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1 Introduction

As part of the Kilkenny County Council's settlement strategy adopted in the County Development Plan 2002 it is the policy of the Council to carry out an extensive programme of local area plans for settlements throughout County Kilkenny. This Local Area Plan for Gowran is part of that policy initiative.

1.1 Legal Basis of the Plan

The legal basis for this plan is provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Sections 18 and 19). The Act provides for the preparation of Local Area Plans for any part of the functional area of a planning authority. A local area plan must be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan. It must contain a written statement and maps indicating the objectives of the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies including detail on community facilities and amenities and on standards of design of developments and structures.

1.2 Function and Aims

The Plan has two main functions:

1. To provide a policy framework and objectives for the physical development of Gowran.
2. To provide the basis for assessing the detailed planning applications submitted to the Council in such a way that the town can encourage and assimilate change, which is essential to it, as a living community, while ensuring that the essential character and qualities of the town are maintained and improved.

The aim of the Gowran Area Plan is to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the town. It will therefore facilitate the co-ordinated social, economic and environmental development of Gowran and its environs and for the conservation and enhancement of its natural and built environment. The County Council also has an obligation to promote principles of sustainable development as outlined in 'Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland' 1997, as adopted by the Government. It is therefore the duty of the County Council to ensure a sustainable balance between socio-economic growth, cultural growth and the environment.

The aim is to develop a plan, which would be agreed and implemented with the concerted effort and mutual co-operation of local people, business, public and private bodies and voluntary organisations. The intention is to make Gowran an attractive, prosperous, and successful area for the benefit of all those who live, work, conduct business in and visit Gowran.

1.3 Duration of the Plan

The duration of this plan will be for a period of 6 years from the date of its adoption, 20th October 2003.

1.4 Previous Plans / Studies

A village study was prepared for Gowran by the Council in 1988. At that time the study set out some 28 specific recommendations for the village, many of which have been implemented over the years.

Following on from that as part of the Urban and Village Renewal program 1996 to 2001 a Gowran Community Village renewal plan was prepared by Gowran Community Association which also set out plans for the development of the village and provided a source of funding to help implement some of the objectives of the 1988 plan as well as funding new objectives. Extensive tree planting has been undertaken by the Gowran Development Association throughout the town.

Where development objectives which were highlighted in those plans have not been carried out to date these have been re-evaluated and amended and/or deleted accordingly.

1.5 Locational Context

Gowran is a town with a recorded population of 454 persons in 2002. It is located approximately 8 miles east of Kilkenny City. Gowran lies at the intersection of two main routes, the N9 National Primary Route linking Paulstown and Thomastown and the R 702 which links Kilkenny and Goresbridge / Graiguenamanagh. (See Map 1)

The town nestles into the rolling fertile landscape of the area. To the east across the River Barrow lie the Blackstairs mountains which provide picturesque views on leaving the town at the eastern end on the R702. To the south of the town lies Gowran Park race course which is an important element in the cultural and economic life of the area. Recently there has been the development of an 18-hole Golf Club which will add further to the cultural and economic activity of the area.

1.6 Historical Development

Gowran developed as a settlement in Norman times and was granted a Charter of Incorporation by Theobald Fitzwalter, ancestor of the Butlers, in 1206. Gowran grew in importance thereafter and had defences with stone gatehouses by the early 15th Century. The town lay on an important route between Munster and Leinster and was besieged and captured by Edward Bruce in 1316 and by Cromwell in 1650.

There is still some evidence of the town defences in the form of a fosse or ditch along rear property boundaries to the North of the town and the site of the original Gowran Castle can still be discerned c. 80 metres to the north – east of Viscount Clifden's classical house. The principal evidence of medieval Gowran lies in the ruins of the collegiate church of St. Mary's in the centre of the town which was built c. 1275.

In 1608 King James 1st made Gowran a parliamentary borough and in 1613 the first two members of Parliament were elected and Gowran returned members to the Irish Parliament until the time of the Union. In the year 1578 Edmund Downey had a grant of 'the custody, mastership and oversight of the Magdalen of Leighlin and Ballygowran for relief of the poor, leprous people dwelling in those places'. The Magdalen or leper hospital at Ballygowran was situated about 300 yards east of the old parish church, just outside the town wall. About 1840, the remains of the chapel were removed and trees

planted on the site. The site is now marked on ordnance survey sheets. The trees have now been removed also but the stumps of those cut down still remain. From its close proximity to the Magdalen chapel and hospital the east gate of the town, formerly situated here, was called the 'Magdalen Gate'.

Gowran continued to grow after 1700 in a typical urban linear pattern with single storey and two storey buildings constructed hard up to the public thoroughfare. The Fair Green is in effect a small Georgian Square and other contemporary structures such as Byrnes opposite the Green and Loughlin's at the junction for Kilkenny attest to the prosperity of the town during that time.

Also to be seen from this period is the influence of the benevolent landlord of Gowran Demesne as evidenced in the former Almshouse at the top of the town and later in the estate cottages and picturesque semi – detached houses dispersed along Main Street.

The architectural detailing of the estate houses and their setting back from the road across private gardens was in contrast to the established pattern of development at the time and results today in a streetscape which unfolds in an interesting and distinctive way as one passes through the town.

1.7 Urban Structure

Gowran is a well maintained and presented town. It is best known for the church which is a fine example of its period and adds to the corpus of medieval Kilkenny. The church is at the heart of the town. For a long time it was hidden away but recent improvements under the two previous Plans have brought it back into focus and made it a central feature of the town. This gives the town a dual character: the church and the street. The town is developed in a general linear fashion with the street winding through the town. At first glance the differences in character along its length could be missed. This long street gives a chance for the streetscape to unfold and develop as the visitor travels along.

There are four main areas of interest

1. at the east end of the town the former alms house and surrounding buildings,
2. then the fair green which is in fact a small square
3. then the junction of the main street with the Kilkenny road
4. The west end of the town with a row of two storey houses on the North side of the street.

The east end of the town (Upper Main street) has a concentration of gentlemen's residences which are two storey dating from the early 19th century. The survival of fanlights and some bright painting is enough to show the quality of the buildings.

The public space known as the Fair Green is at the centre of the town, and is bounded by buildings on three sides and by the Main Street on the south side. The buildings around the green include two-storied houses on the east and north, with a low marble works showroom, a shed and a pub/shop on the west. In the northwest corner is a gap with a ruined cottage and corrugated iron gate.

The Fair Green functions as a car park with a limited amount of grass containing seven large trees. It also functions as an open space within the town but this is subsidiary to its

function as a car park at present. The Fair Green is an important visual element within the town.

The junction of Main Street with the Kilkenny road is defined by Loughlin's public house and the curved façade on the other side of the street. It is unfortunate that the buildings on the South side of the street do not have the same impact.

The west ends of Lower Main Street shows an example of abrupt visual impact which has largely disappeared from the Irish landscape. This is clear cut division between town and country. Coming round the bend on the Waterford road one moment you are in the country and the next a row of houses appears on the North side of the road. This includes the house with the blank arches on the ground floor.

A tributary of the river Nore travels in a west – east axis south of the town. Gowran Marshes bounds the town to the south where the woodlands exist alongside the river. The surrounding land is relatively flat with views towards Freagh Hill and Coppanagh Hill which is further south near Graiguenamanagh.

1.8 Consultation

The Planning and Development Act 2000 introduced statutory Local Area Plans and a requirement that planning authorities take whatever steps are considered necessary to consult the public in preparing a local area plan.

Through the County Development Board local community groups and organisations were identified and these were informed of the Councils attention to make a Local Area Plan. They were invited to make submissions to the Council. In addition to that statutory bodies and Government agencies were notified and invited to make submissions.

A number of written submissions were received both from local organisations and government agencies and were considered in the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan.

As part of the public consultation process on 8/5/01 a public meeting was held in Gowran at which approximately 30 people from the local community attended. The meeting was advertised through the local press, the local radio and the community organisations. The meeting was held in order to learn of the views of the attendants, which in turn would be an input into the preparation and compilation of a plan for Gowran.

A questionnaire was distributed to each attendant, which requested them to evaluate various issues as they related to Gowran and to make recommendations as to how problems could be improved. The twenty headings which selected for discussion were which were as follows:

- 1.8.1 Amenity / recreation
- 1.8.2 Education
- 1.8.3 Housing
- 1.8.4 Street lighting
- 1.8.5 Population
- 1.8.6 Street furniture

- 1.8.7 Employment
- 1.8.8 Boundary treatment of approach roads into the town
- 1.8.9 Maintenance of buildings
- 1.8.10 Tidiness
- 1.8.11 Retailing
- 1.8.12 Sewerage network
- 1.8.13 Water supply
- 1.8.14 Car parking
- 1.8.15 Transportation / roads / footpaths
- 1.8.16 Advertising
- 1.8.17 Healthcare
- 1.8.18 Signposting
- 1.8.19 Preservation
- 1.8.20 Tourism
- 1.8.21 Further comments

The attendants were divided into 5 groups of 6. Each group then discussed the topics listed with the Council staff facilitating the discussion within each group.

Following the completion of the questionnaire a map of Gowran was distributed to each group. The groups were requested to identify on the map how the town should expand and to represent their own objectives for the development of the town on the map. There was significant contrast between the groups for the development proposals for the town.

The findings achieved from the questionnaire revealed a range of views and recommendations from the respondents. Their points have been strongly considered in the making of this plan, and have contributed to the compilation of the objectives and policies within this plan.

Each topic/issue dealt with on the night will be summarised below.

1.8.1 Amenity/Recreation: The Community response

Submitted recommendations include:

- Use of the river lands for amenity purposes/riverside walks.
- Preserve trees along the river.
- More sports facilities needed.
- More space required for sports facilities i.e. GAA athletics, soccer.
- Tennis Court & Handball Alley required.
- More play areas within developments.
- Playground for young children.

1.8.2 Education: The Community response

Pupil teacher ratios need to be lowered.

Pre School /Crèche facilities needed.

1.8.3 Housing: The Community response

More housing needed and required in the town.

Developments of houses should respect the scale of the town.

No major developments
Over 5 years no more than 80 to 100 houses.
Design should blend with the town.
Need to infill around the town.
Keep housing compact around the town – prevent sprawl.
Need more sites for Social housing.
Car parking facilities inadequate especially in housing estates.

1.8.4 Street Lighting: The Community response

Improvements to street lighting were advocated at the following locations:
Along the Kilkenny road approaching the school and the church.
Provide lighting at Rockfield and the Mill road.
Main street lighting needs to be improved.
Need lighting on the approach roads to the town.

1.8.5 Population: The Community response

Extra people from clusters of development would enhance population figures but large developments would have an adverse effect on the quality of life.
People feel like they live in a village and they want to keep it that way.
There is a need to link employment opportunities to population increases.
Need young families
Population needs to increase but a large population increase would be bad for Gowran.

1.8.6 Street Furniture: The Community response

Provide cast iron litter bins and seats.
Provide street furniture in the Parkmore housing estate.
Provide seating at the school wall.
Provide a bus shelter and a seat at the bus stop.
More street furniture in the town would be an asset to the town.

1.8.7 Employment: The Community response

There is a need for a business park in the area to attract local industry.
Space for industry should be incorporated into the plan.
More employment is needed for the area.
More craft and tourist services needed to generate employment.

1.8.8 Boundary treatment of approach roads into the town: The Community response

Keep all entrances clean
Keep grass verges cut.
Higher standard of maintenance required.
Footpath should be provided to GAA pitch on the Goresbridge road.
Dangerous kerbs outside Gowran church and school. 30mph speed limit too near town
there is a need for a 40mph speed limit

1.8.9 Maintenance of buildings: The Community response

Derelict building at Lower Main Street is an eyesore – needs replacement.
Impress upon owners to maintain buildings
All derelict sites need to be developed.
Houses need repair and painting especially beside bus stop.

1.8.10 Tidiness: The Community response

More litter bins needed.
Recycling glass bin needed.
Nice quality litter bins needed.
Have a litter warden visit Gowran at then weekend.
More support and funding for the Gowran Development Association

1.8.11. Retailing: The Community response

The town needs a chemist shop and a bank. More business needed. More car parking needed.
For present size and population retailing adequate.

1.8.12. Sewerage Network: The Community response

The sewerage network needs expansion to accommodate new housing.
New treatment plant necessary immediately.
Treatment plant should be downstream of town.

1.8.13. Water Supply: The Community response

This is a major worry when considering future development.
Land spreading of waste in the immediate area.
Better water pressure needed
Houses at top of street needs more pressure.
Upgrade the water supply system.

