

Recreation and Tourism

7.1 Introduction

One of the chief characteristics of Wexford Town is the high quality of its landscape. On approaching the Town from the north, there are fine views of surrounding rolling countryside and an extensive oak woodland area, extending down its slopes to Ferrycarrig. These woodlands give way to a wetland area, which leads to the River Slaney. From the south, the approach from the Rosslare Road is dominated by a conspicuous rock escarpment running between Rocksborough and Trespan Rock, which forms the edge of the plateau above the town.

From the by-pass road, there are some fine views of the countryside, although views of the Town are obscured by the nature of the topography. In general, the land slopes steeply up from the Town Centre and the Waterfront, gradually giving way to a plateau. This slope provides a natural backdrop to the Town as viewed from Ferrybank. Development on the plateau is not as visible from the surrounding countryside as is development on its slopes.

Wexford is fortunate to possess a wealth of natural amenity areas. Several areas within the plan environs have been designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). These are areas of special interest for their fauna, flora, geology and/or topography. These include the River Slaney and estuary, with notable freshwater tidal marsh and mud-flats some of which contain rare and legally protected plant species. The Oak Woodland near the mouth of the River at Ferrycarrig is also designated as a NHA.

Existing open space within Wexford Town and Environs is made up of active open space, i.e., sports grounds, racecourse, golf course, and passive open space, i.e. parkland, natural amenity areas and incidental open space in housing estates. The provision of open space at the south side of the Town at Trespan Rock, needs to be balanced with provisions at the north side.



Table 11: Areas of Public and Private Open Space in Wexford

Category	Hectares	Acres
Residential Open Space (excluding land below 1 acre)	4.56	11.30
Public Open Space	34.16	84.31
Parks (i.e., Redmond Sq., Trespan Rock)	13.73	33.93
Natural Amenity (landscape features)	3.02	7.47
Active (i.e. Sports fields)	17.41	42.91
Private Open Space (Sports Clubs, Golf Course, Racecourse, etc.)	91.88	227.24
Private/Institutional (School sports fields).	2.11	5.22

Much of the open space suitable for sport and activity in the Town belongs to privately managed clubs and organisations. It would not be readily open for public use. It is estimated that there is approximately 275 acres of such open space in the plan area, of which only 42.9 acres is available for public use).

The Local Authorities acknowledges that open space can provide a variety of functions, including passive recreation (such as walking), active recreation (such as horse-riding, field sports, golf, etc.), visual amenity (important landscape views), ecology (bird and wildlife habitat; plant species), drainage regulation (particularly stormwater control) and even socio-economic needs (meeting places, allotments and travelling carnivals). It is important that the provision of open space considers all of these needs.

It is the policy of the Council:

Policies

- TR 1 To ensure that adequate amenity and recreational open space and facilities, including community facilities and centres, are available for all groups of the population at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work.
- TR 2 To seek the provision for a minimum standard of 2 hectares (5 acres) of public open space per 1,000 population in all housing developments. To meet this standard, suitable areas of land will be identified and reserved for the provision of public open space.
- TR 3 Ensure that a landscape plan accompanies all applications for housing estates, industrial and commercial developments.
- TR 4 Key landscape features such as trees, stone walls, rock outcrops, streams and ponds create distinctiveness in the landscape and give a place its own identity.
- TR 5 To manage to a high standard all of its public parks, playing fields and public open space.
- TR 6 To secure the development of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, which can be shared with schools, on suitable sites where resources are available.
- TR 7 To seek the provision and suitable management of a childrens play area in new housing estates in suitable locations.
- TR 8 To ensure the loss of existing public or private open space will normally be resisted by the Local Authorities unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.
- TR 9 To investigate ways of improving the quality and capacity of existing sporting and recreational facilities through initiatives in both the public and private sector.

Objective

- RT 1 It is an objective of the Councils that within the lifetime of this Plan to provide a dedicated skate park facility within the boundary of the Plan area.



7.2 Public Rights-of-Way

The Councils will preserve and maintain suitable rights-of-way, create new ones where appropriate and promote their greater use in amenity areas. In order to link amenities and facilities, the Councils may have to seek the provision of pedestrian ways as a condition of planning permission. Where pedestrian routes are proposed, they must be directly overlooked at ground-floor level by dwellings, be well lit, have a straight alignment without bends or corners, and have boundary walls/fencing not exceeding 1.2m height.

The Councils will examine existing rights-of-way, paths and access points to the river and other amenity areas to determine where public rights-of-way exist and where public rights-of-way should be created, either by agreement or by compulsion, for the provision of walking routes.

Policy Statements: It is the policy of the Councils to:

- TR 10 Protect and preserve those existing rights-of-way which contribute to general amenity and are not a source of anti-social behaviour.
- TR 11 Create new rights-of-way in the interest of amenity as opportunities or need arise.
- TR 12 Promote the development of river-side walking routes and foster the enjoyment of the natural amenities of the area including the River Slaney.
- TR 13 Encourage the provision of access routes to amenity areas in co-operation with landowners and protect amenity areas from infringement by inappropriate development.
- TR 14 Protect and preserve those existing Town Centre laneways.

7.3 Sport

The Councils recognise that sport is an essential component of everyday life, playing a valuable social, cultural and economic role, providing enjoyment for people, a livelihood for some, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. The Council is committed to enhancing the range and quality of sports facilities and to ensure that there is reasonable public access to sport and a network of facilities. The Council has been active in the provision of facilities, playing fields at various locations and has encouraged and facilitated the provision of facilities by clubs, associations and the private sector. The Council acknowledges the role played by sports clubs in the provision of facilities and opportunities for people to participate, and will continue to encourage and facilitate the development of such facilities.

