

# Housing Strategy

VOLUME 6



**WEXFORD COUNTY  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2013 - 2019**

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# Section 1 Introduction and Context

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## 1.1 Introduction

This Housing Strategy, hereafter referred to as the Strategy, has been prepared by Wexford County Council, the Borough Council of Wexford and the Town Councils of Enniscorthy and New Ross to address the existing and future housing requirements of the county from 2013 to 2019. In view of the significant changes that have occurred in the economy, the housing market and the construction industry, a review of the existing strategy was required. These developments have prompted the announcement, in June 2011, of significant changes to Government housing policy. The Government has indicated their intention to review Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This review has commenced.

It is anticipated that the review of Part V will result in far reaching changes to the nature and functions of housing strategies and will include the standing down of affordable housing programmes combined with a greater focus on the delivery of social housing supports. This Housing Strategy is therefore considered as an interim Housing Strategy until such time as the revised Part V is enacted and the Councils are in a position to plan for housing provision in a manner consistent with the policies which will frame the respective development plan periods.

This Strategy will become part of the respective town and environs development plans when those plans are varied to accommodate it, and part of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 when the Plan is adopted. It is likely that the revisions to Part V of the Act may be completed in advance of the adoption of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 and the Strategy will require significant revision or replacement either during the plan preparation process or shortly after the adoption of the Plan.

Where there is reference to the Planning Authority, Housing Authority or Council in this document it should be read with reference to all of the

authorities. A review of the Housing Strategy was also carried out in 2010 and the content of that review has been incorporated in this Strategy.

### **Aim**

The aim of this Strategy is to ensure access by each household in County Wexford to affordable housing or accommodation of good quality, culturally acceptable, suitable to its needs and in the tenure of their choice, as far as possible.

### **Layout of this document**

This section gives the legislative and policy context for the Housing Strategy. Section 2 looks at the demand for housing in the county and the information available on the quantity and form of existing housing and housing land supply in the county. Section 3 examines social and affordable housing in County Wexford. Section 4 provides an estimate of the requirements for social and affordable housing. Section 5 outlines the Council's objectives for implementing the Strategy.

## **1.2 Legislative Context**

Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), hereafter referred to as the Act, requires that all planning authorities prepare housing strategies and incorporate them into their development plans. Section 10(1A) of the Act requires that development plans include a Core Strategy which shows that the Plan is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the relevant Regional Planning Guidelines. Planning authorities are required to demonstrate that the Housing Strategy is aligned with the population projections contained in the Core Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines.

The Act provides that a housing strategy shall take into account:

- The existing need and the likely future requirement for social and affordable housing
- The need to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income
- The need to ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of the different categories of households, as may be determined by the Planning Authority, and including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities
- The need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds

Section 95 of the Act also requires that:

- The development plan shall ensure that sufficient land is zoned to accommodate the requirements of the housing strategy
- The Planning Authority includes objectives in the development plan to secure the implementation of the housing strategy, including the inclusion of objectives requiring that a specified percentage of land zoned for residential use be made available for social and affordable housing

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 has resulted in a number of changes to the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). However, these changes do not affect the substance of provisions outlined above. The Act requires the preparation of housing services plans and contains new provisions for the assessment of social housing needs. It also revises the housing authority's management and control powers and introduces antisocial behaviour strategies. It broadens the choices available to those seeking social housing by providing a more developed legislative basis for the Rental Accommodation Scheme and by expanding paths to home ownership through the new Incremental Purchase Scheme.

A number of the amendments included in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 have not been commenced to date and the Council has been advised by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government that these changes may not happen during the preparation of the Plan, or at all. Part V has also been amended by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010.

### **1.3 National Policy**

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2000–2006 and 2007-2013 provided the framework for addressing the infrastructural deficit in the size of the national housing stock. Considerable progress has been made in implementing the National Development Plan and Social Partnership Agreement: Towards 2016, but the challenge remains for policy development and implementation to keep pace with these, particularly having regard to the needs of a 'correcting' housing market, a changing population and an economy in recession.

The Government outlined its commitment to ensure that housing provision was sustainable and of high quality in its guidance documents 'Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities (2007)', 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007)', 'A Plan for Social Housing (1991)', 'Social Housing - The Way Ahead' (1995), along with the Government programme: 'An Action Programme for the Millennium (as revised in November 1999), and the National Development Plan and the recently published National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2013.

In general, housing policy decrees that those who can afford to do so should provide housing for themselves with the aid of the fiscal incentives available, and that those unable to do so from their own resources should have access to social housing or to income support to secure and to retain private housing.



## **Housing Policy Statement, 2011**

In June 2011 the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government issued a revised Housing Policy Statement. This document outlines a vision for the future of the housing sector in Ireland “based on choice, fairness, equity across tenures and on delivering quality outcomes for the resources invested”.

The overall strategic objective is to enable all households to have access to good quality housing appropriate to the household circumstances and in their particular community of choice.

A summary of measures outlined in the document are:

- More equitable treatment of housing tenure
- Maximising the delivery of social housing supports within the resources available
- Transfer of responsibility for long-term recipients of rent supplement to local authorities
- New mechanisms for the delivery of permanent social housing
- The standing down of all affordable housing schemes
- Formal review of Part V
- Publication of the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability
- Delivery of housing supports for households with special needs
- Creating an enabling regulatory framework to support the increasingly prominent role of the voluntary and cooperative sector in housing delivery
- The implementation of measures to tackle anti-social behaviour across all housing tenures.

The document outlines the Department’s view that there has been too much emphasis placed on home ownership in the past and that this has had a detrimental effect on the economy. It is stated that future housing policy will focus on meeting the most acute needs.

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (DECLG, 2011) outlines the Government strategy to address the housing needs of people with disabilities over the period 2011 to 2016. The commitment to the development of the housing strategy was set out in the social partnership agreement, 'Towards 2016', and underpinned in the 2007 housing policy statement, Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities. The Government's new Housing Policy Statement, published in June 2011, supports the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability as part of a framework of initiatives to provide for the housing needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged households.

The Strategy's vision is: to facilitate access, for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

The Strategy has nine strategic aims:

- To promote and mainstream equality of access for people with a disability to the full range of housing options available suited to individual and household need
- To develop national protocols and frameworks for effective interagency cooperation which will facilitate person-centered delivery of housing and relevant support services
- To support people with a disability to live independently in their own homes and communities, where appropriate
- To address the specific housing needs of people with an intellectual and/or physical disability, moving from congregated settings in line with good practice, including through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community
- To address the specific housing needs of people with a mental health disability, including through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community, for people with low and medium support needs moving from mental health facilities, in line with good practice

- To consider good practice in the design, coordination and delivery of housing and related supports
- To facilitate people with a disability to access appropriate advice and information in respect of their housing needs
- To improve the collection and use of data/information regarding the nature and extent of the housing needs of people with a disability
- To provide a framework to support the delivery, monitoring and review of agreed actions.

### **Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan 2008-2013**

The Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan (DECLG, 2008) states that the Strategy will be carried out primarily through the local Homeless Action Plan process prepared under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. Further details on these plans are contained in Section 4.

The core objectives of the Strategy for 2008-2013 are to:

- Reduce homelessness through preventative measures
- Eliminate any need for people to sleep rough
- Eliminate long term homelessness and reduce the length of time people spend homeless
- Meet the long term housing needs of people progressing out of homelessness
- Ensure services for homeless people are effective
- Improve funding arrangements and re-orientate resources in line with the objectives of the Strategy

## **Section 2 Housing Demand and Supply**

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### **2.1 Housing Demand**

This section sets out the projected demand for housing units based on the population targets contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 (RPGs) and the Core Strategy contained in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. It was necessary to establish the average household size for the future population in order to calculate the required number of households.

#### **2.1.1 Population**

Previously the practice was to project the population of the county and the main settlements and predict the required number of housing units accordingly. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 now requires planning authorities to take a more planned approach and to indicate the proposed distribution of the population assigned to the county in the RPGs and the county's Settlement Hierarchy. The population allocations for the county and for Wexford Town are set by the RPGs. The target populations for the remaining towns, villages and rural areas are detailed in the Core Strategy contained in Chapter 3 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. These are indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1 Population Allocation**

Settlement Type	Settlement Name	2011	2013	2016	2019	2022
<b>County</b>		145,320	149,618	156,065	161,074	166,083
<b>Hub</b>	Wexford Town	20,072	21,443	23,500	25,100	26,700
<b>Larger Town</b>	Enniscorthy	10,838	11,411	12,271	12,939	13,607
	New Ross	7,887	8,460	9,320	9,988	10,656
	Gorey	9,114	9,687	10,547	11,215	11,883
<b>District Towns</b>	Bunclody	1,570	1,633	1,727	1,821	1,915
	Castlebridge	1,726	1,760	1,813	1,860	1,908
	Courtown and Riverchapel	4,570	4,661	4,801	4,925	5,053
	Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane	1,662	1,723	1,815	1,906	1,998
	Wellingtonbridge	219	241	274	307	340
<b>Strong Villages, Smaller Villages and Rural Areas</b>		87,662	88,599	89,997	91,013	92,023

**2.1.2 Household Size**

In order to estimate the number of housing units required in the county over the period of the Strategy, it is necessary to establish the average household size in the county. The average household size in the county has steadily decreased in recent years, and this was particularly evident in the urban areas of the county. Table 2 illustrates this.

