



GOWRAN DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLAN

2010 – 2016



**MAY 2010
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL**



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Legal Basis

A Local Area Plan was first produced for Gowran in 2003. The legal basis for the review of this plan is provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (Sections 18 and 19). The Act provides for the preparation of Local Area Plans for any part of the functional area of a planning authority. A Local Area Plan must be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan and must be reviewed at least six years from the making of the previous Local Area Plan.

It must contain a written statement and maps indicating the objectives in such detail as may be determined by the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies including detail on community facilities and amenities and on standards of design of developments and structures.

In the text of this plan the plan itself may be referred to as “the Plan” or “this Plan”. In this Plan “the Council” or “the Planning Authority” shall mean Kilkenny County Council.

The County Development Plan sets out the Council’s policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County from 2008 to 2014. This LAP focuses on those policies and objectives of specific relevance to Gowran. This LAP should be read in conjunction with the current Kilkenny County Development Plan.

This Local Area Plan will remain in statute for a period of six years from the date of its adoption. The County Development Plan was adopted in 2008 and will be reviewed in 2014. This LAP will remain in force, notwithstanding any review of the County Development Plan. However, where any provision of this LAP conflicts with the Development Plan as reviewed, the provision of the LAP shall cease to have any effect. The Planning Authority may amend or revoke a Local Area Plan at any time.

1.2 Previous Plans and Studies

The previous Local Area Plan for Gowran was published in 2003. Prior to that, a village study was prepared for Gowran by the Council in 1988. Following on from the 1988 study, a Gowran Community Village renewal plan was prepared by Gowran Community Association as part of the Urban and Village Renewal programme (1996 to 2001).

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

1.3 Context

Gowran is a town with a recorded population of 487 persons in 2006¹. It is located approximately 8 miles east of Kilkenny City. Gowran lies at the intersection of two main routes, the N9 National Primary Route and the R702 Regional Route which links Kilkenny and Goresbridge/Graiguenamanagh. The M9 motorway (Carlow-Knocktopher section) runs to the north of the town (See Figure 1.1, Context). The entire M9 is scheduled for opening by the end of 2010.

No significant landscape sensitivity is recorded for Gowran in the County Landscape Appraisal which is contained in the County Development Plan 2008-2014 (CDP), either within or outside of the main settlement. Gowran is located on the boundary of the B1 - Castlecomer Transition (transition) and F3 - The Kilkenny Basin (lowland) areas. Policies and objectives for these zones are set out in 8.3.3.2 Lowland Areas and 8.3.3.4 Transitional Areas in the CDP.

A tributary of the River Barrow travels in a west – east axis south of the town, known as the Gowran River.



Figure 1.1: Context

¹ Central Statistics Office, 2006, Volume 1, Table 5, Population of Towns ordered by County and size, 2002 and 2006.

1.4 Historical Development

1.4.1 Gowran: Pre – 1700

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

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

In 1608 King James 1st made Gowran a parliamentary borough and in 1613 the first two members of Parliament were elected and Gowran returned members to the Irish Parliament until the time of the Union. In the year 1578 Edmund Downey had a grant of 'the custody, mastership and oversight of the Magdalen of Leighlin and Ballygowran for relief of the poor, leprous people dwelling in those places'. The Magdalen or leper hospital at Ballygowran was situated about 300 yards east of the old parish church, just outside the town wall. About 1840, the remains of the chapel were removed and trees planted on the site. The site is now marked on Ordnance Survey sheets. The trees have now been removed also but the stumps of those cut down still remain. From its close proximity to the Magdalen chapel and hospital the east gate of the town, formerly situated here, was called the 'Magdalen Gate'.

1.4.2 Gowran: Post – 1700

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

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

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

1.5 Urban Structure

Gowran is a well maintained and presented town. It is best known for St. Mary's church which is a fine example of its period and adds to the corpus of medieval County Kilkenny. The church is at the heart of the town. For a long time it was hidden away but improvements have brought it back into focus and made it a central feature of the town. This gives the town a dual character: the church and the street.

The town is developed in a general linear fashion with the street winding through the town. At first glance the differences in character along its length could be missed. This long street gives a chance for the streetscape to unfold and develop as the visitor travels along.

There are four main areas of interest:

1. Former alms house/court house and surrounding buildings at the east end of the town,
2. Fair Green which is in fact a small square,
3. Junction of the Main street with the Kilkenny road
4. West end of the town with a row of two storey houses on the north side of the street.



1. The east end of the town (Upper Main Street) has a concentration of gentlemen's residences, which are two storey, dating from the early 19th century.

The survival of fanlights and some bright painting is enough to show the quality of the buildings, which includes the former Court house.



2. The public space known as the Fair Green is at the centre of the town, and is bounded by buildings on three sides and by the Main Street on the south side. The buildings around the green include two-storied houses on the east and north, and a two storey premises (Harding Fireplaces) and Byrne's pub on the west. The Steeples housing estate now forms the north-western edge to the Fair Green.

The Fair Green is an important visual element within the town. It functions mainly as a car park with a subsidiary function as an open space.



3. The junction of Main Street with the Kilkenny road is defined by Loughlin's public house to the west and a curved façade on the east side of the street.



4. The west end of Lower Main Street shows an example of abrupt visual impact which has largely disappeared from the Irish landscape. This is clear cut division between town and country. Coming round the bend on the Waterford Road (N9) one moment you are in the country and the next a row of houses appears on the north side of the road. This includes the house with the blank arches on the ground floor.

1.6 County Settlement Hierarchy

Section 3.3 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 sets out the six levels in the County settlement hierarchy. Gowran is classified in the “Smaller Town and Villages” category, which is below the level of District towns such as Thomastown and Castlecomer, see Figure 1.4 below.

The policies for the smaller towns and villages in the county concentrate on strengthening their service centre role, ensuring that new development fits well with the town and promoting development on infill and backland sites.

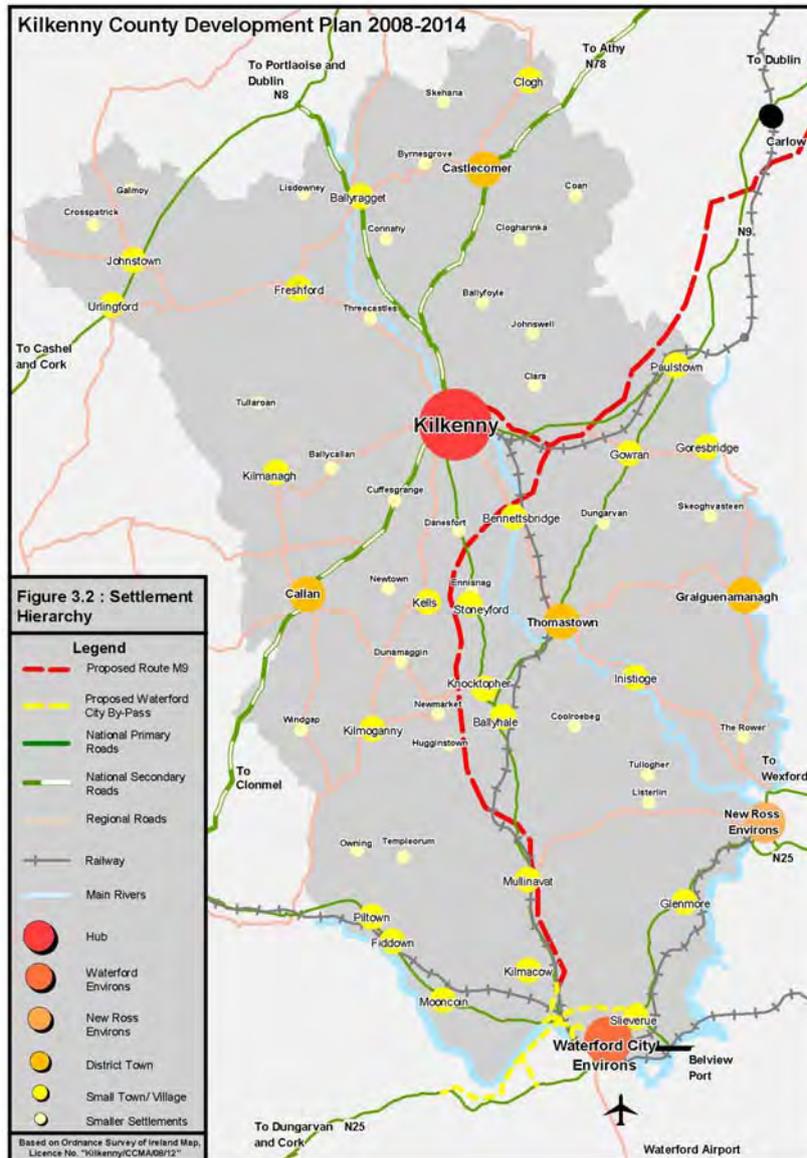


Figure 1.4: County Settlement Hierarchy from County Development Plan 2008-2014

1.7 Population

Gowran had a population of 487 persons recorded at the 2006 Census. The trends in population from 1969 to present are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Population in Gowran between 1961 and 2008

Year	Population
1961	365
1966	353
1971	405
1979	512
1981	510
1986	517
1991	477
1996	476
2002	454
2006	487
2010 (estimate)	804

An estimate of the current (2010) population has been obtained from a combination of sources. Data used to submit the Annual Housing Land Availability Returns to the Department of the Environment includes detail on the number of completions in Gowran per year, by June 31st of that year. For the purposes of this estimate, it was assumed that units completed after June 2005 were not occupied by the 23rd April 2006 (Census night) and therefore were not included in the figures for 2006 population. Conversely, it was assumed that units completed in 2005 were occupied by 23rd April 2006 (Census night) and therefore included in the figures for 2006 population.

