core Strategy is also required to provide details to show that rural areas and objectives relating to retail development are in accordance with Section 28 Guidelines of the Minister and that the Housing Strategy is in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and RPGs.

A complete review of the County Wexford Development Plan 2007-2013 has commenced. The next Plan for the County, which will be operational for the period 2013-2019, will include a new Core Strategy together with a new Housing Strategy and Retail Strategy. The review will incorporate all Section 28 Guidelines that have been enacted by the Minister since the adoption of the current Plan. The review of the Plan will also be subject to the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment under the EU SEA Directive, Appropriate Assessment under the EU Habitats Directive and Water Framework Directive.

Variation No. 1 of the County Wexford Development Plan 2007-2013 sets out an interim Core Strategy to align the Plan with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the population targets for the County as set out in the RPGs and as far as practical national and regional development objectives as set out in the NSS and RPGs.

No changes were made to current Housing Strategy or the Retail Strategy given that the review of the Plan and preparation of new strategies has commenced.

Strategic Environment Assessment

In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004), Wexford County Council carried out formal screening of Proposed Variation No. 1 to determine whether it would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

This screening process involved formal consideration of;

- the characteristics of the Plan; and
- the characteristics of the environmental effects of the plan and the area likely to be affected.

Having consulted with the relevant statutory Environmental Consultees and completed the formal screening process, Wexford County Council determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required for the Proposed Variation, as it was considered that its implementation would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This decision has been taken having regard to the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EEC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Regional Authorities and the Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, November 2004).

The following documents have also been taken into account in the preparation of the Variation No 1: Departmental Circular PSSP 6/2011 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 200 of 2011), amending the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004), and Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), amending the Planning and Development (Strategic Environment Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).

Appropriate Assessment

In order to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive was required, the Proposed Variation was subject to a formal Screening process carried out in accordance with the Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2002). This process sought to determine:

- (a) whether the plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site; and
- (b) whether the plan, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site(s) in view of the site(s) conservation objectives.

Wexford County Council determined that an Appropriate Assessment of Proposed Variation No 1 to the County Development Plan 2007-2013 was not required having regard to:

- The characteristics of the Plan
- The reports of WYG dated July 2011, October 2011 and December 2011 included in the Screening Determination report, in particular the assessment of the implications of the Proposed Variation in Section 4.5, the 'Finding of No Significant Effects Report Matrix' and the 'Conclusions' of the main Screening Report and the respective sections in the Addendum reports, and
- The consultations with the Prescribed Bodies and in particular the National Parks and Wildlife Service

How to read this document:

Variation No. 1 shall be read in conjunction with the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013. Sections 1.1 to 2.4.7 of the Plan have been replaced in their entirety in the interests of clarity. There are text changes to other sections in the Plan to ensure consistency with these new sections. Where text has been deleted this will be shown in ~~striketrough text~~. Where additional text has been included this will be shown in **bold and underlined**.

Chapter 1 Planning Context and County Profile

Section 1.0.1 Legal Context

Wexford County Council as a Planning Authority has a duty to make a Development Plan for its functional area and to review it every six years. The County Development Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County. The legal basis for Development Plans is contained in the Planning and Development 2000-2006 **(as amended)**.

Section 1.1 Planning Context

While Development Plans are the fundamental planning document for the county, the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 place their formulation within a national and regional spatial framework. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region (RPGs) are the two primary strategies, which the review of the County Development Plan must have regard to. Other plans and strategies that the review of the County Development Plan has taken into account in the formulation of its policies include Wexford County Development Board Strategies, the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East 2006-2011 and National Planning Guidelines.

1.1.1 The National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020

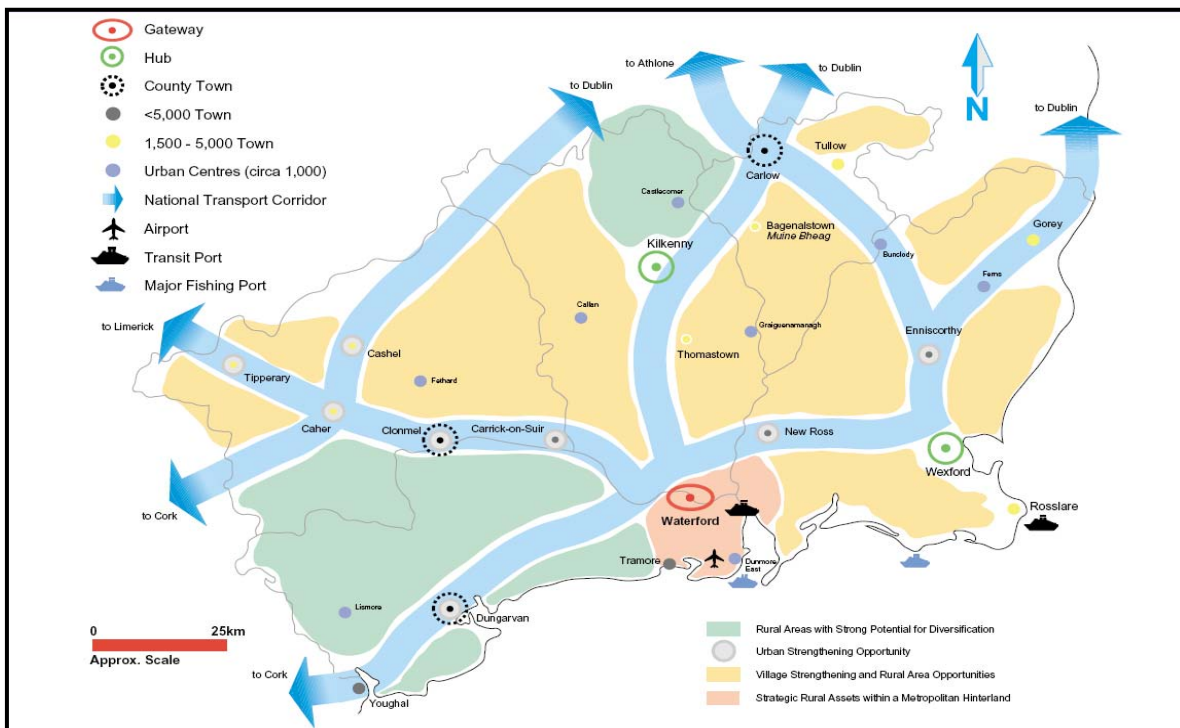
The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions and to facilitate every place in the country to reach its economic potential. Its focus is on people, places and on building communities. This will be achieved through closer matching of where people live and where they work.

The primary aim of the NSS is to,

“Improve the quality of life of all citizens, bringing jobs closer to where people live, improving our environment and building a strong sustainable economic future for ourselves and our children”

Key to the successful implementation of the NSS in the South East Region is the enhancement of Waterford as a Gateway, supported by Wexford and Kilkenny as Hubs. These three together will form a nationally strategic ‘growth triangle’. A critical mass of population will help support greater economic activity and quality of life. In turn the development of Wexford Town as a hub will energise smaller towns and rural areas within its influence.

The towns of Enniscorthy and New Ross are recognised as important urban centres providing a range of services and opportunities for employment whilst smaller towns and villages throughout the County will act as a focus for social and economic activity as well as residential housing.



Source National Spatial Strategy

The NSS states that the characteristics, location, concentration and distribution of future economic activity will have a crucial bearing on the achievement of a more balanced spatial development.

The County Development Plan has taken account of the key issues affecting the development of the South East Region and the strategic importance of Waterford as the designated 'Gateway'. The Plan's policies on economic development, infrastructure, transport and its settlement strategy reflect the Council's recognition of the importance of a strong development axis between Wexford as a growth 'hub' and Waterford as a 'Gateway Centre'. The Plan recognises this 'development axis' as a key to the successful implementation of the National Spatial Strategy and the future economic development of the county.

The NSS provides for a national spatial framework. This Development Plan conforms to the NSS model in terms of sustainable balanced growth and in maximising the growth potential of County Wexford.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, through the Core Strategy, requires planning authorities to demonstrate compliance with the objectives of the NSS, thereby ensuring greater integration and consistency between spatial plans at national, regional and local levels.

1.1.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022

The South-East Region covers counties Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Waterford City. The South-East Regional Authority is the statutory authority covering these areas. The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires Regional Authorities to make planning guidelines for their region and to review the guidelines at least every 6 years. The current guidelines for the South-East Region were adopted on the 26th July 2010 and are operational for the period 2010-2022.

The RPGs provide a strategic planning framework for the South-East Region with the objective of implementing the NSS at regional level and achieving balanced

development. The RPGs incorporate high level policies which will inform and advise local authorities in the preparation and review of their respective Development Plans and provide clear integration of planning and development policy at national, regional and local level.

The RPGs have taken account of key issues affecting the development of the region, such as population and settlement, economic and employment trends, industrial and commercial development, transportation, water supply and waste water facilities, energy and communications, education, healthcare, retail and community facilities and environmental protection.

The key objectives of the RPGs are:

- Combine the strengths of the cities and towns in the region to achieve sufficient critical mass to compete with larger urban centres in other regions;
- Progress towards an accessible region with efficient and fully integrated transport systems;
- Broaden and strengthen the economic base of the region and seek to achieve innovation and enterprise in indigenous and emerging industry sectors, such as green/renewable energy, and greater economic competitiveness and growth;
- Providing for world class higher education, research and development and links to the knowledge economy;
- Tackling inequality, educational disadvantage and social deprivation by providing improved public services and social and community infrastructure;
- Maintenance of the character and vitality of rural areas and conservation of the region's characteristic landscape and heritage assets; and
- Promoting and supporting the creation of a more sustainable self-sufficient region with greater use of renewable resources and development of regional food supplies.

1.1.3 Wexford County Development Board

Remodelling the Model County 2002-2012

The Wexford County Development Board's document "Remodelling the Model County 2002-2012" is a ten year strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of County Wexford. The document aims to implement strategies on a countywide basis through a broadly based partnership approach. In 2009 a review of the Strategy was carried out to incorporate socio-economic changes and identify a limited number of priorities for the period 2009-2012. The Review is published in the document Action for Change: Wexford County Development Board Strategy 2009-2012. Priorities for 2009-2012 include objectives to encourage business development and job creation, to promote civic participation, to co-ordinate County Wexford's response to climate change and develop a Recreation Strategy.

Positioning Wexford for the Upturn - Towards Sustainable Growth & Development

In April 2010 Wexford County Development Board produced this report which focuses on initiatives and actions that can be taken by people living and working in Wexford towards sustainable growth and development of Wexford's economy. The report highlighted the following sectors as the pillars of growth for Wexford:

- Tourism
- Financial Services
- Health Life Sciences, (a collective term used to describe the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical devices and diagnostics sectors).
- Food
- Sustainable Construction, (renewable energies and the retrofitting of buildings).

1.1.4 National Development Plan 2007-2013 Transforming Ireland-A Better Quality of Life for All.

The National Development Plan sets out the roadmap to Ireland's future. The €184 billion Plan represents another major milestone in building a prosperous Ireland for all the people, characterised by sustainable economic growth, greater social

inclusion and balanced regional development. The NDP sets out a Regional Development Strategy which is based on the framework of the NSS. This involves investment in the nine Gateway centres complemented by development of the NSS Hub and County Towns and their rural hinterlands.