**Table 2 Household size 1971-2022**

Year	1971	1981	1991	2002	2006	2011	2016	2022
<b>Urban</b>	4.01	3.71	3.27	2.75	2.60	N/A	2.39	N/A
<b>Rural</b>	4.07	3.92	3.61	3.16	2.99	N/A	2.71	N/A
<b>County</b>	4.05	3.85	3.49	3.01	2.85	2.7	2.55	2.55

**Source: CSO and Wexford County Council**

Figures for 2016 have been estimated based on the percentage decrease between 1971 and 2006. This indicates that average household size will decrease to 2.55 persons. It was decided to also use 2.55 for 2022 for the purposes of the calculation of demand due to uncertainty with regard to changes likely in household size.

The Housing Strategy included in the County Development Plan 2007-2013 estimated that there would be a demand for 8,127 units over the period of the Strategy. It is likely that this demand has been met by the supply of houses which have come to the market since 2004.

Table 3 shows the quantitative demand for households in the Plan area for the period of the new Strategy. These figures do not take account of vacant housing and as such should not be taken as the requirement for new build housing over the period of the Strategy.

**Table 3 Housing Demand**

	Population in Private Households <sup>1</sup>	Household Size	Households	Additional Households <sup>2</sup>
<b>2011</b>	144,349	2.7	53,463 <sup>3</sup>	N/A
<b>2016</b>	156,065	2.55	61,202	7739
<b>2022</b>	166,083	2.55	65,131	3,929
<b>2013-2019</b>	-	2.7/2.55	-	6,609

## 2.2 Housing Supply

This section looks at the information available on housing supply, specifically the information on house completions from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and information on household numbers, composition and accommodation from the Central Statistics Office (CSO). This data gives an indication of whether the demand forecast under the previous Strategy has been met, the type of units that have been built and the other changes that have occurred in order to identify changes in demand. The section also looks at vacant housing, house prices in the county, the role of the private rental sector in supplying housing, the supply of social and affordable housing and the availability of zoned land.

### 2.2.1 House Completions

There was a steady increase in house completions in County Wexford from 1995 onwards. House completions peaked in 2006 with 3,391 houses built in that year. However, since 2007, there has been a significant decrease in

<sup>1</sup> The figure for persons in private residences in 2011 is from the Census of Population 2011. The actual figure for total population according to the Census of Population 2011 was 145,320. The figures for 2016 and 2022 are from the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and are for total persons and not for persons in private households.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the households for the purposes of the Housing Strategy relate to the period of 2013-2019 only whereas for the Core Strategy they relate to 2011-2019. The figures are also different as the Housing Strategy refers to people in private residences only whereas the Core Strategy refers to total population in the county.

<sup>3</sup> The figure of 2.7 has been used for average household size in 2011 for the Housing Strategy as this is the figure that appears in the Census of Population 2011. However, if the 'number of persons in private households' is divided by the 'number of private households' the average household size is 2.74. The figure of 2.7 has been used but for this reason the number of households in 2011 is not the same as that in the Census (52,652).

house completions due to the downturn in the economy, with an 87.2 percent drop between 2006 and 2011. Table 4 and Chart 1 reflect these changes. The Housing Strategy contained in the County Development 2007-2013 identified a demand for 8,127 units. The data in Table 4 confirms that 7,310 units were completed during the years 2007-11. Assuming that building continued at the 2011 rate in 2012 and 2013 then the demand identified would be satisfied by 2013. There are two further factors to consider. Firstly, some of the houses completed would have been holiday homes and secondly, it is likely that there was a significant latent supply as a result of the number of house completions between 2004 and the start of 2007 (9,614 units).

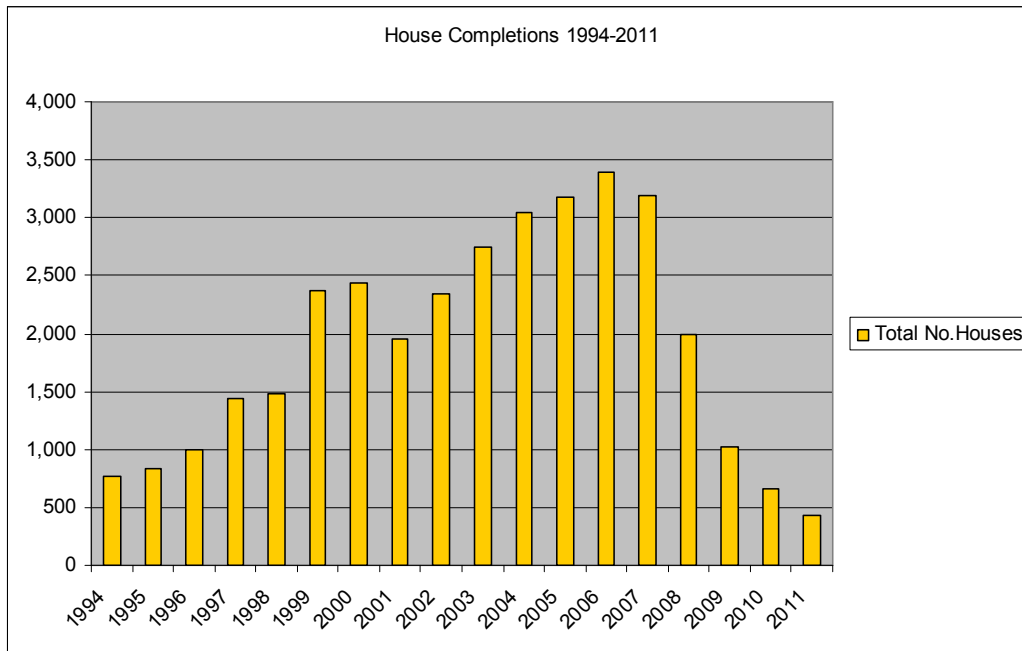
**Table 4 House Completions and Percentage Change 1995-2011<sup>4</sup>**

	Total	% Change
<b>1995</b>	840	9.7
<b>1996</b>	992	18.1
<b>1997</b>	1,446	45.8
<b>1998</b>	1,484	2.6
<b>1999</b>	2,375	60.0
<b>2000</b>	2,432	2.4
<b>2001</b>	1,955	-19.6
<b>2002</b>	2,342	19.8
<b>2003</b>	2,743	17.1
<b>2004</b>	3,043	10.9
<b>2005</b>	3,180	4.5
<b>2006</b>	3,391	6.6
<b>2007</b>	3,194	-5.8
<b>2008</b>	1,998	-37.4
<b>2009</b>	1,024	-48.7
<b>2010</b>	659	-35.6
<b>2011</b>	435	-34.0

<sup>4</sup> Source: DECLG - based on the number of new dwellings connected by the ESB to the electricity supply, but excludes conversions and may not accord precisely with local authority boundaries.



**Chart 1 House Completions 1994-2011<sup>5</sup>**



### **2.2.2 Household Composition and House Types**

In Wexford, social and demographic changes such as the increase in one person households and the change in household composition have resulted in a decrease in household size. Such changes give an indication of the type of housing that will be required over the period of the Strategy and the policies required to ensure that such housing is provided. The information on household size, household composition and house types completed is shown in Tables 5 and 6.

The number of private households in the county increased from 45,566 in 2006 to 52,652 in 2011; an increase of 7,086. As discussed in Section 2.1.2 above, the average number of persons in private households has decreased from 2.84 persons per household to 2.7 in 2011. This trend, which is likely to continue, indicates that more dwellings will have to be supplied for the same amount of people and that smaller unit sizes may be appropriate.

<sup>5</sup> DECLG - based on the number of new dwellings connected by the ESB to the electricity supply but excludes conversions and may not accord precisely with local authority boundaries.