The total number of houses completed in Gowran since June 2005 is 136, and factoring in for vacancies, and applying an average household size of 2.88, it is estimated that the additional population is 317. Therefore it is estimated that the current population stands at approximately 804 (487 + 317).

1.8 Public Consultation

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

A public consultation meeting was held on the 11th of November, 2009 in the Gowran Community Hall. This meeting was held in order to obtain local knowledge to assist in compiling a profile of the area, and to learn the views of the participants, which would be an input into the preparation of the Local Area plans. The entire group was divided into six smaller groups, to discuss the issues with the aid of a facilitator.

The next step in the public consultation process was the preparation of a summary document, which summarised the issues raised at the meeting. This also explained the process, and encouraged the public to write submissions on any issue. Leaflets were posted or emailed to all attendees of the meeting. This leaflet is included in Appendix 1.

2 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

The information in this LAP is set out under a total of eight headings. The existing situation based on survey, research work and local information is discussed and the issues raised in the public consultation are outlined. These are then used to formulate policies and objectives under each heading.

2.1 Housing and Population

A number of housing schemes have been developed in Gowran since the last plan (2003), namely Abbeygrove, Bradóg Way, Ogenty, The Paddocks and The Steeples. To date, the total number of units completed in these estates is 138. The level of population growth since the last plan has been significant and as outlined in Section 1.7 Population, the total population of the town is now estimated at 804 people. It must be noted also that permission exists in the town for a total of 42 units, which are yet to be completed² and a number of units, mainly in new developments, remain vacant.

2.1.1 Context and Trends

The development boundary for Gowran was designated in 2003 taking into consideration the following factors:

- The need to provide a compact and accessible village and to reduce its continuous outward spread, in order to promote the efficient use of land and of energy, to reduce pressure for one-off housing on rural lands, to minimise unnecessary transport demand, encourage walking and cycling and to enhance the existing built environment, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development
- The need to offer locational choice and housing mix
- The Architectural Conservation Area
- The existing built environment and road structure
- Potential population growth and demand for housing
- Proximity to existing and potential community and commercial facilities
- The existing level of provision of infrastructure
- Existing permitted / committed development

From the 2003 Plan, approximately 7 hectares of residential zoned land remains undeveloped. In addition a total of 22 hectares of land were zoned for Integrated Tourism/Leisure in Gowran Demesne, which provided for limited residential accommodation linked to integrated tourism and leisure facilities. None of this land has been developed.

The *Draft South Eastern Regional Planning Guidelines* were published in December 2009 and these set out the population projections for the region as a whole, which local authorities must have regard to. The population projections for the region were broken down into an allocation for each constituent county. This allocation for County Kilkenny must be divided amongst all the settlements. Such a distribution results in a limited potential for growth, particularly for the smaller settlements in the settlement hierarchy such as Gowran.

² Of these 42 units, 12 are under construction and 30 not begun as of April 2010

To estimate the possible population growth for Gowran for the six year period of this plan, the approach adopted was to apply a natural growth rate, which will allow for the natural increase in population. Natural increase is the number of births minus the number of deaths, not taking account of migration.

The rate of natural increase of the population in Ireland was 9.8 per 1000 in 2007³, or 0.98%. This could be rounded up to 1% per year, and for a six year period therefore, would result in a 6% population growth, which could be termed natural growth.

Assuming an existing level of population at 804 people in 2010, the natural growth approach results in a total estimated population growth of approximately **50** people over the plan period to 2016. To translate this into land requirements, an average density for housing units must be assumed.

2.1.2 Development Strategy

According to the Government Guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009), densities within centrally located sites in towns and villages should be in the order of 30-40+ dwellings per hectare. On edge of centre sites, densities to a range of 20-35 dwellings per hectare are recommended. In controlled circumstances to offer an effective alternative to the provision of single houses in surrounding unserviced rural areas, it could be appropriate to consider densities of less than 15-20 dwellings per hectare.

Applying a household occupancy rate of 2.88⁴, a total population of 50 people translates into a housing requirement of 17 units. As Gowran is mainly a rural town and having regard to the existing pattern of development, an average density of 10 per acre is assumed. Applying an average density of 24 units per hectare (which is 10 per acre) this results in a land requirement of 0.7 hectares.

To comply with the Government Guidelines on Development Plans⁵, this land requirement has been increased by 50%, which equates to approximately one hectare. A one hectare site in Gowran, at the corner of Rockfield Road and the Kilkenny Road is subject to an extant permission, P06/1387, for 14 detached units, which expires in November 2011. Considering the level of growth since the last plan, the number of extant permissions and the lack of capacity in the water infrastructure (as detailed in Section 2.2), this site has been zoned for Phase 1 Residential Development (See Map 1: Zoning). The remainder of the greenfield residential land has been zoned for Phase 2 Residential Development.

The layout as permitted under 06/1387 has a density of 14 per hectare, or 6 per acre. This site could provide an alternative to one off housing on the fringes of the town, and in this regard, either an alternative layout, or an application for serviced sites at this location would be welcomed.

It must be noted that this site zoned for Phase 1 residential zoning is not the only area with potential for growth. A General Objective will be applied to the existing built-up area of the town. This General Objective zoning includes some smaller undeveloped sites and a large amount of backland associated with existing buildings. Infill development will be encouraged in these backland sites, where appropriate. In some cases site assembly may be required. Infill development will provide for some

³ Measuring Ireland's Progress 2008, CSO

⁴ Census 2006, Volume 3 (CSO), Table 1, Average number of persons per private household for County Kilkenny

⁵ Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG 2007

locational choice. Taken in conjunction with the level of extant permissions and unfinished/unoccupied housing, it is considered acceptable in these circumstances that only one site is identified for Phase 1 development.

Phase 2 lands will not be released during the lifetime of this plan. However, the situation will be monitored on an ongoing basis. This development strategy for Gowran will provide for consolidation of development around the existing village settlement which will support appropriate service expansion.

Policies & Objectives (Chapters 4 & 10 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also apply):

Policy HP1 To protect the residential amenity of existing dwellings.

Policy HP2 To ensure that infill development is contextually compatible

Policy HP3 To encourage the building of new infill development where vacant plots exist.

Policy HP4 To ensure the maintenance and protection of housing within the village centre, and to encourage continued residential use of upper floors.

Policy HP5 To ensure that no one proposal for residential development will increase the housing stock of the town by more than 10%. (The housing stock of the town is approximately 280 in 2010).

2.1.3 Integration of Developments

In assessing any new development in Gowran, the Council may have regard to the development potential of adjoining land, and will assess any application with a view to providing for the development of these lands in an integrated manner. This applies to any land parcel, and relates to all aspects of development, including open space provision, access arrangements and pedestrian/cycle links and car parking.

For residential developments the distinction between individual schemes should be maintained by the use of design and detailing, to give each its own distinct identity where appropriate.

Policy HP6 To assess any new development having regard to the development potential of adjoining land

Policy HP7 To ensure the integration of adjoining development land parcels where appropriate, in relation to vehicular access, pedestrian and cycleway links, public open space provision and scheme layout

Objective (Long Term):

Obj. HP8 To ensure an access can be provided through the Phase 2 lands to the Castle Ellis Road/Chapel Street from the Kilkenny Road in any development on these lands or lands adjoining.

2.2 Infrastructure

For development to proceed within the town, it will be necessary for development proposals to address the effects imposed on existing water services (water supply, foul drainage and storm drainage systems). During the period of the last plan, a new wastewater treatment plant was provided in Gowran.

2.2.1 Water Services

2.2.1.1 Wastewater System

Gowran is served by a public wastewater collection system and associated treatment plant that provides full secondary treatment with nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) reduction, produces treated effluent to the standards set out in the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations, and finally discharges to the River Gowran (Mill Stream) which flows adjacent to the plant.

The treatment plant is designed to treat a wastewater load equivalent to that which would arise from a population of 1,600 persons (the Population Equivalent, or “PE”, Design Loading); this loading includes both the domestic sewage plus the commercial-industrial wastewater arising in Gowran which is anticipated within the design lifetime of the plant.

The plant is designed so that both the actual load capacity of the plant and the quality of the treated effluent discharged to the adjoining River can be relatively easily improved and upgraded if further population growth occurs and should more stringent standards be applied in the future to treated wastewater discharged to the environment.

Most of the development in the town is connected to the public system, however a number of houses on the Kilkenny Road operate from individual septic tanks.

Policies & Objectives: (Chapter 9 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies)

Obj. IN1 To provide full treatment to all of the wastewater from Gowran to the standard required in the relevant environmental legislation

Obj. IN2 To extend the area covered by the wastewater treatment network to serve existing development within the development boundary, as resources and finances permit

Policy IN3 To preserve free from development, the way leaves of all public sewers

2.2.1.2 Water supply

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

At present, water supply volumes in the scheme are inadequate to meet any further development. Kilkenny County Council proposes to augment and upgrade the existing scheme, subject to resources.

