
2.6 Natural Environment

There are a number of significant natural features in Ferrybank-Belview, such as rivers, waterways, wetlands and woodlands, which unite to give the area a unique environmental character. The natural environment also contains a variety of species and provides an important amenity source for the residents of the area.

2.6.1 Environmental Character

The plan area is bound to the south by the River Suir. The outline of the land running alongside this river curves in and out quite dramatically, resulting in a number of sharp river bends which offer impressive views of Waterford City and Little Island. The plan area also features another smaller river, the Blackwater, which runs through the townland of Grannagh. There are a number of streams in the plan area, these occur to the east and are quite small in size. These streams run from north to south, and feed into the River Suir.

Due to its riverside location and dramatic topography, the area has a distinct environmental character. The south facing slopes which overlook the River Suir are one of the most dominant landscape features in the Ferrybank-Belview area. In the west of the plan area, the land rises sharply upwards, reaching a height of 80m above sea level along the Rockshire Hill ridgeline. In contrast to this, the eastern portion of the plan area features undulating, low lying land which runs alongside the river corridor. This area of land gradually rises upward to reach a height of 40-50m above sea level, forming an important scenic feature in the landscape.

Given the close proximity of this area to Waterford City, a significant portion of the environment is suburban in character, particularly around Ferrybank and Abbeylands. However, much of the plan area is rural in character, featuring large tracts of gently sloping agricultural land lined with hedgerows and mature trees. These trees perform a valuable function by assisting the integration of housing developments into the landscape, particularly in hillside locations.

The environmental resources of the plan area are being subject to increased pressure due to the rapid development that is occurring there. This plan will aim to establish a balance between the future growth and expansion of the Ferrybank-Belview area and the protection and preservation of its unique natural environment.

2.6.2 Natural Habitats

The plan area contains a wide range of habitats including watercourses, agricultural land, hedgerows, wetlands and areas of woodland. Besides providing natural habitats to a variety of species, these areas provide many benefits to the residents of the area.

Watercourses

The main watercourses are the River Suir and its tributary, the Blackwater. The Lower Suir River is a candidate Special Area of Conservation (see National Designations). Smartcastle Stream, which runs through the townland of Mullinabro, is one of the most significant streams in the area. These watercourses represent an important environmental resource in the area. However, a recent report found a slight deterioration in the quality of water in the Blackwater River (*2005: Environmental Protection Agency River Water Quality Report*). The same report found that the River Suir exhibited signs of slight to moderate pollution.

The potential of these watercourses to enhance the quality of life of residents in the area should not be underestimated. This plan proposes the protection of river water quality throughout the plan area. An important objective in this respect is the integration of stream corridors into broader areas of open space which can accommodate storm water attenuation ponds in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems – SUDS, (See [Map 8, Development Objectives](#), in particular Objective EN5).

Agricultural land and hedgerows

The land to the north of the River Suir generally consists of high quality agricultural land. The main agricultural areas within the plan area occur within the townlands of Mullinabro, Newrath, Cloone, Ballyrobin, Killapsy, Ballynamona, Ballinavoher, Rathculliheen, Kilmurry and Gorteens. These agricultural areas are characterised by open land with medium field parcels which are generally delineated by medium sized hedgerows. There are also a number of mature hedgerows in the area, some incorporating larger trees. The most significant of these occur near Belmont and in the townland of Cloone. These are identified on the [Map 4, Environmental Parameters](#) within this plan. The protection of such hedgerows is encouraged. They provide valuable habitats for wildlife and also enhance the character of an area. Hedgerows should be retained and incorporated where possible into any future development of the area.

Value of Hedgerows

Flooding Control – root systems of hedgerows regulate water movement and help prevent flooding.

Disease control – hedgerows help prevent the spread of airborne disease.

Water Quality – hedgerows trap silt and soil particles, which clog up fish spawning grounds if they enter watercourses.

Cultural/Historical – hedgerows are part of Ireland’s cultural, historical and archaeological heritage. Townland boundary hedgerows are particularly important as they can often date from medieval times.

Wildlife – as the area of native woodlands in Ireland is small, hedgerows have become very important wildlife habitats. They provide food, shelter, and corridors of movement, nest and hibernation sites for many of our native flora and fauna.

Screening – hedgerows when incorporated into urban developments provide screening and can greatly enhance the scenic quality of the area.

Woodlands and Gardens

Due to the plan area’s historic association with large country houses there remain today a considerable number of woodland areas which once formed part of the demesnes of these houses. The woods at Rockland are amongst the most significant swathes of mature trees to be found in the plan area. This woodland dates from the 18th century, originally forming part of the Rockland House estate. Adjacent to Rockland Woods are the remnants of woodlands once associated with Christendom House and Rathculliheen House.

To the east of the plan area, there are a number of woodlands running in a northward direction perpendicular to the River Suir corridor. The most significant of these are the woodlands at Gyles Quay, originally associated with Snowhaven House and the woodlands around the Glass House at Gorteens. Many of these woodlands are deciduous and generally consist of a mix of native and non-native trees. These woodlands represent an important environmental amenity for the area, and are particularly significant given their elevated location overlooking the River Suir.

There are also a number of ornamental gardens in the plan area. The gardens associated with Knockmullan House in Gorteens comprise c. 11 acres of ornamental tree plantings and shrubs.

This garden is in private ownership. Immediately abutting the plan area, but outside of the plan lands are the Abbey Road Gardens. These historic gardens were originally associated with Abbey House and are now open to public. There is also a commercial forestry situated to the west of Slieverue village. In Mullinabro, to the north east of the plan area, there is a commercial orchard.

The opportunity exists to utilise some of these woodland areas for public recreation and amenity purposes. The benefits of woodlands are numerous and this plan encourages the use of current funding such as the NeighbourWood Scheme, which is part of the new Forestry Programme 2007-2013. This scheme is open to Local Authorities, private landowners and others who intend to enhance existing woodland, to develop new woodland or to install woodland facilities into new or existing woodland for public access and enjoyment. The aim of the NeighbourWood Scheme is to develop 'close to home' woodland amenities for local people to visit and enjoy on a regular basis.

Wetlands

Wetlands perform a range of ecological functions and are critical for the conservation of biological diversity. They are also important from a socio-economic perspective as they can act as habitats for fishery and forestry. There are a number of important wetlands within the plan area. The most significant of these wetlands occur in the townland of Grannagh. This wetland area is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (See [Section 2.6.3](#)). In the townland of Gorteens, adjacent to Belview Port, there is another significant wetland area, which currently has no protection status. This is a ponded brackish wetland habitat which contains some important aquatic plant species.

2.6.3 European and National Environmental Designations

There are currently two areas within the plan area covered by European and National protection designations:

Lower River Suir (Site Code 002137)	Candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)
Grannyferry (Site Code 000833)	Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Special Areas of Conservation are prime wildlife conservation areas and are considered to be important on a European level as well as a national level. SACs are designated through the EU Habitat Directive (92/43/ EEC). This directive lists certain habitats and species that must be protected within SACs.

The Lower River Suir cSAC consists of the freshwater stretches of the River Suir and the tidal stretches as far as the confluence with the Barrow/Nore immediately east of Cheekpoint in Co. Waterford, as well as many tributaries. The site is a candidate SAC due to the presence of the priority habitats such as alluvial wet woodlands and Yew Wood. The site is also selected as a candidate SAC for floating river vegetation, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, old oak woodlands and eutrophic tall herbs. The site is of particular conservation interest for the presence of rare animal species, such as Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Freshwater Crayfish, Salmon and Otter. Several industrial developments, which discharge into the river, border the site including three meat processing operations.

Natural Heritage Area (NHA)

A Natural Heritage Area is a basic designation for wildlife. It is described as an important area for habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. Grannyferry is a proposed NHA due to the presence of reedswamp, marshes and wet fields with a salt influence. At the southern end there are saltmarsh communities with Saltmarsh Rush, Sea Arrowgrass, Sea Aster and various sedges, Strawberry Clover and Brookweed. There is also a little Meadow Barley which is now a protected species because of its marked decline this century, caused by drainage and grassland improvement. There has been some reclamation here and the vegetation has been extensively modified from its natural condition. Small numbers of Mallard and Water Rail occur within the area and in summer there are, most probably, Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting nesting.

2.6.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been carried out as part of the preparation of this LAP. SEA is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation and adoption of Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The objective of the SEA process is to provide for a high level of environmental protection and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into plans with a view to promoting sustainable development. The SEA for this LAP takes into account all issues of sustainability including the built and archaeological heritage, natural environment and environmental designations, open space and public amenity, community facilities, and infrastructure.