**Table 5 Private Households by Composition<sup>6</sup>**

Household Composition	2011		2006	
	Number Households	% of Overall Households	Number Households	% of Overall Households
Private Households	52,652		45,566	
One person	12,210	23.2	9,657	21.2
Husband and wife	8,431	16.0	7,216	15.8
Cohabiting couple	2,107	4.0	1,835	4.0
Husband and wife with children	16,634	31.6	15,063	33.1
Cohabiting couple with children	2,324	4.4	1,725	3.8
Lone mother with children	5,321	10.1	4,226	9.3
Lone father with children	826	1.6	695	1.5
Husband and wife with other persons	411	0.8	396	0.9
Husband and wife with children and other persons	886	1.7	288	0.6
Cohabiting couple with other persons	205	0.4	979	2.1
Cohabiting couple with children and other persons	160	0.3	161	0.4
Lone mother with children and other persons	467	0.9	408	0.9
Lone father with children and other persons	99	0.2	119	0.3
Two family units with/without other persons	641	1.2	759	1.7
Three or more family units with/without other persons	12	0.0	12	0.0
Non-family households containing related persons	1,009	1.9	1,117	2.5
<b>Households comprised of unrelated persons only</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>2.0</b>

<sup>6</sup> CSO, Census of Population 2011, Population by Province, County or City, Composition of Private Household, Statistical Indicator and Census Year. Census of Population 2006: Number of private households and number of persons in each Province, County and City, classified by type of household, 2006.

There are a significant number of people living in single person households, accounting for 23% of all households in the county in 2011. There are also notable increases in the proportion of all households which are comprised of cohabiting couples with children, and the proportion of all households which are comprised of lone-parents. This means that, while there is a decrease in the proportion of households comprising married couples with children, there is still a demand for this type of family housing.

Table 6 details the type of accommodation of persons in private households in permanent housing units in the county. At present, 94.8% of all households in the county are accommodated in detached, semi-detached or terraced housing. This is notwithstanding the fact that 23% of the population live in single person households. It is evidence of the continued preference for houses over apartments.

**Table 6 Private Households in Permanent Housing Units by the Type of Private Accommodation<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Accommodation Type</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
All households	52,345
Detached house	32,119
Semi-detached house	11,064
Terraced house	6,454
Flat or apartment in a purpose-built block	1,467
Flat or apartment in a converted house or commercial building	512
Bed-sit	51
Not stated	678

It is clear from Table 7 that the vast majority of house completions during the peak building period were 'scheme houses' and that this trend has now

<sup>7</sup> CSO, Census of Population 2011, Private Households in Permanent Housing Units by the Type of Private Accommodation.

reversed with four times as many individual house completions in 2011 in comparison to scheme house completions. It is also clear that the increase in apartment building in the county evident from 1997 though to 2008 has halted, with only 13 apartments completed in 2011. It is interesting to note that while flats/apartments/bed-sits accounted for only 3.8% of households in 2011, they represented 12.5% of units completed at the peak of construction in 2007.

**Table 7 House Completions by Type<sup>8</sup>**

	<b>Individual House</b>	<b>Scheme House</b>	<b>Apartments</b>	<b>Total</b>		
2011	332	90	13	435		
2010	420	193	46	659		
2009	583	387	54	1,024		
2008	867	866	265	1,998		
2007	995	1,801	398	3,194		
2006	1,210	2,007	174	3,391		
2005	1,220	1,676	284	3,180		
	<b>Bungalow</b>	<b>House Detached</b>	<b>House Semi-Detached</b>	<b>House Terraced</b>	<b>Flat/ Apartment</b>	<b>Total</b>
2004	948	441	1,240	115	299	3,043
2003	901	507	1,015	79	241	2,743
2002	939	410	703	109	181	2,342
2001	904	450	416	53	132	1,955
2000	857	559	740	108	168	2,432
1999	591	737	847	75	125	2,375
1998	594	261	489	25	115	1,484
1997	677	111	440	30	188	1,446
1996	186	502	226	20	58	992
1995	294	311	158	13	64	840
1994	387	243	94	8	34	766

<sup>8</sup> DECLG: data based on the number of new dwellings connected by the ESB to the electricity supply but excludes conversions and may not accord precisely with local authority boundaries.

### **2.2.3 Vacant Housing**

The Census of Population 2011 recorded that 21% of all permanent housing units in County Wexford were vacant (other than temporary absences). This was down from 21.5% in 2006. There were 5,480 vacant houses, 1,574 vacant flats and 6,915 vacant holiday homes. Undoubtedly some of the demand identified in Table 3 will be accommodated in this vacant housing stock.

### **2.2.4 House Prices**

House prices have seen a considerable change in the past decade, rising steadily from the mid 1990s and reaching their peak in mid-2007. Since then the prices of new and second hand houses have decreased in County Wexford and across the country. Changes in prices will have an effect on the affordability of houses across the country although other factors such as the personal ability to source finance and the lending policies of the banking sector will also impact upon it. The existence of public confidence in the market and current and expected personal income will also be important factors in determining the demand for houses.

The Residential Property Price Index (CSO) is designed to measure change in the average level of prices paid for residential properties sold in Ireland. The Residential Property Price Index places residential property outside Dublin at 79.1 points in 2011 over a base of 100 at January 2005. This compares to 128 in 2007. According to property website DAFT, the average asking price for property in County Wexford is currently (April 2011) €143,829 compared to €205,156 in 2009; an overall reduction of 56.5% since the peak in 2007.

In general, as property is becoming cheaper, it is also becoming more affordable and accessible. Many of the conditions which necessitated the intervention by Government to provide affordable housing no longer apply. However, house prices alone will not ensure access to the property market and a number of other factors are relevant. Firstly, it is clear that there is still reluctance in the lending market and it would appear that there is difficulty for

individuals sourcing finance. Secondly, there is less certainty with regard to people's future income due to the current economic situation. Finally, and significantly, there are a large number of persons with mortgage arrears and/or unsustainable mortgages.

### **2.2.5 Private Rented Sector**

The private rented sector has grown in importance in the housing market in recent years, particularly considering the migratory nature of the population and the increase in house prices which prohibited home ownership for many in County Wexford. The current instability in the housing market and in the economy means that this trend towards private rented accommodation is likely to continue.

The report of the Commission on the Private Rented Residential Sector has led to the establishment of a Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) which aims to deal with disputes between tenants and landlords without recourse to the courts. The PRTB, which was established in September 2004, also operates a national tenancy registration system and provides information and policy advice on the private rented sector.

As illustrated in Table 8 there were 6,057 private rented housing registrations in County Wexford as of December 2011. This represents 11.5% of total households in the county. This is an increase from 5,083 registered units in May 2009.

**Table 8 Private Rented Housing Registrations (31 December 2011)**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Housing Registrations</b>
Wexford County Council	3,764
Wexford Borough Council	1,147
Enniscorthy Town Council	664
New Ross Town Council	482
Wexford County Total	6,057

Despite falling house prices, home ownership is still an objective for many people. Recent house price decreases coupled with stimulus measures, such as the elimination of stamp duty, have boosted home ownership potential. However, it is expected that other issues will come in to play as previously mentioned such as the reduced ability of individuals to source finance, the unemployment situation, pay cuts and the uncertain future regarding interest rates. The Government has also outlined a change in approach in its Housing Policy Statement (June 2011). It has announced that affordable housing schemes are to be stepped down. The policy statement indicated that the previous policy approach had put a disproportionate value on owner-occupation to the detriment of the economy.

Private rental accommodation can serve important functions in the housing market and in particular it offers:

- New households, or immigrants, time to acclimatise to the housing market
- Individuals time to bridge the gap of affordability to home ownership
- Accommodation for those seeking location specific accommodation (students/short term work arrangements)
- Accommodation as a transitory option prior to longer term commitments for those seeking private or public housing
- An outlet for those wishing to divest of accommodation no longer suited to their needs
- Accommodation for those who have a preference for rented accommodation.

It also provides the Housing Authority with a flexible solution for sourcing accommodation in general or housing of particular types or in particular locations. It also offers the opportunity to provide for more integrated communities which are not bound by the more traditional locations of existing social housing. The Rental Accommodation Scheme, dealt with in Section 2.2.6, will assist in providing such accommodation through housing authorities.

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government – Housing Policy Statement, 16 June 2011, also indicated that it intends to bring the voluntary and cooperative sectors within the PRTB's remit.

### **2.2.6 Rental Accommodation Scheme**

The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) is designed to provide security of tenure in good quality accommodation for eligible tenants in the private rented sector. Eligible tenants are persons in receipt of Rent Supplement (R/S) for more than 18 months and in need of long-term housing. There were 1,991 RAS eligible tenants in County Wexford receiving supplement from the Department of Social Protection in December 2011.

Under RAS, eligible tenants and their landlords become RAS clients. The rent negotiated between the local authority and the landlord is paid monthly by the local authority directly to the landlord for the duration of the RAS contract. The tenant contributes to the rent but pays it to the local authority; not the landlord. Under RAS however, the landlord and tenant retain all duties and responsibilities under Landlord and Tenant law. The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 governs the relationship between the landlord and the tenant.

Under RAS local authorities make agreements with private landlords (or voluntary bodies) to provide accommodation on a medium to long-term basis. The total number of RAS tenants accommodated in County Wexford up to December 2011 was 471. This is an increase from 273 in December 2009. A total of 179 tenants were accommodated under RAS in 2011. There were 71 RAS tenants in Voluntary Housing at 31 December 2011. Future agreements with private landlords (or voluntary bodies) will have regard to the adaptability/accessibility of the accommodation to enable the Council to accommodate the elderly and persons with a disability in accordance with the Council's identified requirements.



