

FERNS LOCAL AREA PLAN

2009-2015



**Wexford County Council
Forward Planning**

13th July 2009



The Ferns Local Area Plan 2009-2015 shall be read in conjunction with the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013. In particular, regard shall be had to Section 10 - Development Standards and Guidelines, which will be applied to any development proposal within the Local Area Plan boundary.

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PART 1

Section 1 – Introduction

Section 2 – Strategic Assessment

Section 3 – Urban Character Assessment



Section 1 Introduction

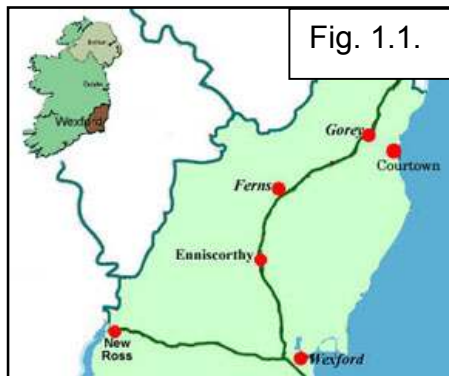


Fig. 1.1.

1.1 Location & Background

The Irish for Ferns is Fearná, which translates as the 'Place of Alders'. Ferns is located on the junction of the Enniscorthy-Gorey road (N11) and Ferns-Bunclody road (L33), 5.5km southwest of Camolin.

The southern tail of the Wicklow Mountains rises to a peak at Slieveboy to the north of the village and the village itself is within the River Bann valley, a tributary of the River Slaney. The location of Ferns and its environs is shown in Figures 1.1. and 1.2.



Fig. 1.2.

1.2 Legal Status

The Ferns Local Area Plan 2009-2015 has been prepared under Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007 and the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2007. This Plan sets out the vision that will guide the development of Ferns for the next six years and is

consistent with the objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013.

1.3 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this Local Area Plan is to formulate a long term strategy for the future development of Ferns so as to appropriately manage change in the village's physical environment and provide for new development that contributes to, and enhances the existing qualities of the village. This will be achieved by ensuring that development is planned in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner. Though the development policies and objectives set out in this Plan are for the next six years, the development strategy will provide foundations that will shape the future development of the Ferns area beyond 2014.

The **aim** of the Ferns Local Area Plan 2008-2014 is to:

Facilitate the planned, integrated and sustainable development of Ferns by balancing the needs of the community and preserving and enhancing the natural and built archaeological environment.

1.4 Plan Area

Wexford County Council has established a development area boundary for the village following consideration of the following factors:

- The stated aim of this Plan;
- Consistency with strategic policies at National, Regional and Local level;
- Anticipated population target;
- The existing urban structure of the village;
- The proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- Proximity of the site to a cSAC;
- Likely future development needs given the increased pressure for development in Ferns in recent years and also due to the fact that many of the lands within the proposed development boundary have not yet come forward for development.

1.5 Planning Context

Village Function

Ferns is typical of an urban settlement located in predominantly rural area. The village performs an important civic and service function with a concentration of civic amenities including churches and schools. These provide services not only for the resident population but also for a much wider rural and parish based population. The village has a relatively high concentration of urban dwellings in a compact area, with services such as pubs, small retailers and local economic activity concentrated along Main Street.

The function of Ferns reflects its long-standing role as an important market, service and employment centre for a large rural hinterland in North Wexford. The village has an important relationship with its surrounding rural area as it provides services, education, civic facilities, housing and a market for produce.

Physical Setting and Appreciation

Situated between the towns of Enniscorthy and Gorey, Ferns is located on a low-lying area of relatively undulating land within a large agricultural hinterland. The N11 Wexford to Dublin Road bisects the village. The Rosslare Europort to Dublin Railway line are located circa 1.3 km east of the centre of the village.

1.6 Relationship with other Plans and Strategies

This Local Area Plan is part of a wider set of planning and development policies and objectives, which guide and inform development at a national, regional, county and local level. A brief outline of these principal planning and development documents is provided below.

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 & the Regional Planning Guidelines

2004: The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Regional Planning Guidelines (South East Region) are the two primary strategies which the formulation of the Ferns LAP has had regard to.

Wexford County Development Plan 2007- 2013

In the context of the Settlement Strategy set out in the Wexford County Development Plan 2007 Ferns is identified as a one of 13 district growth areas for the County. 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 settlements including medium to high density developments in the core.

Wexford County Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy 2007-2013 sets out current and future housing requirements within the County and the requirement for social and affordable housing.

1.7 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

In accordance with EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, it is necessary to screen for a Strategic Environmental Assessment of this Plan.

The SEA screening process decides whether a particular Plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects and thus warrant an SEA. Following the carrying out this screening process and consultation with the designated Environmental Authorities; the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, it was determined that an SEA was not required for the Ferns Local Area Plan.

Section 2. Strategic Assessment

2.1 Population

In the period 1991 – 1996, the population of Ferns village increased by 6.5%. This population growth continued in the period 1996 – 2002 with an increase of 7.7%. However, between 2002 and the most recent census of 2006 the population of the village fell by 3.1% to 954 persons. The total Electoral Division (ED) of Ferns has a population of 1201. Taking into consideration permitted and constructed developments that have occurred in Ferns since 2004, it is considered that the 2006 population figure could actually be higher with the current population as of the end of 2008 significantly higher. The figures in the table below are calculated based on data from permissions granted within the Local Area Plan boundary since 2004.

Table 2.1 – Residential Developments Granted since 2004

No of dwellings Granted within Ferns LAP Boundary	Constructed	Permitted not yet Constructed
224	136	88

2.2 Population Projections 2008-2014

The following figures were calculated taking into account the predicted effects of planning permissions granted and expected to be built, current developments and natural increase in Ferns village. Out of the total no of residential units granted permission since 2004, 136 have been constructed with approximately 63 % of those units occupied.* Taking the average household size for Wexford County-Average Household Size - CSO 2006 at 2.8 persons per dwelling the following data has been established in Table 2.2. The current population is estimated at 1338 persons. This would represent a population increase of 28% since the 2006 Census.

* Onsite survey carried out on the 7th January 2009.

Table 2.2 – Population Projections for LAP Area 2008[†]

Census	2002	2006	2008
Ferns	985	954	1338

The projected levels of population to 2015 are not expected to grow at this rate. Three different growth scenarios have been prepared based on high, medium and low levels. It is anticipated that the medium growth scenario would be most likely.

Table 2.3 – Population Projections to 2015

Year	Low	Medium	High
2015	1445	1538	1712

2.3 Age Profile

The age profile of the Plan area is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. It shows that there is a high representation of people under of 24 years with the three highest age groups in the village between 10-14 years, 15-19 years and 20 to 24 years. This has important implications in terms of both housing and employment provision during the life of the Plan with many people in the area approaching the age of first time buyer and entering the workforce. This could also have an adverse impact on migration levels.

[†] Population Projections calculated using the UCD Econometric Population Model 2006.

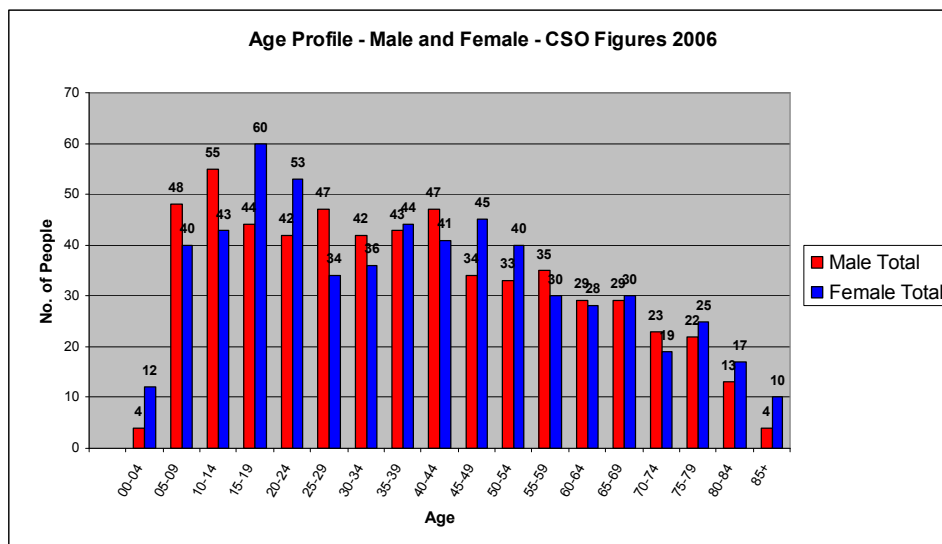


Figure 2.1 – Age Profile Breakdown Male & Female

2.4 Employment

Approximately 8.4% of Fern’s workforces were registered as unemployed at the time of the 2006 Census. This represents a higher level than the National average which is 5% (CSO 2006). While this figure is for 2006, the current economic climate may alter these figures.