The scheme has experienced some intermittent problems with bacterial contamination of the source, which is located east of Paulstown, at Tobergoolick

pool. A report on *The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the Years 2007-2008* (Office of Environment Enforcement EPA, 2009) found that there was one incident of E. coli contamination in public water supplies in the Gowran-Goresbridge-Paulstown supply during 2007. Proposals have been drawn up for improving the treatment to combat bacterial contamination at the source and these will be implemented during the lifetime of the Plan.

Water conservation measures will be encouraged in the plan area.

Policy IN4	Significant additional development will not be permitted to connect to the public water supply until such time as the Water Scheme is upgraded
Policy IN5	To preserve free from development the way leaves of all public water mains
Policy IN6	To encourage the adoption of water saving measures throughout future development. Such measures would include: water butts, low flush and dual flush toilets, low water use appliances, rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling
Obj. IN7	To install an advanced treatment to combat ongoing intermittent bacterial contamination of the source
Obj. IN8	To upgrade the Gowran–Goresbridge–Paulstown Water Scheme, subject to resources

2.2.2 Flood Risk Assessment

In line with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* (2009), a staged approach has been adopted to the appraisal and assessment of flood risk.

Stage 1 – Flood Risk Identification

Stage 1 of this appraisal is Flood Risk Identification which includes a review of existing information and identifies if there are any flooding or surface water management issues in the plan area which may warrant further investigation. A review of existing Office of Public Works (OPW) and local information was carried out. According to the OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping, there are no recorded flood events within a 2.5 km radius of Gowran. From local information, three sites which have experienced flooding have been identified. These are shown on Figure 2.1. The first is the field north of the river which contains the Bastionfort well. This site forms part of the floodplain of the river and the Ordnance Survey six inch map (2nd edition) of the area indicates that it is liable to flooding.

The Flood Risk Management Guidelines recommend a Sequential Approach for taking account of flood risk. The sequential approach works by guiding development away from areas that have been identified through a flood risk assessment as being at risk from flooding. In accordance with this approach, this site is zoned for Agriculture. In this regard, the avoidance principle of the sequential approach has been met.

Two other locations which have experienced flooding are the Bradóg Way housing development and also on the Rockfield Road to the north of the town. At Rockfield, flooding occurs on the road at the soccer pitch entrance. This occurs when the amount of rainfall exceeds the infiltration capacity of the ground to absorb it. This excess water flows overland and ponds in the lowest point in the road.

At Bradóg Way, the Ordnance Survey six inch map (2nd edition) of the area indicates that the strip of land closest to the river forms part of the floodplain and was liable to flooding. The issue of flooding was examined during the planning application process for Bradóg Way and the finished floor levels of the houses nearest the river were set to a level where it was unlikely that flooding would affect.

Flooding has occurred on the site on the hard surfaced parking/road area, nearest the river, and also in the front gardens of the houses facing the river. There has also been flooding in some of the back gardens.

As these two areas lie within the development boundary, and could be potentially affected by development taking place under this LAP, the process will move onto Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Initial Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

The purpose of the initial FRA is to ensure that all relevant flood risk issues are assessed in relation to the decisions to be made. It also ensures that potential conflicts between flood risk and development are addressed to the appropriate level of detail.

At Rockfield, the ponding of water on the road can be addressed through carrying out improvement works under the Roadworks programme. This will be carried out in such a manner to ensure that ponding does not occur.

A preliminary examination of the flooding at Bradóg Way was been carried out and the indication is that it is caused by a lack of capacity in the existing storm water pipeline running through the estate to the river. It will be necessary to ensure that no additional surface water is channelled through the storm water system here. The issue of flooding at Bradóg Way will be investigated, and appropriate remedies will be pursued by the Council. Addressing the surface water capacity issues, and ensuring no additional surface water enters the network, will prevent the recurrence of flooding.

As mitigation measures have been identified to ensure firstly that any development taking place will not exacerbate the existing problems and secondly which will prevent the recurrence of flooding, it is not considered necessary to proceed to Stage 3, Detailed Flood Risk Assessment.

Areas of wetland provide storage for flood waters and can reduce flood risk elsewhere. An area of wet woodland lies along the river to the south of the town, and this was identified in the 2003 Plan and in the Habitats Assessment carried out for this plan, as being of ecological value. This important area will be protected firstly, through zoning it for open space and also by the inclusion of specific policies as outlined in Section 2.7 Natural Heritage.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Policy IN9 | To maintain the River Gowran free from inappropriate development and to discourage its culverting or realignment |
| Policy IN10 | To ensure that no additional surface water drainage is permitted through the existing pipeline running through Bradóg Way |
| Obj. IN11 | To address the flooding at Rockfield through the Roadworks programme |
| Obj. IN12 | To address the flooding issues at Bradóg Way and to pursue appropriate remedies, to prevent the recurrence of flooding |

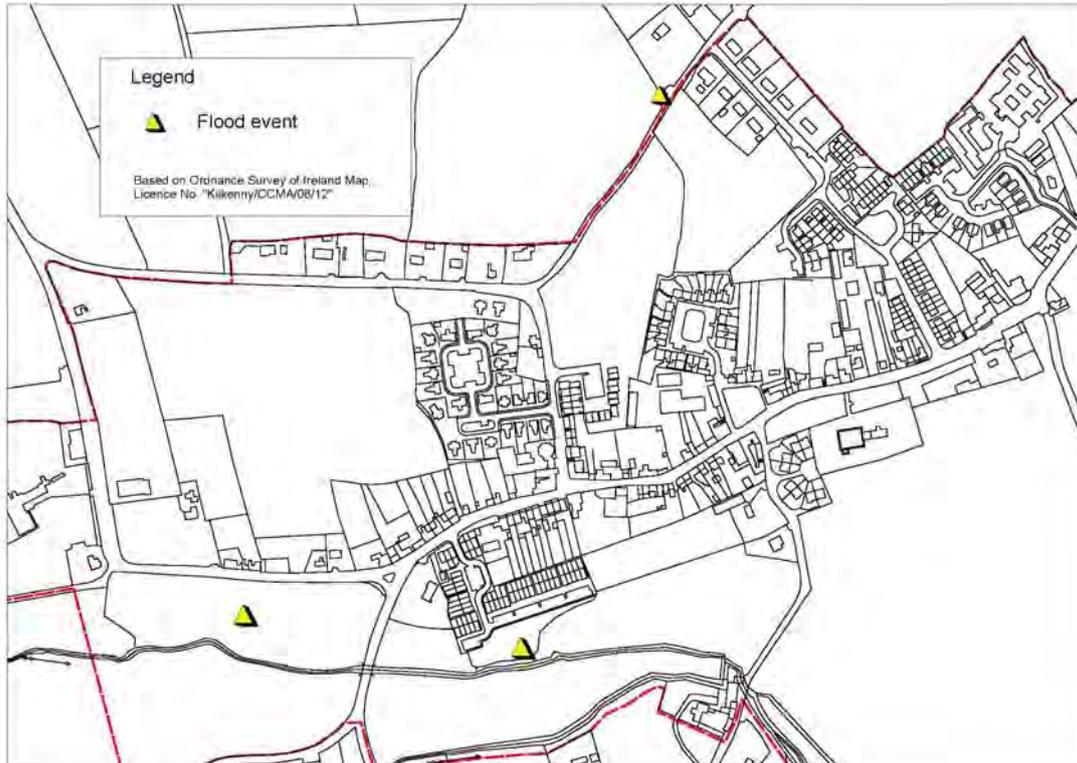


Figure 2.1 Recorded Flood events

Source: Local knowledge

2.2.2.1 Surface Water Drainage

The County Development Plan requires a separation of the surface water system from the foul drainage system. There is a separate surface water drainage system in Gowran, which runs along Main Street through Bradóg Way to an outfall into the Gowran River. An additional outfall to this system is currently being examined.

In accordance with the County Development Plan, the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be encouraged in the plan area.

Policy IN13 To require a separate surface water drainage system from the foul drainage system, for all cases where surface water drainage measures are required and to consider all drainage proposals consistent with SuDS

2.2.3 Waste

The current Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region (JWMP) sets out the policies and objectives for waste management for the period 2006 to 2011.

There is a bring centre in Gowran at present, located beside the Community Hall, where glass (brown, green, clear) and aluminium cans can be deposited. This is considered an appropriate location for a bring centre.

The importance of education and awareness in the encouragement of recycling and promoting more sustainable practices is acknowledged by Kilkenny County Council and endorsed by the appointment of an Environmental Awareness Officer in 2002. This Officer provides regular dissemination of information through group meetings, leaflets and other promotional materials, and any community can access these services. These services will continue to improve the level of environmental awareness throughout the county.

2.2.4 Telecommunications

Telecommunications have become centrally important to the prospects of any local economy. Broadband is available in the Gowran area through mobile, satellite and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) providers.

Policy IN14 To support and encourage the provision of the necessary telecommunications for the existing and future development of Gowran

Policy IN15 To ensure development proposals include the provision of ducting for fibre based data services and in particular broadband services, as appropriate.

2.3 Employment and Economy

The main commercial enterprises in Gowran are Connolly's Red Mills, Harding's Fireplaces, Teach Mhuire café and bakery, Lanigan's truck repair, CT's Tyres, Threesixty marketing and woodcraft. No industrial zoning was included in the 2003 Plan, but the Town Centre zoning provided for a wide variety of commercial uses. In this Plan the Town Centre zone has been replaced by a General Objective zone. It is intended that this zone would allow for a wide variety of uses, all of which would have been permitted in the Town Centre zone.