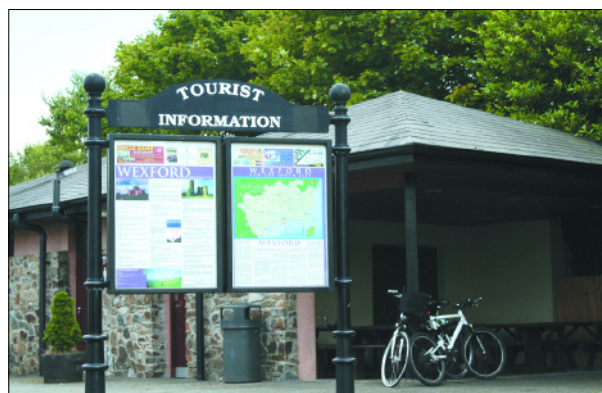
Policy Statement: It is the policy of the Councils:

- TR 15 To protect public open spaces, to meet the social, recreational, conservation and ecological needs of the town and where appropriate to consider the development of appropriate complimentary facilities.
- TR 16 To protect existing public and private recreational open space, and the loss of such facilities will normally be resisted unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location, or it can be demonstrated that there is no longer sufficient demand to sustain the facility.
- TR 17 It is the policy of the Councils, in considering applications for new development, to require the provision of appropriately located and designed open space, recreational and amenity areas.
- TR 18 To facilitate the development of private lands for recreational purposes, having regard to the amenities of residents in vicinity, and to the environmental impact of the development.

7.4 Tourism

Wexford is an important tourist destination in particular for the domestic market. The assets of the Town as a Tourism Centre include; its heritage and its designation as a heritage town; the hosting of an internationally renowned festival in the Wexford Opera Festival; its proximity to fine countryside and superlative beaches; the availability of activities such as angling and sailing, a range of accommodation types and an important flagship visitor attraction in the vicinity of the town - the Irish National Heritage Park.

The development of the harbour and quays has enhanced the attractiveness of the Town as a Tourism Centre, but considerable attention needs to be given to the harnessing of new markets such as conference tourism and activity breaks.

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

- ensure that future development of tourism is carried out in a sensitive and sustainable manner.
- to improve the signposting of scenic routes, walks, riverside trails, historic and archaeological heritage features in an attractive and well designed manner.
- promote the development of eco-tourism and other leisure activities in the Environs of Wexford Town, outside the proposed urban edge (development limit boundary), such as equestrian centres, outdoor recreational centres, bird watching and boating clubs.
- support and promote, with the co-operation of private landowners, public access to heritage sites and features of archaeological interest.
- promote the development of interpretative signs and information boards at important sites of archaeological interest, heritage and nature conservation.
- work with Fáilte Ireland, the County Tourist Board and The Arts Council and other relevant bodies to promote and develop the arts and tourism sector in Wexford.
- explore the potential promotion of the Town's church graveyards and town walls as historical elements of interest to tourists.
- support the provision of workshop space for artists in suitable buildings.



7.5 Objectives

It is an objective of the Councils to:

- TO1 Explore the possible provision of a heritage trail in the town.
- TO2 To ensure the full recreational potential of the River Slaney and its estuary is realised.
- TO3 Provide a pedestrian walkway along the banks of the River Slaney estuary.

The Councils believe that the key to future tourism success is encouraging sustainable tourism development. Ill-conceived and poorly planned tourism development can destroy the very qualities of the natural and human environment that attracts visitors. Thus, the Local Authority will encourage the development of high quality tourism in the town. In considering tourism related development and infrastructure the Local Authority will strive to ensure that it is in keeping with the established uses and that it will not impinge on the existing amenity of the town.

Conservation and Heritage

8.0 Introduction

In Ireland we are fortunate to have a rich and diverse heritage. Our heritage is inextricably linked with our identity. It is a resource, which we may enjoy, a catalogue of our evolution, a source of scientific information and an asset with economic potential. It is also a fragile and non-renewable resource.

Heritage in the Heritage Act 1995 includes monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, wreck, seascapes, heritage gardens & parks, geology and inland waterways.

Our heritage can be considered as including three main aspects; Archaeological Heritage, Architectural Heritage and Natural Heritage.

The overall form and structure of the Town is important from both an architectural and archaeological perspective and as such is included in its own Section entitled Historic Urban Form, 8.1 below. Similarly the Town Walls and Graveyards are not adequately described with reference to either archaeology or architecture and have been included under 8.2 and 8.3 in the following pages.



8.1 Historic Urban Form

The Town is an example of a Hiberno-Scandinavian Town which later expanded and developed as a Port under the Anglo-Normans. The principle route of the Town, was as it is now, Main Street, off which a number of streets and lanes ran eastward to the sea and westward towards the Town Wall. The surviving medieval remains of the Town include a substantial stretch of the Town Wall including a Gatehouse and Three Towers, St. Selskar's and the ruins of the Parish Churches of St. Mary's and St. Patricks.

The street pattern is complex and often narrow and rambling. Notable in the street pattern are the market places and small squares, such as the Cornmarket. The Waterfront and the Quays have remained one of the principle features of the town. The quays, including the distinctive Crescent Quay, were reclaimed from the sea in the nineteenth century.

Wexford Town has a very well defined core area. The line of the Town Wall and the associated medieval gates (of which there were at least five) still form the effective edge of the Town Centre area.

Outside the old Town Wall, are many older residential areas, the most notable of which is the Faythe (or Feagh). The Town's buildings include mills, port related commercial building, civic and religious buildings of the nineteenth century, some fine Georgian houses, late Victorian and Edwardian terraces, together with an immense stock of attractive houses in traditional vernacular styles. In the environs of the Town there are many large Country Houses from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, many of which are situated in large gardens.

Policy Statements - Historic Urban Form

It is the policy of the Councils:

Policies

- UF1 To ensure that the Town's street pattern, including historic squares, public spaces and laneways, retains its medieval layout and is preserved in any future developments. Protect and seek to maintain the remaining sections of the Town Wall and pursue the creation of a path around the circuit of the walls with cobble stoning across roadways to provide visual continuity.
- UF2 Ensure the preservation of historic urban spaces in the medieval Town Centre, retain traditional building lines and heights around their edges so as to maintain their "sense of enclosure," and restrict car parking in these spaces.

8.2 The Town Walls

The existing Town Wall is one of the most important historic structures within Wexford Town which serves as a physical link to the Town's eventful history. The first historical reference to a Town Wall dates back to 1169. However given the turbulent history of the Town, the Wall would have been altered and rebuilt throughout the ages.