Employment by type is illustrated in Figure 2.2. It is evident that there are high numbers employed in the Building and Construction trade and Professional occupations with them accounting for 17.7% and 14.27% respectively of the workforce. There are low numbers employed in the Agriculture and Transport sectors, while relatively high percentages of the workforce are employed in the Manufacturing industry and Sales sector at 12.4% and 11.7% respectively.

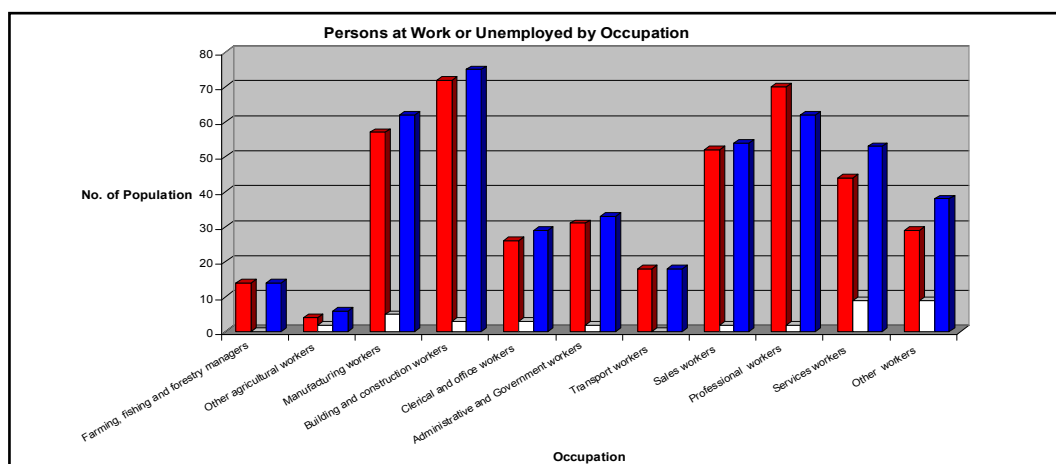


Figure 2.2 – Employment by Occupation Type

2.5 Travel Patterns

The travel patterns of 681 people in Ferns were surveyed by the CSO in 2006. The statistics show that the preferred mode of transport is the private car with 48% travelling as car driver or passenger.

The next most popular mode of travel is foot with 21.87% of those surveyed choosing this mode. This would suggest a significant proportion of the population work or attend school close to their places of residence.

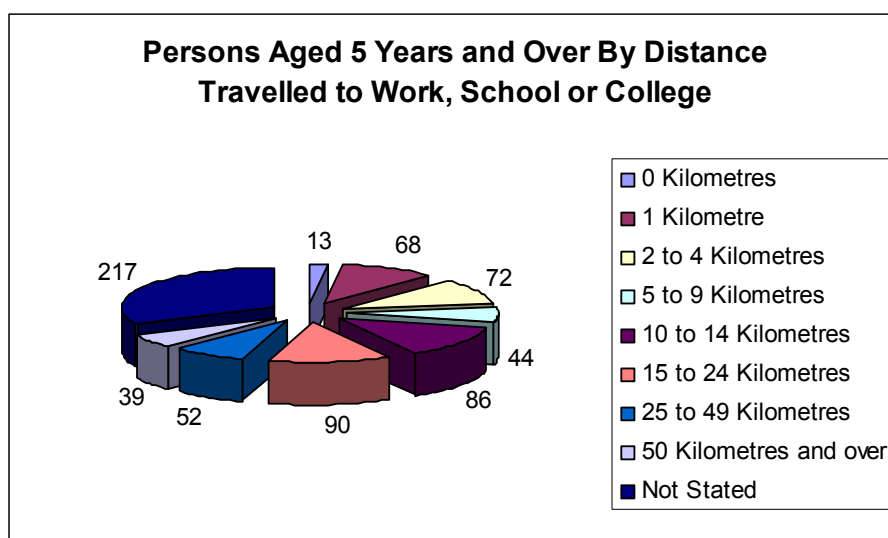


Figure 2.3 Distances Travelled

As can be seen from Figure 2.3 above, the most common distance travelled is 15 to 24 kilometres. This suggests that a large number of residents travelling to work are commuting to the surrounding towns of Enniscorthy and Gorey. The 1km and 2 to 4 kilometre journeys also represent a high proportion of the data. This would suggest that a large number of residents are within easy commuting distance of their workplace or school. This ‘distance travelled’ figure illustrates the opportunity for encouraging non car travel by the provision of adequate walk and cycle ways.

2.6 Wastewater Treatment and Water Supply Facilities

Ferns is currently served by two wastewater treatment plants; one at the north end of the village and the other at the southern end. Ferns Upper is served by the northern plant (a septic tank) which has a 400 PE capacity. Ferns Lower is served by the southern plant which has a 2250 PE capacity. Both these plants are operating near capacity. There are plans to upgrade the sewerage infrastructure within the village by replacing the old northern plant with a pump station which will pump sewage to the southern plant which will be designed for 4500 PE initially with an ultimate capacity of 6000 PE. Consulting Engineers have been engaged and a preliminary report prepared and submitted to DOEHLG for approval. This scheme is currently awaiting approval from the DOEHLG. Future population growth in the village will be facilitated by these upgrading works and the upgrading has been factored into the proposed land use zonings. The development of residentially zoned land will be linked to and dependent on the proposed upgrading works being carried out.

At present there is an adequate water supply to serve existing and permitted development within the village boundary. However, taking into account the anticipated population that the upgraded wastewater treatment facilities will cater for, it will be necessary to source additional water supply for same. Water Services are currently examining measures to secure this additional supply. These measures include maximising existing sources, locating additional water sources and implementing water conservation such as reducing the leakage of water from pipes.

Urban Character Assessment

3.1 Historical Development

Ferns is one of the most historic villages in Ireland and is believed to have been established in the 6th century, when a monastery dedicated to St Mogue of Clonmore the then Bishop of Ferns, was founded there in 598. The village became the capital of the Kingdom of Leinster when the Kings of the southern part of the province established their seat of power there. The most well known is Dermot MacMurrough who was associated with inviting the Anglo-Normans to Ireland in 1169.

Ferns Castle, an Anglo-Norman fortress was built in the 13th century by William, Earl Marshall. Originally, the Castle formed a square, with large corner towers. Only half of the Castle now remains. The most complete tower contains a fine circular Chapel, with carved ornament. The tower also has several original fireplaces and a vaulted basement. Archaeological excavations revealed a rock-cut ditch outside the Castle walls. Several other reminders of the village's eventful history include St Mary's, a 12th Century Augustinian Priory established by McMurragh circa 1160 and where he is thought to be buried. The village also contains the 13th Century St Edan's Cathedral Church of Ireland, with several high crosses and parts of crosses, standing in the Cathedral grounds.

3.2 Urban Character Assessment

The extent of the Fern's LAP boundary has been determined by the pattern of its existing urban development and the need to consolidate and enhance the existing urban structure and provide greater connectivity between component areas of the village.



The village possesses a very unique streetscape pattern, defined by its topography which falls from west to east along the N11. This has facilitated a mix of building heights and styles within the settlement. To the east of the village centre there are a number of higher density structures such as the three and four storey recent developments on Main Street. St Edan's Cathedral (Church of Ireland) is located to the north edge of the village and provides an impressive vista on the southern approach to the village along the N11. The western section of the village is comprised of a number of commercial and residential structures predominately one and two storey. This is most likely due to the elevated nature of these lands and the location of Ferns Castle which is visible from the surrounding countryside and on many of the approach roads into the village.

The village is abounded on all sides by the evidence of its illustrious past. There have been a number of new residential developments constructed in the village in recent years. These are situated on the southern N11 approach road to the village from Enniscorthy and also to the south east of the village on the approach from Clone Road. These developments have increased the number of residential dwellings significantly. It is worthwhile to note that design statements were submitted with these developments to ensure that the history of the village's built environment would not be adversely affected.

3.2.1 Distinctive Features of the Streetscape

The most distinctive features of Fern's streetscape include –

- The approach to the village from the north with St Edan's Cathedral and the 3 and 4 storey developments on Main Street.
- The mix of building heights from the higher density eastern end of the Main Street to the lower density western end of the village.
- The village's Main Street and the distinctive Ferns Castle in the centre and the highest point of the village.
- The approach road to the village from the western side presents a poor visual introduction to the village with a number of derelict structures.

- There are a number of residential developments located in the backlands of the Main Street.

3.2.2 Buildings in the Village

Due to the village's rich historic heritage there are a number of important buildings, some of which are of regional and national importance. The village displays a number of notable buildings, including Ferns Castle on the Main Street, St. Edan's Cathedral, St. Aidan's Monastery of Adoration and the old Bank building which is located on a prominent site at the centre of the village.



The Castle, located in the centre of the village, commands an elevated position, which makes it visible from several approach roads and the surrounding hinterland and represents one of the village's most important features.

St. Edan's Cathedral is another of the village's most impressive structures. Given its elevated siting and setting, it forms a prominent focal feature when approaching the village from the north.

The Centra food store has a building line which curves around the corner following the road line. This adds character and interest to the streetscape at this point.