2.3.1 Retail

The *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* sets out Government policy in relation to shops in small towns and rural areas⁶. The vital role that foodstores and supermarkets play in maintaining the quality and range of shopping in smaller rural town centres and assisting in the anchoring of the surrounding local economy, is recognised. The Guidelines state that planning policies should be supportive of local facilities in small towns and villages which provide an effective and valuable service to the local economy.

This plan will facilitate additional commercial activities to serve future development. There will be a clear presumption in favour of central locations for new developments.

Policy (Chapter 5 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

Policy EE1 To facilitate the expansion of the retail base to serve the needs of the current and future population, in accordance with the policies as laid out by the County Development Plan 2008 and the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2005

2.3.2 Tourism

Gowran is endowed with a number of quality tourist attractions. The main attractions are St. Mary's Church, at which there is now a visitor centre (open seasonally), and Gowran Park Racecourse and Golf Club.

Issues raised at the public consultation related to parking for St. Mary's Church, the lack of adequate signage, the state of disrepair of Gowran Castle, and a lack of tourist accommodation.

In the last plan, an objective was included to provide a tourist trail within and around the town. The implementation of such an objective for a tourist/heritage trail could be examined by the community, in conjunction with Kilkenny Leader Partnership. The Council would facilitate any proposal in this regard.

Parking is available at the Fair Green to provide access to St. Mary's. The OPW are examining improvements to signage in consultation with the Council.

⁶ Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005 *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

There is a lack of tourist accommodation in the town. Gowran Demesne, discussed below has the potential to offer tourist accommodation and facilities.

2.3.2.1 Gowran Castle

Gowran Castle, a protected structure (Ref C344), is a dominant feature in the town. In 1999, permission was refused for a housing development consisting of 156 dwellings on the site. In 2004 permission was refused for a development including changing the use of the Castle to a hotel, building 106 residential units, 23 holiday units, a crèche and converting the gate lodge, castle cottage and castle stables to 8 holiday homes.

This protected structure and its extensive grounds present an ideal opportunity for tourism/leisure development. Therefore the area will remain zoned for Integrated Tourism and Leisure, which allows for a mix of tourist accommodation and limited residential accommodation, in addition to leisure uses. The concept of 'enabling development' will also be applied, in which the Council may consider other uses for the site which brings public benefits in the form of the restoration of the Castle. Such a use would not be considered if it:

- Caused material harm to the Castle, its setting, or the demesne
- Was not demonstrated as being necessary, whether in principle or in scale, to achieve the benefit
- Delivered only the use, but not the restoration of the Castle

Further detail on this is set out in the zoning text for the Integrated Tourism and Leisure zone.

In particular, the Council would welcome leisure uses which also serve the community.

Owners of protected structures have a duty to ensure that the structure is not endangered. Under Section 59 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, the Council can serve a notice requiring works to be carried out in relation to endangerment of protected structures. Such a notice was served in early 2010.

Policies & Objectives (Chapter 7 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Obj. EE2 | To facilitate and encourage the development of facilities and accommodation catering for tourists in Gowran |
| Obj. EE3 | To support and facilitate the community in the provision of a tourist/heritage trail within and around the town |
| Obj. EE4 | To facilitate the improvement of the directional sign posting for tourists within Gowran, particularly in conjunction with the OPW for St. Mary's Church |
| Obj. EE5 | To support and assist the future development of Gowran Demesne in co-operation with the land owners, the local Community groups, Kilkenny Tourism, Fáilte Ireland South East, and KLP as appropriate in accordance with the policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan. |
| Obj. EE6 | To utilise the powers of the Planning and Development Act 2000 in relation to the endangerment of protected structures. |

2.3.3 Dereliction

Dereliction and the maintenance of buildings was identified as an issue in Gowran. There are a number of prominent properties on Main Street which present a poor appearance in the town. The maintenance of Gowran Castle and its gate lodge is

being dealt with through the process for prevention of endangerment to protected structures, as outlined above. One structure is currently being pursued under the Derelict Sites legislation.

Policies (Policy ED40 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies)

Policy EE7: To encourage and provide for the sensitive refurbishment or redevelopment of derelict sites in the village

2.4 Education and Training

2.4.1 Primary Education

Gowran National School, located opposite the Church, west of the town centre, is the only school in Gowran. The school has a current enrolment⁷ of 224. This is a large increase from the enrolment of 171 at the time of the last plan, in 2003.

The school has 8 classrooms, a school hall, and has a playing pitch and an all weather court. Based on a pupil-teacher ratio of 28, the school has a physical capacity of 224. At present therefore the school is at capacity. The school site contains an orchard which was developed in conjunction with a local FÁS community employment scheme.

The site area of the school is 1.6 hectares (excluding the community centre), and this provides space for any necessary expansion.

The Department of Education & Science have published guidelines entitled 'Identification and Suitability Assessment of Sites for Primary Schools' (TGD-025, September 2007) which recommend a range of site areas to accommodate various school sizes, see Table 2. According to these Guidelines, the site area of Gowran school could accommodate a school of 16-24 classrooms. The area required also depends on the shape of the site, site access, availability of site utilities, and the capacity of the site to meet specific criteria set out in the Guidelines, but in general it can be seen that the site is sufficiently large to accommodate future expansion, particularly of one or two classrooms.

Table 2: School Site Area Analysis

	Size of School			
	4 to 8 Classroom	8 to 16 Classroom	16 to 24 Classroom	24 to 32 Classroom
Required site size for two storey building (hectares)	0.71	1.04	1.5	2.025
Required site size for single storey building (hectares)	0.77	1.14	1.6	2.2

Source: Identification and Suitability Assessment of Sites for Primary Schools' (TGD-025, September 2007)

In accordance with *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, the Department of Education and Science, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government*, the Planning Authority consulted with the Forward Planning Unit of the Department of Education and Science in the preparation of this Plan.

The Department of Education were satisfied that the projected population increase proposed under this plan would not require the provision of a new school or a significant expansion to the existing school.

2.4.2 Secondary Education

There is no secondary school in Gowran; the nearest secondary schools are in Goresbridge, Thomastown and Kilkenny City.

⁷ As of June 2009 for 2009-2010 school year

2.5 Transport

2.5.1 Roads

Gowran is located on the N9, the national route linking Dublin to Waterford. The M9/M10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme is under construction at present, and the section bypassing Gowran, the Knocktopher-Powerstown section, is due for opening by the end of 2010. This road will act as a bypass for the town and will relieve much of the heavy through traffic from the main street. When the M9 opens the N9 will be reclassified as a regional road, the R448.

From the public consultation exercise the main issues were in relation to:

- The provision of footpaths; on the Kilkenny Road, on the Waterford Road and to the hurling pitch,
- Parking within the town, particularly for St Mary's Church,
- Traffic calming measures at Mill Road,
- Sightlines at Loughlin's corner, and
- Speed limits in the town particularly on the National Primary Route.

2.5.2 Footpaths

Graiguenamanagh Road

It was noted in the 2003 Plan that the provision of footpaths from the town along the R702 towards Graiguenamanagh to the pitch & putt club and G.A.A. grounds is an objective which will be difficult to achieve. The road at present has a speed limit of 80 kph and is of substandard width to allow a footpath. To provide a footpath there in the conventional manner would be prohibitive in terms of cost due to the constraints and land acquisition costs. However, it is noted that providing a pedestrian link to the G.A.A. pitch is desirable. In any expansion of the facilities or the grounds at this location, consideration should be given to a means of providing such a link.

Kilkenny Road

During the lifetime of the last Plan, a footpath was provided along the northern edge of the Kilkenny Road (R702) serving the existing houses as far as the junction with Rockshire Lane. This footpath is not continuous, as in one location the installation of a footpath would require land acquisition. The provision of a continuous footpath at this location would require land acquisition. It will be an objective to provide a continuous footpath here, subject to agreement with the landowners, and the availability of funding.

Mill Road

There is no footpath along the Mill Road, but a number of ramps have been installed here for traffic calming purposes.

Waterford Road

The footpath on the Waterford Road is not continuous. At present there is a footpath from the town centre out to Bradóg Way, and there is also a footpath on Castle Ellis bridge. For the period of this plan, it will be an objective to extend a continuous footpath as far as the grotto (Bennettsbridge Road).

Policies and Objectives

- Obj. T1** Provide a pedestrian link from the existing footpath in the town to the hurling pitch.
- Obj. T2** To complete a continuous footpath on the north side of the Kilkenny Road in front of the existing houses, subject to the availability of resources and in agreement with the landowners.
- Obj. T3** To extend a continuous footpath along the Waterford Road, as far as the grotto.

2.5.3 Public lighting

Three locations were identified in the last plan as requiring public lighting: along the Kilkenny Road, Rockfield Road and Mill Road. Lighting has been provided along the Mill Road to serve the existing developments. Ducting was put in place along the Kilkenny Road as part of the footpath works. It will be an objective of this plan to provide public lighting along this stretch. As part of the permission granted under 06/1387 on the Rockfield Road, a condition was included to provide public lighting along the Rockfield Road. This has not commenced to date, but lighting will be provided as part of any development on this site.

As part of any new development taking place within the plan area, new footpaths and public lighting will be provided. It is recognised that the undergrounding of cables would enhance the town, however at a prohibitive cost. As the opportunities for this arise, it will be implemented.

