

**COOLGREANY**  
**LOCAL AREA PLAN**  
**2002**

**Adopted By Wexford County Council**

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2002**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Statutory Basis**

The Coolgreany Local Area Plan has been proposed under sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, in the context of the Rural Development Strategy (Small Towns and Villages) set out in the County Wexford Development Plan 2001. The Local Area Plan will remain in statute for a period of six years i.e. to 2007 notwithstanding any review of the County Development Plan. The Local Area Plan will cease to have effect in respect of the Coolgreany areas where it is inconsistent with the provisions of the County Development Plan as reviewed. A Local Area Plan must be reviewed within or at least six years from the making of the previous plan. The Planning Authority may amend or revoke a Local Area Plan at anytime.

## **Planning Context**

The Coolgreany Local Area Plan is consistent with the objectives of the County Wexford Development Plan 2001. Section 3.3 of the County Development Plan emphasises the importance of maintaining the role and vitality of the county's small towns and villages, while protecting their identity, character and setting and quality of life of local communities. The County Development Plan includes objectives to prepare Local Area Plans as a means of guiding new development and of ensuring the proper planning and sustainable development of such areas.

## **Content**

The Coolgreany Local Area Plan includes a written statement, maps and information on the environmental impact of implementing the plan.

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## **FORMAT OF THIS REPORT**

The report is laid out in 3 parts;

### **1.0 Findings and Analysis**

#### **2.0 Survey**

#### **3.0 Proposals: The Local Area Plan**

**1.0 Survey:** The survey is an assessment of the elements, which together make up Coolgreany. It brings together the physical elements and the infrastructure with the hopes and wishes of the residents, as expressed in written submissions, consultations and discussions in the course of the preparation of the Local Area Plan

#### **2.0 Findings and Analysis:**

The findings from the Survey identify the strengths and weaknesses of the physical elements, the aspirations and concerns of the present population and an analysis of the Main Issues which must be addressed in the Local Area Plan.

**3.0 Proposals:** The proposals which make up the Local Area Plan are contained in written statements of Wexford County Council's policy and objectives for the future development of Coolgreany together with a Land Use Zoning Map and a Specific Proposals Map with accompanying explanations.

## **1.0 Survey**

### **1.1 Location**

Coolgreany is located just inside the Wexford / Wicklow border 1.4 miles to the west of the N.11. Recent improvements to the N.11- in particular the Arklow Bypass – has focused attention on Coolgreany as a possible location for Dublin commuters. It is this interest which highlights the need to prepare a Development Plan for Coolgreany.

### **1.2 Population and Employment**

The population in recent years has remained steady at around 400 persons. In addition to the local primary school, shops, post office, pubs, take-away, filling station and car repair service, Gardiners Grain and Coillte are the main sources of employment. The mushroom farm appears to be about to close due to non-availability of labour.

### **1.3 Commercial and Service Facilities**

- The village has one small supermarket, two pubs, a motor cycle Shop, a takeaway, a filling station and a car repair service.
- A small post office is located in the supermarket.
- There is a new Primary School in the village.
- There is no Garda station, no church, no public health centre, no banking service and no library.

### **1.4 Community, Sports and Recreation Facilities**

- There is a very active Handball Club with a second Handball Alley (to current regulations) almost complete.
- Coolgreany Celtic A.F.C caters for a total of 6 teams.
- There is a strong G.A.A. tradition in the area and a Boxing Club.
- The school has an adequate Playing Pitch and a temporary pitch is in use in the Public Open Space beside the local authority housing.
- There are no Youth Club facilities as such.
- There is no cinema.

## **1.5 Housing**

At present there are no approximately 130 houses in Coolgreany. These include the comparatively new development of one-off houses off the Ballyfad Road and the mature local authority estate beside the school. The original houses on both sides of the Main Street are occupied and generally well maintained. Locally generated demand for new houses has generally been met by one-off houses around the fringes of the village.

## **1.6 Engineering services**

### **Water Supply**

Coolgreany and Inch Creamery share the same source of water.

### **Sewage Treatment**

All existing sewerage is located north of the river and falls by gravity to the existing septic tank. There is a sewer along the Ballyfad road, which was laid by a private developer. Most storm water at present finds it's way to the river by means of open shores.