1.8.14. Car Parking: The Community response

Need a car park in the centre of the town the Green is not enough.
Existing bus stop is very dangerous.
Restore car parking that was available at the church and school.
Car parking required for people to shop go to post office and social evenings.

1.8.15 Transportation: The Community response

Footpath outside the post office need urgent repair.
Footpath laid by County Council in 1999 are dangerous and difficult to navigate a buggy on. Footpaths need to be redone.
Footpaths too high.
Lorries can't take turning from Dublin at Loughlin's corner. To turn right from Kilkenny is particularly dangerous.
Footpath required to pitch & putt & hurling club.

Railway station should be made operational for passengers at certain times.
Remove existing bays at chapel and put in ramps.
There is a need to stop cars using the mill road as a rat run.
Regular bus service needed to Dublin Waterford and Kilkenny
Road leading to Parkmore Terrace & Green view needs resurfacing.
A drive slow through the town sign should be erected.

1.8.16 Advertising: The community response

Most people had no complaints about advertising in Gowran. Suggestions for improvement included the promotion of the town in tourist publications.

1.8.17. Healthcare: The Community response

There is a need for a chemist in Gowran. A resident doctor is needed at the weekends.
An increase in population in the town was seen as a benefit for the provision of such services.

1.8.18. Signposting: The Community response

Increase the number of signs for the town or sports facilities.
Erect name signs for the town on approach roads.
Speed limit signs should be moved out further from the town.
More tourist signs needed.

1.8.19 Preservation: The Community response.

Repair damaged walls
Listed buildings need to be maintained and marshlands should be preserved.
The Castle should be renovated.
Rebuild castle boundary wall opposite Dalton's Mill.

1.8.20 Tourism: The Community response

Need for a café
Tourist trails and walks needed.
Parking needed near St. Mary's Church for buses and cars.
Gowran should be advertised more.
Gowran should be on a tourist trail to Graiguenamanagh Inistioge and Thomastown.

2 Policies and Objectives

2.1 Amenities/ Recreation

Gowran's fine architecture, archaeology, race course and new golf course are its principal attractions. It has some very special architectural features of which it can be proud: most notably the church which is a magnificent example of medieval architecture and points to Gowran's historic past as an ecclesiastical centre and as a walled town.

The findings of the questionnaire highlighted the fact that there was inadequate use made of natural resources (e.g. the river) and that green areas and recreational facilities were lacking in the town. It was recommended to provide more playgrounds and sports facilities, provide a river walk and restore the Mill stream.

At Greenview and Parkmore housing schemes there is a hard surfaced area railed off for a play area. A soccer pitch has also been provided on existing Council lands at this location.

Policy:

The Planning Authority will not normally permit development which would result in the loss of public or private playing fields, parks, children's play space, amenity open space or land zoned for recreational or open space purposes. An exception may be considered where all of the following requirements are demonstrably met:

- a) There is a clear excess of playing fields or open space provision within the area. This should take into account the long-term needs of the community, the type and recreational and amenity value and accessibility of such provision.
- b) Alternative compensatory provision is made which is both accessible to and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community.
- c) The continued use, proper maintenance and enhancement of the amenity/facility can best be achieved by the redevelopment of a small part of the site that will not adversely affect its overall sporting, recreational and/or amenity value of the facility.
- d) The site is indicated for an alternative use in the development plan.

It is the policy of the Council to provide, maintain and manage a children's play area in Gowran within public open spaces or other suitable locations where it is appropriate and as finance and resources permit.

The Council will investigate ways of improving the quality and capacity of existing sporting and recreational facilities.

The Council will investigate ways of assisting in the provision of new sporting recreational and leisure facilities through initiatives in both the public and private sector.

It is an objective of the Council:

1. To provide public rights of way to places of special beauty, amenity or recreational value. The Council shall also seek the preservation and maintenance and improvement of all existing rights of way to such areas.

2. To assess the need for playground equipment in the Greenview/Parkmore estate playground
3. To provide further landscaping in the Greenview and Parkmore Terrace open spaces.
4. To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character.
5. To provide for a walkway along the river south of the town in conjunction and with the agreement of the property owners along the river.

2.2 Education

Gowran National School, located opposite the Church, west of the town centre, is the only school in Gowran and in the parish. In 1982 the boys and girls schools in Gowran amalgamated, with Dungarvan N.S. having amalgamated in 1971. The nearest secondary schools are in Goresbridge, Thomastown and Kilkenny City. Gowran N.S. is a mixed school of 171 pupils. It is a 7- teacher school with 8 classrooms but only 6 rooms used. Next year they will have 6 teachers, with an increase to 8 teachers the following year to reflect proposed increased pupil figures. With 8 classrooms the school can accommodate 200 pupils, i.e. an additional 30/40 pupils than currently are attending. An extension was built to the school 20 years ago. There is parochial land adjacent to the school, which could be built upon if ever the need arises. However, at this stage there is ample room to cater for an increase of 30/40 pupils utilizing the existing building.

There is no dedicated full time childcare facility in the town at present. The Gowran Development Association has plans to develop such a facility in the town.

It is an objective of the Council

1. To facilitate the development of a full time childcare facility in the town in conjunction with Gowran Development Association, other relevant statutory organisations and the local community on a suitable site within the town.

2.3 Housing

At present there is outline planning permission for the development of 20 houses off the Fair Green in Gowran. A number of other schemes for housing development in and around the town have been refused. The availability of good quality well located housing for purchase and rental is vital to the future development of Gowran.

Sheltered housing for the elderly is provided in Gowran off the main street in ten units which is run by the parish. There at present a small waiting list for accommodation in the scheme.

Those who responded to the housing part of the questionnaire felt that the condition of the housing stock was good but there was an insufficient supply of housing to meet demand. The main recommendations made were to develop infill sites, and upgrade badly maintained buildings.

It was advocated through the public consultation that multiple residential developments should be in the form of clusters of no more than 20 dwellings. It was also stated that within the plan period no more than 100 dwellings should be constructed.

It is an objective of the Council:

1. To implement the housing strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002
2. To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings.
3. To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the town to cater for its expansion over the period of the plan
4. To facilitate the improvement and enhancement of existing local authority built housing estates in partnership with the residents.
5. To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary and to encourage a wide range and high standard of design within these developments. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at sustainable densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilised where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the town.
6. To ensure a high quality of building design and open space in all proposed housing and other developments and to preserve where possible existing hedgerows, trees and habitats.
7. To encourage sensitive conversion and reuse of historic structures where the original use has become redundant.
8. To utilise the powers under the Derelict Sites Act (1990) to require the maintenance of residential properties in non-derelict condition.
9. To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within the residential areas of the town and the town centre.
10. To control development of one off houses on the fringes of the Gowran development area in order to maintain a clear line between the built up area and the rural countryside.
11. To ensure the maintenance and preservation of housing within the town centre, and to encourage continued residential use of upper floors. To encourage the building of new residential infill development where vacant plots exist.
12. To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/sizes.
13. To facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of sheltered housing for the elderly.
14. To ensure the orderly development of Gowran which reflects the character of the existing town in terms of structure, pattern, scale, design and materials with adequate provision of open space.

2.4 Street Lighting

Lighting provision in Gowran is quite adequate as reiterated in the questionnaire responses; however the responses did show that there is a demand for public lighting along the R702. The respondents also recommended street lighting provision on Mill rd., Rockfield Lane, and Church road.

Improvements to street lighting were carried out under the village renewal programme 1996 to 2000. This has resulted in a generally satisfactory level of street lighting in the town. It is not intended to provide additional public lighting before the end of 2003, but a review of public lighting will be carried out during the period of this Plan, with a view of identifying priority areas in need of improvement. New public lighting will be required as part of any new residential development.

Within the town the existing wires associated with the provision of street lighting and telecommunications are a blight on the streetscape. If these were under-grounded it would enhance the town considerably and provide for a more attractive environment.

It is an objective of the Council:

To provide street lighting at the following locations as finances and priorities permit:

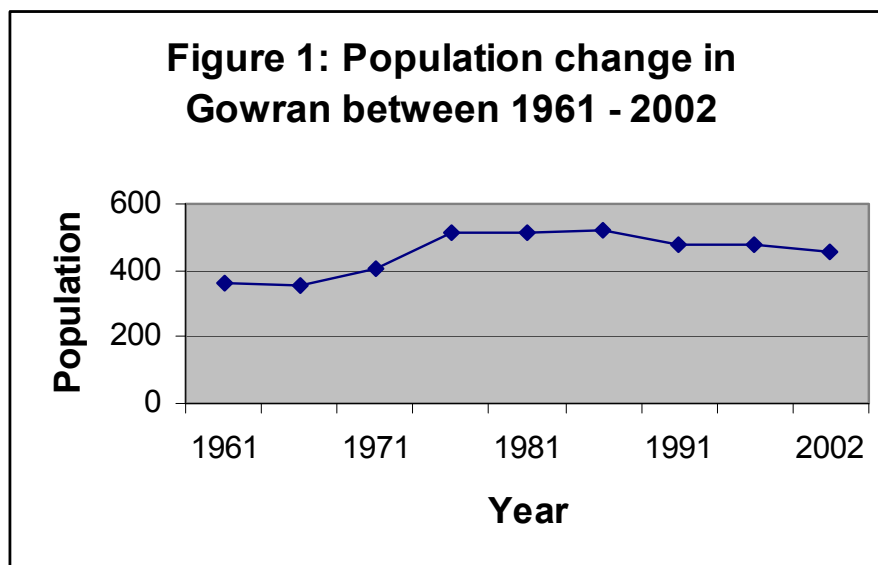
1. along the Kilkenny road to provide lighting for the existing developments
2. along Rockfield road to provide lighting for existing developments.
3. along Mill Road to provide lighting for existing developments.
4. To underground existing electricity and telephone wires within the town as the opportunity arises.

2.5 Population

Gowran had a population of 454 recorded at the 2002 Census. The trends in population of the town for the intercensal period 1961 to 2002 are shown in the table below.

Table no. 1: Population Figures

Year	Population
1961	365
1966	353
1971	405
1979	512
1981	510
1986	517
1991	477
1996	476
2002	454



As is evident from the table and chart above, Gowran has experienced a number of increases and decreases in population, however overall the population has increased from its 1961 census figure of 365 to the last census taking of 454 in 2002. Since 1961, the population was at its highest in 1986 when it was 517, and has decreased since then.

2.5.1 Population Objective

To provide conditions in Gowran which allow it to sustain and strengthen its role as a population centre within Co. Kilkenny however the County Council also recognises that Gowran has a quality of life, a community ethos, a character and scale which are worthy of nurturing and protecting in any expansion of the town. The expansion of the town will be controlled. It is the intention of the Council that the policies in this plan respect these characteristics and that all future development within Gowran will be progressed in a sustainable manner.

2.6 Street Furniture

The provision of refuse bins and public seating is adequate, although somewhat lacking in overall design consistency. A wide variety of bins are in use, producing an uncoordinated effect. There is also an identified need for public seats at strategic points in the town.

It is an objective of the Council to:

1. Replace existing litter bins in the town with one uniform style.
2. Provide seating and associated street furniture at strategic points in the town namely outside the school, at the bus stop (with an associated bus shelter) and at St Mary's Church.

2.7 Labour force / Employment

During the course of the making of the plan it was clear that there is a shortage of locations available within Gowran and its surrounding area where local enterprises can be

accommodated. Pricing of available land was highlighted as the main reason for this as existing and new operators tended to find the price of available land too high to enable them to purchase and develop sites for their enterprises.

While sites within the town itself can be considered for light industrial development and other types of enterprises on their merits it must be borne in mind that such development will be constrained by the fact that it will be located close to existing and future residential development. In the consultation process it was highlighted that Gowran needed a business park in order to provide industrial /enterprise sites and therefore attract jobs locally. It was also said that there should be more craft and tourist services in the area to create employment.

It is an objective of the Council:

1. To support the development of tourism in Gowran
2. To support and assist suitable project development for the future development of Gowran Demesne in co-operation with the land owners, the local Community bodies, Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, the South East Regional Tourism Authority, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader.
3. To assist in the provision of suitable and sustainable locations for employment opportunities in the Gowran area.
4. To require a high standard of design and landscaping in industrial development, in order to maintain the area's attractiveness to new enterprise.