Policies & Objectives

- Policy T4** To provide quality lighting and footpaths throughout the town that will secure the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike.
- Policy T5** To underground existing electricity and telephone wires in the town as the opportunity arises.
- Policy T6** To require appropriate public lighting as part of any new residential development.
- Obj. T7** To provide public lighting along the Kilkenny Road
- Obj. T8** To provide public lighting along the Rockfield Road as part of any development on the Phase 1 lands.

2.5.4 Traffic Management

Traffic calming measures have been put in place on Chapel Road, Mill Road and on Main Street in the period of the last plan. Speed limits on the town's approaches were also altered.

Two issues that arose through the public consultation was the restricted visibility at both the junction of the R702 (Kilkenny Road) and Main Street (Loughlin's corner) and the junction of the R702 (Goresbridge Road) and the N9/R448.

Visibility at Loughlin's corner is obstructed by the building lines. In 2005 a traffic calming scheme was carried out for the town and a pedestrian crossing was installed near the Quik-Pick supermarket. The building lines at this junction result in little or no scope to physically alter the junction, however, the road markings and parking here will be examined in order to improve visibility. The opening of the M9/N9 Motorway will substantially reduce the volume of traffic travelling through the town.

As part of a planning permission granted under 08/176, improvements were to be carried out to the junction of Local Road LS6722 with the Regional Road R702. This work has not been completed to date but an Enforcement file ENF08/201 has been opened and these junction improvements are being pursued.

Policies and Objectives

- Obj. T9** To examine the junction of the N9 and R702 (Goresbridge Road) following the reclassification of the N9 to the R448, with a view to increasing visibility at this junction.
- Obj. T10** To increase visibility at the junction of the Local Road LS6722 with the Regional Road R702 (Goresbridge Road).
- Obj. T11** Examine the road markings and traffic enforcement at Loughlin's corner with a view to increasing visibility at this junction.

2.5.5 Parking

Parking in Gowran is mainly provided on street, with a public car park located at the Fair Green, and a private car park to the east of Loughlin's pub. The lack of car parking was raised at public consultation, particularly for St. Mary's church.

The number of delineated spaces available at the Fair Green is 17, including one disabled parking space. This does not include for on street parking outside the homes and in front of Harding's Fireplaces. Harding's also has a customer car park to the rear. The Fair Green car park was surveyed on a number of occasions and there was spare capacity each time. The signage improvements for St. Mary's may help in this regard. The issue of parking in the town could be re-examined following the reclassification of the National route to a regional route.

Policies (Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

- Policy T12** To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided in all new developments
- Policy T13** To ensure appropriate parking provision for tourists and locals
- Policy T14** To assess the provision of on-street parking in the town subsequent to the reclassification of the N9 to the R448.

2.5.6 Linkages within the Town

As discussed in Section 2.1.2 above, in assessing any new development in Gowran, the Council will have regard to the development potential of adjoining land within the development boundary. One of the elements of this integration will be the provision of pedestrian and cycle linkages between all new developments, to provide for a pleasant network of routes, public spaces and walkways interlinking the town.

In accordance with the County Development Plan Section 10.30, Cycle Facilities, bicycle stands will be required for any new development proposal. The number of stands required will be one quarter the number of car parking spaces required for the development.

Policy T15 To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new and existing developments

2.5.7 Public transport

There is a good public transport service in Gowran due to its location on the N9 national route from Dublin to Waterford. There are daily buses to Waterford and to Dublin, provided by both Bus Éireann and J.J. Kavanagh's. Kavanagh's buses use the petrol station to the north of the town for its collection and drop-off point. The two Bus Éireann stops are located on the western end of Main Street, beside Bradóg Way housing estate. There is no bus shelter here at present.

Objective

Obj. T16 To support Bus Éireann in the provision of a bus shelter and road markings at the bus stops.

2.6 Open Space and Recreation

2.6.1 Open space

Areas of open space are illustrated on Figure 2.2 below. The areas of open space in Gowran fall into three categories; public open space, active open space and strategic open space.

Public open space is usable and accessible by the public. The only formal area of public open space is the area beside St. Mary's Church, which contains the fountain. Smaller pockets of open space are provided in each of the housing estates.

Active open space includes the soccer pitch to the north and the pitch 'n' putt area and GAA pitch to the east.

Strategic open space is not generally accessible by members of the public but provides a valuable amenity. In Gowran, strategic open space has been identified as a buffer along the river. These areas should generally be kept free of development and retained as strategic open space. The wet woodland along the river has been identified as an area of ecological significance, see Section 2.7.1.1. This land will be reserved as open space in this plan.

The line of the Mill Race forms the southern boundary to this area of strategic open space. A Mill Race is indicated on the Second edition Ordnance Survey Map (c. 1900), running to the south of the Gowran River from the townland of Sheffield South to the mill on Mill Road. This would have been developed to operate the flour (later corn and saw) mill in the early to mid-nineteenth century. To the west of the Waterford Road this stream is no longer in existence. In the longer term, a walk way could be provided along the river, possibly along the line of the dried up mill race, through negotiation with the relevant landowners.

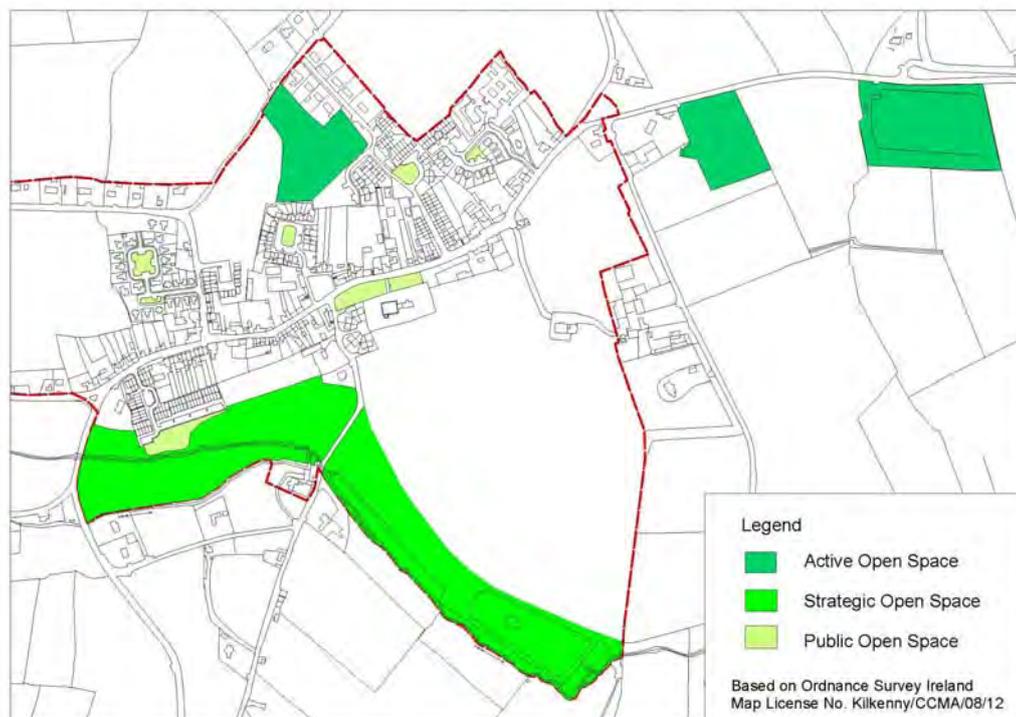


Figure 2.2 Areas of Open Space

Policies (Chapter 7 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

Policy OS1 To reserve land for and support the development of a walkway along the river, south of the town, in accordance with the heritage objectives for the area.

2.6.2 Recreation

There are a number of sporting groups in the village including hurling and athletics. The existing community hall, located beside the Church and school, is very well utilised.

The GAA club, Young Ireland's, which represents both Gowran and Dungarvan, is experiencing some capacity constraints. The grounds are located on the R702 (Goresbridge Road) to the east of the town. The Club are currently examining options of upgrading and improving facilities at the existing location, and ways of increasing capacity.

The Pitch 'n' putt club is also located on the Goresbridge Road on the grounds of the old Cricket club. The location of these two amenities beside one another could contribute to the provision of a pedestrian link, back to the town centre, in this area.

The Athletics Club currently use the Gowran Park Racecourse car park and driving range for training and also use the Community Hall for training during winter months.

The soccer pitch to the north of the village is under-utilised at present. The trustees of Gowran Soccer Club purchased the site (2.5 acres) from the Council in 1999, with the proviso that the land be used for recreational purposes only. There are no changing facilities at this location. The opportunities offered by this valuable recreational asset, located in the centre of the town, should be exploited further.

A Lawn tennis club was situated on the Bennettsbridge Road just outside the village. This is no longer in operation.

Policies (Chapter 7 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

Policy OS2 To support and facilitate the expansion of capacity at Young Ireland's GAA club

Policy OS3 To encourage and support the greater utilisation of the soccer pitch for the good of the community

2.7 Heritage

NATURAL HERITAGE

2.7.1 Designated Natural Heritage Sites

There are no recorded candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC) or Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) in Gowran. The nearest cSAC is located approx. 7.5 km away, the River Barrow and River Nore, site code 002162. The nearest pNHA is Red Bog, Dungarvan, (Site code 000846) located approximately 4 km from Gowran. An Appropriate Assessment Screening has been carried out for this plan in line with Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive to assess possible implications to any cSACs.