There are a number of important views that are considered worthy of protection as they positively contribute to both the character and visual amenity of Ferns. These views, as shown on the Protected Views Map No. 5, are mostly on the approach roads into the village. In particular, as one approaches the village from the north, there are splendid views of St. Edan's Cathedral and St. Augustine's Monastery. There is also a view of Ferns Castle from the R745 that is worthy of protection.

3.2.3 The Interrelationship between Buildings and Spaces

There are a number of buildings along the Main Street that create a strong sense of enclosure and define the spaces in between as the 'centre of the village'

1. Ferns Castle



The Castle is situated on an elevated site in the centre of the village. This structure is the main tourist attraction in the village. The Castle is an example of a towered keep, consisting of a rectangular keep with three-quarter projecting round towers at the angles. Of the towers, only the southwest and southeast towers have survived to any substantial degree. Despite its state of dereliction, this fortified structure is a prominent feature of the town's skyline. The main concerns relating to it are its preservation and also the provision of car parking. The Castle is surrounded by a variety of uses with residential to the south, community to the east and a variety of village centre uses to the north and west at the Square.

2. The Square

The Square is situated to the north west of the village centre. The Square is



surrounded by predominately two storey commercial structures. Some of these structures are architecturally weak in the streetscape and demand greater attention in terms of future re-modelling or design. On street car parking is provided in the Square area adjacent to these commercial properties. This area is in need of regeneration due to a number of derelict buildings in the vicinity. There is great potential for new tourism/cultural development in this area due to its proximity to the Castle and also acts a focal point for the proposed historical walk.

3. Village Centre



The village centre is unique to settlements of this size, in that a large majority of the community facilities are dispersed throughout the village core. These community facilities include St Aidan's Church, Naomh Maodhog National School, the Community Hall and St. Aidans Boxing Club. This area is the principal focal point of the village. Buildings such as the Courtyard Bar & Restaurant provide some definition to the building line along the street. The remainder of the village centre has a varied building line due to the individual community uses. (For example the National School is set back off the street. The building heights in this area are single and two storey with the St. Aidan's Church spire forming a prominent focal point.

4. Roman Catholic Church.



The Roman Catholic Church, which is modern in form and design, is located at the heart of the village centre. It is set back from the road and given its elevated position, the Church and its spire is visually prominent on all approaches to the village. Within the Church grounds there is a large car park which is open to public to use at all times.

5. Redevelopment of Mills behind and to side of Mixed Use Development – Main Street



This development is located on the southern eastern fringe of the village. It presents an impressive visual statement upon entering the village with both a combination of new and old

building materials and designs. This development houses a number of important services for the village including crèche, pharmacy, hairdressers etc. This development also provides a large amount of off-street parking, which in turn alleviates parking problems. The site is within easy walking distance of shops and other commercial services in the village centre.

6. St Edan's Cathedral and St Mogue's Cottage.



The Cathedral and St. Mogue's cottage are located to the east of the village. Both are extremely attractive stone buildings with great charm and character. They contribute to an impressive vista



as one enters the village from the north. The ruins of the Monastery are also visible in this vista. This area is of immense amenity value and as such its protection is of utmost importance.



7. Infill Development Opportunities

A number of significant opportunity sites are identified throughout the town which would benefit from infill developments. Many of these relate to areas where the traditional building lines have been eroded for reasons including dereliction

and/or demolition and new builds.



8. Vacant Buildings

Though the majority of Ferns buildings are well maintained several vacant/derelict structures exist scattered throughout the village. These buildings can have a negative effect in terms of

visual amenity and the overall character of the village. This is particularly evident to the west of the village centre where there are a number of opportunities to improve the streetscape.

9. Other Urban Design Elements

A uniform design approach or some element of continuity is required to create harmony. In a traditional streetscape this can be achieved through similar building heights, façade widths, materials, building lines etc.

On the edge of a village where this continuity of design and sense of place is easily lost it can be counteracted by simple design elements such as common boundary treatment for example standard stone wall treatment.

The village centre is divided into two separate areas by the N11. This has led to a perception of a very small village centre to road users. Many people passing through the village would not realise that there is an extended village centre to the west of the N11. This can be counteracted by the redevelopment of derelict sites which would improve the visual link to this area. Signposts informing people of Ferns Castle, other historic sites and services, could assist in attracting people to this part of the village.

3.3 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

From a review of the existing available data and literature and consultation with the public the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are identified as follows:

Strengths:

- Historic Core & Local History
- Landscape & Setting - River Bann
- Archaeological History – Ferns castle etc.
- Village is traditional centre of rural hinterland
- Good range of local services (i.e. pubs, shops, post office, etc.)
- Good accessibility to nearby larger villages – N11 – Connects to Enniscorthy/Wexford village to the south and Gorey/Dublin to the north etc.
- Recent new developments

Weaknesses

- Traffic congestion and pedestrian safety
- N11 National Route
- Lack of quality public space
- Derelict structures along the main street.
- Lack of linkages in village centre
- Road Connectivity between different routes
- Connectivity of housing estate location to centre of village

Opportunities

- Consolidate expansion of village
- Riverside amenity area and walks
- Backland development opportunities
- Attractive villagescape that could be improved
- Identify derelict sites as development opportunities
- Conserve and enhance built environment
- Linkages in village centre

- New road connections and opportunity for development on same
- Re-opening of the railway station to the east of the village on the Dublin to Rosslare Railway Line.
- Provide physical and social infrastructure linked to development
- Development of tourist industry within the town.

Threats

- Incoherent growth of village
- Development on the periphery of the village with poor connectivity
- Inaccessibility to back lands
- Problematic circulation of traffic
- Threats to existing archaeology
- Loss of views

To ensure the sustainable development of Ferns, the strengths and opportunities outlined above need to be encouraged, protected and developed. The threats and weaknesses need to be addressed and monitored. Therefore the above SWOT analysis has been used to help formulate the plans and objectives for the Plan.

PART 2



Section 4 - Core strategy

Section 5 – Policies & Objectives

Section 4 Core Strategy

4.1 The Vision for Ferns

The proposed development strategy as put forward in this Local Area Plan is to ensure that Ferns village develops as a sustainable balanced settlement with appropriate amounts of residential, commercial, industrial, tourism and recreational development while also protecting its archaeological and built environment.

Vision for Ferns:

To build on Ferns' current strengths and develop the Plan area. This will be achieved by:

- facilitating the planned, integrated and sustainable development of the village by balancing the needs of the community and preserving and enhancing the natural and built archaeological environment.
- developing a desirable place to live with an adequate mix of housing;
- protecting the Archaeological Heritage of the area;
- promoting the village as a tourism destination.
- ensuring convenience for the local community in relation to provision services and ancillary requirements;
- promoting a vibrant and unique community;
- promoting a walkable and pedestrian friendly environment;
- encouraging a degree of self sufficiency;
- encouraging the protection of its Built and Natural Environment.

With reference to the Council's Settlement Strategy contained in the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013, Section 2.3.4 defines Ferns along with twelve other villages within the County as a District Growth Area. The LAP builds upon this strategy by supporting and promoting the sustainable development of Ferns as a self-supporting community, enjoying a good standard of life in terms of housing, employment, amenities, transport and natural environment. The Council recognises that in order to achieve this, Ferns must offer living and working conditions, educational, recreational and

community opportunities of the highest quality in an attractive urban environment.

4.2 Development Proposals

It is the policy of the Council to consider development proposals that:

1. are located within the Plan boundary as defined on the Land Use Zoning Map 1,
2. provide high quality development in accordance with the Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and its companion document the Urban Design Manual (December 2008),
3. comply with the Development Control Guidelines in the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013.
4. protect and enhance the village's physical character and natural environment,
5. do not significantly affect neighbouring properties' residential amenities and those of the surrounding area;
6. do not create traffic hazards;

The Council will encourage developments that contribute to the revitalisation of the village and in a manner that is sympathetic to its character and surroundings by

- promoting the redevelopment of derelict, obsolete and brownfield sites,
- encouraging the development of backlands where it strengthens the streetscape and continuity of the urban grain,
- supporting the role of the village centre as the principal commercial area.

4.2.1 Development Uses

Future development in Ferns will be aimed at building on and enhancing the characteristics that endow its uniqueness and sense of place. The Council will promote appropriate residential developments, commercial and retail uses and the provision of social facilities e.g. educational and amenity uses on lands within the settlement boundary.

The Land-Use Zoning Plan (refer **Map No.1**) encourages a variety of uses in a manner that promotes the concept of a balanced residential community with appropriate services and facilities, while ensuring that the village protects and retains its character and continues to function effectively as a compact physical place with good accessibility and high quality public spaces.

4.3 Purpose of Land use Zoning

The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate to property owners, developers and the general public, the types of development that are considered most appropriate in each zone and to give guidance to the criteria used by the Planning Authority to assess planning applications. In this context, the zoning objectives allow the developer to plan proposals with some degree of certainty, subject to other conditions and requirements as set out in this Plan and the relevant Wexford County Development Plan. In the control of development, zoning seeks to avoid competing and incompatible uses thus promoting greater environmental quality and rationalising the land use pattern of the village.

