

Housing Strategy

5.1 Introduction

Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives. Sustainable communities require not only economic development, but also provision of and access to education, health and community support services, amenities and leisure services and a good quality built environment.

The Councils' role is to formulate a planning policy for housing, consider planning applications for private housing, ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to meet the projected housing demand and provide houses or facilitate the provision of social and affordable housing for those unable to house themselves. The Councils are both the Housing Authority and the Planning Authority. In these roles they have the capacity to influence the supply, location and scale of new housing within its functional area.

The Councils' core objective in relation to the provision of housing is to ensure that every household has accommodation suitable to their needs, located in a suitable environment, at a price or rent it can afford. Wexford County Council's Housing Strategy is prepared in accordance with Part V of the Planning & Development Act, 2000-2006 and Part II of the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2002.



5.2 Housing Policy

The principal mechanism adopted in this Plan for the delivery of sustainable communities is the implementation of the masterplan zones as described in Chapter 3. The neighbourhood strategy defines the neighbourhood structure and proposes objectives, policies and strategies for their development. The focus of the housing and neighbourhood strategy will be based on the following objectives;

Housing Objectives:

- H1. Continuing improvement in the quality of housing and neighbourhoods.
- H2. Tailored housing services for those unable to meet their own housing need.
- H3. Delivery of affordable housing to the market place.
- H4. Inter agency co operation in delivering the best services where and when required.
- H5. The Housing Strategy will be implemented through the appropriate zoning of land.
- H6. Inclusive area action planning for the neighbourhood zones.
- H7. Innovative high quality housing and estate design.
- H8. Provision of appropriate community facilities and public services.
- H9. Provision of social and affordable housing by means of Part V.
- H10. High standards of management and maintenance.
- H11. The housing strategy will seek to ensure that all housing is seen as being on an equal footing, whether provided fully by the Councils, the voluntary or the private sector. The overall approach to the strategy is to encourage choice, personal independence and a sense of community.
- H12. The development of inclusive and cohesive communities in the neighbourhoods will be supported by implementing the following objectives;
- H13. Planning for inclusively and safety by means of layout design, appropriate housing mix and the requirement of 'housing for all' as set out in Section 6.8 of this plan.
- H14. Ensuring the provision of social infrastructure such as schools, recreational and community facilities etc. at appropriate locations.
- H15. Building capacity within communities through community participation, proper estate management, supporting the role of the elected members and community and volunteer groups.
- H16. Access to childcare facilities.
- H17. Creating opportunities for employment by appropriate zoning of land and supporting economic development initiatives of other agencies.

The delivery of these objectives will require co-operation and active participation by various public agencies and the private sector. The delivery of these services require a clear policy structure which links physical and social planning and delivers 'joined up' governance. The Council will continue to support the work of the County Development Board and other agencies in the formulation and implementation of policies that provide for the integrated and efficient provision of public services.





5.3 Housing Demand

The demand for housing nationally has increased significantly due to continued economic growth, smaller household sizes, changes in population structure and inward migration. Housing demand analysis is primarily based on the numbers seeking housing services at a particular time, the analysis of the need identified in such applications and the extrapolation of patterns and trends in the demand.

Social Housing Demand

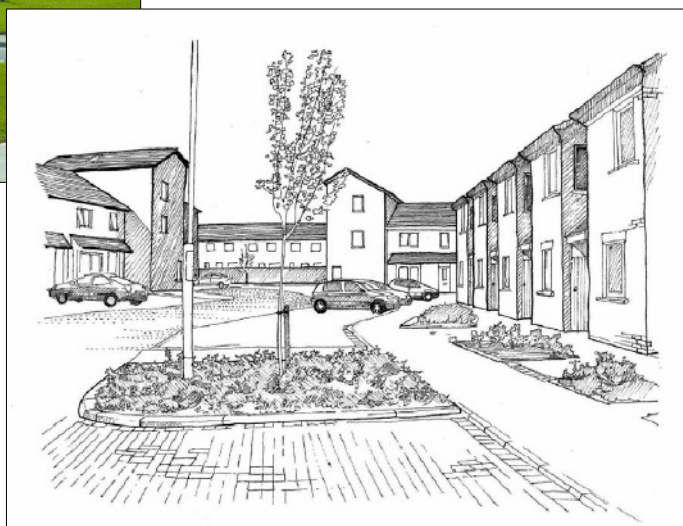
| Area | Demand | Area | Demand | Total |
|------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|-------|
| Wexford District | 396 | Wexford Borough Council | 824 | 1220 |

