



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

Proposed Variation 5 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan

Castlecomer Settlement Plan and alignment with the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2024)

Forward Planning
May 2025

Proposed Variation 5

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Introduction

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, notice is hereby given that Kilkenny County Council is proposing a Variation to the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 (CCDP). The proposed Variation is to:

- Incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the KCCDP, as part of a new Volume 3, titled 'Settlement Plans',
- Make associated changes to Volume 1 to reflect this, and
- To align the City and County Development Plan with the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* as relevant.

The content of the previous Castlecomer Local Area Plan 2018-2024 was reviewed and informed the making of the Settlement Plan.

Environmental Reports

The Proposed Variation has been subject to SEA and AA Screening processes and SEA and AA Screening Reports and associated SEA and AA Screening Determinations accompany the Proposed Variation on public display.

Proposed Variation

The proposed Variation is outlined below and should be read in conjunction with the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021.

The proposed changes to Volume 1 will appear as follows:

Deletions in ~~striketrough~~

Insertions in *red italics*

There are no changes proposed to Volume 2, the Kilkenny City Plan. As Volume 3 is a new addition, the entire Settlement Plans text is to be inserted.

Volume 1 County

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.5 Structure of the Plan

This Plan comprises ~~two~~ *three* Volumes. Volume 1 consists of a written statement and accompanying maps and includes the overarching strategies, objectives and Development Management Requirements common to both the City and the County. Volume 2, Kilkenny City Strategies, consists of City-specific strategies (which apply to the area defined by the City Development Boundary), such as a Core Strategy, Retail Strategy and Heritage Strategy. *Volume 3 contains the Settlement Plan for Castlecomer, and others as approved in future.* In the interest of avoiding duplication and contradiction, Volumes *2 and 3* should be read in conjunction with Volume 1, and cross references will appear as relevant. Where the City *Plan or a Settlement Plan* has particular Objectives, Development Management considerations and requirements these will be set out in Volumes *2 and*

3. However, if a particular policy/objective is not included in Volumes 2 and 3, the relevant section of Volume 1 will be applied as appropriate.

The text of the entire Plan Vol 1 and Vol 2 is a statement of Council policy. Each chapter contains objectives and also has Development Management Requirements in relation to specific areas and topics. Objectives are in as far as is possible Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound (SMART). The Development Management Requirements will apply to development proposals in addition to the requirements for development set out in Volume 1, Chapter 13 and Vol 2.6 Place-making Strategy for the City. It should be noted that each chapter is not a stand-alone chapter, but should be read in conjunction with all other chapters.

Chapter 4: Core Strategy

4.4 District Towns

4th paragraph:

~~Provided that water capacity issues can be addressed for Castlecomer, an additional population of 100 is considered appropriate over and above the adopted Local Area Plan. A Settlement Plan for Castlecomer is included in Volume 3.~~

4.12 Core Strategy Table

Table 4.6 Core strategy table 2016-2027

District Towns					
(a) Callan	441 ¹	160 (3.4%)	8 Ha		7.65Ha
(b) Castlecomer*	264	93 (2%)	4.65 Ha		5.5Ha
(c) Graiguenamanagh	278	100 (2.1%)	5 Ha		6Ha
(d) Thomastown	437 ²	159 (3.4%)	8 Ha		6.7Ha
					(Review land provision in LAPs to 2027) ³

* See Volume 3 – Castlecomer Settlement Plan

Chapter 5: Economic Development

Insert Section 5.3.3a Castlecomer Discovery Park

The Discovery Park, and Craft Yard, in Castlecomer is an attractive asset, and opportunities to expand and promote the offering are embedded in this Plan, see Volume 3, Castlecomer Settlement Plan.

A Masterplan for the Discovery Park was published in 2024, and this set out the long term plan for expansion and enhancement of the Park's facilities. The facilities proposed under the Masterplan include tourist accommodation, cultural and recreational buildings and various access improvements.

¹ The figure for Callan is an increase of 150 persons to 2027 over and above the 2019 LAP following review under this Core strategy.

² The figure for Thomastown includes an additional 150 persons to 2027 over and above the 2019 LAP.