1.1.5 National Planning Guidelines

Planning Authorities are required to have regard to guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). These include:

- Architectural Heritage Protection-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2004.
- Architectural Heritage Protection for Places of Public Worship-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, November 2003.
- Childcare Facilities-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2001.
- Provision of Schools and the Planning System-A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities (DE and DEHLG), July 2008.
- Sustainable Urban Housing-Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, September 2007.
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2008 and Best Practice Urban Design Manual (Companion document to the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines), May 2009.
- Development Plans – Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities June, 2007.
- Development Management-Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2007.
- Retail Planning Guidelines-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, January 2005.
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Local Authorities, November 2009.
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Projects on the Environment-Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities, November 2004.

- Landscape and Landscape Assessment –Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2000.
- Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures.
- Wind Energy-Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- Sustainable Rural Housing-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, April 2005.
- Quarries and Ancillary Activities-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, April 2004.
- Spatial Planning and National Roads (Consultation Draft): Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2010.

1.1.6 Joint Waste Management Plan for the South–East 2006-2011

The purpose of this Plan is to promote waste prevention and minimisation through source reduction, producer responsibility and public awareness; and to manage the recovery/ recycling/ disposal of waste arising on a regional basis. The statutory period for which the Plan provides is 2006–2011. The Plan must be reviewed every five years in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996.

Section 1.2 County Profile

1.2.1 Current Trends and Issues

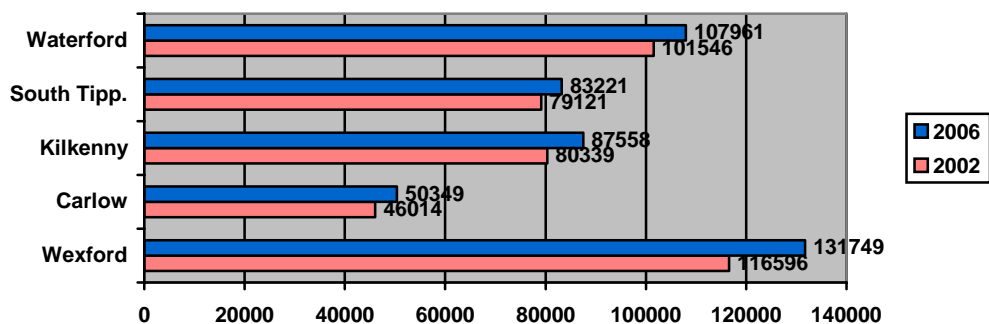
The population of the South-East Region increased from 423,616 to 460,838 persons between 2002 and 2006, an increase of 37,222 people or 8.8%. Within the region, the population of County Wexford increased from 116,596 to 131,749, an increase of 15,153 persons. Wexford also recorded the highest growth rate in region at 13%.

By comparison, the population of Co. Waterford as a whole increased to 107,961 persons - a total growth rate of 6.3%. The population of Waterford City grew by 2.6% to 45,748 persons. Co. Carlow maintained its steady growth rate evident in the 2002 Census with its population increasing by 9.4% to 50,349 persons. The population of Co. Kilkenny increased by 9.0% to 87,558 persons and South Tipperary increased by 5.2% to 83,221 persons.

1.2.2 South East Region-Components of population change

Chart 1 demonstrates population change within each of the counties in the region. Co. Wexford increased in population by 15,153 persons since 2002. 10,700 (71%) of this increase is due to inward migration, which is considerable high in comparison to the other counties within the South-East.

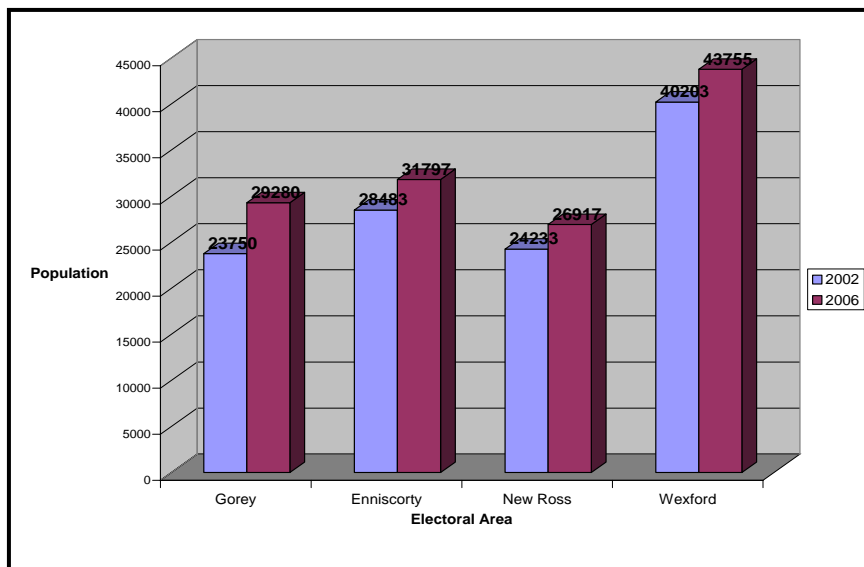
Chart 1 Population Change across the South East region



1.2.3 Population in County Wexford 2006

Chart 2 demonstrates the population of the Electoral Areas within the County in 2002 and 2006. The population of the Wexford Electoral Area remains the largest with a population of 43,755 persons. Enniscorthy is the second largest Electoral Area with a population of 31,797, followed by Gorey and New Ross with populations of 29,280 and 26,917 respectively.

Chart 2 Population of County Wexford's Electoral Areas¹



Figures 1 and 2 illustrate population change and proportional (%) population increases in the County from Census 2002 to 2006. The Gorey area has continued to grow with most Electoral Divisions increasing in population, many by over 20% since 2002. There have been population increases across the Enniscorthy area, mostly between 5% and 15%. The New Ross and Wexford Areas have also grown steadily, although some Electoral Divisions have shown a decrease in population in the Census period to 2006.

¹ It should be noted that Wexford County Council's defined Electoral Areas do not correspond with CSO defined Rural Areas, therefore there may be some differences in the Electoral Divisions included in each.

