



2015

# COURTOWN & RIVERCHAPEL

## Courtown & Riverchapel Local Area Plan 2015



Wexford County Council  
Planning & Development

## Courtown and Riverchapel Local Area Plan

The Courtown and Riverchapel Local Area Plan was made by Wexford County Council on the 2nd February 2015 and came into effect on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015.

This Plan should be read in conjunction with the Wexford County Development Plan, in particular the Section on Development Management Standards which will be applied to any proposal within the Local Area Plan boundary.

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## Acronyms

<b>AA</b>	Appropriate Assessment
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>DEHLG</b>	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
<b>DECLG</b>	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
<b>DES</b>	Department of Education and Skills
<b>DTTS</b>	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Agency
<b>GP</b>	General Practitioner
<b>LAP</b>	Local Area Plan
<b>NCPF</b>	National Cycle Policy Framework
<b>NSS</b>	National Spatial Strategy
<b>OPW</b>	Office of Public Works
<b>pNHA</b>	proposed Natural Heritage Area
<b>RPGs</b>	Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022
<b>SAC</b>	Special Area of Conservation
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>SFRA</b>	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Area
<b>SuDS</b>	Sustainable Drainage Systems
<b>WTP</b>	Water Treatment Plant
<b>WWTP</b>	Waste Water Treatment Plant

### Section 1 Introduction

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#### 1.1 Introduction

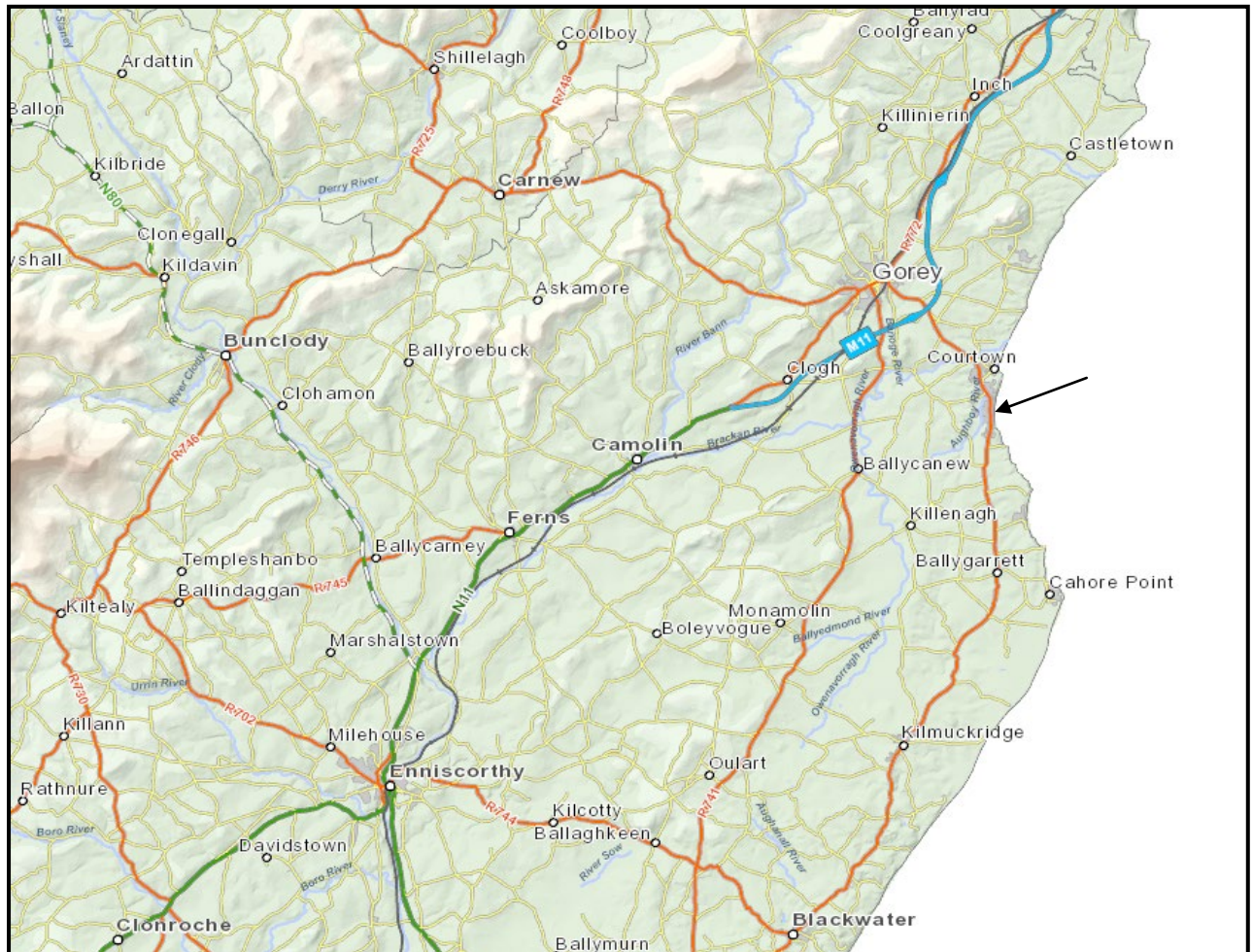
This plan has been formulated following detailed consideration of the information obtained during the public consultations that have been carried out, and it aims to address the issues that matter the most to the local community and stakeholders of Courtown and Riverchapel. The writing of this plan has first and foremost focused on the local community, to help to meet the needs of the community and to promote local economic development and employment growth at all levels to achieve the maximum benefits for Courtown and Riverchapel in a sustainable manner. The Council, for the purposes of the plan, defines proper planning and sustainable development as ensuring that a balance is achieved between economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations in the interests of the common good of present and future generations.



## 1.2 Location and Background

Courtown and Riverchapel are located in the northeast of County Wexford approximately 6km east of Gorey, the main town in the north of Wexford, 16 km south of Arklow, County Wicklow and 35 km northeast of Wexford Town. The Wexford to Gorey Coast Road, the R742 passes through the centre of the plan area.

### Map 1 Location of Courtown and Riverchapel



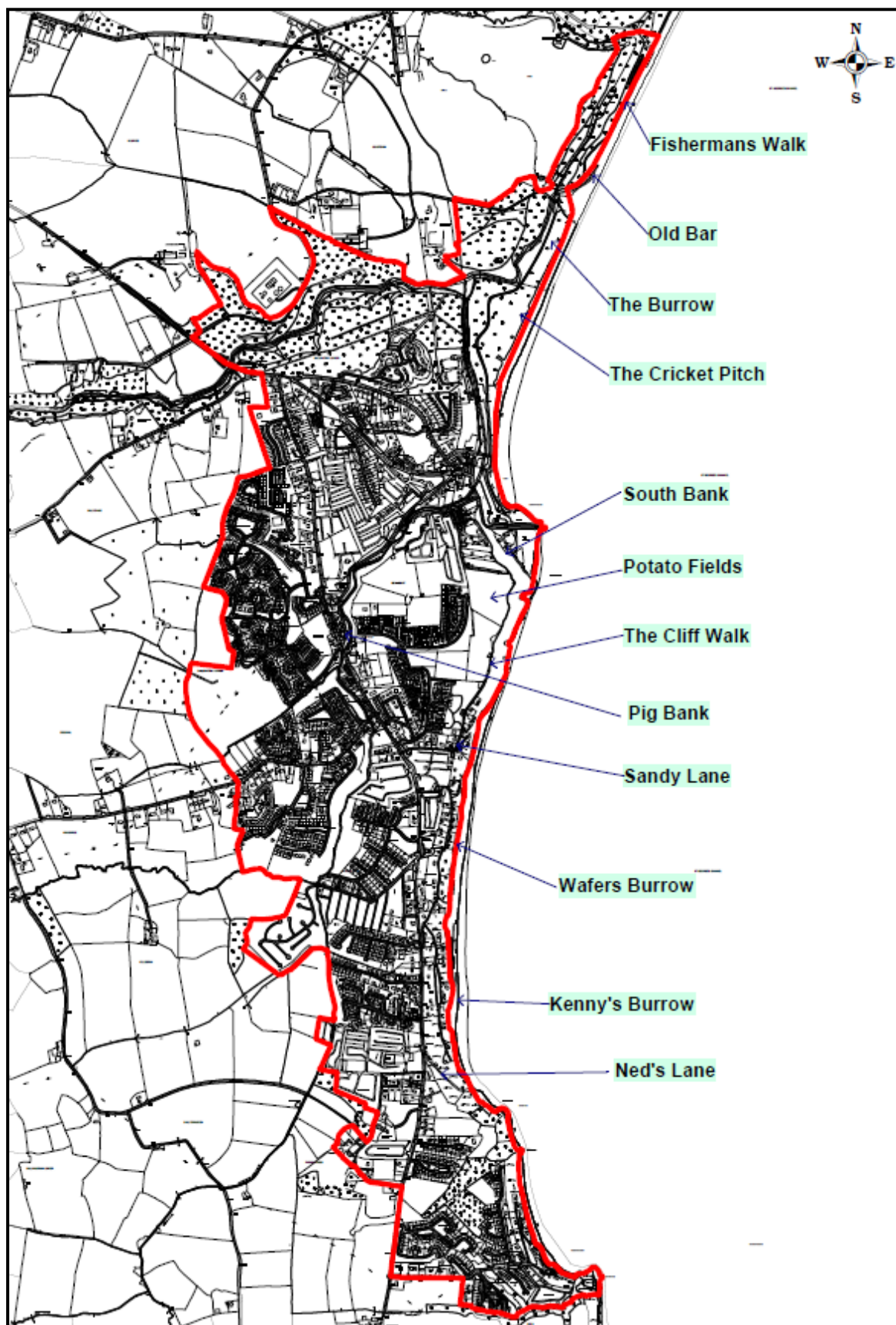
The plan area is bound to the east by coastline and the Irish Sea. To the north of the plan area is woodland, locally known as The Old Bar and Fishermans Walk, which leads to Kiltannel and Ballymoney. Within this plan local names if known have been used and are listed on Map 2. The woodlands form part of a public walkway which leads from the harbour in Courtown to Dog's Walk, Ballymoney. To the west and south of the plan area is largely agricultural land with dispersed one-off rural housing.



The area is a popular tourist destination, and the current land uses reflect this. The area offers visitors the use of its rich natural amenities in the form of extensive woodlands, blue flag bathing beaches and coastal walkways, while family activity, recreational centres and entertainment facilities offer alternative recreation opportunities. Courtown and Riverchapel have the potential to further maximise their tourist potential which in turn will help promote the entire county as a tourist destination.



Map 2 Local Area Names



### 1.3 Legal Status

This Local Area Plan (hereon referred to as the LAP) has been prepared in accordance with Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended). The LAP will remain in place for a period of six years from the date on which it is made, or for an extended period as provided under Section 19(1)(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

A local area plan must conform to its parent county development plan which, in this case, is the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. The County Development Plan contains a range of strategies and objectives in relation to economic development, transport, housing, infrastructure, community, tourism, recreation and heritage. The LAP is consistent with this plan. It is not proposed to include a repetition of the objectives or strategies as set out in the county plan. Where objectives or standards for a particular development are not included in the LAP, the provisions of the county plan shall apply. The plan will however include development objectives that are specific to the plan area and which are compatible with those of the county plan.

A Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Determination, Appropriate Assessment Screening report (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), are included as appendices to the plan.

### 1.4 Purpose of the Local Area Plan

It is an objective of the parent plan, the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019, to prepare a Local Area Plan for Courtown and Riverchapel. The purpose of the LAP is to set out a community led strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Courtown and Riverchapel area. This strategy will facilitate the planned, integrated and sustainable development of the area so that growth and development can take place in a co-ordinated manner, while protecting and preserving the area's character, heritage and amenity and making a positive



contribution to people's quality of life. It will essentially guide the area's physical, environmental and social development over the next six years. The LAP has been prepared taking into account the Local Area Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in June 2013.

### **1.5 Plan Area**

The last local area plan for the area was adopted in 2002 and expired in 2008. The boundary of this LAP area has changed from the previous boundary of the 2002 Courtown and Riverchapel Local Area Plan. The new boundary has been formulated in line with best practice and having regard to the 'Guidance Note on Core Strategies issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) in November 2010, which requires the zoning objectives for 'excess' residential zoned lands to be addressed through phasing, alternative zoning objectives and/or deletion of zoning objectives. Regard has also been given to the existing urban structure of Courtown and Riverchapel and the population growth targets for the area.

### **1.6 Courtown and Riverchapel in the context of the County**

#### **Settlement Strategy**

In line with the Local Area Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG, 2013) a LAP must contain a statement that clearly places the area in question within the settlement structure as established by the relevant development plan. The Core Strategy in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 sets out the settlement strategy and settlement hierarchy for the county and allocates population targets to the different levels in the hierarchy.

The settlement hierarchy for County Wexford is:

Hub  
Larger Towns  
**District Towns**  
Strong Villages  
Smaller Villages and Rural Settlements  
Open Countryside

Courtown and Riverchapel are designated as a District Town. The settlements included at District Town level were selected based on either their inclusion in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region as District Towns or their size and potential to contribute to the balanced spatial development of the county. These towns perform important retail, residential, service and amenity functions, especially for their rural hinterlands. The settlement of Courtown and Riverchapel was chosen due to its size and location. However, having regard to the rapid level of growth that has taken place there, the development approach is to consolidate growth within the settlement and to support the development of physical and social infrastructure.

The Core Strategy set out an estimated population for Courtown and Riverchapel in 2011 of 4,570 persons and allocated an additional population of 355 persons over the period 2011-2019. However, this 2011 population figure was an estimate prepared by demographic consultants in advance of the Census of Population 2011 figures for Courtown and Riverchapel being published. The estimate has proven to be significantly higher than the actual population of the settlement<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, it has been necessary to adjust the population allocation for Courtown to reflect the smaller actual population of the settlement. However, the same limited growth rate has been applied.

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<sup>1</sup> It would appear that the estimates underestimated the number of holiday homes or vacant residential properties in the settlement.



The population of the plan area in 2011, adjusted from the Census of Population in 2011 (see Section 2.1) is calculated as 2,977 persons. When the growth rate is applied this allows for a population allocation for the plan area of 227 persons over the period of the plan. This population allocation is used to determine the requirement for housing in the plan area. This in turn will inform the amount of residential zoned land which is required to accommodate the future population. Future housing land requirements are discussed further in Section 11.3 of the LAP.

### **1.7 Relationship with Other Plans**

#### **1.7.1 National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020**

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. This will be achieved through matching where people live and where they work. The focus is on people, places and on building communities. The key to the successful implementation of the NSS in the South-East Region is the formation of a strategic growth triangle with Waterford City as the Gateway, supported by Wexford and Kilkenny as hubs. Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey are recognised as important urban centres providing a range of services and opportunities for employment, whilst smaller towns and villages throughout the county will act as a focus for social and economic activity as well as housing.

#### **1.7.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022**

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of the South-East Region up to 2022. The South-East Region is divided into six smaller sub-areas. Courtown and Riverchapel are located within Sub- Area B (North County Wexford). The principal issues associated in this area are:

- Strong population growth - influence of Greater Dublin Area is present
- Strong physical links to Dublin and the Mid-East Regions
- Demographic implications for the rest of the county and Wexford Town

- Tourism development to be facilitated
- Urban sprawl to be controlled and monitored
- Sensitive coastal landscapes

The RPGs recognise that smaller towns and villages play important roles as service, retail and residential centres. These towns and villages need to be developed in a way that respects their existing character while at the same time strengthening their role as local service centres.

The RPGs state that some scenic areas of the region, particularly in coastal locations, are experiencing development pressures arising from the growing trend of building second homes and developing holiday home accommodation. Well-located and appropriately scaled second-home and holiday home development can act as a revitalising force in economic terms but an emphasis is needed on clustering such tourism driven development in or adjoining small towns and villages.

### **1.7.3 National Planning Guidelines**

Planning authorities are required by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to have regard to Ministerial Guidelines issued by DEHLG. This includes guidelines on Design for Urban Roads and Streets, Architectural Conservation, Urban Design, Childcare Facilities, Apartments, Development Management, Development Plans, Landscape, Schools, Quarries, Retail Planning, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainable Rural Housing, Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Telecommunication Structures, Flood Risk Management, Wind Energy Development, Appropriate Assessment and National Roads and Spatial Planning. The Council has had regard to relevant guidelines in the preparation of the LAP and will have regard to any future Circulars, updated guidelines or new guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 when assessing planning applications within the plan area, or in any future amendment of the Local Area Plan.

### **1.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC), otherwise referred to as the SEA Directive, requires all member states to systematically evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme prior to its adoption. The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended) require SEA to be carried out in respect of an LAP where the population of the area is 5,000 persons or more, where the area covered by the plan is more than 50 square kilometres or where the plan is for a town and its environs. In all other cases, SEA must be carried out where it is considered that the plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This is determined through a screening process.

In accordance with the Regulations a screening report was prepared for this plan (Appendix No. 4) and consultation with the designated Environmental Authorities was carried out. The screening process determined that the implementation of the Courtown and Riverchapel LAP would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore an SEA Environmental Report was not required to be carried out in tandem with the LAP.

### **1.9 Appropriate Assessment**

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) place an obligation on competent authorities to consider the effects of every plan and project on the Natura 2000 network of sites through a process known as Appropriate Assessment. This Plan was screened for appropriate assessment (Appendix No. 5) to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the Plan, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on the Natura 2000 network. It was determined that the Plan, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

The Council will ensure, during the period of the Plan, that all plans and projects in the plan area which are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to

appropriate assessment of their implications for the site in view of the sites conservation objectives.

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

**AA01** The Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.



### **1.10 Implementation of the Local Area Plan**

The Council acknowledges that one of the main factors in the successful implementation of the LAP is securing the necessary funding and partnerships to deliver key objectives in the plan such as those relating to infrastructure and services. To this end, and in accordance with the best practice advice contained in the Local Area Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013), the Council has prepared an 'Implementation and Infrastructure Delivery Schedule' for the delivery of the key objectives relating to infrastructure and services. This is contained in Appendix 2. The Council will work closely with all relevant departments, agencies and stakeholders in securing the delivery of both the objectives relating to infrastructure and services and also other key objectives relating to the delivery of 'soft infrastructure' such as community facilities.

The Council will carry out periodic reviews of the success or otherwise of the implementation of the LAP's objectives. This monitoring will include reviewing the progress achieved in securing the objectives supported by periodic surveys of housing land availability, retail health checks and audits of open space and community facilities.

### Section 2 Population and Socio-Economic Profile

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#### 2.1 Population

According to the Census Statistics Office (CSO) the population of the census town of Courtown in 2006 was 1,421 persons. However, the census town boundary excluded Middletown, Parknacross and Glen Richards, all of which are within the LAP area.

The CSO boundary for Courtown in Census 2011 included Middletown and Parknacross and the population was 2,857 persons. However, this figure still excludes Glen Richards.

In 2011, the CSO produced the 'Small Area Population Statistics' for Glen Richards for the first time, and this has allowed the Council to establish the 2011 population figure for Glen Richards which was 187 persons.

The population of the Courtown census town area and Glen Richards would be 3,044 persons. However, this figure has been adjusted to exclude 25 residential properties which lie outside of the LAP boundary area. This equates to 67 persons<sup>2</sup>. The population figure for the LAP area is therefore 2,977. The effect of this deduction on the figures for the profiles of the area (age, employment, travel etc as set out in Charts 1, 2, 3 and 4 below) is minimal.