2.6.5 Natural Environment Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- NEP1** Protect and enhance the unique environmental setting of the plan area, particularly its relationship with the River Suir.
- NEP2** Encourage developers to incorporate features of the natural environment, such as rivers, streams, existing flora and fauna, and significant tree groups, within open space layouts and/or in the planning of future developments.
- NEP3** Protect the natural course of the River Suir and tributaries including their riparian corridors and associated habitats and species.
- NEP4** Protect, maintain, improve and enhance the quality of watercourses throughout the plan area, through the promotion of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- NEP5** Retain, where possible, significant hedgerows and incorporate into future development layouts within the area.
- NEP6** Encourage the protection of significant tree groupings within the plan area as identified on the Environmental Parameters Map.
- NEP7** Ensure that developers carry out an ecological assessment at planning application stage where impacts on hedgerows and treelines are likely.
- NEP8** Develop suitable programmes under the NeighbourWood Scheme to increase public access to woodland areas, to enhance existing woodland areas and to install woodland facilities, e.g. benches, picnic areas, playgrounds.

NEP9 Initiate the NeighbourWood Scheme and work with local community groups / conservation groups to seek the eradication of the invasive Cherry Laurel species and invasive Japanese knotweed species.

NEP10 Ensure minimum impact to local flora and fauna by new or existing developments in the area.

NEP11 Require future planning applications for development in the vicinity of the proposed NHA (Grannyferry) and the SAC (Lower River Suir) to include a report on the likely potential impacts and any necessary mitigation impacts. This report should be carried out by a professional ecologist or other suitably qualified professional.

NEP12 Planning applications within 30 metres of designated wetland/peatland ecological sites must be accompanied by an eco-hydrological assessment: which complies with Section 18 of the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997.

NEP13 Planning applications within 30 metres of designated wetland/peatland ecological sites must also be accompanied by evidence of consultation between the applicant and the National Parks and Wildlife Service with regard to the findings of this assessment. The need for ecological assessments for planning applications further than the 30 metre distance shall be decided upon on a site by site basis depending on local ecological and drainage conditions and other factors as appropriate.

NEP14 Allow for the designation of ecological sites that are of 'county importance' (this is a level below SAC and NHA which are of international and national importance respectively) as stated in the Kilkenny County Development Plan, section 8.2.3. While a mechanism for identification of these sites has yet to be finalised, a number of sites within the study are potential candidates. These are proposed as they are of particular conservation value and feature habitats that are relatively natural, and rare in a local context (meaning a low proportion of alien species). These are:

- a) Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland sites indicated as W7 and W8 on the SEA Habitat Map (S593 148 & S609 151)
- b) Riparian Woodland sites at S657 145; S650 130; S644 125; and S633 126)
- c) Wet Grassland site indicated on the SEA Habitat Map as WG1 (S628 148)

A comprehensive ecological survey should be carried out for each of these sites against the criteria established by Kilkenny County Council for the designation of sites of county importance.

NEP15 Any planting to be carried out by Kilkenny County Council, or private companies developing sites within the LAP area should at all times utilise native tree species only. The NRA's guidance document *A Guide to Landscape Treatments for National Road Schemes in Ireland* may be useful in this regard.

2.6.6 Natural Environment Objectives (Refer also to [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

It is the objective of the Council to:

NE1 Ensure the protection of the views as identified on the Development Objectives Maps

NE2 Restrict development on the proposed NHA (Grannyferry) and the SAC (Lower River Suir).

NE3 Ensure the protection of Rockland Woods in Christendom by way of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

NE4 Protect and manage the tree groups as identified on [Map 8, Development Objectives](#) and secure TPOs where necessary. These tree groups occur in the following townlands:

- Mullinabro
- Cloone
- Rockshire
- Belmont
- Ballyrobin
- Newtown
- Rathculliheen
- Kilmurry
- Gorteens

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are made only if it appears to the Planning Authority that it is expedient and in the interest of amenity in the environment to protect a tree, trees, group of trees or woodlands, which may be under threat. If the Planning Authority proposes to make a TPO, a notice will be published in one or more newspapers circulated in the area. Submissions or observations may be made to the Planning Authority regarding a proposal within a period of not less than 6 weeks (as will be stated in newspaper notice/s). A decision on TPOs will be made by the Council after careful consideration of the proposal and all submissions or observations.

NE5 Protect existing wetlands from fill.

NE6 Require a specialist bat ecologist to survey the old mill buildings in the Newrath area prior to any development taking place. This report is to be submitted to Kilkenny County Council at planning application stage.

NE7 Request at planning application stage an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for any future large scale development project that may take place in the Belview Port area.

2.7 Open Space and Public Amenity

2.7.1 Open space

The lack of adequate public open space within the plan area was highlighted as a major weakness at the public consultation meeting for the preparation of this LAP. Places such as the Rockshire Hills, which were formerly used by local people as walking areas, are now inaccessible due to the level of new housing constructions in the area. There is a need for public parks within the area and for dedicated walking routes.

This LAP has maintained the Open Space Strategy outlined in the previous plan for this area (the Waterford City Environs Plan 2002). This strategy prioritised the protection of the Rockshire Hill Ridgeline and the River Suir setting. Accordingly, the LAP has zoned these areas Passive Open Space/Green Links/Biodiversity Conservation. Furthermore, a significant amount of additional open space has been zoned as part of this LAP, with specific objectives indicated for different areas. Given the highly scenic nature of Ferrybank-Belview area, the development of a linear riverside walkway stretching from Christendom to Belview is an objective of this plan (See [Map 8, Development Objectives](#), in particular Objective OS3). It is also proposed to reserve landscape belts alongside the numerous stream corridors that occur in the plan area. As regards the development of public parks, a number of areas have been highlighted as suitable locations (See [Map 8, Development Objectives](#), in particular Objective OS1).

2.7.2 Playgrounds

There is a distinct lack of playground facilities in the plan area. There is no public playground and only one housing development (Blackthorn Hills, Rockshire) in the plan area has a purpose built playground. Additional play grounds are permitted in other developments aswell. However, this LAP proposes to identify lands that could be used to facilitate the development of public playgrounds at locations adjacent to residential areas, and in proximity to existing and proposed neighbourhood/district centres (See Objective OS2).

2.7.3 Walking Routes

This LAP proposes a number of walking routes which are identified on [Map 8, Development Objectives](#), as Objectives OS5.1 to OS5.5. The establishment of linkages and connections between areas of open space identified in this LAP is essential if the goal of having a comprehensive walking network is to be realised. A key component of this integrated open space system is the River Suir.

2.7.4 Open Space and Public Amenity Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- OSP1** Provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population.
- OSP2** Ensure that parks/strategic areas of open space are developed at appropriate locations to serve the existing and future planned populations of the plan area.

OSP3 Consult the Kilkenny Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study when considering applications for new developments in the plan area. The study identifies opportunity sites for the development of amenities and resources in the plan area.

OSP4 Support and encourage the opening up of the relevant parcels of lands to public access. The success of these walkway proposals depends on agreement being reached between landowners in the area and developers.

OSP5 Investigate the feasibility of developing walkways in the plan area, particularly in riverside locations.

The National Development Plan 2007-13, "Transforming Ireland", provides for a total Exchequer investment in tourism of €800m over the seven years, including a product development and infrastructure sub-programme of €317m to upgrade and supplement Ireland's tourism attractions and activities

The focus of the Tourism Infrastructure Fund is on supporting local authorities and other key infrastructure providers to develop appropriate facilities for tourists such as walking and cycling routes.

OSP6 Secure funding and develop suitable programmes under schemes such as the Tourism Infrastructure Fund to enable the development of the proposed walking routes.

2.7.5 Open Space and Public Amenity Objectives (Refer also to [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

It is the objective of the Council to:

OS1 Reserve as large strategic areas of open space the following:

OS1.1 In conjunction with Waterford City Council, from the Church of Ireland at Christendom, along the banks of the River Suir to Newtown/Gyles Quay.

OS1.2 From Milepost Village to Gyles Quay, along the course of the existing stream corridor. (This also has the potential to extend north from Milepost to the forest west of Slieverue).

OS1.3 From the rear of the former Ard Ri Hotel to the summits of Mount Sion and Mount Misery connecting onto the Newrath Road.

The Council will work with landowners and others in the potential development of these areas as public parks.

OS2 Develop public children's playgrounds at the following locations:

OS2.1 Former Pitch and Putt course at Ferrybank.

OS2.2 The site adjacent to the proposed Ferrybank Childcare Centre and beside the Telephone Exchange building in the existing N25.

OR

OS2.2 As part of the Abbeylands Park on the south side of the current N25.