To date the circuit of the Town Wall has survived remarkably intact. The Town Wall has a strong visual presence within the Town. However an appreciation of the extent of its survival is not immediately evident due to the proximity of developments both within and outside the Walls.

Wexford Borough Council has produced the "Wexford Town Walls Conservation Plan" in conjunction with the Town Wall Steering Group and Alastair Coey Architects. The content of this Plan is considered to be of such significance and importance that its policies, aims and objectives are now incorporated into this Development Plan and the Conservation Plan is included in the appendices.





Policy Statements - The Town Walls

It is the Policy of the Councils:

Policies

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| TW1 | To protect, conserve and enhance access to the Town Wall in accordance with the “Wexford Town Walls Conservation Plan 2008”. |
| TW2 | To protect and enhance views from the Town Walls to reinforce the role of the Town Walls in the future development of Wexford Town. |
| TW3 | No further demolition of nineteenth century, or earlier, property built against, overlooking, or opening onto the Town Wall should be permitted unless a compelling case is presented to demonstrate that the outcome will be to the ultimate benefit to the Town Walls. |
| TW4 | A walking route which would provide as much access as feasible shall be prepared and promoted. The walking route will focus on the areas of the Walls within the public realm. New public access points to the wall will be sought in any redevelopment adjacent to the Town Walls. |
| TW5 | Within new developments means shall be devised to indicate the location of the Walls and the Town Wall Gates where such structures no longer exist or where sections remain below ground. |

8.3 Wexford Graveyards

The location of the historic Graveyards are identified on the Town Centre Zone maps. The importance of such burial grounds as a primary physical source for the history of the Town is significant. The Graveyards could, through careful management, provide additional passive amenity spaces as well as contributing to the Heritage Tourism potential of Wexford Town.

Policy

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| GY1 | To preserve and enhance the Towns Graveyards through improved management and access.
To provide historical information at each location and promote the unique character of each of the burial grounds to the surrounding residents and property owners. |
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8.4 Archaeological Heritage

Wexford has a rich and diverse archaeological heritage. The Councils will ensure that features or items of archaeological interest and recognised areas of archaeological potential are suitably safeguarded from inappropriate development that would adversely affect and/or detract from the interpretation and setting of these sites.

The archaeological heritage of Wexford includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts and moveable objects, situated both on land and underwater.

The main document dealing with archaeological potential and sites is the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) of County Wexford which identifies archaeological individual sites known as ‘Recorded Monuments’ within the town and also a large central area known as the ‘Zone of Archaeological Potential’. These areas/monuments are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The maps (i.e. the Sites and Monuments Record for County Wexford) are subject to regular updating, thus the most recent edition should be consulted. The RMP is not an exhaustive list of all archaeology in existence.

Policy Statements - Archaeology

It is the Policy of the Councils:

Policies

- AH 1 To have regard to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and the Urban Archaeological Survey prepared for Wexford Town (when it becomes available) when dealing with planning applications for development or threats to recorded items. Development shall be controlled in the vicinity of a recorded feature where it detracts from the setting of the feature or where it is a feature seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value. In all such cases the Councils shall consult with the National Monuments Section of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG).
- AH 2 To protect and preserve archaeological sites which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
- AH 3 To have regard to the Zone of Archaeological Potential within Wexford Town when dealing with planning applications for all development, including public sector development. Where permission for such proposals is granted, the applicant will have due regard to the recommendations of the Heritage and Planning Division of the DoEHLG. This may involve the employment of a licensed archaeologist at the expense of the developer to record any archaeological remains uncovered and to supervise all excavation works.
- AH 4 To promote a presumption in favour of “preservation in situ” of archaeological remains and settings, in accordance with government policy, when dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features;
- AH 5 To recognise that under the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994 all underwater archaeological structures, features and objects are protected and ensure that any development proposals within or along the banks of the River Slaney with the potential to impact on the Slaney will require consultation with the Heritage and Planning Division of the DoEHLG.
- AH 6 To require an archaeological assessment for development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have a significant affect upon archaeological heritage and to take all appropriate measures to safeguard this archaeological heritage. In all such cases the Planning Authority shall consult with the National Monuments Section of the DoEHLG. [Any such assessments shall be carried out by a licensed archaeologist].
- AH 7 The Councils will, in co-operation with relevant bodies seek the publication of the results of archaeological excavations carried out within the Town.
- AH 8 It is the policy of the Councils to protect and record heritage objects, such as walls, bridges and street furniture, within the Town.
- AH 9 It is the policy of the Councils to protect the burial grounds within Wexford town identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, in co-operation with the National Monuments Section of the DoEHLG.

8.5 Architectural Heritage

Wexford has a distinctive and valuable architectural heritage. There are two main mechanisms Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas. The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (The Granada Convention), drawn up by the Council of Europe and signed at Granada in 1985, was ratified by Ireland in 1997. As a result, comprehensive and systematic legislative provisions for the protection of the architectural heritage were introduced by the Government as part of the Planning Code, with implementation of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007 and the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) & Historic Monuments Act, 1999.

Protected Structures

In relation to a Protected Structure or proposed Protected Structure, the meaning of the term includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structure lying within the curtilage and their interior, all fixtures, fittings and features which form part of the interior or exterior of that structure. The protection also extends to the attendant grounds and any structure therein.

Protected Structures are listed in the appendices of this written statement.

The affect of Protected Structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the character of a structure are carried out in such a way that the existing character is retained and enhanced. Works which would, in the opinion of the Planning Authorities, have material affect on the character of the structure will require planning permission.

It is important to note that not all works to a Protected Structure will constitute material alterations but that some works which would be exempt to an ordinary structure may require planning permission when carried out to a Protected Structure. Under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, owners and occupiers of protected structures may request a declaration from the Planning Authorities as to the type of works that it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure and consequently, which works would or would not require planning permission.