Affordable Housing Demand

| Area | Demand | Area | Demand | Total |
|------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|-------|
| Wexford District | 254 | Wexford Borough Council | 0 | 254 |

It is noted that there is not a strong correlation between the demand for social and affordable housing, it would appear that demand for affordable housing is more directly related to the supply of units and accordingly the demand in some areas has not been expressed where no supply of units is programmed. The aforementioned figures for social housing break down into the following categories;

| Category | Demand |
|------------------------|--------|
| Single people | 534 |
| Single with children | 416 |
| Family | 112 |
| Couples | 48 |
| People with disability | 12 |



5.4 Population Projections

The population is projected to increase by approximately 21,000 persons by 2021 to 40,000 persons. However, this population projection assumes a continued high level of migration to the Town. This is important when considering the location of those migrating to the County. The distribution of this population increase is likely to be heavily influenced by policy decisions at County level. The following table shows population projections for Wexford assuming the same migration flows as occurred in the period 2002-2006, and takes on board the data contained in the CSO latest Population and Labour Force Projections 2011-2041. The projections also takes into account the amount of planning applications for residential units that are granted but construction has not yet commenced.

Population Projections

| Population 2006 | Population 2010 | Population 2016 | Population 2021 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 18,930 | 26,000 | 33,000 | 40,000 |

The main variable in relation to demand is migration. It is therefore considered prudent, having regard to the policies contained in the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013 in relation to the designation of Wexford Town as a 'Hub' under the National Spatial Strategy, to assess housing demand and supply in the context of a higher migration variable. In the case of Wexford Town and its designation as a 'Hub' the National Spatial Strategy envisages a population of 40,000 persons by 2021.

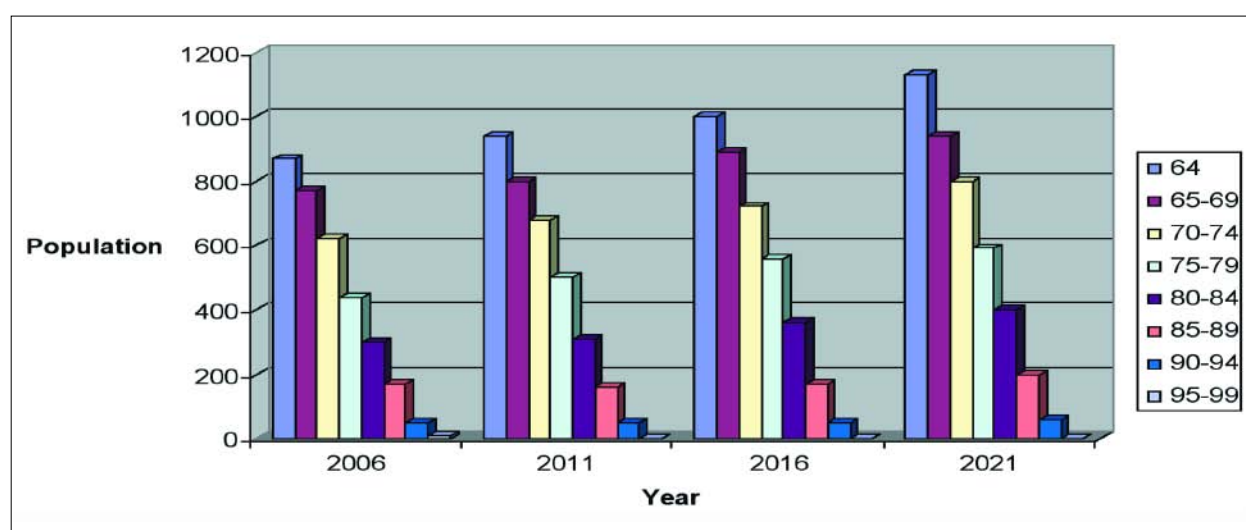
5.5 Housing for the Elderly and the Disabled

The proportion of people aged 65 years and over living in Wexford is increasing and the rate of this increase is expected to grow over the lifetime of this Plan.