An Ecological Survey was carried out by CAAS Environmental Services as part of the 2003 LAP, and this identified four areas of ecological interest; three of which centred on the River and the other around the soccer pitch.

2.7.2 Habitats Assessment

As part of the preparation for this plan, a Habitats Assessment was carried out by a team of ecological consultants. This report is included as Appendix 2 of this Plan. The study mapped all habitats within the plan area, and also rated habitats based on their ecological merit and value as an ecological network.

Based on the findings of the habitats assessment, and in line with the County Development Plan, policies and objectives have been formulated for the protection and enhancement of habitats in the plan area, with particular emphasis placed on those habitats and ecological corridors of highest ecological value. Habitats of highest value are illustrated on Map 2; specific objectives have been formulated in relation to the protection of these most significant habitats.

2.7.3 Nature Conservation Outside of Designated Areas

There are no sites within the draft LAP boundary designated under national or European legislation. However substantial areas of high biodiversity value are found outside the existing network of designated sites, but within the LAP boundary; and whilst not protected under legislation, they contribute to the biodiversity of the area.

Habitats and landscape features have an important role to play as ecological “corridors” as they allow for the movement of species, and help to sustain the habitats, ecological processes and functions necessary to enhance and maintain biodiversity. It is important that these areas are conserved and managed well.

The habitat assessment carried out as part of the survey work for this plan used a ‘Green Infrastructure’ approach to describe and assess biodiversity, based on the identification of habitats and their interconnected relationship within ecological networks. Other ecosystem services such as connectivity between habitats; flood attenuation and spaces for recreation were also identified. A detailed hedgerow survey was also carried out.

The identification of ecological networks can assist in identifying features, outside designated areas that might trigger screening and risk pathways that could suggest the need for full appropriate assessment.

All habitats within the LAP area enhance the biodiversity of the area and should be protected and enhanced where possible. However there are a number of habitats of significant ecological value, due to the species contained therein and/ or due to their function as an ecological network. These habitats have been shown on Map 2.

Policies (Chapter 8 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

- Policy H1** To ensure that any development in or near sites of local conservation interest, as identified in Table 3 of Appendix 2, will minimise any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site has been designated.
- Policy H2** Applicants shall demonstrate that there will be no adverse impacts on the ecological integrity of sites of high local ecological value identified in this plan from developments on adjacent sites.

2.7.3.1 Gowran River Valley – GR1

The most important ecological network in Gowran is based around the river and adjacent wet woodland. It contains rare wetland habitats, supports salmon and bats which have statutory protection, and is considered of national ecological value. The river is linked with the candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) associated with the River Barrow and Nore. This area provides for flood attenuation. Development adjacent to this ecological network which could affect water quality or riparian habitats should be screened for its potential impact on the candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). The Council will support the progression of designation of this area as a potential National Heritage Area (pNHA).

Objective:

- Obj. H3** To protect and enhance the habitat of the Gowran River, and its associated ecological corridors and habitats, as identified as GR1 on Map 2. An ecological impact assessment will be required in order to assess the impact of any development which could potentially affect this area; this should include a survey of protected species where appropriate. Where a proposal is deemed likely to have a significant effect on the Gowran River, it shall be subject to an appropriate assessment.

2.7.3.2 Grassland & Hedgerows to the north of the village - GR2

A small area of grassland and hedgerows to the north of the village, adjacent to the soccer field has been identified as being of high local value having regard to its diversity of plant species, use as a commuting route for small mammals, a nesting site for birds, and also for providing seeds for birds. The existing permission for development in this area is noted. Where possible development in this area should seek to retain an area of grassland adjacent to the hedgerows.

Objective:

- Obj. H4** To protect and enhance the habitats of GR2 as identified on Map 2. An ecological impact assessment will be required in order to assess the impact of any future development within this area.

2.7.3.3 Hedgerows

A number of hedgerows were identified as high value having regard to a number of factors including biodiversity, structural and connectivity value. These hedgerows are identified on Map 2 for retention and enhancement as they contribute significantly to biodiversity in the area.

Objective:

Obj. H5 To require details for the retention and integration of hedgerows of high value as identified on Map 2, in all development proposals to ensure that the ecological integrity and connectivity of the hedgerow is protected during and after construction.

From local information, it is known that an area known as Earl's Bog, in Earlsbog Commons townland, which contains a number of springs, exists. This area is located to the west of the town, outside the plan area boundary, and was not included in area covered by the habitats assessment.

BUILT HERITAGE

2.7.4 Archaeology

Gowran is recorded as a Town in the Record of Monuments and Places (KK020-060). There is a Zone of Archaeological Potential recorded in Gowran and there are a number of items recorded on the RMP. (Please consult the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Record of Monuments and Places for the location of Recorded Monuments - see www.archaeology.ie for the most up-to-date listing). A second zone of Archaeological Potential is located around Ballyshanemore Castle on Mill Road. This is located outside the Plan development boundary. The two Zones of Archaeological Potential and the location of recorded monuments are shown on Map 3. Policies for the protection of archaeological heritage are set out in *Chapter 8: Heritage* of the County Development Plan 2008.

2.7.4.1 Mass path

A mass path is a pedestrian track connecting destinations frequently used by rural communities, most usually the destination of Sunday Mass. From local knowledge, a mass path has been identified in Gowran, leading from Chapel Street across to the Bennettsbridge Road. A foot bridge is shown across the river on the Ordnance Survey 6 inch 2nd edition map, with a footpath shown connecting to the Bennettsbridge Road. This footpath and footbridge are no longer in evidence. The line of the mass path is shown on Map 3: Archaeological Heritage. The County Development Plan 2008 includes an Action to "Research and map the existing network of traditional paths used for leisure purposes with the intention of determining the legal basis and status of their use". This mass path should be included in this piece of research.

Objective

Obj. H6 To include the mass path as shown on Map 3 in any county-wide research work on traditional paths.

2.7.5 Record of Protected Structures

Gowran has 21 protected structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures in the County Development Plan, 2008. The existing Record of Protected Structures for the village is shown in Appendix 3. Works which would have a material effect on the character of the protected structure, require planning permission. Advice can be obtained by consulting with Kilkenny County Council's Conservation Officer. Further guidance is available in *Chapter 8: Heritage* of the County Development Plan 2008.

Two of the protected structures; C120 and C121 are proposed for deletion from the RPS. C120, formerly known as Perle's shop, is proposed for deletion as it is considered no longer to be of special interest under the Planning and Development Act 2000. C121 is the row of ten terraced three-bay single-storey estate workers' houses, c.1850, which is known as Drover's Row. These are proposed for deletion as they are now included in a revised Architectural Conservation Area, which is considered to offer them sufficient protection. Deletions to the RPS cannot be carried out as part of the LAP process, but the deletion process will be commenced following the adoption of this LAP.

2.7.6 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has been completed by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, for County Kilkenny. Descriptions and appraisals can be viewed at the NIAH website (www.buildingsofireland.com). An *Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Kilkenny* was published by the NIAH in 2006, and offers an illustrated introduction to the architecture of the county. A total of 35 structures were identified by the NIAH survey in Gowran. The Minister made a recommendation in 2006 to consider structures included in the survey and rated Regional and above for inclusion in the RPS. A review of the NIAH has been carried out as part of this Draft LAP, and eleven NIAH structures are recommended for inclusion in the RPS, see Appendix 3. Additions to the RPS cannot be carried out as part of the LAP process, but the additions process will be commenced following the adoption of this LAP.

Policies & Objectives (Chapter 8 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

Policy H7 To protect and enhance the amenity and built environment of Gowran and to provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance for both the built and natural environment of the village

Obj. H8 To respond to the Ministerial recommendation to include in the Record of Protected Structures, structures which have been identified in the NIAH, as recommended in Appendix 3 to the RPS.

Obj. H9 To review the Record of Protected Structures and make appropriate deletions as recommended in Appendix 3.

2.7.7 Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

An ACA was first designated for Gowran in the 2003 LAP. This designation covered the central core of the town, stretching from the gates of Gowran Castle to the former estate houses west of the Fair Green.

As part of this Draft Plan a review of the architectural heritage in the town was carried out, and this included modifications to the ACA.

2.7.7.1 ACA Character Appraisal

Gowran derives much of its special architectural interest from a curving streetscape with a significant change in level from high ground at its eastern entry point to its lowest level where it crosses the river at the western end of the town. This combination of curving streetscape and change in levels brings a lively dynamic of movement and drama to the streetscape as the visitor proceeds from east to west or vice versa. The influence of its topographical setting is enhanced by the four nodal points in the town which encourage the visitor to linger before moving on; these points are (i) the entrance to Gowran Demesne, (ii) the Medieval Church of St. Mary's and formal eighteenth-century square with mature trees opposite (Fair Green), (iii) the interesting grouping of curved and corner buildings at the Kilkenny Road junction and (iv) the formal quality of the entry point at the western end of the town.

The streetscape is composed mostly of vernacular buildings principally two storeys in height, rendered and painted, with classically proportioned window openings and wall to window ratio. Timber sash windows, classical timber doors, external painted render, natural slate roofs and early timber shopfronts are significant details which contribute to the character of the area. There are a small number of buildings which depart from this simple vernacular including the formal stone building beside the entrance to Gowran Demesne (the former Court House), Gowran Castle gate Lodge, the Tudor Revival former Curate's House and several terraces of both single and two-storey houses which were built by Gowran Demesne to house estate workers. This sinuous urban streetscape and interesting unfolding of buildings is framed with great visual impact within the rich agricultural setting of the County Kilkenny countryside.