### **2.2.7 Rent Supplement**

Rent supplement is currently administered by the Department of Social Protection. The Government acknowledged in its Housing Policy Statement in June 2011 that rent supplement, which was intended as a short-term income support, had become a de facto long term social housing support. The Government indicated its intention to transfer the responsibility for those requiring long-term rent support to the local authorities. It is stated that an accelerated rate of transfer of households from rent supplement to RAS and the sourcing of increased rental stock will be key features of the new arrangements.

### **2.2.8 Housing Land Supply**

There is approximately 1,117ha. of residential zoned land in the county at present. This is detailed in Table 9. Table 1 in Section 2.1 outlines the distribution of the population allocation for the county (from the RPGs) to the tiers on the Settlement Hierarchy. Table 9 shows the level of zoning required to accommodate the population in each of the tiers on the hierarchy. Table 9 also shows the existing zonings in the town development plans and local area plans in the county. These Plans will be varied to accommodate the revised Core Strategy figures within one year of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 being adopted.

**Table 9 Zoning Required/Existing**

	2013-2019 Required Zoning (ha)	Existing Zoning (ha)
Wexford Town	180.68	398
Enniscorthy	92.75	379
New Ross	87.12	39
Gorey	89.46	121
Bunclody	11.61	75
Castlebridge	7.91	n/a
Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane	11.55	11.8
Courtown	2.95	n/a
Wellingtonbridge	3.44	n/a
Smaller villages and rural	282.02	93.70

It is clear that there is ample land zoned for residential purposes to cater for future population growth in the county.

### 2.2.9 Local Authority Land Bank

Table 10 shows the size of the Wexford Local Authorities' land bank in 2011.

**Table 10 Land Bank of Wexford Local Authorities 2011<sup>9</sup>**

Area	Hectares
Wexford County Council	17.7ha
Wexford Borough Council	7.2
Enniscorthy Town Council	0
New Ross Town Council	0
<b>Total</b>	24.9

<sup>9</sup> Housing Land Availability Returns 2011, June 30 2011

## 2.3 Conclusion

The Housing Strategy contained in the County Development Plan 2007-2013 identified a demand of 8,127 units. The data in Table 4 confirms that 7,310 units were completed during the years 2007-2011. Assuming the current rate of construction continued, the demand identified in the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013 would be satisfied by 2013.

An analysis of demand has indicated that there will be a requirement for 6,609 households during the lifetime of the County Development Plan 2013-2019. An analysis of CSO information and DECLG information on households and house completions indicates that household size has decreased to 2.7 persons and that 23% of all households in 2011 were one-person households. While this indicates that the Council should consider smaller unit sizes, care needs to be taken with regard to the design of the units as there is a clear preference for detached/semi-detached/terraced housing over apartments with 94.8 percent of households being accommodated in such housing units. Adaptability and accessibility of accommodation will also be important considerations in the design of new units.

There are currently 7,054 vacant housing units in County Wexford. This is a reduction of 0.5% on the number of units at the time of the Census of Population 2006. Some of the demand for housing identified in the Strategy could be accommodated in these units.

While house affordability has improved relative to personal income, it is apparent that difficulties are arising with regard to people sourcing finance due to stricter lending conditions. There are also new issues such as the significant number of people with negative equity, mortgage arrears or unsustainable mortgages. The private rental sector is healthy and would appear to be benefiting from the instability in the property market.

The Councils have a supply of 24.9 ha. of residential zoned land. However, some of this land is not capable of being utilised due to its location either on

unserved land or in locations which are inappropriate for further social housing. There is an adequate supply of land zoned for residential use in the county to accommodate the projected increase in demand over the period of the Strategy.

## **Section 3 Social and Affordable Housing in County Wexford**

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For the purposes of this Strategy, social housing is defined as rented housing provided by the Housing (Local) Authority or a voluntary or co-operative housing body or provided through the Rental Accommodation scheme (RAS). The Housing (Misc Provisions) Act 2009 (HMP Act 2009) specifies that “social housing support” includes a range of housing services. A housing authority is empowered to purchase, build, lease or otherwise acquire dwellings or sites for the purpose of providing social housing support. It also requires authorities to carry out its functions in a way that counteracts undue segregation between persons of different social backgrounds and ensures the provision of an appropriate mix of dwelling types and tenure classes.

The HMP Act 2009 also empowers a housing authority to enter into public-private partnership arrangements for carrying out its social housing support functions. It also provides updated powers for housing authorities to assess a household’s need and eligibility for local authority housing, rental accommodation including RAS and voluntary and co-operative housing provided with Exchequer funding.

Affordable housing is a form of subsidised owner occupier or shared housing provided at a price below market value. The demand for affordable housing has decreased in recent years. Thirteen affordable houses were provided in 2009 and no houses have been provided since that date.

The main services provided by housing authorities are classified into two groups:

- housing supports, including social housing supports, affordable housing, tenant purchase, loans and grants
- management, maintenance and refurbishment of dwellings owned by, or under the control of, housing authorities

### **3.1 Housing Needs Assessment**

The Housing Needs Assessment is a statutory count, carried out every three years by local authorities to identify the number of households who require social housing in each area. In 2011 the assessment that was carried out was not a full review of all applicants considered to have a housing need (as is normally the case) but it provided a snap-shot of the situation in advance of the introduction of the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011. The regulations introduced revised eligibility criteria. A reassessment of housing need was carried out subsequent to the commencement of the regulations using the new eligibility criteria.

The results of the assessment are used in planning for the provision of social housing by both the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and by local authorities. The assessment provides information which is comparable with previous assessments and shows trends in housing for each particular area over time. While many local authorities maintain up to date waiting lists of those in need of housing, the national assessment presents an important opportunity to create awareness and to reach those who may not be registered, yet have a housing need. The assessment also provides valuable information for housing associations on the level and type of housing need in any given local authority area and this will assist them in planning and developing housing projects to meet that particular need.

Table 11 illustrates the results of the Housing Needs Assessments conducted in 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2012, showing the proportional and actual increase in numbers in each assessment. The figures for 2012 are as a result of the re-assessment required under the Social Housing Assessment Regulation 2011. It is considered that this may be an underestimation as it would appear that not all those in need of housing re-applied. It is considered that these applicants may re-apply in due course.

Between the years of 2005 and 2012 there was a considerable increase in the housing need in the county with a 54% increase in the numbers assessed as

being in need of housing. The increase has been particularly marked in the New Ross Town and Wexford Town areas. However, it is considered that these figures represent an underestimation of demand. By comparison the increase in need at the county level between 2005 and 2011 was 116%. It is likely that the realistic figure is somewhere between these two figures.

**Table 11 Housing Needs Assessments**

Area	2005	2008	2011	2012	Change 2005-2012 (%)
Wexford County Council	903	1,218	1,701	1,358	50
Wexford Borough Council	355	875	1,145	595	67
New Ross Town Council	173	356	245	335	94
Enniscorthy Town Council	261	525	556	315	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,692</b>	<b>2,974</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>2,603</b>	<b>54</b>

As a result of applicants applying to multiple housing authorities, it is estimated that there is an over representation of 20% of housing applicants. Therefore, it is estimated that 80% of the Local Authority housing list is an accurate estimation of the current housing need in County Wexford. Current net social housing need, therefore, is estimated to be 2,082 people (80% of 2,603).

It is estimated that approximately 50% of those on the RAS system and/or those on the Department of Social Protection Rent Supplement payment have also applied for inclusion on the Local Authority Housing List. Current net social housing need, therefore, is approximately 1,846 (2,082 less 50% of RAS Tenants). However, as this figure is considered as an underestimate

due to the introduction of the Social Housing Assessment Regulations in 2011 the former figure of 2,603 is used as a basis for calculation.

### **3.1.1 House Composition Trends**

As previously discussed, an analysis of the Census of Population 2011 indicates that 23% of households in the county are single person households. There are also a significant number of households with children with 53% of all households having children. This structure of household composition will be reflected to some extent in the need for social housing. There will continue to be a requirement for a mix of units to meet changing needs and household sizes and to ensure house provision reflects local circumstances.

Table 12 illustrates social housing applicants by household type in 2011 (figures for 2012 not available to date). This shows the composition of households seeking social housing. There has been a substantial increase in one person households in need of housing, with 61% of approved applicants being in this category in 2011. By comparison 44% of approved applicants were one person households in 2009. Almost 23% of applicants were single parents. This is down from 32% in 2009. In both categories there is a significantly higher proportion of persons in need of social housing than their proportionate representation in the general population.