-
- OS2.3** Proposed Open Space west of the Abbeypark housing development.
- OS2.4** On lands adjacent to the current Clover Social Club.
OR
- OS2.4** As part of the proposed linear park at Christendom.
- OS2.5** Concurrent with new housing developments at the proposed mixed use zone at Newrath.
- OS3** Develop a system of linear parks with walkways and cycle paths, with significant tree planting and public seating, at the following locations:
- OS3.1** Along the riverfront from the Estuary Wood housing development at Christendom to Newtown/Gyles Quay.
- OS3.2** From Clover Road, south of the former Abbey Business Park, and northeasterly to the western boundary of the townland of Christendom and southerly to link into OS3.1.
- OS3.3** From Abbey Road South to link into OS3.1.
- OS3.4** From the Railway Crossing linking Rathculliheen to Abbeylands to the current N25.
- OS3.5** From Belmont Roundabout north and westerly to link up with the Rockshire Neighbourhood Centre.
- OS4** Reserve as a long-term objective, a strategic open space corridor from the Brothers of Charity complex, along the townland boundaries of Ballyrobin and Killaspy to Cloone, linking the stream corridor at Cloone westwards to Mullinabro and Smartcastle stream, and from there west to the Blackwater River and the River Suir.
- OS5** Reserve as long-term objective, strategic landscape belts, which should be developed as informal walking routes in the vicinity of the Belview area, including:
- OS5.1** From Gyles Quay to western boundary of Belview Port
- OS5.2** From the eastern side of the sewerage treatment works, northwards along the stream corridor to the N25/Slieverue Village.
- OS5.3** From the stream on the eastern side of Springfield House north to the entrance of the IDA Business Park, to connect with the N29 at the disused railway line intersection.
- OS5.4** Along the stream corridor at the eastern side of Belview Port.
- OS5.5** Along the stream corridor north of the disused mill at Rathculliheen, extending northwards as far as the disused railway line and further north to Kilmurry Castle.
- OS6** Explore in conjunction with Iarnrod Eireann, the possibility of developing one or more pedestrian crossings over the railway line with a boardwalk-style viewing platform along the River Suir (such a facility could also be used for recreational fishing).

2.8 Recreation and Community Facilities

The creation of a sense of community in an area is dependent upon having the right facilities and resources. However, it is also dependent upon people, and on their willingness to devote time and energy to the development of their local area. In this context, there are a number of very active community groups in the plan area. Bodies such as the Waterford Area Partnership, the Ferrybank Community Development Group, the Active Retirement Group, Foroige and various residents' associations provide a strong public voice for the development and growth of the area.

2.8.1 General Community facilities

(This section should be read in conjunction with [Appendix 5: Community Facilities Matrix](#)).

The church, graveyard and parish hall are located immediately outside the plan area in Ferrybank. In the same vicinity, there are a number of retail and service outlets, a bank and a takeaway/restaurant. There are two pubs located within the plan area, one in Milepost village and another, the Ferryman, in Grannagh. There are a number of convenience shops serving the plan area, one on the Abbeypark estate, a service station located along the N25 and another two along the N9. A shopping centre for the Ferrybank-Abbeylands area is currently under construction. When completed, this will provide the local area with a range of shopping, leisure and health facilities.

There is no library service provision in the Ferrybank-Belview area at present however it is an objective of this plan to examine the feasibility of providing a new branch in the area.

2.8.2 Urban Village Proposal

This plan proposes to create an urban village in the Ferrybank-Abbeylands area. The area stretching from Ferrybank to the new Shopping Centre, and eastwards to the Aldi store at Belmont, will act as a focal point for the plan area. There are currently a number of existing shops and services in this area, and when complete the Ferrybank-Abbeylands Shopping Centre will greatly improve the facilities available in the area.

It therefore follows that pedestrian footfall and community activity will increase in this area. The establishment of an urban village at this location will create greater legibility in the area, allowing it to develop as an environment that is clearly understood and useable by the community. The main features of the urban village will be a tree lined boulevard, incorporating on-street car parking and wide pavements that allow for adequate pedestrian movement.

Principles of the Urban Village:

- To create a main street in the vicinity of Ferrybank-Abbeylands-Belmont, with the central focus being on the area that stretches from the new Shopping Centre to Ferrybank
- To create a sense of identity in the plan area and a focal point for the community
- To allow for a mix of community uses in this area, in particular basic facilities such as a post office and Garda station
- To create an attractive tree lined avenue with traffic calming measures and pedestrian friendly spaces
- To provide for sustainable patterns of movement, with priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport
- To enhance the connectivity between Ferrybank-Abbeylands and the North Quays, and Waterford City Centre

2.8.3 Educational facilities

Primary School Facilities

The plan area is served by two primary schools - St. Mary's Boy's National School (Scoil Mhuire) and the Good Counsel School for Girls. Both these schools are located in Ferrybank, immediately outside of the plan area. The Boy's school has 194 pupils and 11 teachers. There is no waiting list at present for the school. The Girl's school has 189 pupils and 12 teachers. The school is currently at capacity and there is a waiting list for the incoming school year. A site for a new 32 room primary school has been identified in Abbeylands. However, this proposal is at an infancy stage and as yet the Department of Education has no fixed plans to develop a school at this site. This LAP has given this site a zoning of CF: Community Facilities, with an objective to reserve the site for the development of a primary school facility. Lands directly adjacent to this site have been zoned AOS: Active Open Space, to accommodate playing fields and other sporting facilities.

Secondary School Facilities

There is one secondary school in the plan area, the Abbey Community College in Ferrybank. This co-educational school was established in 2000, and is an amalgamation of the Sacred Heart of Mary Secondary School, Ferrybank, and Slieverue Vocational School. There are currently 638 students in the school. The school's catchment area encompasses Slieverue, Ferrybank and parts of the parishes of Mullinavat and Kilmacow in South Kilkenny, as well as the part of Waterford situated north of the River Suir. In terms of sporting facilities, the school has a 600 sqm indoor sports hall, 2 outdoor basketball courts, 1 all weather pitch and 1 grass field which can be at times unusable due to waterlogging. Consequently, the school uses the local sporting facilities, e.g. GAA pitch and soccer grounds on a regular basis.

The school currently has a very large waiting list and does not have the capacity to cater for the expanding population of the area. There are no immediate plans by the Department of Education to provide an additional secondary school in the Ferrybank-Belview area. Given the levels of growth that the area is currently experiencing, it is likely that this situation will need to be re-examined in the near future. Therefore, this plan has identified a suitable site for the development of a secondary school, with a zoning of CF: Community Facilities, and an objective to reserve the site for the development of a secondary school facility. Lands directly adjacent to this site have been zoned AOS: Active Open Space, to accommodate playing fields and other sporting facilities. Given the proximity of the proposed secondary school site to the proposed primary school site, it is anticipated that these facilities can be shared.

Adult Education Facilities

There are a number of adult education classes available in the study area. These classes are run by various bodies, who take a collaborative approach to the provision of adult education services. Kilkenny Vocational Education Committee (VEC) and Waterford City VEC administer a wide range of courses at regular intervals. Waterford Area Partnership, in conjunction with FAS, also facilitate a number of adult education classes, such as the Retail Sales courses which are currently being run to retrain adults who may wish to pursue employment in the new Ferrybank–Abbeylands Shopping Centre. Despite the strong levels of interest displayed for such courses by the community, finding suitable places to host the classes is a problem. The classes are currently held at a number of locations in the area, such as the Abbey Community College, the Brothers of Charity and the Ferrybank soccer club.

2.8.4 Childcare facilities

A new childcare facility is currently under construction at Belmont Heights/Ardaire in Ferrybank. This will be a grant-aided, community based crèche, with the intention of being accessible to all

sectors of the community. It is due to be completed in mid 2008. There are two other community playgroups located with the plan area - Stepping Stones and Tir na nÓg – in addition to two private crèche facilities. The new Ferrybank-Abbeylands Shopping Centre will also have a crèche facility.

2.8.5 Sports facilities

The plan area is well served by sporting facilities. Ferrybank A.F.C.'s soccer grounds are located in Abbeylands. Their facilities consist of two pitches, one all-weather and a modern clubhouse which contains a general purpose room and committee room.

Immediately adjacent to the proposed Ferrybank-Abbeylands Shopping Centre are the grounds of the Ferrybank G.A.A. club. This comprises a state of the art hurling arena with an AstroTurf surface and floodlighting.

There is also the Clover Social Centre. This was originally built for the employees of Clover Meats, but as this factory has now ceased productions, the possibility of handing the centre over to the local community is being explored. The facilities consist of playing fields and a general purpose room. In addition, Ferrybank has an Athletic Club who train in the Waterford Regional Sports Centre. There is also the Waterford Golf Course, which lies within the plan area.

2.8.6 Youth facilities

The plan area has a significant number of active youth organisations, however finding suitable venues, with suitable facilities and equipment to host activities is a problem. Consequently, youth programmes are run at dispersed locations throughout the plan area.

No.58 Ard Daire is currently in use as a community house and acts as a venue for various youth courses. The majority of youth programmes are run in the Parish Centre. This is the base for the Foróige club, which has four staff members and runs two programmes – the Drugs Prevention Project and the Youth Development Project. The club caters for up to ten groups per week and also works with local schools. The PACT group (Providing Activities and Choices Together) operate from the Abbeylands Community Centre. This youth group runs various summer camps and classes, e.g. cookery, life learning, dancing. The Abbey Scout Hall in Ferrybank also facilitates youth programmes.