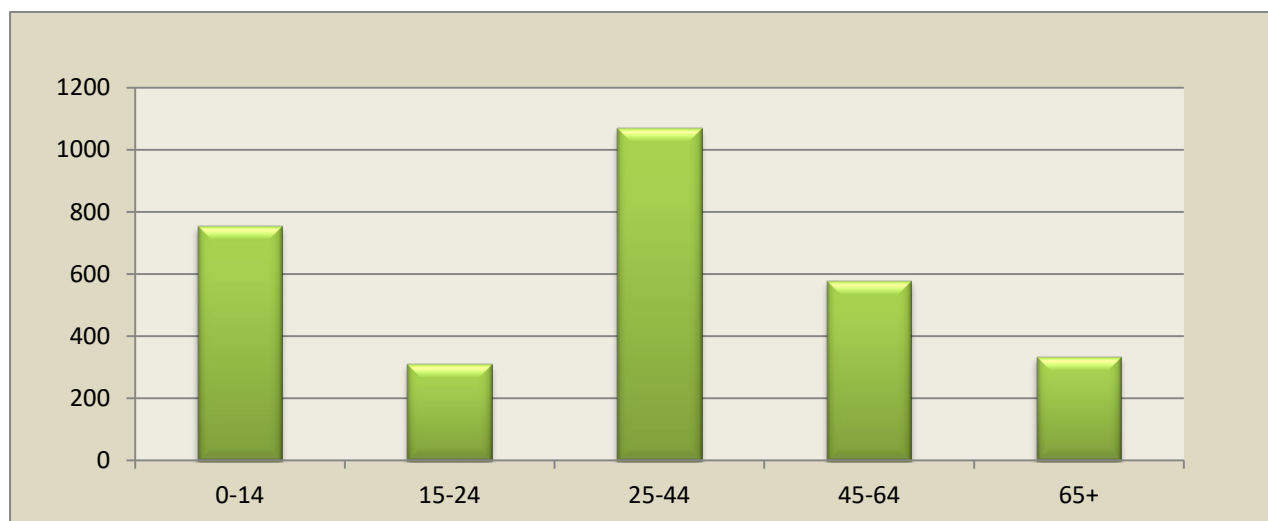
#### 2.2 Age Profile

The age profile for Courtown and Riverchapel shows the largest proportion of the population is between the ages of 25 and 44. The second highest age profile is 0-14 which suggests that there are high numbers of families living in the area. The lowest age profile is that between 15 and 24 and second lowest 65 and over.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Census 2011 the average household size was 2.7 persons. Therefore, the population equivalent of the excluded 25 residential properties equates to 67.5 persons (25 x 2.7).

**Chart 1: Age Profile of the Courtown and Riverchapel LAP Area**

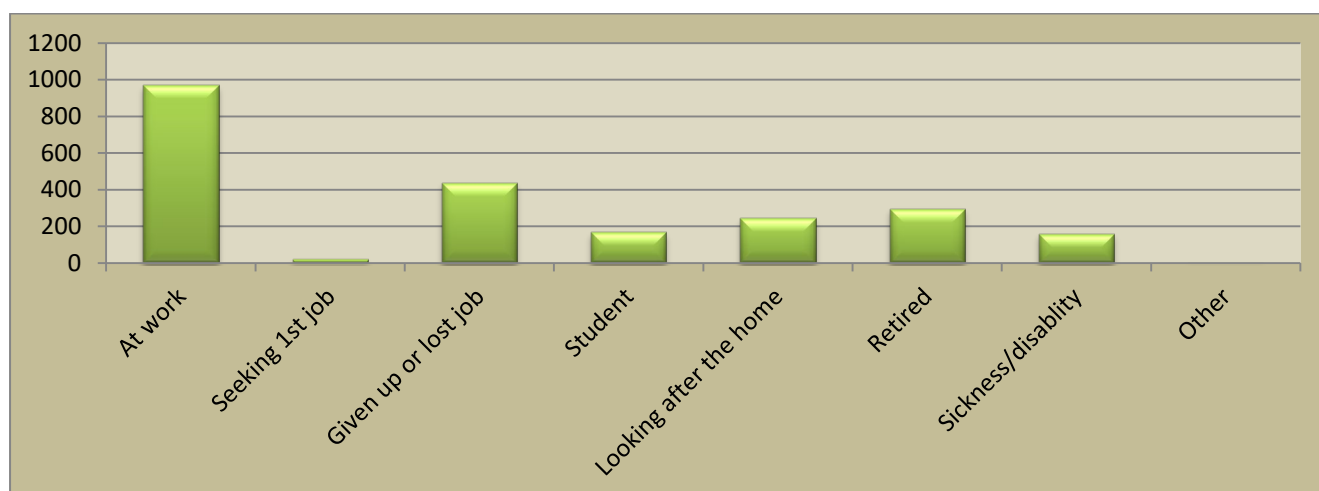


Source: CSO 2011

### 2.3 Employment

The employment profile of the LAP area shows that 80% of the working population are either in work or not looking for work (42% working, 13% retired, 11% looking after the home, 7% studying and 7% either too sick to work or disabled). 20% of the population would be available for work (19% left or lost job and 1% are looking for their first job) if they could gain employment.

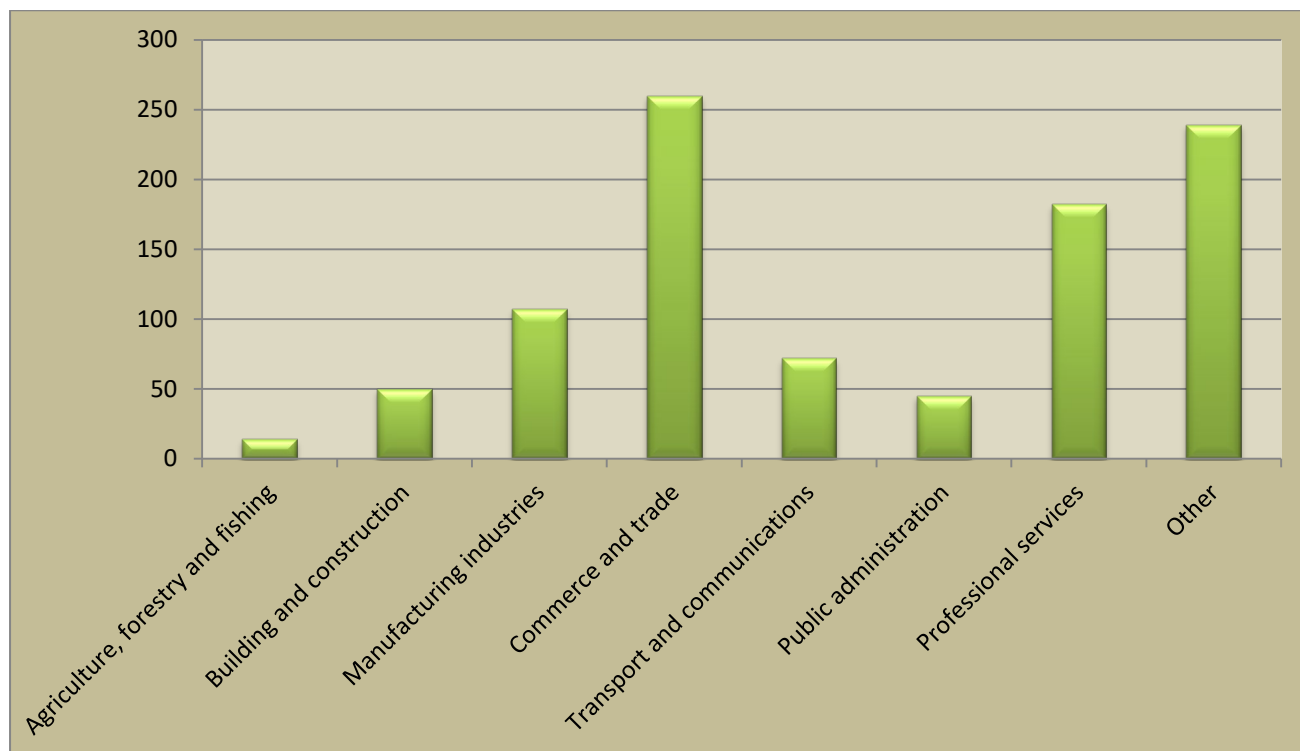
**Chart 2: Principal Economic Status of the Courtown and Riverchapel LAP Area**



Source: CSO 2011

According to Census 2011, a high proportion of the population are employed in the commerce and trade sector, equating for 260 people or 27% of the workforce. There are also high numbers of people employed in professional services (19%), manufacturing (11%) and transport (7%) sectors. Very few people in the LAP area are employed in agriculture with only 1% of the population working in this sector.

**Chart 3: Courtown and Riverchapel LAP Area - Occupational Status**



Source: CSO 2011

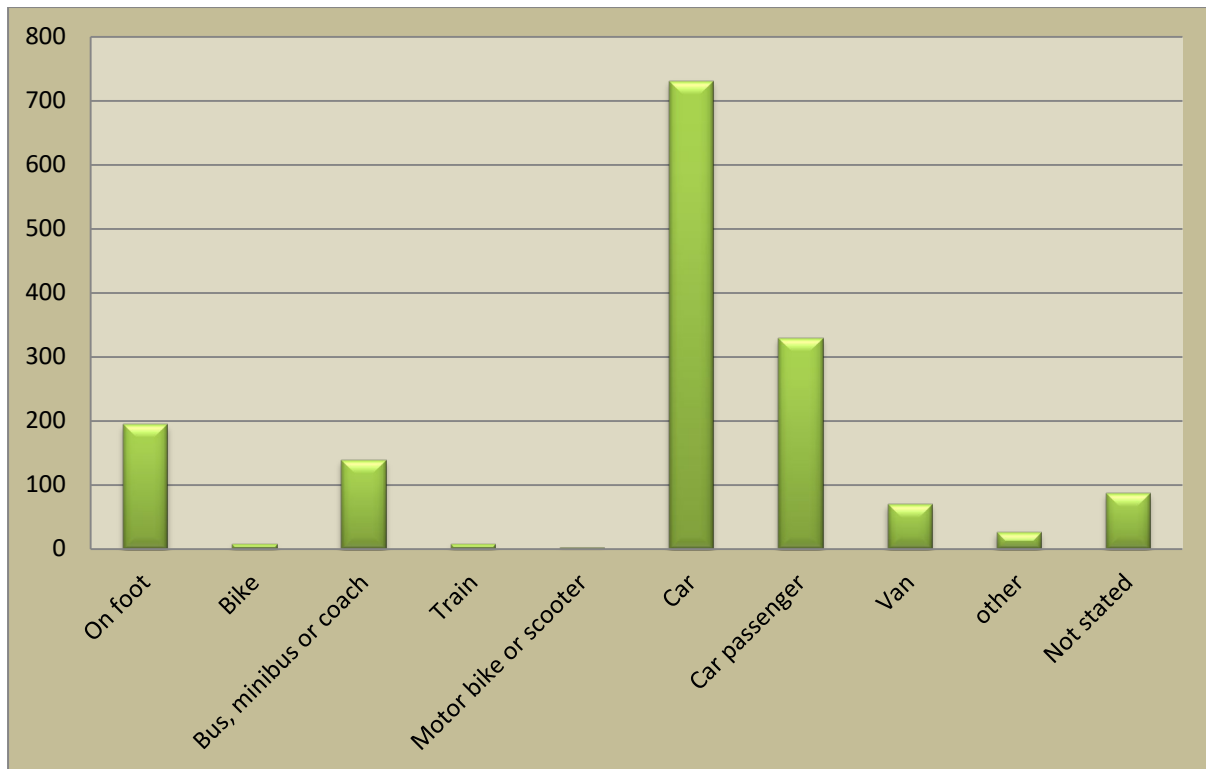
### 2.4 Travel Patterns

Based on Census 2011, the main mode of transport is the private car with 67% of the population using a car (either as a driver (46%) or as passenger (21%) as their main mode of transport. The next most popular mode of transport is by foot with 12%, then bus, minibus or coach with 9% of the population choosing this type of travel.



The most common stated commuter time is less than 15 minutes (34%) which suggests that a significant proportion of the population of Courtown and Riverchapel commute to within the LAP area or to Gorey Town for work, school or college on a daily basis.

**Chart 4 Travel Patterns**



**Source: CSO 2011**

### Section 3 Physical Functions and Character of the Area

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#### 3.1 Settlement Function

Courtown and Riverchapel consist of established residential settlements and is a traditional destination resort. Tourism plays a significant role in attracting visitors, including day trippers and holiday makers to the area. This in turn helps with businesses in the area as well as the county as a whole. The area also has an extensive residential stock consisting of permanent dwellings, serving the full time community, along with holiday home developments and caravan parks serving a temporary community during peak holiday periods.

The area acts as a centre for leisure, recreation, retail and employment during the summer months. It is important for the vitality of the area that these services are retained, improved and expanded upon where necessary.

#### 3.2 Physical Setting and Appreciation

Courtown and Riverchapel have developed as an organic, dispersed settlement. The two villages were once independent of one another however, with the significant growth of the area, as a whole the two villages have merged into one.

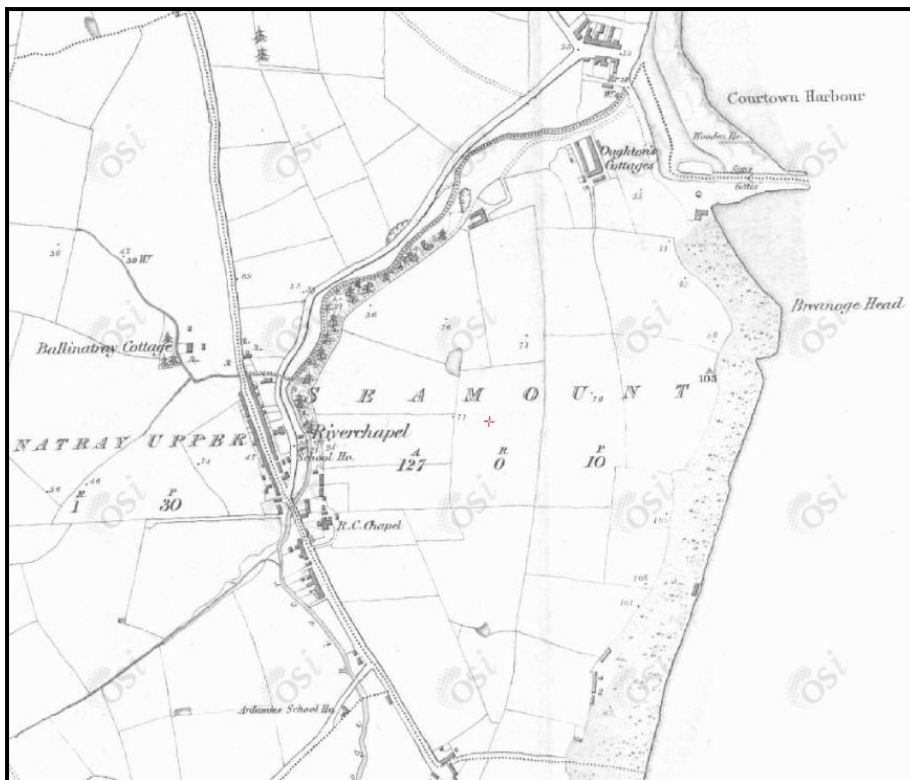
Courtown and Riverchapel form part of County Wexford's coastline. These areas experience greater needs and pressures for tourism and residential developments. Any development along the coastline has the potential to have visual impacts on this coastal landscape.

The coast runs along the entire plan length to the east. Much of the eastern boundary consists of natural amenity and recreational coastal lands. The hub of tourist facilities is located within the centre of Courtown. The residential areas are predominantly to the south and west of the plan area, largely in Riverchapel.

### 3.3 Historical Development

Little is documented for the area of Courtown and Riverchapel until early modern history. There is some evidence documented that pre-Christian settlers lived in the area. St Aidan, the first bishop of Ferns, is said to have landed at Ardamine from St David's, Pembrokeshire, South Wales in 598 A.D and established a church at Kiltannel. It is supposed that there was a small established settlement in Riverchapel at that time and that in Courtown a small fishing settlement had developed around the parish of Kiltannel. Modern records of Courtown and Riverchapel date from 1758 when James Stopford was made Baron Courtown and later in 1762 Earl of Courtown. The Stopfords were the main landowners for the area well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Map 3 Courtown and Riverchapel around the year 1840**



Source: [www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie)

The Harbour was constructed in 1825. Before the harbour was built, local fishermen launched and landed their boats at The Old Bar (Map 2), north of the harbour. The harbour proved extremely useful to local boat owners and local fishermen. By the

mid 1800s the area had become a thriving fishing village as well as a tourist destination and was very popular with people from Dublin and the Midlands. The arrival of the Dublin to Gorey railway in 1863 further boosted the town's role as a significant tourist destination.



Up until the mid 1990s, Riverchapel remained a small village consisting of a dispersed housing pattern dotted with static mobile home holiday parks while Courtown existed as a thriving tourist centre. The significant increase in building activity experienced from the late 1990s has seen Riverchapel dramatically increase in size. The introduction of the Renewal Scheme for Traditional Seaside Resorts in 1995 also contributed to the attractiveness of the area for residential development, helping to realise people's dreams of a place by the sea. This three year scheme granted tax incentives for tourist related trades and tourist related accommodation. It resulted in developments such as Beachside, Seamount Village, Glen Beg Point and a number of new developments around Pollshone and Parknacross. The scheme concentrated on the development of houses and commercial development and unfortunately did not include any incentive to facilitate the provision of community facilities or services.

### **3.4 Settlement Character Assessment**

Courtown and Riverchapel have grown from two individual villages into one larger amalgamated village. The main visitor attractions are clustered around the harbour in Courtown. These include a leisure centre and swimming pool, a Gravity Extreme Adventure Centre, amusement arcades, hotels, bars, food outlets, post office and retail units. There is direct access to a blue flag beach and extensive woodlands to the north and north-west.



While commercial and tourist related developments are clustered around the harbour, the main social facilities, the school and community centre are located in Riverchapel. Both centres are dependent on one another for services and facilities.

The development pattern to the west and south of the plan area is predominantly residential. It consists of a mix of suburban style housing estates, holiday villages with apartments, caravan parks and chalets. The R742 regional road passes through the centre of Riverchapel. The coast side of the R742 is characterised by chalet and caravan developments which has developed overtime, primarily for use as holiday homes.