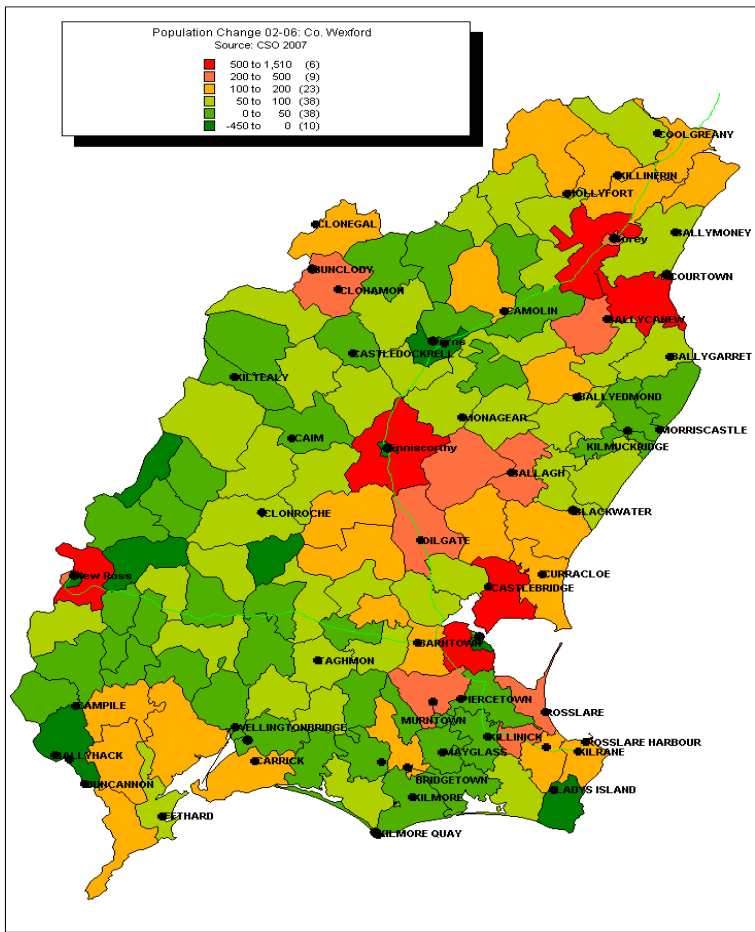


Figure 1 Population Change from 2002 to 2006

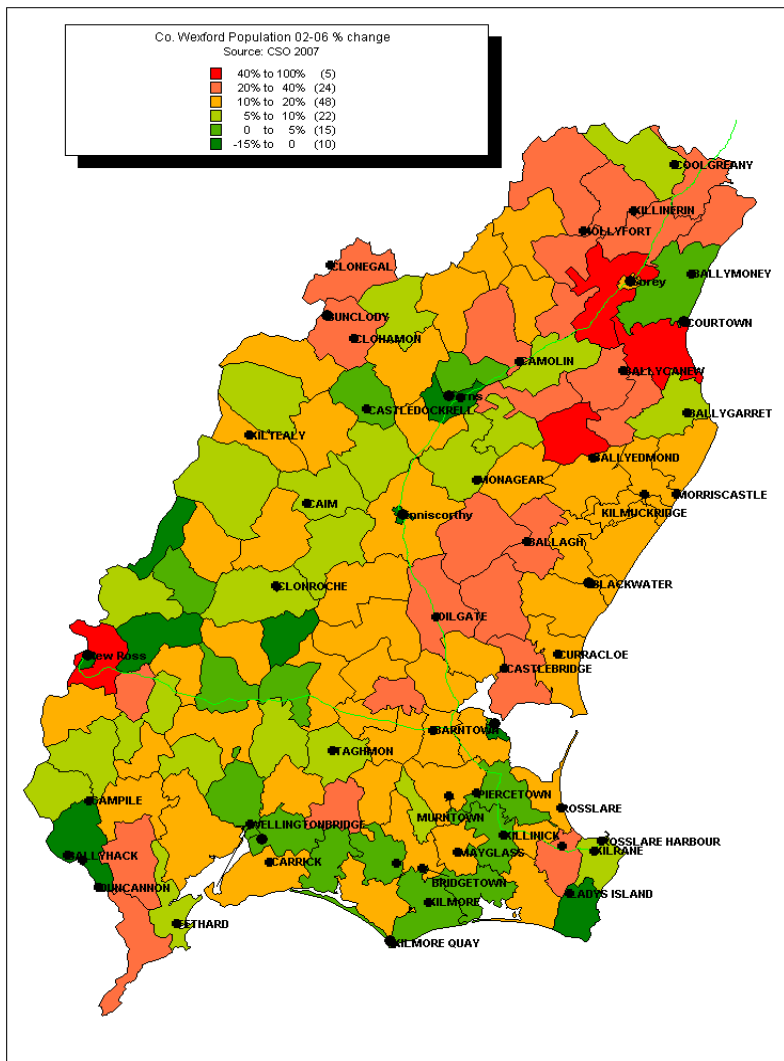


Figure 2 Population Increases across Co. Wexford 2002-2006 % Change

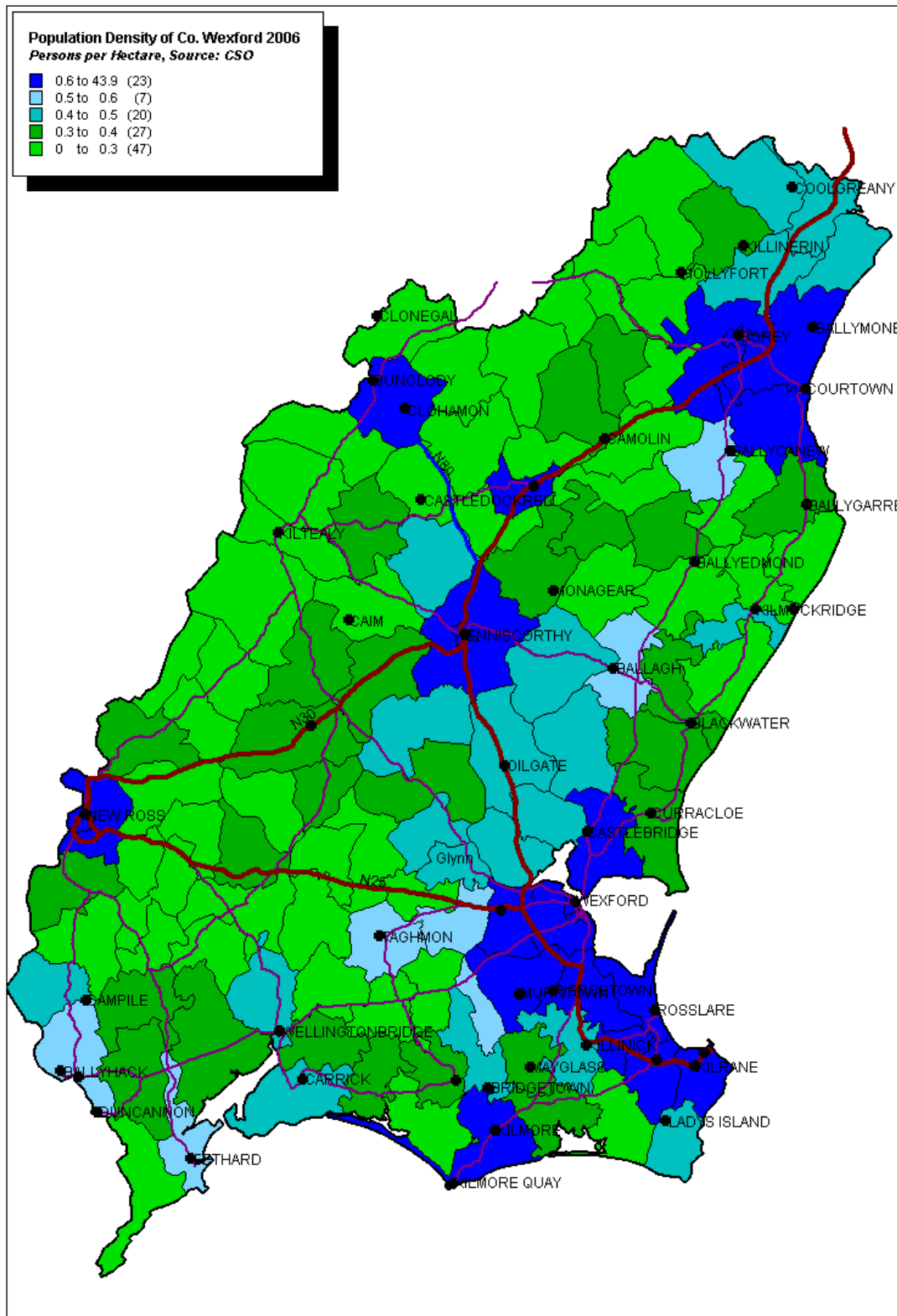
1.2.4 Population Density Trends

Population density gives an indication of a population's disbursement across an area and is measured by calculating the number of persons per hectare. While noting the number of persons per Electoral Division is useful, calculating the population density of an electoral division can give a better indication of the spread of population within the county, irrespective of the size of the electoral division. The South East region has a population density of 0.49 persons per hectare of land while the State hosts 0.60 persons per hectare. County Wexford as a whole has a population density of 0.55 persons per hectare of land. However, the population density varies dramatically across the County as illustrated by Figure 3.

An analysis of population density across the County concluded:

- Within the County, the highest population densities are apparent in the areas surrounding the four main towns of Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey and in the larger villages of Bunclody, Ferns and Kilmore.
- The population increases have increased the population density of the rural areas of the County to a larger degree than the density of the urban areas of the County.
- The urban areas have remained high in population density over the past 20 years.
- There has been a definite population concentration on the eastern side of the County, particularly in the Gorey and Wexford areas and beginning to emerge in the Enniscorthy area on the Wexford side.
- The western side of the County remains lower in population density than the rest of the County.

Figure 3 Population Density of Co. Wexford 2006



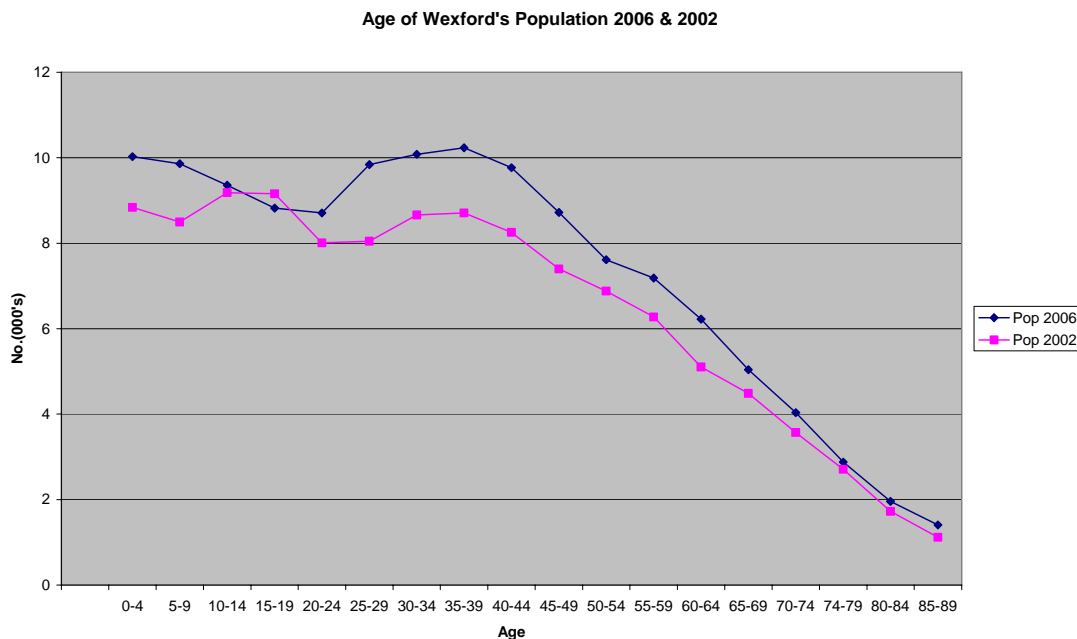
1.2.5 Age Profile of County Wexford 2006

In 2006 County Wexford had a significant amount of children under the age of 4 years with over 10,000 children in this age group. The County had less 15-19 year olds in 2006 than in 2002 but from the age of 20 years onwards, particularly up to age 50 years, there were more of every age group than in 2002.

In 2006, 11.7% of the population of County Wexford were between the ages of 5-12 years (Primary school going age) compared to 10.6% of the State. 8.5% were between the ages of 13-18 years (Post primary school going age) in 2006, compared to 8.1% nationally.

Chart 3 illustrates the age profiles of the County's population in 2002 and 2006. It shows the impact of inward migration on the population of the county with an increase in the numbers of people between the ages of 20 and 55 years moving into county. The County's considerable young population is also evident.

Chart 3 Age Profile of County Wexford's Population 2002 and 2006



The Age Dependency ratio is a figure used to describe the proportion of the population that is available for work and those who are not. The dependency ratio is derived by expressing the young (aged 0 to 14 years) population and old (aged 65 years and over) population as a proportion of the population of working age (15 to 64 years). The ratio, which is expressed as a percentage, is important because as it increases, there is increased requirement on the working population to support the upbringing, pensions and care of the economically dependent population.

In 2002, the age dependency ratio of the county was 52%. In 2006, it was 51.1%, probably a result of the high birth rate and loss of the 15-19 years age group, despite the high inward migration of the 20-50 year age groups. The State age dependency ratio is 46%.

NIRSA (National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis) based in NUI Maynooth², calls the 25-40 year age group the 'Demographically Vital' age group. It states that an area with a high level of this age group will be more likely to sustain its population into the future. NIRSA also state that as this age group are more likely to be wage earners, they can also provide strong benefits for the economy of the area in which they reside, provided the opportunities exist for them to contribute. In 2006, the Demographic Vital Ratio was 21.7%. In 2002, it was 22.8%.

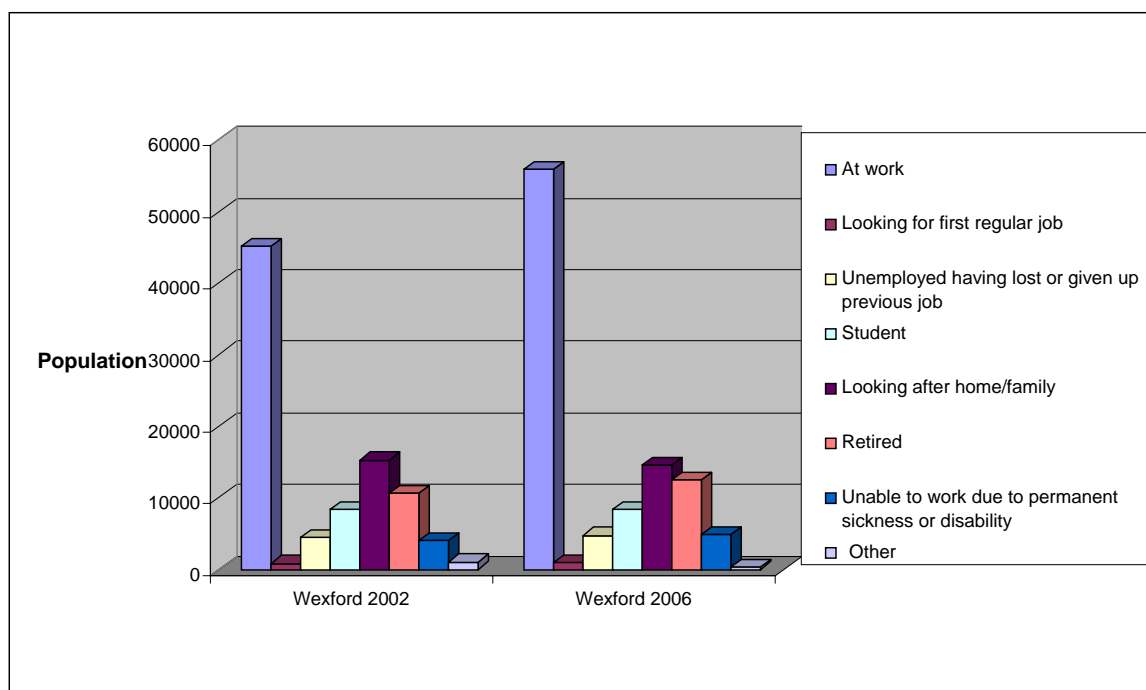
1.2.6 Economic Profile

Chart 4 illustrates the principle economic status of the County's population in 2002 and 2006. The period between 2002 and 2006 witnessed a significant increase in the amount of people 'at work' with 56,011 persons 'at work' in 2006 compared to 45,249 persons in 2002. The number of persons 'looking after home/family' decreased from 15,312 in 2002 to 14,615 in 2006.