There is a strong need for a dedicated youth facility in the plan area. The demand for youth activities and training courses is very high and is currently not being met. This is largely due to the lack of a suitably resourced and equipped facility in the area. Given the levels of population growth that the area is currently experiencing, this LAP seeks to identify community lands that could be used to accommodate a community facility for young people.

2.8.7 Facilities for the Elderly

There are very limited social facilities for the elderly in the Ferrybank area, e.g. no bingo, no bridge club etc. In addition to this, there is no day centre in the area for the elderly. There is one nursing home in the plan area, the Rockshire Care Centre, which is a private facility. However, the housing association Respond have received permission to construct a nursing home on a site close to the Abbey Community School – when completed, this will improve the level of health and social facilities that are available for the aged in the plan area, e.g. pharmacy, doctor, arts and crafts classes, hair dressers etc. The Ring-a-Link bus service is a

valuable resource to the elderly in the study area, delivering flexible transport to those living in rural areas.

2.8.8 Health facilities

At present, the plan area is lacking in health and medical facilities. However, the new Ferrybank-Abbeylands Shopping Centre will include a medical centre. The Brothers of Charity run a centre in Ferrybank for people with intellectual disabilities, providing a range of day and residential services designed to meet the needs of adults and children. The Rapid Express bus service enables residents of the plan to access the Waterford Regional Hospital via public transport.

2.8.9 Recreation and Community Facilities Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RCP1** Require the provision of increased childcare facilities in suitable locations within the area, particularly in new and established residential areas and locations in close proximity to open space amenities, community facilities and recreational facilities.
- RCP2** Support and facilitate the improvement and upgrading of existing sporting facilities and the provision of new facilities.
- RCP3** Support and facilitate a wide range of sporting facilities for all age groups, and ensure that the recreational needs of children are met.
- RCP4** Ensure that access to and use of all sporting facilities is safe and secure.
- RCP5** Encourage the further provision of social facilities for the elderly within the plan area.

2.8.10 Recreation and Community Facilities Objectives (Refer also to [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

It is the objectives of the Council to:

- RC1** Provide a new library branch in the proposed urban village (C1) at Ferrybank – Abbeylands. (No Map Reference).
- RC2** Develop a flagship, multi-purpose community facility which shall make provision for youth and elderly facilities, adult education, and indoor sports and recreation. An optimum location would be adjoining a zoned area of Active Open Space. (No Map Reference).
- RC3** Promote the public use of the Clover Social Club and accordingly, facilitate its refurbishment.
- RC4** Reserve lands for primary school educational facilities at Rathculliheen.
- RC5** Reserve lands for secondary school educational facilities at Rathculliheen.

2.9 Tourism, Arts and Culture

2.9.1 Analysis

The plan area is highly scenic and has much to offer as regards natural beauty. The dramatic topography of the area, and its riverside setting, combine to make it a place of special interest. To the south, the plan area offers striking views of Waterford City and Little Island, and of the ever widening River Suir to the south-east. In addition, the area is rich in archaeology and has a number of important historic structures. Despite this, the area currently has little to offer in the way of tourism. The area lacks the infrastructure necessary to sustain a viable tourism market and does not have a readily definable tourism product. Its close proximity to Waterford City, which has a vibrant arts and culture base, has acted against the creation of a tourism industry in the plan area itself. However, there is potential to capitalise on some of the tourism associated with Waterford City through the development of complimentary activities. This section will highlight the many opportunities that exist at present.

2.9.2 Existing facilities and services

The plan area has an adequate level of visitor accommodation, but is poorly serviced in terms of restaurants and dining facilities. There is one hotel in the plan area, the Athenaeum House Hotel, and there are a handful of bed and breakfasts dispersed throughout the area. There is also a caravan park located in Kilmurry. Apart from the Chinese restaurant located in Ferrybank, there is little else in terms of dining facilities. Given the area's proximity to Waterford City, which has an abundance of hotels and restaurants, this is to be expected. However, the establishment of an urban centre in Ferrybank would facilitate the creation of additional dining facilities in the area. Such facilities and services would provide the plan area with an evening economy, something which it currently lacks.

There is a picnic area at Grannagh. This is located in a very scenic area and adjacent to the medieval Grannagh Castle and the Ferryman pub – a charming thatched structure. However, the appearance of the picnic area is quite dated and it would benefit from a refurbishment scheme.

2.9.3 The River Suir

In terms of tourism, the River Suir is the plan area's key asset. While Waterford City has developed a strong relationship with the river, particularly since the creation of the Millennium Plaza and riverfront boardwalk, the Ferrybank-Belview area has failed to embrace the river in any meaningful way.

In this regard, the proposed rejuvenation of the North Quays is a critical factor. The *Draft Urban Design Framework Plan (2008)* for the North Quays recommended that the connections between Ferrybank and the new waterfront should be prioritised. This would provide the plan area with an opportunity to strengthen its relationship with the River Suir and to create linkages with the northern waterfront. The deepening of the connection between Ferrybank and the North Quays is all the more pertinent due to the imminent opening of the Ferrybank-Abbeylands Shopping Centre in 2008.

One of the key recommendations of both the PLUTS and the Draft Urban Design Framework Plan concerning tourism is the development of a new marina and waterfront to the north of the River Suir. In this regard, this plan proposes the development of a marina in the area adjoining

the C2: Commercial and Mixed Use Zone at Christendom. This would serve to animate the riverfront in this location, and would also act as a valuable amenity. In addition, it is an objective of this plan to explore the possibility of developing one or more pedestrian crossings over the railway line at Christendom, with a boardwalk-style viewing platform along the River Suir. Such a facility could also be used for recreational fishing (See [Map 8, Development Objectives](#), in particular Objective OS6).

2.9.4 Natural Environment

One of the plan area's most valuable assets is its unique natural environment. The development of nature-based tourism activities would harness the potential of the area in terms of its scenic landscape, and would also offer a strong alternative to the urban based activities available in Waterford City. Given the area's traditional agricultural base, the development of agri-tourism products offers significant potential. This plan encourages the development of activities such as equestrian centres, water-based activities, walking trails and other nature-based pursuits. There is also the opportunity to develop wildlife parks within the plan area. An ideal location for such an amenity would be within the vicinity of the Grannyferry wetlands at Grannagh.

2.9.5 The Port

As regards tourism and leisure, the Port of Waterford at Belview is another of the plan area's principal assets. A substantial number of cruise ships berth at Waterford Port on a year round basis. It has become a popular berthing location for cruise ships due to the impressive location of the Port, close to the south eastern tip of Ireland at the conjunction of the Atlantic Ocean, English Channel and Irish Sea. It is also popular due to its proximity to Waterford City, which contains a range of tourist attractions, the principal one being Waterford Crystal. There is potential for the Ferrybank-Belview area to capitalise on the tourism associated with these cruise ships. Undoubtedly, it provides an incentive to strengthen its existing tourism assets and explore the development of other tourist attractions.

2.9.6 Ferrybank-Abbeylands Shopping Centre

The potential of the shopping centre to kickstart the area's tourist trade should not be overlooked. It is likely that the centre will attract a large volume of visitors to the plan area. This presents challenges in terms of drawing these visitors back to the area once the initial novelty of the centre has worn off, and also providing them with additional choices to shopping, such as arts and culture related activities. This plan seeks to create an urban village in the heart of Ferrybank-Abbeylands, and in an effort to attract visitors to the area, will encourage a mix of uses and activities. However, given that that the vision for the North Quays includes new retail units, cafes, restaurants and leisure uses, it must be acknowledged that realistically, Ferrybank can only sustain a small number of mixed use activities outside of the shopping centre. Therefore, careful consideration will be given to the type of developments permitted alongside the new shopping centre.

2.9.7 Ard Rí hotel site

Another area with tourism potential within the Ferrybank-Belview area is the Ard Rí hotel site. The site occupies a very prominent position on the north side of the River Suir and offers panoramic views of Waterford City below. Due to its dramatic location, this site presents

opportunities in terms of the development of amenity and leisure facilities. It is currently occupied by the former hotel building, which is now vacant. This building dates from the late 1960s and is built in the Modernist architectural style. Hence, it responds very poorly to the topography of the site and dominates the skyline in quite an obtrusive manner. Kilkenny County Council is to liaise with Waterford City Council in relation to this site.

2.9.8 Arts and Culture

The area is served by a Community Arts Officer, the responsibility of whom it is to develop and facilitate all-inclusive community based arts projects. At present, the community is involved in the production of a documentary about the changing environment of the Ferrybank-Belview area. There is also the Ferrybank Arts Group, who regularly undertake visits to the opera, cinema, theatre and art galleries. The group published a book in 2007 entitled 'Ferrybank and the ABC of Arts'. The aim of this publication was to demystify the arts from a community perspective. The community is actively involved in festivals such as the St. Patrick's Day parade, and activities for young people included drumming, Hip Hop and Irish dancing.