Change of Use and Extension of Protected Structures

Sympathetic reuse and/or development of structures, including appropriate contemporarily designed additions to Protected Structures, can allow our architectural heritage to continue to offer aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits for future generations. It is often necessary to permit new extensions to a Protected Structure so as to adapt it to modern living or to make it economically viable. Proposals for new structures or extensions need careful consideration and the new development should not have any adverse affects on the character of the structure. Historic buildings often present an opportunity to provide accommodation in upper floors above ground floor shops and offices. Mixed uses also provide variety and vibrancy to an area whilst preventing a building from falling into dereliction.

Traditional Fabric

Historic buildings comprise a range of construction materials that contribute to the character, colour, texture, and patina of age of a building. The retention of original and early building fabric will be encouraged.

Protection of Elements of Architectural Heritage

Many elements of architectural heritage, such as historic gardens, stone walls, ditches and street furniture make a positive contribution to our built heritage. Carelessness and a lack of awareness can result in the loss of these elements. Elements of architectural heritage can make an important contribution to the character of an area and help to create a distinctive sense of place.

Policy Statements - Architectural Heritage

It is the Policy of the Council:

Policies

- BH1 To protect the architectural heritage of Wexford Town and to include all structures considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the Record of Protected Structures.
- BH2 To revise the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) when necessary and in the light of the publication of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and other relevant surveys using the provisions of Part IV of the Planning & Development Act 2000.
- BH3 To protect the curtilage of Protected Structures or proposed Protected Structures from any works which would cause loss of or damage to the special character of the structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of heritage value within the curtilage or attendant grounds of the structure.
- BH4 To encourage development within the curtilage of a protected structure which is compatible with its character in terms of siting, building lines, proportions, scale, massing, height, roof treatment and materials. This does not preclude putting forward innovative contemporary designs which respect the context of the protected structure.
- BH5 To promote the maintenance and appropriate reuse of Protected Structures and older buildings of architectural heritage merit that make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes and the sustainable development of the County and Town.
- BH6 To encourage the use of upper floors while ensuring that there is no adverse impact on the intrinsic character of the structure.
- BH7 To promote the retention of original or early building fabric including timber sash windows, stonework, brickwork, joinery, render and slate. Likewise the Council will encourage the re-instatement of historically correct traditional features.
- BH8 To encourage the retention of those elements which give a protected structure its special interest where the structure has suffered damage through fire or other accidental causes and where those elements have survived either in whole or in part.
- BH9 To give planning permission to the demolition of a Protected Structure only in exceptional circumstances.
- BH10 To ensure that all applications in relation to Protected Structures include an architectural heritage assessment/architectural impact assessment report. This report should assess the implications of the development on the character of the structure and the area in which it is located. This should be prepared in accordance with appendix B of the "Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities".
- BH11 To encourage the retention of all structures of vernacular architectural heritage merit which are not included in the Record of Protected Structures but which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes of Wexford Town.
- BH12 To encourage the repair and retention of traditional timber, rendered and/or tiled shop fronts and pub fronts, including those, which may not be Protected Structures.
- BH13 To ensure that all applications for Protected Structures will be assessed by taking into consideration the advice contained in "Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (December 2004) and any subsequent amendments.

- BH14** To facilitate the retention of older buildings the Planning Authorities will give consideration to the relaxation of car parking and other Development Control requirements in appropriate circumstances.
- BH15** To protect elements of the architectural heritage of the Town, such as historic gardens, stone walls, ditches and street furniture that make a positive contribution to the built heritage.

Architectural Conservation Areas

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that Development Plans shall include objectives to preserve the character of places, areas groups of structures or townscapes that are of:

- a) Special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social or technical interest or value;
- b) Contribute to the appreciation of Protected Structures.

These areas are described as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). Where such an area is considered to be of special importance to civic life, or architectural, historical, cultural or social character of the town, a planning scheme may be prepared with the objectives of:

- Promoting higher standards of civic amenity and design.
- Preserving and protecting the architectural, archaeological and natural heritage.
- Providing for the renewal, preservation, conservation and development of streetscape, layout and building pattern.
- Providing for the control of design and layout of structures and space.
- Provide for the promotion of the redevelopment of vacant or derelict sites and of the maintenance and repair of structures.

Wexford contains a number of distinctive areas and environments which in terms of scale and composition of streetscapes, buildings of different period's style, detail layout of streets and spaces merit consideration for designation as Architectural Conservation Areas.

Policy Statements - Architectural Conservation Areas

It is the policy of the Councils:

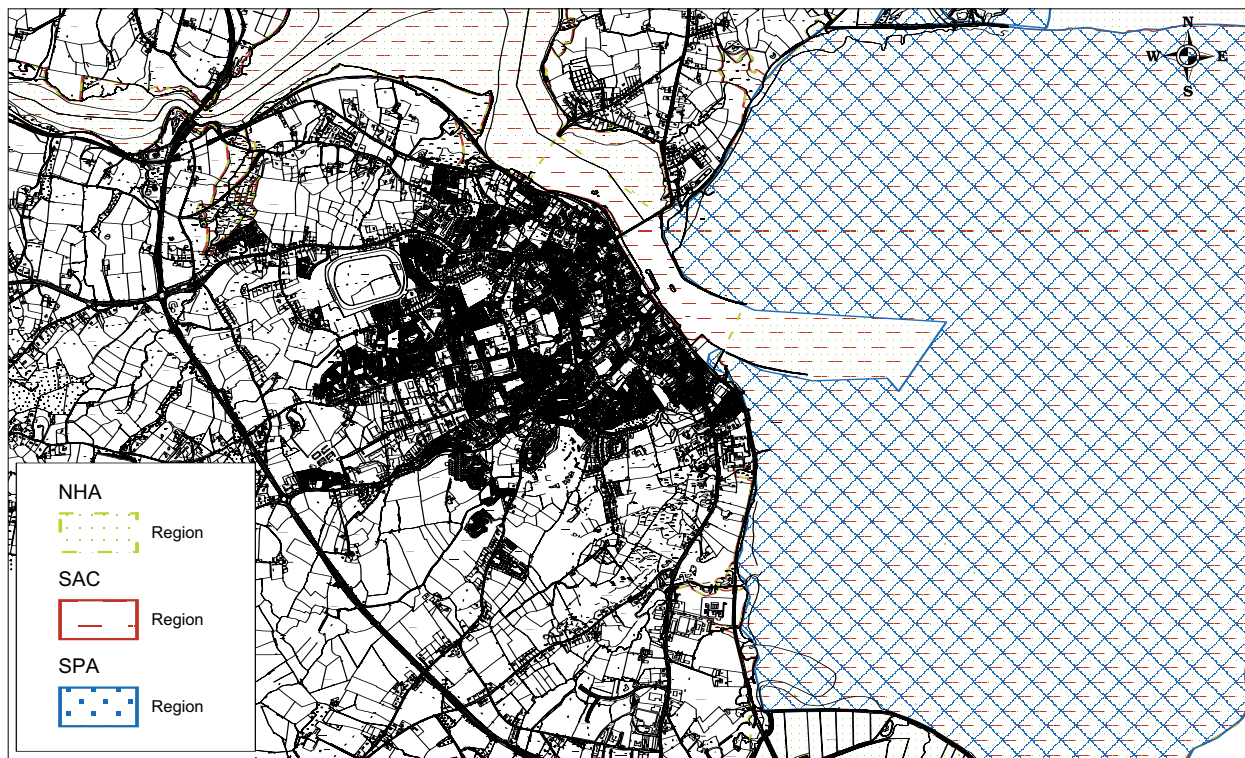
Policies

- ACA1** To designate within Wexford, 7 Architectural Conservation Areas, as illustrated on the appended map (see ACA 1 map).
- ACA2** To preserve the special character of the Architectural Conservation Areas and to ensure that all future development will enhance this character and contribute to the creation of a distinctive sense of place.
- ACA3** To review the boundaries, aims and objectives of the proposed Architectural Conservation Areas within the life time of the Development Plan. Prepare detailed statements for each area, in consultation with stakeholders and local interest groups, including guidance regarding new development and exempted development relevant to the specific character of the area.
- ACA4** To conserve, restore and rehabilitate the existing building stock in the area.
- ACA5** To ensure that all proposed developments are carried out in a manner sympathetic to the special character of the area.
- ACA6** To ensure a high standard of urban design within proposed Architectural Conservation Areas.
- ACA7** Promote improvements to the streetscape and the spaces between buildings to enhance the quality of these areas.
- ACA8** To investigate the possibility of designating the houses known as Casa Rio on Distillery Road as an Architectural Conservation Area.

8.6 Natural Heritage

The Town is rich in natural, archaeological and built heritage. This heritage should be protected, as it is a valuable, non-renewable resource, which contributes greatly to quality of life.

It is an objective to conserve, protect and enhance in general the character of Wexford as defined by its natural heritage and biodiversity, built environment, landscape and culture.



A range of different sites have been (or will be) designated under national and EU legislation and under the Ramsar Convention on wetlands. **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** and **Special Protection Areas (SPA)** have been and are being designated to conserve habitats and species of European importance pursuant to the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 **Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)** are being designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance and sites of geological interest.

In addition, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Flora and Ramsar sites, are sites where nature conservation is the primary objective and takes precedence over all other activities. The following are the Ramsar sites and Nature Reserves relevant to Wexford Town.

Ramsar Sites:

Ramsar Site No. 291: The Wexford Wildfowl Reserve was designated on the 15th November 1984. The Wexford Wildfowl Reserve has a total area of 194ha. The site also has the following designation; Special Protection Area EC Directive; & Nature Reserve.

Ramsar Site No. 333 : The Raven was designated on the 31st July 1986. The site has a total area of 589ha. and also has the following designations; Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve.

Nature Reserves:

The Raven: 589ha. Situated 8km north-east of Wexford Town is a large, well developed sand dune ecosystem, foreshore and seabed. The area supports a full range of duneland animals, several of which are of particular interest and has a rich flora including some rare species. It is one of the best developed sand dune systems on the east coast. Important also as a roosting area for geese and waders, this was established on 31 July, 1983 and is State owned.

The Wexford Wildfowl Reserve: 194ha. Situated on the sloblands north of Wexford Harbour. It is owned jointly by the National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Irish Wildbird Conservancy and it forms a wintering ground of international importance for a number of migratory water fowl species including in particular the Greenland White-fronted Goose. This reserve was extended by 84ha. in 1989 to 194ha. There is significant overlap between the areas covered by the various designations.

The overall aim of the Council will be to promote a reasonable balance between conservation measures and development measures in the interests of promoting the orderly and sustainable development of Wexford Town.

Policy Statement - Natural Heritage

It is the Policy of the Councils:

Policies

- NH 1 To ensure that appropriate measures for conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment are incorporated into all relevant plans and programmes of the Council.
- NH 2 To require developers to consult with relevant agencies as early as possible (i.e. prior to lodging a planning application) to ensure that heritage concerns are considered early in the planning process and so that the final planning application can be appropriately informed.
- NH 3 To work with the relevant agencies in promoting awareness of and pride in the natural, built and archaeological heritage of Wexford Town. This will be achieved by producing leaflets, publications, town walks and heritage trails that seek to promote all aspects of the Town's heritage.
- NH 4 To co-operate with other agencies, organisations and individuals in the assessment of and the promotion of access to heritage sites.
- NH 5 To actively encourage participation by heritage groups, community associations and local people in the identification, protection, conservation and enhancement of the heritage of Wexford Town.
- NH 6 To protect riparian zones by maintaining an adequate buffer zone (minimum 5-10m back from the riverbank) along all watercourses, with no infilling or removal of vegetation within these buffer zones.
- NH 7 To prohibit development which would damage or threaten the integrity of sites of international or national importance, designated for their habitat/wildlife or geological/geomorphological importance including the proposed Natural Heritage Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites and Statutory Nature Reserves.
- NH8 To require an appropriate ecological assessment of any project that has the potential to significantly impact on the Slaney River Valley and Wexford Harbour.
- NH9 To promote appropriate enhancement as an integral part of any development.

Infrastructure

9.1 Part A: Transport

Improving the standard of transportation infrastructure in Wexford is of primary importance. The provision of good quality infrastructure is essential to the economic, social and cultural development of the Town. The Planning Authority will seek to encourage patterns of economic growth, which can achieve maximum transport efficiency and the least possible environmental impact.