2.8 Boundary Treatment along Approach Roads

The approach roads into Gowran are generally bounded by uniform natural random rubble stone walls. However, an existing block wall on the west side of the Kilkenny approach road is recommended to be finished in a similar stone in order to integrate with the standard achieved along other approach roads. Furthermore, the existing white fence along the stretch of road opposite the entrance to the Parochial House along the LP2337-152 is in need of reinstatement and repainting. There was a need identified for the preservation of existing stone walls where possible.

Policy: To retain existing stone walls in the town and its environs where possible

It is an objective of the Council:

1. To have the stone wall along the Mill road part of the Gowran Castle boundary repaired.
2. To have existing block wall on the west side of the Kilkenny approach road finished in a similar stone as the adjacent walls in order to integrate with the standard achieved along other approach roads.

2.9 Maintenance of Buildings

Most of the buildings in Gowran are in good condition with some in very good condition and presenting a very favourable impression of the town. There are a few signs of dereliction or vacancy.

Policy: To implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990 as resources permit with a view to the elimination of derelict sites within the town

2.10 Tidiness

Gowran is well presented and very clean and tidy. However, there are pockets of untidiness which were identified and need to be addressed. From the consultation exercise it is evident that there is a strong desire among the local community to provide more good quality litter bins, provide recycling containers and a litter warden at weekends.

Kilkenny County Council has adopted the South East Regional Authority Waste Management Strategy, and the policy for Kilkenny is set out in the Waste Management Plan for the period 2000-2004. European Union environmental policy dictates that the 'Polluter pays principle' be applied, which means that the full costs associated with environmentally sound recovery and disposal of waste are charged to the customer.

With regard to recycling, it is Council and regional policy that bottle banks for clear, green and brown glass and aluminium cans are provided at villages throughout the county. There is a bottle bank at the Church car park in Gowran at present, where glass bottles and drinks cans can be recycled. The aim is to have one bottle bank per 1000 head of population by the end of 2005. Kerbside collections for recyclables are proposed for 2003. These collections will cover newspapers, cardboard, magazines, food cans, drink cans and plastic. Bottles will still be disposed of at the Bottle banks.

Policy: To continue to encourage and facilitate recycling and the minimisation of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan objectives

It is an objective of the Council

1. To ensure Gowran has an adequate solid waste collection system
2. To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan

2.11 Retailing

Gowran is served by a number of convenience retail outlets which include a butchers, a small supermarket and convenience shop and two filling stations with small shops. It has three public houses which are all located on the Main Street.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* sets out Government policy in relation to shops in small towns and rural areas. The vital role that food stores and supermarkets play in maintaining the quality and range of shopping in smaller rural town centres and assisting in the anchoring of the surrounding local economy is recognised. Planning policies should be supportive of local facilities in small towns and villages which provide an effective and valuable service to the local economy.

From the consultation exercise it came across strongly that Gowran lacked the services of a chemist.

Policy: To maintain and enhance the role of Gowran as a local market centre for its rural catchment and as a centre to service its anticipated expansion during the period of the Plan.

The preferred location for new retail development where practicable and viable, is within the town centre. Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development required then sites outside the town centre but within the development boundary can be considered.

2.12 Sanitary Services

2.12.1 Sewerage Network

Gowran is served by a sewerage scheme with both primary and secondary treatment. Primary treatment is by means of Imhoff tanks and secondary treatment is by means of percolating filters. Discharge is to the nearby stream. The small sewerage scheme that serves Gowran is at overcapacity. Its design P.E. is 350, with the current P.E. above the 600 mark.

Gowran has been approved for funding under the serviced land initiative for the upgrading of the existing sewerage treatment plant.

It is an objective of the Council:

1. To secure the upgrading of the existing sewerage treatment plant through agreements with developers and/or landowners under the serviced land initiative administered by the Department of the Environment.

2.12.2 Surface Water

At present the only surface water system in Gowran is dedicated to cater for existing run off from the public thoroughfare. There is no system in place which can cater specifically for the expansion of the town in terms of additional development lands. It is essential that surface water be disposed in a satisfactory manner from new developments.

Positive disposal of storm water will be a condition of all permitted development. This means that all storm water shall be collected in a storm water pipe network and disposed of to a watercourse, and shall not be stored or directed to a soakpit. It will be the responsibility of the developer to prove that the pipe network and/or watercourse into which he is discharging, has an adequate capacity, and will not lead to flooding.

It is an objective of the Council

2. To secure the satisfactory disposal of surface water from all developments within the town as financial and human resources permit.

2.13 Water Supply

The Gowran water supply forms part of a large regional scheme, namely the ‘Gowran – Goresbridge – Paulstown Water Scheme’. There is no spare capacity within the scheme. The system serves an existing population of 1,900 approximately.

The deficiencies in the scheme include the fact that the reservoir is too small, the pumps are at full capacity, the mains are too small and the network is inadequate. An augmentation scheme is proposed, which is high on the Council’s priority list and funding is awaited for it from the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

It is an objective of the Council

3. To implement a scheme for water supply augmentation for the Gowran Goresbridge Paulstown Water Scheme.

2.14 Roads / Transport / Car Parking / Footpaths

The National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 has identified significant levels of investment to be made in the national road network in the County. This development strategy for national roads will include the development of a Waterford to Dublin (N9) route near Gowran.

This road will act as a by pass for the town and will relieve much of the heavy through traffic from the main street.

From the public consultation exercise the main issues were in relation to the provision of footpaths on the edge of the town, parking within the town, particularly for St Mary’s Church, traffic calming measures at Mill Road, Church road and the turning movements of heavy vehicles at junction of the Kilkenny Road with Main Street. Another issue to come to the fore was the 30 mph speed limits in the town particularly on the National Primary Route.

The provision of footpaths from the town along the R702 towards Graiguenamanagh to the pitch & putt and G.A.A. grounds is an objective which will be difficult to achieve. The road at present has no speed limit and is of substandard width to allow a footpath. To provide a footpath there in the conventional manner would at present be prohibitive in terms of cost.

It is an objective of the Council to:

1. Provide a dedicated pedestrian link from the existing footpath to the hurling pitch along the Goresbridge road.
2. Examine the corner at the junction of the R702 and Main Street (Loughlin’s corner) with a view to facilitating the movement of HGV’s through this junction instead of through Church road.
3. Move existing 30 mph speed limits and provide 40 mph speed limits along the N9 on the approaches to the town.
4. To investigate the implementation of suitable measures along Mill Road to prevent the road being used as a rat run through the town for traffic along the N9.

5. Resurface road LS6718-22 south of the town which links The N9 with Mill road as resources permit.
6. Identify and develop a site for a public car park to facilitate visitors to the Church and the locals in carrying out their business in the town.
7. Paint junction road lines at junction of Rockfield Lane and the R702
8. Provide speed limit signs at a suitable location along Rockfield Lane and the R702.
9. Provide pedestrian crossing between Church and Primary School along the LP2337-152.
10. Resurface part of road between Parkmore Terrace and Greenview.
11. Provide traffic calming measures for the town to slow traffic through the town along the N9
12. Erect name signs for the town on all approach roads.
13. Provide path along part of the R702 to its junction with Rockshire Lane and from Rockfield lane in a southerly direction to the existing path on the eastern side of the R702
14. To investigate suitable traffic calming measures along the Church road.
15. Delineate car parking spaces at the Fair Green, and at two car parks on either side of Loughlin's pub.

2.15 Advertising

All advertisements and advertisement structures other than those exempted under Part II, Second Schedule of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations, 1994, shall be the subject of a formal planning application. Advertising signs, poorly sited and designed or in groups, can detract from the appearance of an area or a building and therefore interfere with the amenities of the area. This is especially so when they are out of scale and character with their surroundings.

In general Gowran does not suffer from a proliferation of commercial signage. There is a proliferation of large advertising signs outside the Gowran Racecourse, which obstruct fine views of Ballyshanemore Castle and St. Mary's Church in the town and which are out of character with the area. This was an issue which was highlighted in the 1988 plan and where little progress has been made.

It is an objective:

1. To remove the signage and hoarding at the Junction of Mill Road and the N9 on the approach to the town.

It is the policy of the Council to control advertising signs as follows:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Favourable consideration may be given, in consultation with business groups, to the erection of composite advance signs on which the facilities available in the town will be declared. Due to the damage which a proliferation of large competitive advance signs can cause to the appearance and image of the important entrance routes to the town,

- Signs will not be permitted where they interfere with the safety of pedestrians, the safety and free-flow of traffic or if they obscure road signs.
- Signs shall be sympathetic in design and colouring, both to the building on which it will be displayed and its surroundings.
- Signs shall not obscure architectural features or details.
- Signs will not be permitted above eaves or parapet levels.
- Traditional painted sign writing or solid block individual lettering will be encouraged as will traditional or wrought iron hanging signs. The use of neon, plastic, PVC, Perspex flashing, refectories or glitter type signs on the exterior of buildings or where they are located internally but visible from the outside will be prohibited.
- Projecting signs, banners and flagpoles will be restricted in size and number to prevent clutter.
- Temporary hoardings may be approved where they can be used for screening of building sites or land, which is unsightly.
- Signs attached to buildings are preferable to those on free standing hoardings.
- Signs shall not be permitted to project above the roofline of buildings.

2.16 Healthcare

Health services are provided through the local GP surgery where an extensive range of services are provided to the local community. From the public consultation exercise an issue relating to the provision of a resident doctors service at the weekends was seen as important along with the provision of a chemist. From consultations with the South Eastern Health Board the Caredoc service is likely to be the out of hours arrangements for the foreseeable future in relation to the provision of doctors services.

It is an objective of the Council

1. To support the provision of a dispensing chemist to cater for needs in the town.
2. To support and co-operate with the SEHB in the provision of any health care services for the town.

2.17 Signposting

Issues covering signposting in and around the town have been covered in other sections of the plan.

In relation to speed limits Kilkenny County Council carry out a general review of speed limits every two to three years and Gowran's speed limits will be reviewed again during the period of this Plan.

It was identified also that there is a need for a more signage for the promotion of the town itself and the promotion of the various tourist attractions close to the town.

It is an objective of the Council:

1. To review the existing 30 mph speed limits along the N9 on the approaches to the town during the period of the plan.
2. To erect name signs for the town on all the approach roads.

3. To have adequate directional signposting for facilities within the town such as the Gowran race course, the golf course and St Mary's Church.

2.18 Conservation

As part of the study an architectural/conservation review of the structures of the town was carried out on behalf of the Council. From that have arisen recommendations for the inclusion of some additional structures within the town to the Record of Protected Structures and recommendations for deletions of others.

In addition Gowran has a central core stretching from the gates of Gowran Castle to the former estate houses past west of the Fair Green which encapsulates the various phases of the history of the town in an attractive streetscape which is worthy of protection.

2.18.1 Gowran: Pre – 1700

Gowran developed as a settlement in Norman times and was granted a Charter of Incorporation by Theobald Fitzwalter, ancestor of the Butlers, in 1206. Gowran grew in importance thereafter and had defences with stone gatehouses by the early 15th Century. The town lay on an important route between Munster and Leinster and was besieged and captured by Edward Bruce in 1316 and by Cromwell in 1650.

There is still some evidence of the town defences in the form of a fosse or ditch along rear property boundaries to the North of the town and the site of the original Gowran Castle can still be discerned c. 80 metres to the north – east of Viscount Clifden's classical house. The principal evidence of medieval Gowran lies in the ruins of the collegiate church of St. Mary's in the centre of the town which was built c. 1275. St. Mary's is a National Monument and the lower part of the tower is incorporated into the Church of Ireland built in 1826.

2.18.2 Gowran: Post – 1700

Gowran continued to grow after 1700 in a typical urban linear pattern with single storey and two storey buildings constructed hard up to the public thoroughfare. The Fair Green is in effect a small Georgian Square and other contemporary structures such as Byrnes opposite the Green on the corner of Mill road and Main street and Loughlin's at the junction for Kilkenny attest to the prosperity of the town during that time.

Also in evidence from this period is the influence of the benevolent landlord of the Gowran Demesne as found in the former Almshouse at the top of the town and later in the estate cottages and picturesque semi – detached houses dispersed along Main Street.

The architectural detailing of the estate houses and their setting back from the road across private gardens was in contrast to the established pattern of development at the time and results today in a streetscape which unfolds in an interesting and distinctive way as one passes through the town.

A number of post – 1700 buildings in Gowran are listed in the County Development Plan as 'Protected Structures'. Following the completion of an Architectural Inventory of Gowran as part of the Local Area Plan process, it is proposed to add additional buildings to the 'Record of Protected Structures' (RPS) because of their architectural or historic interest.