Existing Residential

Zoning Objective: To protect and improve residential amenities.

This zoning provides for the protection and improvement of existing residential amenity and the provision of new and improved ancillary services.

Certain areas of existing residential zoning adjoining Enterprise & Industry areas may be considered for these uses if demand is present.

New Residential

Zoning Objective: To provide for new residential development.

This zoning provides for new residential development and associated local shopping and other services incidental to residential development. While housing is the primary use in these zones, recreation, education, crèche/playschool, clinic/surgery uses are also permitted in principle.

Permission may also be granted for home based economic activity within this zone subject to the preservation of residential amenity and traffic

considerations. Residential development shall only take place in conjunction with the provision of the necessary physical, social, community and recreational services/facilities.

Under this **New Residential Zoning** the following categories are included:

Zoning Density	Maximum Dwelling units per		Indicative appropriate locations
	Hectare	Acre	
Super Low Density Residential	2.5	1	Green Field/ Edge of Village
Low - Medium Density	10 - 17	4 - 7	Green Field/ Edge of Village
Medium – High Density Residential	17 - 25	7 - 10	Existing built up area
Higher Density Residential	> 27	>11	At strategic locations including the village centre, neighbourhood centres and transport nodes

Village Centre Uses

Zoning Objective: To protect and enhance the character of Ferns village centre by providing for the development and improvement of appropriate village centre uses including residential, retail, commercial, office and civic uses.

Generally two and three storey buildings will be preferred, depending on the character of the surrounding buildings. Retail, commercial and office based industry will be encouraged in the village centre. Warehousing and other industrial uses will not be permitted in the village centre.

Recreation, Open space & Amenity

Zoning Objective: To protect and provide for recreation, open space and amenity provision.

The purpose of this zoning is to protect and provide for recreation, open space and amenity; to protect and maintain public space; to preserve private open space and to provide recreational facilities. The areas covered by this zoning include both private and public open space throughout the Plan area. The LAP includes designations for both existing and planned new open space.

The Council will support developments that will provide playgrounds, parks and other areas of outdoor activities, sports centres, sports pitches, outdoor recreation training centres and landscaped areas. The Council will not normally permit development that would result in the loss of open space within the Plan Area.

Commercial

Zoning Objective: To protect existing commercial areas and make provision for commercial uses.

Enterprise & Industry

Zoning Objective: This zoning provides for enterprise, industrial, office/business park type uses.

Transition Zone

Zoning Objective: This zoning provides for a transition zone between conflicting land uses so as to protect the amenities of more sensitive land uses.

The purpose of this zoning objective is to provide a transition zone between conflicting land uses – for example residential and industrial uses. The zone provides both a physical break in zoning uses and also assists in the overall integration of different land uses by providing a transition area which avoids

adverse conflict between different uses. Types of land uses in this transition zone must avoid manufacturing heavy or light industry.

Community & Education Uses

Zoning Objective: To provide for new and extensions to existing community, social and educational uses.

The objective of this land use zoning will be to ensure the provision of adequate community and education facilities including health centre/clinic; place of worship/graveyards; cultural uses; school; nursing home; community hall; sports club; recreational building and park/playground.

Public Utilities

Zoning Objective: to provide for and improve Public Utilities in Ferns.

The purpose of this zoning is to provide for and preserve land mainly in the ownership of the Council or other bodies charged with the provision of services such as electricity, telecommunications, water, waste and wastewater etc. as well as car parking in the village.

Exclusion Zone

Zoning Objective: To provide a 150metre exclusion zone around the proposed wastewater treatment plant.

The only permissible uses in this exclusion zone will be car parking.

4.4 Land Use Zoning Matrix Table

The following land use matrix provides general guidance in assessing the acceptability or otherwise of development proposals.

Y – Permitted in Principle

Land uses designated under each zoning objective as 'Permitted in Principle' are generally acceptable, subject to compliance with the relevant policies, standards and requirements set out in his Plan.

O- Open for Consideration

Land uses in this category may or may not be acceptable and proposals in this category will be considered by the Planning Authority on their individual merits. Land uses shown as 'Open for Consideration' may be acceptable in circumstances where the proposal will not conflict with the policies and objectives for the zoning and the permitted or existing uses.

Furthermore, the proposal should be in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

N - Not Permitted

Land uses indicated as 'Not Permitted' in the Land Use Zoning Matrix will not be permitted.

Land Use Zoning Matrix Table Key

ER	Existing Residential
NR	New Residential
TC-LAP	Village Centre
OS&A	Open Space & Amenity
C2	Commercial Uses
E&I	Enterprise & Industry
TU	Transition Zone
C&E	Community & Education Uses
PU	Public Utilities
EZ	Exclusion Zone

Figure 4.1 - Land Use Zoning Matrix Table

	ER	NR	TC - LAP	OS &A	C2	E& I	TU	C &E	PU	EZ
Advertising	N	N	O	N	O	O	O	O	O	N
Amusement Arcade	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Bank	O	O	Y	N	O	N	O	N	N	N
Car Parking	O	O	Y	O	Y	Y	O	Y	Y	Y
Car Sales/Repair	N	N	O	N	Y	Y	O	O	N	N
Childcare Facilities	Y	Y	Y	N	O	O	P	Y	N	N
Discount Food stores	O	O	Y	N	O	Y	N	N	N	N
Indoor Leisure facilities	O	O	Y	O	O	N	O	O	N	N
Community Uses Hall/Centre/Church	O	O	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Guesthouse/Hostel	O	O	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Health Centre	O	O	Y	N	O	O	N	O	N	N
Hotel	O	O	Y	N	N	O	N	O	N	N
General Industry	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Light Industry	N	N	O	N	O	Y	N	N	N	N
School	Y	Y	Y	N	N	O	N	Y	N	N
Nursing Home	Y	Y	O	N	Y	Y	O	Y	N	N
Office	O	O	Y	N	O	O	O	O	N	N
Petrol Station	N	N	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N
Public House	N	N	Y	N	O	Y	N	O	N	N
Recycling Centre	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	P	Y	Y	N
Residential	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Restaurant	O	O	Y	N	O	O	N	N	N	N
Retail Warehousing/ Wholesale/ Warehousing	N	N	N	N	O	O	O	N	N	N
Retail Comparison	N	N	Y	N	Y	O	N	N	N	N
Retail Convenience	O	O	Y	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Take Away	O	O	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Tourist – Holiday Home Dev/Camping/Caravan	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N

Section 5 Development Management Policies & Objectives

This section of the Plan contains detailed development strategy policies and objectives which will govern the future development of the Ferns area. The policies and objectives together with the Core Strategy will be used to make consistent decisions on planning applications.

5.1 Population

The key policy of the Council is to encourage the growth of the village and to ensure that as far as possible encourage self-sufficiency in terms of employment, housing and also to ensure the concurrent delivery of services and facilities with new developments within the village boundary.

In the 2006 Census, the population of Ferns was 954 persons. Taking into account the number of dwellings permitted, constructed and occupied at present, the current population of Ferns is calculated to be 1338 persons. This figure is projected to increase to 1538 by 2015[‡]. This Local Area Plan provides for sufficient levels of zoned housing land to cater for the predicted housing demands based on the above population projections. It also allows for sufficient scope to cater for sites that may not come forward for development in the life time of the LAP.

The level of land zoned for development will ensure that a sustainable rate of village growth can be accommodated. It will allow for the provision of expected expansion of services and facilities and assist the integration of new and existing communities all while maintaining the natural and built environment and enhancing the special historic townscape and natural heritage character of the village.

[‡] Draft Ferns Local Area Plan Section 2.2 Population Projections pg10.

Population Policy

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

1. Zone sufficient lands for housing developments consistent with the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Regional Planning Guidelines.

5.2 Housing

The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the village's projected housing requirements over the Plan period and to ensure that an undue shortage will not arise. Cognisance has been taken of the Wexford County Housing Strategy 2007 – 2013 which sets out the housing requirements for the entire County.

5.2.1 Housing land supply based on population projections

The requirement for new housing is estimated from the projected increase in households for the area. It is estimated that the population of Ferns will grow by approximately **200** persons within the lifetime of this Plan. By applying the national household size of 2.8 persons per household[§] it is estimated that a minimum of **71** residential units will be required during and beyond the Plan period.

Based on an average density of 17 units per hectare (medium density), and incorporating a factor of two to acknowledge the fact that not all lands identified for development will be developed over the Plan period, it is estimated that a total of 8.36ha^{**} will be required for new housing to cater for the predicted population growth of the town over the next six years. The location of new residential lands was carefully considered to incorporate the sequential development of lands close to the village centre and also within sustainable travel distances.

[§] the average household size for Wexford County,- Average Household Size - CSO 2006

^{**} $71 / 17 = 4.18 \times 2 = 8.36\text{ha}$

The housing capacity of this land will depend on varying factors including density and topography etc. In addition to the lands zoned for new residential development, some element of residential development may also occur on brownfield sites, sites zoned for town centre uses or on sites with mixed use zoning.