² NUI Maynooth 2005

A worrying development during this period was the marginal decrease in the number of students in the County despite the population growth that the County has experienced. This figure decreased from 8,377 students in 2002 to 8,314 students in 2006.

Chart 4 Principal Economic Status of County Wexford's Population in 2002 and 2006



Source: CSO 2006

1.2.7 Socio-economic Profile

Socio-economic group status defines each person aged 15 years or over according to their employment, occupation or qualification. The classification aims to bring together people on the basis of similar skills or educational attainment. In defining the socio-economic group, no attempt is made to rank groups in order of socio-economic importance.³

³ Census 2006 Principal Socio-economic Results Appendix 2 - Definitions

Table 1 provides details of the socio-economic groups in the County and the State in 2006. The County had a higher amount of people employed in farming, agriculture and unskilled labour compared to the State averages. The County had significantly lower amounts of Higher Professionals (2.9%) and Lower Professionals (8.1%) than the State averages of 5.8% and 10.7% respectively.

Table 1: Socio-economic Groups County Wexford and State

Socio-economic Group	Co. Wexford		State	
	No.	% Total	No.	% Total
Employers & managers	19,762	14.3%	650,552	15.3%
Higher professionals	4,609	2.9%	245,170	5.8%
Lower professionals	12,185	8.1%	451,865	10.7%
Non-manual	25,615	16.4%	818,573	19.3%
Manual Skilled	16,186	11.5%	429,779	10.1%
Semi-skilled	12,163	8.8%	355,441	8.4%
Unskilled	6,439	6.2%	159,904	3.8%
Own account workers	7,132	6.0%	180,500	4.3%
Farmers	7,660	8.8%	166,864	3.9%
Agricultural Workers	1,742	2.1%	27,407	0.6%
All others	18,256	14.9%	753,793	17.8%
Total	131,749	(100%)	4,239,848	(100%)

Source: CSO

1.2.8 Occupational Status

The Occupation classification used in the Census is based upon the UK standard Occupational Classification with modifications to reflect Irish Labour market conditions. In this system, the occupation of a person is classified by the kind of work he or she performs in earning a living, irrespective of the place in which, or the purpose for which, it is performed. The nature of the industry, business or service in which the person is working has no bearing upon the classification of the occupation.⁴

Table 2 below indicates the Occupational Status of Co. Wexford and the State in 2006. The highest proportion of the County's workforce was employed within the Clerical, Managing and Government (14.7%) and the Sales and Commerce (13.8%) sectors. The dependence of County Wexford on the Building and Construction sector was also evident with 13.2% working in this sector compared to the State average of 8.8%.

While the amount of people employed in the agriculture sector continues to decrease, the proportion of the workforce involved in farming, fishing and forestry in 2006 was still higher in the County (6.9%) compared to the State (4.3%).

⁴ Census 2006 Principal Socio-economic Results Appendix 2 - Definitions

Table 2: Occupational Status for County Wexford and the State 2006

Occupation	Co. Wexford		State	
	No.	% Total	No.	% Total
Farming, fishing and forestry	4,175	6.9%	88,414	4.3%
Manufacturing	8,084	13.3%	245,234	11.8%
Building and construction	8,004	13.2%	183,429	8.8%
Clerical, managing and government	8,955	14.7%	365,670	17.6%
Communication and transport	3,381	5.6%	114,919	5.5%
Sales and Commerce	8,406	13.8%	284,164	13.7%
Professional, technical and health	7,703	12.7%	342,414	16.5%
Service	7,159	11.8%	224,964	10.8%
Other	4,898	8.0%	230,918	11.0%
Total	60,765	(100%)	2,080,126	(100%)

Source: CSO

1.2.9 Live Register

The Live Register is not a measure of employment as it includes those working on reduced hours or casual workers. However, it can be used to indicate current employment trends and areas of unemployment in the county. Table 3 illustrates the numbers signing on the Live Register and the comparison between April 2006 and April 2011. In April 2006 the CSO recorded 6,529 persons signing on the Live Register in County Wexford. In April 2011 this figure had increased dramatically to 19,479 persons. This represents the enormity of the economic challenges now facing the county.

Table 3 Live Register for County Wexford

Office of Registration	Number of Persons Unemployed	
	April 2006	April 2011
Wexford	2,488	6,912
New Ross	1,199	3,572
Enniscorthy	1,699	4,774
Gorey	1,143	4,211
Total	6,529	19,479

Source: CSO, Live Register Additional Tables

Chapter 2 Core Strategy

2.1 Introduction

This purpose of this section is to set out a vision for the future development of the County and to provide a 'Core Strategy' which will present a medium to long term evidenced based strategy for the spatial development of County Wexford. In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, it shall show that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs).

The Core Strategy will:

- set out the vision for the County and the strategic aims to deliver this vision;
- provide details on how the Plan and the Housing Strategy conforms to the objectives of the NSS and RPGs;
- set out the Settlement Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy for the County;
- allocate population growth target to the towns, villages and the rural areas in the hierarchy. The population allocations will be based on the targets set out in the RPGs;
- provide details of the national and regional road network and the inter-urban and commuter rail routes in the County;
- provide details to show that the retail development objectives in the Plan have regard to the Government's Retail Development Guidelines; and
- provide details on rural areas in accordance with the Government's 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines'.

The Core Strategy is supported by the strategic Transportation Strategy in Chapter 3, the Economic Development Strategy in Chapter 4, the Housing Strategy in Chapter 5 and the Retail Strategy in Appendix 1.

2.2 A Vision for County Wexford

‘To build on the strengths of the county by facilitating sustainable development through the provision of high quality employment opportunities and residential development supported by quality urban and rural environments with physical and social infrastructure to support communities throughout the County’.

The strategic aims for achieving this vision include:

- Developing sustainable and vibrant communities and providing attractive places to live and work;
- Broadening and strengthening the economic base of the county by encouraging the sustainable growth of employment, enterprise and economic activity, and in particular facilitate innovation and enterprise in indigenous industries;
- Integrating land use planning with transportation planning so as to facilitate improved public transport provision and reduce the distance that people need to travel to work, schools, services and recreational facilities;
- Develop the County’s transport system so as to contribute towards an accessible Region with efficient and fully integrated transport systems;
- Protecting and enhancing the County’s rural assets and recognising the housing, employment, social and recreational needs of those in rural areas;
- Facilitating the provision of housing in a range of appropriate locations to meet the needs of the county’s population, with particular emphasis on facilitating access to housing to suit different household and tenure needs;
- Developing the tourism potential of the county in a balanced and sustainable manner; and
- Protecting, conserving and enhancing the County’s built, natural and cultural heritage.

2.3 Compliance with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022

The Plan articulates the national and regional spatial planning framework set out by NSS and the RPGs through its integrated settlement, transportation and economic development strategies. The Plan's policies and objectives provide a local framework to encourage and facilitate the physical, social and economic development of the county's towns and villages in line with national and regional policy.

The current Housing Strategy requires realignment with the RPGs in terms of population targets. This will be done when a new Housing Strategy is prepared in tandem with the County Development Plan 2013-2019. The preparation of the new Plan, including the Housing Strategy, commenced on the 5th April 2011.

2.3.1 Settlement Strategy

The settlement and population objectives for the county come directly from the NSS and the RPGs. The Settlement Strategy in the RPGs sets out a settlement hierarchy for the region. It reinforces the NSS designation of Waterford City as the Regional 'Gateway' and Wexford Town and Kilkenny City as the Hubs.

The RPGs designate the towns of New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey as 'Larger Towns'. The RPGs suggest that these larger towns should be either

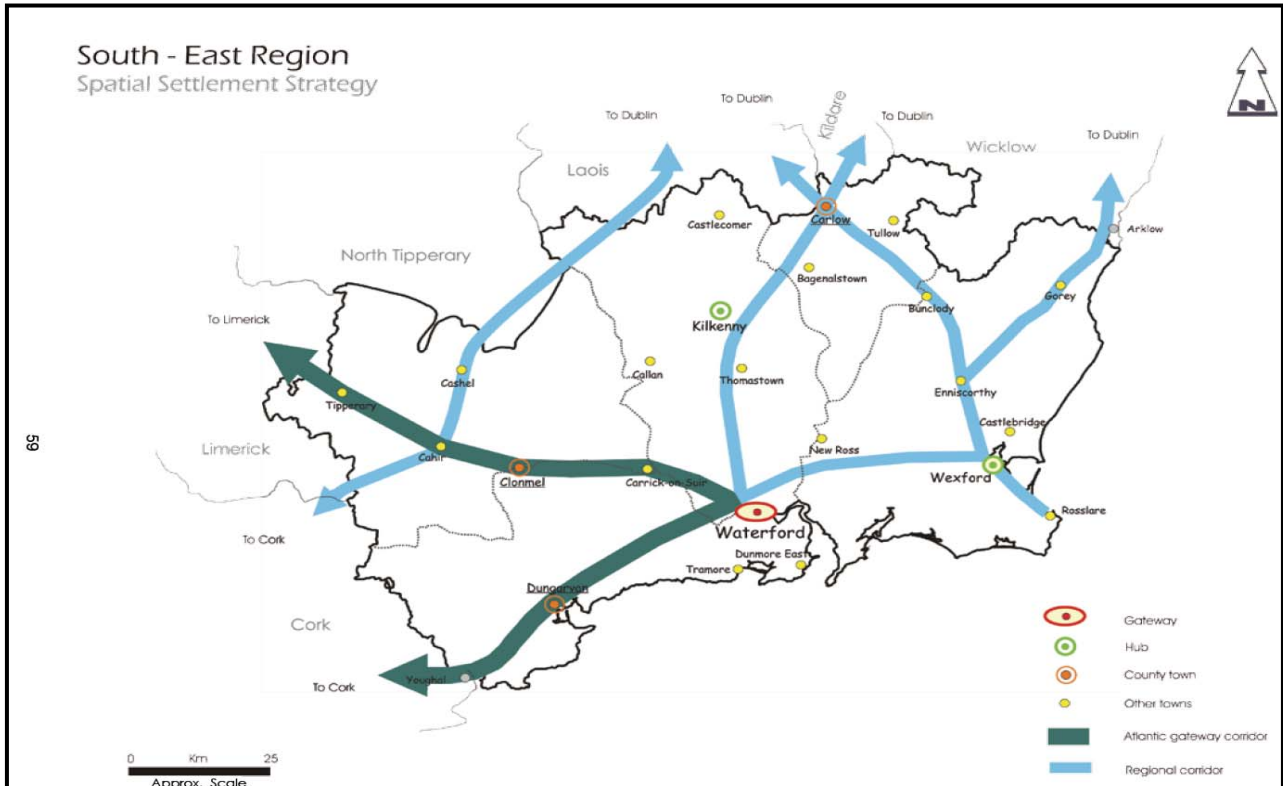
- (a) targeted for growth, or
- (b) where the towns have already experienced high levels of population growth, the objective should be more measured growth in a manner that allows community, social and retail development to catch up with recent rapid phases of mainly residential development.