It is also proposed to remove certain buildings currently on the RPS either because refurbishment works have significantly diluted their historic character or because their contribution is primarily to the general streetscape of the town and they lie within the proposed Gowran Architectural Conservation Area.

The complete list of such buildings is contained in appendix 1 of this plan. A map showing the location of the structures on the RPS is part of this plan.

2.18.3 Gowran Architectural Conservation Area

The Planning & Development Act 2000 requires a Planning Authority to include in its Development Plans the objective of preserving the character of areas of special architectural historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

Kilkenny County Council considers that Gowran is such an area of special interest and believes that the central core of the settlement stretching from the gates of Gowran Castle to the former estate houses west of the Fair Green as defined on Map No. 2 encapsulates the various phases of the history of the town in an attractive streetscape which is worthy of protection.

Therefore it is proposed to designate this part of Gowran as an Architectural Conservation Area, having regard to its special character which is based on the unusual combination of:

- Impressive and unimpeded views of a National Monument, the 13th Century Collegiate Church of St. Mary's.
- A coherent urban streetscape made up for the most part of 18th and 19th century dwelling houses of consistent architectural scale and massing.
- Picturesque examples of the 'estate village' developments of 'improving' landlords of the 19th Century with attractive detailing and low stone boundary walls or railings to the street

The co-existence of these different development patterns and layers of history in one place is of value, all the more so because no single aspect of the architectural heritage dominates.

The purpose of the Architectural Conservation Area will be to both protect these aspects of the character of Gowran from erosion and to provide guidance for the future enhancement of the streetscape or the sympathetic development or redevelopment of sites and properties.

2.18.4 Development Control within the proposed Conservation Area

Within an Architectural Conservation Area, development which would materially affect the character of the Conservation Area requires planning permission. (Planning & Development Act 2000, Section 82, 1).

This effectively de-exempts the Classes of Exempt Developments contained in the (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001 and in some circumstances the construction of porches or small extensions, the creation of hard standings, window replacements or the display of advertisements, may require planning permission. If development is intended within an Architectural Conservation Area which would normally be exempt

development, advice should be sought from the Planning Authority as to whether the proposal would have a material impact on the character of the Area.

2.18.5 Conservation Area Development Objectives

The purpose of proposing the Gowran Architectural Conservation Area is firstly to encourage the retention and restoration of the existing buildings and streetscape in a manner which respects its special character and secondly to consolidate that character with appropriate new developments when opportunities arise. These aims can be achieved by adherence to the following Development Objectives.

Objective 1: To seek the conservation and preservation of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures. Alterations to Protected Structures normally require planning permission and proposals should be subject to early consultation with Kilkenny County Council's Conservation Officer and/or Dúchas, the Heritage Service.

Generally, all repair and maintenance works should be carried out on a 'like for like' basis and in accordance with the Conservation Guidelines published by the Department of Environment & Local Government, 1996.

Objective 2: To seek the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make up the streetscape of the Conservation Area. The cycle of repair and maintenance will provide opportunities for the restoration of original features in many cases and the enhancement of the original character of the buildings will be encouraged.

In this respect, new roof or wall finishes should have the same colour and texture as the original material and replacement windows should have traditional glazing patterns and should be of similar profile to the original windows when closed.

Objective 3: The 19th Century estate houses are intrinsic to the character of the Conservation Area and although they are of several types, they share a common palette of details which creates a strong affinity between them.

Unfortunately, almost all these houses have been altered to some degree with consequent dilution of character and it will be an objective of the Planning Authority to seek the restoration of the low castellated boundary walls, or original boundary railings, the decorative bargeboards and ridgelines and the original arrangement of porches and door and window configurations, as opportunities arise.

Objective 4: To seek the conservation or restoration of original shop fronts and doorways within the Conservation Area.

There are some areas within the Conservation Area which could be developed or where redevelopment could consolidate the character if carried out to appropriate design and specifications. Such areas include the west side of the Fair Green, the commercial premises east of St. Mary's (Farrell's Garage) and the land to the rear of some of the houses on the north side of Main Street.

The following objectives are intended to provide design guidance for these areas to ensure a sympathetic pattern of development.

Objective 5: New development should relate closely to the established character of the town, respecting the disciplines of established building form, massing height, alignment, orientation and window proportions. In Gowran, walls are generally rendered and painted with occasional use of dressed stone, brick or timber detailing, rooflines are generally varied and dark in tone and windows are generally of vertical proportion

Objective 6: New developments should be appropriate in form and use to its corner, infill, or back land location. Established views, particularly to St. Mary's should be maintained.

Objective 7: New open spaces should be sheltered, carefully located and well overlooked. Opportunities should be taken to provide street – trees and public seating where possible.

2.18.6 Archaeology

Dúchas, The Heritage Service advises that County Kilkenny is rich in archaeology and of cultural importance. It is highlighted by Dúchas that Gowran lies within a zone of archaeological potential. There are three extensive areas highlighted in the Record of Monuments and Places. These three areas are shown on the zoning objectives map.

There are additional sites and monuments within Gowran which form part of the Record of Monuments and Places as established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. This should be consulted for a list of all recorded monuments within the Gowran area. A copy of the record is available for inspection at the Planning department of Kilkenny County Council.

Section 9.2.2 of the County Development Plan sets out the Council's policies in relation to the protection of sites and features of archaeological and historical interest.

For convenience these policies are repeated here.

It is the policy of the Council:

- a) To preserve, conserve and protect sites, monuments and areas of archaeological importance, which are identified in the "Record of Monuments and Places" for County Kilkenny published by the OPW (1996) and in "The Urban Archaeological Survey of County Kilkenny" (OPW 1993).
- b) To ensure that development proposals within Areas of Archaeological Potential and within close proximity to monuments as set out in the Record of Monuments and Places of County Kilkenny are referred to Dúchas the Heritage Service for observations and recommendations and to have regard to such observations and recommendations in the assessment of development proposals.
- c) To preserve, conserve and protect sites that are (a) National Monuments (b) protected by preservation orders (c) protected by listing orders under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930, 1954 as amended.

- d) To facilitate and where feasible create public rights of way to sites of Archaeological and Historical interest. The Council will also seek the preservation and maintenance and improvement of all existing rights of way to such areas where appropriate.
- e) To protect the setting of monuments and sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places and the setting of archaeological objects and heritage objects
- f) To facilitate public access to the National Monuments in State care and Local Authority ownership in the County.

2.18.6.1 The Record of Monuments and Places

The Records of Monuments and Places (RMP) of County Kilkenny identifies archaeological sites throughout the county. These recorded monuments are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The maps (i.e. the sites and Monuments Record for County Kilkenny showing the archaeological sites throughout County Kilkenny) are subject to updating. The RMP is not exhaustive list of all archaeology in existence. The up dated maps and accompanying manuals are referred to as “The Recorded Monuments” due to the adoption of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.

Historic Towns

Historic towns have been identified by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaelteacht and the Islands for general protection. They appear as historic towns within the RMP. These sites are also known as Zones of Archaeological potential, and are areas where intense archaeology is present.

Gowran is an historic town, (RMPKK020-060) and is protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

Details of monuments within the zones of archaeological potential are shown on maps accompanying the Urban Archaeological Survey. These documents can be inspected at the County Councils planning office.

Underwater Archaeology

Underwater Archaeology does not appear on the RMP. However much archaeology exists underwater and it does form part of the archaeological heritage.

It is an objective of the planning authority:

To secure the preservation (i.e. the preservation in situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, and sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally.

In securing such preservation the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of Dúchas, the Heritage Service, of the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

2.19 Tourism

It is recommended to build on the tourism resources currently available to the town, namely St. Mary's Church, Gowran Golf Club, Gowran Park Racecourse and the fine array of buildings of architectural quality.

Gowran Castle which is an outstanding protected structure on extensive grounds presents an opportunity for tourism/leisure development. This would secure the future of the castle and its setting and could provide a significant tourist and leisure facility for the area and the wider region. This potential is there given the rich historical heritage in Gowran the existing race course and the recently developed golf course.

It is an objective of the Council:

1. To co-operate in the development of a tourist development strategy for the town and its hinterland in association with Kilkenny City and County Tourism, SERTA, Bord Fáilte, The local Development Association, BNS and Leader, local community groups and business interests.
2. To improve the adequacy of directional sign posting for tourists within Gowran in consultation with Bord Fáilte, SERTA, Kilkenny Tourism and local tourism business and community groups.
3. To provide a tourist trail within and around the town which passes by the majority of Gowran's attractions.
4. To provide a walkway along the river, south of the town.
5. To support and assist the future development of Gowran Demesne in co-operation with the land owners, the local Community bodies, Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, the South East Regional Tourism Authority, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader as appropriate in accordance with the policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan.
6. To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character.

2.20 Development Boundary

The development boundary for the town has been designated taking into consideration:

- The need to provide a compact and accessible town in accordance with the principles of sustainable development
- The existing built environment and road structure
- Potential population growth and demand for housing
- The need to offer locational choice and housing mix
- Proximity to existing and potential community and commercial facilities and the need to encourage sustainable growth.
- The St Mary's Church.
- The location of existing and proposed protected structures.
- The areas of ecological interest in the area.
- The topography of the area.
- The planning history of the area.

2.21 Land Use Zoning

The purpose of zoning is to indicate to property owners and the general public the types of development which the Council considers most appropriate in each land use category. The land use zoning objectives are detailed below and are shown on the Land Use zoning and specific objectives map. It is the intention of the Planning Authority that the zoning of particular areas for a particular use shall not in itself exclude other uses in that area provided they are compatible with the dominant use.

Zoning is designed to reduce conflicting uses within areas, to protect resources and, in association with phasing, to ensure that land suitable for development is used to the best advantage of the community as a whole.

The zoning objectives map indicates a development boundary for the town. The drawing up of a development boundary/envelope for the town is intended to provide for the proper planning and development of the area. New developments may be incorporated into the nucleus of the town and serviced by existing and improved services and infrastructure.

In the following paragraphs:

- **Permissible uses** mean a use, which is acceptable in the relevant zone. However, it is still the subject of the normal planning process.
- **Open for consideration** means a use which may be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the individual proposal or development will be compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, and will not conflict with the permitted uses and also conforms with the proper planning and development of the area.

2.21.1 Residential

Objective: To protect and improve residential amenities and provide for new residential development appropriate to the scale and character of Gowran.

Permitted uses:

Dwellings, open spaces, places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, Nursing home

Open for Consideration:

Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, lock up garages.

Retail shop of local convenience not more than 100m sq in gross area, public house, hotel, and restaurant.

Use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.

2.21.2 Town Centre

Objective: To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses and allow for the development of Gowran as a focus for local services sustaining and strengthening its role as a population centre.

Permissible Uses:

Dwellings, retailing, retail warehousing, wholesale outlets, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, halting sites, hotels, motels, guest houses, clubs, private garages, open spaces, public service

installations, medical and related consultants, restaurants, public houses, car parks, halls or discotheques, and other uses as permitted and open for consideration in residential zoning.

Open for Consideration

Workshop or light industry

2.21.3 Integrated Tourism and Leisure

Objective: To facilitate the development of an integrated tourism and leisure development while securing the preservation of Gowran Castle, a protected structure.

Permitted uses:

Tourist accommodation and associated facilities, equestrian uses leisure development,

Open for Consideration:

Limited residential accommodation linked to the integrated tourism and leisure facilities.

2.21.4 Open Space Amenity Recreation

Objective: To preserve, provide and improve recreational open space.

Permitted uses:

Open space

Open for Consideration:

Sports clubs, recreational buildings, stands, pavilions, agricultural uses, public service installations

2.21.5 Community Facilities

Objective: To protect, provide and improve community facilities.

Permitted uses:

Educational, religious and cultural facilities, public buildings, crèches, schools, churches, hospitals, convents, community centres and halls, school playing fields, colleges, orphanages, hostels, halting sites, cemeteries, libraries and medical centres, nursing homes

Open for consideration:

Public service installations, town centre uses which would not conflict with the other objectives of the Plan and which would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2.22 Application of Zoning Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to carry out its development control function, in relation to the zonings set out in section 2.21 above. However it should not be assumed that if a proposed development complies with the permitted uses it will necessarily be accepted. Factors such as design criteria, density, height, traffic, water, sewerage, archaeology, protected structures objectives, conservation area objectives are important in establishing whether or not a development proposal conforms to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2.23 Implementation

The realisation of the objectives over a period of time will it is felt, significantly benefit the orderly development of the town. The achievement of the objectives will be dependent on the availability of finance and the inclusion of the objectives in the work programme of the County Council and the other responsible agencies.