The Councils propose to cater for the needs of this group in a number of different ways,

- through direct provision of suitable accommodation
- support of voluntary housing groups
- encouraging private sector development of specialist housing units
- appropriate housing mix and the requirement of 'housing for all' as set out in Section 11.08.04 of this Plan.

Population Projections for Wexford Town & Environs - Ages 64-99 for the Years 2006-2021



5.6 Implementation of the Housing Strategy

In pursuit of its Housing Strategy, the Councils will in the execution of their own programs as well as considering the planning applications and programmes of other agencies, developers and individuals, apply the following policies:

Policies

- HS1** The Councils shall require that 20% of land zoned for residential development or for mix of residential and other uses, shall be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing. This figure may be modified in line with any revision to the Housing Strategy carried out during the period of the Development Plan.
- HS2** In a case where the Housing Authority consider the preferred Policy HS1 is not appropriate, the Councils shall require that developers comply with Part V of the Planning and Development Act through the following;
Options available to satisfy the requirements of the Housing Strategy include:
- The direct provision of the required number of housing units on completion as determined in accordance with the Strategy, integrated as part of the overall development of a site.
 - The transfer of a portion of the site which is the subject of the planning application to the Councils which will enable the Councils to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Strategy.
 - The disposal of a number of fully or partially serviced sites within the site to the Councils which will enable the Councils to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Strategy.
 - A financial contribution that is specified in agreement with the Planning Authority.
 - A combination of a), b), c) or d) of the above options.
- HS3** That the Councils will review the current Housing Strategy during the lifetime of this Plan.



Community, Culture and Education

6.1 Introduction

Wexford has been the subject of much population change and inward migration in the past decade with approximately 1,000 more persons in the Town than in 2002, an increase of 5.4%. Population increases and inward migration has had a major impact on the dynamics of the Town. The Council must put in place appropriate responses to meet a diverse range of needs including housing, infrastructure, services, social and cultural facilities. Building strong and inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Economic development is undoubtedly important but for sustainable development, people must have access to the provision of good quality education, health, childcare services, recreation and leisure amenities and facilities, community support services and a good quality built environment.



Underlying this is the opportunity for all members of communities, young and old, to meet and interact in order to form strong social networks and develop a sense of place and belonging. The influx of new residents with many people having ties elsewhere coupled with modern living, with people working in one area and living in another has meant that the opportunity for interaction between new residents and existing members of the community can be rare. Social relationships and a sense of community can take longer to establish. Also, some groups will have more barriers than others in accessing the same opportunities, services and facilities, whether through unemployment, disability, age, gender, location, origin or language barriers. These groups will require specific policies and actions which will enable them to have the same quality of life as the rest of the community, essential to an inclusive and equitable community.

The Planning Authority remains committed to providing adequate community, recreational and cultural facilities to serve the needs and expectations of the growing population of Wexford.

Objective

- C1 To promote the development of sustainable communities on the basis of a high quality of life where people can live, work and enjoy access to a wide range of community cultural, health and educational facilities suitable for all ages and needs.

The Councils will support and facilitate the provision of new and the improvement of existing community, health and educational facilities. The Councils will where possible protect and improve cultural assets in the interests of public enjoyment and for the education of residents and visitors alike. The Councils will co-operate with private and commercial interests, community and voluntary groups and state agencies in ensuring an equitable distribution of facilities at locations convenient to where people live and work.

Policies

- C1 The Councils shall facilitate the provision of adequate community facilities in accordance with the County Development Board strategy as outlined in the document "Remodelling the Model County 2002-2012" in relation to the provision of childcare, play, sports and the arts.
- C2 Where new community facilities are required as a result of new development, the developer will be expected to contribute to the cost of the provision of these facilities.
- C3 The Councils recognise the need to maintain and, where possible, improve the provision of community facilities in the County. The Councils will seek to facilitate appropriate development by voluntary bodies.

6.1.1 Community

Sustainable development requires that attention be given to cultural identity and social equality. The Councils are committed to involving local people and communities in all issues that affect their area. There are many voluntary and national organisations in the Town that are working to reduce levels of social exclusion by providing services, building the capacity of local groups, empowering individuals and promoting participation in community activity.

Objective

- C2 To develop within the lifetime of the Plan, a process of 'Social Audit' to identify the areas where social/community facilities are lacking, and to ascertain what local communities require in conjunction with the County Development Board.