It is therefore apparent that there is a strong level of interest in arts and culture in the plan area. Participation in arts groups and the various art workshops is very high, and there is a strong demand for increased provision of such services. However, the lack of a suitably equipped community building impedes the development of arts and culture in the area. At present, arts workshops are being run in poorly resourced buildings and consequently demand for such workshops is not being met.

2.9.9 Community infrastructure

The provision of the necessary community infrastructure is vital if arts and culture related activities are to make a meaningful impact in the plan area. Such activities enable people to develop a sense of ownership of their area and to achieve a sense of place. However, the level of interest currently shown by members of the community in arts and culture indicates that it could also make a significant contribution to tourism in the area. It is likely that if the necessary infrastructure was put in place, the area could begin to generate tourism through arts festivals, art exhibitions and installations, etc. The provision of a theatre, artists' studios and galleries for visual arts, photography, multi-media, etc. should be explored in conjunction with the development of the urban centre at Ferrybank. In light of Waterford City's strong cultural and theatrical base, it is likely that the plan area could tap into this tourist market.

2.9.10 Tourism, Arts and Culture Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- TMP1** Promote the River Suir as a key tourist attraction in the area and examine opportunities to develop water based tourism activities.
- TMP2** Promote the development of cafes, restaurants and arts and culture related uses, e.g. a theatre, art gallery, public sculpture in the proposed urban centre at Ferrybank.
- TMP3** Encourage the development of agri-tourism in the plan area, e.g. equestrian centres, nature trails and wildlife parks.
- TMP4** Support the development of scenic walkways throughout the plan area and in particular a continuous walkway from Grannagh to Belview, where feasible.

-
- TMP5** Support and promote, with the co-operation of private landowners, public access to heritage sites and features of archaeological interest.
- TMP6** Work with Waterford City Council to explore development options for the Ard Rí hotel site and the North Quays.
- TMP7** Promote the development of arts and culture related activities at the proposed urban village.

2.9.11 Tourism, Arts and Culture Policies Objectives

(Refer also to [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

It is the objective of the Council to:

- TM1** Improve the facilities and enhance the appearance of the picnic area at Grannagh.
- TM2** Facilitate the development of a marina, so as to animate the River Suir, in the area adjoining the C2: Commercial and Mixed Use Zone at Christendom. In fulfilling this objective, the Council will liaise with the Port Authority and Iarnrod Eireann so as to ensure adequate vehicular access (including a railway crossing, if necessary).

2.10 Employment, Enterprise and Economic Development

2.10.1 Aims

It is the aim of the Council to support the economic development of the plan area and in particular to:

- Promote the further development of Belview Port
- Ensure a gas connection to the plan area
- Promote the development of Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) to University status, including its Research & Development facilities
- Promote improved Broadband connectivity in the plan area and for Belview Port in particular
- Promote and facilitate the decentralisation of offices from the Dublin Metropolitan Area to the southeast
- Promote the development of quality industrial estates to accommodate small to medium sized enterprises
- Promote the development of enterprise parks to facilitate the development of indigenous industry and services

2.10.2 National, Regional and Local Policies

In regard to the economic development of the Ferrybank/Belview area, existing national, regional and local Policies advise the provision of:

- Improved road infrastructure from the plan area to other local and national urban centres.
- Improved rail service (freight and passenger) for the industrial, agricultural and service sectors, having particular regard to access to and from Waterford Regional Airport and Belview Port.

2.10.3 Economic Profile of the Plan area

The plan area contains a significant number of industries and enterprises, which are spread throughout the geographical area, but with the main clusters occurring at Grannagh, Christendom and Belview. Historically, there has been a high concentration of industry at these locations, most likely due to the availability of land and the relatively sparse population. In recent times, a significant number of residential units have been constructed adjacent to the Christendom industrial area, with the nature of the industry here leading to conflicts between the economic and residential development of the area. Belview Port and its associated industries have provided an economic stimulus to the South-East region. The Belview area will become an increasingly important economic nucleus as the port expands and develops.

2.10.4 Employment and Educational Profile

The number of people at work in the area is 9% higher than the national average (66.7% versus 57.2%). The unemployment rate is however one percent higher than the national average (6.4% versus 5.3%), and the student population is lower than the national average (6.5% versus 10.4%).

An analysis of the employment profile of the area indicates the importance of manufacturing, commerce and trade. Some 24% of the working population is employed in manufacturing

versus a national average of 13%. Commerce and trade are also important in the area, with 25.3% of the population working in these areas.

Professional services are under-represented, with only 16% of the working population classified as professional, versus the national average of 21%. In reality, there are few offices or professional services located in the area, except for education and health.

Educational attainment varies in the area, 24% of the population have secondary education as opposed to the national figure of 29%, while 42.1% of the population have a third level qualification versus a 37.6% national figure.

2.10.5 Office Development

There is a lack of good quality office accommodation in the plan area, with the exception of the offices developed by Waterford Port at Belview. The availability of high quality office space is seen as an integral part of a developing economy. If Information and Communications Technology (ICT) companies are to be attracted to the area, such office space needs to be available. This plan proposes the development of small to medium sized offices in mixed use zones. However, given the area's proximity to existing office development in Waterford City, the amount of office development in the area may be minimal.

2.10.6 Belview Port

Currently the Port of Waterford at Belview and its associated industries employ 100 people directly, and 400-500 indirectly. This is expected to increase dramatically in the future with the expansion of the port and port services. The extension of the quayside, improved transport links, and indeed the increasing congestion problems that rival ports are experiencing, will see Belview grow in national importance.

Policy Context

The Port of Waterford at Belview is seen as a critical piece of infrastructure nationally, regionally and locally. The important role of the Port is reflected in a number of national and regional policy documents. The NSS believes there is substantial potential for the enhancement of critical mass through the further expansion of the designated gateway of Waterford including the Port at Belview. The South East Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 state that Belview may offer the best location for investment due to its proximity to the Gateway City of Waterford, WIT, and Belview Port, with direct access to a railway line.

Strategic Location

In line with the N25 Waterford City bypass, is the upgrade of the N9, to consist of a motorway/dual carriageway linking Waterford to Dublin. These infrastructural improvements will result in the port becoming more accessible in the future and will speed up the transportation of goods. Belview Port has a competitive advantage over the ports of Dublin and Cork as it does not suffer from traffic congestion. In addition, sailing times to south-west of Britain and the continent are shorter from Belview. It is the only port in the country served by a functioning rail line. The port is served by two railway lines, one of which is disused (Waterford to New Ross line) and the Limerick to Rosslare Europort line, which is operational. However, no rail freight is transported through the port at present. The development of a rail cargo depot with freight and container handling equipment at Belview is a policy of the County Development Plan. It is an objective of this LAP to explore the viability of using the Limerick to Rosslare Europort railway line to provide freight services to Belview Port (See [Map 8, Development Objectives](#) in particular Objectives T4 and E3).

Infrastructure and facilities

The infrastructure and facilities that have been developed at Belview represent major investment and confidence in the area. Belview operates on a 24 hour basis and provides a number of services, with Lo-Lo, Bulk and Break Bulk cargoes. Current facilities at Belview include 450 metres of container berthage, a 200 metre general cargo berth, serviced by a Liebherr 250 portal crane with a 65 tonne lift capacity, 20 cubic metre grab, a motorised hopper with a 70 tonne capacity and other relevant handling equipment, a 120 metre private general cargo berth. There is substantial warehousing at Belview Port and additional land available for warehousing and port related developments.

An additional 193 metre extension of quay is currently under construction to handle more vessels at the Port. In addition, planning permission has been secured for the dredging and reclamation of the river at the confluence of the Rivers Barrow and Suir from Snowhill to Drumdowney Point, to enable the provision of quayside facilities such as warehousing and port services.

Port Related Activities

Port related activities provide a significant number of jobs both directly and indirectly in the area. There are a number of port related activities located at Belview including break-of-bulk activities (such as the bagging of coal, fertiliser or animal feed), warehousing, freight handling, trade and commercial vehicle parking. Bulk cargos such as bulk cement and wood are also catered for. Other facilities and industries located at the port include a number of refrigeration/storage units, wood processing units and Port of Waterford related commercial offices.

2.10.7 Future of Belview Port

Expansion and Growth

It is envisaged that there will be significant levels of growth in the Ro-Ro (Roll on-Roll off) and Lo-Lo (Load on-Load off) sectors in the future. It is considered that the growth of logistics, and areas such as commercial vehicle parking, will play a key role in the growth of the Port.

In recent years, a number of permissions have been secured by the Port of Waterford for wharf expansion and associated port services. However, the expansion of port activities such as logistics, distribution centres, commercial vehicle parking and storage areas for containers has been somewhat limited due to the shortage of suitable zoned land in the area. Inadequate parking facilities, weighting facilities and a lack of capacity at the port have been highlighted as problematic issues, which appear to affect cost efficiencies at the port.