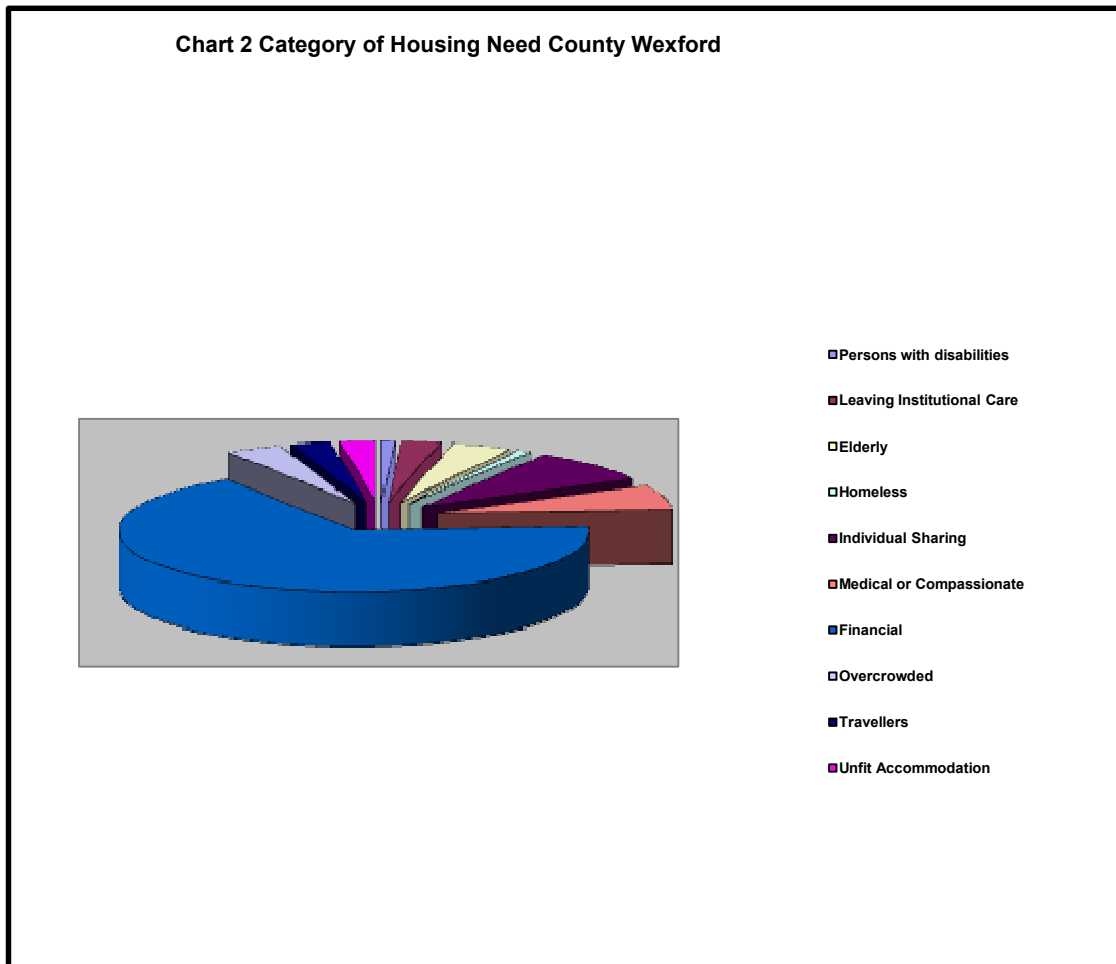
**Table 12 Social Housing Need - Household type of applicants by Housing Authority 2011<sup>10</sup>**

County Council / Town Council Areas	Single with child/Children				Couple with/without child/children				Family Household	One person Household	Total	
	1	2	3	4+	0	1	2	3				4+
Wexford County Council	269	72	19	9	76	77	54	20	10	606	1,095	1,701
Wexford Borough Council	174	71	23	9	59	55	39	13	5	448	697	1,145
Enniscorthy Town Council	90	27	10	6	47	32	19	6	2	239	317	556
New Ross Town Council	49	4	-	-	20	38	3	-	-	114	131	245
<b>Totals</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>2,240</b>	<b>3,647</b>
<b>% of total Households</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>10</sup> Table 18 in Appendix 2 details the 'open' housing applications for persons whose reason for application was categorised as persons with disability, medical or compassionate reasons.

### 3.1.2 Category of Need

Chart 2 provides an overview of the main reasons that people applied for social housing in 2011. The most common reason for social housing need is due to 'financial reasons' with 67% of all applicants citing this as the reason for applying to the housing authority. This is followed by people potentially requiring adaptable housing specific to their needs and possibly linked to a specific location to retain/obtain supports. These include persons in the categories for medical or compassionate reasons (6.6%), leaving institutions (2.7%) elderly (4.2%) and persons with disabilities (0.9%), overall as a grouping 14.4%. Followed by 'individuals sharing' (8%), overcrowding (3.9%), Travellers (2.7%), unfit accommodation (2.5%) and homeless (0.9%).



### 3.1.3 Housing Allocation Scheme

The purpose of the allocation scheme is to provide a means for determining the order of priority afforded in the letting of local authority accommodation to persons whose needs have been established in the Council's Assessment of Housing Needs or who are accepted for inclusion in the next Assessment. In July 2011 a new scheme was adopted by the Members of the Council in accordance with the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011. The aim of the scheme of letting priorities is to ensure equality in the average length of time a person remains on the housing list, ensuring all groups are catered for on an equal basis.

## 3.2 Social Housing Stock

### 3.2.1 Existing Local Authority Housing Stock

Table 13 details the total social housing stock owned by the Wexford Local Authorities or by voluntary bodies.

**Table 13 Social Housing Stock**

Authority	Stock
Wexford County Council	2,480
Wexford Borough Council	824
Enniscorthy Town Council	447
New Ross Town Council	466
Total	4,217
Voluntary	622
<b>Total Local Authority and Voluntary</b>	<b>4,839</b>

The vacancy rate for Local Authority stock at the 31 December 2011 was 107 units - 2.54% of stock.

### 3.2.2 Voluntary Housing Stock

Voluntary/Co-operative Housing Associations are independent non-profit making organisations formed for the purpose of relieving housing needs and the provision and management of social housing. They help to achieve a

balance in social housing provision by widening the range of housing choice or options to meet different and changing needs. They are mainly concerned with accommodating persons/families who are in need of housing and who do not have the resources to provide their own accommodation. These developments are funded by central Government under the Capital Assistance and Rental Subsidy Schemes. Table 14 outlines the total housing stock of the voluntary sector.

**Table 14 Voluntary Housing Stock in County Wexford (2012)**

<b>Voluntary Housing Association</b>	<b>Housing Authority Area</b>	<b>1 Bed</b>	<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>4 Bed</b>	<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cluid	New Ross	0	0	24	0	0	<b>120</b>
	Gorey	14	13	10	0	0	
	Enniscorthy	0	0	6	6	0	
	Ferns	0	0	8	10	0	
	Faythe, Wexford	0	4	25	0	0	
Respond	Ferns	0	0	8	0	0	<b>285</b>
	Enniscorthy	10	26	61	10	8	
	New Ross	38	11	25	6	0	
	Wexford.	18	20	19	0	25	
St. Vincent de Paul	Gorey	7	13	0	0	0	<b>52</b>
	Wexford	21	11	0	0	0	
Tagoat Community	Tagoat	0	2	8	0	0	<b>10</b>
			0	0	0	0	
Community Workshop	Enniscorthy	0	0	0	0	20	<b>20</b>
Community Workshop	New Ross	3	0	0	0	6	<b>9</b>
St. Aidan's	Gorey	0	0	0	0	18	<b>18</b>
New Dawn	Wexford	0	0	0	0	8	<b>16</b>
Crossabeg Ferns						8	
Irish Society for Autism, Kilmore	Wexford	0	0	0	0	7	<b>7</b>
Camphill Communities, Ballymoney	Gorey	0	0	0	0	13	<b>13</b>
Women's Refuge	Wexford	0	0	0	0	4	<b>4</b>
Ramsgrange Senior Citizens Concern Ltd.	New Ross	8	2	0	0	0	<b>10</b>
Wexford Mental Health	Oylegate					8	<b>8</b>
Grantstown	New Ross	0	24	0	0	0	<b>24</b>
Enniscorthy Community Housing Ltd.	Enniscorthy	16	9	0	0	0	<b>25</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>622</b>

### **3.3 Social Housing Support**

#### **3.3.1 RAS and Rent Supplement**

RAS and rent supplement have been dealt with in Section 2 as they directly affect the private rental sector.

#### **3.3.2 Incremental Purchase Scheme (IPS)**

The objective of the IPS is to provide an affordable route to homeownership for households that are renting social housing or those awaiting the allocation of social housing. The Scheme offers social housing applicants the earliest possible start on the path to home ownership for those willing and able to undertake a house purchase. It also provides a vehicle for effective saving for low-income applicants and allows the household to avail of the opportunity to improve their housing circumstances over time.