The designation of Wexford as a 'Hub' in the National Spatial Strategy necessitates the improvement of links to and from Wexford for all trip purposes by all modes of transport. It is vital that links with Dublin and Waterford and surrounding areas are maximised not only to attract business development into the Town but also to provide for leisure and other trips to and from the surrounding area.

An improvement in the environmental quality of the Town is dependent on the reorganisation of the town's system of traffic circulation. Car usage should be reduced through the promotion of other modes of transport, such as cycling, walking and public transport. Policies that address car parking facilities and short trip generation, such as the journey to and from school, can be quite effective in reducing traffic volumes. Policies and zoning that address the imbalanced retail distribution will also go towards reducing traffic flows. Walking and cycling are particularly suitable modes of transport for children going to school. An improvement in road safety through the designation of cycle paths and pedestrian paths would remove the main obstacle preventing cycling and walking as a suitable mode of transport for school trips. In order to create safe and attractive routes for children to cycle to school, specific routes have been identified and improvement measures proposed where there is a high potential demand for school trips.



9.2 Transport Management

Traffic management is now a crucial issue for every urban centre in terms of access to the Town and circulation within. The ultimate aim of traffic regimes must be to maintain the vehicular access that is essential for the use and enjoyment of the Town Centre, while eliminating or reducing its adverse impacts. Aspects of traffic management which must be incorporated into the Town's strategies are:

- increasing the use of public transport.
- prevention or limitation of car penetration into central streets.
- on-street parking control and rationalisation of off-street parking.
- adequate disabled parking provision.
- accommodation of service deliveries.
- provision for emergency services.
- taxi ranks provided in key locations.
- cyclist amenities.
- promoting pedestrian safety and priority.
- traffic management schemes to improve vehicular access to the Town Centre and to reduce congestion must not be undertaken at the expense of pedestrian movement. Streetscape projects must be advanced only when they facilitate greater accessibility and pedestrian and cyclist friendly environments.
- rationalise open lot car parks and consolidate parking in well-designed multi-storey car parks. Strategic location of car parks will increase pedestrian activity in the Town Centre.

The internal design of these car parks should create a safe, well lit internal environment which is welcoming for both driver and pedestrian. Wherever possible, incorporate active edges at the street level of multi-storey car parks to avoid blank facades. Multi-storey car parks must be set appropriately within the adjacent urban grain, with architectural detail and storey height in scale with adjacent development.

Where open lot car parks are to be retained, they must be carefully landscaped and surfaced so that they complement their streetscape context. Low level perimeter landscaping can provide an edge to these sites and trees can be placed to break up large expanses of hard surface.

The existing public transport network needs to be integrated and rationalised to provide a more efficient service and encourage increased use.

Wexford's cycle network must be improved and expanded. This includes provision of appropriately marked and signed cycle lanes on all major roads, or shared use of the footway when appropriate.

Cycle routes should be identified by the use of contrasting surfacing materials to give the cycleway high visibility to the cyclist, vehicle driver and pedestrian. These materials should complement the adjacent pavement or road surface. Changes in surface material should be minimised and suitable for cyclists with particular attention paid to maintenance and reinstatement of cycle lanes. Cyclists must be provided with secure and well designed cycle parking.

Goal

To develop a safer, more efficient and integrated transport system within Wexford, with improvements to the road network, other forms of the transport network including public transport, cycle ways and to create a pedestrian friendly environment.

Objectives

- (1) To integrate land use and transportation to ensure that, in the future, travel to and within Wexford is carried out using the most convenient and appropriate modes of travel.
- (2) To minimise car access and direct through-traffic in the Town Centre by the development of key road links.
- (3) To maximise pedestrian and cycle movements between Residential Areas, the Town Centre, Schools, Industrial Estates and the Railway Station.

Policy Statements - Transport - General

It is the policy of the Councils:

- GT 1 To promote road safety measures in conjunction with Government Departments and other agencies to avoid the creation of traffic hazards and to ensure traffic management issues are adequately addressed at pre-planning and planning application stage.
- GT 2 To ensure a safe and comprehensive roads system capable of satisfying the requirements of both vehicular traffic, cycle and pedestrian traffic within the Town.
- GT 3 To have regard to the condition, location and accessibility of heritage items in the planning and provision of transportation services.

9.3 Public Transport

Wexford is served by both bus and rail public transport. The rail service operates on the mainline intercity route. The capacity on the line is increasing due to ongoing investment and improvements in infrastructure. It is an objective of the Plan to support this route by promoting policies that utilise this transport node.



Wexford is served by bus transport with a range of services to centres including, Rosslare, Carlow, Waterford, Dublin, Arklow, Tullow, Gorey, New Ross. In addition there is a shuttle bus service which operates in Wexford and an Airport Bus service along with a number of private bus services. The Planning Authorities will support improved and more frequent rail and bus services from Wexford to other urban centres in the County and elsewhere.

Policy Statements - Public Transport

It is the policy of the Councils:

- PT 1 To co-operate with the relevant transport bodies and authorities to secure improvements and further developments of the public transport system.
- PT 2 To facilitate and promote the development of upgraded rail infrastructure and services on the Dublin-Rosslare line through Wexford.
- PT 3 To promote and seek improvements to the Wexford/Waterford rail service.
- PT 4 To facilitate the provision of taxi and hackney parking in the Town Centre.
- PT 5 To facilitate the provision of a bus-bay and quality bus waiting area in the Town Centre and to encourage interchange between bus and rail services, which could include the provision of a national bus service terminus.
- PT 6 To promote the provision and improvement to the rail freight service to/from and through Wexford Town.
- PT 7 To require that public transport set-down and pickup points are located such that the safety of passengers is maximised and the safety of road users is not endangered through the creation of a traffic hazard.
- PT 8 To promote the existing coach parking facilities along Redmond Road.

9.4 Cycling & Walking

In line with principles of sustainability a modal shift from the private car to public transport, walking or cycling will be encouraged. A number of development objectives set out in the Plan will enhance the pedestrian and cycling environment for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

There is potential to reallocate road space to footpaths and dedicated cyclist facilities. Improvements to pedestrian facilities will create opportunities for enhanced pedestrian movements to and through the Town.