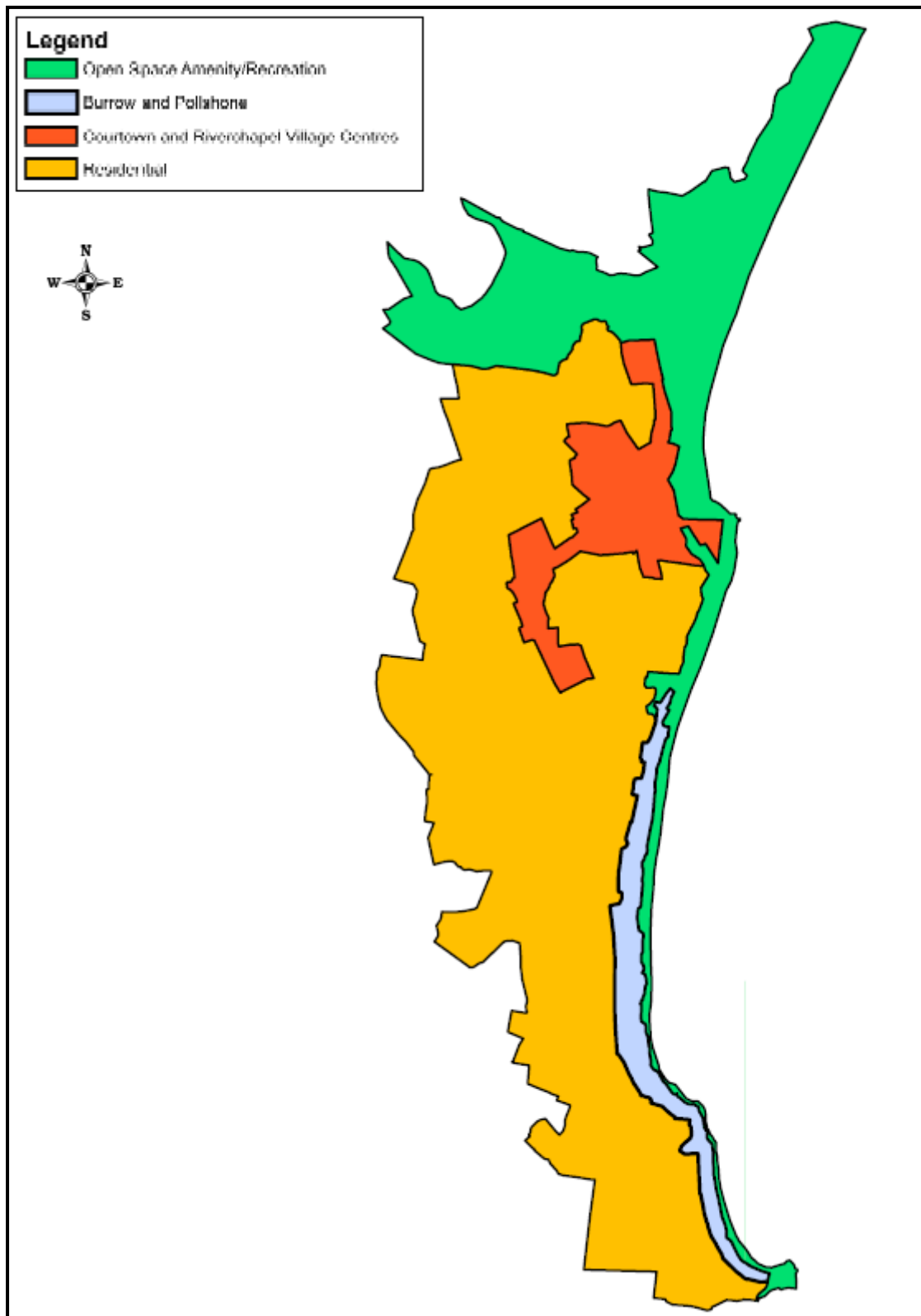


### 3.5 Character Areas

The plan area has been divided into four character areas identified on Map 4. The character areas are:

1. Courtown and Riverchapel village centre
2. Residential
3. Burrow and Pollshone (area includes Sandy Lane, The Burrow, Ned's Lane and Pollshone)
4. Open Space Amenity/Recreation

**Map 4 Settlement Character Areas**





### 3.5.1 Character Area 1: Courtown and Riverchapel Village Centre

The two centres in the plan area, Courtown and Riverchapel, collectively form the commercial and community centre. Courtown Harbour provides services for the majority of visitors to the area. It has a greater concentration of commercial facilities, including shops, cafés, fast food outlets and offers direct access to the beach and woodland amenities. Riverchapel centre serves the community. It has one public house, two convenience stores, a couple of fast food outlets, a school, church and community centre.

#### Distinctive Features of the Streetscape

Distinctive features of Courtown and Riverchapel village centre include the stone built harbour and amenity area with landscaped cliff edge. The harbour front and surrounding streets have a real sense of a seaside resort with ice-cream parlours, amusement arcades, shops with buckets and spaces hanging at the entrances and children's fairground rides. It has narrow streets lined primarily with single and two storey terraced buildings.



Riverchapel has low buildings fronting on to the R725. To one side to the east is a graveyard and church, school, community centre and shop.

#### Buildings

There are a number of modern pre and post 1960s landmark buildings in the centre of the harbour area. These include Ocean Point, Bayview Hotel and Flanagan's

Amusement Arcade. The historic buildings in this area include the Harbour Lifeboat House, Tara Vie Hotel, Star of the Sea Church and the Rocket House.



### **Movement Through the Area**

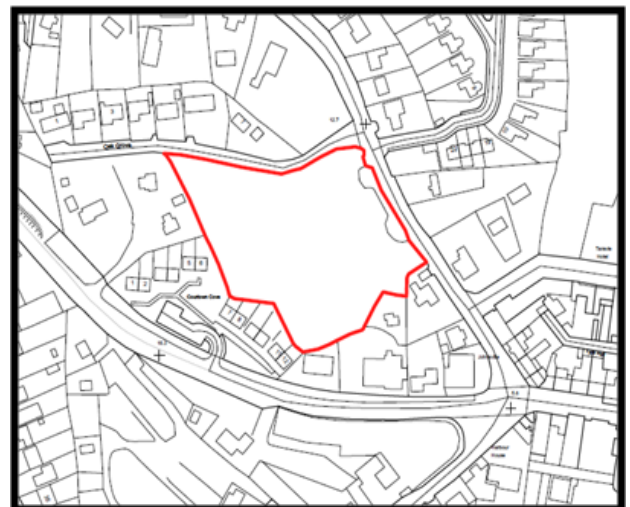
The village centre is generally well served by footpaths and public lighting with the exception of the link between Courtown and Riverchapel. This road is the main pedestrian link between the two centres and follows a wooded river corridor, known as Pig Bank.

### **Infill Development Opportunities**

There are two development opportunity sites in this area.

#### **Site 1**

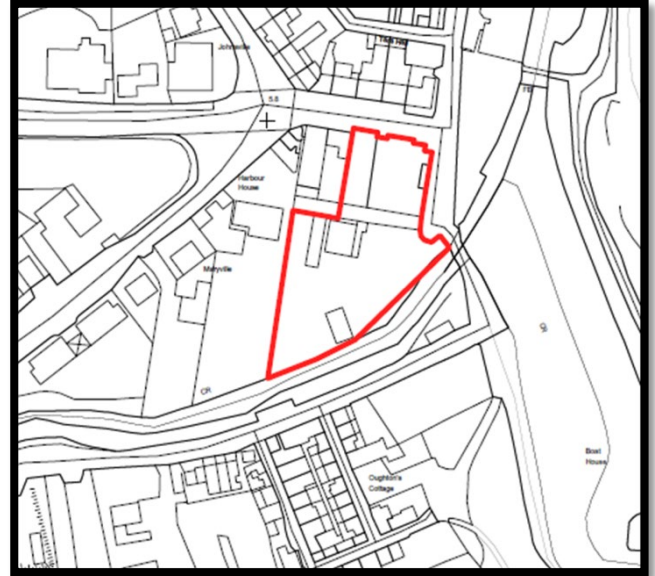
The first site is located within the heart of Courtown and is located directly behind the petrol filling station. It is a substantial site with an area of 1.2 hectares. It was the site of Stopford House which has been demolished. There are a number of mature trees within the site and the site would be suitable for mixed use development. These lands are zoned as Village Centre.





### Site 2

This site is the combined sites of the Bayview and Ounavarra Hotel and it is 0.40 hectares in size. It is a key infill site in the village centre and it is important that any future redevelopment proposal for the site maximises its urban design potential and visually enhances the village centre. A design statement shall be prepared for the site which will give clear design guidance to any future potential developer (See Objective VC02) This site would offer an exceptional development opportunity for commercial, tourism and mixed uses. The site is zoned Village Centre.



### 3.5.2 Character Area 2: Residential

The plan area has a number of well-established housing areas amongst the relatively new areas. There is a mix of types of estates which range from four house clusters to the largest estates such as Riverchapel Estate and Beachside Estate. The estates largely consist of two storey terraced, semi and detached properties with front and rear gardens and with pockets and areas of public open space dispersed within them. Within Riverchapel estate there are also a number of three storey apartment blocks.

### Distinctive Features of the Streetscape

Many of the estates are accessed directly from the R742 regional road and cannot be seen from this road. It is only once one enters these estates that the size and character of that particular estate is revealed. Red Row and all along and fronting onto the R742 is characterised by a pattern of established one-off housing which has expanded in a linear nature over time.

### Buildings

The buildings of this character area range from one-off plots with single dwellings, smaller estates with 20-30 houses to the larger estates such as Riverchapel and Beachside each with over 100 dwelling units. All the housing estates have either private rear and front gardens or private rear gardens, with elements of open space and landscaping throughout.

### Movement Through the Area

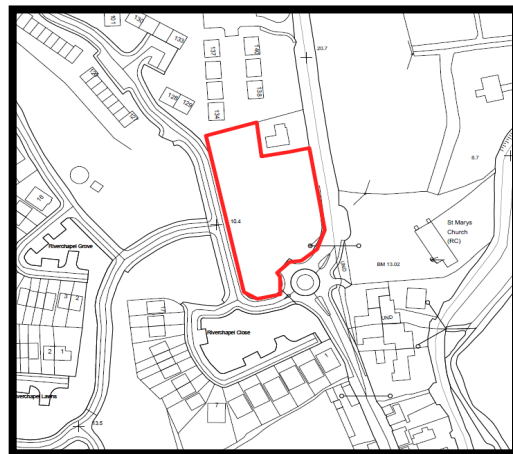
Footpaths are in place within the estates, however there is a lack of footpaths from Pollshone to Riverchapel and areas of footpaths are missing in Red Row.

### Infill Development Opportunities

There are pockets of land within some of these existing housing estates and residential areas that could accommodate either additional housing and/or community uses.

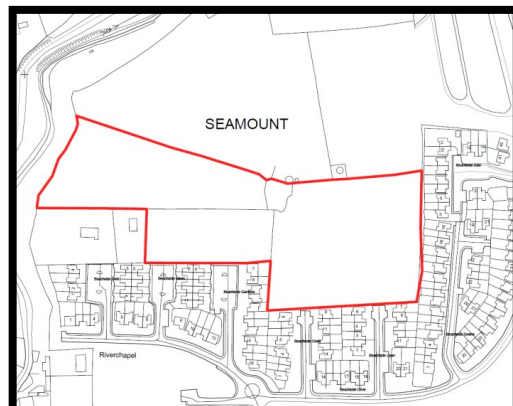
#### Site 1

This site is located at the southern end of Red Row and is opposite St Mary's Church. The site, which is 0.48 hectares in size, would be suitable for the development of appropriate community facilities. The site is zoned Community and Education.



#### Site 2

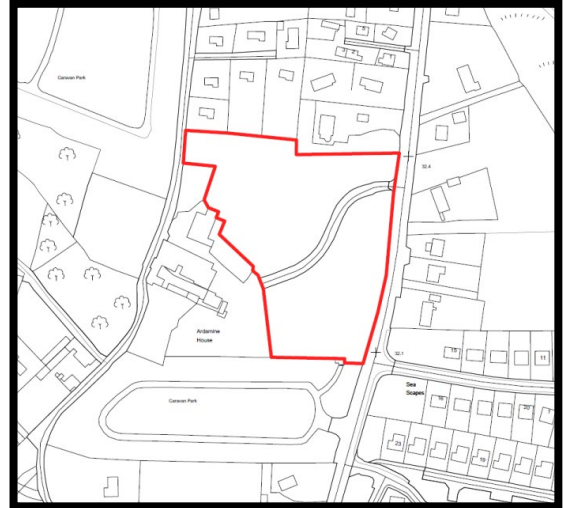
This site is located to the north of Beachside Estate and consists of 3.07 hectares. Access is currently an issue. However, with suitable access



arrangements, the site would offer a significant site for community and education facilities. The site is therefore zoned Community and Education.

### Site 3

This site is located to the front of Ardamine House Hotel and is 1.51 hectares in size. Given its location, in particular, adjacent to a hotel, it is considered that this site would be suitable for the development of suitable tourist accommodation. The site is therefore zoned Tourist Accommodation.



### 3.5.3 Character Area 3: Burrow and Pollshone Distinctive Features of the Area

This character coastal area includes 'Sandy Lane', 'The Burrow' 'Ned's Lane' and 'Pollshone'. The area has organically developed over time with chalets, mobile homes and temporary buildings. Private landowners have placed structures on the sites, and created individual plots with private garden areas with accesses to the beach and car parking areas.



### Movement Through the Area

The Burrow offers extensive views of the sea and long vistas up and down the coastline. Access to the beach is through a network of poorly surfaced roads and



lanes through the dunes, some of which are likely to be public rights of way. The area has been subject to coastal erosion and a number of property owners have placed rock armour along the sea bank in order to prevent or delay erosion. The siting of some of the chalets have created a barrier for access to the beach. There are a number of established and well used accesses to the coast and these need to be maintained.



### 3.5.4 Character Area 4: Open Space Amenity/Recreation

This character area wraps around the plan area to the north, along the eastern boundary and to the south. These areas offer exceptional high quality recreational (passive and active) opportunities for people as well as providing important habitats for wildlife.

#### Distinctive Features

The area includes extensive natural features including Courtown Woods, a designated blue flag bathing beach, Courtown Dunes and Glen Natural Heritage Area, Owenavorrhagh River and river walk and the extensive coastline along the east of the plan area.



The coast has intrinsic natural scenic and special amenity values and contains a diverse range of habitats. The balance between ensuring environmental protection and allowing the human impact on these areas is vital to ensure long term continued use.



### **Movement through the area**

There is good excellent pedestrian footfall over much of the area with disabled access to the beach and within Courtown Woods.



### **Opportunity Sites**

The area would generally not be suitable for building development however the promotion of the natural environment and recreation would be encouraged.



### Section 4 Development Strategy for the Plan Area

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#### 4.1 Background

The public consultation undertaken provided an invaluable insight into, and understanding of, the main issues which need to be addressed by the plan. The development strategy for the plan area (aims/goals) is underpinned by the desire of all key stakeholders, including the local authority, local community and business interests, to address these issues.

This section of the plan sets out the development strategy and objectives which will guide the future development of Courtown and Riverchapel. The objectives, together with the Core Strategy contained in Chapter 3 and the Development Management Standards contained in Chapter 18 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 will be used to make consistent decisions on planning applications in the plan area.

#### 4.2 Development Strategy for the Plan Area

The LAP envisages that Courtown and Riverchapel will experience a modest increase in population growth which will help to sustain existing services and increase the demand and feasibility to provide other important services in the plan area. The LAP also envisages that Courtown and Riverchapel will further develop its economic development potential and maximise its tourism role; both of which will be done in harmony with its permanent settlement role. The LAP focuses on the provision of additional infrastructure, services and community facilities to serve the existing and future population and visitors to the area. The principles of sustainable development enshrine the strategy, with a strong emphasis on the protection of the area's natural heritage and environment.

The main aims for Courtown and Riverchapel, which are supported by the objectives in the LAP and the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019, are:

## Section 4: Development Strategy for the Plan Area

- 1** To encourage and support the local community in their efforts to enhance the villages in order to improve the quality of life for all residents of the area.
- 2** To facilitate and support the provision of adequate community and sports facilities to cater for the needs of the various age-groups in the community and to encourage, where possible and feasible, the development of multi-user community and sports facilities.
- 3** To facilitate the provision of key services to serve both the resident population and tourists, such as a chemist, a GP medical consultants practice and retail, at appropriate locations in the plan area.
- 4** To facilitate the provision of a connected network of accessible public footpaths and public lighting and the provision of accessible linkages between key areas so as to improve accessibility and movement for residents and visitors.
- 5** To provide for the future development of the local primary school.
- 6** To maximise the tourism potential of the plan area by encouraging developments which expand the tourism product and extend the holiday season and to encourage the development of secondary services such as retail, restaurants and coffee shops which may encourage visitors to stay longer in the area subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with EU Directives.
- 7** To protect and preserve natural and built heritage amenities both for their tourism potential and the significant contribution they make to the recreational opportunities for residents of the area.
- 8** To enhance the public realm and visual amenities of the area and to encourage and support the local community to take measures to ensure that

## Section 4: Development Strategy for the Plan Area

the villages are maintained on an on-going basis, in particular, with regard to litter control, landscaping and maintaining buildings in presentable forms.

- 9** To encourage and facilitate the development of a regular public bus service between the plan area and adjoining areas, in particular, Gorey Town.



### Section 5 Economic Development in the Plan Area

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#### 5.1 Background

Courtown and Riverchapel have a large resident population. Unfortunately, much of the working population is not employed locally. It would appear that most people work in Gorey Town, Arklow Town, Wexford Town and to some extent Dublin. This trend results in unsustainable travel patterns and a lack of vibrancy in the plan area outside of tourist season. The development strategy for the plan area, as set out in Section 4, aims to change this by encouraging and facilitating new employment opportunities in the plan area. This is in line with the Economic Development Strategy in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 which outlines that the role for Courtown and Riverchapel is to sustain the local community and provide enhanced opportunities for the creation of new enterprises. If people are employed locally, they will spend more money locally which will have a positive knock-on effect on the vibrancy and vitality of the area. It will also give rise to more sustainable travel patterns and smarter travel.

#### 5.2 Economic Development Strategy for the Plan Area

Economic activity in the plan area is heavily focused on tourism, and it is considered that the greatest potential for economic and employment growth in the plan area lies in the further development of the local tourism product. There are many opportunities available to further maximise the tourism potential of both the plan area and the surrounding area and this is discussed in further detail in Section 6 Tourism and Economic Activity.

There are other future economic development opportunities in the plan area. The harbour is a key asset which could be further developed. While underused at present, it has significant potential for marine related developments. The fishing industry could be expanded through the provision of fish processing and distribution units and other ancillary services.

In terms of other sources of economic potential, the LAP supports the development of enterprise ventures such as high quality office developments, call centres, I.T support services, start up or incubator units for new businesses, arts and crafts and artisan foods. The range of enterprise ventures is not limited to the aforementioned. The Council will consider all employment related proposals on their merits and their suitability to the area and subject lands.

As demand has not been strong for employment sites in Courtown and Riverchapel in the past, the LAP does not directly zone lands for employment uses. Instead, developments of this nature will be considered on appropriate sites in the village centre, and possibly the commercial leisure lands.

### **5.3 Retail and Commercial Development**

Local shops and services form an important part of the economic, social and community wellbeing of the area. These shops reduce the need to travel to Gorey for day-to-day shopping needs. However, the plan area lacks the range of services and retail uses that a settlement the size of Courtown and Riverchapel would normally require. Retail services would also benefit from new employers setting up in the plan area as this would increase vitality in the area outside of the tourism season.

The County Wexford Retail Strategy 2013-2019, which was prepared in accordance with 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department Environment Community and Local Government, 2012), sets out the retail hierarchy for the county designating Courtown and Riverchapel as a Level 3 retail centre which has a crucial role in serving the surrounding areas.