³ To realign the timelines of the LAPs with the City and County Development plan 2021-2027 the housing land required in the District towns will be reviewed to 2027 in light of the new housing demand figures.

Chapter 9: Heritage, Culture and the Arts

Amend Section 9.3.3.1 Kilkenny County ACA's to include the Castlecomer ACA as follows:

There may be other ACA's designated within the lifetime of this Development Plan. The ACAs for Callan, ~~Castlecomer~~, Graigueenamanagh and Thomastown are set out in the Local Area Plans for those towns *and the ACA for Castlecomer is included in Volume 3, Castlecomer Settlement Plan.*

Chapter 10: Infrastructure and Environment

10.2.7 Surface water drainage

Surface water drainage systems are designed to channel stormwater (rainwater) to the nearest suitable river. Rain falling on impervious surfaces is usually directed into surface water drainage systems. Best practice is to separate the surface water drainage system from the foul drainage system to maximise the efficiency of our waste water treatment plants.

Surface water drainage systems are effective at transferring surface water quickly, but they can cause the volume of water in the receiving watercourse to increase more rapidly thereby increasing flood risk. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can play a role in reducing and managing run-off to surface water drainage systems as well as improving water quality.

The Government Guidelines⁴ recommend how best to achieve this, through the replacement of impermeable surfacing with nature-based planted areas that are designed to absorb, retain, store, and treat urban runoff prior to discharge back into the environment. These are known as 'nature based solutions'.

A nature-based approach will reduce pollution and reduce flood risk as well as improving biodiversity and a greener more pleasant urban environment, as well as contributing to water conservation.

The Planning Authority shall have regard to any catchment-based surface water management plan in accordance with the Flood Risk Guidelines 2009, to facilitate the management of nature-based surface water management in a holistic manner. In all instances where development is proposed, non - nature based solutions to surface water management will only be considered where nature-based solutions cannot be incorporated or will not provide an adequate solution to the surface water management.

10.2.8 Development Management Requirements

The Planning Authority will have regard to the Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance on 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' *and the Government Guidelines on Water Sensitive Urban Design⁵, and any revisions thereof* in assessing applications.

⁴ *Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas Water Sensitive Urban Design Best Practice Interim Guidance Document, 2021 and Nature Based Management of Urban Rainwater and Urban Surface Water Discharges A National Strategy, 2024*

⁵ *Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas Water Sensitive Urban Design Best Practice Interim Guidance Document, 2021*

- *All planning applications for development shall include integrated provisions for nature-based rainwater management (NBS), appropriate to the scale and context of the development proposed.*
- Development must, so far as is reasonably practicable, incorporate the maximum provision to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff e.g.: -
 - Hard surface areas (car parks, etc.), should be constructed in permeable or semi-permeable materials,
 - On site storm water ponds to store and/or attenuate additional runoff from the development should be provided,
 - Soak-aways or french drains should be provided to increase infiltration and minimise additional runoff.
 - ~~The Planning Authority will normally require that all new developments, include rainwater harvesting and/or grey water recycling in their design, except where not practical or feasible~~
- Individual developments shall be obliged, in all cases where surface water drainage measures are required, to provide a surface water drainage system separated from the foul drainage system.
- In the case of one-off rural dwellings or extensions, except in circumstances where an existing surface water drainage system is available to the proposed site for development and which, in the opinion of the planning authority has adequate capacity to accommodate the identified surface water loading, surface water shall be disposed of, in its entirety within the curtilage of the development site by way of suitably sized soak holes.
- In the case of driveways, drainage measures shall be provided to a detail acceptable to the planning authority so as to avoid run-off from the site to the adjoining public road.
- For all other green-field developments in general the limitation of surface water run-off to pre-development levels will be required. Where a developer can clearly demonstrate that capacity exists to accommodate run-off levels in excess of green-field levels then the planning authority shall consider such proposals on a case by case basis.
- In the case of brown-field development, while existing surface water drainage measures will be taken into account, some attenuation measures for surface water may be required at the discretion of the planning authority in the interests of balanced and sustainable development.
- In line with the above Kilkenny County Council will consider all drainage proposals consistent with SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems).
- For developments adjacent to watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back a minimum of 5-10m from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel clearing/maintenance. Any required setback may be increased to provide for habitat protection. Development consisting of construction of embankments, wide bridge piers, or similar structures will not normally be permitted in or across flood plains or river channels.
- The culverting of water courses is discouraged. Where culverting is unavoidable, the use of ecologically friendly box culverts is required. A development proposal requiring culverting should document open watercourse habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat.
- Adequate allowance be made for climate change in designing surface water proposals a multiplication factor of 1.2 shall be applied to all river return periods up to 100 years except in circumstances where the OPW have provided advice specifying the particular multiplication factor for return periods up to 100 years. In the case of rainfall a multiplication factor of 1.1 shall be applied to rainfall intensities to make allowance for climate change requirements.