Policy Statements - Cycling & Walking

It is the policy of the Councils:

- CW 1 To continue the improvements, which facilitate pedestrian safety at various locations within the Town Centre.
- CW 2 To encourage the extension and widening of footpaths generally within the existing built up area.
- CW 3 To continue to provide for and extend the system of safe pedestrian and cycle routes linking residential areas and the town centre with schools, shops, the train station and open spaces.
- CW 4 To provide signal controlled pedestrian facilities, which have an audible signal and dished kerbs with tactile paving to assist visually and mobility-impaired persons in crossing roads.
- CW 5 To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in the Town Centre, at public facilities such as Schools, Libraries, the Train Station and in all new developments in accordance with the standards set out in development management standards.
- CW 6 To ensure that roads and footpaths are designed and constructed to cater for the needs of the people with disabilities.

9.5 Roads

Policy Statements - Roads

It is the policy of the Councils:

- R 1 To implement in conjunction with development the road objectives set out in this Plan.
- R 2 To improve access along the main radial routes into the Town by reserving lands for road widening, restrict new access, improve pedestrian and cycling facilities. In addition to reserving lands for road improvements on the outer areas of the Town landscape strips of 2-4m each side of the road are also required.
- R 3 To improve the existing roads where necessary by the setting back of building or frontage lines and by setting back of proposed new structures at road junctions to improve sight lines in the interests of traffic improvement and safety.
- R 4 To reserve lands for road improvement proposals by means of acquisition and development management.
- R 5 To preserve free from development all alternative road improvement lines and route corridors where development would seriously interfere with the roads objectives, until such time as a final decision on a preferred route has been made. The Local Authority will endeavour to ensure that a decision with respect to final road lines is decided upon as expeditiously as possible in order to prevent planning blight.

- R 6 Ensure that the design of major new accesses, roundabouts and new roads prioritise the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and people who have a disability. In Town Centre locations, Residential Estates, next to Schools and Parks, new roads design shall give priority to pedestrian and cyclists.

Policy Statements - Traffic Management

It is the policy of the Councils:

- TM 1 To review, extend and adopt proposals to improve traffic management and parking controls so as to allow for optimum use of streets in the Town.
- TM 2 To adopt a system for the circulation of car traffic, this limits through-traffic in the Town, through the implementation of traffic cells, radial routes and distributor roads.
- TM 3 To introduce traffic management measures within the Town Centre to facilitate pedestrian movement, cycling and public transport initiatives.

Policy Statements - Car Parking

It is the policy of the Council:

- CP 1 To identify suitable locations and/or other provisions for long term parking by commuters on the outskirts of the Town.
- CP 2 To identify suitable locations for a coach/bus parking facility adjacent to the Town Centre.
- CP 3 To provide off-street car parking at strategic locations in the Town Centre and on the outskirts of the Town.
- CP 4 To adopt car parking management standards within the Town Centre that reduce on-street car parking in favour of off-street car parking and a restriction on long term (commuter) car parking facilities in favour of short term (business and leisure) car parking use.



9.6 Part B - Water Supply

The provision of adequate water supply and sewerage facilities is an integral part of the proper planning and sustainable development of any area. There have been significant changes in the operating environment in which these services are provided since 1999. The many drivers of change include new EU and national legislation, the Government's Framework for Water Pricing, project management and service procurement approaches together with regional strategic planning and integration of services.

Plans are currently underway to upgrade the existing sewerage plant to provide additional capacity; this will be carried out during the lifetime of this Plan. The existing water supply in Wexford is adequate to meet the demands of the present and future populations anticipated with the designation of Wexford as a hub in the NSS. However the Councils recognise that water supplies are a scarce and expensive resource which cannot be wasted, conservation policies are now mandatory and work is progressing on a Water Conservation Programme for Wexford.



Goal

To provide water in sufficient quantity and quality for domestic, industrial, and other uses and to provide a reliable system for the safe and adequate disposal of wastewater in a manner, which is sustainable.

Objectives

- (1) To improve the provision of wastewater services in those areas of the Town where deficiencies exist at present.
- (2) To provide the necessary drainage facilities to serve the needs of all development within the Town, and to prevent pollution.
- (3) To separate the disposal of foul and surface water effluent through the provision of separate sewerage networks.
- (4) To promote the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in all cases where this is feasible.
- (5) To preserve free from development the way-leaves of all public sewers and water mains.
- (6) To provide sufficient water to service all the lands zoned for development in this Plan, and to provide for future needs in the longer term.

Policy Statements

It is a Policy of the Council to:

- | | |
|------|--|
| WS 1 | Provide an adequate, sustainable and economic public water supply to provide for the existing and future populations. |
| WS 2 | The Councils will, where appropriate implement the findings and relevant recommendations as set out in The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the Years 2006-2007 (Office of Environment Enforcement - EPA 2007). |
| WS 3 | Implement a programme for upgrading water supply mains so as to provide adequate standards of water quality, pressure, storage and fire safety. |
| WS 4 | Conserve supplies through the maintenance of the mains and the elimination of leakages. |
| WS 5 | Promote public awareness on the maintenance of water quality and economic and sustainable use. |

Objectives

It is an objective of the Councils to:-

- W 1 To formulate and implement a leak control policy.
- W 2 The Council will over the lifetime of the plan prepare a Water Conservation Strategy.
- W 3 To install water metres at appropriate locations in order to improve leakage control.

9.7 Wastewater

The existing Wastewater Treatment plant at Wexford has a capacity of 45,000 PE.

Policy Statements

It is a Policy of the joint Councils to:-

- WW 1 Collect the foul sewage from within the Town and Environs and to discharge it after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner.
- WW 2 Provide satisfactory Wastewater Treatment facilities to serve existing and future populations.
- WW 3 Develop the separate foul and surface water drainage system where feasible in order to reduce the volume of material entering the treatment plant and to ensure that all new developments provide separate on-site foul and surface water drainage systems.