Appropriate Zonings

The above issues can be addressed through zoning appropriate lands for PFI: Development of Port Facilities and Industry. The purpose of this zoning is to allow for the further development and expansion of port facilities and associated industries. However, it is also important that existing residences in the Belview area are protected and that their existing environmental amenities remain intact. Accordingly, this LAP has created a zoning of Belview Residential Amenity (BRA) to protect existing residences in proximity to Belview Port. This zoning incorporates lands surrounding and adjoining the existing residences as open space and indicative landscape buffers. Although existing residential amenity will be protected, it is important that there is no net increase in residential development in this area over the lifetime of the plan. It is felt that the provisions of this zoning category need to be flexible in terms of accommodating the expansion of port related development and specialised industries in the

area, but only where the existing residences are acquired by industries seeking to expand. New industries locating in this area will be required to incorporate appropriate landscape screening around all existing residential developments, based on similar lines to the screening adopted at the Smartply site.

The lands surrounding the Port are largely agricultural and contain many sensitive environmental features, including tree groups, flood plains and stream valleys. It is important that these features remain protected. Accordingly, this LAP has zoned significant areas of open space in proximity to Belview Port, including landscape belts and a riverside walkway (See [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

2.10.8 IDA – Promoting the Pharmaceutical/Biotechnology Industries

The present Industrial Development Agency (IDA) site in Belview comprises 74 acres of land, of which 43 acres are currently available for industrial development. Servier Pharmaceuticals, a French company, has already taken 15 acres of land for their proposed plant.

The IDA has dedicated their available lands at Belview for pharmaceutical/ biotechnology companies only. The proximity of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant at Gorteens, the ready availability of water, land, energy, as well as good infrastructural links, are the key elements which make these lands ideal for industry. The “Strategic Site Initiative” policy pursued by the IDA would allow for high value manufacturing on this site.

However, the IDA has identified some serious bottlenecks in attracting industry to the Belview area which need to be addressed. The inadequate water supply is being currently addressed; high volumes of water (1000 gallons a day) are usually required by pharmaceutical plants to operate at full capacity. The lack of a gas connection is also seen as a major drawback, and solutions to this are being explored. Poor access is also seen as a potential drawback. Although the N25 has made Belview more accessible, there is little connectivity throughout the area, with road access primarily along rural back roads. It is believed that the expansion of Belview Port should drive the demand for infrastructure. In this regard, this LAP has proposed a number of additional routes for the plan area (See [Section 2.1 Effective Transport and Movement](#)).

2.10.9 Future Economic Strategy

As regards the future economic strategy of the plan area, its proximity to the “Gateway” of Waterford City is a primary consideration. Waterford City possesses a varied economic base, ranging from manufacturing to regional financial industries which could be beneficial to the Ferrybank-Belview area in the longer term. This LAP aims to facilitate the diversification of the area’s industrial base into one which is more reflective of employment today; particularly service and knowledge based industries, as well as more specialised industries such as pharmaceuticals. This LAP also recognises that there is a need to capitalise on the significance of Belview Port as a critical piece of infrastructure, rivaling the more traditional ports of Dublin and Cork.

Business, Industry and Technology Parks

It is clear that the area needs to broaden its industrial profile in order to face the economic challenges of the future. In this regard, key sites have been identified for industrial, business/enterprise and mixed use purposes. Accordingly, these areas have been zoned BITP: Business, Industry and Technology Parks.

Pharmaceutical/Industry and Technology Parks

In designating lands for pharmaceutical/biotechnology industries, the IDA is addressing the issue of the area's over-reliance on traditional industries. The IDA recognise the growing importance of the pharmaceutical industry, and in particular of the "Life sciences" field, to the regional economy of the Southeast. Over the past couple of years, a number of pharmaceutical/biotechnology companies have set up operations in the region, including Bausch and Lomb, Genzyme, Ivax Pharmaceuticals (Waterford), Glaxo SmithKline (Dungarvan), Merck Sharpe & Dohme (Clonmel and a new factory opening in Carlow).

The IDA has identified these relatively clean companies as providing high value jobs to the local economy, and their policy is to actively promote the Ferrybank-Belview area to these companies. Accordingly, the IDA lands at Belview have been zoned PIT: Pharmaceutical/Industry and Technology Parks.

Commercial and Mixed Use

This LAP seeks to address the lack of offices and professional services in the area, with the designation of a C2: Commercial and Mixed Use zones. The C2 Zone at Newrath occupies a strategic location entering Waterford from the M9. A business park is promoted as part of this mixed use zone. A second C2 zone is proposed at Christendom. This will provide a new urban quarter which will address the River Suir, and will also accommodate office and service uses.

This LAP promotes the development of an integrated 'Truck Rest Stop' on lands zoned C3: Commercial at the junction of the existing N25 and N29 Port Access Road, which could facilitate a range of uses.

Special Industrial Amenity

It is considered that the land located to the north of the IDA site at Belview offers significant industrial potential. These lands border the N29 Port Access Road and are intersected by the disused railway line (Waterford to New Ross line). It is an objective of this plan to keep this railway line free from development so as to facilitate the long term development of either a commuter rail service or local tram service in the future. Therefore, the possible re-opening of this line would further enhance the potential of these lands. It is also an objective of this plan to create a compact development form along the section of the N29 bordering these lands. This would raise the industrial and commercial profile of the area, making it an attractive location for industrial and commercial units. Accordingly, this LAP has zoned these lands SIA: Special Industrial Amenity.

Waste Management, Industry, Logistics and Transport Related Uses

Given the expansion of Belview Port in recent years and the anticipated future expansion of port facilities, lands in this vicinity have been zoned WILT: Waste Management, Industry, Logistics and Transport Related Uses. There have been a number of expressions of interest in locating Bio-ethanol plants in the vicinity of the Port, as well as for storage areas for the importation/exportation of commercial vehicles. Tank farms may also be considered for the area at some point in the future. Therefore, this zoning should allow for the future growth of the port facilities and spin-off industries in the surrounding area.

2.10.10 Employment, Enterprise and Economic Development Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- EP1** Facilitate and encourage economic development in the Ferrybank-Belview area in tandem with the “Regional Gateway” status of Waterford City, thereby enabling the area to act as an economic driver of the southeast.
- EP2** Ensure that there are sufficient lands zoned for business and industry in the area.
- EP3** Promote the IDA lands at Belview as a centre for the pharmaceutical/biotechnology industry.
- EP4** Promote the expansion of portal activities at Belview Port.
- EP5** Encourage small to medium scale office developments in the C2: Commercial and Mixed Use Zones in Christendom and Newrath.
- EP6** Encourage the relocation of traditional meat industries adjoining Christendom to other locations within the area, thereby freeing up these lands for residential and mixed-use development.
- EP7** Continue to support investment in infrastructure thereby making the area more attractive for investment and employment.
- EP8** Work together with Waterford City Council and Waterford County Council on common economic issues to make both the Ferrybank-Belview area and Waterford City more attractive place to live and work.
- EP9** Promote synergy between Waterford Institute of Technology (W.I.T) and industry/enterprise in the area. The W.I.T contains a large research & development facility with potential for further expansion.
- EP10** Encourage appropriate screening of future site developments in the plan area, where appropriate.
- EP11** Protect the existing residential amenity enjoyed by persons living in the vicinity of Belview Port by creating indicative buffer zones around existing residences. These zones are identified as Belview Residential Amenity (BRA) on [Map 9, Zoning](#).
- EP12** Accommodate the expansion of port related development and specialised industries in the area surrounding Belview Port. In the case of residential areas, this expansion will only be supported where the existing residences are acquired by industries / prospective industrial developers.
- EP13** Ensure that adequate wastewater capacity is provided for present and future industry in the area.
- EP14** Support the delivery of a public water supply to the area.

2.10.11 Employment, Enterprise and Economic Development Objectives (Refer also to [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

It is the objective of the Council to:

- E1** Promote the development of an integrated 'Truck Rest Stop' on lands zoned C3 at the junction of the existing N25 and Belview Road which could facilitate the following range of uses, service station, truck parking facilities, small scale convenience shop, restaurant and accommodation.
- E2** Promote a compact development form with a relatively uniform building line (uniform set-back from the public road) along the N29 Port Access Road. Higher order functions, including offices and commercial services will be encouraged along this route.
- E3** Explore the feasibility of a rail freight depot and associated container handling equipment at Belview Port which would allow the transportation of goods in a cheaper, cleaner and more sustainable manner. (No Map Reference).

2.11 Engineering, Infrastructure and Utilities

2.11.1 Analysis – Water Supply

There is presently no spare potable water capacity in the plan area. However, the Council is currently working on a scheme which will see the development of additional supplies. It is likely to be approximately two years before there is full capacity for the area. When full capacity is achieved, the network will serve a Population Equivalent (PE) of 20,000 -30,000, and a further 2,000-3,000 persons at Slieverue. Some 2 million gallons of water will be dispensed on a daily basis in order to meet both residential and industrial demand.