- In the design of surface water systems, regard shall be had to the [Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works](#)⁶ and associated GSDS technical documents.
- For larger scale developments a report will be required specifying the SUDS measures considered in principle. If natural measures are not included, the reasons why not should be outlined.

Chapter 12: Movement and Mobility

12.5 Cycling and Walking

Development management requirements

Require planning applications to demonstrate the development proposal's accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, *including compliance with the Compact Settlement Guidelines⁷ and any revisions thereof*. Planning applications for residential/commercial or mixed-use developments need to:

- Demonstrate detailed layouts and design which reflect the importance of walking and cycling by providing safe and direct access to local services and public transport nodes.
- Demonstrate how walking and cycling is integrated with open space provision.
- Demonstrate that the proposal is easily accessible to pedestrians and cyclists alike with the layouts displaying high internal pedestrian and cyclist permeability.
- Show a high quality of internal routes which are safe, secure and convenient for users.
- Require that adequate covered facilities for the secure parking of bicycles are provided at convenient locations close to building entrances in order to encourage cycling. *For any new housing schemes, cycle storage facilities should be provided in a dedicated facility of permanent construction, within the building footprint or, where not feasible, within an adjacent or adjoining purpose-built structure of permanent construction. Cycle parking areas shall be designed so that cyclists feel safe. It is best practice that either secure cycle cage/compound or preferably locker facilities are provided.* The number of bicycle parking spaces required will be in accordance with Table 12.2 below.

12.12 Car parking

In assessing development proposals, the Planning Authority will use the standards set out in Table 12.3 below, *combined with the requirements of the Compact Settlements Guidelines⁸, and any revisions thereof*.

Table 12.3 Car Parking Standards

⁶⁶ Greater Dublin Local Authorities, [Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works](#), 2006

⁷ Government of Ireland, *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, 2024

⁸ Government of Ireland, *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, 2024

Land Use	Parking Spaces per Unit
Dwelling House	<p><i>Maximum 1.5 car parking spaces per unit in accessible locations⁹</i></p> <p><i>Maximum 2 car parking spaces per unit in intermediate and peripheral locations¹⁰</i></p> <p>0.25 spaces per unit for visitor parking</p>

Chapter 13: Requirements for Development

13.4 Compact Growth

The Compact Settlements Guidelines¹¹ set out various Specific Planning Policy Requirements that must be adhered to.

13.4.1 Density

Delete text and replace with:

The appropriate residential density in any particular location will be determined in accordance with the Compact Settlements Guidelines¹².

13.9 Separation Distance between houses

~~In general, there should be adequate separation (traditionally about 22 m between 2-storey dwellings) between opposing first floor windows.~~ *When considering a planning application for residential development, a separation distance of at least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units and apartment units, above ground floor level shall be maintained. Separation distances below 16 metres may be considered acceptable in circumstances where there are no opposing windows serving habitable rooms and where suitable privacy measures have been designed into the scheme to prevent undue overlooking of habitable rooms and private amenity spaces.*

13.20.1 Private Open Space

Delete text and replace with:

Private open space standards shall comply with the Compact Settlements Guidelines¹³ and any revisions thereof.

13.20.2.1 Design of Open Space

⁹ *As defined by the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024*

¹⁰ *As defined by the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024*

¹¹ *Government of Ireland, Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024*

¹² *Government of Ireland, Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024*

¹³ *Government of Ireland, Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024*

~~Applications shall have regard to the qualitative standards outlined in Section 4.18 of the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.~~

Applications shall have regard to the qualitative standards outlined in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities and any revisions thereof.