The Strategy notes that in February 2012 when a retail survey of the villages was carried out, a significant number of the retail units were closed. However, there were 'no for sale' or 'to let' signs on these vacant units which would suggest that these units open seasonally. The survey also concluded that the types of retail uses consisted mainly of convenience shops associated with a coastal village such as an ice-cream parlour and sweet shops.

The Strategy promotes Courtown and Riverchapel as a prime, quality tourist destination. However, it acknowledges that there is a need to extend the range of retail services. The LAP therefore encourages the protection and enhancement of existing retail services and the development of new retail opportunities within the village centres. The appropriate use of vacant properties in the village centres will also be encouraged to promote viability and vitality.

### 5.4 Economic Development Objectives

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

- ED01** To encourage and facilitate appropriate employment opportunities in the plan area to allow the area to be more self-sufficient in terms of employment and to provide the opportunity for people to work locally rather than commute outside the area for work.
- ED02** To encourage more employment in the village centre so as to provide additional footfall and potential spend for local businesses and to support the development of new businesses, thereby increasing the vibrancy and vitality of the area year round.
- ED03** To encourage the development of the fishing industry at appropriate locations in the plan area.
- ED04** To maintain and foster the role of Courtown and Riverchapel as a local retail and service centre.
- ED05** To encourage the appropriate expansion of retail and commercial services in the village centres to meet the needs of the existing and future population of the area and its surrounds.
- ED06** To ensure that proposals for retail development comply with the requirements of the County Wexford Retail Strategy, the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Community and Local

Government, 2012) and any subsequent review update or circulars issued in relation to the guidelines.

**ED07** To encourage the development of infill and brownfield sites in the village centre as locations for a mix of retail and commercial uses having regard to the surrounding building uses in the area. All new development should be to the highest design standards with safe and convenient access for all.

## Section 6 Tourism and Economic Activity

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### 6.1 Background

Courtown and Riverchapel are historically popular holiday resorts and the area remains one of the leading tourist destinations in both the county and the South-East region. The existing tourist products on offer include activity centres, a swimming pool and outdoor pursuit venues, a public beach, woodland areas and a range of accommodation.

There is significant potential to expand the tourism potential of Courtown and Riverchapel. Tourist activity can support community development, lead to local employment and help to enhance the overall image of the area. The plan responds to this by promoting appropriate tourism developments and ensuring that sufficient lands are zoned for tourism. The objectives of this plan are designed to strengthen the tourism role of Courtown and Riverchapel while protecting and improving the quality of all available resources.

### 6.2 Tourism Strategy

As set out in the Section 4, the development strategy for the plan area includes maximising the tourism potential of the plan area. This will be based around the following goals:

1. To encourage tourism-related development at appropriate locations in the plan area.
2. To ensure that new or expanded tourism developments respect the natural and built environment so that they do not damage the feature that has attracted the visitor to the area in the first instance.
3. To facilitate developments that may add to the tourism product, extend the tourist season and/or increase accessibility to attractions and facilities such as the development of the coastal path subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with EU Directives.

Courtown's harbour setting is a key tourism asset providing opportunities for recreation and marine leisure activities. There is significant potential to enhance and expand it as a tourism product. The RPGs recognise the opportunity to promote the South-East as the 'Marine Centre of Ireland' by identifying and facilitating the development of marine tourism clusters along the South-East coastline. These clusters could incorporate a marina (sailing, cruising, general boating), angling facilities, water sports facilities, facilities for nature tourism, pleasure cruise, island ferries and support facilities. Courtown Harbour is one of the identified locations and the cluster would be for a small scale development (0-25 berths, slipway/pier construction, maybe a small marina) subject to further economic feasibility and environmental studies.

The LAP supports the sustainable development of the harbour area for marine recreation activities and associated infrastructure. It is essential that the location, scale, design, form and extent of any proposed development is capable of being integrated into the existing harbour area. Any such development will also have to comply with all relevant EU and national legislation, particular the Habitats Directive and Environmental Impact Assessment.

There are also opportunities to promote green tourism packages and activity breaks in the area which would exploit the existing walkways, golf courses and water-based activities. There is also significant potential for small to medium tourism enterprises such as restaurants, pubs, craft shops, fishing boat trips and bicycle hire and bus tours.

### 6.3 General Tourism Objectives

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

**TE01** To develop and maximise the tourism potential of Courtown and Riverchapel by facilitating the expansion of existing, and the provision of new sustainable tourism products, facilities and infrastructure, subject to compliance with normal planning and environment criteria and compliance with EU Directives.



- TE02** To work closely with the relevant agencies, bodies and commercial sectors active in the plan area to continue to promote and enhance the tourist attractions of the area in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.
- TE03** To co-operate with state and semi-state employment agencies and local organisations in promoting, marketing and encouraging enterprises to locate suitable activities in tourism and tourism related services in the plan area.
- TE04** To facilitate the development of the harbour area in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with EU Directives.
- TE05** To facilitate tourism activities including eco-tourism, health centres, fishing, horse-riding, walking and cycling and facilities that relate to the special qualities of the surrounding natural environment subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with EU Directives.
- TE06** To encourage the provision of high quality tourism accommodation on the lands zoned for Holiday Caravan/Mobile Home Parks and Tourist Accommodation.
- TE07** To promote the development and use of a continuous coastal path as a tourist and recreational facility subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with EU Directives.
- TE08** To facilitate the provision of shower facilities and public toilets in the vicinity of the beach area as identified on Map 10 (indicative only) subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with EU Directives.
- TE09** To improve the visual appearance of the area, to protect the inherent character and maximise the tourism potential by the continuance of

environmental schemes, improvements to the public realm, design control and by improving the appearance of derelict buildings and sites.

### **6.4 Tourist Accommodation**

A range of tourist accommodation is necessary to attract visitors to the plan area including hotels, guesthouses, B & Bs, caravan and mobile homes, holidays homes, hostels and camping.

#### **6.4.1 Caravan and Mobile Home Parks**

Caravan and mobile homes parks are one of the traditional tourist accommodations in Courtown and Riverchapel and as a result there are a number of these parks in the plan area. These parks significantly contribute to both the local economy and wider north Wexford area, especially during the summer months. It is important that these parks are maintained to a good standard both to protect the tourism product and the visual amenities of the area. The Council will facilitate the improvement of existing caravan and mobile home parks.

#### **6.4.2 Touring Caravan Sites**

There are no designated touring caravan sites in the plan area. It is considered that any demand for such uses can be facilitated within the established caravan and mobile home parks and/or on the lands zoned for Tourist Accommodation. This will result in the more efficient use of land and visitors can avail of ancillary services provided on these sites.

#### **6.4.3 Holiday Homes**

In the past the plan area has experienced significant pressure for holiday home developments, particularly as a result of the Renewal Scheme for Traditional Seaside Resorts, 1995. Based on the level of holiday home development that has occurred, the plan confines any future development of this nature to the following:

- The replacement of existing caravan and mobile homes within established parks with appropriately scaled and designed permanent holiday homes. This will not apply in Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 in the Burrow and Pollshone;
- The lands designated for Tourist Accommodation;
- On appropriate site(s) in the village centre;
- The replacement of chalet structures and caravans/mobile homes in Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 (See Section 6.4.6 and Map 5) in the Burrow and Pollshone subject to compliance with Objective TA06 and Objective TA07 respectively; and
- Replacement of authorised individual holiday homes and chalets elsewhere in the plan area subject to compliance with the criteria (a) to (k) outlined in Objective TA07.

### 6.4.4 Camping and Glamping

There are no designated camping or glamping sites in the plan area. It is considered that any demand for such uses can be facilitated within the established caravan and mobile home parks and/or on the lands zoned for Tourist Accommodation. This will result in the more efficient use of land and visitors can avail of ancillary services provided on these sites.

### 6.4.5 Hotels, Guesthouses and B&Bs

There are a number of hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs in the plan area that contribute significantly to the tourist accommodation product. The Council will encourage appropriate development to either expand or enhance facilities on these sites subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

There are also a number of closed/derelict hotel sites within the plan area; in particular in Courtown. These sites are currently an eyesore. The Council will encourage the redevelopment of these lands subject to the proposal being of a scale and design appropriate to its setting.

### **6.4.6 Tourist Accommodation in the Burrow and Pollshone Area**

This area runs alongside the coast and collectively includes 'Sandy Lane', 'The Burrow' 'Ned's Lane' and 'Pollshone'. Over time it has developed in an ad-hoc manner. Landowners have developed individual plots with chalets which are used for holiday accommodation. There are varying planning statuses attached to these structures. While some of these structures are pre 1963 (before planning permission was required), others are authorised where the owners have applied for, and been approved planning permission. Where a structure is unauthorised, this precludes the owner from carrying out any works to the structure which otherwise would constitute exempted development. Some of these structures have septic tanks; others pump individually to the public wastewater system. The Council would encourage the development of a communal pumping point to facilitate connection of all authorised structures to the public sewer.

The ecological survey carried out identified the presence of an important habitat in parts of this area. This habitat is referred to as Dune Scrub and Woodland and its location is identified on Map 8. As this is an important habitat, the nature of development which can be undertaken in this area must be carefully considered. For example when considering a replacement structure, landowners will not be allowed to remove this habitat for the purposes of creating enlarged or new areas of private open space or hard surfacing.

The Burrow and Pollshone area has been into two sub-areas for the purposes of formulating future planning policy. These sub-areas are Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 and are identified on Map 5. The term 'structure' in this section refers to an authorised chalet structure, an authorised mobile home or an authorised caravan; all of which must be in habitable condition.

#### **Chalet Area 1**

There are concerns about coastal erosion in this area due to its proximity to the coastline. The OPW Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study identifies this area as being at significant risk of coastal erosion. The predicted 2030 and 2050 erosion lines are identified on Map 5. Having regard to the coastal erosion risks in this area,

the Council will consider, on a case-by-case basis, the replacement of existing habitable structures in Chalet Area 1. However, the Council will not consider extensions to these existing structures or a net increase in the floor area of replacement structures. Ancillary developments in the area, such as boundary fencing and decking, will be considered on a on a case-by-case basis. The Council will not consider the development of new structures on greenfield sites in this area.

In relation to the replacement of existing structures, such proposals will be required to comply with Objective TA06 and it will be necessary for the following to be demonstrated:

1. The replacement structure will only be used as holiday accommodation;
2. The risk of coastal erosion to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. It must be objectively established based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application, that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal. It must also be demonstrated that the development will not have any impacts on erosion or deposition elsewhere, and that the development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features. Such an assessment must be carried out by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional.
3. Where appropriate, necessary coastal protection works should form part of the planning application. The subject works must be designed by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional and must demonstrate compliance with the Point 2.
4. The risk of flooding to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. This should be demonstrated by a site-specific flood risk assessment, if deemed necessary.
5. The structure can be connected to the public waste water system, or effluent from the structure can be treated on-site in accordance in accordance with the EPA's Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (EPA, 2009)
6. The development complies with all other normal planning and environmental criteria.

The Council will encourage the connection of structures to the public waste water system. The Council will consider proposals to upgrade an existing treatment waste water infrastructure in the interest of environmental gain but only where there is no increase in loading on the treatment system (as a result of any additional development).

### **Chalet Area 2**

The Council will consider the replacement of, or extension to, existing habitable structures in this area for use as a holiday home accommodation as set out in Objective TA07. However, it will not consider the development of new structures on greenfield sites in this area. The Council will encourage the connection of these replacement/extended structures to the public waste water system. The Council will also consider proposals to upgrade existing on site wastewater treatment infrastructure where the effluent from the replacement/extended structure can be treated on-site in accordance with the EPA's Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (EPA, 2009).

The Council will consider proposals to upgrade an existing treatment waste water infrastructure in the interest of environmental gain but only where there is no increase in loading on the treatment system as a result of any additional development.

The Council will also consider proposals by individual landowners to carry out coastal protection works to their land subject to compliance with the relevant objectives in Section 15 Coastal Protection and all other normal planning and environmental criteria.



## 6.5 Tourist Accommodation Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

- TA01** To facilitate caravan and mobile home developments on the lands zoned 'Holiday Caravan/Mobile Home Parks and 'Tourist Accommodation' subject to compliance with all normal planning and environmental criteria.
- TA02** Planning applications for new tourist accommodation developments on the lands zoned 'Tourist Accommodation' on Map 9 will be required to:
- demonstrate that the development respects its landscape setting and will not have an adverse impact on the visual amenities of the area. This shall be demonstrated in a visual impact assessment submitted by the applicant with the planning application;
  - be developed in a well designed and planned manner;
  - demonstrate that the development can be appropriately accessed without unduly detracting from the residential amenities of adjoining properties; and
  - comply with all other normal planning and environmental criteria
- TA03** To encourage the visual and environmental improvement of existing caravan and mobile home parks and the upgrading of their associated infrastructure and facilities.
- TA04** To prohibit the replacement of individual mobile home and caravans outside of the lands zoned 'Holiday Caravan/Mobile Home Parks, Tourist Accommodation and 'Chalet Area 1 and 2 in the Burrow and Pollshone' except in extenuating circumstances. It must be demonstrated that a mobile home or caravan used for holiday home accommodation has been on the subject site previous to 1<sup>st</sup> October 1964 when the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 came into effect or has the benefit of planning permission and is in accordance with the planning conditions pertaining to same. The use of the replacement mobile home or caravan will be conditioned to holiday home accommodation and where permitted the planning permission will only be for a limited period.

**TA05** To encourage the redevelopment of existing or derelict hotel sites and the development of new hotel, guesthouse and B&B accommodation on appropriately zoned lands subject to the development being of scale and design appropriate to its setting and compliance with all normal planning and environmental criteria.

**TA06** To consider the replacement of existing habitable structures within Chalet Area 1 in the Burrow and Pollshone Area identified on Map 5 where:

- (a) It is demonstrated that the structure which it is proposed to replace has been on the subject site previous to 1<sup>st</sup> October 1964 when the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 came into effect or has the benefit of planning permission and is in accordance with the planning conditions pertaining to same.
- (b) It is proposed to replace the existing structure with a new structure which is less than, or the same floor area, as that being replaced.
- (c) The replacement structure is for use as holiday home accommodation.
- (d) The risk of coastal erosion to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. It must be objectively established based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application, that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal. It must also be demonstrated that the development will not have any significant impacts on erosion or deposition elsewhere, and that the development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features. Such an assessment must be carried out by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional.
- (e) Where appropriate, necessary coastal protection works should form part of the planning application. The subject works must be designed by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional and must demonstrate compliance with Point (d). The maintenance of the coastal works will form a condition of the planning permission.

- (f) The risk of flooding to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. This should be demonstrated by a site-specific flood risk assessment, if deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.
- (g) The structure can be connected to the public waste water system, or effluent from the structure can be treated on-site in accordance with the EPA's Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (EPA, 2009).
- (h) Suitable water conservation measures form part of the development proposal.
- (i) It is demonstrated that the proposed development will not threaten the integrity of the Dune Scrub and Woodland habitat (see Map 8).
- (j) Satisfactory access arrangements are in place, and
- (k) All other normal planning and environmental criteria are complied with.

**TA07** To consider the replacement of, or extension to, existing habitable structures within Chalet Area 2 in the Burrow and Pollshone Area identified on Map 5 where:

- (a) It is demonstrated that the structure which it is proposed to replace has been on the subject site previous to 1<sup>st</sup> October 1964 when the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 came into effect or has the benefit of planning permission and is in accordance with the planning conditions pertaining to same.
- (b) It is proposed to replace the existing structure with a new structure which is equal to or not more than 20% of the floor area of that being replaced, or to extend the structure with an extension which is equal to or not more than 20% the floor area of the structure to be extended. This is to ensure that the scale and form of this type of development is consistent.
- (c) The replacement structure is for use as holiday home accommodation.
- (d) The risk of coastal erosion to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. It must be objectively established based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application, that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal. It must also be demonstrated that the development will not have any significant impacts on erosion or deposition elsewhere, and that the development will not

pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features. Such an assessment must be carried out by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional.

- (e) Where appropriate, necessary coastal protection works should form part of the planning application. The subject works must be designed by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional and must demonstrate compliance with Point (d). The maintenance of the coastal works will form a condition of the planning permission.
- (f) The risk of flooding to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. This should be demonstrated by a site-specific flood risk assessment, if deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.
- (g) The structure can be connected to the public waste water system, or effluent from the structure can be treated on-site in accordance with the EPA's Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (EPA, 2009).
- (h) Suitable water conservation measures form part of the development proposal.
- (i) It is demonstrated that the proposed development will not threaten the integrity of the Dune Scrub and Woodland habitat (see Map 8).
- (j) Satisfactory access arrangements are in place, and
- (k) All other normal planning and environmental criteria area complied with.

**TA08** To encourage the development of a communal pumping point to facilitate the connection of all authorised structures in the defined Burrow and Pollshone area to the public waste water system subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with EU Directives.

**TA09** To permit the replacement of authorised individual holiday homes and chalets elsewhere in the plan area subject to compliance with the criteria (a) to (k) in Objective TA07.

## Section 7: Village Centre, Public Realm and Urban Design

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### 7.1 The Village Centre

The village centre is defined by two areas which have merged to contain a variety of retail, commercial and civic uses including tourist accommodation, a church, post office, shops, restaurants, public houses, fast food outlets, hair dressers and amusement arcades.

In recent years the village centre has experienced a range of developments from small-scale retail and commercial units to large mixed use developments. The most notable development is Ocean Point which was constructed on the site of the 'Beacon nightclub'. This development contains a mix of retail, commercial and residential uses, and while a sizeable amount of this development remains vacant, in full use it has the potential to significantly contribute to the economic and social vitality of the village centre.

The LAP supports the continued development of the village centre for a mix of appropriate of uses. There are infill and brownfield sites in the centre and the Council would encourage the appropriate redevelopment of these sites. The sites include the old Bayview Hotel and the site previously occupied by the Ounavarra Hotel. The Bayview Hotel in its current state detracts from the visual amenities of the harbour area. The redevelopment of these sites would not only enhance the visual attractiveness of the area but would also help to consolidate the centre of Courtown and contribute to its vitality.

With regard to derelict sites the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 states that it is the duty of every owner and occupier of land to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the land does not become or does not continue to be a derelict site. The Act also states it shall be the duty of a local authority to take all reasonable steps (including the exercise of any appropriate statutory powers) to ensure that any land situate in their functional area does not become or continue to be a derelict site. To this end, the Council is recommending the designating the area as an urban area for the purposes of the Act, which would give power to the Council to levy derelict sites.



### 7.2 The Public Realm

The public realm consists of the ‘space between buildings’-the streets, laneways, squares, promenades and open areas that are accessible to the public and also the building frontages that define these spaces.

It is widely recognised that a high quality public realm improves our interpretation and experience of urban areas, adding to their attractiveness and enhancing their use by residents and visitors alike. People chose to spend more time in high quality public spaces and streets, stopping to linger rather than utilising these streets and spaces as thoroughfares, thereby contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of urban areas.

The public realm in the Courtown and Riverchapel includes its streets, harbour and waterfront area, street furniture and signage. There is considerable scope for improvement of the public realm in the village centre so as to help enhance the role of the area for tourism and attract retail and businesses, as well as making the area an attractive place to live. The Council will give consideration to the preparation of a public realm plan for the village centre which will focus on a range of projects and initiatives for the up-grading of the public realm. The main responsibility for the delivery of the Public Realm Plan will inevitably lie with the local authority, but in certain cases partnership between different organisations may be necessary, such as private sector where redevelopment or land ownership issues are involved. The ongoing support and involvement of the local community and stakeholders will be of equal importance to the success of the plan, ensuring a sense of ownership and pride in the projects to be delivered.