These towns are also considered to be good locations for economic development.

The RPGs also designate Bunclody/Carrickduff and Castlebridge as District Towns. The RPGs consider that these towns perform an important role in driving

the development of a particular spatial component of the overall region-the Hub of Wexford Town and Carlow respectively.

Figure 4 South-East Region Settlement Strategy



2.3.2 National and Regional Population Targets

The NSS does not allocate population at a county level. This is done by the Settlement Strategy in the RPGs which sets out the target population for the overall region, the counties and each of the main settlements in the region. The population targets in the RPGs are based on the 'National Population Projections and Regional Population Targets 2010-2022' issued by the DEHLG in January 2009 and 'Gateway and Hub Population Targets' issued by the DEHLG in October 2009.

The target population for County Wexford is 156,065 by 2016 and 166,083 by 2022. The target population for the Hub of Wexford Town is set at 23,500 by 2016 and 26,700 by 2022.

Table 2.1 Population Targets for Each Local Authority Area in the Region

Local Authority Area	2006	2010	2016	2022
Wexford	131,749	146,139	156,065	166,083
Waterford City	45,748	48,500	51,000	55,000
Kilkenny	87,558	96,872	105,598	111,903
Carlow	50,349	56,155	59,451	63,536
South Tipperary	83,221	91,302	96,863	104,483
Waterford County	62,213	68,932	73,223	79,495
Total	460,838	507,900	542,200	580,500

Table 2.2 Population Targets for Main Settlements

Main Settlements	2006	2010	2016	2022
Wexford Town	18,163	21,000	23,500	26,700
Waterford City and Environs	49,213	52,500	56,500	62,500
Kilkenny City	22,179	24,000	25,800	28,200
Carlow Town	20,724	22,216	23,768	25,000
Clonmel	17,008	20,750	23,000	25,000
Dungarvan	8,362	10,000	11,600	13,400

2.3.3 Transportation Network in the County

The transportation strategy in the NSS seeks the development of Strategic Radial Corridors, Strategic Linking Corridors and Strategic International Access Points and this is translated to regional level in the RPGs. Both the NSS and RPGs seek to create an accessible region with an efficient and fully integrated transport system.

Integrating land use planning with transportation planning has been a key consideration in setting out the settlement strategy for county as it will facilitate improved public transport provision and reduce the distance that people need to travel to work, schools, services and recreational facilities.

The NSS identifies the N11-M11 as a Strategic Radial Corridor from the south-east to Dublin. This national primary route serves the eastern section of the county. The NSS identifies the N25 Wexford to Cork and N80 Enniscorthy to Carlow national primary routes as Strategic Linking Corridors. These routes serve the south and northwest of the county respectively. The RPGs supports the upgrading of the N80 Enniscorthy-Carlow road and improvements to linkages from the south-east region to the Midlands. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010-2022 also identify the N30 as a Main Access Route.

The County is served by a well developed network of regional roads which form an important part of the County's road network system. Regional roads in the County are designated either Class 1 or Class 2 based on their significance and levels of traffic. Class 1 Regional Roads carry levels of traffic close to that of national roads. There are three Class 1 Regional Roads in the County:

- R733 Wexford-Arthurstown-Ballyhack;
- R739 N25 junction to Kilmore Quay; and
- R741 Wexford-Gorey.

There are 24 Class 2 Regional Roads in the County.

County roads, also know as Local roads form the backbone of the roads network in the County. County roads are primarily service roads of great benefit to the immediate community served.

The NSS identifies the Rosslare-Dublin railway line as a Strategic Radial Corridor between the south-east of Ireland and the capital city. This is the only operational railway line in the county. There are five stations along it, serving Rosslare Harbour,

Rosslare Strand, Wexford Town, Enniscorthy Town and Gorey Town. Early commuter train services operate on the line providing an invaluable service to commuters in the County. The county's other railway line Rosslare to Waterford was closed on the 20 September 2010. Notwithstanding its closure, this railway line is considered to be a key element in the region's transportation infrastructure.

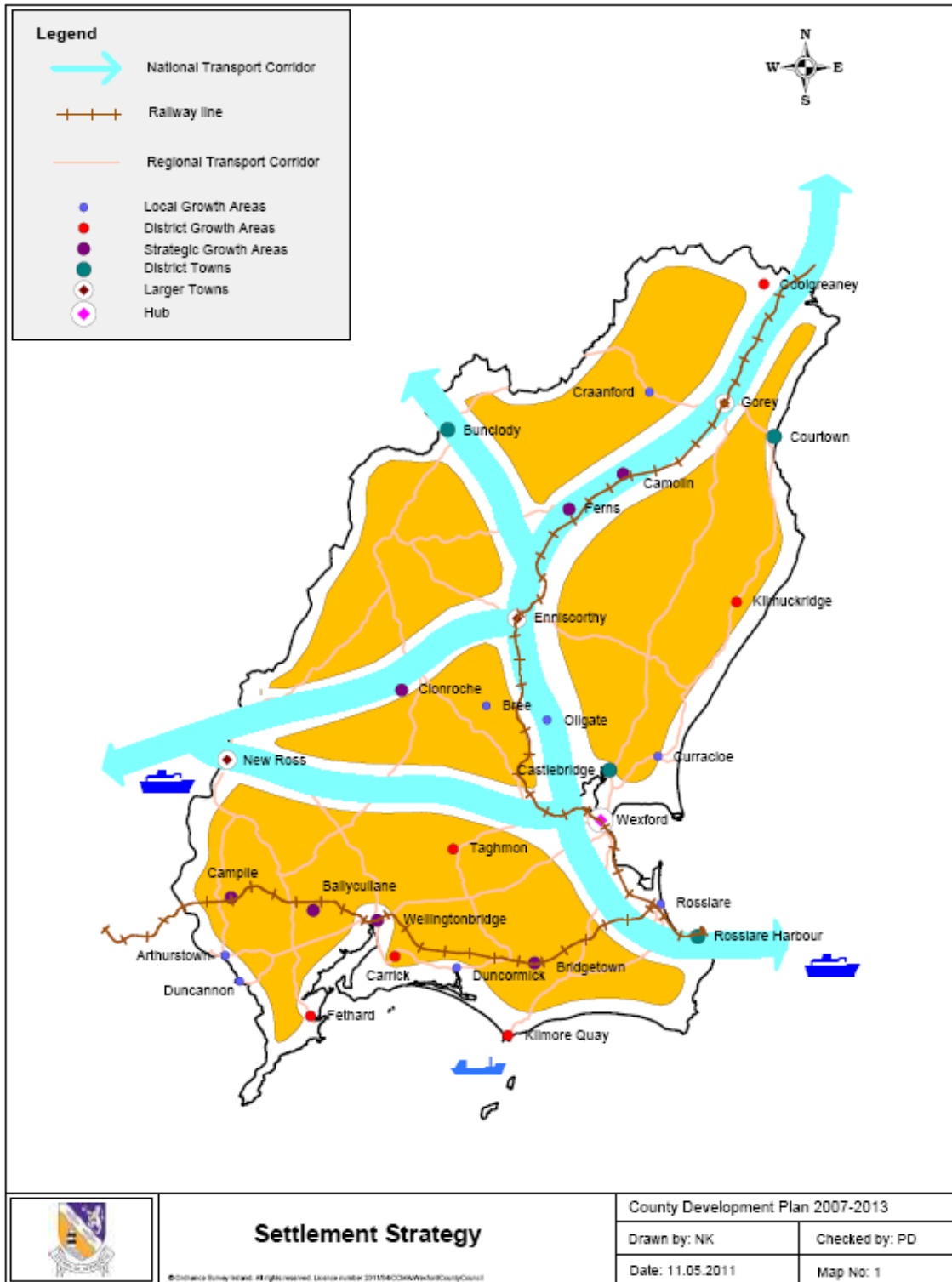
The NSS designates Rosslare Europort as a Strategic International Access point providing access from Britain and Continental Europe to the Waterford Gateway and South-East Region. It is the major port in the region for passenger and Ro-Ro freight services. Given its strategic location and with improving road links to Dublin, Cork and other economic centres, Rosslare is well placed to develop further.

The county is well served by public bus services through Bus Éireann and private bus operators with buses travelling to Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Galway, Cork and Belfast.

The Plan's Settlement Strategy focuses on developing population centres along the county's existing transportation network so as to provide critical mass to support the maintenance and further development of the network, and in the case of the Rosslare-Waterford railway, provide the critical mass and demand for re-opening of the railway line in the future, which would be to the benefit of the county and the region.

Map 1 illustrates the national and regional road network and railway routes in the County.

Map No. 1 Transportation Network and Settlement Strategy



Policy CS1

The Council shall support an integrated transportation strategy which recognises the relative strategic roles of the National, Regional and Local road network together with the public rail and bus network. The Councils will ensure that land use and transport planning are integrated to maximise sustainable travel patterns.

Objective CS1

The Council shall prepare a Transport Plan for the County.

2.3.4 Retail Development

The County Retail Strategy was prepared in tandem with the Plan and in accordance with the requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines (DEHLG, 2005). The Retail Strategy has not been realigned with the Regional Planning Guidelines in terms of population targets. However, this will be done when a new County Retail Strategy is prepared in tandem with the County Development Plan 2013-2019. The preparation of the new Plan, including the Retail Strategy, commenced on the 5th April 2011.

The Guidelines provide national level policy guidance in relation to retailing, objectives for retail policy, specific retail formats and issue advice in relation to the location of new retail development. The guidelines represent a plan led approach to retail development at a national level, which is then followed on by the use of County Retail Strategies to guide development at a local level.

The Guidelines have informed the retail development policies and objectives in the Plan with particular reference to:

- (i) Identification of a retail hierarchy;
- (ii) Maintaining the vitality and viability of existing town centres;
- (iii) The location and scale of retail development;
- (iv) The application of the sequential test for new retail development; and
- (v) Identification of criteria for the assessment of retail development.

A key principle in the provision of future retail floor space is the need to reinforce the existing retail hierarchy of the county and in particular existing town and village centres.

2.4 Settlement Strategy for County Wexford

The Settlement Strategy set out in the County Development Plan 2001 focused on a multi-centred settlement pattern, expanding existing towns and villages in the county and developing functional roles between urban and rural areas so as to achieve balanced development across the County. This strategy was hindered to a certain extent by infrastructural deficiencies; however the concept of multi-centred spatial development is retained in order to continue population growth in existing settlements throughout the county. The strategy complies with the requirements of the NSS and RPGs settlement strategies.