The local community, through local associations such as Residents Associations, Tidy Towns and the Gowran Development Association, can play a huge role in contributing to the achievement of the above objectives. Kilkenny County Council's policy will be to facilitate and aid local organisations in this capacity.

This is intended to be an integrated plan, and the formulation of objectives from issues identified in the public consultation is the first step in enabling an integrated approach to implementation. Kilkenny County intends to seek co operation of development and community agencies, to secure the delivery of the objectives of this plan through the County Development Board.

2.24 Specific Objectives

Amenity & Recreation

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale
To provide public rights of way to places of special beauty, amenity or recreational value. The Council shall also seek the preservation and maintenance and improvement of all existing rights of way to such areas.	A1	Local Authority in conjunction with relevant land owners. Tourists interests, local development groups.	Local authority, Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, SERTA	As the opportunities are identified through tourism & recreation projects.
To assess the need for playground equipment in the Greenview estate.	A2	Residents association / Local Authority housing section.	Residents association / Local Authority.	Short term
To provide further landscaping in the Greenview and Parkmore Terrace open spaces.	A3	Residents association / Local Authority.	Residents association / Local Authority.	Short term.
To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character.	A4	Local Authority/Landowners, Dúchas	Dúchas, Landowners, local authority, local community,	Ongoing through the period of the plan.
To provide for a walkway along the river, south of the town in conjunction and with the agreement of property owners along the river	A5	Local development groups local authority County child care committee.	NDP / local community, county childcare committee.	Short term.

Education

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale
To facilitate the development of a fulltime childcare facility in the town in conjunction with Gowran Development Association other relevant statutory organisations and the local community on a suitable site within the town.	E1	Local Authority / Local development group County childcare committee	NDP county childcare committee local authority	Short Term

Housing

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale.
To implement the housing strategy contained in appendix A of the County Development Plan 2002	H1	Local Authority	N/A	On going from adoption of the plan.
To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings	H2	Local Authority	N/A	On going from adoption of plan
To ensure that an adequate amount of land is included in the development boundary of the town to cater for its expansion over the period of the plan.	H3	Local Authority	N/A	On going from adoption of the plan.
To facilitate the improvement and enhancement of the existing local authority built housing estates in partnership with the residents.	H4	Local authority housing section SEHB local residents association	Local authority housing section SEHB local residents association	On going from adoption of the plan.
To encourage planned housing development of serviced lands within the development boundary and to encourage a wide range and high standard of design within these developments. The Planning Authority will require that serviced/serviceable lands will be developed in depth and at sustainable densities. The use of degraded or brown field sites will be preferred and utilized where possible in order to improve the environmental character of the town.	H5	Developers landowners local authority & designers	Developers, landowners & designers & local authority through the development control process.	On going from adoption of the plan.
To ensure a high quality of building design and open space in all	H6	Developers landowners local	Developers landowners	On going from adoption of the

proposed housing and other developments and to preserve where possible existing hedgerows, trees and habitats.		authority & designers	designers & local authority through the development control process.	plan.
To encourage the sensitive conversion and reuse of historic structures, where the original use has become redundant	H7	Local Authority Dúchas DOELG	Local Authority Dúchas DOELG	On going from adoption of the plan.
To utilise the powers under the Derelict Sites Act (1990) to require the maintenance of properties in non-derelict condition.	H8	Local authority	Local Authority	Implement as derelict sites are identified.
To encourage the provision of landscaped pedestrian and bicycle links between and within the residential areas of the town and the town centre.	H9	Developers landowners local authority & designers	Developers landowners local authority & designers	On going from adoption of the plan.
To control development of one off houses on the fringes of the Gowran development area in order to maintain a clear line between the built up area and the rural countryside.	H10	Local Authority	Local Authority	On going from adoption of the plan.
To ensure the maintenance and preservation of housing within the town centre, and to encourage continued residential use of upper floors. To encourage the rebuilding of new residential infill development where vacant plots exist.	H11	Local authority through the development control process	Developers, landowners & designers & local authority through the development control process.	On going from adoption of the plan.
To have a good social mix in new residential developments providing a range of unit types/ sizes.	H12	Local authority through the development control process	Developers landowners & local authority through the development control process	On going from adoption of the plan.
To facilitate the provision of an adequate provision of sheltered housing for the elderly.	H13	Local authority SEHB Local community.	SEHB Local authority local community	On going from adoption of the plan.
To ensure the orderly development of Gowran which reflects the character of the existing town in terms of structure pattern, scale, design and materials with adequate provision of open space.	H14	Local Authority		On going from adoption of the plan.

Street Lighting

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale.
To provide lighting along the Kilkenny road to provide lighting	SL1	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term depending on

for the existing developments				finance
To provide lighting along Rockfield road to provide lighting for existing developments	SL2	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term depending on finance
To provide lighting along Mill road to provide lighting for existing developments	SL3	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term depending on finance
To underground existing electricity and telephone wires within the town as the opportunity arises.	SL4	Utility providers and Local authority	Utility providers and local authority.	Ongoing from the adoption of the plan

Street Furniture

To replace existing litter bins in the town with one uniform style.	SF 1	Local Authority	Local Authority local business sponsorship	Short term
Provide seating and associated street furniture at strategic points in the town namely outside the school, at the bus stop (with an associated bus shelter) and at St Mary's Church	SF 2	Local authority community & development organisations	Local authority, sponsorship by business & tourist interests.	On going from adoption of the plan.

Labour Force /Employment

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale.
To support the development of tourism in Gowran	L1	Kilkenny Tourism SERTA Local authority local development organisations	Kilkenny Tourism SERTA Local authority local development organisations local businesses	On going from adoption of the plan.
To support and assist suitable project development for the future development of Gowran Demesne in co-operation with the land owners, the local Community bodies, Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, the South East Regional Tourism Authority, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader.	L2	Land owners local authority	Land owners & Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, the South East Regional Tourism Authority, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader.	On going from adoption of the plan.
To assist in the provision of suitable and sustainable locations for employment opportunities in the Gowran area.	L3	Local authority BNS enterprise Ireland local dev. organisations.	Local authority BNS enterprise Ireland local development organisations	On going from adoption of the plan.

			land owners.	
To require a high standard of design and landscaping in industrial development, in order to maintain the area's attractiveness to new enterprise	L4	Local Authority	Local Authority and Developers	On going from adoption of the plan

Boundary Treatment along Approach Roads

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale
The have the stone wall along the Mill road part of the Gowran Castle boundary repaired.	BTR 1	Property Owner	Property Owner	Short term
To have the existing block wall on the west side of the Kilkenny approach road finished in a similar stone to the adjacent walls in order to integrate with the standard achieved along other approach roads.	BTR 2	Local community / Local Authority	Local Authority /Local community	Short term

Tidiness

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale
To ensure Gowran has an adequate solid waste collection system	T1	Local authority	Local authority	On going from adoption of the plan.
To continue to work with and encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and safe disposal of waste in line with the South East Regional Waste Management Plan	T2	Local authority	Local authority	On going from adoption of the plan.

Sanitary Services

It is an objective of the Council to secure the upgrading of the existing sewerage treatment plant through agreements under the serviced land initiative administered by the Department of the Environment.	SS1	Local Authority/ Developer	DOE Local Authority Developers.	Short term
To secure the satisfactory disposal of surface water from all developments within the town as financial and human resources permit.	SS2	Local authority through development control.	DOE Local Authority	Short term

To implement a scheme for water supply augmentation for the Gowran Goresbridge Paulstown Water Scheme.	SS3	Local Authority	DOE and Developers	Short term
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Roads & Transport

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale
Provide a dedicated pedestrian link from the existing footpath to the hurling pitch along the Goresbridge road	R1	The Local Authority local development group /land owners.	Local Authority	Medium term
Examine the corner at the junction of the R702 and Main Street (Loughlin's corner) with a view to facilitating the movement of HGV's through this junction instead of through Church road.	R2	The Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term
Move existing 30 mph speed limits and provide 40 mph speed limits along the N9 on the approaches to the town.	R3	Local Authority NRA, Garda Siochána	Local Authority, NRA, Garda Siochána	Medium term
To investigate suitable measures along Mill Road to prevent the road being used as a rat run through the town for traffic along the N9.	R4	Local Authority	Local Authority Local community Garda Siochána	Medium term
Resurface road LS6718-22 south of the town which links The N9 with Mill road as resources permit	R5	Local Authority	Local authority	Medium term
Identify and develop a site for a public car park to facilitate visitors to the Church and the locals in carrying out their business in the town.	R6	Local Authority and/or Dúchas	Local Authority and/or Dúchas local development groups	Long term
Paint junction road lines at junction of Rockfield Lane and the R702.	R7	Local Authority	Local authority local development group.	Short Term
Provide speed limit signs at a suitable location along Rockfield Lane and the R702	R8	Local Authority	Local Authority, Garda Siochána	Medium term.
Provide pedestrian crossing between Church and Primary School along the LP2337-152	R9	Local Authority	Local Authority, Garda Siochána local development group.	Short term
Resurface part of road between Parkmore Terrace and Greenview.	R10	Local Authority	Local Authority Resident's association.	Medium term

Provide traffic calming measures for the town to slow traffic through the town along the N9	R11	Local Authority NRA	Local Authority NRA	Medium term
Erect name signs for the town on all approach roads.	R12	Local Authority Local development group	Local Authority Local development group	Short term
Provide path along part of the R702 to its junction with Rockfield Lane and from Rockfield lane in a southerly direction to the existing path on the eastern side of the R702	R13	Local authority	Local authority	Medium term
To investigate suitable traffic calming measures along the Church road.	R14	Local Authority	Local authority	Medium term
Delineate car parking spaces at the Fair Green, and at two car parks on either side of Loughlin's pub.	R15	Local Authority	Local Authority	Medium term.

Advertising

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale.
To remove the signage and hoarding at the Junction of Mill Road and the N9 on the approach to the town	Ad 1	Local Authority Land owners local community	Local Authority Land owners local community	Long term

Health Care

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale.
To support the provision of a dispensing chemist to cater for needs in the town.	HC1	S.E.H.B. Local Authority	S.E.H.B. Local Authority	Long term
To support and co-operate with the SEHB in the provision of any health care services for the town.	HC2	S.E.H.B. Local Authority	S.E.H.B. Local Authority	On going from the adoption of the plan.

Sign Posting

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale
To review the existing 30 mph speed limits along the N9 on the approaches to the town during the period of the plan	R3	Local Authority, NRA, Garda Siochana	Local Authority, NRA, Garda Siochana	Medium term
To erect name signs for the town on all the approach roads.	R12	Local Authority Local development group	Local Authority Local development group	Short term
To have adequate directional signposting for facilities within the town such as the Gowran race course, the golf course and St Mary's Church.		Owners / local tourist interests.	Local authority SERTA Kilkenny Tourism.	Short Term.

Conservation

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale.
To seek the conservation and preservation of the buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures.	C1	Local Authority Dúchas	Local authority Dúchas DOELG,	On going from adoption of the plan.
To seek the retention, repair and maintenance of the buildings which make up the streetscape of the Conservation Area.	C2	Local Authority Dúchas property owners	Local authority Dúchas DOELG,	On going from adoption of the plan.
To seek the restoration of the low castellated boundary walls, the decorative bargeboards and ridgelines and the original arrangement of porches and door and window configurations, as opportunities arise.	C3	Local Authority Dúchas property owners	Local authority Dúchas DOELG,	On going from adoption of the plan.
To seek the conservation or restoration of original shop fronts and doorways within the Conservation Area.	C4	Local Authority Dúchas property owners	Local authority Dúchas DOELG,	On going from adoption of the plan.
New development should relate closely to the established character of the town, respecting the disciplines of established building form, massing height, alignment, orientation and window proportions.	C5	Local Authority Developers, Designers.	Local Authority Developers landowners	On going from adoption of the plan.
New developments should be appropriate in form and use to its corner, infill, or back land location.	C6	Local Authority Developers, Designers.	Local Authority Developers	On going from adoption of the plan.

Established views, particularly to St. Mary's should be maintained			landowners	
New open spaces should be sheltered, carefully located and well overlooked	C7	Local Authority through the development control process.	Local Authority	On going from adoption of the plan.
To secure the preservation (i.e. the preservation in situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, and sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally.	C8	Local Authority through the development control process.	Local Authority	On going from adoption of the plan.