### 7.3 Urban Design

Good urban design plays a pivotal role in creating attractive places to live and visit. The Council is committed to ensuring that new developments in the plan area are built to a high standard of design, layout and finish. The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines and its companion document Urban Design

Manual (DEHLG, 2008) provide a framework for the best advice in urban design and illustrates how design principles can be translated into practice for the creation of sustainable communities. The Council will promote the use of these guidelines by applicants and their agents to design and contribute to sustainable developments of high quality design. The principle of universal design referring to the composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people should underpin the design of any proposed development. Further advice and objectives relating to urban design are set out in Chapter 17 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

### 7.4 Village Centre, Urban and Public Realm Objectives

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

- VC01** To ensure that all new developments employ a high standard of urban design, layout and finish and require sensitive and high quality architectural design for infill and brownfield developments in the village centre having regard to the area's context and streetscape.
- VC02** Prior to any future proposal for the re-development of the Bayview and Ounavarra hotel sites a design statement shall be prepared for this key village centre site. The design statement will focus on enhancing the visual appearance of the harbour area. Any future planning application for this site will be required to have full regard to this design statement.
- VC03** To give consideration to preparing a Public Realm Plan for the village centre.
- VC04** To encourage the carrying out of environmental improvements in the village centres in order to enhance their overall appearance and quality.
- VC05** To designate the plan area as an urban area for the purposes of the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 in order to give power to the Council to levy derelict sites.

### Section 8 Community Facilities

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#### 8.1 Community Facilities

The provision of good quality accessible, socially inclusive, community facilities is essential. These facilities promote community cohesion and identity, and this in turn helps combat social isolation. Community facilities include educational, religious, health and sporting clubs. At present, there is a basic range of community facilities in the plan area. The local Garda station is situated in Courtown and the local national school, a community centre, churches and graveyards are located in Riverchapel. The day-to-day health care needs of the local community are currently provided for in Gorey Town including GP and dentists. Public healthcare services are also provided in Gorey Heath Centre and HSE centres in the Palms and Gorey Medical Centre.

Based on the size of the local population, community facilities are underprovided for in the plan area. This was confirmed during the consultations with the local community who highlighted the need for additional community facilities in the plan area and it also emphasised the need to ensure that such facilities are provided in tandem with new residential developments.

The LAP therefore supports the provision of an extended range of community facilities in the plan area. While there is an existing community centre in Riverchapel, it is considered that based on the size of the population, the development of further community facilities would make a significant contribution on the local community. These facilities could be used for a variety of uses including the delivery of suitable health care services, community resource work, childcare and as well as catering for the various social and recreational needs of the community as discussed in further detail in Section 9.

### It is the objective of the Council to:

- CE01** To facilitate and co-operate with other organisation in the provision of services for the community, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities in parallel with future housing.
- CE02** To facilitate the provision of accessible health services, including a general medical practitioners and chemist, at a suitable location in the plan area.
- CE03** To facilitate the provision of multi-user community facilities to serve the needs of the local population at suitable location's which are accessible to the residents of both Courtown and Riverchapel.
- CE04** To facilitate the development of a Youth Café at a suitable location which is accessible to the young people of both Courtown and Riverchapel.

### 8.2 Education Facilities

The existence of high quality educational facilities can attract families, businesses and increase the general development and prosperity of an area. There is currently one school within the plan area, Riverchapel National School. The school had an enrolment of 425 pupils in the 2013/2014 school year. The nearest secondary schools are located in Gorey Town.

The Department of Education and Skills in consultation with the Council has identified the need for two additional classrooms at Riverchapel School. This could be accommodated within the existing boundaries of the school. Notwithstanding this, and in the interests of safeguarding the future educational needs of the community, a greenfield site has been reserved to the west of Riverchapel Estate and the new community playing fields. These lands are zoned Community and Education and are identified on Map 10.

### It is the objective of the Council:

- EF01** To facilitate the development of educational facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population, in co-operation with the Department of Education and Skills and the Board of Management and in accordance with The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A code of practice for Planning Authorities (DES and DEHLG, July 2008).
- EF02** To ensure that no significant residential development proceeds without an assessment of existing schools capacity or the provision of new school facilities in tandem with the development.
- EF03** To reserve lands to the west of Riverchapel Estate and the proposed community playing fields for the development of a new school. These lands are identified on Map 10.
- EF04** To encourage the multi-use of school buildings and facilities provided that this does not conflict with the delivery of the education service.
- EF05** To facilitate the development of outreach, adult and further education facilities to meet the needs of the area.

### 8.3 Childcare Facilities

The Government's guidelines on childcare facilities emphasise the importance of local assessment of the need to provide for such facilities at the plan preparation stage, having regard to the provision of existing facilities in the area. The location of these 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 the plan area which are registered with Wexford County Childcare Committee; Kickstart Education in Glen Aoibhinn offers full day care and Little Rascals in Riverchapel offers half-day pre-school care. Changing economic times may present a demand for additional facilities in the



future. The Council will continue to support the County Childcare Committee in responding to the changing needs of the community in terms of childcare demand and services. The Planning Authority will ensure that any new facilities are suitably located, are of a high quality and are inclusive of all children.

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

**CF01** To encourage and facilitate the provision of childcare facilities at appropriate locations, in accordance with the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) and any subsequent review, update or circulars issued in relation to the guidelines, Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 2006 and Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities.

## Section 9 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

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### 9.1 Background

The availability and ease of access to recreation, amenity and open space facilities is an important factor in maintaining the area as an attractive place to live and visit. It is important that all members of the community including children, older people and people with specific design needs continue to have access to high quality public open space, recreational and sporting facilities in order to maintain and enhance their quality of life.

### 9.2 Recreation Facilities

Courtown and Riverchapel offer extensive commercial recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. There is a sports centre and swimming pool, Extreme Gravity Centre, marine based activities, amusements, bowling and the nearby Courtown and Ballymoney Golf Clubs. Permission has been granted for an accessible kayaking centre on the canal. There are also many natural amenities in the plan area which can be enjoyed for free by all. The Council will continue to promote and facilitate the development of appropriate recreational activities, particularly those which may extend the tourism season.

#### 9.2.1 Recreational Facilities for Children and Teenagers

The Council recognises that the recreational needs of children and teenagers differ from adults and older people. It is important that the younger community of Courtown and Riverchapel have spaces to meet, play and hang out. It is clear that these facilities are severely lacking in the plan area. At present, there is one playground for younger children at the car park in front of Courtown Adventure and Leisure Centre. The area would also benefit from facilities where teenagers would meet and socialise.

While there are many recreational facilities for children and teenagers in Gorey Town, access to these facilities is dependent on adults with a means of transport as

there is no regular bus service to/from Gorey. The Council will encourage the development of similar facilities in the plan area such as a park, additional playgrounds, facilities for different sports, including boxing, badminton, tennis, soccer and dance. A lot of these facilities and many more could be accommodated in a multi-user community facility, which could also be used by youth workers, community workers and family resource works to provide services such as youth projects and homework clubs.

### 9.2.1.1 Recreational Facilities for Children

The design of future housing development should take into account the play needs of children. The Council will encourage the use of lands at Dune Haven for an accessible public park with a play area. The possible layout of this area is identified in Figure 1 and illustrated in Figure 2. This is indicative only and the Council is mindful of the fact that this land is currently in private ownership.

**Figure 1 Indicative Layout of a Public Park and Play Area in Dune Haven**



**Figure 2 Indicative View of the Public Park and Play Area at Dune Haven**



The recreational and social needs of toddlers and parents are largely focused around the need for a space which allows the parents to meet up and talk while facilitating a safe and warm space for the children to play and interact. This type of facility can be vital for the general wellbeing of parents and children. The development of community facilities would provide opportunities for local parent and toddler groups to meet.

### **9.2.1.2 Recreation Facilities for Teenagers and Young Adults**

Teenagers and young adults have different play and recreation needs to younger children. Within the plan area the introduction of sports facilities would provide an opportunity for them to get involved in various sports or to just 'hang out'. Other appropriate facilities which the Council will encourage are a youth cafe and youth clubs. The community facilities could also be used for the purposes of providing invaluable health, education, mentoring and life skills training for teenagers and young adults.

Plans are well advanced to develop a community sports grounds on lands to the rear of Riverchapel Estate. It will have a soccer pitch, a GAA Pitch, a BMX biking

track and walking track. This will be an invaluable recreational facility for the whole community.

### **9.2.2 Recreation Facilities for Older People**

Alongside outdoor recreation activities such as walking and cycling, a range of indoor recreational facilities could be provided for older people such as fitness and exercise classes and clubs focusing on communal interests like arts, music, cooking and craft. Older people can enjoy lifelong learning including training on digital communications, internet, mobile phones and computers. They can also play a vital role in the mentoring of younger people and families. The provision of additional community facilities would provide a valuable space for carrying out these activities.

## **9.3 Open Space and Natural Amenities**

Open space and natural amenities within the plan area include the beach, Courtown Woods, the harbour area and the 'Cricket Pitch'. There is a lack of public open space particularly in the Riverchapel to Pollshone area where a significant amount of residential development has occurred. The Plan has responded to this by zoning additional lands for open space and amenity throughout the plan area. The lands could be developed for a variety of open spaces for both passive and active uses including linear parks. The rivers which flow through the plan area offer natural amenity and the potential to develop linear parks along them. The protection of natural amenity is dealt with in Section in 12.3 of the LAP.

## **9.4 The Coastal Path**

Historically there has been a coastal path from Fishermans Walk, through Courtown Village down to Ned's Lane. In recent times there has been a collapse of the coastal path at South Bank. Works to, and the diversion of, the coastal path at South Bank could allow for its continuation to Ned's Lane. This also presents the opportunity to provide much needed access to the village centre for residents of Beachside and the wider community. A preliminary study of this area has been carried out. It includes illustrative options to upgrade and continue the existing path and identifies where these potential linkages could be provided. The study is included in Appendix No. 1

of the LAP. This preliminary study would require further feasibility and environmental studies prior to the deciding on the design and suitability of the coastal path.

### 9.5 Public Rights of Way

A public right of way is a person's right of passage along a road or path, even if the road or path is not in public ownership. Public rights of way constitute an important amenity and are an economic asset. They enable enjoyment of the county's high quality landscapes and cultural heritage and are important for tourism development and recreation.

The formal process for designating rights of way is dealt with in Section 14 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 15.9 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. The County Plan, through Objective RS35, sets out the process that the Council will follow in their endeavours to list and map public rights of way.

### 9.6 Allotments/Community Gardens

Public allotments and community gardens have a number of benefits including promoting healthy lifestyles, providing a cheap and local source of food and a reduction in food miles. Working an allotment is a healthy physical recreation for all age groups and gives people the opportunity for social contact and interaction with other members of the community. The Council will consider the development of allotments/community gardens on appropriate lands.

### 9.7 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space Objectives

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

**RS01** To facilitate the development of a range of accessible play and recreation facilities for all people in the community, for example, at the lands zoned Open and Amenity at the entrance to Dune Haven Housing Estate.



- RS02** To facilitate the development of accessible multi-user community playing fields on lands to the rear of Riverchapel Estate.
- RS03** To facilitate the provision of a Youth Café at an appropriate location in the plan area.
- RS04** To ensure that all residents have reasonable access to a range of different types of open space and that new open spaces are integrated with good access for pedestrians, cyclists and persons with specific design needs.
- RS05** To require the provision of good quality, accessible, well located and functional open spaces in new residential developments in accordance with the standards recommended in Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2008) and any subsequent review, update or circulars issued in relation to the guidelines.
- RS06** To avoid the loss of public and private recreational open space and facilities unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.
- RS07** To encourage and facilitate the upgrading and extension of the coastal path subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and all other normal planning and environmental criteria. Appendix No. 1, which is for illustrative purposes only, will guide the development of the coastal path.
- RS08** To facilitate the development of an accessible linear park at the location identified on Map 10 subject to compliance with all relevant planning and environmental criteria.
- RS09** To promote the development of allotments or community gardens on suitable sites within the plan area, taking into consideration the demand for such facilities.

### Section 10 Access and Movement

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#### 10.1 Background

‘Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future’ is the transport policy for Ireland for the period 2009-2020. The aim of the policy is to reduce the dependence on road transport and to ensure that where possible people can and do choose more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Continued growth in the demand for road transport is not sustainable for a number of reasons including increased congestion, local air pollution, contribution to global warming and it results in negative impacts on our health through promoting increasingly sedentary lifestyles.

Integrated land use and transportation planning is fundamental to the achievement of a shift in the modal share from the car to walking, cycling and public transport. The development of compact settlements with people living, working and shopping in the local area reduces the need to travel long distances, and increases the attractiveness of using alternative modes of transport.

In order to encourage people to walk and cycle more, the pedestrian and cycling network in the plan area needs to be safe, attractive and comfortable for all users. This includes people of all ages and abilities and is equally relevant to residents and visitors.

The creation of walkable, cycleable and public transport orientated communities requires that designers re-examine the way streets are designed in order to meet the needs of all users. In this regard all future developments in the plan area will be designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Streets and Roads (DTTS and DECLG, 2013). This manual provides guidance relating to the design of urban roads and streets. It sets out a series of principles, approaches and standards to be used when designing street networks and individual streets.

### 10.2 Roads

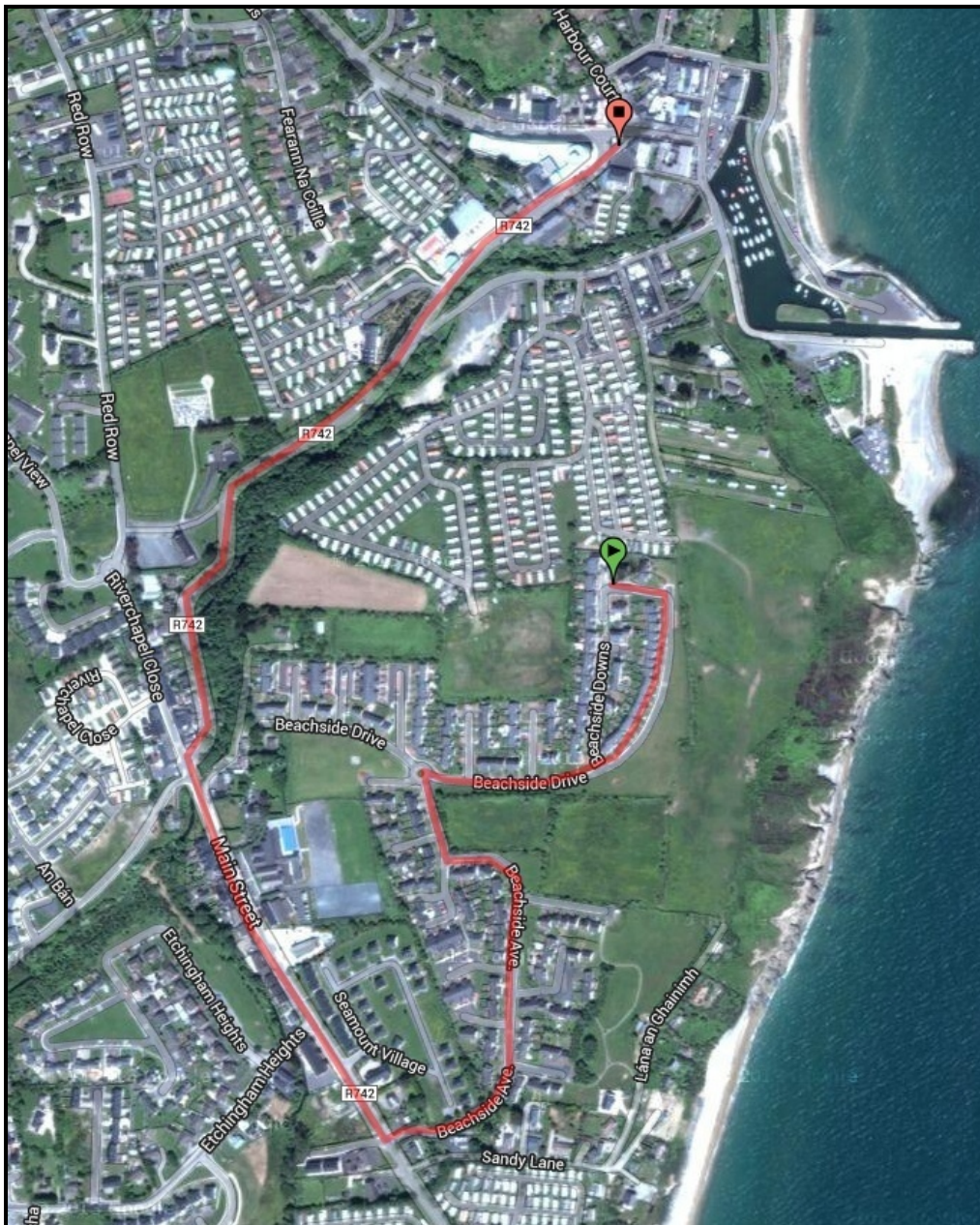
Courtown and Riverchapel are well served by a network of regional and local roads. The R742 regional road runs through the village and forms part of the Wexford to Gorey coastal drive. The LAP has not identified a need for additional link roads in the plan area. The area would benefit from traffic management including traffic calming and pedestrian crossings. Future developments will be designed to have regard to the Design Manual; one of the principles of the manual is to design out issues such as speeding.

### 10.3 Footpaths and Linkages

Generally, the village centres and the established residential housing developments are well served by footpaths. However, there is no footpath link between the two village centres, there are existing gaps in the footpath provision at Red Row and virtually no footpath provision from Riverchapel south bound to Glen Richards. A well connected footpath network is essential to encourage more walking and improve public safety and therefore it is an objective of the Plan to address these deficiencies, subject to the necessary financial resources being in place. Map 10 identifies the locations where additional accessible footpaths are required. These are the locations where there are currently no footpaths on either side of the public road, and as such it will be a priority to put in place a footpath on one side of the road. The Council will, in the long term, aim to provide accessible footpaths on both sides of the public road subject to the necessary financial resources being available. However, it is important to note that there are some places where this will just not be feasible, either in the long or short term.

The residents of Beachside Estate have a considerable walk to Courtown village centre. It is necessary to follow a route marked from start to finish shown on Figure 3. This distance is approximately 2.4km, and some of the walk (between Riverchapel and Courtown) lacks footpaths.

**Figure 3 Existing Pedestrian Route from Beachside Estate to Courtown Village**



An improved and re-instated coastal path (refer to Section 9.4) could provide a link from Beachside Estate to the village centre. The walking distance would be reduced from 2.4km (Figure 3) to 1km (Figure 4) and would encourage individuals and families to walk to the village centre instead of making a car journey. It would make an enormous difference to the lives of children and young people and to those who do not own cars.