Public open space provision shall be between 10% and 15% of net site area in range and not more than a minimum of 15% net site area save in exceptional circumstances. The minimum requirement should be justified taking into account existing public open space provision in the area and broader nature conservation and environmental considerations.

13.20.3 Open Space in new residential development

~~The Council will require a minimum public open space provision of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. For the purposes of this calculation, public open space requirements are to be based on residential units with an occupancy rate of 2.8 persons per unit.~~

~~A reduction to this standard will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances as determined by the local authority. Where such a relaxation occurs the provision of open space within any scheme should not be below 10% of the site area.~~

13.30 Zoning objectives (See Figure 4.3 New Ross Environs)

13.30.1 Agriculture

Open for consideration: Public open space, guesthouse, restaurant, nursing home, dwelling houses in certain limited cases, halting site, private open space, *tourist accommodation uses associated with, and linked to, the Castlecomer Discovery Park.*

Flood Risk:

All proposed development within this zone which also falls within Flood Zones A or B shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment. No highly vulnerable uses other than extensions to existing structures and uses will be permitted within Flood Zones A or B.

Less vulnerable uses will not be allowed within Flood Zone A other than extensions to existing structures and uses.

13.30.2 Community Facilities

Permissible uses:

Orphanages

~~Open for consideration: Town centre uses which would not conflict with the other objectives of the Plan~~

Flood Risk:

All proposed development within this zone which also falls within flood zone A or B shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment. No highly vulnerable uses other than extensions to existing structures and uses will be permitted within Flood Zones A or B.

Less vulnerable uses will not be allowed within Flood Zone A other than extensions to existing structures and uses.

13.30.5 Mixed use (New Ross Environs)

Objective: To encourage the development of underutilised and brownfield lands with a view to consolidating and adding vitality to these areas and ensuring the efficient use of urban lands. A mix of uses such as residential, commercial, community, tourism and recreation are envisaged.

Any retail development proposed shall comply with the requirements of the Retail Strategy. ***No retail use is to be permitted on the Mixed use site in Castlecomer.***

In New Ross, significant development proposals on this site must be made in the context of a masterplan/design statement for the former Albatross site, situated in both the Kilkenny County Council and New Ross Town Council jurisdictions. This master plan shall be prepared in consultation with both these authorities. There shall be an emphasis on the attainment of an appropriate mix of uses to include recreation, leisure, tourism, offices, residential and public open spaces.

13.30.6 Amenity/Green links/Biodiversity Conservation/Open space/recreation

Objective:

Objective: To allow for ~~green links and~~ biodiversity conservation and to preserve, provide and improve recreational open space ***and connectivity, including the expansion of tourist related facilities in the Castlecomer Discovery Park.***

Permissible Uses:

Open space, ***playgrounds and facilities associated with active recreational uses and tourism related facilities in the Castlecomer Discovery Park.***

Open for Consideration:

Sports clubs, ***cultural and*** recreational buildings, stands, pavilions, agricultural uses, public service installations, ***Café, club house and associated facilities, golf course, water based recreational activities, camp site /glamping and associated parking.***

Flood Risk:

All proposed development within this zone which also falls within flood zone A or B shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment. No highly vulnerable uses other than extensions to existing structures and uses will be permitted within Flood Zones A or B.

Less vulnerable uses will not be allowed within Flood Zone A other than extensions to existing structures and uses.

13.30.7 Existing Residential

Flood Risk:

All proposed development within this zone which also falls within flood zone A or B shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment. No highly vulnerable uses other than extensions to existing structures and uses will be permitted within Flood Zones A or B.

Less vulnerable uses will not be allowed within Flood Zone A other than extensions to existing structures and uses.

13.30.8 Residential (low density)

Open for Consideration: Places of worship, community centres, halting sites, public service installations, playgroup or crèche, Nursing home, ~~Bed and breakfast establishments and guesthouses~~ *tourist accommodation*, lock up garages, retail shop of local convenience, hotel, public house, restaurant, use by owner or occupier of part of a private residence as a studio, for a light industrial activity, a clinic or surgery, professional office, or as a playgroup or crèche.