Tourism

Specific Objective	Map ref	Action By	Funding and Support services to the objective	Time scale
To co-operate in the development of a tourist development strategy for the town and its hinterland in association with Kilkenny City and County Tourism, SERTA, Bord Fáilte, The local Development Association, BNS and Leader, local community groups and business interests.	TR1	Local Authority /Local community and business interests	Local Authority /Local business interests Kilkenny City and County Tourism, SERTA, Bord Fáilte, local development group, BNS and Leader.	Medium term
To improve the adequacy of directional sign posting for tourists within Gowran in consultation with Bord Fáilte, SERTA, Kilkenny Tourism and local community and business groups	TR2	Local Authority / local community.	Local Authority Local development groups, Dúchas local business & tourist interests.	Short term
To provide a tourist trail within and around the town which passes by the majority of Gowran's attractions	TR3	Local Authority local community and development group, Kilkenny city and county tourism.	Local Authority local community and development group, Kilkenny city and county tourism.	Medium term
To provide a walkway along the river, south of the town.	TR4	Local development group and tourist interests landowners.	Local development group and tourist interests landowners	Long term
To support and assist the future development of Gowran Demesne in co-operation with the land owners,	TR5	Land owners local authority local development group	Land owners local authority local	Medium term

<p>the local Community bodies, Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, the South East Regional Tourism Authority, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader as appropriate in accordance with the policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan.</p>			<p>development group Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, the South East Regional Tourism Authority, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader</p>	
<p>To ensure the protection and/or conservation as appropriate of the non designated sites outlined as areas of ecological interest in the plan and to control development which would be inimical to the preservation or conservation of their essential character.</p>	<p>TR6</p>	<p>Dúchas Authority community landowners Local local</p>	<p>Dúchas, Kilkenny Tourism, the South East Regional Tourism Authority, An Bord Fáilte, BNS and Leader</p>	<p>On going from adoption of the plan.</p>

3 Development control

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section of the Proposed Plan is to ensure a high standard of design, layout and function for all new development, to conserve what is good in the existing built and natural environment, and to protect the amenities of the town.

3.2 The Design of Developments and Structures

In general the development standards as outlined in chapter 10 of the County Development Plan 2002 will be adhered to in the Gowran with the following stipulations attached. Where there is a conflict between the County Development plan standards and the Gowran Plan the latter shall take precedence.

3.3 Residential Development

The use of standard road design tends to be at the expense of local distinctiveness. In newer housing areas plots tend to be uniformly rectangular in shape with detached or semi detached properties usually substantially set back from the pavement to provide space for front and side gardens and off street car parking. This reduces the sense of enclosure as the roadway tends to dominate the placing of the houses. The areas are characterised by the use of standard housing types and designs that can provide a form of consistency but can also appear visually monotonous due to their lack of subtle variation.

While it is recognised there is a need to embrace modern design there is also a need for new development to reflect and respect the existing character features within the town.

Where land is being developed for housing the following will be required to be incorporated:

- *All new buildings should be in harmony with existing old buildings in terms of architectural style and should reflect the style and materials of the older character of buildings within the town.*
- *The pattern of existing forms within the area where development is to be located should be used as a stimulus for creative adaptation so that it will fit more appropriately with the overall character of the town.*
- *Careful consideration shall be given to the design of components (such as doors windows the height pitch and ridges of roofs) which should have regard to those already present in the vicinity of the site. This is particularly important with regard to the redevelopment and alterations to existing buildings which should strictly reflect the original buildings characteristics in proportions of windows to walls and in the design of the roof.*

New development shall seek to:

- *Reflect the local development patterns*
- *Avoid substantial repetition of one house type*

- *Respect the local characteristics and context of the site*
- *Respond to typical setting and garden forms of the town*
- *Refer to local buildings and variety of proportions and design.*
- *Refer to local distinctive details and materials*
- *Provide adequate privacy for individual houses, flats etc*
- *adequate provision for car parking, open space, landscaping and planting*
- *integration with existing development and the preservation of features on site*

A principle aim for new development design should be a balance between innovation and local character, utilising the predominant forms within the town as a starting point for reference. Developments utilising the pattern of local forms as a stimulus for creativity will be encouraged. A variety of house types in developments of multiple housing will be encouraged with variation in house size, colour, materials, and designs that reflect the development styles of the town over time.

In support of the Council's policy of reducing social exclusion the Council will encourage developers to have regard to the requirements of people with disabilities, the elderly, and children in the supply, design and layout of residential development in accordance with the development control standards set out in section 10 of the County Development Plan.

Natural features or landmarks such as mature trees or vistas should help to determine the layout and orientation of the housing. The creation of 'land marks' within the development whether through retention of existing features or by the introduction of new features will be encouraged.

New development must recognise and be sympathetic to the existing town and help to renew the specific architectural traditions of the area e.g. lime plaster render, vertical fenestration, and blue/black slates boundary treatment to individual plots.

3.4 Materials

When designing the type of materials to be used in new development or improvements to existing properties should:

- Fit in with the prevailing character of the town.
- Utilise materials for extensions which have the same colour and textures as the existing property.
- New and replacement windows should have the traditional glazing patterns and should be of similar profile to the original windows when closed.
- The design of dwellings should bear a relationship to the existing fabric of the settlement within which it is proposed to build.
- Roof slates / tiles of black, blue/black or grey will be favoured.

These guidelines for dwellings are provided to assist intending applicants in their design and siting consideration for housing in Gowran. The guidelines are general in nature and are not intended to cover every situation or factor, which may give rise when siting or designing a house at a particular location. Furthermore, the guide is aimed at ensuring that buildings enhance rather than dominate the visual character of the area

3.5 Building Layout and Orientation

It is intended to create coherent and environmentally comfortable public realm throughout Gowran. Accordingly, proposed layouts shall optimise solar orientation to both adjoining buildings and outdoor spaces. Layouts shall also have careful regard to prevailing wind direction with a view to reducing wind speeds in outdoor areas.

It is an aim to discourage the enclosure and isolation of individual housing estates and to promote the physical and social connectivity in a permeable network of streets and public spaces. Layouts shall promote this connectivity between phases of development. Large residential areas shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity.

Long straight roads are not desirable in residential estate developments. Estate roads should incorporate gentle curves and physical traffic calming measures should be included at the planning application stage. The provision of services and road layout of the development must have regard to 'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas', Department of the Environment and Local Government.

All new residential developments should take full account of the characteristics of the natural and built environment of the site, the views and vistas to and from the site, and its surrounding areas.

Layouts, which give priority to the pedestrian and cyclists, will be encouraged. This can be achieved in smaller developments through shared surfaces for pedestrians and vehicles. Well-lit pedestrian links, separate from the main carriageways should be provided within the estate. These links should be overlooked as far as possible by dwellings and right angled bends should be avoided for security reasons.

Large residential areas shall be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity. These shall be designed to create safety for young children, facilitate social interaction and introduce a variety into the visual environment whilst avoiding a monotonous repetitive type development. Each group of houses should have its own visual identity, variation being achieved by layout, including building lines, house design, and colour and hard and soft landscaping.

Provision should be made where appropriate for cycle and pedestrian movement both within the estate and also close to nearby amenities.

Passive supervision of the Public Realm is the most consistent and effective means of preventing anti-social behaviour. All public open spaces (hard and soft landscaped) shall be overlooked by adjoining accommodations to ensure passive surveillance. Back-land spaces, rear access lanes, blind corners and long side-garden walls shall be avoided so as to minimize the risk of anti-social activity.

3.6 Ecology & Bio-diversity

Layouts should encourage bio-diversity by preserving and providing cover for species and where appropriate avoiding the culverting of watercourses and providing new water areas. Planting should normally use native trees and shrub species and native stock; tree species with berries are important for wintering birds; trees which support a high biomass of

insects in summer are important for breeding birds; the setting aside of maintenance free areas and the avoidance or limitation of the use of herbicides and pesticides are all practices which will encourage bio-diversity.

3.7 Car Parking

Car parking shall be carefully designed to integrate successfully into its location in terms of layout, surface treatment and screen planting. New development will normally be required by the Planning Authority to provide adequate off-street car parking facilities.

Communal car parking arrangements will also be acceptable in residential developments. For security reasons, car parking should always be overlooked by housing. There should not be an excessive amount of car parking grouped together. The visual impact of large areas of car parking can be reduced by the judicious use of screen planting, low walls and the use of textured or coloured paving for car parking bays.

3.8 Density

There is no set maximum or minimum density recommended. A high standard of architectural design and layout will be required in residential developments. The Council will seek to ensure that new developments have individuality and a sense of place which is generated by the interaction between the physical characteristics and features of the site and its surroundings and the layout, landscaping and design of the new housing. It is the policy of the County Council that this high standard should not be diluted in newly constructed developments and that designs and layouts will be welcome which pay regard to the qualities and appearance of the existing area.

In determining suitable density, the character and amenities of the site and of the surrounding area will be considered along with the need for a variety of site sizes and house designs to encourage social mix and choice.

In infill sites or in areas adjacent to the town centre, higher densities will be permitted subject to exceptional quality of design and finishes, proper provision for active and passive recreation and good living conditions, including privacy and adequate natural light, within each accommodation unit.

Regard should be had to 'Residential Density – Guidelines for Planning Authorities', Department of the Environment and Local Government, September 1999.

As there will be no set minimum or maximum density specified in the Plan, the emphasis will be on providing a quality housing environment based on innovation and a design led approach.

In preparing applications for housing developments, designers and developers alike are advised to consult relevant publications for guidance such as

- *Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Department of the Environment and Local Government, September 1999,

3.9 Public Open Space

The Council will normally expect all open space provision to take account of the following principles:

- Open space should be provided in a comprehensive and linked way, designed as an integral part of the development.
- Areas should be of a demonstrated recreational or amenity value. Small dysfunctional open spaces should be avoided.
- Wherever possible the majority of open space should be multi-functional. Areas for informal amenity and children's play should be combined.
- Areas should be easily and safely accessible from all dwelling, which the space is designed to serve.
- The design, location and appearance of open space areas should have regard to the amenities of nearby dwellings, for example, areas where children may play should normally be overlooked by the fronts of nearby dwellings to provide for maximum surveillance and overlooking
- Public open space areas should not be located so close to adjoining dwellings so as to cause undue noise or nuisance to existing or proposed residents.
- Attractive natural features should be protected and incorporated into open space areas. Tree planting should normally form an integral part of such open space areas.

To ensure implementation of open space provision the Council will attach appropriate planning conditions to permissions, and where necessary will enter into agreements with developers. These will provide for the laying out and landscaping of open space areas in accordance with a detailed scheme to be agreed with the Council.

The Council will not normally permit new residential development unless open space is provided within the development to a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population (circa 300 dwellings) or greater. Where a proposed development is located in close proximity to an established park area or zoned open space this may be relaxed depending on the nature and quality of existing provision. This relaxation will only be considered where the development pays a financial contribution towards the improvement of the open space so as to improve its quality and carrying capacity.

Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space required under this policy where spaces and facilities are not taken in charge by the Local Authority.

Reduced provisions may only be acceptable in urban locations where there are more sustainable patterns of development and maximum use can be made of urban land or redevelopment schemes where open space is already available. With relatively high densities such as flats, townhouses or apartments, good quality landscaped open space should be provided.

Open space provision for smaller residential developments and schemes catering for special needs such as accommodation for the elderly will be considered more flexibly on its merits and having regard to the requirements of likely future residents.

Developers may also be required to provide an equipped children's playground in association with open space provision where a development scheme would be greater than 800 metres from an existing easily accessible equipped children's playground.

Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space required under this policy either through management companies or agreements with the planning authority.

Adequate areas of open space should be an integral part of any new residential development to meet the needs generated by that development. The overall standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population is recognised in the Residential Density Guidelines for Local Authorities and will normally be applied in assessing proposals for open space for children's play and informal amenity. In developments, which are adjacent to and provide for easy access to significant areas of existing public open space a lesser standard of provision may be acceptable.

It is an objective of the County Council to secure a high quality of design layout and landscaping in all new residential developments consistent with the Residential Density Guidelines.

Integrated pleasant, attractive and landscaped open space should form an intrinsic element of new residential development. The precise location, type and design of open space provision will be negotiated with developers according to the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context. All open spaces proposed by developers should be designed and set out by suitably qualified landscape architects or similar design professionals so as to ensure a high standard and consistency with good design and layout practice.

Developers should consider providing a variety of open spaces both formal and informal semi-natural areas should be provided such as wetlands, woodlands, meadows, green corridors as well as formal gardens, and seating areas. These elements work best as part of a structure to the provision of open space.