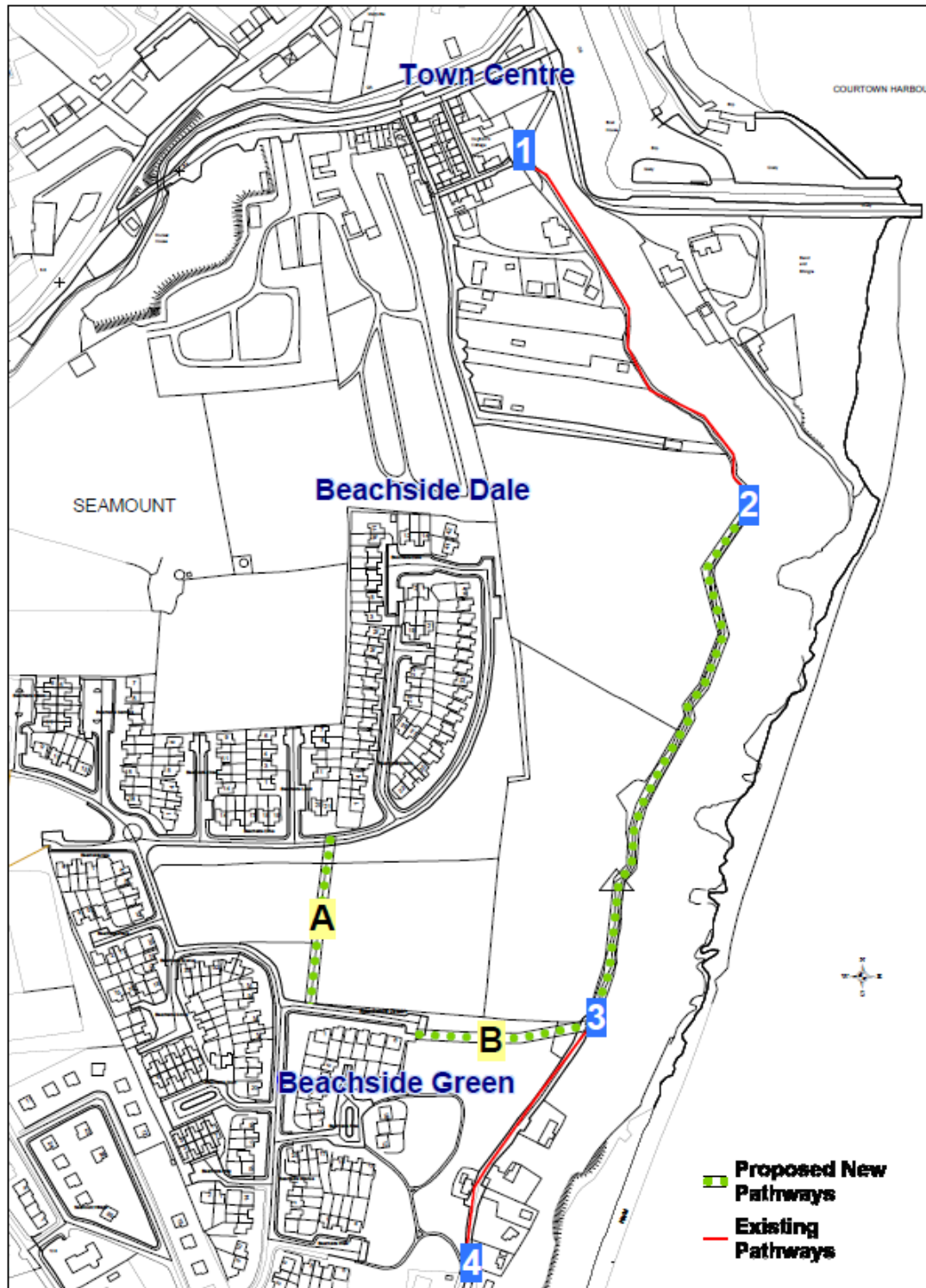


**Figure 4 Proposed Pedestrian Route from Beachside Estate to Courtown Village via the Proposed Coastal Path.**



Figure 5 outlines potential links to the suggested coastal pathway. The lands in the vicinity are zoned for tourist accommodation, community and education and open space. The development of these lands offers significant planning gain through the delivery of the reinstated coastal path and the much needed new linkages for the benefit of the local community.

Figure 5 Proposed Linkages from the Coastal Path to Beachside Estate





The Council will also facilitate a pedestrian access between Riverchapel School and Beachside Estate. This will reduce the travelling distances for pupils, encourage pupils to walk to school which in turn will reduce the number of cars at the school during peak time. This pedestrian access is supported by Objective AM08 and is identified on Map 10.

### 10.4 Cycling

Cycling as a transport option within, and to and from, Courtown and Riverchapel can be made safer and more attractive, for all sections of the community including residents and visitors. Recent Government policy seeks to promote cycling as a sustainable form of transport, primarily through the following documents:

- Smarter Travel Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 (Department of Transport).
- National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2009).
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013).

### 10.5 Car Parking

There is a plentiful supply of on-street parking and public car parks within the plan area and for most of the year parking is not an issue. However, during the busy summer months parking is under pressure. It is not considered appropriate to designate land solely for car parking to address the demand/supply issue in the peak season as it will be unused for the remainder of the year. Instead, the dual usage of lands could be considered. All new developments will be required to provide adequate off-street car parking in line with the car parking standards contained in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

### 10.6 Public Transport

At present there is an extremely limited bus service serving Courtown and given the size of the plan area and its catchment it is considered that a more frequent bus service could be sustained. An improved bus service would not only improve the quality of life for the local residents but would also offer an alternative mode of transport for tourists and visitors. The Council would support the provision of a more frequent bus service to and from the area and would also facilitate the development of bus shelter(s) at appropriate location(s) to further encourage the use of the extended service.

### 10.7 Access and Movement Objectives

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

**AM01** To ensure that all future developments are designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Streets and Roads (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013).

**AM02** To encourage bus transport providers to extend the bus service to and from the plan area and to support rural community transport initiatives.

**AM03** To facilitate the provision of bus stops and bus shelters at appropriate locations in the plan area.

**AM04** To provide accessible additional footpaths on the existing road network as indicated on Map 10 subject to the necessary financial resources being available.

**AM05** To facilitate measures which enhance cycling infrastructure and the cycling experience in the plan area. The Council will also work with and support other stakeholders (including community groups, landowners and developers) in this regard. Measures which will be undertaken include;

- the enhancement of safety for travelling within, to and from, Courtown and Riverchapel,
- the provision of a safe, convenient and fit for purpose cycle parking facilities,
- the promotion of 'everyday' and recreational cycling within, and to and from, Courtown and Riverchapel, including the development of connections to a National Cycling Network and
- The development of cycling paths in tandem with new pedestrian routes subject to suitability and the necessary financial resources being available.

**AM06** To restrict development where the local roads network is deficient including considerations of capacity, width, alignment, surface or structural condition.

**AM07** To require retail, commercial and employment developments to provide accessible, off-street parking in accordance with the development management standards set out in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. Where this is not possible, the Council may, on a case by case basis consider the payment of a development contribution towards the provision of car parking elsewhere subject to this arrangement being in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**AM08** To facilitate the provision of pedestrian access between Riverchapel National School and Beachside Housing Estate.

### Section 11 Housing

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#### 11.1 Background

Courtown and Riverchapel experienced a substantial increase in house construction from the mid 1990s to 2006. The demand for new private housing was met by the development of new housing estates mainly to the south and west of the plan area. The capacity constraints with the waste water treatment plant, taken in conjunction with the economic downturn, resulted in limited house construction since 2007. Notwithstanding this, there remains a good supply of housing in the plan area, in particular vacant houses which form part of both completed and unfinished housing developments.

The Council must ensure that there is sufficient housing to meet demand and the allocated population target for the plan area. The plan must therefore provide sufficient residential zoned land to facilitate new housing developments.

#### 11.2 Population Target for the Plan Area

The population targets for the plan area are derived from the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 and the Core Strategy in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. The Core Strategy designates Courtown and Riverchapel as a 'District Town'.

As explained in Chapter 2, the 2011 baseline population for the plan area differs to that set out in the Core Strategy. While the baseline population is different, the same population growth rates have been applied to this baseline figure. The population target for the plan area is 3,233 persons by 2020. This represents an increase of 227 persons during the lifetime of the plan.

### 11.3 Housing Land Requirements

The population target equates to 155 additional households/housing units. At an average density of 20 units per hectare, this equates to 7.75 hectares. The RPGs recommend that a 75% over zoning be allowed for in the interests of choice and ensuring the availability of land. A total of 13.56ha of residential land would be required.

However, there are a significant number of vacant housing units in the plan area and it is considered that these units can contribute to facilitating the housing needs of the population targets. There are 189 vacant residential units of various types within the plan area. It is difficult to quantify what the take up of these units will be. On this basis it is assumed that 50% of the units will become occupied, that is, 95 units. This therefore reduced the required additional household/housing unit figure to 60 units. There are also extant planning permissions for residential developments in the plan area. Having regard to current market conditions, it is assumed that 20% of these units will be built. The housing requirement is therefore reduced to reflect this. This means that the household requirement is reduced from 60 units to 23 units.

These 23 units will be provided for through new residential developments on residential zoned lands. At an average density of 20 units per hectare this equates 1.15ha, and allowing for the 75% over-zoning, a total of 2ha is required. There is approximately 1.8 ha of undeveloped residential land zoned in the plan area. This land was identified using the sequential approach which focuses on infill sites in the village centre and thereafter greenfield lands located closest to the centre. This land is the nearest Greenfield site to the village centre. It is expected that a proportion of the vacant housing stock will meet some of the housing demand over the plan period. This, taken in conjunction with the quantum of housing units which can be provided by the current vacant stock and the extant permissions, is considered sufficient to meet the housing needs of the area during the lifetime of the Plan.

### 11.4 Future Residential Development

Housing in the plan area varies from one-off housing on the outskirts of the plan area and the village centre to larger estates of varying densities and design to the west and south of the plan area. The village centre experienced some higher density residential developments such as Ocean Point.

The density and design of future residential development will be guided by the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Area Guidelines and companion Best Practice Urban Design Manual (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008). These guidelines set out best practice advice and developers will be required to take account of these guidelines when designing new residential developments. This will result in high quality sustainable residential developments.

The Council also promotes the concept of universal design which is based on the concept that the design of new developments should consider people's diverse needs and abilities throughout the design process so as to provide an adaptable environment that meets the needs of all. All buildings should be designed to meet the needs of all people who may wish to use them. This is not a special requirement for the benefit of only a minority of the population; everyone benefits when an environment is accessible, usable and convenient and a pleasure to use.

### 11.5 Apartments

Apartment developments have occurred in the plan area, mainly in the village centre as a part of mixed use developments. The role apartments play in meeting the accommodation needs of smaller households is acknowledged. However, the location and type of this development needs to be controlled. Apartment developments will generally only be considered in the village centre and will not be permitted where there is an overprovision of this type of development. All new apartments will be required to have a minimum internal floor area of 75m<sup>2</sup>.

The development of apartments for use as holiday home accommodation will not be considered except in the case of apart-hotel accommodation in the Village Centre or



on the lands zoned 'Tourist Accommodation'. This type of development will only be considered where the subject lands can accommodate it and the scale, form and design of the development is in accordance with the proper planning of the area.

The sub-division of dwelling houses into apartments will generally not be permitted within residential areas designed and developed for single family occupancy. Apartment development will be required to comply with the relevant development management standard set out in Chapter 18 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

### **11.6 Infill and Backland Development**

Infill housing in existing residential areas and the village centre will be considered. Potential sites may range from a small gap infill, unused lands, side gardens of existing houses, to larger undeveloped sites. Proposals for infill development will need to clearly demonstrate that the proposal respects the existing character of the area and would not harm the amenities of adjoining properties.

The development of backland sites in a coherent and well-designed manner will allow for the efficient use of serviced lands and can enhance visual amenities and vibrancy. The Council will generally facilitate well-designed developments on backland sites, particularly where such developments brings into use derelict sites. Each case will be assessed on its merits having regard to the site's context and zoning and the relevant development management standards set out in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

### **11.7 Unfinished Housing Developments**

There are six unfinished housing developments in the plan area in varying degrees of completion. However, only small components of two of these estates are Category 4 and have been identified as Property Tax exempt; within two areas in Riverchapel Woods and Woodlands.

The Council has set up a dedicated team to focus on the resolution of unfinished housing developments. In accordance with the Guidance Manual on Unfinished Housing Developments, the plan recognises the need to resolve these unfinished developments. The Council will therefore adopt a flexible approach to planning applications which seek to address outstanding issues in such developments.

All unfinished housing developments are activity being dealt with by Wexford County Council. To date final road surfacing has been carried out at Glen Aoibhinn, Riverchapel, the sewers have been inspected for maintenance using CCTV cameras and health and safety works have been carried out by erecting and painting security fencing around unoccupied properties. A small area in Riverchapel Woods has been secured and health and safety works have been carried out to secure undeveloped lands.

### **11.8 Traveller Accommodation**

Wexford County Council adopted an Accommodation Programme for the Traveller Community 2014-2018. The Council will monitor the requirements of the indigenous travelling community within the plan area for any future requirements. The programme has not identified any current housing requirements in the plan area.

### **11.9 Housing Objectives**

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

**H01** To ensure that all new residential developments in the plan area provide a high quality accessible living environment with attractive and efficient dwellings located in a high quality public realm and serviced by well-designed and located open spaces and area designed. The density of the residential development shall be appropriate to the location. All new housing developments shall have regard to the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2008) and any subsequent review, update or circulars issued in relation to the guidelines.

- H02** To require new residential developments in the plan area to provide, where possible, safe pedestrian linkages to adjoining developments and the village centre.
- H03** To restrict apartment developments generally to the village centre. Apartments will not be permitted where there is an overprovision of this type of development. Apartments for use as holiday homes accommodation will only be considered on lands zoned Village Centre and Tourist Accommodation and will only be considered where the subject lands can accommodate apartments and the scale, form and design of the development is appropriate to that particular area and in accordance with all normal and planning and environmental criteria.
- H04** To require new apartments to have a minimum internal floor area of 75m<sup>2</sup> and to comply with all normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Chapter 18 in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.
- H05** To encourage infill and backland housing development on appropriate sites where such development respects and enhances the existing character of the area and does not negatively impact on the amenities of adjoining properties.

Applicants and their agents should also refer to Chapter 4 Housing of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 for other relevant objectives relating to housing. Regard should also be had to Chapter 18 Development Management Standards.

### Section 12 Built and Natural Heritage

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#### 12.1 Architectural Heritage

The Record of Protected Structures is contained in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. There are currently nine protected structures within the plan area which are listed in the Record of Protected Structures. These are shown on Map 6. Section 14.6 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 sets out the Council's objectives with regard to protected structures, and this section should be consulted in the cases of all development proposals relating to protected structures. Each owner and occupier of a protected structure is legally obliged to ensure that the structure is preserved and that the structure or any element of it is not endangered through harm, decay or damage, whether over a short or long period, through neglect or through direct or indirect means.

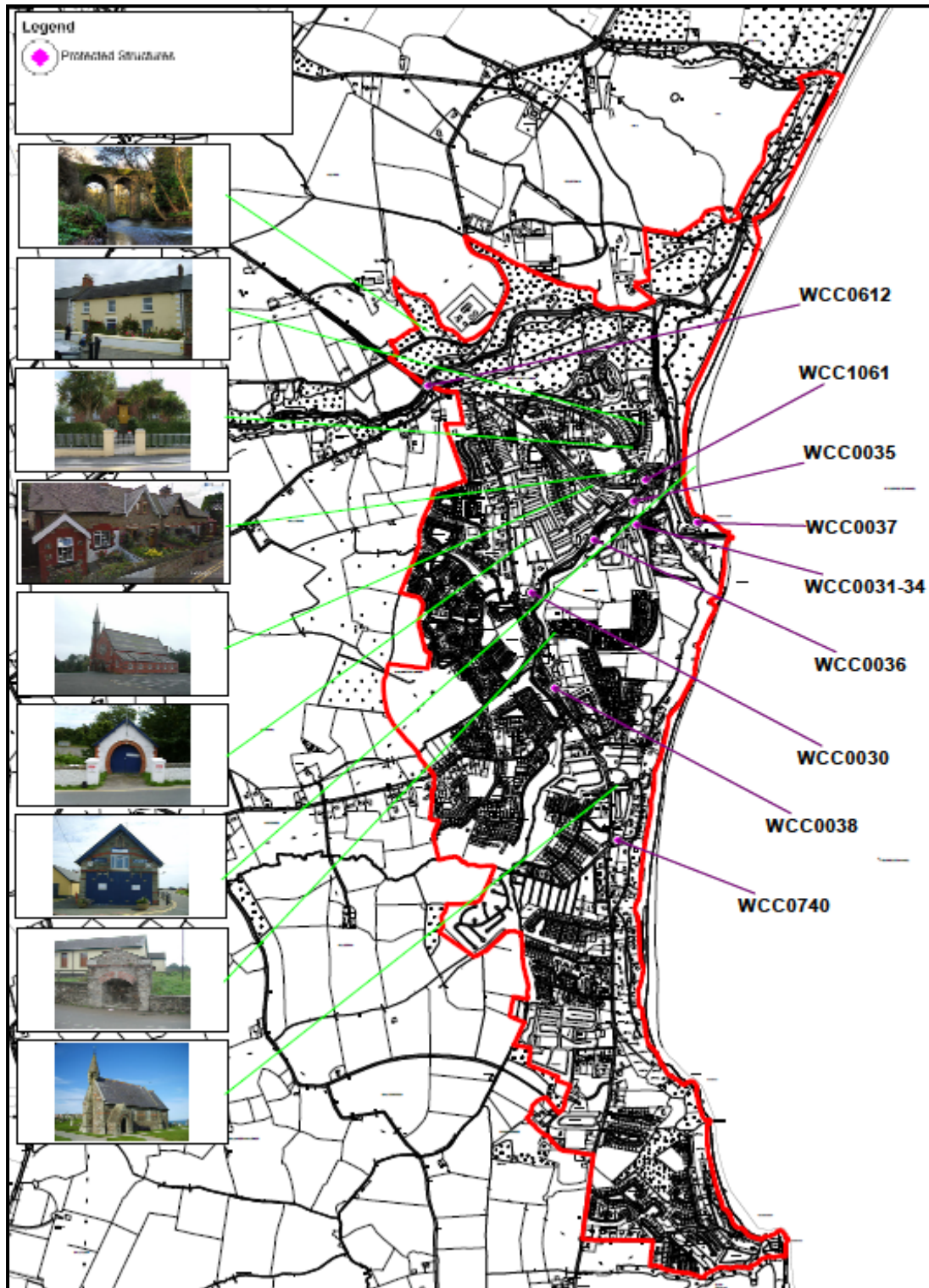
Aside from protected structures there are other distinctive elements of the built heritage which make a positive contribution to the character of the area and help to achieve a sense of place. This includes elements of the older settlement of Courtown such as the Fishermen's Cottages and the Harbour which have an important social and historical association with the development of the villages. The Council is committed to the protection, appreciation and appropriate re-use of this built heritage.

#### **It is the objective of the Council:**

- PS01** To protect the architectural heritage of Courtown and Riverchapel by;
- (a)** promoting the maintenance, continued use and/or appropriate reuse of its Protected Structures, and
  - (b)** promoting the retention, adaptation and reuse as appropriate of other structures of architectural heritage merit within the plan area that make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes.

Applicants and their agents should also refer to Section 14.6 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 for other objectives relating to protected structures.