13.30.9 New Residential

Permissible Uses: Residential

Open for consideration: gymnasiums, *Bed and Breakfast/Guesthouse, Childcare Facilities, Club house and associated facilities, Open Space, Playground, community/educational facilities, Home-based Economic Activity, Shop (Convenience, not more than 100 sqm in gross retail area), Recycling Centre (bottle banks, etc).*

Flood Risk:

All proposed development within this zone which also falls within flood zones A or B shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment. No highly vulnerable uses other than extensions to existing structures and uses will be permitted within Flood Zones A or B.

Less vulnerable uses will not be allowed within Flood Zone A other than extensions to existing structures and uses.

13.30.10 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Green Links/ Biodiversity/Conservation

Objective:

To reserve the area within the designated Special Area of Conservation for green links / biodiversity / conservation purposes and to accommodate connectivity.

Permissible Uses:

Biodiversity projects and works associated with the conservation and management of the Special Area of Conservation.

Open for Consideration:

In Castlecomer, links to span the SAC such as bridges.

13.30.11 General Business

Objective:

To allow a flexible approach to development that supports the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Permissible Uses:

Dwellings, retailing, retail warehousing, wholesale outlets, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, halting sites, hotels, motels, guest houses, clubs, private garages, open spaces, public service installations, medical and related consultants, restaurants, public houses, car parks, halls or discotheques, and other uses as permitted and open for consideration in residential zoning.

Open for Consideration:

Open space, workshop or light industry, small incubator uses provided that there is no adverse impact to the amenity of adjacent residential areas.

Insert entire new Volume 3 as follows.



Kilkenny City and County Development Plan
Volume 3 Settlement Plans
2021-2027

2025

Castlecomer Settlement Plan



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

Forward Planning

May 2025

Volume 3: Settlement Plans

Introduction

These Settlement Plans contained in Volume 3 consist of a written statement and accompanying maps. The entire Plan is a statement of Council policy. It must be noted that each section is not stand-alone, but should be read in conjunction with all other chapters of the Development Plan.

In assessing any development in the area, the overall context will be informed by all relevant sections, including the settlement strategy, housing, community, economic, heritage and infrastructure considerations. Therefore, no one item takes precedence over another, but rather all plan provisions converge, founded as they are on the goal of sustainable development.

1 Castlecomer District Town

1.1 Town Context

Castlecomer is situated 20 km north of Kilkenny City in north-east County Kilkenny. It is one of 4 District Towns in the county, as set out under Volume 1, Section 4.4. The town is an important market and service centre for the agricultural hinterland.

Castlecomer is bounded by the River Dinin to the east, and the Castlecomer Discovery Park to the north-east which encompasses an area of approximately 80 acres. The topography and natural features of the area have influenced the pattern and form of development in the town over the years. The town as a whole is attractive and inviting as a place to live and for visitors to Kilkenny.

In recent years the lack of a sufficient water supply has constrained development in Castlecomer. The development of the Oak Hill and Acorns housing estates, to the west of the Kilkenny Road, took place in the 2000's. A Local Area Plan was in place for Castlecomer from 2018 to 2024, and during this period the only housing estate built was Glebeside, a 33 unit development at Donaguile (built by the Council under a Part 8). Notwithstanding the constrained water supply, developments during the last Plan included the opening of the Avalon Hotel in 2019, and the construction of the Miner's Bridge, to improve the town's link to the Discovery Park, in 2022.

1.2 Plan priorities

The *Compact Settlements Guidelines*¹⁴ set out priorities in relation to compact growth for settlements such as Castlecomer, which falls within the Small and Medium sized town category. Based on the Guidelines, the priorities for Castlecomer are as follows:

To fulfil its potential as a District Town, the key priorities for this Plan are to:

- a) ensure sufficiency of water supply,
- b) ensure readiness of development for when additional water capacity becomes available,
- c) strengthen the town centre,

¹⁴ Government of Ireland, *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, 2024

- d) protect, restore and enhance historic fabric, character, amenity, natural heritage, biodiversity and environmental quality,
- e) realise opportunities for adaption, reuse and intensification of existing buildings and for backland, brownfield and infill development, and
- f) deliver sequential and sustainable urban extension at locations that are closest to the urban core and are integrated into, or can be integrated into, the existing built up footprint of the settlement.