### **Roads, Footpaths and Lighting**

- Coolgreany is accessed from the N.11 on the county road from Inch (1.4 miles) and from Scarnagh Crossroad north of Inch (2.5 miles).
- There is an historic stone arched bridge at the lower end of the Main Street across the Coolgreany river.
- There is a narrow road leading to the school from the Main Street and no footpath.
- The footpath from the Main Street along the Ballyfad Road extends for a short distance.

## **1.7 Public open Space**

The most conspicuous – and most unique- public open space in Coolgreany is the long strip of grass, which separates the two sides of the Main Street

The second and larger public open space is the large open area, which joins the local authority housing estate with the school.

## **1.8 Conservation: Historic, Architectural and Amenity Features.**

- The outstanding feature of Coolgreany is its unusual Main Street. The west side is made up of two storey houses with the pub, shop and takeaway scattered among the houses. The east side of the Main St., is made up almost entirely of single storey cottages, now an extremely rare feature throughout Ireland. These are separated from the main carriageway by a wide grass margin containing a row of trees and are served by a separate narrow carriageway. The Main Street winds up the hill from the bridge at the bottom of the village.
- The second outstanding feature of Coolgreany is the historic arched bridge across the Coolgreany River. This bridge was at one time on the main road from Dublin to Wexford. It is just wide enough for two vehicles to pass and is surprisingly long and high for the size of the river.
- The mature boundary plantation round St. Augustine House adjoining the Inch road is a significant visual feature of the village.
- The site of the Old Friary west of the village, appears to hold little of interest and not much appears to be known about it locally.
- An outstanding feature of Coolgreany is that it is almost entirely located on a south-facing slope. The landscape to the south is particularly attractive, with the rolling hills and mountains to the west and the Parkland around St. Augustine House to the east.

## **2.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

This section outlines the conclusions arrived at from the Survey and the consultations held with the interested parties. It serves primarily to identify the issues, which the Local Area Plan must address.

### **2.1 General Description of Coolgreany and its Current Role in the County**

Coolgreany is a very attractive and unique village of approximately 130 Houses and 400 persons set in idyllic unspoiled countryside. Its character, as previously described, comes mainly from its unique Main Street, historic bridge and beautiful countryside to the south. It has a new primary school, a number of shops and pubs and limited services and employment opportunities. It is often referred to by the local residents as “the Forgotten Village” of Co.Wexford. Shopping, social services, employment and recreation opportunities are provided by Arklow (6 miles) and Gorey (7 miles).



## 2.2 Commercial and Service Facilities

Commercial and other Services have been listed in Section 1.3. The absence of a wide range of services is a limiting factor in the potential for major growth in the village. The primary School and the small post office (located in the supermarket) are practically the only services currently available in Coolgreany. The school has a limited capacity for a small number of additional pupils.

## 2.3 Community, Sports and Recreation Facilities

The current population of 400 appears to support a wide range of sporting facilities. There is a strong G.A.A. tradition in the area and a Boxing club. The Handball Club has a second (regulation size) handball court almost complete.

Coolgreany Celtic A.F.C. in 1999 catered for 6 teams but lack a permanent playing pitch. The Primary School has a satisfactory playing pitch. There is a temporary playing pitch in use in the large Public Open Space beside the local authority housing estate and the school. There are no Youth Club facilities as such.

## 2.4 Housing

The provision and development of housing in Coolgreany must have regard to the Council's **Housing Strategy** contained in the County Development Plan 2001. Compliance with the **Housing Strategy** will necessitate the transfer of up to 20% of zoned land, sites or units to the local authority for the provision of social and affordable housing. The distribution of social and affordable houses within the village will take cognisance of the existing concentration of existing social and affordable housing.

The Council recognises the need to ensure balance between accommodating local need through the provision of social and affordable housing and meeting the increasing demand for second and holiday home developments. Implementation of the **Housing Strategy** will help to consolidate and increase the permanent resident population, thereby fostering a greater sense of place and community spirit, and providing the population base to support the introduction of a range of services and facilities.

Over the years the comparatively small number of houses built annually have been sufficient to meet the demands of local people in Coolgreany. The improvements to the N.11 (including the Arklow Bypass) and the unprecedented demand for housing in the Dublin area have focused the attention of house builders on Coolgreany. Interest has been expressed in housing developments of the order of 34 houses, 58 houses and larger. If serviced land zoned for housing were available there would be very considerable interest in building large-scale housing projects in Coolgreany.

To date there has not been any great interest in holiday home development in Coolgreany and this situation would appear to be unlikely to change significantly in the near future.