**Map 6 Protected Structures in the Plan Area**



## 12.2 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological heritage is a unique and special resource which needs to be conserved. The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 provide for the protection of archaeological sites and monuments. The Record of Monuments and Places is a statutory list of all known archaeological monuments and these are known as Recorded Monuments. There following five recorded monuments area in the plan area. These are shown on Map 7.

Reference No	Description
WX012-006	Latin Cross, Ballinatry, Courtown
WX012-00901	Graveyard, Ardamine, Courtown
WX012-00902	Cross, Ardamine, Courtown
WX012-010	Castle-Motte & Bailey, Ardamine, Courtown (Unclassified earthwork)
WX012-012	Promontory Fort, Pollshone, Courtown. (Earthworks)

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

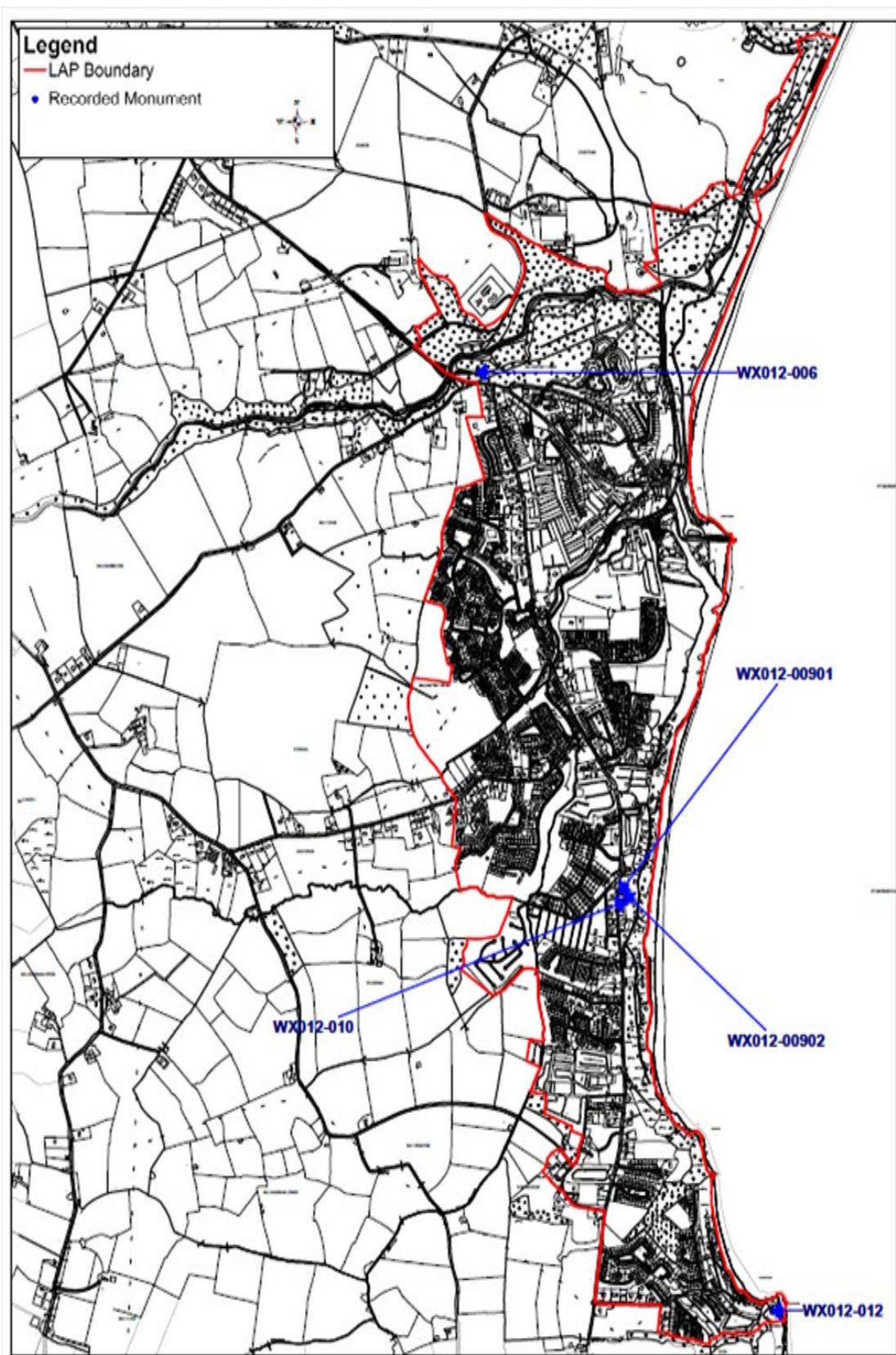
### It is the objective of the Council:

**NM01** To conserve and protect archaeological sites, monuments (including their settings), underwater archaeology and objects within the plan area including those listed on the Record of Monuments and Places, the Register of Historic Monuments or newly discovered sub-surface archaeological remains.

Applicants and their agents should also refer to Section 14.5 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 for other objectives relating to archaeological heritage.



Map 7 Recorded Monuments in the Plan Area



### 12.3 Natural Heritage

Courtown and Riverchapel have a diverse natural heritage ranging from dunes, rivers and riparian habitats, woodlands and groups of trees. Natural heritage, often referred to as biodiversity, is important for many things including food, fertile soils and clean air and water. It can be threatened by the development of land and human activity. Therefore, it is important that the development objectives in the LAP are balanced with conservation measures and objectives which ensure that the area's natural heritage is protected and conserved.

#### 12.3.1 Designated Sites

There are two proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) in the plan area: Courtown Dunes and Glen and Ardamine Woods (See Map 8). Courtown Dunes and Glen is a large area of mixed woodland situated in the north of the plan area. It consists mostly of mixed woodland along the Owenavarragh River and a dune ridge which is largely wooded. Ardamine Wood is situated in the south east of the plan area and consists of a woodland with associated scrub and heath that slopes down to clay sea cliffs and bedrock shores. These areas are zoned as 'Natural Amenity' in the Plan; the objective of which is to retain and protect these areas of high amenity value.

While there are no Natura 2000 sites within or immediately adjoining the plan area, there are a number of these sites within 15km. These sites include the Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC located approximately 10km along the coast to the north; the Cahore Polders and Dunes SAC and the Cahore Marshes SPA, located approximately 10km along the coast to the south; and the Slaney River Valley located approximately 10km inland to the west. It is an objective of the LAP (Objective AA01/NH01) to ensure that every plan or project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, are subject to appropriate assessment screening to ensure that there are no likely significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive are fully satisfied.

### 12.3.2 Ecological Networks and Wildlife Corridors

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive relates to ecological corridors/ecological stepping stones. Many habitats of conservation concern are linked to the surrounding landscape by natural and manmade features such as water courses (rivers, streams, canals and drainage ditches), hedgerows, treelines, roads and railways. Therefore, areas of conservation concern must not be considered in isolation. Their linkages and buffer zones must also be protected to ensure the continued migration of species and genetic diversity throughout the entire area.

Issues related to connectivity, including maintaining and establishing connections between protected areas, play an integral role in land-use planning. The Plan aims to improve the ecological situation in Courtown and Riverchapel and enhance connectivity between small fragmented areas.

Within the plan area and its immediate surroundings, an ecological survey has been completed to identify those habitats which would improve the ecological coherence throughout the entire area. The specific habitats identified include significant treelines, dune scrub and woodland, watercourses and semi-natural areas, like mixed broadleaved woodland and fixed dunes. These are shown on Map 8.

The habitats mapped within the plan area and its immediate surroundings include (in accordance with Fossitt classification and codes):

- Treelines (WL2)
- Fixed Dunes (CD3)
- Mixed Broadleaved Woodland (WD2)
- Dune Scrub and Woodland (CD4)
- Depositing lowland rivers (FW2), and
- Scrub (WS1)

### **Treelines (WL2)**

There are a number of short treelines within the plan area, however, the only significant treeline runs along the Aughboy River. Treelines in the area are dominated by Oak, Ash and Sycamore.

### **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland (WD2)**

There are a number of areas of Mixed Broadleaved Woodland throughout the plan area. These areas contain many trees which have been planted, however, some species particularly in the understory are likely to have self-seeded. These woodland areas provide habitat and potential corridors for many species including birds and mammals. Typical species include broadleaved species such as Beech, Oak, Sycamore, Willow, Alder and Pine species, Spruce species. Understory species include Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Elder and Leylandii.

### **Fixed Dunes (CD3)**

Fixed dunes are stabilised ridges or hills of sand with a more or less complete cover of vegetation, and where humus has accumulated in the soil. Species composition is highly variable but vegetation is usually characterised by herb-rich grassland or heath communities.

As the plan area is coastal, there are significant areas of fixed dune habitat along the coastline. Fine-leaved perennial grasses such as Red Fescue and bents dominate this habitat and a variety of broadleaved herbs can be found such as Lady's Bedstraw, Common Bird's-foot Trefoil, Kidney Vetch and Ribwort Plantain.

### **Dune Scrub and Woodland (CD4)**

Dune Scrub and Woodland includes fixed or flattened dunes where scrub or woodland has replaced herbaceous or dwarf shrub communities. This may have occurred naturally as a result of succession; however it is likely that trees and shrubs may also have been planted on dunes within the plan area. The Dune Scrub comprises of spinose species such as gorse, hawthorn, blackthorn, and bramble and in the north of the plan area Sea-buckthorn. Sea-buckthorn has been planted in the past in order to create a stable sand dune system. There is a large area of Dune

Woodland to the south, most of which is likely to have been planted and which contains Willow species, Ash, and Alder.

### **Depositing/Lowland Rivers (FW2)**

Large streams and rivers within the plan area and along its boundary have the potential to provide important fisheries habitat and refuge for protected species such as Salmonids (salmon and trout) and Otter.

The Aughboy River is the most significant watercourse running through the plan area together with a channel of the Owenavorrhagh River to the north. These rivers are not designated under the Habitats Directive but they contain good salmonid (salmon and trout) habitat along their lower reaches prior to discharging to the sea. However, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water quality monitoring programme, the water quality of the Aughboy River within the plan area is of poor quality giving it a biological water quality value of Q2-3, whereas the water quality of the Owenavorrhagh River to the north is of good quality (Q4).

Otter spraints (droppings) were observed along a tributary of the Aughboy River within the LAP area.

### **Scrub (WS1)**

Scrub habitat includes areas that are dominated by at least 50% cover of shrubs, stunted trees or brambles. Within the plan area, areas of scrub are dominated by Willow species, Hawthorn and Bramble. Scrub can be a natural stage in the succession of plant communities on a site eventually ending in woodland. Although not of high conservation value in its own right, this habitat can provide a valuable refuge or corridor for animal species.

### **12.3.3 River Corridors and Riparian Zones**

The management of the river corridors and riparian zones in the plan area is important for ecological and amenity reasons. The riparian zone needs to be considered as part of an integrated part of a river and it can be particularly vulnerable to damage from inappropriate development. Inappropriate development in



these areas can lead to significant environmental and economic problems including restricted public access and angler access, increased surface water runoff, increased flooding and erosion, loss of habitats and food for fish and mammals and a reduction in biodiversity. Development proposals in a riparian zone must take steps to ensure the protection and conservation of the area and the conservation of its habitats and species, which may be impacted upon either directly, indirectly or cumulatively by the development proposal. The Council will apply the principles for protecting watercourses set out in the document 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (Shannon Regional Fisheries Board) when considering development proposals.

It will be necessary to set aside buffers zones with a sufficient area of land along the river corridor. The width of the riparian buffer zone will be dependent on the width of the river and the nature of the site, as such it will be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, a minimum of 5-10m in width will be required. In some instances buffers of up to 50m may be appropriate. It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river and the riparian zone. Applicants are advised to refer to the above document and contact the Planning Authority at pre-planning stage with regard to buffers and the requirement for ecological assessments.

### **12.3.4 Invasive Non-Native Species**

Invasive non native plant and animal species can represent a major threat to local biodiversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. While the Council is committed to controlling invasive species, vigilance is required by all landowners as invasive species can spread quickly across boundaries. Preventative measures include ensuring that good site hygiene practices are employed for movement of materials into, out of and around the site and ensuring that imported soil is free of seeds and rhizomes of key invasive plant species.



### 12.4 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure can be defined as an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to the human population. It includes rivers, inland waterways, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, coastal areas, parks and open spaces, natural conservation areas, gardens and allotments.

The Council supports the concept of Green Infrastructure and it is an objective of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 to prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the county. This strategy will guide the protection, provision and management of the county's green spaces in tandem with plans for growth and development. Development proposals within the plan area will be required to have regard to this Strategy. In the meantime, the Council will ensure that the principle of Green Infrastructure informs the development management process in terms of design and layout of new schemes.

### 12.5 Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure Objectives

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

**NH01** To ensure that any plan or project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure that there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where the plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.

- NH02** To ensure the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. These features are outlined as Ecological Corridors/Ecological Stepping Stones on Map 8. Where such features exist on land which is to be developed, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the design of the development has resulted in the retention of these features insofar as is possible and that the impact on the biodiversity of the site has been minimised and where possible enhanced.
- NH03** To ensure the protection and conservation of areas, sites and species and ecological networks/corridors of local biodiversity value within the plan area.
- NH04** To ensure, where appropriate, applications for development include proposals for native planting and leave a suitable ecological buffer zone between the development works and areas or features of ecological importance. Where hedgerows are required to be removed, the applicant/developer may be required to reinstate the hedgerows with a suitable replacement of native species to the satisfaction of the Council.
- NH05** To ensure riparian buffer zones, a minimum of 5-10m in width (in some cases buffer zones of up to 50 m may be appropriate) are created between all watercourses and any future development. In considering the appropriate width, the Council will have regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment Guidelines' (Shannon Regional Fisheries Board).
- NH06** To only consider proposals for culverting/piping of streams and watercourses where these works are deemed absolutely necessary and appropriate. Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) will be consulted, where appropriate.

**NH07** To have regard to the 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment Guidelines' (Shannon Regional Fisheries Board) when considering development proposals in the vicinity of rivers and streams within and adjoining the plan area.

**NH08** To promote best practice in the control of invasive species and support measures for the prevention and/or eradication of invasive species as appropriate and as opportunities and resources allow.

**NH09** To raise awareness in relation to invasive species, including making landowners and developers aware of best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species and encouraging them to adhere to same and, to ensure, in so far as possible, that proposals for development do not lead to the spread of invasive species.

Applicants and their agents should refer to Chapter Flood Risk Management and Chapter 14 Heritage for other relevant objectives relating to natural heritage.

### Section 13 Infrastructure

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#### 13.1 Water and Waste Water Infrastructure

Irish Water is now responsible for the delivery of water and waste water infrastructure. An upgrade to the Courtown Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) commenced in 2014 and is expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2016. The upgraded plant will have a design capacity of 35,000P.E. with 20,000 P.E. allocated to Gorey and 15,000 P.E. allocated to Courtown. The Gorey WWTP will be converted to storm water storage once the Courtown WWTP is complete and all waste water from Gorey Town will be pumped to the Courtown WWTP.

A new Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and water storage reservoir are proposed at Ballyminaun Hill to the south of Gorey Town. Irish Water is currently carrying out a review of this proposal. The proposal is included in Irish Water's 2014-2016 Capital Investment programme.

The upgrades to the WTP and the WWTP will ensure a sufficient supply of water and waste water infrastructure to serve new development in the plan area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to development taking place.

The Council will also encourage the owners of existing properties served by private on-site waste water treatment facilities to decommission these facilities and connect the property to the public waste water system. This would contribute to environmental gain and maximise the significant investment into this infrastructure in the plan area.

#### **It is the objective of the Council:**

**WW01** To promote the provision by Irish Water of adequate water and waste water treatment infrastructure to serve the needs of the existing and future population of the plan area and ensure that such infrastructure is provided prior to, or in tandem with, new development.

- WW02** To ensure that development permitted would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface waters, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors, estuarine waters, bathing waters, coastal and transitional waters.
- WW03** To require that all wastewater generated is collected, treated and discharged after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner, having regard to the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance.
- WW04** To promote the conservation of water supplies through the maintenance of the mains and the elimination of leakages.
- WW05** To encourage the decommissioning of existing on-site private waste water treatment facilities and the connection of the subject properties to the public waste water treatment system subject to the compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance.

### 13. 2 Waste Management

#### 13.2.1 Waste Management Facilities

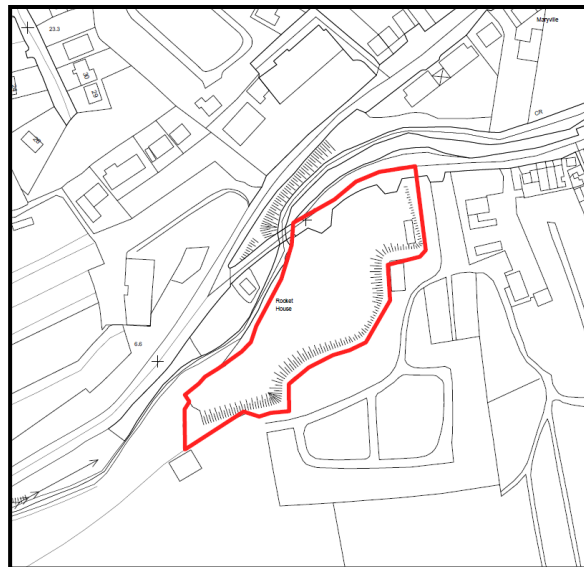
There is one recycling bank within the plan area. This is located in the public car park in front of Courtown Adventure and Leisure Centre. The nearest civic amenity facility is in Gorey Town. The Council will continue to support the provision of waste management facilities where there is an identified need.

#### 13.2.2 Former Landfill Site at Seamount

A former landfill site is located in the plan area at Seamount. The site, the location of which is identified on Figure 6, measures approximately 0.85 hectares. It was used as a quarry in the 1960s and operated as a landfill site during the period 1965-1975.

The subject site is zoned for Leisure and Amenity. Any development of this site will be subject to appropriate risk assessment and remediation works being carried out in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice: Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites (April 2007), the EPA Landfill Manuals and/or other best practice as appropriate. All such measures shall be agreed with the Environment Section of Wexford County Council prior to developing the site and shall also be subject to the required Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment screening procedures, site specific flood risk assessment and Waste Permit Licences, as appropriate.

### Figure 6 Site of the Former Landfill at Seamount



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

- WM01** To require the provision of recycling facilities and adequately screened waste storage areas in all new residential and commercial developments.
- WM02** To encourage the recycling of all materials from all waste sources and promote the principles of waste prevention and minimisation with local businesses, schools and residents associations.
- WM03** To require appropriate risk assessment and remediation works to be carried out at the former landfill site at Seamount to the satisfaction of the local



authority prior to any development taking place on that site. Regard shall be had to the EPA Code of Practice: Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites (April 2007), the EPA Landfill Manuals and/or other best practice as appropriate. All such measures shall be agreed with the Environment Section of Wexford County Council prior to developing the site.

## **Section 14 Flood Risk Management and Surface Water**

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### **14.1 Background**

Flooding is a natural process that can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations. It has significant impacts on human activities, and in addition to economic and social damage, floods can have severe environmental consequences. As a result of climate change there is a likelihood of increased rainfall and rising sea levels and this will give rise to increased future flood risk.