Housing Land Supply Policies

It is a **policy** of the Council to:

1. Zone sufficient land to allow for the probability that some centrally located sites will not become available in the lifetime of the plan.
2. Use the sequential approach to residential development firstly through in-fill opportunities followed by brownfield sites and where these sites are not viable only then will new residential lands be considered.

5.2.2 Existing & Future Residential

The type of existing residential development in the village is typical of similar sized Irish villages. It varies from one off housing on the outskirts to ribbon development on the approach roads to housing estates of varying design and densities. There has been a significant increase in the number of houses built in recent years. These have occurred predominantly on the southern and eastern side of the town as well as a number of developments within the village centre. The zone of archaeological importance throughout the village centre represents a considerable development barrier.

Existing & Future Housing Policies

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

1. Provide sufficient and suitably located land to meet the housing target and satisfy local housing needs.
2. Encourage a mix of housing type, tenure and size in order to meet changing household size and composition and to provide a social and demographic balance in the village.

3. Require that 20% of land zoned for residential development or for mix of residential and other uses, shall be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing. This figure may be modified in line with any revision to the Housing Strategy carried out during the period of the Development Plan.
4. To consolidate the existing settlement pattern by encouraging a sequential approach whereby new developments in close proximity to the existing built-up area are developed through in-fill development having regard to the need also to provide open space, car parking and other appropriate planning and environmental criteria.
5. To permit appropriate higher densities in residential developments in accordance with the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' DoEH&LG December 2008 and the Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide December 2008.
6. Any proposed housing developments within the Local Area Plan development boundary, and particularly those in close proximity to sensitive sites, shall be required to submit Design Statements based on appropriate site analysis in order to demonstrate that the proposed development would blend in with and enhance the existing built environment in the village.

Housing Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

H1- Ensure the implementation of the Housing Strategy and to integrate housing provided under Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007 into private development in a layout that prevents segregation and promotes good design and layout.

H2- Carry out the Council's responsibilities under the Housing Acts and to provide Local Authority dwellings, affordable units, voluntary co-operative housing and private sites as the need arises and as finances permit.

H3- Actively promote the provision of community, educational, social and recreational facilities in parallel with future housing development

5.2.3 Zoned Land

The Ferns Local Area Plan 2009 to 2015 forecasts a population of 1538 persons by 2015. The Council has provided double the minimum requirement of residentially zoned land to ensure the Ferns area has an adequate quantum of such zoned land so as to allow choice in the market and to provide an alternative to rural housing. This will ensure that the availability of zoned land will not be a constraining factor in the housing market and there will be sufficient choice available for both the developer and the purchaser. Within the Phased Residential Zoning lands, development will be dependent on the future upgrading of the village's wastewater treatment system.

Zoned Land Policy

It is a policy of the Council to:

ZL1- Co-ordinate and facilitate the release of new residential development, giving priority to locations that enhance the existing urban structure (sequential test) and which can be integrated into existing public services. Development of greenfield sites will therefore be encouraged to occur in a sequential manner with the lands nearest the village centre being developed first.

5.2.4 Social Affordable & Voluntary Housing

All lands identified on the Land Use Zoning Map as *Residential, Town Centre or Mixed Use* will be subject to the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007 in relation to the provision of social and affordable housing. Prior to lodging a planning application, developers will be required to engage in discussions with Council to negotiate details of their Part V agreement.

Social and Affordable Housing Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SA1 - acquire land in the interest of providing additional public sector housing and to assist local initiatives providing community housing, shared housing and social housing.

SA2 - To regenerate the Council's current housing stock as required.

5.2.5 Residential Density & Housing

The 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities' DoEH&LG December 2008 sets out Government policy for encouraging more sustainable urban development through the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and the promotion of higher residential densities in appropriate locations. Developers should therefore take account of the advice contained in these guidelines. This will result in proposed sustainable developments of sufficiently high design quality that will facilitate the granting of planning permission.

The Council recognises that higher densities will not be appropriate in every circumstance. In achieving higher densities the protection of the amenities of existing developments and those of the residents of the proposed development will be a primary consideration. Regard will have to be had in all cases to the archaeological and built heritage of the village. A high quality of architecture in the siting and design, providing a good quality living environment is essential if increased residential densities are to be acceptable.

5.2.6 Infill Housing & Development of Backlands

Where appropriate infill housing in the existing built up areas of the village will be encouraged. Development of backland areas will also be encouraged. Any proposals should be designed to integrate successfully with the existing pattern of development in terms of housing type, scale and details to include materials finishes, building lines etc. In all cases the protection of the amenities of existing development should be a significant consideration.

Infill Housing & Backland Development Policy

It is the **policy** of the Council:

InBd - To encourage infill housing & backland developments on appropriate sites where the proposals respect the existing scale and character of the area.

5.2.7 Special Needs Housing

The Planning Authority is committed to providing a range of house designs to meet housing requirements of people with disabilities. While the Planning Authority recognises that Part M of the Building Regulations has led to improved visitor accessibility, there is a significant need to ensure a variety of housing types to provide accommodation for people who have disabilities. The Council will seek to ensure that adequate provision for people with special needs is incorporated within new housing developments.

Special Needs Housing Policy

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

Facilitate the provision of housing for those with special needs, such as the elderly and those with disabilities, including sheltered housing. The integration of such housing into developments located near services and community facilities will be encouraged.

Special Needs Housing Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

SNH – Provide the necessary accommodation facilities in suitable locations in proximity to the town centre.

5.3 Sustainable Development

The vision for the Ferns LAP is based on the need to ensure the sustainable planning and development of the village. It will provide for a village with a balanced community, high quality standards in the provision of housing, employment, social and community facilities', transport, recreational amenities and the natural environment.

The Council is committed to encouraging more sustainable development through efficient energy use and increasing the use of renewable energy in new building projects.

The Council shall have regard to the Building Energy Rating (EU directive) which came into effect on the 1st January 2007. This is an energy

performance rating for all housing in relation to insulation and energy performance.

Sustainable Development Policy

It is the **policy** of the Council that:

All new residential building developments will be required to meet low energy performance targets. Each building's energy performance as calculated by the Building Energy Rating (BER) will have a minimum energy efficiency rating of B1. New buildings should incorporate renewable energy technologies in order to help achieve the B1 rating required.

Sustainable Development Objective

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

SUS 1 - Ensure new development is contained within the settlement boundary and that it employs a high quality energy efficient design.

SUS2 - Support sustainable means of transport by providing safe and high quality pedestrian and bicycle links between residential areas and the retail, recreational and educational facilities in the village.

5.4 Retail and Commercial

Retail and commercial services are located primarily in the village centre. This is situated between lower Main Street and upper Main Street, with retailers such as the 'Centra' and 'Londis' located at lower and upper Main Street respectively. Local shops form part of the economic life of the village as well as playing a part in the everyday social and community life of the residents. Ferns has a good array of services for a village of its size e.g. hairdressers, video shop, butchers, restaurants, pharmacy to name but a few. The focus of this Plan is to encourage the expansion & diversification of the village centre.

Greater linkages and improved accessibility between these streets is required in order to support the local economy at these locations and encourage more sustainable travel patterns. The Main Street is developed along the N11 National Primary route and the R745 Regional road. There is a strong conflict

between its role as part of a local service centre and as an important regional and primary national route.

The village centre is predominately zoned for village centre uses with the primary focus being the provision of retail and commercial services. This is indicated on Land Use Zoning map No. 1. The loss of retail/office to a non-retail/commercial use will not be favourably looked upon. The reasoning behind this is to strengthen and consolidate the village centre in order to ensure that there is provision for expansion of retail and commercial services in the future.

Retail and Commercial Policies:

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

1. Maintain and foster the role of Ferns as an important service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland;
2. Encourage the provision of retail and commercial services and facilities sufficient to meet existing and proposed local needs;
3. Ensure that the retail development proposals conform to the requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines 2005 and those of the Wexford County Retail Strategy;
4. To ensure that new retail/commercial developments are designed to the highest standard and located to ensure safe, sustainable and convenient access;
5. To maintain and promote the vitality and viability of the town centre as a core retail area;
6. Encourage the use of upper floors in retail premises for commercial or for living above the shop accommodation;
7. Prevent the loss of retail/commercial through redevelopment or change of use to non retail/commercial use at ground floor level within the village centre. Storage uses will not be permitted as the primary use in this location;
8. Shop front signage by reason of its scale, form and size shall not be visually detrimental to the appearance and character of a building or streetscape. Internally illuminated signs will be resisted because of

their adverse visual impact. Solid galvanised steel shutters will be resisted whilst perforated shutters may be considered behind existing shop windows if necessary.

Retail and Commercial Objectives:

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

RC1 – Facilitate the expansion & diversification of the village’s commercial core , having regard to the protection of the scale and character of these streetscapes in terms of plot width, height and roof pitch upon conversion of residential premises to commercial uses;

RC2 – Encourage development of infill sites, laneways, streets and backlands within the village centre and adjoining area as locations for retail and commercial uses, having regard to the surrounding building uses in the area;

RC3 - Provide greater linkages through the village centre to provide access to opportunity sites and more sustainable travel patterns;

RC4 - Allow for the development of certain larger retail/commercial uses on those newly zoned industrial lands to the south of the town, providing it has been demonstrated other sites closer to the village centre are not available.