6.1.2 Community Participation

The Councils seek to establish a partnership approach, between the Council, local community groups and relevant agencies as the basis for the formulation of local planning policies or action plans, which reflect the real needs of the community.

The Councils are committed to maintaining good working relationships with voluntary groups and organisations within the County, and to supporting efforts by communities to provide and improve facilities and amenities in their local areas. It is intended to promote public awareness of the functions and activities of the Council, to provide information in relation to its policies and objectives and to engage in consultation with local communities as appropriate.

6.1.3 Community Facilities

There are a wide range of recreational facilities in Wexford Town including, Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts, Race Track, Golf Club, Cinema, Theatre, Parish Hall, Boat Clubs and Community Centres. These are complemented by the provision of Parks and Public Open Space and by private facilities in a number of the Town's Hotels. Despite the existence of these facilities research carried out during the preparation of the

Development Plan has shown that there is a need for greater community infrastructure in the Town. In many areas of the Town there is a lack of facilities for running Youth Clubs, other youth projects, training projects and community development and there are only two official Community Centres in the Town-Clonard and Coolcots. In addition, there is a Community House in Wolfe Tone Villas and a converted retail unit devoted to the FAB (Ferndale, Ashfield and Belvedere) Community Development Project and a Community Centre in Westlands.



The public swimming pool is proposed for major renovations within the Town Centre, also the new Public Library is currently under construction located to the front of Rowe Street Church. A new and improved cinema is also under construction and a bowling alley has recently been completed in the Drinagh area.

Policies

- C4 To support the provision of community facilities where necessary, and to continue to sponsor community projects where appropriate.
- C5 The Councils shall facilitate the provision of community centres, schools, etc by requiring a minimum of 10% of all residentially zoned lands to be zoned for Community Facilities.
- C6 The Councils shall encourage and assist the formation, development, direction and co-ordination of community organisations, local interests and self help groups, with an emphasis on areas of Special Need within the Town.

6.1.4 Special Need Groups

Some groups will have more barriers than others in accessing the same opportunities, services and facilities, whether through unemployment, disability, age, gender, location, origin or language barriers. These groups include children/young people, older people, women, people who are ill or those with various disabilities, members of the travelling community and members of Ireland's existing and new ethnic minority groups. These groups will require specific policies and actions which will enable them to have the same quality of life as the rest of the community, essential to an inclusive and equitable community.

Policy

- C7 The Councils shall recognise the need for people with special needs to enjoy a decent living environment in the town and to support local communities, the Health Authorities and other bodies involved in the provision of facilities for people with special needs.

6.1.5 Ethnic Groups

The large mainly young population of ethnic minority communities means that access to facilities such as shops, schools, community facilities and childcare is particularly important. In planning for the needs of these communities, cultural sensitivity will be required.

Policy

- C8 The Councils shall have regard to the needs of ethnic groups in its local and community planning policies.

6.1.6 Women and Children

The role of women as primary carers in society means that they are also more likely to experience physical barriers to access and movement e.g. with young children in buggies. Therefore, level access to buildings, dipped kerbs, parent and child parking facilities and baby changing and feeding facilities are important considerations.

Access to services such as childcare, community facilities and public transport is also essential. Women are also less likely to frequent environments that are perceived as unsafe e.g. unlit lanes or open spaces that are not informally supervised. Good design is necessary to create a more accessible environment which promotes or is perceived to support personal safety.

Policy

- C9 To ensure that all new developments within the Town facilitate access by special needs groups including women, children and young people.

Objective

- C3 To develop within the lifetime of the Plan, a process of 'Town Accessibility Audit' to identify the physical obstacles to an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of their age, gender or disability, has full access.

6.1.7 Travelling Community

The Councils recognise the long tradition of the traveller community within the County and has regard to the special needs arising from its indigenous culture. The Councils Traveller Accommodation Programme should address the particular accommodation needs of members of Wexford's Traveller Community. The Councils will, in co-operation with the appropriate local and national representative groups, investigate the particular needs of the traveller culture and economy.

Policies

- C10 The Councils shall secure the implementation of a Traveller Accommodation Programme for Wexford within the life of the Plan.
- C11 The Councils shall investigate and where possible facilitate the needs of the travelling community, its culture and economy having regard to proper planning and sustainable development.