A fundamental principle of the settlement strategy is to allow the county's inhabitants the right to establish homes and find employment in close relationship to each other and to avail of adequate social, community and physical infrastructure services.

2.4.1 Settlement Hierarchy

The Settlement Strategy aims to facilitate linkages between settlements and support their expansion and consolidation, and in so doing, create a high quality living environment. This is achieved by the creation of a settlement hierarchy that reflects the development role of each settlement and this in turn will facilitate the Council in formulating realistic objectives for each of the identified settlements.

The upper tiers of the settlement hierarchy have been determined by the RPGs. In order to identify the remaining villages and towns for inclusion in the settlement hierarchy, selection criteria were used to identify settlements that had the necessary social and physical infrastructure. A matrix of social facilities (schools, shops, post office, pubs etc.) was compiled, against which each settlement was assessed. Villages/ towns were short listed on the services available and in conjunction with

the roads, capital services and environment sections of the Council, these settlements were analysed in order to identify key issues which may either promote or limit their growth potential. Using the population densities data compiled for Section 1.2.4, it was possible to identify some population movement trends that were considered undesirable, e.g. definite population concentration on the eastern side of the county. Using these sets of data and having taken full cognisance of the NSS, RPGs and other relevant policies such as transport, a spatial strategy was prepared that aims to provide a balanced approach to the development of the county and will facilitate an equitable spread so that all parts of the county can share in the benefits of social and economic growth.

The Rural Settlement Strategy in the Plan is based on objectives of the NSS, the RPGs and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2005). The Strategy seeks to promote sustainable rural development while creating and maintaining vibrant and viable rural communities.

2.4.2 Projected Population

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 requires planning authorities to provide details of the projected population growth for towns and villages in the settlement hierarchy, as well as smaller towns and villages under 1,500 persons and rural areas. The allocation of projected population growth is underpinned by the population targets and settlement strategy set out in the RPGs. The projections are detailed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Allocation of Population Growth to the Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement Type	Name	Projected Population			
		2010	2013	2016	2022
Hub	Wexford Town	21000	22250	23500	26700
Rest of County		125139	128852	132565	139383
Larger Towns	Enniscorthy	10507	10819	11131	11703
	New Ross	8318	8565	8812	9264
	Gorey	7925	8160	8395	8827
District Towns	Bunclody	1701	1752	1802	1895
	Castlebridge	1789	1842	1895	1993
	Rosslare Harbour & Kilrane	1623	1705	1803	2000
	Courtown	5015	5164	5313	5586
<u>Smaller⁵ Villages</u>		17316	17829	18343	19287
<u>Rural Areas</u>		70945	73016	75071	78828

Policy CS2

The population allocations contained in Table 2.3 shall form the framework for the Core Strategies to be prepared for the Town Development Plans and Local Area Plans in the County.

⁵ The population allocation for Smaller Villages relates to the settlements listed in the Strategic Growth Areas and Local Growth Areas and also the smaller villages in the County which are not listed.

Policy CS3

The Council shall review and amend as appropriate existing Local Area Plans within one year of the adoption of the Core Strategy to ensure compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy.

2.5 Settlement Strategy

The Settlement Strategy is divided into a number of hierarchical layers that reinforce the policy objectives and settlement hierarchy set out in the NSS and the RPGs.

Table 2.4 sets out the Settlement Strategy.

Table 2.4 County Wexford Settlement Strategy

Settlement Type	Settlement		
Hub	Wexford Town		
Larger Towns	Enniscorthy New Ross Gorey		
District Towns	Bunclody Castlebridge Rosslare Harbour Courtown		
Strategic Growth Areas	Ferns Ballycullane Clonroche Camolin	Bridgetown Wellingtonbridge Campile	
Local Growth Areas	Fethard Coolgreany Kilmuckridge Craanford Rosslare Arthurstown	Kilmore Quay Taghmon Carrick on Bannow	Duncannon Curracloe, Duncormick Oilgate Bree
Rural Areas	Areas under Strong Urban Influence Stronger Rural Areas Structurally Weak Areas		

2.5.1 Hub

Wexford Town is placed at the top of the County's settlement hierarchy and is the centre piece of the County's settlement strategy given its designation as Hub in the NSS and RPGs. The town's role will be a strategic urban centre that supports the Gateway of Waterford City and the wider rural areas of the region.

In order to develop and maximise its role as a Hub a critical mass of population is required. The RPGs indicate that critical mass will only be achieved if populations of 30,000 or more are realised. The RPGs have set about achieving this by allocating a population target of 26,700 for Wexford Town by 2022.

Targeted investment in transport links and other socio-economic infrastructure such as water services, education and serviced business locations will be required to facilitate the achievement of critical mass in the Hub. The RPGs encourage local authorities, government departments and semi-state agencies to focus their investment decisions in such a manner as to accomplish these targets.

2.5.2 Larger Towns

New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey are identified as larger towns with populations in excess of 5,000 people. New Ross is targeted for growth given its strategic location, capacity for growth and the potential to deliver on the core objectives of critical mass and balanced regional development. Enniscorthy and Gorey have recently experienced high levels of population growth. The RPGs suggest that these towns continue to be attractive locations for new residential development. However, it also cautions that care must be taken to ensure that the continued expansion of these towns is well managed to ensure that community, social and retail developments keep pace with recent residential development.

2.5.3 District Towns

The RPGs designate Bunclody and Castlebridge at District Towns. The Council also include Rosslare Harbour and Courtown at this level given their current population levels and access to key infrastructure and strategic infrastructure.

These towns are being targeted for growth as centres that can perform an important role in driving the spatial development of the County and the Region. These towns have well developed services, good transport links and community facilities and have the capacity to accommodate additional growth subject to certain physical infrastructural investments.

2.5.4 Strategic Growth Areas

Other towns and settlements with good quality transport links have been included at this level. Future development in these settlements will utilise and underpin the existing road and rail network. Bridgetown and Wellingtonbridge, whilst located on Regional roads, are also located on the Rosslare Europort-Waterford-Limerick railway line. This railway line is currently closed. However, there are objectives in the RPGs which seek infrastructural investment and new passenger services along this railway line.

In addition to good transport links these settlements also provide good infrastructural facilities and services combined with a good population base to maintain them. Appropriate forms of development will be considered in these villages. In accordance with the guidelines “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas” (DEHLG, 2008), the scale and density of new residential schemes for development must be in proportion to the pattern and grain of the existing village.

2.5.5 Local Growth Areas

‘Local Growth Areas’ cover a range of settlement types. The larger of these settlements are listed in Table 2.4 above. They also include a number of smaller settlements, too numerous to list, but which provide important local service functions

such as shops, churches, community and sporting facilities and pubs. The functions of these settlements vary with some providing a wide range of services such as churches, post offices and small supermarkets. Others provide a lower range of services but perform an important function for the population of the immediate hinterland providing opportunities for social interaction and limited retail services. These settlements also provide an alternative location to the open countryside for persons seeking a rural lifestyle. The strategy recognises that vibrant communities living in these settlements have a major role in sustaining the rural population and economy.

Developments must have regard to the respective Village Design Statement. In accordance with the guidelines “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas” (DEHLG, 2008), the scale and density of new residential schemes for development must be in proportion to the pattern and grain of the existing village.

2.5.6 New Village Settlements

The Council may proceed to prepare Local Area Plans to facilitate the development of new rural communities. In such cases where it is prudent to lift the burden of development from small settlements, where it can be proven that such a development would be consistent with the spatial and sustainable development of the County, new villages will be considered.

2.5.7 Settlement Strategy Policies and Objectives

Policy SS1
The Council shall implement the Settlement Strategy of the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region by concentrating development into designated settlements of Wexford Town, New Ross, Gorey, Enniscorthy, Bunclody and Castlebridge.

Policy SS2

The Council shall ensure that an appropriate quantum of land is zoned at suitable locations in the County in accordance with the Settlement Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and population projections contained in the Core Strategy.

Development on such lands will be subject to adequate and appropriate infrastructure, in particular wastewater, water, transport, waste management, community services and amenities being available.

Policy SS3

The Council shall promote the necessary physical and social infrastructure in the settlements identified in Table 2.4 and make them more attractive places to live.

Policy SS4

The Council shall ensure that the Hub and Larger Towns, will in as far as practical, be self sufficient, incorporating employment activities, retail services, social and community facilities

Objective SS1

It is an objective of the County Council to prepare Local Area Plans for the following areas:

Bridgetown	Castlebridge	Carrick on Bannow
Coolgreany	Courtown	Camolin
Kilmore Quay	Kilmuckridge	Wellington Bridge

Having regard to the remaining lifetime of the County Development Plan it is unlikely that Local Area Plans will be prepared for all these areas before the expiration of the Plan.

Objective SS 2

It is an objective of the County Council to prepare Village Design Statements in order to encourage sympathetic design of new buildings into existing villages for the following areas:

Arthurstown,	Duncannon	Rosslare
Craanford	Duncormick	Curracloe
Oilgate	Bree	

Having regard to the remaining lifetime of the County Development Plan it is unlikely that Village Design Statements will be prepared for all of these areas before the expiration of the Plan.

Objective SS3

The Council, having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, will consider the development of new rural settlements. Such schemes will be subject to the preparation of a Local Area Plan by the County Council.

2.6 Rural Housing Policy

Wexford County Council is committed to the maintenance and growth of strong rural communities living in towns, villages, settlements and in the open countryside and to facilitate and support this through its rural investment programmes, policies and objectives. In meeting this commitment, the Council recognises the need to permit the development of rural housing in suitable locations, on a scale and at a pace, which will not unduly impact on Wexford's high quality rural environment and distinctive spatial character.

It is therefore necessary to draw up a fair and balanced policy that will protect the rural environment from over-development whilst also reinforcing and strengthening rural communities in County Wexford.

The Council's aim is to provide for rural housing to:

- meet the needs of rural people and their families who have strong ties to a particular locality and to those who need to reside in rural areas for employment or other essential economic and social reasons;
- control the amount of sporadic speculative development which should more appropriately be located on serviced lands in towns and villages; and
- monitor the effectiveness of the Rural Housing Strategy so as to avoid excessive levels of or inappropriately located development.

2.6.1 Identification of Rural Area Types

In line with the recommendations of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, the Planning Authority examined the population trends in the County and looked at the demand for development in rural areas.

Population densities were calculated based upon Census 2006. The densities are measured by calculating the number of persons per hectare within electoral divisions, as per the breakdown in Census 2006. The results give an indication of a population's disbursement across the County, calculating the population density of an electoral division gives an accurate indication of the spread of population within the County.

Context

According to Census 2006 the South East region has an average population density of 0.49 persons per hectare, while the State hosts 0.60 persons per hectare. County Wexford as a whole has a population density of 0.55 persons per hectare of land. However, the population density varies significantly across the County.

Having regard to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, the Planning Authority has identified three broad rural area types within the County;-

- Areas under Strong Urban Pressure;
- Stronger Rural Areas, and
- Structurally Weak Rural areas.