The Scheme will make it possible for households in receipt of, or eligible for, social housing support to purchase designated new local authority and approved housing body houses. The Scheme works by transferring full title to the new house to the purchaser on the payment of between 40% and 60% of the all-in-cost of the house, depending on the applicant's income. A charge is placed on the property in respect of the discounted amount which declines in annual increments of 2% of the total equity until the charge is eliminated. The buyer takes out a mortgage to meet the remaining cost of the house and accepts full responsibility for the maintenance, repair and insurance. The key elements of the Scheme are:

- The scheme will apply to new-build houses only
- The houses must be identified for sale by the local authority or approved housing body
- All households in receipt of, or eligible for, social housing support, including those in voluntary, co-operative and local authority RAS or leased properties may apply
- The purchase price is based on the all-in cost of providing the house with a discount of between 40% and 60% depending on income
- The purchaser is responsible for maintenance, repair and insurance

- A charge is put on the property in respect of the discount applied which is released at a rate of 2% per annum. If the house is sold within the first five years after purchase there is no release of the charge
- The property can be resold by the purchaser at any time at market value with the housing authority or approved body being paid, from the proceeds of the sale, an amount equal to the outstanding equity charge in the property
- The housing authority or approved body has first option on buying the property in the event of the resale of a dwelling by the purchaser during the charged period
- Special arrangements will allow purchasers to undertake improvement works with the agreement of the authority/body.

### **3.3.4 Tenant Purchase Scheme**

Tenants of a local authority house for at least one year may apply to the relevant local authority to purchase it either outright or by way of shared ownership. The price of the house will be its market value, as determined by the local authority, in its existing state of repair and condition, less discounts. The structural condition of the house is taken into account and any increase in the market value due to improvements made to the house by the tenant will be disregarded in calculating the price. The discount is 3% of the value of the house for each year of tenancy of a local authority house (up to a maximum of 10 years), plus 3,809 euro.

## **3.4 Special Needs Housing**

### **3.4.1 Grants**

The Housing Grants for People with a Disability Scheme (HGD) is available to assist in the carrying out of works that are necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability who is a member of a household. The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme (MAG) is available to fast track grant aid to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems, primarily but not exclusively associated with ageing in order that recipients are not subject to delays in accessing works. The

Housing Aid for Older People (HOP) scheme is available to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to carry out necessary repairs or improvements. Table 15 gives details of grant applications received, approved and paid from the commencement of the scheme in 2007 until December 2011.

**Table 15 Housing Grants**

2008 Grants	Applications Received	Applications approved	Value (€)
Housing Grants for people with a disability	385	193	2,792,656
Mobility Aids Grant	550	378	1,736,474
Housing Aid for Older people	1,654	866	5,219,322

Priority has been given to the approval of applications received under the HGD and MAG Schemes. All valid applications received under these schemes have been approved.

### **3.4.2 Travellers**

According to the annual census carried out by Wexford County Council in 2011 there are a total of 603 traveller families living in Wexford. Table 16 provides details of the accommodation types of these families.



**Table 16 Traveller Accommodation in County Wexford**

Type of Accommodation	Wexford	Enniscorthy	New Ross	Gorey	Total
<b>Standard Local Authority</b>	42	38	46	19	<b>145</b>
<b>Local Authority Group</b>	4	30	10	-	<b>44</b>
<b>Private Local Authority Assist</b>	4	13	9	1	<b>27</b>
<b>Private Houses</b>	25	50	54	11	<b>140</b>
<b>Private Rented</b>	29	38	32	26	<b>125</b>
<b>Voluntary Housing</b>	1	3	2	-	<b>6</b>
<b>Official Halting Sites</b>	-	6	3	-	<b>9</b>
<b>Other</b>	1	2	1	2	<b>6</b>
<b>Total With Accommodation</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>502</b>
<b>Sharing with Relatives</b>	15	12	6	8	<b>41</b>
<b>Yards of Houses</b>	13	9	27	8	<b>57</b>
<b>Parked on Private Sites</b>	3	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
<b>Unofficial Halting sites</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
<b>Transient sites</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
<b>Roadside Caravans</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
<b>No Fixed Abode</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Without Accommodation</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>603</b>

It should be noted that certain areas of the county have a higher concentration per capita of population indicating traditional areas of traveller settlement. These areas are mainly Enniscorthy Town, New Ross Town, Wexford Town, Clonroche, Taghmon and Bunclody. It is the policy of Wexford Local

Authorities to provide accommodation in accordance with the indicated preferred choices of the families concerned who normally reside in the county and as far as possible within the areas of choice.

The approach:

- It is intended to aim to provide the necessary required accommodation over the five year period of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2007-2013 and subsequently approved programmes prepared during the life of this Strategy.
- It is intended that the major element of accommodation will be provided under the relevant standard housing programme in accordance with the stated choices of the applicants
- It is envisaged that elements of traveller specific requests will be accommodated through vacancies in existing units
- In addition to the obligation of adopting a Traveller Accommodation Programme, Wexford Local Authorities intend to take all necessary steps and use all available means to implement the programme during its currency.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme outlined a commitment to accommodate 117 families during the life of the programme. To date, there have been 44 families accommodated. However, it is considered unlikely that the Housing Authority will be able to accommodate all of those remaining to be accommodated during the life of the Programme having regard to reduced funding for social housing.

The Council will examine the individual family circumstances and distinct needs of Traveller families when specific accommodation for these families is being arranged. This may involve consultation between the Traveller families, Council staff and Traveller support representatives. The design of Traveller accommodation will generally be in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government guidelines. Group Housing Schemes will also be designed to take into account Traveller families lifestyles

as far as practicable, while at the same time having regard to the need for effective accommodation management.

Basic amenity and community facilities will be provided where feasible and as required to cater for social, educational and training needs, in association with the provision of accommodation, in order to improve the quality of life - particularly for the future benefit of young Travellers.

### **Private Rented Accommodation**

A very noticeable trend in County Wexford during recent years is the large increase in Travellers moving to private rented accommodation:

- In 1999 there were 5 Traveller families living in private rented accommodation
- In 2004 this figure had risen to 20 families
- In 2011 this figure had risen to 125 families.

Despite the perception of ongoing difficulties for Traveller families accessing this form of accommodation, this trend would seem to indicate that private rented is now a popular choice of accommodation for Traveller families in County Wexford. It is the policy of Wexford Local Authorities to provide whatever assistance and support can be made available for such families.

### **Temporary and Emergency Accommodation**

Temporary accommodation will only be provided on an emergency short term basis. Details and conditions regarding the provision of emergency accommodation shall be in accordance with Section 24 of the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998. It is intended that wherever possible any emergency accommodation which may be required, shall be provided in conjunction with temporary halting site accommodation proposals in order to utilise land and resources to the maximum effect.

## **Transient Accommodation**

There is no identified need for a transient site. However, having regard to national policy regarding the provision of transient sites, it is an objective of Wexford Local Authorities to examine the feasibility of developing a transient site. This objective will require consultation and agreement with the other local authorities in the South-East Region.

### **3.4.3 Homeless**

The South-East Homelessness Action Plan 2010-2013 is an amalgamation of a large body of work which has been ongoing in the South-East Region over the past decade and more. It contains specific plans for each of the local authority areas in the region.

Wexford Homeless Action Team was established in June 2007. It is comprised of local authority housing personnel, Health Service Executive health care staff and voluntary service providers. The role of the homeless action team is to:

- Carry out an initial assessment of presenting homeless people
- Prepare and approve care and support plans
- Find and resettle homeless people into new permanent and emergency accommodation
- Regularly review the implementation and efficacy of plans
- Develop and implement local preventative strategies with other agencies such as hospitals, probation service, Gardaí, voluntary agencies and estates services

## **3.5 Housing Plans**

### **3.5.1 Housing Services Plan**

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 2009 obliges the housing authority to compile a Housing Services Plan. This section of the Act has yet to commence. This Plan sets out the objectives which the housing authority considers to be reasonable and necessary for the provision of housing services having regard to the requirements of the Housing Strategy or strategies relating to housing supports for its administrative area.