While local people are not against growth and development they have a very real fear of the consequences of large-scale developments, which they see as being out of scale and out of character with Coolgreany. They fear that large scale housing development would put too great a demand on limited existing facilities and would have a negative effect on the quality of life in the village.

In addition there is a deep concern that the interest of house builders is driving the price of building land and sites beyond the reach of local people wishing to set up home.

### **The Rate of Growth and Scale of Housing Development**

The Coolgreany Action Group for Planned Development urge a growth rate of Houses per annum. A controlled growth rate in the order of 10% was considered but it was held that it would not be feasible to achieve this in practice.

### **Arguments for Rapid Growth and Large Scale Development**

- (i) Coolgreany is a peaceful, attractive village set in a beautiful unspoiled Landscape and offering a potential "village lifestyle" which is appealing to many people.
- (ii) There are large areas of potential development land capable of being serviced.
- (iii) There is an apparently adequate water supply, which could be increased.
- (iv) There is a need to provide a new sewage treatment plant.
- (v) The location of Coolgreany apparently is considered to be an acceptable commuting distance from Dublin.

- (vi) A substantial increase in population would result in an improvement in service facilities such as Garda, Post Office, Health and Welfare, Co. Council services and greater recreation and job opportunities.
- (vii) If the demand for “a home in a rural setting” could be met in a village like Coolgreany, then the proliferation of one off houses in the landscape could be significantly reduced.

### **Arguments against Rapid Growth and Large Scale Development**

- (i) While the standard of the county road from Inch to Coolgreany is good, the road from Coolgreany north to the N.11 could not presently carry a high volume of traffic and presumably it is in this direction that most of the traffic would want to go.
- (ii) Traffic and car parking would become problems.
- (iii) A big increase in traffic would inevitably result in the narrow bridge at the southern end of the village becoming more of a bottleneck and a potential hazard.
- (iv) Because of the minimal service facilities presently available, if large scale development were to occur, the village would go through a long and probably quite stressful period of being a dormitory town until such time as it would have adequate shops, schools, recreational facilities etc.
- (v) The large-scale development of Coolgreany would put an end to the potentially “peaceful attractive village lifestyle”.
- (vi) It is unlikely that a home in an expanded Coolgreany would be acceptable as an alternative to “a home in a rural setting”

### **Conclusion on Future Growth of Coolgreany**

**The absence of facilities in Coolgreany, when compared to other larger towns in the region would suggest that Coolgreany should not be targeted as a significant future growth centre.**

## **2.5 Engineering Services**

### **Water**

Some shortages of water to appear to have been experienced during the Summer months (Appendix 2 Tidy Towns 5 year plan p.6). Council engineers have identified leakage from the old cast iron water Supply which when repaired or replaced will ameliorate the situation. Alternatively additional water can be provided from the existing source.

## **Sewerage**

The existing septic tank is polluting the river and adjoining lands. The sewer laid by the house builder along the Ballyfad Road is not working satisfactorily. It is envisaged that a new sewage treatment plant will be provided in the vicinity of the area designated on the Objectives Map 2.

## **Roads**

The road from the N.11 at Inch, to the south of Coolgreany (1.4 miles) is a county road of a good standard and provides the best access to Coolgreany. The road from Scarnagh Cross on the N.11 (2.5 miles) to the north is narrower with more corners and a railway bridge. The old historic bridge at the south end of the town is a potentially serious bottleneck.

## **Footpaths and Lighting**

There is a need to extend the footpath from the Main Street along the Ballyfad Road as far as the Doctor's House.

The road leading to the School from the Main Street is very narrow and has no footpath.

Public lighting will be required for both of these footpaths.

## **2.6 Public Open Space**

In a village of 400 persons surrounded by open countryside there is unlikely to be great pressure for the Public Open Space. The present large Open Space between the school and the local authority estate appears adequate to Coolgreany's present needs.

The open grass strip on the Main Street is unique and its continued maintenance is critical.

The proposal of the Tidy Towns Committee to create a small Town Park on the site of the Coolgreany Inn is very appropriate and worthy of support and encouragement.

## **2.7 Conservation: Historic, Architectural and Amenity Features.**

The major features helping to create the unique character of Coolgreany have been listed in Section 1.8 (p.4.)