2.11.2 Analysis - Wastewater Services

The new Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) being provided by Waterford City Council (WCC) at Gorteens will have a PE of 190,600, with two thirds of that capacity to be reserved for industry and commercial. There will be a substantial PE for the IDA site at Belview, with a capacity of 65,000 PE set aside.

The new WWTP at Gorteens is capable of serving most of the zoned land in the plan area. It has been identified through the consultation exercise that the Newrath area is not capable of being served by the new WWTP at present. Given the level of development in the area and the additional zoning proposed in Newrath, it will be an objective of the Council to provide for the servicing of the Newrath area for the disposal of foul waste water.

2.11.3 Analysis – Surface Water Quality, Drainage Systems and Flood Control

Drainage systems in the area currently serve the existing residential neighbourhoods. The gradients fall naturally towards the River Suir in these residential areas, so there are no major problems with drainage.

There are no flooding problems in the area except in the Newrath area adjacent to the River Suir, which suffers from tidal flooding and occasionally leads to flooding on the N9. This road will eventually become a local access road when the new Waterford City N25 by-pass is opened. This LAP seeks to protect all stream and river corridors from development, with opportunities for storm water attenuation ponds in the proposed areas of open space, so as to ensure the water quality of rivers and streams is maintained.

SUDS can be thought of as a move away from the conventional practice of piping all surface water directly to the nearest watercourse or river. Using SUDS techniques, water is either infiltrated or conveyed more slowly to watercourses via ponds, filter drains or other installations. This mimics natural catchment behaviour more closely where rainfall either infiltrates through the soil or runs off slowly over the ground surface to the nearest ditch or watercourse. SUDS also attempt to mimic the natural situation whereby pollutants are filtered through soils or broken down by bacteria.

Stormwater retention facilities, such as attenuation ponds, store water which is in excess of the capacity available in downstream channels until storm flows have abated. The provision of such facilities enables an economical and environmental approach to stormwater control. The provision of such ponds provides enormous environmental benefits in terms of protecting the

SAC status of the River Suir by filtering potential pollutants that may be included in water runoff.

2.11.4 Analysis – Energy

Industrial

Currently there is sufficient capacity in the network system to cater for the various industries in the area. There is a number of existing high voltage customers in the Belview Port area who are sufficiently serviced. There are plans to accommodate future industrial customers in the area. Presently a 38kV line services the area however, ESB have planning permission for a 110 kV station at Kilmurry which could in the future service the Belview area.

Developments at the Ard-Ri hotel site and the North Docks area will require energy connections and ESB are currently looking at either developing new substations or upgrading existing sub stations. The existing 110kV sub station at Misery Hill serves the surrounding area. There is a possibility that a second sub station will be required at either the Ard-Ri hotel or the North Docks.

Residential

There will be enough capacity in the ESB network for future residential development in the area. ESB are aware of the development pressures in the Ferrybank-Belview area and are able to accommodate future demand. Presently ESB is in the process of setting up a supply for the Ferrybank-Abbeylands Shopping Centre, while upgrading substations in both Belview and Misery Hill. The area is served by 10kV, 20 kV and 38 kV lines.

2.11.5 Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ)

This LAP encourages the development of a Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ) in the C2: Commercial and Mixed Use Zone at Christendom. This SEZ would be based on the lines of the Dundalk SEZ and would include a number of stakeholders such as Sustainable Energy Ireland, Kilkenny County Council, WIT, ESB, IDA etc.

The Dundalk project titled 'Dundalk 2020' initially focuses on developing a four square kilometer sustainable energy zone in the town. The project goal is to demonstrate how all sectors can work together to significantly reduce their impact on the environment. Specific targets are to be achieved by 2010, including the commitment to supply 20% of heat and electricity from renewable sources and improving energy efficiency in designated buildings by 40%. The Dundalk SEZ provides an important template for the Ferrybank-Belview area in terms of sustainable energy practices. Many features of this SEZ could be adopted in the plan area, and include:

- Renewable energy street lighting
- Biomass (wood chip) fired district heating scheme
- Domestic electricity meters to help householders control electricity usage
- Refurbishment of buildings to a high standard of energy efficiency
- Training programmes with Sustainable Energy Ireland

2.11.6 Analysis – Telecommunications

Internet Connections

One of the central policies of the National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP) is the development of infrastructure in Ireland to allow us to compete in the global arena. It is acknowledged that there are major deficiencies in our telecommunications network, which have affected both productivity and competitiveness. Access to high speed broadband is seen as crucial for all areas of business. Investments under Economic Infrastructure Priority of the NDP will advance the rollout of broadband across rural areas. There will also be a continued roll out of Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs).

The cost of connection between Waterford City and Dublin is of concern as it affects a number of international trading companies who are located in the area. The lack of competition in backbone capacity is also affecting the cost base of a number of businesses and industries in the area. The SERPANT (Southeast Broadband Project) launched by the South East Regional Authority seeks to address the issue of broadband by providing a high speed, open access network through the MANs network, Waterford City has already been included in Phase 1 of the rollout.

2.11.7 Analysis – Gas

Bord Gais presently provide gas to residential homes and businesses in the Abbeylands, Christendom, Rathculliheen, Belmont and Rockshire areas. According to Bord Gais, the gas network could be expanded to other areas if the demand for gas existed. There is no gas available in Belview for industrial purposes at present. It is an objective of the Council to extend the gas supply to Belview.

2.11.8 Analysis – Infrastructure Corridor

Although infrastructure corridors are rare in Ireland, they are highly desirable. Infrastructure corridors provide the infrastructure for services such as water, sewerage, telecoms, electricity and gas. The corridor is usually provided underground within a designated corridor and usually have their own service access roads, thereby resulting in fewer disruptions to traffic if maintenance or service is required.

Possible locations for infrastructure corridors include a corridor running along the railway line in an east-west direction linking Belview Port in the east and the new development at Christendom in the west. The long term proposal to create a link road (Ferrybank Relief Road) north of Aldi could also create an opportunity for the insertion of a corridor.

If infrastructural corridors are developed there is potential to create cycle-ways, linear parks, wildlife parks or simply walkways along these service roads. Sufficient width must be provided usually 17-19 metres for a wayleave.

2.11.9 Analysis – Waste Management, Recycling and Re-use

A Joint Waste Management Plan has been prepared by the councils of County Carlow, County Kilkenny, Waterford City, County Wexford and South Tipperary under the Waste Management Act (1996), which set out the legislative framework to develop waste management policies. The Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region 2006 sets out the policies and objectives for waste management over the period 2006-2011. The core objective of the

document is that waste must be prevented, minimised, re-used, recycled, recovered and disposed of safely with regard to public health and environmental protection.

Some of the policies include the diversion of 50% of overall household waste away from landfill, the recycling of 35% of municipal waste, the recycling of 85% of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste by 2013, an 80% reduction in methane emissions from landfill and the development of waste recovery facilities as an alternative to landfill.

There is an existing collection point at the council's area office in Newrath which accepts paper and plastic. There are current plans to provide a second civic amenity site at Grannagh which will provide householders in the catchment area with an effective means of disposal of their waste. In terms of bring banks; the Council would like to ensure that there is at least one bring bank location per 1,000 head of population. Under the Joint Waste Management Plan, a three bin collection system will be mandatory from 2008 in urban areas with a population greater than 1,000 persons for household, industrial and commercial waste. The third collection bin will be used to collect bio-waste.

2.11.10 Analysis – Fire Service

The area is serviced by the full time fire service based in Waterford City.

2.11.11 Engineering, Infrastructure and Utilities Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

ENP1 Water Supply

- ENP1.1 Ensure that the area has an adequate water supply for domestic, commercial and industrial use
- ENP1.2 Promote the conservation of water where possible through a series of measures such as reducing water leakage rates and conservation education
- ENP1.3 Ensure that water is clean and safe to drink and complies with the European Union Water Directive
- ENP1.4 Identify potential additional sources of potable water to service the needs of the local area. Possible new sources include surface water abstraction from rivers in the area and new groundwater sources.
- ENP1.5 Ensure the provision of a public water supply to the Belview area

ENP2 Wastewater Services

- ENP2.1 Make provision for a new Wastewater Treatment Plant to service the Newrath area of the plan.
- ENP2.2 Ensure that further development is to be restricted until the new wastewater treatment plant comes online and additional septic tank use is to be curtailed.

ENP2.3 Ensure that provision of efficient drainage systems with separate foul and surface water networks in all new developments.

ENP2.4 Ensure that the necessary gravity and pumping stations are provided to service all zoned lands

ENP3 Surface Water Quality, Drainage Systems and Flood Control

ENP3.1 Ensure that the water quality of the rivers Pollanassa and Blackwater are maintained to a high level as part of their power and duty to a water services and pollution control authority.