The Act states that housing services are ‘housing support provided to households for the purposes of meeting their accommodation needs’ including:

- Social housing support
- Affordable housing
- The granting of shared ownership leases under Section 3 of the Act of 1992
- The sale, or consent to the sale, of dwellings under Section 90 of the Principal Act
- Subsidies payable under Section 4 of the Act of 1992 or Section 7 of the Act of 2002
- Loans made under section 11 of the Act of 1992 or Section 25(1) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998
- Grants for works of improvement or adaptation to houses under Section 5 of the Act of 1992
- Grants and other assistance for the provision of new houses or improvement works to houses under section 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1979
- Services provided to homeless persons under Section 10 of the Act of 1988
- The provision of sites under Section 57 of the Principal Act

### **3.5.2 Housing Action Programme**

A Housing Action Programme is the mechanism for implementation of the Housing Services Plan. It will take account of the financial resources available for the period to which the Programme relates and will include the progress made in the implementation of the Housing Services Plan. A copy of the Housing Action Programme must be made available to the Minister and the members of the relevant Housing Authority.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009

### **3.6 Conclusion**

There has been a steady increase in the numbers of persons requiring social housing over the period 2005-2012. Using data from the Housing Needs Assessment carried out in 2011/2012 subsequent to the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011, it is estimated that 1,846 units are currently needed. However, this is considered to underestimate the number of units required as there are indications that all those who have a need did not reapply (subsequent to the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011) but may do so over the course of the Strategy. The increase in demand from 2005 to 2012 equates to 54%. If the assessment from 2011 is used the increase is 115%.

Of those that applied in 2011 61% were one-person households. This compares to 44% in 2009. This has significant implications for the type of units that should be provided. Twenty three percent of those with housing need were single parents.

The vast majority of those in need cited financial reasons as the main reason for requiring social accommodation. Other common reasons included 'individuals sharing' and 'medical or compassionate' reasons.

There is a total housing stock of 4,839 units in the county; 622 of these belong to Voluntary Bodies. The annual Traveller Census indicates that there are 101 Traveller families without adequate accommodation.

Housing must be made available for people with special needs including homeless people, Travellers, people with a disability, older people, refugees and asylum seekers and students.

## **Section 4 Estimated Social and Affordable Housing Need**

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This is a time of significant change in the housing market and the development and construction sector as a whole. Changes in prices will have an effect on the affordability of houses across the country, although other factors such as the personal ability to source finance and the lending policies of the banking sector will still create barriers to ownership. Public confidence in the market and current and expected personal income, along with the ability for individuals to source finance in the current climate will be important factors determining the demand for houses.

The Residential Property Price Index (CSO) is designed to measure change in the average level of prices paid for residential properties sold in Ireland. The Residential Property Price Index places residential property outside Dublin at 79.1 points in 2011 over a base of 100 at January 2005. This compares to 128 in 2007. According to property website DAFT, the average asking price for property in Co. Wexford is currently (April 2011) €143,829 compared to €205,156 in 2009 and an overall reduction of 56.5% since the peak in 2007.

This is also a significant time as the Government has signaled its intention to review Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and to step down all affordable housing programmes in the Housing Policy Statement issued in June 2011. It is stated that this is because a disproportionate weight has been placed on home ownership in housing policy and this has had a detrimental effect on the economy. The policy document indicates that future housing policy will focus on providing support to those most in need of housing. It is not intended to end Part V fully. It is stated that there is a continued rationale for capturing planning gain for residential development through the resourcing of social housing supports.

Section 94(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that a housing strategy shall include an estimate of the amount of:

- (i) housing for the purposes of the provision of social housing support with the meaning of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, and
- (ii) affordable housing (amendment under HMP Act not commenced)<sup>12</sup>

Section 94(5)(a) of the Act details the items to which planning authorities must have regard to when making an assessment of affordable housing. The methodology for carrying out such an 'affordability assessment' is included in 'Housing Supply – A Model Housing Strategy and Step-by-Step Guide', (DECLG, 2000). However, having regard to the changes in the economic and policy context, and specifically the Housing Policy Statement in June 2011 announcing that Affordable Housing Schemes should be stepped down, it is considered inappropriate to carry out an 'affordability assessment' as it cannot be considered that there is any need for affordable housing. The Council has consulted with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and it has been agreed that it would not be necessary to carry out such an assessment.

The Housing Policy Statement however outlines that there is a continued rationale for capturing planning gain through Part V. The estimate hereunder therefore provides details of the requirement for social housing only as a percentage of all new households formed.

Section 3.1 identified that 2,603 households were in need of social housing. In order to calculate the amount of growth in social housing it has been assumed that the average household size is 2.7. This equates to 7,028 persons in need of housing. It has been assumed that the number of persons requiring social housing will grow at the same rate as the general population

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<sup>12</sup> It is noted that the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 2009 contains an amendment to 4(a)(ii) but this amendment has not commenced yet and having discussed the matter with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) it appears that this section will not commence during the preparation of the plan, if at all.



for the period of the Strategy (i.e. 10.8% which the Regional Planning Guidelines allocated). This would give a total of 7,717 persons in need of housing over the period of the Strategy. It is anticipated that household size will have reduced to 2.55 by 2016, and this figure has been used to calculate the total number of social houses required by 2019.

**Table 17 Demand for Social Housing 2011-2019**

	<b>Units</b>
Net Social Housing Need	3,026
Less construction/purchase of social housing	5 p/a
Less provision of RAS Houses	140 p/a
Less Leases	20 p/a
Voluntary	5 p/a
<b>Net Demand</b>	<b>2,006</b>

When existing or anticipated provision is removed from the total demand, this gives a final demand for 2,006 units. Proposals for construction or purchase of houses are particularly low due to budgetary constraints. It is anticipated therefore that social housing will equate to 30% of total house provision during the period of the Strategy.

It is therefore considered reasonable to apply a requirement of 20% of all land zoned solely for residential use, or a mixture of residential and other uses, or equivalent be reserved for the purposes for Part V.

### **Exemptions from Requirement to Reserve Lands**

Section 94(4) states that in making an estimate of the requirement for lands for the purpose outlined above the Council may specify different requirements for different areas of a Development Plan. The Council has examined the areas which have particular concentrations of social housing in the county and has had regard to the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds. Having regard to the level of social

housing in Templeshannon in Enniscorthy it has been decided to exempt new residential development in this area from the requirement to provide further social housing so as to encourage more private housing into these areas. A map of the area where this exemption will apply is included in Appendix 1.

## **Section 5 Objectives to Secure Delivery of the Strategy**

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

### **Objective HS01**

Require that a 20% of all land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, be reserved for the purposes of Section 94(4)(a)(i) and 94(4)(a)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) with the exception of the exemption(s) provided for in Section 4 of this Strategy and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

### **Objective HS02**

Review this interim Housing Strategy when Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) is revised to take account of the new economic and policy contexts.

### **Objective HS03**

Ensure that adequate and appropriate land is zoned to meet the likely future housing need identified in the Housing Strategy and Core Strategy of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

### **Objective HS04**

Seek to facilitate all households to access good quality housing appropriate to household circumstances and in their particular community of choice. The Council's priority will be on meeting the most acute needs – those unable to provide for their accommodation from their own resources.

### **Objective HS05**

Ensure that housing is available for people of different income types. This shall be achieved through the housing support system and through the planning system which will ensure that an appropriate mix of units is provided in appropriate locations.

**Objective HS06**

Ensure that a mix of house types and sizes is provided within individual developments and within communities. This will be achieved through the development management and forward planning process. The forward planning process will ensure that appropriate zonings are provided in development plans and local area plans at suitable locations to provide for a mix of unit types. Development plans will also include standards requiring the provision of a mix of unit types and sizes. This will also be achieved through the Council's actions as a housing authority via the selection of lands or units for lease, rent or purchase.

**Objective HS07**

Ensure that the Council's selection of lands or housing units to purchase or lease acts to counteract undue segregation by persons of different social backgrounds and has regard to the accommodation and services requirements for persons with specific needs such as the elderly, persons with a disability, homeless people and Travellers.

**Objective HS08**

Ensure that those with specific housing needs, such as the elderly, persons with a disability, homeless people and Travellers are accommodated in a manner which is appropriate to their specific needs.

**Objective HS09**

To work with other statutory, voluntary and representative and interest groups to identify the needs of those with special housing needs and the appropriate policy and strategic responses.

**Objective HS10**

Have regard to the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 and, insofar as possible having regard to budgetary constraints, implement the strategic aims of this strategy (see Section 1 above).

**Objective HS11**

Promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in accordance with best practice and the policies and principles contained in Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012) and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2008).

**Objective HS12**

Ensure that a minimum of 20% of dwellings in all new housing estates of five dwellings or more are suitable to accommodate or are adaptable to provide accommodation for people with disabilities. Developers will be required to show an accessible route to the residential units from the boundary of the property. Proximity and access to local services must also be considered relative to the units which are accessible.

**Objective HS13**

To require an Access Statement to be carried out for significant developments in accordance with Appendix 6 of Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012).

**Objective HS14**

Implement, insofar as possible having regard to budgetary constraints, the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2007-2013 and any subsequently adopted programme.

**Objective HS15**

Implement, insofar as possible having regard to budgetary constraints, the actions contained in the South-East Homeless Action Plan 2010-2013 and any subsequently adopted plan.

**Objective HS16**

Ensure, through the forward planning and development management processes and the actions of the housing authorities, that new and existing

communities provide high-quality living environments with attractive, comfortable and safe accommodation and adequate and well located social and physical infrastructure.