Flood risk management aims to minimise the level of flood risk to people, businesses, infrastructure and the environment. This is done by identifying and managing existing and potential future flood risks. Flood risk assessment was carried out during the preparation of the LAP through a process known as Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (Refer to Appendix No. 3).

### **14.2 Flood Risk Management in the Plan Area**

The SFRA identified that there are flood risk issues along the course of the River Owenavorrhagh and River Aughboy and along parts of the coastline. This has informed the zoning of lands in these areas. Lands in the identified Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B areas have been avoided and are zoned for water-compatible uses under the land zoning objective 'Leisure and Amenity'.

In 2011, the OPW carried out a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), a national screening exercise which identified areas of potential significant flood risk (referred to as Areas for Further Assessment or AFAs). Courtown is an AFA and the OPW are currently preparing flood zone maps for the area. This will then be followed by the preparation of a Flood Management Plan for Courtown by 2015/2016.

This is therefore a significant time in the planning for future flood risk management in Courtown and Riverchapel. The Council will have regard to all current and future flood maps and the flood risk management plan when assessing development proposals, and if deemed necessary, will review the Plan when the flood risk management plan is finally published.

Applications for minor development proposals will be assessed in accordance with Section 5.28 of the Guidelines (as amended by PL2/2014). Minor developments such as small scale infill, small extensions to houses or the rebuilding of houses, and most change of use of existing buildings and or extensions and additions to existing commercial and industrial enterprises, are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues, unless they obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas or entail the storage of hazardous substances. Since such applications concern existing buildings or developed areas, the sequential approach cannot be used to locate them in lower-risk areas and the Justification Test will not apply. However, a commensurate assessment of the risks of flooding should accompany such applications to demonstrate that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities. These proposals should follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the proposal.

### **14.3 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

The management of surface water and storm water is important so as to avoid increased flood or pollution risk in rivers, streams and the storm water network. The Council will require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all new developments. The incorporation of SuDS techniques allows surface water to be either infiltrated or conveyed more slowly to water courses using porous surface treatments, ponds, swales, filter drains or other installations. This will minimise the risk of flooding and contamination and protect environmental and water resources.

### **14.4 Flood Risk Management Objectives**

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

- F01** To have regard to any current and future flood hazard maps, flood risk maps and flood risk management plan prepared for the plan area as part of the South-East Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAM).

**F02** To ensure that all development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009), as amended by Circular PL2/2014 and any subsequent review or other future update to the Guidelines and to ensure that the Justification Test of Development Management is applied to development proposals, where required and in accordance with the methodology set out in the guidelines.

**F03** To ensure that screening for flood risk is carried out for all development proposals in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management –Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009, as amended by Circular PL2/2014 and any other future update to the Guidelines.

Planning applications for development proposals within, or incorporating areas at moderate (Flood Zone B) to high (Flood Zone A) risk of flooding will be required to be accompanied by a site specific and appropriately detailed flood risk assessment. In Flood Zone C the need for an appropriately detailed site specific flood risk assessment will be assessed based on a number of factors including, inter alia, the proximity to Flood Zone A or B, the topography of the subject lands and adjoining lands and the nature and vulnerability of the development proposal.

The required site-specific flood risk assessment shall be carried out by a suitable qualified and indemnified professional and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009) as amended by Circular PL2/2014 and any other future updates to the Guidelines.

**F04** To require the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of

sustainable drainage for new developments or extensions to existing developments.

- F05** To require the separation of foul and surface water discharges in new developments through the provision by the developer of separate networks.
- F06** To ensure new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere including that which arise from surface water run-off.
- F07** To ensure riparian buffer zones, a minimum of 5-10m in width (in some cases buffer zones of up to 50 m may be appropriate), are created between all watercourses and any future development. In considering the appropriate width, the Council will have regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment Guidelines' (Shannon Regional Fisheries Board).

### Section 15 Coastal Protection

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#### 15.1 Background

The LAP must take account of the changing and dynamic nature of the coast and the need for coastal protection. While erosion is a normal occurrence in coastal areas, rates of erosion may be accelerated due to storm action, inappropriate development, pressures from leisure or recreational activities or the presence of man-made protection works. In addition, the impacts of predicted sea level rise due to climate change need to be considered. The predicted increase in the frequency of storm surges and high tides resulting from climate change will increase the extent, severity and recurrence of coastal flooding and may also lead to increased rates of coastal erosion.

Coastal erosion can have serious economic and social consequences. The winter of 2013/14 highlights the significant damage and costs to a community that can occur as a result of extreme weather events. As these events may be set to become more frequent, there is an increased need to ensure that future development in the plan area is carefully considered and managed from a coastal protection perspective. There is a strong case for restricting and containing development near the coast and development along the coast must recognise the need for coastal protection in all instances.

#### 15.2 Coastal Erosion in the Plan Area

The Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study Phase II shows predicted future erosion on the east coast for the years 2030 and 2050.<sup>3</sup> The study identifies low confidence rates for erosion predications in localised areas where coastal protection works are in place. This includes Courtown (at the northern end of the plan boundary) and Pollshone (at the southern end of the plan boundary). In between these areas,

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<sup>3</sup> The erosion maps have been produced for existing conditions only and do not currently include for projected future changes in climate such as sea level rise, increased storm frequency or associated variations in erosion rates. Neither do they include for variations in erosion rates due to planned coastal protection or dredging works or other potential changes of a geological nature.



Ardamine is identified as one of ten primary areas of potential significant coastal erosion hazard. This area is identified as having high confidence (i.e. between 70% and 85% confidence in the erosion extent shown).

Courtown North Beach has extensive coastal protection works all along the boundary between the dunes/woodland and the beach itself. To the south of Courtown Harbour, a number of landowners have placed rock armour along the boundaries of their property.

### **15.3 Coastal Protection in the Plan Area**

Coastal development must take account of the changing and dynamic nature of the coast and the need for coastal protection. The rate of coastal erosion experienced to date and the predicted coastal erosion levels in the Ardamine area have raised significant concerns about allowing future development in this area. Therefore, in the absence of a coastal protection strategy for this area and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development, this area has been sub-divided into two areas which restricts development in Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 (refer to Section 6.4.6).

The Council's coastal works programme includes the renewing and rehabilitation of existing rock armour, regular maintenance dredging of the harbour area and the potential proposed construction of four break waters at Courtown Beach. These, and all other coastal protection works, will be subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and compliance with relevant EU and national legislation and guidance.

The carrying out of coastal protection works by private landowners requires planning permission. These works need to be carried out in a planned and co-ordinated manner to avoid potential negative knock-on effects on adjoining properties. The Council will consider the carrying out of environmentally sensitive coastal protection works where necessary and subject to the works being appropriately designed and where it is demonstrated that the works would not significantly exacerbate existing problems of coastal erosion or result in altered patterns of erosion, deposition of

flooding elsewhere along the coast to the detriment of other properties, important habitats, coastal features of Natura 2000 sites.

Given the nature, extent and pattern of development within the villages of Courtown and Riverchapel, with the exception of Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 in the Burrow and Pollshone, the Council will consider new building development on suitably zoned land within 100m of the soft shoreline subject to complying with the requirements of Objective CP04 and all other relevant objectives. The Council will however consider the carrying out of appropriate coastal protection works within 100m of the soft shoreline in Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 in the Burrow and Pollshone.

### 15.4 Coastal Protection Objectives

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

- CP01** To control the nature and pattern of development within the plan area. Development shall be prohibited where it poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in adverse patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.
- CP02** To review coastal erosion in and adjoining the plan area and to carry out appropriate remedial action where appropriate and subject to compliance with all relevant EU and national legislation and guidance and normal planning and environmental criteria.
- CP03** To consider the carrying out of environmentally sensitive coastal protection works where appropriate and subject to the works being suitably designed and where it is demonstrated that the works would not exacerbate existing problems of coastal erosion or result in altered patterns of erosion, deposition or flooding elsewhere along the coast to the detriment of other properties, important habitats, coastal features or Natura 2000 sites.

- CP04** With the exception of Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 in the Burrow and Pollshone, to consider the development of a new building (including caravans or temporary dwellings) on suitably zoned land where the development is within 100m of the 'soft shoreline', that is, shorelines that are prone to erosion. It must be objectively established based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application, that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, any impacts of the proposed development on erosion or deposition, and that the development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features.
- CP05** To only consider developments where they will not result in an increase in coastal erosion, either at the subject site or at another location in the vicinity subject to compliance with relevant EU and national legislation and guidance and all other normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Section 16 Land Use Zoning

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#### 16.1 Background

The purpose of land use zoning is to promote the orderly development of the plan area, to establish an efficient basis for investment in public infrastructure and facilities and to avoid potential conflict between opposing land uses. It also identifies for property owners, developers and the public the types of developments and uses that the Planning Authority considers most appropriate on lands within the plan area.

The land use zoning objectives, which are identified on Map 10, have been formulated having regard to the following:

- The existing pattern of development.
- The need to promote the proper planning and sustainable development of Courtown and Riverchapel in accordance with national, regional and local policies.
- The need to zone sufficient lands at appropriate locations to accommodate the population target and to facilitate economic and retail development, in particular, to maximise the tourism development potential of the plan area.
- The location, accessibility and availability of land for development.
- The existing and future provision of essential infrastructure (water, sewerage and roads) and the need to ensure the efficient use of this infrastructure.
- The location and adequacy of existing social infrastructure (for example schools, childcare facilities and sports facilities).
- The character of the area with regard to the scale and pattern of development.
- The physical features and amenities of the area.

### 16.2 Land Use Zoning Objectives

#### **Existing Residential (R)**

‘To protect and enhance the residential amenity of existing residential areas’.

This zoning relates to existing residential lands that are fully or partially built on. The purpose of the zoning is to preserve existing residential areas and to provide for infill development at a density that is considered suitable to the area. While infill or redevelopment proposals would be acceptable in principle, careful consideration will be given to protecting residential amenity. In general development will not be permitted on lands zoned for residential development unless a better amenity provision is developed in lieu.

#### **New Residential (NR)**

‘To provide for new residential development, associated residential services, and community facilities’.

The purpose of this zoning is to provide for new permanent residential development and associated residential services. Density will generally be permitted at an average of 20 units per hectare. While housing is the primary use on these lands, recreation, education, childcare facilities and community buildings will be considered subject to the preservation of neighbouring residential amenity. The Planning Authority may also consider a local convenience shop to serve the day-to-day needs of the residents of that particular area in the plan.

#### **Village Centres (VC)**

Zoning Objective: ‘To provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of the village centres through consolidating development, maximising the use of lands and encouraging a mix of uses’.

The purpose of this zoning is to enhance the vitality and viability of the village centres. This can be achieved through the appropriate development of under-utilised

lands and brownfield sites and by encouraging a variety of uses to make the centres attractive places to visit, shop and live in.

The full use of existing buildings and backlands will be encouraged with appropriate uses. New development proposals will be required to protect and enhance the character of the centre.

### **Community and Education (CE)**

Zoning Objective: 'To protect, provide for and improve community and educational facilities'.

The purpose of this zoning is to protect and improve existing community and educational facilities and to safeguard their future development. Residential uses will not normally be permitted in this zone.

### **Holiday Caravan/Mobile Homes Parks (HCMP)**

Zoning Objective: 'To control and provide for the improvement of existing caravan/mobile home parks.

The purpose of this zoning is to regulate the future development of caravan/mobile home parks in the plan area. Any future proposals on these lands will be required to demonstrate that the development will positively contribute to the visual amenities of the area, improve the quality and standard of accommodation and where possible, improve and provide additional associated facilities.

### **Chalet Area 1 and 2 (CA1 and CA2)**

Zoning Objective: 'To control and co-ordinate the development of existing plots and habitable and non-habitable structures in the Burrow and Pollshone Area'.

The purpose of this zoning is to strictly control the future development of Chalet Area 1 and Chalet Area 2 in the Burrow and Pollshone and to ensure that future development and any proposals to replace existing habitable structures and ancillary developments are done so in a coherent and planned manner.



### **Commercial Leisure (CL)**

Zoning Objective: 'To provide for the expansion of existing and the development of new leisure facilities'

The purpose of this zoning is to allow for the expansion of Courtown Adventure and Leisure Centre and to encourage the development of additional leisure facilities on these lands. In particular, the Council will encourage leisure/recreation developments which would extend the tourist season.

### **Tourist Accommodation (TA)**

Zoning Objective: 'To provide for the development of additional tourism accommodation'

The purpose of this zoning is to allow for the provision of appropriately scaled and designed tourism accommodation and to secure the delivery of the coastal path and linkages to adjoining residential areas.

### **Open Space and Amenity (OSA)**

Zoning Objective: 'To protect and provide for attractive and accessible public open spaces and amenity areas.'

The purpose of this zoning is to retain existing public open spaces (both passive and active) and to provide additional areas of public open spaces. The Planning Authority will not normally permit development that would result in a loss of established open space or lands zoned for open space and amenity. An exception may be made where appropriate compensatory provision is made elsewhere in the plan area.

### **Natural Amenity (NA)**

Zoning Objective: 'To retain and protect areas of high natural amenity'

This purpose of this zoning is to retain and protect areas of high natural amenity value and to provide a level of conservation for biodiversity and/or visual amenity.

### **Leisure and Amenity (LA)**

Zoning objective: 'To provide for water-compatible leisure and amenity uses'.

The purpose of this zoning is to provide for amenity and open space, however as the areas may be subject to flooding certain specific developments are excluded. While this area is generally intended to be open in character some water-compatible developments as set out in Table 3.1 Classification of Vulnerability of Different Types of Uses of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009). Such uses include water-based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation), amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms.

### **16.3 Land Use Zoning Matrix**

The land use zoning matrix is intended as a general guideline in assessing the acceptability or otherwise of developments proposed in each zone. This matrix is a guideline and the listed uses are not exhaustive. The indication that a use would be permitted in principle or open to consideration relates to the acceptability in principle of the use only. Factors such as density, height, traffic generation, environmental factors and design criteria are also important in establishing whether or not a development proposal conforms to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Guidelines and standards on these matters are set out in Chapter 18 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

#### **P= Permitted in Principle**

A use which is 'Permitted in Principle' is generally acceptable subject to complying with the relevant objectives, standards and requirements set out in the Plan and the Wexford County Development Plan.

#### **O= Open for Consideration**

An 'Open for Consideration' use is one which the Planning Authority may permit where it is satisfied that the suggested form of development will be compatible with the objectives for the zone, will not conflict with the permitted uses and conforms

with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Particular attention will be given to the nature and scale of the development when assessing compatibility. When considering whether any given development is appropriate in any zone, the Planning Authority will have regard to the relevant objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the Plan and the Wexford County Development Plan.

### **N= Not Normally Acceptable**

Development that is classified as 'Not Normally Acceptable' in a particular zone is one that will not be permitted by the Planning Authority, except in exceptional circumstances. This may be due to its effect on existing and permitted uses, its incompatibility with the relevant objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the Plan and the Wexford County Development Plan.

### **Change of Use and Extensions of Existing Buildings**

Change of use and extensions to existing buildings will generally be required to be consistent with the zoning matrix. Exceptions to uses not normally permissible in the zoning matrix will be considered where:

- a. the Planning Authority is satisfied that the use or extension would not conflict with the land use zoning;
- b. the use or extension would not negatively impact on the amenity of the area;  
and
- c. the use or extension would not give rise to additional planning considerations above those of the existing/previous use.

## Section 16: Land Use Zoning

Use	R	VC	CE	HCMP	CA1	CA2	CL	TA	OSA	NA	LA
	NR										
Allotments	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	O	P	N	O <sup>9</sup>
Amusement/Arcades	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Betting Office	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
B&B/Guesthouse	O	P	N	O	N	N	O	O	N	N	N
Car Park	O <sup>6</sup>	P	O <sup>6</sup>	O <sup>6</sup>	N	N	O <sup>6</sup>	O <sup>6</sup>	O <sup>6</sup>	O <sup>8</sup>	O <sup>6</sup>
Chalets	N	O <sup>1</sup>	N	O <sup>1</sup>	O <sup>5</sup>	O <sup>5</sup>	N	O	N	N	N
Childcare facilities crèche/nursery	O	P	P	O	N	N	O	O	N	N	N
Civic amenity/recycling centre	N	O	P	O	N	N	O	O	O	N	N
Community buildings	O	P	P	O	N	N	O	O	O	O <sup>8</sup>	N
Culture, recreation and leisure	O	P	P	O	N	N	P	O	O	O <sup>8</sup>	O <sup>7</sup>
Education	O	P	P	O	N	N	O	N	N	O <sup>8</sup>	N
Enterprise centre	N	P	N	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Financial institutions/facilities	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Garden centre	N	O	N	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Light Industry	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Holiday Caravan/Mobile Home	N	O <sup>1</sup>	N	P	O <sup>5</sup>	O <sup>5</sup>	N	O	N	N	N
Holiday Homes	N	P	N	O	O <sup>5</sup>	O <sup>5</sup>	O	O	N	N	N
Hotel	N	P	N	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N
Hostel	O	P	N	O	N	N	O	O	N	N	N
Medical and related services	O	P	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Nightclub	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Office	O	P	N	O <sup>2</sup>	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Place of worship	O	P	P	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

## Section 16: Land Use Zoning

Post Office	O	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Use</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>VC</b>	<b>CE</b>	<b>HCMP</b>	<b>CA1</b>	<b>CA2</b>	<b>CL</b>	<b>TA</b>	<b>OSA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>LA</b>
	<b>NR</b>										
Public house	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Residential	P	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Retirement home	P	P	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Restaurant	N	P	N	O <sup>3</sup>	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Retail (convenience)	N	P	O <sup>3</sup>	O <sup>3</sup>	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Retail (comparison)	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Service Station/Petrol Filling Station	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Service Garage	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Storage/Warehousing	N	O	N	O <sup>4</sup>	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Takeaway	N	O	N	O <sup>3</sup>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Touring Caravans	N	O <sup>1</sup>	N	O	N	N	O	O	N	N	N

O<sup>1</sup> Upgrading/improvement of existing caravan/mobile home parks will be open for consideration. The development of Greenfield lands in the village centre for this use will not normally be permitted (N).

O<sup>2</sup> Only offices ancillary to the operation of a caravan/mobile home park will be open for consideration on these lands.

O<sup>3</sup> Only retail convenience, restaurant or takeaway ancillary to the main use will be open for consideration in the CMP or CL land use zones. Similarly only retail convenience ancillary to the main use will be open for consideration in the CE land use zone.

O<sup>4</sup> Storage of an appropriate scale and ancillary to the operation of the caravan/mobile home will be open for consideration on these lands.

O<sup>5</sup> The replacement of existing chalet, mobile home or caravan will be open to consideration subject to compliance with the relevant objectives in the Plan, in particular, Objectives TA06 and TA07.

O<sup>6</sup> A car park will be considered where it is ancillary to the main use.

O<sup>7</sup> The proposed use must be a water-compatible development in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) as amended by Circular PL2/2014 and any subsequent review, update or circulars issued in relation to the guidelines.

O<sup>8</sup> Limited community, cultural, recreational and education facilities may be open for consideration in areas zoned as Natural Amenity where such development would add to the interpretation or enjoyment of these natural amenities subject to the proposed development not having a negative impact on the natural amenity/biodiversity. The Council will consult with the National Parks and Wildlife service in appropriate instances.

O<sup>9</sup> Allotments will not be considered on the site of the former quarry at Seamount.