1.3 Core Strategy

The above priorities have informed the making of the Core Strategy. There are several factors to consider in calculating the amount of land to be zoned for residential development in this Plan. These include:

- Core Strategy of the Development Plan (See Vol. 1 Chapter 4)
- Population analysis
 - Population trends to 2022
 - Projection of population growth
- Housing unit requirement
 - Units built since 2021 and permitted development
- Gross and net residential zoning
- Additional Provision

As set out in Table 4.6 of Volume 1, under the County Core Strategy, Castlecomer was allocated a population increase of 264 people to 2027. This translated into a housing land requirement of 4.65 hectares for the 6 year period 2021-2027¹⁵.

This Settlement Plan forms part of the County Development Plan, the review of which commences in 2025. A new Development Plan will be in place by 2027, which will set out the Core Strategy for the entire county.

Since 2021, the only multiple unit housing scheme built was Glebeside, a 33 unit development at Donaguile (built by the Council under a Part 8), on a 1.1 hectare site. As the current Core Strategy stands therefore, a balance of 3.55 hectares remains to 2027.

1.3.1 Population analysis

The population of Castlecomer town in the 2022 Census is 1,496, which marked a small decrease for the town from the 2016 Census, which recorded a population of 1,502. It must be noted that the CSO changed the criteria for designation of town boundaries for the 2022 Census, and the boundary of the enumerated area of the town reduced over this period. The population of the surrounding Electoral Division increased, from 2,318 to 2,397 over the same period, therefore the slight decline in the town's population does not reflect a trend of decreasing population in the area.

¹⁵ This was on the basis of applying an average density of 20 units per hectare

Table 1 CSO Population Statistics 1996 - 2022						
	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016	2022
Castlecomer Town	1,380	1,482	1,531	1,456	1,502	1,496
Castlecomer Electoral Division	2,133	2,319	2,407	2,293	2,318	2,397

The Core Strategy of the Development Plan allocated an additional 264 people to 2027, from the 1,502 in 2016. It is clear from the 2022 Census figure, and the lack of housing development since then¹⁶, that this allocation has not been absorbed. This allocation will continue to be provided for in this Plan. According to the Core Strategy, the population to be accommodated is 1,766. Subtracting the 2022 population figure of 1,496, gives a population allocation of 270 to 2027.

1.3.2 Housing unit requirement

A population of 270 translates to a household demand of 97 units¹⁷. At present, there are extant planning permissions for 39 units at the former Glanbia Site¹⁸, on land zoned as Mixed Use.

1.3.3 Gross and net residential zoning

The *Compact Settlements Guidelines* require that net and gross areas are used when calculating land requirements. The gross area encompasses the entire parcel, including the road network, open space, areas with constraints, such as within flood zones, difficult topography etc. The net area is the land actually to be used for housing. The general rule of thumb is that the net site area would be between 65 to 80 percent (approx.) of the gross area but this will depend on the area of land involved and local circumstances¹⁹. For this Plan, an average of 65% has been used to obtain the net site area, or area that is envisaged to be developed for residential use.

Based on the population allocation above, an area of 2.3 hectares is required, see Table 2 below.

¹⁶ The only multiple-unit housing development (Glebeside) was occupied by the Census date of 2022

¹⁷ Average household size for Co. Kilkenny for 2022 is 2.78

¹⁸ Under P20/112 and P.23/60610 (serviced by private well)

¹⁹ *Sustainable and Compact Settlements | Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024*, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, page 19.

Table 3 Core Strategy to 2027			
	Population allocation	Household demand ²⁰	Housing land requirement (25 units p.h.)
Castlecomer Town	270	58	2.3 ha

The Core Strategy indicates a net figure of 2.3 ha for the population to 2027, based on a minimum density of 25 units/ha (to align with *Compact Settlement Guidelines*). This means the gross residential zoning would be 3.5 ha.