5.5 Views within the village

There are a number of important views within and on the main approaches into the village that contribute to the character and visual amenity of Ferns. These views, which are shown on the Protected Views Map No. 5, are mostly from the approach roads into the village. In particular, as one approaches the village from the north, there are splendid views of St. Edan’s Cathedral and St. Augustine’s Monastery. There are also a number of views of Ferns Castle which are worthy of protection.

Protected Views Policies:

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

- 1 Safeguard the views shown on Protected Views Map No. 5. There will be a presumption against any development that would adversely affect the views of the village or would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area

5.6 Employment and Economic Activity

The role of Ferns as a service provider and employment location, its strategic location within the county as a whole and its proximity to major towns such as Gorey, Enniscorthy, Wexford and Rosslare Europort, provides a significant opportunity for inward investment and growth for the area. Apart from the central commercial area, employment is concentrated in the industrial zone located to the north-west of the village and at 'Bolgers Hardware' to the east of the village. The promotion of economic activity can be encouraged through the provision of suitable sourced land to facilitate consolidation of existing industry & development of new industry.

Employment and Economic Activity Policy

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

1. Facilitate and encourage the setting up of small and medium sized enterprises in close proximity to the town centre and the expansion of existing businesses.
2. Co-operate with State and Semi-State employment agencies and local organisations in promoting Ferns as a location for employment activities.
3. Ensure that future development does not compromise the viability of existing facilities.
4. To provide sufficient & suitably located zoned land to promote economic activity in the area.

Employment and Economic Activity Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

- EM1** – Promote economic development in the village and facilitate the development of office based and light industry such as Information Technology and Research and Development in co-operation with relevant agencies and organisations.
- EM2** - Facilitate home-based employment activities subject to the protection of the amenities of residential areas.
- EM3** - Ensure that existing residential area and areas of sensitive

environmental character are safeguarded from inappropriate new or expanded employment uses.

EM4 - Encourage the development of industrial uses to the north west of the village adjacent to existing commercial and industrial units.

5.7 Community Facilities

The provision of adequate community facilities is an essential element of sustainable and balanced development. Community facilities include educational, religious, health, recreational and sporting needs and activities. A key objective of the LAP is to ensure that the community needs of residents, both new and existing, can be provided and that expansion of the village will be accompanied by a corresponding expansion of community facilities.

Community Facility Policies

It is a **policy** of the Council to:

1. Facilitate and co-operate with other organisations in the provision of services for the community including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities in parallel with future housing.
2. Facilitate the provision of health and social facilities, nursing homes and sheltered housing.
3. Encourage the development of youth centre facilities.
4. Facilitate the provision of health services in the village at suitable locations.

5.8 Education

The existence of adequate education facilities can lead to the increased attractiveness of an area for location of businesses and families and increased development and prosperity. The Ferns area is served by two primary schools.

Primary Schools

Naomh Maodhog National School is located in the village centre east of Ferns Castle. St Edan's National School is located on the Clone road to the eastern end of the town.

Primary ^{††} Schools	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	Capacity
NS St. Aidan's	271	271	268	265	263	325
NS St. Edan's	36	30	30	28	22	56

Education Facilities Policies and Objectives

As the table above illustrates there is sufficient capacity in both schools for future expansion. Therefore it is anticipated no significant additional zoning is required for these educational facilities. The LAP will provide for the future educational needs of the community through appropriate land use designations that could cater for any additional requirements in respect of the existing and future populations.

The Council is committed to ensuring that future schools will be located on suitable sites within sustainable walking distances from nearby residential areas. The Council will also endeavour to ensure safe walking access and cycling access is provided to these locations.

Education Policies

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

1. Facilitate the development of educational facilities and any additional specialist accommodation to meet the required needs of both current and future populations in co-operation with the Department of Education and Science and local school Management Boards.
2. The Council shall restrict new developments adjacent to existing schools where such development may have the potential to restrict the expansion of that school.

^{††} Figures sourced from local Primary Schools December 2008.

3. Facilitate educational developments that are consistent with the Department's guidelines 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A code of practice for Planning (Department of Education and Science DoEH&LG - July 2008).

Education Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

- E1.** Ensure that if required additional school facilities be provided on appropriate sites within the village. These appropriate sites can be seen on the accompanying Zoning Map (Community & Educational Uses).
- E2.** Ensure new sites maximise opportunities to walk or cycle to school and also ensure that post primary schools (which may serve larger catchment areas) are within walking distance of a bus route and ensure adequate pedestrian access and safe routes to school are available.
- E3.** No substantial residential development should proceed without an assessment of existing schools capacity or the provision of new school facilities in tandem with the development.

5.9. Tourism

Ferns has the potential to be an attractive tourism destination. Ferns Castle is currently open to the public for the summer months and has a coffee shop/information office on site. It is considered that through co-ordination with other relevant bodies, the role of Ferns as a tourism destination could be enhanced.

Tourism Policies

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

1. To enhance the role of Ferns as a tourism destination.
2. Facilitate the development of historical sites walk within the town as highlighted in map no. 7 Historical Sites
3. Facilitate and encourage the opening of the Ferns Castle site to the public on a year round basis.
4. The Council shall seek to consult with Irish Heart Foundation to

examine the feasibility of developing a Sli na Slainte route to coalesce with the historic walking route.

5.10 Childcare Facilities

The DoEH&LG's Guidelines on Childcare Facilities emphasise the importance of incorporating an assessment of the local need for such facilities into the Local Area Plan preparation process. This assessment shall take into account the level of existing facilities. It is recommended that the location of childcare facilities should be easily accessible for parents, and the facility may be combined with other appropriate community uses.

There are currently two childcare facilities in Ferns namely Little Acorns, located on the N11 approach from Enniscorthy and Teach Na Bpastí located in the centre of the village. Teach Na Bpastí is located within walking distance of the village centre, with Little Acorns located further out. Both facilities are near or at full capacity, Teach Na Bpastí has recently got planning permission to extend its premises. Having regard to this the Council will seek to ensure adequate provision of childcare places and facilities in Ferns through the Development Management section and also to support and improve the current facilities in the town.

Childcare Policy

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

Require the provision of appropriate childcare facilities in accordance with the 'Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001' and the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013.

Childcare Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

CH1: Facilitate the development of childcare facilities where demand arises subject to satisfying applicable planning and engineering criteria.

CH2: Ensure the provision of appropriate childcare facilities on site in or within close proximity to new developments with convenient and safe access

for all. Where possible such facilities should be located adjacent to or close by other facilities i.e. employment or neighbourhood centres.

5.11 Transportation & Infrastructure

The provision of good quality infrastructure is essential to the economic, social and cultural development of a village. The Planning Authority will seek to encourage patterns of economic growth, which can achieve maximum transport efficiency and minimal environmental impact.

5.11.1 Access and Movement

The majority of vehicular movement in the village occurs on the N11, which is the main route connecting Wexford and Dublin, and also the main artery from Rosslare Europort to the Capital. The R745 runs perpendicular to the N11 and runs in a westerly direction through the village. This route connects Ferns to the N80 and provides access to the Midlands. Ferns village centre is located at the junction of these main roads. There are also a number of local roads leading into the town serving the rural area in the vicinity.

The problems associated with traffic traversing the Main Street has significantly improved following the construction of a roundabout in the centre of the village. There are also a number of car parks located off the Main Street which also elevated traffic congestion on the Main Street. To the east of the village there are areas of on street parking. This should remain as it not only brings life to the village centre but also acts as a natural traffic calming measure.

There are several new connections proposed for Ferns. These will be in the form of connecting streets. These linkages will be developer led and are displayed on **Map no. 3**.

Movement and Access Policies

It is a **policy** of the Councils to;

1. Promote local access routes and pedestrian movement corridors that encourage a strong network of linkages and enhanced permeability as displayed on **Map 1**.
2. Encourage the development of a safe and efficient movement and accessibility network that will cater for the needs of all users and to encourage priority for town centre access, walking and cycling, public transport provision and accident reduction.
3. All roads within the development boundary should allow for expansion of roads and provision of footpaths and lighting.
4. Encourage and facilitate any future plans to reopen the Ferns railway station.
5. Improve the visual approach road to the town along the R745 and the N11 to the south of the town through the new development of footpaths, lighting and planting.
6. Support the provision of the N11 bypass of Ferns Village.
7. Transport and Traffic Assessment and Road Safety Audit shall be carried out for all significant new road linkages within the Local Area Plan area. These assessments will address land use and access proposals/options as well as any other issues that may arise at planning application stage.