6.1.8 Catering For People with Disabilities

The Councils will require that the design of buildings and the layout of developments to which the public could be expected to have frequent access, will require special consideration to be given to the accommodation of people with disabilities, the elderly and others who may be temporarily impaired. Access requirements for these groups must be incorporated into the design of buildings, public spaces, car parking, footpaths and general facilities and services. Developers must have regard to the criteria set out in the following in the preparation of development proposals:

- Part M of the Building Regulations, 2000
- Access for the Disabled - Minimum Design Criteria published by the National Rehabilitation Board (or to

amendments which may be published from time to time).

- Buildings for Everyone - Access and Use for All the Citizens, National Rehabilitation Board, 1998.

6.1.9 Accessible Housing

The Councils are committed to providing a range of house designs to meet with the requirements of the housing needs of people with disabilities. The Council recognises that Part M of the Building Regulations has improved visitor accessibility. There is a significant need to ensure a variety of housing types to provide accommodation for people who have disabilities.

In order to improve the supply of suitable housing choice for the future, all new housing estates of 10 dwellings or more should ensure that at least 20% of the dwellings are suitable to accommodate or are adaptable to provide accommodation for people with disabilities.

Policy

- C12 The Councils shall seek to ensure that 20% of all new residential development of 10 or more dwelling units are adaptable to provide accommodation for people with disabilities.

6.1.10 Elderly People

The proportion of the population aged 65 or above as recorded in the 2006 Census was 2301 persons or 12.7% of the Town population. The Councils are aware of its responsibilities to its elderly population and will implement the following policies.

Policies

- C13 The Councils shall cater for older people by providing the mechanisms to continue providing appropriate housing, including sheltered housing in accordance with the Housing Strategy of the Council.
- C14 The Councils shall ensure appropriately designed and barrier-free built environments, which are easily negotiated by older people.

6.1.11 Nursing Homes/Residential Care Homes

The need for Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes in the Town is continuing to grow. Such facilities should be integrated wherever possible into the established residential areas of the Town, where residents can avail of reasonable access to local services.

6.1.12 Childcare Facilities

Changes in the population structure, as identified in the Town Profile Chapter of this Plan, the significant increase in female participation in the labour force and ongoing social change have given rise in a short period of time to a significant increase in the demand for childcare facilities.

The provision of childcare facilities is recognised as being important for economic and social well being. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy identifies childcare provision as a means of alleviating poverty and social exclusion. Accordingly, national policy in regard to childcare is to increase the number of places available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community. The design of childcare facilities should have regard to We Like This Place, Guidelines for Best Practice in Design of Childcare Facilities, Department of Health, 2002.



The Councils will promote dual use facilities, so that childcare facilities are capable of being adapted or used as another type of community facility should that need arise.

'Childcare' is taken to mean full day care, seasonal facilities and services both for pre-school and after school.

Policies

- C15 Childcare facilities will be required in all new housing developments at a rate of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places for each 75 residential units and in accordance with the DOELG Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities 2001, the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996 and Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities. In appropriate cases the Council will support the provision of these spaces off site provided they serve the inhabitants of the development.

Applications for crèches and play-schools within a new or existing place of work or in proximity thereof, such as an industrial estate, will be favourably considered.

- C16 The Councils shall facilitate the development of childcare facilities where demand arises subject to satisfying applicable planning and engineering criteria.

6.2. Culture

Wexford Town with a rich and varied cultural identity, also has a strong literary, musical and clearly defined crafts base, which have formed an intrinsic part of the identity of the Town.

The importance of developing the Town's cultural infrastructure has seen recent developments in the Arts, with substantial investment in the library, museum and theatre. The importance of culture in all its guises in supporting both local need and in assisting in economic development, is recognised and will be supported and encouraged by the Councils as far as possible. The whole area of culture is seen as a key resource for the Town and its population.

Policies

- C17 The Councils shall promote artistic excellence and innovation, support the work of artists, art organisations and traditional Wexford based arts.
- C18 The Councils shall continue to promote the Wexford Festival Opera and the bringing of International Arts to the County. The Councils will also promote international audiences for Wexford based artists and arts projects, and support multi-cultural initiatives.