1.3.4 Additional Provision

The *Development Plan Guidelines*²¹ set out that ‘additional provision’ of lands may be provided. Castlecomer, as a District Town, has been targeted for growth in successive Development Plans, but owing to the lack of capacity in water services, it has not fulfilled its potential.

This Plan has identified 3.6 ha of land for New Residential zoning, which includes 3% Additional Provision (or 0.1 hectares). The rationale for this is:

- To counteract the slow pace of growth in Castlecomer over the last two decades and to enable sufficient residential development within the plan period to ensure that Castlecomer reaches its potential as a District Town.
- To avoid restricting the supply of housing development through inactivity on a particular landholding or site.
- Although not serviced at present, over the life of this Plan, the water services capacity is due to be increased, and the land identified will be serviced at that point.

1.3.5 Spatial distribution

In line with National Policy Objective 9 of the *National Planning Framework First Revision*²², the aim is to deliver at least 30% of all new homes, within the existing built-up footprint. The built-up footprint is taken as being the 2022 CSO boundary. Based on the identified requirement of 3.6 hectares, this breakdown is as follows:

NPO 9 – minimum 30% inside CSO boundary
Min. 1.08 ha inside CSO boundary
Max. 2.5 ha outside

²⁰ 97 units minus the 39 permitted = 58

²¹ *Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2022*

²² *National Planning Framework, First Revision, April 2025*

1.3.6 Density ranges

The *Compact Settlements Guidelines*²³ set out recommended density ranges for housing development. Castlecomer falls within the Small and Medium sized town (1,500-5,000 population) category²⁴. The Guidelines recommend a density range of 25 dph to 40 dph²⁵ (net) to be generally applied at the edge of small to medium sized towns. For more central sites, new development should respond positively to the scale, form and character of existing development, and to the capacity of services and infrastructure (including public transport and water services infrastructure).

1.4 Settlement Capacity Audit

The allocation, taken from the Core Strategy, is distributed in a manner consistent with a standardised methodology, which is set out in the Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) accompanying this Plan. This methodology, termed a Tiered Approach to Zoning (TAZ), is intended to improve the coordination of zoning and infrastructure and service provision.

The SCA has identified a total of 3.6 hectares (gross) inside the CSO settlement boundary for New Residential, which is mainly greenfield land. There is also a large area, of approx. 4 ha, inside the CSO settlement boundary, with potential for some residential development, which has been identified for the preparation of a Masterplan, see Section 1.12. (The previous LAP had zoned a total of 2.8 hectares of land for New Residential, 0.6 ha of which was outside the CSO settlement boundary.)

The zoning map is provided in Figure CC1: Castlecomer Zoning Map, and the Plan objectives are set out on Figure CC2: Castlecomer Objectives Map.

1.5 Area Identity

Castlecomer was a planned town, and the formal layout of the town remains, with the main commercial areas centred on a cross roads development comprising a broad tree lined High Street and public space at Market Square. Development was laid out in a linear manner along Kilkenny Street from the 1800's. To the east, growth was restricted by the River Dinin, and Castlecomer House.

Historically, development of the town was also restricted to the west by the railway line. However, since the line's abandonment, development spread beyond this along the town's main arterial routes and in some cases in upland areas.

In line with the priorities under Section 1.2, the objective of this plan is to consolidate the current structure and to render it more permeable, focussing on lands closer to the centre for housing and retail uses and further towards the edges of town for industrial uses.

1.6 Economic Development and Employment

Castlecomer's main role is as a service centre for its wider rural hinterland, but it is also home to some manufacturing bases. Existing large employers in the town include Modubuild at Princes Ground, and

²³ Government of Ireland, *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, 2024

²⁴ Section 3.3.4 *ibid*

²⁵ This equates to 10 to 16 units per acre

SRS, Steel and Roofing Systems in the Castlecomer Business Park. (Tourism is addressed in Section 1.9.)

It is essential that Castlecomer functions meaningfully as a District Town and tourist centre in north Kilkenny. This requires offering a mix of employment opportunities relating to enterprise, local services and tourism sectors. An assessment of employment land was carried out based on the OPR Practice Note PN04: *Planning for Employment Growth - The Development Plan and Employment Lands*.