5.11.2 Pedestrian Accessibility

The volume of traffic on both N11 and the R745 frequently acts as a barrier between the northern and southern sides of the village and consequently poses a hazard to pedestrians. There is a need to relieve traffic congestion from the N11 and to create a safe and attractive pedestrian environment for the local community. This will be achieved with the delivery of the Enniscorthy/Clough N11 by pass

There is no formal pedestrian crossing located in the centre of Main Street. There is also no safe crossing point adjacent to Naomh Maodhog National

School. This can result in dangerous pedestrian movement particular at certain times of the day. The footpaths within the village centre are generally acceptable. On the approach roads however many of the footpaths are not in good condition. On the approach to St. Edan’s National School on the Clone Road, they are in particularly poor condition and non existent in places.

As can be seen also from figure 5.1 - 149 of those surveyed walk to work or school, this accounts for 21.8% of the total survey number. This suggests that Ferns has the potential to develop more sustainable travel patterns and the Council will seek to support this through the pedestrian accessibility policies and objectives.

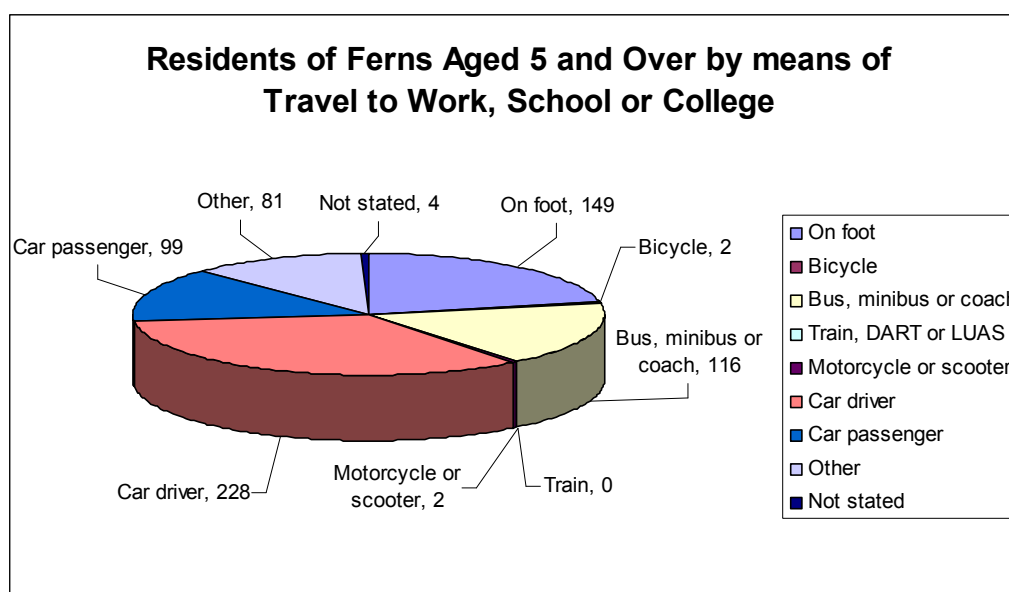


Figure 5.1 – Means of Travel to Work, School or College – Census 2006

Pedestrian Accessibility Policies

It is a **policy** of the Council to;

1. Seek to ensure safe pedestrian movements by providing a connected network of footpaths and pedestrian crossings where required within the village.
2. Seek to improve road safety for all road users by improving road and footpath surfaces, markings and lighting, and relieving traffic congestion in the town.
3. Ensure that all new footpaths have ramps at kerb corners for pram and

wheelchair access and tactile ground indicator tiles for vision impaired pedestrians at crossing points.

4. Ensure that the location of street furniture does not obstruct footpaths.
5. Ensure that pedestrian links from and between existing and new developments to local services are direct, have adequate street lighting and passive surveillance.

Pedestrian Accessibility Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Council to;

PA1 – seek to provide a pedestrian crossing on the R745 adjacent to Naomh Maodhog National School subject to compliance with the necessary technical roads requirements.

5.11.3 Car parking

Car parking is mainly provided on the Main Street adjacent to retail facilities and services. However, Ferns is unusual for a village of its size as there is an abundance of existing off street parking located in backland positions along the Main Street, most notably to the rear of Centra, The St Aidan's Church car park and the car parking within the recently developed four storey development across the road from St. Edan's Cathedral.

Car parking Policies

It is a **policy** of the Council to;

1. To ensure that sufficient car parking is provided to meet the requirements of the village over the next 6 years.
2. Seek to explore the provision of additional village centre car parking.

5.12 Wastewater Treatment Capacity & Water Supply

Ferns is currently served by two wastewater treatment plants; one at the North end of the village and the other at the Southern end of the village. Ferns Upper is served by the northern plant (a septic tank) which has a capacity of 400 PE. Ferns Lower is served by the southern plant which has a capacity of 2250 PE.

Consulting Engineers have been engaged and a preliminary report prepared and submitted to DOEHLG for approval to upgrade the sewerage infrastructure with the village. This scheme is currently awaiting approval from the DOEHLG. It is proposed to replace the old northern plant with a pump station and pump the sewage to the southern plant which will be designed for 4500 PE initially with an ultimate capacity of 6000 PE.

Wastewater Treatment & Water Supply Policies

It is a **policy** of the Councils to;

1. Encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly drainage systems such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) into larger developments.
2. Protect existing groundwater aquifers and surface waters from pollution;
3. Protect the water quality of the River Bann and ensure that the water quality of the river is maintained at a satisfactory level in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Directive Number 78/659 that lists the river as a salmonoid river.

Wastewater Treatment & Water Supply Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Councils to;

WW1 – Upgrade the existing wastewater treatment plant in two stages, initially to cater for a PE of 4500 and ultimately 6000 PE to ensure the development needs of Ferns will be met in the future.

5.13 Flooding / Climatic Factors



Two major events of flooding have occurred in close proximity to the village in the years 1986 and 2000. The two main areas in Ferns which are identified by the Office of Public Works as 'Areas liable to flooding' can be seen on figure 5.2. The first of these is on the River Bann to the east of the bridge and the second is at Doran's Bridge to the south east of the village also on the River Bann.

Due to Ferns location on a hilltop, the lands within the Local Area Plan boundary are not subject to flood risk from the River Bann located to the east of the village. There would however be storm water risk. Regard has been had to the new draft government guidelines 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management' September 2008. In general development will not be encouraged in areas historically prone to flooding.

Flooding/Climatic Factors Policies

It is a **policy** of the Councils to;

1. Ensure that development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. Developers and the planning authority will have to have regard to the new government guidelines for planning authorities 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management', September 2008 in regard to any new development.

5.14 Village Centre

Ferns village centre is a vibrant location, with many commercial uses and facilities' which serve the local population. The Council will seek to protect and enhance this quality and ensure that proposals for development within the

village centre area respect the general height, scale, building line, plot width and village streetscape.

Village Centre Policies

It is a **policy** of the Council to;

1. Maintain the mixed use character of the village centre.
2. Encourage the integration of residential areas with the village centre.
3. Provide for anticipated car parking and commercial delivery demands within the village centre.
4. Encourage amenity and environmental improvements in the village centre, so as to reinforce and enhance the special character of Ferns.
5. To ensure that proposals for development within the village centre area respect the general height, scale, building line, plot width, architectural quality and streetscape.
6. To encourage refurbishment and in-fill development such that the existing character of the streetscape is maintained, except where appropriate design can be demonstrated on a site where a setback will have a positive contribution to the overall character of the village.
7. Strictly control advertising and encourage the removal of signage which is visually obtrusive or out of scale with the character of the village.

Village Centre Objectives

It is an **objective** of the Council to:

- TC1** - Encourage residential use of upper floor space within the village centre.
- TC2** - Encourage uses that support pedestrian activity along the Main Street, and adjoining side streets.
- TC3** - Discourage office use at ground floor level on the Main Street.
- TC4** - Encourage future developments to provide ducts to accommodate the relocation of overhead wires underground and to encourage the ESB to put wires underground, particularly within the village centre.

5.15 Development Management Standards & Guidelines

The Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013 contains development management standards and recommendations for development within the Council's administrative area. These development management standards will be applicable throughout this LAP area. These standards are intended to give an indication of the criteria the Council will take into account when assessing applications for new developments. These standards and guidelines are complimentary to the overall development strategy and the individual objectives of the relevant development plans.

PART 3



Section 6 - Conservation Proposals

Chapter 6 Conservation Proposals

6.1 Introduction

Historic character and built heritage are an expression of our culture and our identity and contribute significantly to the quality of our lives. It is important to ensure that Ferns retains its built heritage and that the architectural and historic character of the village and the quality of its villagescape is preserved.

6.2 Historical Development

The historic built fabric of Ferns can be traced back to the 6th Century to the site of a monastery founded by the King of Leinster. The village may be among a handful in Ireland that owe its origin and certainly its location to a monastic foundation. Early in the 9th Century, the growing importance of the village, which had gradually risen around the monastery, was evident with successive invasions by the Danes, in 834, 836, and 838; afterwards in 917 and 928. In 930 they plundered the Abbey and burnt the village.