The now rare single storey cottages making up the east side of the Main Street, the Historic Bridge and the idyllic unspoiled countryside to the south with the mature woodland trees around St. Augustine House are the most important features of Coolgreany.

The Main Street is most attractive coming from the Bridge at the lower end but becomes less attractive around the road junction at the top. The handball alleys, the storage yard aspect of Gardiners Grain and the pub façade set back from the roads, combine to present a much less appealing aspect at this end of the village.

### **3.0 Proposals**

The elements making up this section i.e. the Policy Statements, the Land Use Zoning Map and the Specific Proposals Map are the Local Area Plan. Since parts of the Policy Statement are also included in the County Development Plan 2001 and apply to all towns, villages and settlements in the County, these are preceded ***in bold italics in each section*** (where appropriate) by the relevant policy proposals either unique to Coolgreany or considered to be of special significance.

#### **3.1 Wexford County Council Policy for Coolgreany**

***It is the policy of Wexford County Council that the future role of Coolgreany in Wexford should continue unchanged. The Council will continue to improve all services to the village and will encourage development consistent with the scale of the village and its capacity to absorb further growth and expansion without damaging the unique character of the village and its environs.***

#### **3.2 General Policy on New Development, Design and the Built Environment**

All new development in the Development Area must have regard to the general planning and environmental standards and criteria set out in the overall County Development Plan and to any planning guidance, which the Planning Authority may produce over the plan period. New building designs must respect existing village character, scale and streetscape.

***Housing Developers must submit Residential Design Statements as part of their pre planning submission discussions with the Council planners and residential development must have regard to the design Guide for Residential Areas.***

#### **3.3 Commercial and Service Facilities**

***Since a modest annual growth rate is proposed for Coolgreany, Arklow and Gorey will continue to provide most of these facilities. To ensure the continuation and consolidation of the present commercial role of Coolgreany. It is the Councils policy to encourage and provide for mixed use development including commercial and service facilities in the village core area, as shown on the Land Use Zoning Map and as appropriate to the rate of growth and needs of Coolgreany.***

***An area of land behind the Main Street has been identified as appropriate for small Enterprise Units and it is the Council's policy to encourage and foster the development of these in order to create additional job opportunities.***

### **3.4 Community, Sports and Recreation Facilities**

***It is the Council's policy to encourage and facilitate the provision of community and sports facilities and in particular to assist Coolgreany Celtic A.F.C. to acquire a permanent playing pitch.***

### **3.5 Housing**

The County Council require that, where a person applies for residential development on land subject to a zoning requirement to reserve land for social and affordable housing, as a condition of planning permission agreement must be reached between the planning authority and the developer regarding the reservation of land, houses or sites for social and affordable housing with provision for appeal or arbitration in default of agreement.

The County Council will require developers to provide social and affordable housing in accordance with the Council's Housing programme and to pursue a range of other policy options/ solutions to meet the housing need in Coolgreany.

***It is an objective of the Council that housing be developed in what are clearly perceived as groups of houses of not more than 12 houses in any single group and at the density zoned for that particular location.***

The Council propose to achieve this objective by the following means:

***In order to ensure that house builders achieved the desired maximum grouping of up to 12 houses, all house builders and designers as part of their pre submission discussions with the planners would be required to submit "Residential Design statements" to words and preliminary sketch layouts their overall Design Objectives for the site. This would set the layout and design on course to achieve the small groups of houses required by the Development Plan and will ensure a better marriage of the development with the site and the environs of the site.***

***Together with a sensitive understanding of the objectives of the Design Guidelines already in use in Wexford these two proposals would achieve the high standard of layout and design required.***

## **Land Zoning for Housing**

Considerable areas of land in and around the village can be sewered by gravity.

***It is an objective of the council to achieve orderly development compatible with the existing character of Coolgreany. Since all land zoned for housing in any one 6 year period is unlikely to become available for development, it is necessary to zone more land than might be required.***

## **Development Land for Housing**

***The existing village and most of the newer development in Coolgreany is on the south facing slope north of the river. In addition to facing south the outlook and views to the south from the north of the river are far more attractive than the views to the north from south of the river. Existing sewers and the treatment plant are all located north of the river. The Bridge is both a definite “gateway” to the village and something of a traffic barrier.***

## **Residential Zoning Classification**

***It is an objective of the Council to retain the existing form and character of Coolgreany by in-filling the urban core around the main Street and by retaining the comparatively low density of the surrounding development***