An area separate to the main streetscape in both location and character is the grouping of ecclesiastical and educational buildings on the western fringe of the town to the north of the river's flood-plain. The school, Catholic Church and presbytery are characterised by their relative isolation on the western edge of the town and derive much interest from the sense of open parkland space which characterises their setting.

The designation of the area as an Architectural Conservation Area is further justified by the special historic interest of the town which retains an interesting and very representative collection of buildings spanning the centuries. This includes the 13th Century Church of St. Mary (a National Monument), a classical courthouse, an urban vernacular streetscape dating to the 18th and 19th centuries, reflective of the prosperity of the area due to the richness of the surrounding agricultural landscape, and picturesque examples of estate village houses indicating the benevolent influence of the improving landlords of the 19th and early twentieth centuries.

According to the Planning and Development Act 2000-2007, the purpose of designation as an Architectural Conservation Area is to 'preserve' the character of the area. The intention is not to prevent future development of the urban environment but to ensure that future development proposals make use of good

quality contemporary design and a strong emphasis should be placed on sensitive integration into the existing character of the area. The ACA boundary is illustrated on Map 4 (a) and (b): Architectural Heritage.

ACA Policies (Policies H102-H111 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also apply)

- Policy H10** Details which contribute to the character of the area should be retained. This includes timber sash windows, classical timber doors, external painted render, natural slate roofs and early timber shopfronts. Only timber sash windows should be installed where existing windows are being replaced in vernacular buildings. Where windows were originally of a material other than timber and a design other than sash, the original intended materials and design should be followed. uPVC windows and doors are considered to have a negative impact on the character of the ACA and where an opportunity arises to replace them they should be replaced with more appropriate alternatives. Windows which contribute to the character of the structure should be repaired rather than replaced. All doors which contribute to the character of the structure should be retained and repaired rather than replaced.
- Policy H11** External renders should not be removed unless failing and then should be replaced with painted lime renders.
- Policy H12** Where roofs are being repaired/replaced natural stone slate only should be used.
- Policy H13** The creation of visual clutter should be avoided when making proposals for street signage, advertising, street furniture etc.
- Policy H14** New development should make use of good contemporary design and a strong emphasis should be placed on sensitive integration into the existing character of the area.

2.8 Community Services and Facilities

2.8.1 Services

As a small town, Gowran is an important service centre. This plan aims to ensure that Gowran's service base expands in line with any development and that the town maintains its important role in the local rural area.

2.8.2 Garda Síochána

There is no resident Garda in Gowran. The Garda Station in Thomastown serves the Gowran area.

A Community Alert Group was founded in Gowran in 1993 and this is still operational. The Community Alert programme was established on a national level by Muintir Na Tíre in 1984 in partnership with An Garda Síochána. It evolved in response to a rise of crime in rural Ireland, particularly attacks on vulnerable people (including the elderly) living alone. It is a voluntary crime prevention programme for rural communities and it encourages the community to pro-actively participate with An Garda Síochána in improving the quality of life and safety of the community in general.

2.8.3 Youth

In addition to the wide range of sporting organisations which provide activities for youth, a Foróige group is active in the town. This provides non-sport activities for young people.

Policies (Chapter 4 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 also applies):

Policy CS1 To work in partnership with youth service providers and the local community in the development of youth services.

2.8.4 Elderly

The Dalton Day Care centre and ten terraced houses were constructed by the community in 1996 with the aid of Department of Environment funding. The Day Care centre provides a range of valuable services and facilities to the community.

Policy CS2 To facilitate and support the expansion of the range of facilities including accommodation, catering for the elderly population in conjunction with the community and the Health Service Executive.

2.8.5 Healthcare

Primary health services for the Gowran area are provided through the East Kilkenny/ South Carlow Primary Care Team, which serves a population of 7,746 (2006 census) across the Gowran, Graiguenamanagh and Borris geographic region. The Team is made up of 7 GPs, Practice Nurses, Public Health Nurses, Home Helps, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy services along with other more specialised services such as Dietetics, Mental Health, Substance Misuse services, etc. being provided as part of a broader Primary and Social Care Network. The service is

provided across five locations of which one of these is the Health and Medical Centre on Main Street in Gowran. Out of hours medical services are provided locally through the Care Doc service.

Gowran also has a pharmacist and a nursing home serving the needs of the local community.

Policy CS3 To co-operate with the Health Service Executive in the provision of health services for the town

2.8.6 Childcare

According to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities, "Government policy on childcare is to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community"⁸.

Section 4.5.1 of the County Development Plan (2008) sets out the policies of Kilkenny County Council in relation to childcare provision. Kilkenny County Childcare committee, which is a sub group of the Kilkenny County Development Board, have also published a County Childcare Strategy (2007-2010). This identified a gap in the Gowran area for a childcare facility.

Permission was granted under P.05/1279 for a crèche located in what is now the Ogenty housing estate. This has not been built to date and this permission expires in February 2011. The Council would welcome the provision of any childcare services in the town and the County Childcare Committee provide support in this regard.

Policy CS4 To facilitate and encourage the provision of an adequate range of quality childcare facilities in appropriate locations

2.8.7 Graveyard

The graveyard is located to the west of the village, adjacent to the Church. The site of the graveyard and the church grounds is approximately 1.3 hectares.

This graveyard contains graves dating back to the 1700's. There is still ample capacity to cater for the next 15-20 years. The Parish also own a parcel of land (approximately 0.6 hectares) to the rear of the graveyard (located in Phase 2 Residential zone) which is held in reserve into the future.

⁸ Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2001, p. 3 *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Stationery Office

3 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

This section of the Draft Plan sets out specific objectives for the development of Gowran. Some of the objectives can be carried out directly by the County Council, but for other objectives, for which the Council is not directly responsible; the Council will have a facilitative role.

Achievement of the objectives for which the Council is directly responsible, will, in many cases be dependent upon adequate finance being made available to the Council from the Department of the Environment and Local Government and other sources. For many of the other objectives, a co-ordinated approach is needed by both the Council and local community. The Council, through its Planning Department and Community and Enterprise Department, intend to facilitate and build the capacity in the community to follow these objectives through.

Objectives which relate to a specific location are illustrated on the zoning map accompanying this plan.

3.2 Land Use Zoning

The purpose of zoning is to indicate to property owners and the general public the types of development which the Council considers most appropriate in each land use category. The land use zoning objectives are detailed below and are shown on the Land Use zoning map.

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

In the following paragraphs:

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

3.2.1 General Objective

Objective: To provide for a mix of uses and to support, strengthen and expand the service base, allowing for development appropriate to the scale and character of Gowran, whilst protecting its natural and built heritage.

Any development proposal in this area will be assessed against this objective.

3.2.2 Phase 1 Residential

Objective: To protect, provide and improve residential amenities appropriate to the scale and character of Gowran. These lands are open for development during the lifetime of this plan.

Permitted uses:

Dwellings, open spaces, places of worship, community facilities, halting sites, public service installations, childcare facility, nursing home, bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses, home-based economic activity, playing fields, local convenience shop and medical centre.

Open for Consideration: public house, hotel, and restaurant.

3.2.3 Phase 2 Residential

Objective: This land will not be released for development during the lifetime of this plan. The situation will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

3.2.4 Agriculture

Objective: To protect the rural setting of this part of the designated Architectural Conservation Area, to protect the setting of the Bastionfort Well, to avoid development encroaching on the river's floodplain and to conserve the agricultural land use.

Permitted uses:

Agriculture and horticulture.

Open for Consideration:

Public open space, private open space, public service installations and other uses not contrary to the proper planning and development of the area. Dwellings may be open for consideration in certain limited cases.

Any development proposal shall be subject to detailed flood risk assessment.

3.2.5 Integrated Tourism and Leisure

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

Permitted uses:

Tourist accommodation and associated facilities, equestrian uses, leisure development

Open for Consideration:

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

Enabling Development: The Council may consider other uses which would enable the restoration of the house provided it meets all of the following criteria:

- The enabling development will not materially detract from the archaeological, architectural, historic, landscape or biodiversity interest of the asset, or materially harm its setting
- The proposal avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the Demesne
- The enabling development will secure the long term future of the Castle and Demesne and its continued use for a sympathetic purpose
- It is demonstrated that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the Castle and that its form minimises the disadvantages

Planning permission for such a use would only be considered if:

- The achievement of the restoration of the Castle is securely and enforceably linked to it;
- The Castle is repaired to an agreed standard as early as possible in the course of the enabling development, ideally at the outset and certainly before completion or occupation;
- The monitoring of implementation is achievable

3.2.6 Open Space, Amenity & Recreation

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

Permitted uses:

Open space, sports clubs, recreational buildings, stands, pavilions, agricultural uses, halting site and public service installations.

3.2.7 Transitional Areas

While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land uses zones. In these areas, it is necessary to avoid developments, which would be detrimental to the amenities of the more environmentally sensitive zone. For instance, in zones abutting residential areas particular attention must be paid to the uses, scale and density and appearance of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals in order to protect the amenities of these residential areas.