In the 12th Century Dermot Mac Murrough Kavanagh established St Mary's Abbey, a portion of which still survives. The present Church of Ireland Church incorporates sections of the 13th Century Cathedral thought to have been built by the first Anglo-Norman Bishop of the Diocese. There are some 8th/9th Century High crosses in the vicinity of the Abbey ruin. The 12th Century fragment of a High Cross reputedly marks the resting place of Dermot Mac Murrough. St. Mogue's Well and St. Peter's Church are located on the northern side of the N11 Dublin-Wexford road. Ferns Castle, an Anglo-Norman fortress, was built in the 13th Century by William Earl Marshall and is found at the south end of the village. The Castle historically formed the centre of the village where markets were held. This gave rise to the development of the village's commercial centre.

Ferns structure takes its urban form from the main spine of these historical buildings. It is focused on a linear Main Street with a number of side streets radiating at right angles from this central spine.

The village's development pattern has been constrained due to the rich heritage of area particularly at St. Peter's Church and the Cathedral and its Graveyard. Consequently, the growth of the village has occurred westwards around the Castle. This has resulted in two commercial sectors, one to the west of the village adjacent to the Castle at Londis and the other to the east of the village at the junction of the N11 and the R745 at the old bank building and the Centra food store.

6.3 Archaeological Heritage

The Planning Authority recognises the value of these archaeological sites and monuments as areas of archaeological importance. Where a development site coincides with an area of archaeological potential, the planning application will be referred to the following prescribed bodies; the Department of Arts, Heritage, Culture, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the Department of Environment , Heritage and Local Government as well as the other relevant bodies. Their views, together with the views and concerns of other interested bodies, will be taken into account when assessing the planning application.

In cases where it is deemed that archaeology would be affected by a development, the Planning Authority will require archaeological investigations to be carried out either prior to a decision on a planning application or prior to commencement of development on site. Developers are also advised of additional requirements under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

Within the Ferns Local Area Plan boundary there are thirty four sites listed as National Monuments protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Following consultation with the Archaeology Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the following list of the most important National Monuments within the village boundary have been identified.

SMR (Sites & Monument Record) No.	Classification	Townsland	Village Boundary
WX015-003001	Castle - Anglo-Norman Masonry Castle	Castleland	Within
WX015-003002	Church	Ferns Upper	Within
WX015-003003	Cathedral	Ferns Upper	Within
WX015-003004	Religious House – Augustinian Canons	Ferns Demesne	Within
WX015-003005	St. Peter's Church	Ferns Upper	Within
WX00509	Holy Well	Ferns Upper	Within

The Council will ensure that features or items of archaeological interest and recognised areas of archaeological potential are suitably safeguarded from inappropriate development that would adversely affect and/or detract from the interpretation and setting of these sites.

Archaeological Heritage Policies

It is a **policy** of the Council to;

1. Have regard to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) when assessing with planning applications for development or threats to recorded items.
2. Have regard to the Zone of Archaeological Potential within the village when dealing with planning applications for development or threats to recorded items. (See Map No. 2)
3. Control development in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument to ensure that it does not detract from the monument's setting or seriously injure its cultural or educational value. In all such cases the Council shall consult with the National Monuments Section of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG).
4. Promote public awareness of the rich archaeological heritage in the

area.

5. Facilitate the development of a heritage trail which would include the main historical sites and monuments within the village (See Map No. 7)

6.4 Natural Heritage

There are no designated nature conservation sites, that is, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), or Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), within the Ferns Local Area Plan boundary. However, the Slaney River Valley SAC is located 240 m east of the Plan boundary. Taking into account its proximity, the protection of this site is of primary importance.

Natural Heritage Objectives

It is a policy of the Council to;

NH1 – protect the character, appearance and quality of the habitats and semi-natural features in Ferns Local Area Plan and the Special Area of Conservation to the east of the Plan area from developments within the Plan area.

NH2 - To protect undeveloped sections of rivers and streams by maintaining an adequate buffer zone (minimum 5-10m back from the riverbank) along all watercourses, with no infilling or removal of vegetation within these buffer zones. These buffer zones should be overlooked by future development in order to provide an open space/amenity area.

NH3 – To encourage potential developers to consult with relevant agencies as early as possible to ensure that natural heritage concerns are considered early in the planning process thus appropriately informing the final planning application.

6.5 Architectural Heritage

Ferns is distinguished by its built heritage and, in particular, the number of National Monuments (Ferns Castle, St Edan's Cathedral etc) within the plan boundary.

Within the village boundary there are several considerable monuments, including the 13th century Ferns Castle and St. Edan's Castle, St. Peter's Church and the holy well located on the edge of the village on the N11 approach from Gorey.

The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) contained in Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013 is legislated for under Section 51 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007. The structures are protected for the contribution they make to our architectural heritage for reasons relating to special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

In the Wexford County Development Plan 2007 - 2013 there are 9 protected structures in the Ferns area. These are:

1. Ballymore School House, (RPS No. WCC0509);
2. Doran's Bridge (RPS No. WCC0604);
3. Broadford (RPS No. WCC0621);
4. The Deanery (RPS No. WCC0679);
5. Woodview (RPS No. WCC0726);
6. Augustinian Monastery (RPS No. WCC0778);
7. Church of Ireland (RPS No. WCC0866);
8. The Holy Well (RPS No. WCC0867) and
9. The Old Mill (RPS No. WCC0868)

Nos. 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are within or in close proximity to the Ferns Local Area Plan boundary and are demonstrated on **Map 2 – Archaeology and Protected Structures** in the appendix of this Plan.

The designation of a property as a protected structure ensures statutory protection for the building, its interior as well as the curtilage of the protected structure and any other structures contained within that curtilage. Whereas a certain amount of compromise may be required in adapting a protected structure for modern living requirements, it is important that its special interest

is not damaged. The first step is to gain a thorough understanding of the building's historical development and its present condition. This research should be carried out in advance of a planning application for works to a protected structure. It should include not only the structure and its interior but also its curtilage and attendant grounds where relevant and any structures or features within them which contribute to the special interest of the protected structure.

Protected Structures Policies

It is the **policy** of the Council to:

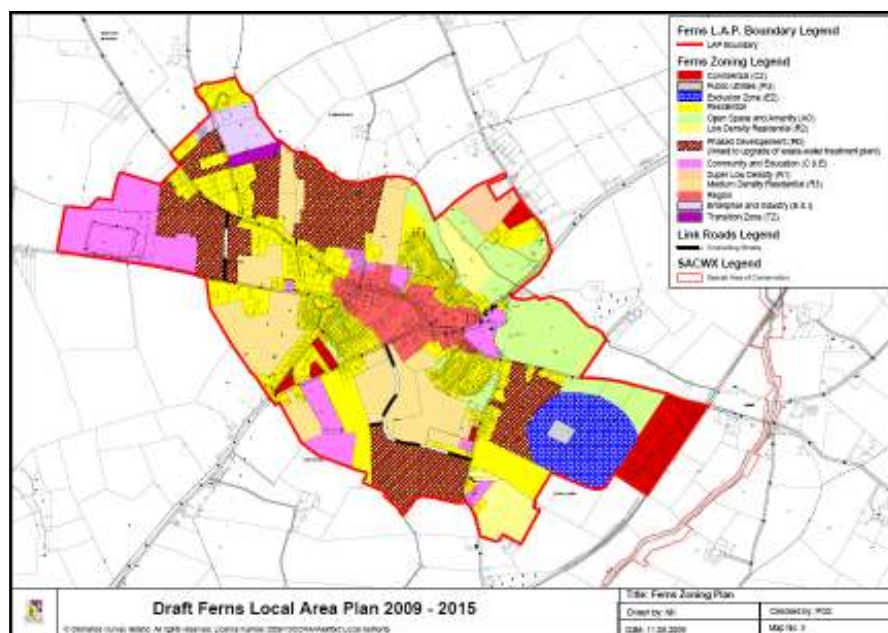
Protect the architectural heritage of Ferns by:

1. Promoting the maintenance, continued use or and appropriate reuse of its Protected Structures.
2. Encouraging development which would enhance the setting, integrity or character of any Protected Structure.
3. Promoting the retention, adaptation and reuse as appropriate, of other structures of architectural heritage merit within the village that make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes and assist in its sustainable development.

Section 57(1) of the 2000 Planning and Development Act requires that planning permission is required for the carrying out of works to a protected structure if those works materially affect the character of the structure.

Section 57(2) of the Act allows for the owner or an occupier of a protected structure to make a written request to the Planning Authority to issue a declaration to the type of works which it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure. Where it deemed by the Planning Authority that the works will materially alter the structure of the structure, the said works will require planning permission.

APPENDICES



Map 1 - Ferns Aerial Photograph

Map 2 - Archaeological Sites & Protected Structure in the Ferns Area

Map 3 - Ferns Local Area Plan 2008-2014 Landuse Zoning Map

Map 4 - Potential Historic Walk of Ferns

Map 5 - Protected Views with Ferns Local Area Plan

Map 6 - N11 Clough to Enniscorthy Emerging Preferred Route Corridor

Map 7 - Draft 1 Agglomeration Boundary Map