In selecting the criteria used to identify the three rural area types the following densities were calculated:

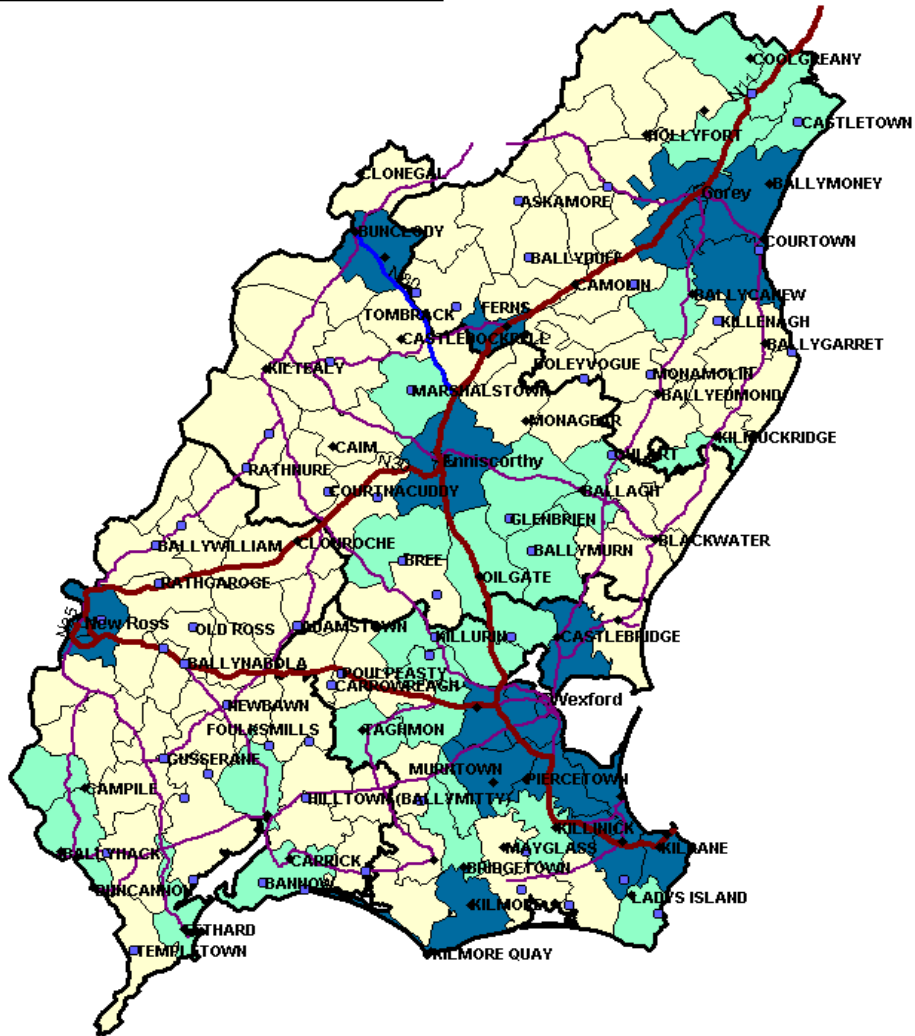
6.0 +	Above the County Average	Areas under Strong Urban Pressure
3.3 – 5.9	Above County & State Average	Stronger Rural Areas,
0.1 – 3.3	Below County Average	Structurally Weak Rural areas

This gave an indication of population growth and distribution, and allowed for the identification of areas, which are under pressure for development. These areas are shown on Map 2 Rural Area Types. It should be noted that this is a generalised map indicating broadly the location of different types of areas in relation to which individual applications will be assessed in more detail on their merits.

Map No. 2 Rural Areas Types

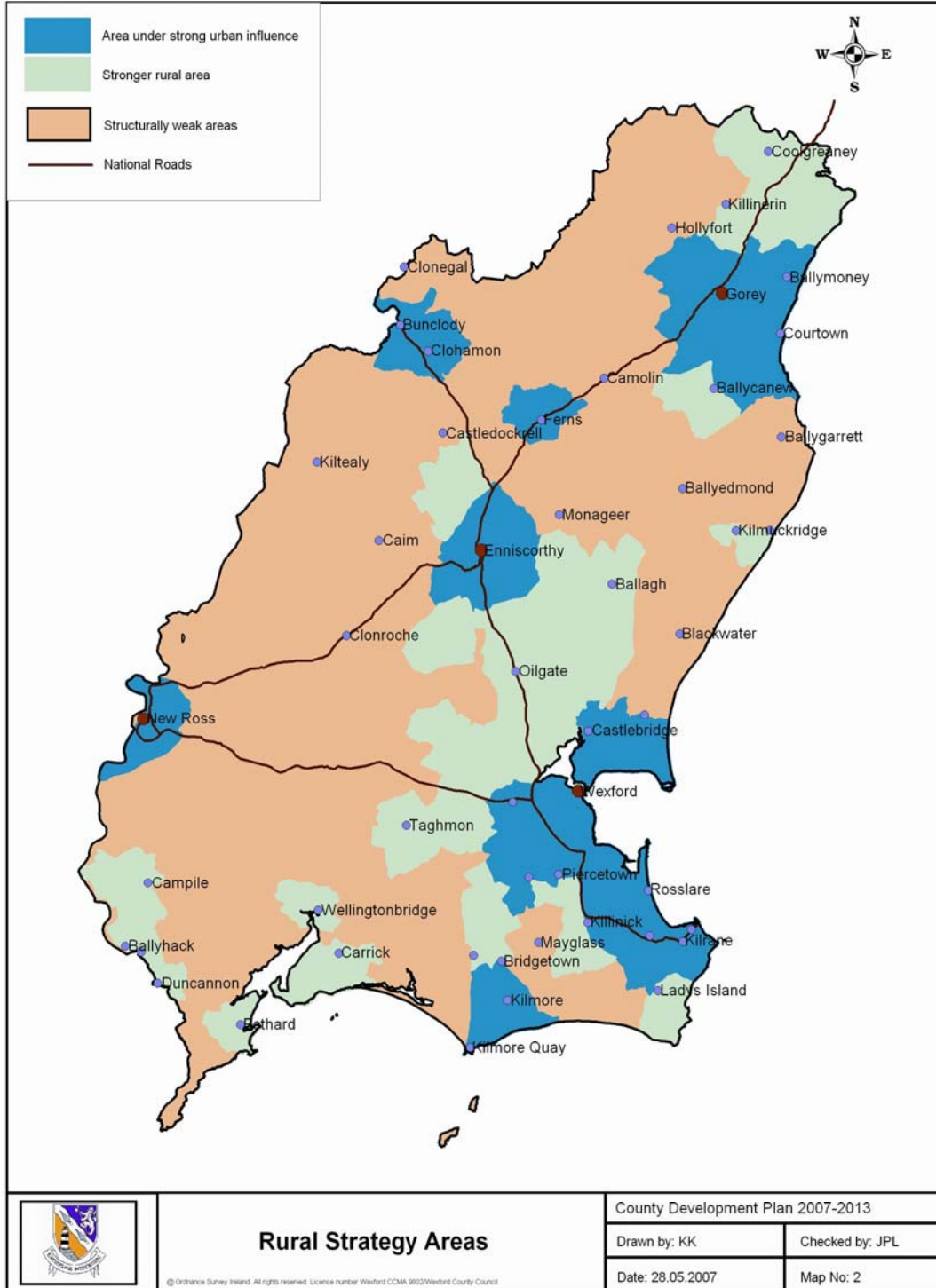
NSS Rural Area Types
 Source: *Wexford County Council 2006*

■ Areas under Strong Urban Influence	(21)
■ Stronger Rural Areas	(27)
■ Structurally Weak Areas	(74)



©Research Officer 2006

Map No. 3 Rural Strategy Areas



Section 2.6.2 Areas under Strong Urban Influence

Areas classified as under Strong Urban Influence are shown on the map entitled Rural Strategy Areas. These areas display the greatest pressures for development due to their:

- Proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of large towns;
- Rapidly rising populations;
- Location in areas of considerable pressure for housing development and proximity to large urban centres; and
- Proximity to major transport corridors with ready access to urban areas.

The key development plan objectives in this area are to:

- facilitate the housing requirements of persons with rural linkages (see Section 2.6.6), subject to satisfying site suitability and technical considerations, and
- direct urban generated development to areas zoned for housing in the adjoining towns, villages and settlement nodes.

Policy RSS 1
The Council shall cater for the housing needs of persons with rural linkages who have a requirement to live in the area.

Policy RSS 2
Urban generated housing development shall be directed into designated settlements.

2.6.3 Stronger Rural Areas

In these areas shown on the map entitled Rural Strategy Areas population levels are generally stable both within well developed village structures, and in the wider rural hinterlands around them. This stability is supported by a traditionally strong economic base. The criteria for facilitating development in these areas will be to accommodate individual houses in rural areas and to actively stimulate the development of houses in settlements so as to provide for balanced urban and rural choices in the new housing market.

The overall policy approach is to facilitate the development of rural housing for the applicants own use, where the applicant have been resident in the county for a period of not less than ten years.

Policy RSS 3
The Council shall give priority to the development of settlements with adequate wastewater and water infrastructure and those settlements targeted for infrastructural investment (see Table 2.4).

2.6.4 Structurally Weak Rural Areas

These areas exhibit characteristics such as lower population growth and density as well as a weaker economic structure (see map entitled Rural Strategy Areas). A number of these areas correspond with the designations of high visual and scenic amenity as identified in the Landscape Assessment Character and vulnerable areas such as EU Designated Sites. The capacity of the landscape to absorb development will be a major consideration in the assessment of proposals in such areas.

The criteria for facilitating development in these areas will be to accommodate demand for permanent residential development houses in rural areas and to actively stimulate the development of houses in settlements.

Further revitalisation of these areas will be achieved by implementing other Development Plan policies which will aim to facilitate development opportunities by stimulating the regeneration of these weaker rural areas through the promotion and support of economic development initiatives like agri-tourism, cottage type industry and local enterprise, as referred to in Chapter 4 Economic Development.

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines promote the provision of appropriate levels of tourist housing at suitable locations in Structurally Weaker Rural Areas. Wexford County Council in assessing such proposals will have regard to their ability to stimulate economic activity and population growth, while ensuring that these areas are not unduly damaged.

Furthermore the local service centres, identified in Table 2.4 of this Plan, will provide the impetus for employment and population stability and sustained growth in the longer-term.

Policy RSS 4
The demand for permanent residential development in Structurally Weak Rural Areas should be accommodated as it arises, subject to proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2.6.5 Occupancy

All planning permissions granted for single houses on unzoned land in the areas identified as “Areas Under Strong Urban Pressure” and “Stronger Rural Areas”, with the exception of development in the District Towns, Strategic Growth Area and Local Growth Area settlements referred to in Table 2.4 and Section 2.5.5, shall be subject to an occupancy condition, pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The period of occupancy will be limited to a period of five years from the date of first occupation.

Policy RSS 5

The Council shall attach an occupancy condition to all individual one off rural dwellings on un-zoned land in areas defined as Under Strong Urban Pressure and Stronger Rural Areas, pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, restricting the use of the dwelling to the applicant and their immediate family, as a place of permanent residence. The period of occupancy will be limited to a period of five years from the date of first occupation.