6.2.1 Public Arts

Public Art can assist in developing a sense of place and provides an identity and character to a community that is distinctive and unique. Public art has many advantages including increasing environmental quality, enhancing the built environment, nurturing civic pride and promoting a sense of place

Policies

- C19 The Councils will encourage and facilitate the development, creation and display of works of art in public areas.
- C20 The Councils will encourage major new commercial and private residential developments in the County to incorporate works of public art into the overall scheme in order to enhance the amenities of the local environment.



6.2.2 Libraries

The County Wexford Library Service plays an increasingly important community, information and outreach facility role throughout the County. The public library has for many years provided means of access to information/leisure reading facilities and has played a major role in the advancement in education and literacy in our society. More recently the provision of free internet access in the libraries has advanced knowledge gathering facilities and allowed greater access to information and resources.

Policy

- LB1 The Councils shall support the development and expansion of Library Services. Such development and expansion shall be carried out to the highest internationally recognised standard.

Objectives

- C4 To work towards integrated development where the economy, environment, cultural life etc. are all considered together, and where artistic and cultural activity is accepted as a vital part of everyday life.
- C5 To safeguard the cultural heritage of the Wexford Town.
- C6 Support the provision of the infrastructure, physical and human, that is needed for libraries, archives and for all forms of contemporary and traditional arts.

6.3 Education

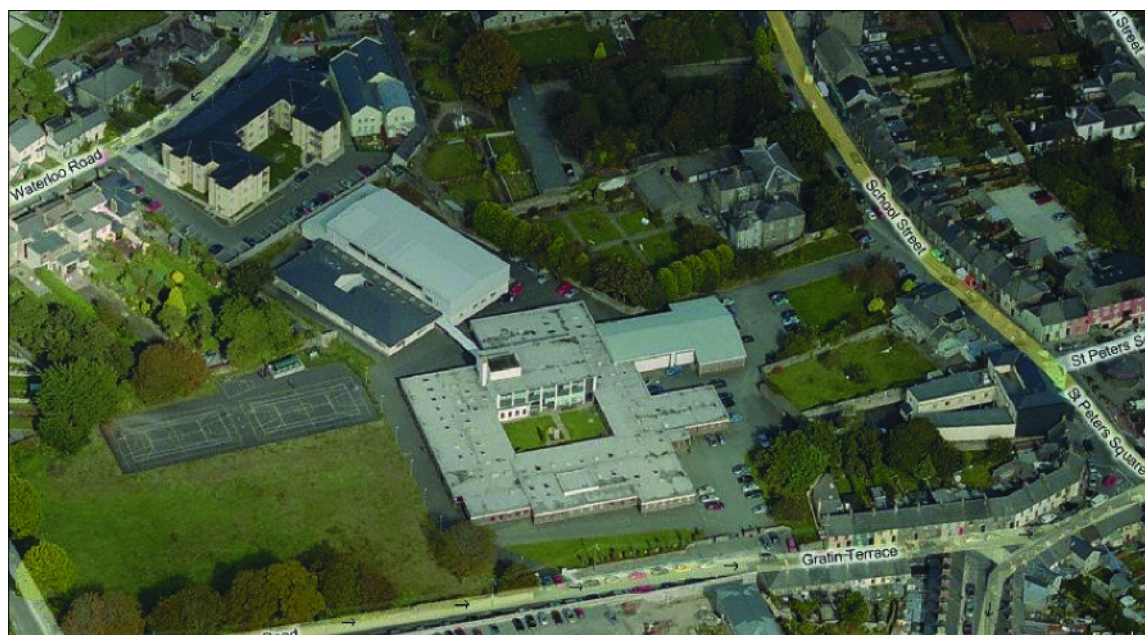
The existence of adequate education facilities can lead to the increased attractiveness of an area for location of businesses and families and increased development and prosperity. Education has long been cited as one of the key factors for development and it is now accepted that a highly educated population leads to a decrease in factors leading to social exclusion. The Councils will seek to create an environment in which every citizen can develop their full potential to enable them to participate in all aspects of life. Therefore, it is important that educational facilities within a developing area are accommodated.