**Objective HS17**

Promote the development of sustainable housing developments which are energy efficient, and efficient in their use of natural resources such as water and materials.

**Objective HS18**

Promote best practice and innovation with regard to ongoing management and maintenance of all housing stock and the associated public realm.

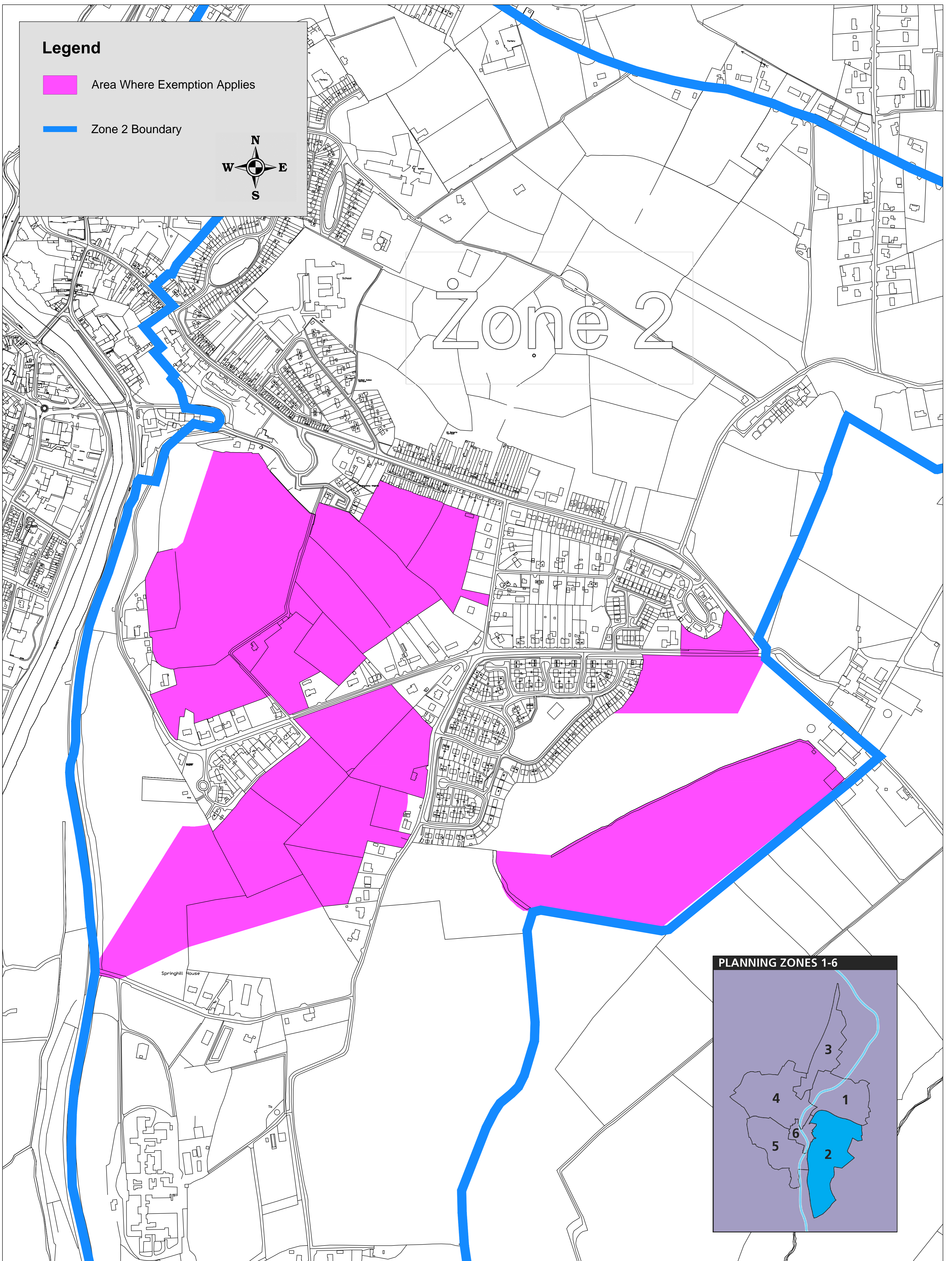
**Objective HS19**

Pursue a range of options for housing provision (including adaptable and accessible housing), such as direct new stock acquisition or build, leasing, RAS and the utilisation of RAS commitments.

**Objective HS20**

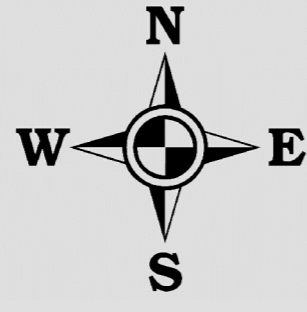
Support and assist the voluntary housing sector in their role as providers of housing to those in need of accommodation.

# Appendix 1

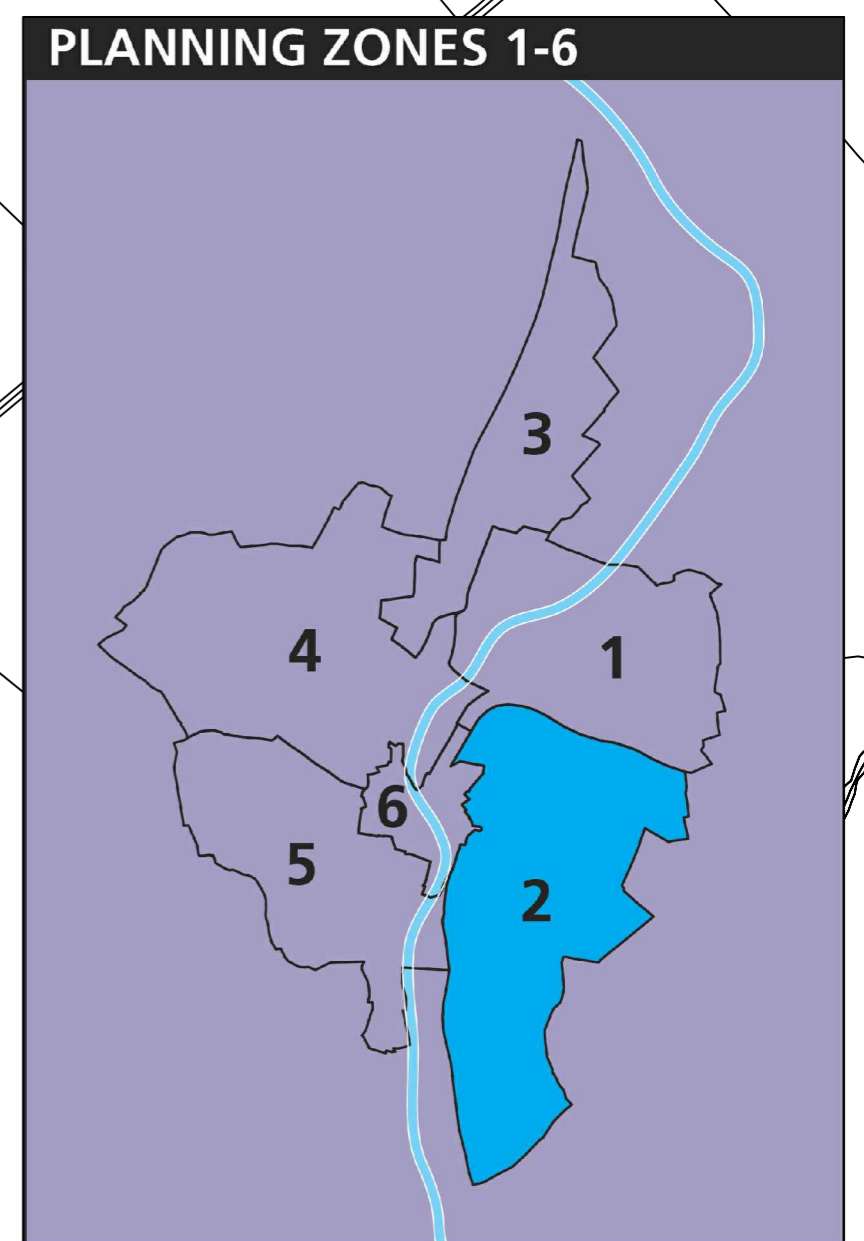


**Legend**

- Area Where Exemption Applies
- Zone 2 Boundary



zone 2



**Joint Housing Strategy 2013-2019**

**Title: Exemption from Requirement to Reserve Lands for Social and Affordable Housing (Enniscorthy Town & Environs)**

Drawn by: DON

Checked by: DK

Date: 12/03/2013

Map No: 1/1



# **Appendix 2**

**Table 18 'Open' Housing Applications for persons whose reason for application was 'Person with disability, Medical or Compassionate'.**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Open applications</b>
Wexford County Council	180
Wexford Borough Council	67
New Ross Town Council	6
Enniscorthy Town Council	To be inputted when available