## **Lower Density Housing**

***Essentially this is suburban housing development similar to housing already built in Coolgreaney. It is proposed that this housing would be at approximately 4 houses to the acre and developed in small groups. House builders would be expected to identify and use existing hedgerows, reinforced with additional planting where required which would help achieve the small groups of not more than 12 houses***

## **Higher Density and/or Social Housing**

*This land is adjacent to the present Main Street where high densities could be achieved by Town House developments sympathetic in character to the existing housing on the Main Street. As outlined already it is proposed that all housing development be in increments or groups not exceeding 12 houses in number.*

## **Residential / Community Use**

*This land is located within the village core where higher density residential development would be appropriate and/or the provision of community facilities promoted due to its central location such that the village is adequately catered for in terms of basic social, community and recreational facilities.*

### **3.6 Engineering Services**

#### **Sanitary Services**

- *The Council will continue to monitor the water supply and take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the supply will continue to meet the demand.*
- *The Council recognise the inadequacy of the present sewage treatment system and it is the intention of the Council to provide a new sewage treatment plant which will meet the needs of the proposed population of Coolgreany.*
- It is the policy of the Council to ensure that lands designated for development are serviced or serviceable with water supplies and sewerage facilities prior to the granting of planning permission.
- It is the policy of the council to seek financial contributions from or the provision of infrastructure by developers to service development where existing capacity cannot accommodate the proposed development provided such development is otherwise acceptable, is appropriate in scale and does not detract from village form, character and identity.
- It is the policy of the Council to provide an adequate level of water and sanitary services infrastructure to accommodate in the future the appropriate amount of sustainable development.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- S.1 To provide a sewage treatment plant where shown on Map 2. A buffer zone shall be applied around the treatment plant in accordance with the specifications set out in Section 7.4.4 of the Wexford County Development Plan**



**2001 in the interests of public health, residential amenities and environmental protection.**

**Roads, Footpaths and Lighting.**

- ***The Council will continue to monitor the condition of the Historic Stone Arched Bridge across the Coolgreany River and take any remedial action required consistent with the objective of conserving this unique bridge.***

The following will be objectives of the Council:

- ❖ To provide for the development of an appropriate hierarchy of roads and communications within and around Coolgreany to accommodate:
- ❖ A range of users including the residential and commercial needs of the area local and seasonal traffic
- ❖ The safe and convenient movement of vehicles and persons
- ❖ To carry out road improvements to facilitate the implementation of the development strategy for the village.
- ❖ To ensure that all development proposals meet traffic safety and parking requirements.
- ❖ To promote and accommodate walking and cycling and to carry out road improvements to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- ❖ To ensure that all existing and future housing developments are satisfactorily completed in terms of roads, footpaths, parking and turning areas and serviced with adequate public lighting systems.
- ❖ To improve road junctions.
- ❖ To seek the under grounding of all new service cables and the under grounding of existing service cables as part of traffic calming and management and general environmental improvement works.

**Specific Objectives**

- R.1 To widen the road from the Main Street to the school and provide a footpath and public lighting.***
- R.2 To improve the footpath and provide public lighting on the Ballyfad Road from the Main Street to the doctor's house.***
- R.3 To provide a shelter for children waiting for the School Bus.***

### **3.7 Public Open Space**

It will be the policy of the Council:

- ***To protect and maintain the grass area dividing the two carriageways on The Main Street and to seek to put all overhead services underground so that the existing trees can be restored to their natural form and character.***

- To provide a variety of public open spaces to meet amenity, recreation and environmental needs and to ensure the maintenance of these areas.
- To ensure that all new housing developments allow for recreational Opportunities by encouraging the provision of useful open space.
- To ensure that existing landscape and site features such as stands of mature trees, hedgerows, streams and watercourses are properly identified and retained in site layouts and open spaces where appropriate.
- To improve existing open space areas through hard and soft landscaping and where practicable create additional opportunities for recreation.