ENP3.2 Prevent the alteration of the natural drainage systems in the area and when development occurs ensure mitigation measures to minimise the risk of flooding and impacts on water quality (including run-off, erosion and sedimentation).

ENP3.3 Preserve and protect the natural surface water storage sites such as wetlands, these help to regulate stream flows, recharge groundwater and screen pollutants.

ENP3.4 Promote public awareness on how to maintain water quality and reduce waste.

ENP3.5 Prohibit the landfilling of wetlands. Landfilling should only be allowed in case of overriding need.

ENP3.6 Promote stormwater retention facilities for new developments and existing catchment areas, particularly where developments are proposed in proximity to an existing open water course or stream in the plan area.

ENP4 Energy

ENP4.1 Liaise with energy service providers so as to ensure that future energy requirements for the area are planned in a coordinated manner.

ENP4.2 Support ESB in upgrading their lines and allowing for further kV lines if required.

ENP4.3 Support the development of a sub station at Kilmurry which will result in increased capacity for the Belview region.

ENP5 Sustainable Energy Zone

ENP5.1 Encourage the incorporation of sustainable design principles and energy efficiency into the building process.

ENP5.2 Promote the development of an eco friendly district heating system as part of the Christendom SEZ.

ENP5.3 Support the introduction of specific targets for the SEZ over the lifetime of this LAP.

ENP6 Telecommunications

- ENP6.1 Support the provision of high speed broadband access to enable industry and business to compete in a global environment.
- ENP6.2 Encourage the development of the telecommunications sector, including broadband and the creation of an eBusiness hub (clustering of electronic businesses) in the plan area, particularly at Belview.
- ENP6.3 Entice the location of the high value ICT industries (Information, Communications, and Technology) to the area. Their presence would lead to the delivery of a high quality telecommunications system to the area.
- ENP6.4 Ensure that any future telecommunications development will be sufficiently integrated, screened and/or landscaped as to minimise the impact of development on the environment.

ENP7 Gas

- ENP7.1 Facilitate and support the extension of the gas network to the Belview area.

ENP8 Public Utilities

- ENP8.1 Ensure that all new developments are serviced with adequate public lighting and other public utilities.
- ENP8.2 Negotiate with service utility providers on any major projects coming on stream especially on the location of pylons, antennae or lines.
- ENP8.3 Encourage the main utility players to work together in a coordinated approach to avoid disruption and explore joint locations of facilities and services where feasible.
- ENP8.4 Encourage the screening through landscaping of utility substations as to minimise the visual effects that this development may have on the landscape, or alternatively encourage suitable integration through design.
- ENP8.5 Promote the siting of public utilities such as internet access points throughout the plan area.

ENP9 Infrastructure Corridor

- ENP9.1 Support the reservation of lands for the development of infrastructural corridors in the future. A way-leave of approximately 17-19 metres should be considered.
- ENP9.2 Work with the various service providers to examine the potential development of an infrastructural corridor to serve the proposed industrial and business related lands in the Ferrybank-Belview area.

ENP10 Waste Management, Recycling and Re-use

- ENP10.1 Support the provision of increased recycling facilities in the area.

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- ENP10.2 Implement the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region 2006-2011.
 - ENP10.3 Promote the development of alternative waste facilities which involves the shift towards preventative and waste minimisation measures including recycling and reuse and energy recovery.
 - ENP10.4 Promote the recycling of construction and demolition waste reusing the aggregates and other materials in future construction projects.
 - ENP10.5 Consider energy recovery especially methane which is a renewable and environmentally friendly fuel source available from large sewerage treatment centres.

ENP11 Fire

- ENP13.1 Ensure that the existing fire service is adequate for the needs of a growing population and review the situation when/if required.

2.11.12 Engineering, Infrastructure and Utilities Objectives (Refer also to [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

It is the objective of the Council to:

- EN1** Upgrade the Mooncion Regional Water Supply Scheme sourced from Mullinavat thereby increasing the water supply to the area. (No Map Reference).
- EN2** Acquire further capacity at the Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant at Gorteens to cater for future population growth in the area.
- EN3** Make provision for a new waste water facility to service the Newrath area of the Plan.
- EN4** Maintain the natural wetland characteristics of lands at the following locations which are currently free from development and act as natural stormwater retention areas:
 - Grannyferry
 - Newrath
 - Drumdowney
- EN5** Incorporate stormwater retention facilities in the following areas of open space, as identified on [Map 8, Development Objectives](#) (See also Objective NE5).
 - Ratchculliheen
 - Newtown
 - Christendom
 - Rockshire
 - Belmont
 - Ballyrobin
- EN6** Require, where possible, the relocation of overhead cables underground in urban areas, specifically at the proposed urban village at Ferrybank-Abbeylands.
- EN7** Provide Bring Banks at all proposed Neighbourhood Centres and at a location in the proposed urban village of Ferrybank-Abbeylands.

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- EN8** Establish a Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ) for undeveloped lands identified at Christendom and Newtown, including lands proposed for redevelopment. All future development in these areas will be required to ensure the supply of 20% heat and electricity from renewable sources over the period of the plan.
- EN9** Promote the development of an eco friendly district heating system as part of the Christendom SEZ. (No Map Reference).

2.12 Implementation and Finance

2.12.1 Introduction

The responsibility for the implementation of policies and objectives contained within this LAP will be dependent on a number of possible sources, including EU programmes and grants, the National Government, the County Council and the Private Sector. The Council will require developers to incorporate the objectives of this plan into their development proposals. Other objectives, particularly key infrastructural elements will require government funding and support. Where appropriate, the Council will seek financing from specified sources, both the public and private sector, as well as from EU programmes and grants.

The implementation of a plan may be constrained by a number of elements, namely, the economic climate, political support, allocated local authority funding, and the availability of funding from other sources. Therefore, no funding of projects is guaranteed in advance nor is the implementation of all objectives contained within the plan. The Council will endeavour to implement the LAP to the fullest extent possible.

2.12.2 Development Contributions

The Council, taking into consideration the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of infrastructure, will require financial contributions by way of conditions attached to planning permissions. The amount of financial charge will be in accordance with the relevant development contribution scheme. Levies for public infrastructure and facilities can relate to:

- The acquisition of land.
- The provision of open spaces, recreational and community facilities and amenities and landscaping works.
- The provision of roads, car parks, car parking places, sewers, waste water and water treatment facilities, drains and watermains.
- The provision of bus corridors and lanes, bus interchange facilities (including car parks for those facilities), infrastructure to facilitate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities, and traffic calming measures.
- The refurbishment, upgrading, enlargement or replacement of roads, car parks, car parking places, sewers, waste water and water treatment facilities, drains or watermains.
- Any matters ancillary to the above.

2.12.3 Bonds

To ensure that development undertaken by private developers is satisfactorily completed the Council will impose, as a condition, of the planning permission, that a security bond or other acceptable security be lodged with them. This bond is to ensure that all roads, footpaths, open spaces, lighting and other services within a development are completed to an acceptable standard. The amount of the security bond will be based upon the estimated cost of the development works and this bond shall remain in place until all prescribed works are satisfactorily completed or until the development is taken in charge by the Council. If it is proposed that the estate or development is taken in charge by the Council, it shall be necessary to have the ownership of all areas of public open space, roadways, and services within the development legally transferred and registered to the relevant local authority.

2.12.4 Public Private Partnerships

A Public Private Partnership (PPP) involves a partnership agreement between the public and private sector for the delivery of specific projects relating to public services and infrastructure. Such an approach can ensure a commitment to funding due to interlinked public and private assistance, and aims at ensuring the most economically efficient manner of development. Education, local services, health, housing, public transport, roads, solid waste, water/waste water and other public services can benefit from the approach of a PPP. The Council will consider entering PPP arrangements with the private sector if it can deliver social or physical infrastructure for the area.

2.12.5 Additional Funding Sources

- RAPID Programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) – comes under the remit of the National Development Plan 2007-2013.
- NeighbourWood Scheme – funded by the National Development Plan 2007-2013 through the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
- Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism.
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- The Combat Poverty Agency
- Failte Ireland
- EU Structural Funds

Many other programmes alongside those listed above may be of value with regard to the implementation and finance of this LAP. It is intended that various agencies, including voluntary groups, professional institutions, public and private bodies, and other organisations will be encouraged to participate whenever possible, in the implementation of the policies and objectives of this plan.

2.12.6 Implementation Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- IP1** Encourage meaningful participation and community involvement in the implementation of policies and objectives.
- IP2** Engage with government departments, state and semi-state companies, the County Development Board, private developers (through development management and public-private partnerships), and community and voluntary groups, where appropriate, to explore opportunities for the plan's implementation.

2.12.7 Implementation Objectives (Refer also to [Map 8, Development Objectives](#)).

It is the objective of the Council to:

- I1** Explore the merits of preparing a schedule for the implementation of Development Objectives, which will identify each objective, an implementation strategy, primary responsibility (i.e., local authority department, private developers, etc.) and proposed timeline. (No Map Reference).