9.8 Surface Water Quality, Drainage Systems, Flood Control and the Water Framework Directive

The Local Authority will endeavour to improve the water quality in rivers and other water courses and minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from septic tanks and other potentially polluting sources. The need for control of stormwater runoff has long been recognised. Rainfall on a greenfield site is either absorbed into the ground or runs off slowly to the nearest watercourse. When these sites are built on, much of the area becomes impermeable with runoff being piped to the nearest watercourse or storm drain. Thus both the volume and rate of runoff can dramatically increase, which may lead to flooding or increased overflows from combined sewers, neither of which is acceptable. As a result, the Councils will ensure that all proposed drainage systems are consistent with **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)**. SUDS can be defined as “a sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable fashion than conventional techniques”.

Policy Statements

It is a Policy of the Councils to:-

- SW 1 Protect existing groundwater aquifers and surface waters from pollution.
- SW 2 Protect the water quality of the River Slaney and continue to implement the Water Quality Management Plan for the River Slaney, and to ensure that the water quality of the river is maintained at a satisfactory level in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Directive Number 78/659 that lists the river as a salmonoid river.
- SW 3 Prevent the alteration of natural drainage systems and in the case of development works require the provision of acceptable mitigation measures in order to minimise the risk of flooding and negative impacts on water quality.
- SW 4 Promote storm water retention facilities for new developments and existing catchment areas.
- SW 5 Ensure that all proposed drainage systems are consistent with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).

Flooding

Multiple recurring flood points are identified in and around Wexford. The surprising depths of flooding are in part due to the lack of floodplains at Wexford and the tidal estuary of the Slaney. Generally, the floodplains of the Slaney and its tributaries are not wide enough and end abruptly in steep sided encarpments and hills, the majority of large Irish rivers do not share this condition. This means during major rain events there is nowhere for rain to rest temporarily so the flood peak is not attenuated (reduced in size) to the same degree as is common in this country. Recent improvements in the Wexford Main Drainage Scheme have helped to alleviate this problem to a limited extent.

Policy Statements

It is a Policy of the Councils to:-

- SW 6 Ensure that development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations.
- SW 7 The Councils will have regard to the consultation draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management' DOEHLG 2008.
- SW 8 Require that a Flood Risk Assessment and proposals for the storage or attenuation of run/off discharges (including foul drains) must accompany applications for planning permission for all significant developments (greater than 1ha) to ensure that the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment. For smaller developments (1ha or less), a certificate from a suitably qualified competent person stating that the development will not contribute to flooding within the relevant catchment must accompany applications for planning permission. A Flood Impact Assessment shall identify potential loss of floodplain storage and how it would be offset in order to minimize impact on the river flood regime. It shall also take account of the possible affect on the natural resources of the river. For developments adjacent to watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity any structures must be set back from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel cleaning/maintenance.
- SW 9 All new developments must be designed and constructed to meet the following minimum flood design standards, for urban areas so that floor levels are 300mm above the 100 year flood level and that in areas under the influence of the tide the 200 year event flood should be considered.
- SW 10 Preserve and protect the water quality of the natural wetlands and flood plains of the River Slaney where these help to regulate stream flow, recharge ground water and screen pollutants.
- SW 11 All proposals to deal with storm water discharging into the catchment of the River Slaney and its tributaries shall include an assessment of impacts and mitigation measures to protect Environmentally designated sites.

Water Framework Directive

In response to the increasing threat of pollution and the increasing demand from the public for cleaner rivers, lakes and beaches, the EU developed the Water Framework Directive. The directive establishes a framework for the protection of all waters including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, groundwater, canals and other artificial water bodies for the benefit of everyone. The protection of water for wildlife and their habitats is also included under the directive.

Management of water resources must be planned and implemented, through Management Plans, in a way that achieves the best possible balance between the protection and improvement of the water environment and the interests of those who depend on it for their livelihood and quality of life. Good ecological and chemical status for all waters must be achieved by 2015 with no deterioration in existing status in the meantime.

To facilitate this process a statutory River Basin District Advisory Council has been established in each River Basin District to consider matters relating to the preparation of River Basin Management Plans and other matters relevant to the protection and use of the aquatic environment and water resources in the district and to advise and make recommendations on these matters to the relevant public authorities. The South-East River Basin Advisory Council is the relevant authority in the South East.

The Councils are participating in the preparation of a River Basin Management Plan in relation to the South Eastern River Basin District which is due to be completed by mid-2009.

Policy Statements

It is a Policy of the Councils to:-

SW 12 To actively participate in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

SW 13 To jointly with other local authorities and the relevant Public Authorities, participate and co-operate in the South Eastern River Basin District Management Project.

SW 14 To implement the South Eastern River Basin Management Plan and to increase public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect, reduce demand and where required, improve the quality of all waters.

SW 15 To take account of the findings of the National Programs of Measures Studies being developed for the River Basin Management Plans.

9.9 Waste Management Strategy

Proper waste management is a fundamental requirement for sustainable development and environmental protection and we cannot continue to rely on landfill as the principal means of waste disposal. There are a number of EU Directives that apply to the area of waste management defining the legal context within which waste must be planned and managed. The Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region was adopted in 2006.

The Plan highlights current levels of waste and sets objectives whereby overall levels will be reduced and stabilised in order to comply with both national and European legislative guidelines. The guidelines set down a hierarchy of preferential modes of waste management, focusing on prevention, minimisation, re-use/ recycle and disposal with energy recovery and disposal of residual waste.



Policy Statements

It is a Policy of the joint Councils to:-

WM 1 To promote the implementation of the Waste Management Plan (2006) for Wexford together with any future Waste Management Plans.

WM 2 To encourage waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste. Where waste management is not being carried out properly, the Waste Management Acts, 1996 to 2001 will be used as a means to ensuring specific national policies and regulations are adhered to.

WM 3 To encourage the recycling of construction and demolition waste and the reuse of aggregate and other materials.

WM 4 To promote the 'polluter pays principle'.

WM 5 To encourage the provision of recycling facilities (i.e. bottle banks, bring centres etc.) at suitable locations in the town in order to facilitate domestic recycling initiatives.

WM 6 To promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community-based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.