### **3.8 Conservation: Historic, Architectural and Amenity Features**

- *In recognition of the unique character of Coolgreany it is the Council's policy to protect and conserve the residential use of the single story cottages on the east side of the Main Street and to further protect the grass strip with the trees, which separates the two carriageways.*
- *The Councils policy is to also conserve the character of the two story houses on the west side of the Main Street and to ensure that any proposed new shopfronts will be in keeping with the character and scale appropriate to Coolgreany.*
- *The Council will protect and conserve the historic stone arched bridge crossing the Coolgreany River. The Council will monitor its condition and ensure that any remedial work required will be compatible with the proper conservation of the bridge.*
- *The Council will encourage the owners of properties at the top end of the Main Street to improve the appearance of their properties and to ensure that any changes made will restore the area to a character and scale appropriate to Coolgreany and in particular to the middle and lower parts of the Main Street.*
- *The council will not permit any development which will significantly detract from the unspoiled landscape south of Coolgreany River when viewed from areas north of the river.*
- *It is the Council's policy to preserve and assist in the conservation of the perimeter planting and woodland planting around St Augustine House and to secure the protection of significant trees through the making and the development control process.*
- The Council will undertake planting of trees and shrubs in open space areas and indigenous trees and shrubs on approach roads to Coolgreany where appropriate.

- The Council will investigate the placement of existing above ground electricity transformers at ground level with appropriate landscaping and screening.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- C.1 To carry out visual improvements to the approach roads to Coolgreany including the restoration and protection of the stone walls.**
- C.2 To maintain a set back distance of 6 metres from either side of the Coolgreany River and all streams so as to assist in the maintenance of a healthy riparian ecology and water quality.**
- C.3 To ensure the character and the uniqueness of the single storey terrace and two storey terrace along the Main Street is maintained in tact. Any new development or improvements to be carried out to the terraces, shall compliment and enhance the existing built form.**

## **Zoning Map**

The following is a brief explanation of the different Land Use Zonings as shown on Map 1.

### **Mixed Use**

The intention of this zoning is to encourage the infill and consolidation of the village core while recognising the unique character of the Main Street. All types of development not in conflict with the character of the Main Street, including Commercial and Residential, would be permitted providing the development is in keeping with the scale, character and overall height of existing buildings and that they observe the existing building lines of both sides of the street.

### **Enterprise Units**

The Council will encourage the setting up of small starter units in this area so as to allow new enterprises to get going and to make provision for the creation of job opportunities.

### **Institutional**

This land is zoned for all institutional uses including: schools, social services, health and welfare, libraries, local authority services etc.

### **Higher Density and /or Social Housing**

This housing land closest to the Main Street is intended for higher density town house development and local authority or other affordable housing.

**Lower Density Housing**

Given the policy of the Council to control the rate of growth of Coolgreany and to encourage orderly development, the Council will encourage the development of Lower Density Housing (4 houses per acre) in this zone for duration of this plan.

**Community / Residential**

This land is zoned for higher density residential development at a density appropriate to the character of the village and/or the provision of community facilities.

**Public open Space**

This is land zoned for public recreation and amenity use. It includes a small Town Park on the site of the old Coolgreany Inn.

**Agriculture and Amenity**

This is land within the Development Boundary which has specific amenity value but is not needed for Public Open Space and for which Agriculture is the most appropriate use.

## **4.0 Implementing the Local Area Plan – Significant Effects on the Environment**

4.1 Section 19(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 states that a Local Area Plan shall contain information on the likely significant effects implementing the Plan. This requirement is in accordance with the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment for plans and policies. By highlighting the significant effects of the Plan's strategy, policies and objectives, it is possible in the plan making and implementation process to

- Avoid unnecessary harm to the local community and the natural and built environment
- Reduce the effects of harm where it cannot be avoided (mitigation)
- Identify positive benefits for the local community, the natural and built environment that can be provided
- Ensure that the Plan is moving towards sustainable development
- Make a major contribution to the future monitoring process by allowing resources to be focused on key areas of uncertainty.

4.1.1 In general terms the development strategy for the area covered by the Local Area Plan has incorporated the principle of sustainability as a central theme. In this respect the protection of the environment has been integral to the Plan's preparation and is in accordance with:

- The *Strategic Vision* for the planning and development of County Wexford as set out in the County Development Plan 2001 (Reference Section 3.1)
- Government policy as set out in '*Sustainable Development—A Strategy for Ireland*' (Department of the Environment 1997).

4.2 Change resulting from economic and social development will have inevitable effects, both positive and negative on the local communities in Coolgreany and on their natural and built environments. It is the purpose of this Local Area Plan to manage this change and to ensure that adverse impacts on the integrity of the environment and quality of life are mitigated and minimised. The following sections set out in more detail the identified significant effects of implementing the Plan, and what measures are available to minimise and mitigate and adverse effects.