3.10 Management of Open Space

A detailed landscaping plan should be prepared as an integral part of the overall development of any residential estate and submitted as part of the planning application for the development. Landscaping is an integral part of any development, and should be designed for long term ease of maintenance. The potential of existing site features should be fully explored and planning applications should include an accurate landscape survey plan. Planting should be used as for screening purposes and as an essential element of visual amenity. Planting schemes should include characteristic varieties such as chestnut, oak, lime and beech trees. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and incorporated into the development.

A management plan for the maintenance of open space should be provided as part of the development proposal. This plan will outline how, and by whom (whether a management company or the residents themselves), the open space will be maintained.

The landscaping should be appropriate to the function of the space and proposed long term maintenance plan. Thus, while seeding with grass may be appropriate for larger 'kick about' spaces, grass requires high maintenance. Tree and shrub planting or decorative paving, are lower maintenance alternatives which may be more appropriate in smaller and heavily trafficked spaces.

Passive supervision of the Public Realm is the most consistent and effective means of preventing anti-social behaviour. All public open spaces (hard and soft landscaped) shall be overlooked by adjoining accommodations to ensure passive surveillance. Back-land spaces, rear access lanes, blind corners and long side-garden walls shall be avoided so as to minimise the risk of anti-social activity.

3.11 Private Open Space

An adequate amount of private open space should be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling.

In general the requirement will be 60 to 75 sq.m. minimum for 3/4/5 bed roomed houses in order to ensure that most household activities are accommodated and at the same offers visual delight, receive some sunshine and encourage plant growth. A standard of 22 metres will normally be required between directly opposing first floor windows. However where adequate levels of privacy are provided this depth may be reduced.

The boundaries of rear gardens should generally be provided with a permanent durable barrier with a minimum height of 1.4 metres. Where rear gardens back onto public areas, excluding a public roadway, this height should be increased to 1.8 metres.

3.12 Road and Estate Names

The naming of residential developments shall be approved by the County Council. The names of residential developments shall reflect local and Irish place names for the locality as far as possible. No development work or advertising of housing schemes shall be allowed until the name has been agreed with the Planning Authority.

3.13 Services

All services including electricity, public lighting cables, and telephone and television cables shall be provided underground in new housing developments. Provision should be made for the unobtrusive siting of transformer stations, pumping stations and other necessary service buildings.

3.14 Apartments/Duplex Style

In general apartments will be required to have the following minimum floor areas:

Apartment Type	Minimum Floor Area
One Bed	46 m ²
Two Bed	65 m ²
Three Bed	93sq.m

The internal dimensions of all rooms should be proportioned to allow for an adequate space for normal living purposes. The shape and layout of rooms should maximise the amenity of residents.

All living room, kitchens and bedrooms should minimise overlooking of adjoining/adjacent residences and should be so located so to avoid facing towards nearby high boundary or gable walls.

3.15 Access for People with Disabilities

Access requirements for physically disabled persons should be incorporated into the design of buildings and layouts of developments likely to be used by the general public and will be a material consideration of the Planning Authority in assessing applications.

Developers should have regard to the criteria set out in the following in the preparation of development proposals

- Access for the disabled – minimum design criteria, published by the National Rehabilitation Board
- Part M of the Building Regulations 1997 to 2000
- Buildings for Everyone – Access and uses for all the citizens, by the National Rehabilitation Board, 1998.

The needs of people with disabilities should be taken into account in the design and construction of footpaths and parking areas. Footpaths in private commercial and housing developments and public housing developments shall be dished at junctions. Parking areas should make provision for spaces for disabled drivers and such spaces should be located in the most convenient locations for ease of use.

Tactile indicators are becoming increasingly more common. Tactile paving surfaces can be used to convey important information to visually impaired pedestrians about their environment. The provision of tactile surfaces for the visually impaired in all developments will be encouraged.

3.16 Car parking and Loading

New development will normally be required by the Planning Authority to provide adequate off-street car parking facilities. Such facilities shall cater for the immediate and anticipated future demands of the development, and shall be located within the site or in close proximity to such development. Car parking facilities shall generally be provided in a manner that reduces its visual impact to a minimum such as behind the building line and the use of screening.

The dimension of car parking bays shall be a minimum of 4.8m by 2.4m.

Where parking space is proposed in front of existing premises, existing railings or boundary walls shall be retained. They should be provided with proper public lighting facilities and shall be clearly demarcated. Car parking areas should be properly landscaped by the provision of trees, shrubs and grassed areas in order to ensure that damage to the visual amenities is avoided. Parking bays shall be adequately delineated.

Where the developer is unable to comply with the car parking standards for the development set out in the table below, a financial contribution may be acceptable in lieu of car parking provision, which will be related to the cost of providing such facilities.

In developments of an industrial or commercial nature, developers will be required to provide loading or unloading facilities sufficient to meet the demand of such development

Kilkenny County Council may modify the requirements of loading and unloading facilities in any particular case where it considers it would be in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the area to do so. Parking and service spaces must be located on site so as to prevent street obstruction and should be located where possible to the rear and side of the buildings and in such a manner to ensure minimal impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

Where a number of uses are contained within one development, the various uses shall be separated and the overall parking requirements for the development shall be assessed relative to each separate use in order to compute the overall parking requirement for the development (e.g. in a hotel the function rooms, bars etc. shall be assessed as separate from the bedroom provision).

In addition to the above requirements, developers will be required to provide and maintain loading and circulation facilities sufficient to meet the likely demand of each development.

Table Car Parking Standards for Various Land Uses

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Parking Spaces per Unit</i>
Dwelling House (Residential areas)	A minimum of 1 car space per dwelling unit 0.25 per dwelling for visitor parking
Flat or Bed-sitter	1.25 spaces per unit
Schools	1 space for every classroom plus 4 additional spaces
Churches, theatres, Public halls	1 car space per 10 seats.
Hotels, hostels and guesthouses	1 car space per bedroom
Hotel function rooms	1 space per 10 sq. metres
Public houses, inc. hotel bar	1 car space for every 5 sq. m of bar and lounge floor area.
Shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores	5 car spaces for every 93 m ² of gross floor area.
Shops	1 car space per 10sq. metres
Restaurants, cafes	1 car space per 20 m ² gross floor area
Banks and offices	1 car space per 15m ² of gross floor area and additional space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Industry	1 car space for every 60m ² of gross industrial floor area and operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Warehousing	1 car space for every 100m ² of gross floor area and additional parking space to be determined by the Planning Authority for each individual development.
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 sq. meters of net retail floor space
Golf or Pitch and Putt courses	4 car spaces per hole.
Golf driving ranges, shooting ranges	1 space per 2m of base line/ per trap
Sports grounds and sports clubs	1 car space for every 15m ² of floor area and 6 spaces for each pitch and additional operational space to be determined by the Planning Authority.
Hospital	1.50 spaces per bed
Clinics/Medical practices	2 spaces per consulting room

In the case of any use not specified above, the Planning Authority will determine the parking requirements, having regard to the traffic levels likely to be generated as a result of the development.

In implementing the car parking standards, the Council will reserve the right to alter the requirements having regard to each particular development.

3.17 Public Utilities

The Planning Authority will require that all wires and cables for the provision of public utility services shall be ducted underground to preserve the amenity and visual character of an area, and in the interests of public safety.

3.18 Shopfronts and Advertising

The over-riding principle for the design of shopfronts should be restraint. Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan sets out guidance for shopfronts, which will be adhered to in Gowran.

For the development of advertising within Gowran the policy is set out in section 2.17 of this plan.

3.19 The Likely Significant Effects on the Environment of Implementing the Proposed Gowran Local Area Plan

The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a local area plan shall include information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan.

3.19.1 Description of the Proposed Local Area Plan

The Local Area Plan lands comprise approximately 69 acres (28 hectares) of residential development. At an average density of 8 units per acre the proposed plan facilitates the development of approximately 550 residential units together with elements of supporting employment, retail, service, leisure and community uses.

3.19.2 Identification of likely significant effects on the environment

The likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Gowran local area plan are categorised as follows:

- Human beings (includes population, economic and social activity)
- Flora and fauna
- Material assets (includes infrastructure)
- Archaeology and cultural heritage
- Landscape.

Information on each likely significant effect together with proposed mitigation measures is outlined below:

Identification of likely significant effects on the environment

This Local Area Plan concerns the demarcation of a development boundary around the town of Gowran. It does not make proposals for any specific type of development on any particular site. Thus, evaluation of the environmental impacts of development within the boundary is difficult to ascertain in detail as opposed to evaluating impacts from a specific development proposal.

3.19.2.1 Human beings

Environmental baseline

The population of Gowran was 454 in 2002. The lands identified for development are all contiguous to the existing built up area of Gowran and are within walking distance of the

Main Street. There is limited employment opportunities associated with the lands identified for development.

Likely significant effects

An increase in population
Greater demand for services
Increased demand for transport and travel

Proposed mitigation measures

Objectives to ensure the provision of adequate supporting services, facilities and amenities in association with new residential development.
Objectives for the provision of an adequate road network to cater for increased traffic.
Objectives for high quality architectural design, layout and landscape treatment of all buildings and spaces.

3.19.2.2 Material Assets

Traffic:

The development of additional lands will increase the amount of local traffic.

Environmental baseline

Traffic is a problem in the town at present due traffic patterns in the town and the number of HGVs' passing through the town.

Likely significant effects

Increased traffic volumes in the town as development progresses.

Proposed mitigation measures

A number of measures are proposed which will help to slow traffic through the town and will also change the pattern of traffic so as to make a safe environment for existing and new residences.

Water Supply:

The development of additional land will lead to an increase in the demand for public water supply.

Foul and Surface Water Drainage:

The development of additional lands will lead to an increase in the demand for foul water and surface water drainage.

It is anticipated that through the development of additional lands in Gowran that the material assets of the area will be improved.

This will result in improved foul drainage facilities dedicated surface water disposal to cater for run off from new developments and water supply to cater for new housing developments

3.19.2.3 Flora & Fauna

Environmental Baseline

Consultants carried out a Flora & fauna studying order to survey and compile an inventory of the flora and fauna of the area.

Likely Significant effects

The principle effect will be the loss of habitat and bio diversity arising from developments on previously agricultural /rural lands.

Proposed mitigation measures

Identification of the significant areas of interest for flora and fauna.

Objectives for the preservation of these areas through the zoning objectives of the plan.

Much of any new development will occur on lands which are considered less important in terms of flora and fauna diversity.

3.19.2.4 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

Environmental Baseline

In archaeology terms Gowran is considered to be a Historic Town. An area of archaeological potential is identified in the Record of Monuments and Places for the County.

Gowran contains St Mary's church which is a National Monument.

There are a significant number of buildings of architectural merit in the town.

Likely Significant effects

Possible impact on the area of archaeological potential

Possible impact on sites of archaeological interest.

Possible degradation of buildings of architectural interest.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

Policies and objectives to protect the archaeological heritage

Archaeological assessment prior to the commencement of development, where required.

The inclusion in the List of protected structures of the buildings of architectural and historic interest.

3.19.2.5 Other Possible Effects

Other possible effects on the environment include those on air, water soils and climate.

These are considered to be less significant in the context of the Local Area Plan than those outlined above and therefore dealt with on an individual basis.

3.19.3 Could Development Take Place Elsewhere

The development of Gowran will have a significant impact as a result of the change of use of areas from agricultural and fallow use to residential, employment and social uses. It is a policy of the Council to encourage development within such designated towns and towns where the infrastructure and services exist. Development in such settlements would constitute more efficient use of existing resources.

The development of land locally must however be seen in the context of providing for local development demands, and ensuring that realistic alternatives exist to the development of one off houses in the country side. The development of lands locally and in a centralized location is more sustainable type of development than the development of many individual houses in a un-coordinated manner.

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES

1. Gowran Castle *

Gowran Castle is dated 1823 and thought to be by the Kilkenny architect William Robertson. It must be one of the last Palladian houses to be built – one hundred years after the introduction of the style to Ireland. In this way it is an interesting commentary on the style rather than a full-blooded involvement in Palladianism.

The house has been empty for some years and is presently for sale.

Inventory

2. Gate-lodge to Gowran Castle**

The lodge and entrance gates are architect designed and date from the late 19th century.

3. Former Alms House.*

This is a very interesting, early-Palladian building. With the help of an early-19th century drawing the design points to Sir Edward Lovett Pierce of his school. It has certain similarities, such as the niches and the bull-nosed sills, to the market house at Cashel. It should be noted that there are bullet marks on the façade dating from the War of Independence. The building is a rare example of a small, early-18th century, public building from the school of Pierce.