3.3 Implementation of Objectives

As a result of the discussion under each of the headings as outlined in Section 2, certain policies and objectives have been formulated. It is intended to implement all of the objectives (unless otherwise specified as long-term) during the period of the plan. The objectives are set out below, in table form, in addition to the agencies responsible for their implementation.

The realisation of these objectives over a period of time, will it is felt, be of significant benefit to the town, ensuring its orderly development and improvement.

The achievement of the objectives will be dependent on the availability of finance and the inclusion of the objectives in the work programmes of the County Council and the responsible agencies. The local community, through local associations such as the Development Association and Residents Associations, and other groups including GAA and others, can play a huge role in contributing to the achievement of some of the objectives above. Kilkenny County Council's policy will be to facilitate and aid local organisations in this capacity.

This is intended to be an integrated plan, and the progression of formulating objectives from issues identified in the public consultation is the first step in enabling an integrated approach to implementation. Kilkenny County Council will fully co-operate with other development and community agencies, such as the County Development Board and Kilkenny Leader Partnership where necessary to secure the implementation of this plan.

Kilkenny Leader Partnership (KLP) operates the LEADER+ programme. This is the European Union's rural development programme. KLP also operates the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP). Under these programmes grant-aid is available to small enterprises, or individuals with a business project and to community groups with either a business or a community-beneficial project, if they meet the programmes' rural development criteria. Both programmes provide part-funding so applicants are expected to fund a percentage of any project themselves.

Ref.	Objective	Lead Partners
HP8	To ensure an access can be provided through the Phase 2 lands to the Castle Ellis Road/Chapel Street from the Kilkenny Road in any development on these lands or lands adjoining.	Planning, landowners/developers
Obj. IN1	To provide full treatment to all of the wastewater from Gowran to the standard required in the relevant environmental legislation	Water Services
Obj. IN2	To extend the area covered by the wastewater treatment network to serve existing development within the development boundary, as resources and finances permit	Water Services, property owners
Obj. IN7	To install an advanced treatment to combat ongoing intermittent bacterial contamination of the source	Water Services
Obj. IN8	To upgrade the Gowran–Goresbridge–Paulstown Water Scheme, subject to resources	Water Services
Obj. IN11	To address the flooding at Rockfield through the Roadworks programme	Area Engineer

Obj. IN12	To address the flooding issues at Bradóg Way and to pursue appropriate remedies, to prevent the recurrence of flooding	Environment, Area Engineer
Obj. EE2	To facilitate and encourage the development of facilities and accommodation catering for tourists in Gowran	Fáilte Ireland South East, Kilkenny Tourism, Kilkenny Leader Partnership
Obj. EE3	To support and facilitate the community in the provision of a tourist/heritage trail within and around the town	Heritage Officer, Fáilte Ireland South East, Kilkenny Tourism, Kilkenny Leader Partnership
Obj. EE4	To facilitate the improvement of the directional sign posting for tourists within Gowran, particularly in conjunction with the OPW for St. Mary's Church	OPW
Obj. EE5	To support and assist the future development of Gowran Demesne in co-operation with the land owners, the local Community groups, Kilkenny Tourism, Fáilte Ireland South East, and KLP as appropriate in accordance with the policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan.	Community groups, Kilkenny Tourism, Fáilte Ireland South East, and KLP
Obj. EE6	To utilise the powers of the Planning and Development Act 2000 in relation to the endangerment of protected structures, to prevent Gowran Castle from continuing to be endangered.	Planning, Conservation Officer
Obj. T1	Provide a pedestrian link from the existing footpath in the town to the hurling pitch.	GAA, Pitch n putt club, Area Engineer
Obj. T2	To complete a continuous footpath on the north side of the Kilkenny Road in front of the existing houses, subject to the availability of resources and in agreement with the landowners.	Planning, developers
Obj. T3	To extend a continuous footpath along the Waterford Road, as far as the grotto.	Area Engineer
Obj. T7	To provide public lighting along the Kilkenny Road	Area Engineer/ developer
Obj. T8	To provide public lighting along the Rockfield Road as part of any development on the Phase 1 lands.	Area Engineer
Obj. T9	To examine the junction of the N9 and R702 (Goresbridge Road) following the reclassification of the N9 to the R448, with a view to increasing visibility at this junction.	Roads
Obj. T10	To increase visibility at the junction of the Local Road LS6722 with the Regional Road R702 (Goresbridge Road).	Roads, Planning
Obj. T11	Examine the road markings and traffic enforcement at Loughlin's corner with a view to increasing visibility at this junction.	Area Engineer, Roads, An Garda Síochána
Obj. T16	To support Bus Éireann in the provision of a bus	Bus Éireann, Area

	shelter and road markings at the bus stops.	Engineer
Obj. H3	To protect and enhance the habitat of the Gowran River, and its associated ecological corridors and habitats, as identified as GR1 on Map 2. An ecological impact assessment will be required in order to assess the impact of any development which could potentially affect this area; this should include a survey of protected species where appropriate. Where a proposal is deemed likely to have a significant effect on the Gowran River, it shall be subject to an appropriate assessment.	Planning, landowners/ developers
Obj. H4	To protect and enhance the habitats of GR2 as identified on Map 2. An ecological impact assessment will be required in order to assess the impact of any future development within this area.	Planning, landowners/ developers
Obj. H5	To require details for the retention and integration of hedgerows of high value as identified on Map 2, in all development proposals to ensure that the ecological integrity and connectivity of the hedgerow is protected during and after construction.	Planning, landowners/ developers
Obj. H6	To include the mass path as shown on Map 3 in any county-wide research work on traditional paths.	Planning
Obj. H8	To respond to the Ministerial recommendation to include in the Record of Protected Structures, structures which have been identified in the NIAH, as recommended in Appendix 3 to the RPS.	Planning, Conservation Officer
Obj. H9	To review the Record of Protected Structures and make appropriate deletions as recommended in Appendix 3.	Planning, Conservation Officer

4 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

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

Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014, Requirements for New Development should be consulted for the relevant development standards. In general, these will be adhered to for all development standards, with the following stipulations.

4.1 Design Guidance Principles

The aim for new development should be to enhance the traditional character of the town streetscape. This section of the plan, combined with Appendix 4, Urban Design Guidelines on Future Development, is aimed at giving landowners, developers and their architects a clear view as to how the design of new development should be considered. It will also be used by the Planning Authority when judging planning applications in the town.

When designing for new building, consideration should be given to the existing building fabric, for it is the existing pattern and appearance of these buildings, related to the unique history and morphology of a place that makes one village or town different from the next. The building fabric therefore is a reflection of the character of a place and if we permit this character to be eroded, either through dereliction, decay and/or demolition and replacement with insensitive new build, then we erode the uniqueness of the place.

Design guidance on new development for Gowran is given in Appendix 4 of this plan and in the sections below.

4.2 Design Elements

Streetscape refers to the look of a particular road, regarding the arrangement and design of plots, buildings and materials, roads and footpaths, street furniture, open spaces and planting. Attractive and coherent streetscapes happen when all of these features reinforce and work with one another.

Some detail in relation to design elements which contribute to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area has been provided in Section 2.7. There are also some general elements that contribute to the overall character of the town.

Height and roofs

The roof line in many Irish towns is never constant but tends to vary within a limited range. It is noted however, that some of the terraces in Gowran have quite a consistency of uniform building heights, roof ridge and roof pitch. Where this is evident it should be maintained. Elsewhere, new infill buildings should be encouraged to either step up above or below their neighbour, as would be the case.

Materials

As discussed in Section 2.7, most of the buildings in Gowran are rendered and painted, with classically proportioned window openings and wall to window ratio. Timber sash windows, classical timber doors, external painted render, natural slate roofs and early timber shopfronts are significant details which contribute to the

character of the area. There are a small number of buildings which depart from this simple vernacular including the formal stone building beside the entrance to Gowran Demesne (the former Court House), Gowran Castle gate Lodge, the Tudor Revival former Curate's House and several terraces of both single and two-storey houses which were built by Gowran Demesne to house estate workers.

Design Principles Based on Distinctive Local Character

- Consider the retention and refurbishment of the few attractive stone constructed out-buildings, in preference to demolition and rebuild.
- Maintain the scale, composition and character of the streetscapes in the immediate vicinity of the village centre, close to the existing traditional building forms.
- Ensure the continuation of existing building lines.
- Encourage the comprehensive development of backlands (sites to the rear of plots) and ensure that developers have regard to the possible need to provide access to these areas in any future development scheme.

4.2.1 Natural Heritage

- The culverting of watercourses is discouraged, in favour of the retention of all open and natural channels.
- Development should not be carried out in the immediate vicinity of hedgerows to be retained or within the root protection area of trees; a grass margin should be maintained adjacent to hedgerows.
- If it is necessary to replace an original semi-natural feature (hedgerow, dry stone wall), it should be replaced with another type of semi-natural boundary.
- Semi-mature planting of native species will be required for the reinstatement of connecting features to ensure their function is restored quickly. For species that do not need continuous cover, 'stepping stones'/ patches of similar habitat may be appropriate.
- Where tree and shrub planting is undertaken only native plants, which occur in the locality, should be used. These should be of local provenance where possible. A list of native trees and shrubs is contained in Appendix 5.

4.2.2 Rainwater harvesting

Having regard to the fact that the water supply scheme is currently at capacity, and in the interests of water conservation, where viable, all house units should be provided with water butts to harvest rainwater from roofs and downpipes.