## **4.3 Human Beings**

The development of additional lands as outlined in the Local Area Plan will have significant effects on the local community in Coolgreany. The mix of land uses to cater for the needs of the existing and future population of the

area including the provision of homes, jobs, shopping, tourism and recreational facilities will have significant effects in terms of the way the local community experience the area and on the spatial character of the villages. On the other hand, by providing an attractive place in which to live, work, visit and recreate, the Local Area Plan can help to create a positive impact on the future of the community. An increased year round population which the Plan seeks to achieve, will create the critical mass and vitality needed to give rise to investment in services and amenities which will benefit the whole community. The provision of additional residential development in the context of the Council's Housing Strategy will provide for local residential need and contribute towards minimising the pressure for one-off housing on the approaches to the villages. The strategy of seeking to consolidate development in and around the village core with phased expansion outwards, using existing and proposed infrastructure will have less negative effects and is more sustainable than haphazard, uncoordinated development in the village environs where services and environmental capacity are limited. Negative effects resulting from new residential development can be further mitigated by careful layout and design, the sensitive use of existing site features, screening, landscaping and the planning control and enforcement system.

#### **4.4 Flora**

The Local Area Plan identifies the important habitats and amenity areas in Coolgreany and its environs. Those areas that have been identified for development consist almost exclusively of agricultural grasslands which are primarily used for grazing and are considered to be of least importance in terms of habitat.

#### **4.5 Fauna**

This is closely related to flora and the habitats referred to in Section 4.5 above and the likely impacts are as previously discussed.

#### **4.6 Soil**

No special or noteworthy soil conditions have been identified in areas designated for development. Soils in areas such as sand dunes or coastal amenity areas will not be impacted upon as these areas will be kept free from development. Impacts on soil will occur in development areas due to removal construction work, excavation and re-profiling. Impacts will be mitigated in landscaping, screening and planting of developed sites.

#### **4.7 Water**

Primary Impacts on the area's water resources will result from demand created by new development. These demands are identified in the Local

Area Plan which also contains detailed policies and objectives to meet this demand through the provision of infrastructure. Foul water treatment impacts will also be addressed through the provision of appropriate infrastructure identified in the Plan, i.e. the provision of treatment facilities to cater for existing and proposed development. While the rate of surface water run-off has the potential to increase in development areas, any adverse impacts will be addressed by the provision of appropriate storm water infrastructure and through careful design, siting and site development to be addressed in the development control process. In general terms water quality will improve benefiting the existing and proposed population through the upgrading and improvement of water infrastructure services.

#### **4.8 Air**

Increased levels of development will result in air quality changes from both vehicles and properties. However, increases in residential density, the provision of cycle and pedestrian networks, and the provision of local facilities and services and more energy efficient houses, will help reduce emissions over the longer term. Extensive tree planting will also assist in air purification.

#### **4.9 Climate**

There are no likely or significant impacts on climate anticipated from the Local Area Plan.

#### **4.10 Landscape**

Implementation of the Plan involves the urbanisation of land previously used for agricultural purposes, resulting in significant long-term changes to the traditional landscape of these areas. This is deemed to be acceptable as future growth in housing, jobs, services and facilities needs to be accommodated and the lands identified are as close as possible to the built up areas. Those lands and areas that represent the most important ecological habitats and sensitive or vulnerable landscapes have been reserved in the interests of bio-diversity, visual amenity and public open space. Significant change in proposed development areas can be mitigated through the planning control process by requiring sensitive landscaping of new development and the creation of new landscapes.

#### **4.11 Material Assets**

This includes both natural and man-made assets. Natural assets have been addressed in foregoing sections and some of the material assets that relate to heritage are addressed in the following section. Other material assets include the area's existing infrastructure e.g. roads, water supply, sewerage infrastructure and built fabric. No significant impacts which would affect these assets are anticipated, while improvements to existing infrastructure of the road network will benefit the area.

#### **4.12 Cultural Heritage**

Cultural heritage is the term used to describe the combined components of archaeology, architecture, urban design, monuments and decorative features. It also includes sites or areas of religious or folklore interest. The Local Area Plan and the overall County Development Plan address the nature and extent of such cultural assets in the Coolgreany areas. The protection of these assets will be major objective through the development control process through its requirement for well-planned designed and sensitive development. Close consultation with Dúchas - The Heritage Service will also ensure that any adverse impacts on the cultural heritage are avoided or mitigated.