The dwelling must be occupied as the subsequent owner's place of permanent residence. The planning authority will include a condition on all such residences restricting the use of the dwelling as a permanent-primary residence. Subsequent applications by individuals who entered into occupancy agreements shall not be favourably considered for planning permission by the planning authority for residential property on any unzoned land, until the expiry of the initial five year period referred to in Section 2.6.5.

Areas under Strong Urban Pressure;

Applicants must have rural linkage –occupancy and permanent residency will be applied to all permissions

Stronger Rural Areas

Open to applicants from County Wexford building their own home- occupancy and permanent residency will be applied to all permissions for single houses

Structurally Weak Rural areas.

Speculative development will be considered- permanent residency conditions will be applied

2.6.6 Rural Linkage

To establish rural linkage, the applicant must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that he/she can comply with one of the following criteria:-

- Immediate family member (son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother) of an existing householder, who owned the property for a minimum of five years, wishing to build a permanent home for their own use in the local area;
- A Farm owner or an immediate family member (son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, heir) wishing to build a permanent home for their own use on family lands;
- An immediate family member wishing to live adjacent to elderly parents to provide care and support or vice versa;
- Persons working fulltime or part-time on a permanent basis, in a specific rural area who by the nature of the work need to be close to the workplace;
- Persons who were born and lived for substantial parts of their lives in a specific rural area, who then moved away and who now wish to return to their home places to reside near other family members, to work locally, to care for elderly family members or to retire; and
- Any Persons who can demonstrate the need to live in a particular environment or close to family support
- Applicant's who are first time buyers and who have been resident in the local urban area for a period not less than 10 years

2.6.7 Cluster Developments

Cluster type development will be permitted in principle in rural areas defined as structurally weak rural areas (Section 2.6.4). Cluster developments in structurally weak areas shall consist of a group of between two and five houses, on a definable plot with natural screening, with suitable and adequate infrastructure and services. The cluster layout should reflect what is appropriate to the site.

Consideration may be given to cluster type developments of up to a maximum of 3 houses within the rural areas defined as Stronger Rural Areas (Section 2.6.3).

The onus shall be on the developer/applicant to clearly demonstrate that there is not an over concentration of existing or permitted rural housing within the locality and that the development can be easily accommodated without negative impact on the visual amenity of the area. A cluster development will only be considered within a definable plot with natural screening, with suitable and adequate infrastructure and services.

All cluster type developments shall be subject to the following;

- permanent residency conditions will apply on all dwellings;
- individual wastewater treatment system within each dwelling site and a potable water supply;
- high quality innovative standard of design, layout, and siting in-keeping with rural setting and which avoids the adverse effects of over development;
- have regard to the guidance contained in the Landscape Character Assessment and seek to minimise the visual impact in areas designated as Sensitive and Vulnerable Landscapes; and
- compliance with Section 10.0.6 Building Sustainably.

Chapter 3 Transportation

Section 3.4.0

Rail infrastructure in County Wexford consists of the Rosslare to Dublin line and the Rosslare to Waterford line. ~~Both lines are used for freight and passenger purposes.~~ The Rosslare to Dublin service is used for freight and passenger purposes. It carried some 400,000 passengers in 2005.

The Rosslare to Waterford line's primary purpose was for the transportation of sugar beet. **However, it also provided an invaluable passenger service and connection to the region's Gateway of Waterford City.** This rail link is was under-utilised due to ageing infrastructure and outdated rolling stock and coupled with the loss of sugar production the viability of this railway line is **came** under threat. **The line closed on the 20th September 2010.**

It is an objective of the Plan to **re-open** and upgrade this route and the settlement strategy aims to underpin this policy by promoting settlement patterns that will utilise this transport node.

Objective T14

To seek the **re-opening and** ongoing upgrading of the Rosslare-Waterford rail service for passengers and freight.

Chapter 4 Economic Development

Paragraph 2

The strategy is based upon the principles of the National Spatial Strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East 2010-2022 and the Wexford County Development Board's **Economic Development Strategies**. 'Remodelling the Model County'

Section 4.1.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022

The RPGs for the South-East region identifies:

- Provision of first class business and technology parks;
- Development of quality industrial estates to accommodate small to medium size indigenous enterprises;
- Development of higher education and training facilities;
- Additional incubator units at other locations.

The RPGs identify certain conditions which must apply to support increased economic activity and regional competitiveness. These conditions are:

- **A critical mass of population, a range of skills, an innovation capacity and good business and transport linkages. There should be an attractive environment for people to live in.**
- **The potential for development of economic activity must be driven by advantages derived from exchange of information, collaboration, innovation, adoption of best practices and mobilisation of finance and skills. The establishment of a University in the South-East by utilising and building upon the existing network of third level educational establishments at Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow, would be a key driver for the region.**

- **Strong cities and towns are needed to support a competitive business environment, working in partnership with strong rural areas and ensuring an effective supply of employment opportunities and services.**

Section 4.1.3 Wexford County Development Board

The Wexford County Development Board is committed to developing a vibrant local economy, by:

- ~~Developing a strong business culture;~~
- ~~Attracting foreign investment;~~
- ~~Promoting indigenous industry;~~
- ~~Promoting the development of micro-enterprises;~~
- ~~Developing a strong agricultural and horticultural sector.~~

The Board's report 'Action for Change' recognises the economic challenges facing the County. Unemployment has become the main issues facing local economies and improved inter-agency collaboration must focus on job creation and providing a supportive environment. The following key actions are identified:

- **Maximising employment potential;**
- **Support business development and job creation;**
- **Maximise Tourism 'Brand' identity of Wexford-develop Wexford as the Natural Heritage and Culture Destination of Ireland.**

In 2010 the Board's report 'Positioning Wexford for the Upturn-Towards Sustainable Growth and Development' which identified the following sectors as the pillars of growth for Wexford:

- **Tourism**
- **Financial Services**
- **Health Life Sciences, (a collective term used to describe the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical devices and diagnostics sectors).**

- Food
- Sustainable Construction, (renewable energies and the retrofitting of buildings).

Section 4.2.0 Strategy

Paragraph 2

While recognising that the strengths of our local economy ~~remains robust,~~ economic analysis of the County highlights the following issues **face the County:**

- ~~While unemployment levels fell significantly during the period of the last plan 2001-2006 but is still above the national average.~~ Unemployment levels have increased dramatically. In April 2006 6,529 people were signing on the Live Register. This figure had increased to 19,479 people in April 2011.

4.4.0 Retail Strategy

Paragraph 2

The Wexford County Retail Strategy makes projections for the retail space requirements for both convenience and comparison goods shopping for 2011 and 2016. The review of the retail strategy has updated these projections using the population projection forecast, which are used throughout this Development Plan and which are based upon the latest data available from ~~the preliminary~~ Census 2006. **The Strategy has not been realigned to take account of the population targets set down by the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010-2022. The realignment with regional population targets will have knock on effects on the projections for retail space requirements. This will be addressed when a new Retail Strategy is prepared in tandem with the next County Development Plan 2013-2019.**

Chapter 5 Housing Strategy

Paragraph 2

In accordance with its statutory requirements, the Council will endeavour to meet the needs of those requiring accommodation through its own house building programme and a range of social housing options. **The Strategy has not been realigned with the population targets set down by the RPGs. This will be addressed when a new Housing Strategy is prepared in tandem with the next County Development Plan 2013-2019.**

Chapter 6 Infrastructure, Energy and Waste

Section 6.2.0 Water Supply

(Inserted after Paragraph 6 and placed before water supply policies).

Update on Water Services Investment Programme

- The Taghmon Water Supply Scheme (Water Treatment Plant Upgrade) is completed.
- The Gorey Regional Water Supply Scheme (Network) is nearing completion.
- The Bunclody Water Supply Scheme (SLI) (Network) is under construction.
- Stages 1 and 2 of the Water Conservation Programme are completed.

Contracts to start before 2012

- Gorey Regional Water Supply Scheme (Contract 4 Water Treatment Plant Upgrade, Reservoir and Pumps)
- New Ross Water Supply Scheme-Water Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Water Conservation Stage 3 Works-Watermains Rehabilitation Project Phase 1.

Schemes at Planning Stage up to 2012

- Enniscorthy and Sow Regional Water Supply Scheme
- Water Conservation Stage 3 Works

Chapter 6 Infrastructure, Energy and Waste

Section 6.3.0 Wastewater Treatment

Capital Investment Programme

Primary Growth Area <u>Hub</u>	Wexford
Secondary Growth Area <u>Larger Towns</u>	New Ross, Enniscorthy, Gorey
<u>District Towns</u>	<u>Bunclody</u> <u>Castlebridge</u> <u>Courtown</u> <u>Rosslare Harbour</u>
Strategic Growth Areas	Bunclody , Ferns, Clonroche, Camolin, Campile, Wellington Bridge, Rosslare Harbour, Ballycullane,
District Growth Areas Local Growth Areas	Fethard, Coolgreany, Kilmuckridge, Kilmore Quay, Taghmon, Castlebridge , Carrick on Bannow, Courtown , Rosslare, Duncormick, Arhurstown, Duncannon, Curraclloe, Oilgate

Update on Capital Investment Programme

(Inserted after the above table and place before the wastewater treatment policies)

The New Ross Sewerage Scheme and the Bunclody Sewage Scheme have been upgraded and commissioned.

Upgrading of the following schemes is scheduled to commence before 2012:

1. **Enniscorthy Sewerage Scheme Phase 3 (Wastewater Treatment Plan upgrade and Network)**
2. **Gorey Sewerage Scheme (Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade)**

3. Castlebridge Sewerage Scheme (SLI) (Network and Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade).
4. Taghmon Sewerage Scheme (SLI) (Wastewater Treatment Plant)
5. Fethard-on-Sea Sewerage Scheme (Wastewater Treatment Plant and Network)
6. Piercestown Sewerage Scheme (SLI) (Wastewater Treatment Plant)

Schemes at Planning Stage up to 2012:

1. Wexford Sewerage Scheme
2. Village Sewerage Schemes for Arthurstown, Ballycanew, Ballyhack, Campile, Clonroche, Duncannon and Wellingtonbridge.

Chapter 7 Community, Culture and Education

Section 7.0 Community, Culture and Education

Policy C1

The Council shall facilitate the provision of adequate community facilities in accordance with the County Development Board Strategy **Strategies as outlined in Remodelling the Model County 2002-2012 and Action for Change: Wexford County Development Board Strategy 2009-2012** in relation to the provision of childcare, play, sports and the arts.

Chapter 8 Tourism, Recreation and Leisure

Section 8.1.3 Holiday Homes

County Wexford has experienced unprecedented pressure for holiday home development in recent years. The Council is aware of the short and long term benefits arising from such developments, but also of its negative impacts, not least in terms of pressure on inadequate infrastructure, the impact on local housing markets and the consequent issue of availability and affordability of housing for local people. In keeping with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, there will be a presumption against individual holiday home/second home development in areas outside of settlements. Therefore the Council will seek to ensure that holiday home development is located in the established settlements **of the Hub, Larger Towns, District Towns, Strategic Growth Areas and Local Growth Areas as listed** in Table 2.4 **2.4** (Settlement Strategy section) and that such development relates sympathetically to the scale and level of development and facilities in the locality.