Table: Existing Primary School Capacity - Wexford Town 2008

| | |
|--|-------------|
| CBS Primary | 248 |
| Mercy Convent, St. Johns Road | 425 |
| St. John of Gods Convent, Faythe | 265 |
| Gaelscoil, Uisce an Easpaig | 209 |
| Our Lady of Fatima Special School, Carrigeen St. | 96 |
| Scoil Mhuire, St. Johns Road | 425 |
| Scoil Mhuire, Coolcotts | 513 |
| St. Iberius, Davitt Road | 95 |
| Total Enrolment | 2276 |

Table: Existing Secondary School Capacity - Wexford Town 2008

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| CBS Secondary, Green St | 465 |
| Presentation, Grogans Road | 680 |
| Loreto, Spawell Road | 660 |
| St. Peter's College, Summerhill | 656 |
| Wexford. Vocational College, Westgate | 450 |
| Total Enrolment | 2911 |



6.3.1 Educational Requirements

The Town schools are currently at capacity, both primary and post primary educational facilities, which are dispersed throughout the centre and the suburbs. These schools provide not only an educational resource but are also utilised in a number of cases as centres of community activity and recreation. These primary and secondary educational facilities are complemented by vocational training which is provided by the VEC. The VEC provides Adult Education courses and vocational training.

While not possessing its own Third Level Educational Institution, Wexford has links with both the Carlow Institute of Technology and the Waterford Institute of Technology. Most notably an outreach campus of the Carlow Institute of Technology has been developed at St Peter's College, while a number of courses accredited by the Waterford Institute of Technology are availed of locally by those active in community development. The Carlow IT Campus needs to be expanded upon and the Councils fully support the development of a University for the South East which has facilities located within the County.

Over the life time of this Plan 2009-2015 it is estimated based on population projections as outlined in Chapter 2, that there will be a requirement for one additional secondary school and two new primary schools.

It is estimated with a projected increase in population to 40,000 persons by 2021 to achieve the population projections of the "Hub" designation under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) of the plan a quarter of the population will be of school going age, approximately 10,000 children, based on these projections and on the assumption that a new school facility will be required per every 1,000 children - 10 new schools, primary and secondary will be required.

The majority of the new school facilities will be required in the western section of the Town's Environs, with some also required in the north western section, so as to provide facilities within sustainable distances from proposed residential development and other facilities. According to the new guidelines Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas it is recommended that planning applications in excess of 200 dwelling units should be accompanied by a report identifying the demand for school places likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools in the vicinity to cater for such demand. In very large-scale residential developments (800+ units), Planning Authorities will consider the need to link the phased completion of dwellings with the provision of new schools.



6.3.2 Role of the Planning Authority

The Planning Authority has no direct responsibility for the provision of education. Decisions on the future requirements for educational facilities are primarily a matter for the education authorities. The primary function of the Planning Authority is to reserve sufficient lands to meet the likely future demands for community facilities including education.

In many urban and rural areas across the County, there has been significant increases in residential development without the accompanying educational facilities. This has placed considerable strain on existing facilities in these areas.

Future provision should be planned and implemented in concert with residential development. Where such provision is being planned, new facilities should be located where possible close to or within the main residential areas in order to utilise the use of walking, cycling and public transport and to reinforce the sense of community.

Policies

- ED 1 The Councils will facilitate the provision of schools by zoning suitable lands.
- ED 2 The Councils shall consult with the Department of Education regarding the location and provision of adequate educational facilities.
- ED 3 The Councils shall restrict new developments adjacent to existing schools where such development may have the potential to restrict the expansion of that school.
- ED 4 The Councils shall restrict new developments in urban areas where necessary social infrastructure, including but not limited to schools, community facilities etc., are not available.
- ED 5 The Councils shall encourage and facilitate the development and expansion of the Waterford Institute of Technology & Institute of Technology Carlow campuses.
- ED 6 The Councils will support the campaign to develop a University for the South East which has facilities located in the County.

6.3.3 Dual Use of School Buildings

School and other educational premises represent a valuable resource in terms of land and buildings, which are generally only used on a partial basis. The dual use of educational facilities, where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service (i.e. outside school hours and during school holidays) can contribute to meeting the wider needs of the community, by helping to satisfy demand for a variety of uses. Guidelines on Childcare Facilities DOE 2001 recommend the use of school premises to cater for after-school care.

Where lands and buildings can be beneficially used by the community, the Councils will promote such uses. Where new schools or other community facilities are proposed, the Councils will seek to ensure that they are designed in such a way as to facilitate dual use from the onset.