4. House.*

The house dates from circa 1820. It is well proportioned and well maintained and a good example of the type of small farmhouse found in the country rather than in the villages.

5. Gowran House, Main Street.**

The house dates from the mid-19th century and may have some early-19th century sections. The site is important being on the site of the earlier house and is of streetscape importance as it off-sets the alms house opposite.

6. Gowran Church*

This important group of buildings is a great asset to the town. The park in front protects the church visually and gives it a special feeling of place.

7 ‘Loughlin’ Main Street *

The proportions of the building and the high-pitched roof make it of architectural significant. The curved corner is unusual and gives it streetscape importance.

8. House, Main Street.?**

Of little individual importance but of streetscape importance in creating a small open space.

9 ‘Loughlin’ Main Street*

A very decorative façade and also of streetscape importance in enclosing a small open space.

10. 1 to 10 Drover's Row. Main Street.*

This is an excellent example of estate cottage design dating from circa 1840. It is similar to terraces found in County Carlow.

11. Farm Building**

The building probably dates from the early 19th century. With local slates and lime rendering farm buildings such as this are becoming rare.

12. End of terrace house

The house dates from the early-19th century and the façade is a good example of moulded cement decoration.

13. Terrace house

The house is of little individual interest but it has streetscape importance because it is part of the terrace facing the Thomastown Road and continues the street line.

14. House facing Thomastown Road.*

The house probably dates from circa 1820. This house announces the beginning of the town in the traditional manner. Because of its location it provides definitive line to the commencement of the town at this location.

15. House **

The house probably dates from the late 18th century and has vernacular character dating from that period and from the mid-20th century.

16. Parochial House **

A mid-19th century house of historical interest as a parochial house and minor architectural interest.

17. Catholic church *

18. Former School.*

The school is facing the church opposite.
Dated 1890 the school is a fine example of Board of Works design.

19 Mill Building.*

As a mill building it is sited next to the river.
A building of indeterminate date possibly circa 1800.

20 Mill Building.*

Known as Daltons Mill most has been demolished. Great spurwheel transmission gearing and millstones survive elsewhere on site.

Items which are marked with an asterix * are items that are at present on the existing Record of Protected Structures.

Items marked with a double asterix ** are items which are proposed additions to the record of protected structures.

Appendix 2

Items to be removed from the Record of Protected Structures

Buildings surrounding the Fair Green. Ref C114 in the County Development Plan
These are now included in the proposed Conservation Area.

Gabled Orkney cottages Ref C115 in the County Development Plan.
These are now included in the proposed Conservation Area.

Harding has good lettering Ref C116 in the County Development Plan
This public house is now included in the Conservation area.

Kelsey's and Mahon's shopfront Ref C117 in the County Development Plan

Perle's shop Ref C120 in the County Development Plan

APPENDIX 3
AREAS OF ECOLOGICAL INTEREST

(Area 1) Gowran Valley Woodland

(Area 2) River Valley Upstream of Castle Ellis Bridge

(Area 3) Laneway by Church

(Area 4) Quarry/Dumping Site

These four areas are identified on the zoning objectives map for Gowran.
For a more complete description please see the report prepared for the Local Area Plan in Appendix 4

APPENDIX 4 – Ecological Survey

Ecological Survey of the Area
to be Included in the
Gowran Local Area Plan

Prepared for
Kilkenny County Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared on behalf of Kilkenny County Council prior to the preparation of a Local Area Plan for the village of Gowran, Co Kilkenny. This study was undertaken by Roger Goodwillie, Ecologist, of CAAS (Environmental Services) Ltd, in October and November 2002.

It gives an account of habitats within the environs of the village and assesses their ecological importance. As this study is based on fieldwork undertaken in Autumn 2002, cognisance must be had as to the seasonal limitations of this study and this may, in some aspects, provide an incomplete description of flora and fauna.

2. DESCRIPTION OF AREA

Gowran seems to have arisen at the crossing point of a small river, around the core of St Mary's Church/Abbey, Gowran Castle and Ballaghanemore castle. Later the main road crossing was moved to more gentle slopes upstream and this elongated the town in a westerly direction along the Waterford road. Apart from a single housing estate on the northern side it retains a basic linear form and is surrounded by agricultural land in which one-off houses follow most of the roads.

The dominant ecological feature of the area is the river valley as it represents land which cannot be farmed at such a high level as the rest. Added to this natural circumstance is the historical factor of the Gowran Castle demesne which dictated the land use patterns of everything south and south-east of the town and, at one time, managed extensive woods between Demesne Road and St Mary's Abbey.

The study area consists in large part of improved agricultural land but there are three or four sites that deserve further description and merit consideration in any local plan.

Areas are approximately indicated on *Map 1* attached.

2.1 Gowran Valley Woodland (Area 1)

The valley below Castle Ellis Bridge is broad and filled with glacial drift. It receives springs along both edges so the soil is saturated with water at all times of the year but particularly in winter. Slopes are also very low so that the drainage into the river is slow and the channels winding. In these conditions wet woodland develops and only alder *Alnus glutinosa* grows well. It forms a wood of tall narrow stems with some willow *Salix fragilis*, especially close to the river, as well as ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and a little oak *Quercus robur* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. Elm *Ulmus glabra* and holly *Ilex aquifolium* contribute to the open understorey and there is a little field rose *Rosa arvensis*, bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara* and the introduced red currant *Ribes rubrum*. The trees are rooted in such soft ground that they fall over frequently and block side streams or the main river for a time.

Beneath this canopy herbaceous species form a regular feature, most commonly yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus* and golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*. Other plants include:

Phalaris arundinacea
Urtica dioica
Filipendula ulmaria

Reed Canary Grass
Nettle
Meadowsweet

<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica
<i>Carex remota</i>	Distant Sedge
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Celandine
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh Marigold
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Buckler Fern
<i>D.affinis</i>	Male Fern
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady Fern
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Lady's Smock
<i>C.flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bittercress

Wetter places usually are covered by fool's watercress *Apium nodiflorum* and sweet grass *Glyceria fluitans* in a matrix of *Iris* rhizomes. The riverbank itself is higher than the surrounding with a natural levee and supports a dense growth of cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* with wood avens *Geum urbanum*.

The land rises along the southern edge into a drier scrub of blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and privet *Ligustrum vulgare* with more ash and oak as well as a more ordinary selection of woodland herbs, e.g.

<i>Bromopsis ramosa</i>	Great Brome
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Wood Sedge
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	Shield Fern
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	Hartstongue
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail

Disturbed places, near the bridge or adjacent to dumping on the northern side bring in bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, butterbur *Petasites hybridus* and abundant nettles *Urtica dioica*.

Downstream of the central bridge (to Ballaghanemore Castle) the valley becomes narrower for a time and more open though there are still alders and willows throughout. Grey poplar *Populus canescens* and oak *Quercus robur* are relatively frequent and there is also goat willow *Salix caprea*, wych elm *Ulmus glabra* and Portuguese laurel *Prunus lusitanica*. A stand of lesser pond sedge *Carex acutiformis* is a notable feature close to the bridge where it grows with marsh species such as

<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime
<i>Epilobium palustre</i>	Marsh Willowherb
<i>Galium palustre</i>	Marsh Bedstraw
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint
<i>Carex rostrata</i>	Bottle Sedge
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Sweet Grass
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica

At the edges grassland comes in on a firmer soil, at first consisting of crested dogstail *Cynosurus cristatus*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* mixed with hard rush *Juncus inflexus* and several sedges *Carex disticha*, *C.hirta* and *C.flacca*. Then the ground rises and the *Cynosurus* is mixed with common bent *Agrostis capillaris* in the unfertilised and extensive old parkland of Gowran castle.

Further downstream the former earthworks and river diversions creating an artificial lake have broken down so that the land is reverting to wet woodland. More frequent planted species occur in this: dogwood *Cornus sericea* is present on a small scale while pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* is abundant, monopolising parts of the woodland floor. More natural species such as yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum* and golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* continue to occur however. There is now no standing water as far as could be seen.

This section retains embankments and paths which are passable though at present much grazed and trampled by cattle.

The woodland is notable for bats and provides excellent feeding habitat with potential breeding roosts in the sawmill by the central bridge and in other buildings further away. An icehouse by the footbridge downstream looks suitable for hibernation by these animals. Other mammals present are badger, fox, hare and grey squirrel as well as the smaller species.

The woods are used as a roost in winter by a large number of woodpigeon, rook, redwing and fieldfare. Woodcock occur in numbers depending on weather conditions while there are also pheasant. Redpoll were frequent during the site visit and there are probably siskin present at times. In summer there would be good breeding conditions for sparrowhawk, hooded crow, blackcap, chiffchaff, spotted flycatcher, long-tailed tit and treecreeper, as well as for all the more common, garden species.

Evaluation

The whole river valley is of ecological interest with an uncommon diversity of wildlife species. In particular the wet woodland is important: it seems to be the Wet willow-alder-ash woodland (WN6) of Fossitt (2000) but there may be a case for considering it as Alluvial forest, a priority habitat in the EU Habitats Directive. A summer evaluation should also be made. Whatever the most suitable category, the site is definitely of NHA quality and should be considered in this light. No particularly rare species seems to occur: it is more the case of a rare vegetation type which is cleared, drained or infilled along many rivers elsewhere.

The grassland of the 'park' south of Gowran castle is itself of some ecological interest as there are so few grassland areas left that are not regularly fertilised. This example has probably been sprayed against broad-leaved weeds so that its level of species diversity is not high. However the soil communities (invertebrate and fungal) are likely to be unusual and characteristic of stable pastureland.

2.2 River Valley Upstream of Castle Ellis Bridge (Area 2)

The river has a winding course through mineral ground and with a stony bed supplies a habitat for *Ranunculus penicillatus* as well as for food organisms preyed on by grey

heron, moorhen, kingfisher and pied wagtail. In places the bank has a line of alders *Alnus glutinosa* along it which are frequented by redpoll, and just outside the study area there is a marsh on the south bank. Adjoining land otherwise is intensively managed without features of interest.

Evaluation

The stream habitat is in quite good condition and has a role for local wildlife, some of it of noticeable species. Additional planting of alder would benefit its use as a feeding corridor for all species.

2.3 Laneway by Church (Area 3)

A laneway giving field access from the bend south of the Catholic church contains a variety of common species absent from many newer roadside hedges, including oak *Quercus robur*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastaneum*, elm *Ulmus* sp., crab apple *Malus domestica*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and privet *Ligustrum vulgare*. It turns in at a large cypress tree *Cupressus macrocarpa* which with adjacent beeches provide roosting for birds.

Beneath the hedges are brambles *Rubus fruticosus*, wild rose *Rosa canina*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* etc, but also

<i>Rubus cf caesius</i>	Dewberry
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Burdock
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	Shield Fern
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	Hartstongue
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground Elder
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet

The angled ditch down to the river from the eastern end of the hedge contains watercress *Nasturtium microphylla*, lesser pond sedge *Carex acutiformis*, field horsetail *Equisetum arvense*, figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*, etc.

Evaluation

This is a good example of an old hedge with a broader range of common plants than most others seen in the neighbourhood. It is also of value because of the lack of traffic and its proximity to the school.

2.4 Quarry/Dumping Site (Area 4)

The site of the former landfill has developed a good vegetation cover since abandonment with a mixture of gorse *Ulex europaeus*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and plants that can take some water-logging in the surface soil. Hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, scutch *Elytrigia repens* and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* are particularly frequent and there is also

<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucous Sedge
<i>C.hirta</i>	Hairy Sedge
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Fleabane
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>T.pratense</i>	Red Clover

The habitat suits small bird species such as linnet, goldfinch, bullfinch and whitethroat and appears particularly suitable for pygmy shrew and lizard. Snipe occur in winter and there is good cover for pheasant.

Evaluation

This is a new habitat developing on an abandoned site with a potentially interesting fauna because of the cover and lack of disturbance. It contains no rare species as far as is known.

3. CONCLUSION

The wet woodland in the valley south of the town is of high ecological interest and of NHA quality. The community is rare everywhere in the county and this may be the largest stand in a limestone catchment. Other examples in the vicinity of Callan are on Upper Carboniferous flagstones.

Three other sites stand out on a local level - the infilled quarry just north of the town, the river valley to the west and a laneway nearby.

All sites could be developed for an educational/amenity role though only the lower half of the valley woodland would be suitable. Bat surveys of old buildings in this area should be carried out if these have to be demolished or restored.

Gowran Local Area Plan 2003