This found that some sites as designated in the 2018 LAP were not appropriate for the development of employment facilities. The development and expansion of the three existing employment centres of the Enterprise Centre, the Castlecomer Business park and the One Stop Business Centre are to be consolidated and encouraged. These areas provide sufficient land to accommodate the projected need for employment expansion. The areas zoned for General Business around the town centre, and Mixed use (Modubuild site at Prince Grounds), allow for a broad range of employment uses. Greenfield sites at a remove from the centre are to be discouraged, in line with the priorities for this Plan.

Access at the Castlecomer Business Park is addressed under Section 1.11 Movement.

The former Brick factory, located outside the settlement boundary of the town, on the Athy road has the potential for employment generation. In recent years the building and premises have fallen into a poor state of repair.

1.6.1 Retail

For retail, Castlecomer is classified as a Level 3 District/sub county town in the County's retail hierarchy, see Vol. 1, Chapter 5. A Core Retail area is designated in Vol. 1, Figure 5.3. In the main, the existing retail activity is centred on The Square. Permission was granted in 2023 for a convenience retail unit on the site of the former Creamery, which has yet to be commenced²⁶. The plan area also includes the Castlecomer Business Park at Ballyhimmin, which includes a number of industrial/commercial units, and the Tirlán CountryLife store.

In accordance with the sequential approach, the focus for retail will remain the core retail area. The town centre, and surrounds, is zoned as General Business, which allows for a broad range of uses, including retail. Opportunities for the redevelopment of backland sites remain within this zone. The Mixed Use zone is applied on the Modubuild site; at present this site is not well connected to the core. Retail is not permissible on this site, see Vol. 1 Chapter 13.

The issue of town centre parking was raised during consultation on this Plan, as a concern affecting businesses. (See Section 1.11 Movement.)

Objectives

²⁶ Permission granted for a significant mixed use development on this site during the period of the last Plan (under P.20/112 and P.23/60610).

V3CC1: To support the continued use and expansion of the Castlecomer Enterprise Centre, subject to appropriate site specific flood risk assessment.

V3CC2: To examine uses for the former brick factory, that would align with sustainable land use and transportation patterns.

1.7 Community facilities

An audit of social infrastructure (e.g. schools, library, health services), was carried out to inform the preparation of this Plan. There are a wide range of community facilities serving the plan area.

1.7.1 Schools

There are three primary schools and one post-primary school in the area, as follows:

Name of facility	Level
Castlecomer Community School	Secondary
Presentation Convent (Mixed and Senior Girls)	Primary
Castlecomer Boys'	Primary
Wandesforde Mixed	Primary

The Presentation Convent and the Castlecomer Boys' school are to amalgamate from September 2025, to operate from the Presentation Convent site. This is a centrally located site, ideally situated in the built-up area of the town, however pedestrian and cycle linkages could be improved, with the creation of access to the rear along the Dinin (see Section 1.12). The relocation of the Boys School offers opportunities for the redevelopment of the site.

The Castlecomer Community School was recently granted permission for an extension of facilities²⁷.

The site adjoining the Community School to the east, containing the old Barracks, has been identified for the preparation of a Masterplan, see Section 1.12.

1.7.2 Childcare

There are two childcare providers in the town. Both have capacity in physical space, but human resources are the constraint to any expansion. The creche at the Community Hall has a small hard-surfaced play area, but does not currently have access to any grassed area for play. This site adjoins a large site backing on to the River Dinin, see Section 1.12.

1.7.3 Health facilities

There is a District hospital in the town, but there is no private nursing home located within close proximity of the study area. To ensure a flexible approach, nursing homes are permissible within many of the zones, including within the Agriculture zone, see Vol. 1, Section 13.30.

1.8 Heritage

The natural, built and cultural heritage in Castlecomer contribute to its character and local distinctiveness. The townscape of Castlecomer is an important part of the area's visual amenity and

²⁷ P24/60515 granted 25/04/2025

that is reflected in the designation of the historic town centre as an Architectural Conservation Area. The most up to date Record of Protected Structures for Castlecomer is available as Appendix I to the Development Plan.

1.8.1 Castlecomer ACA

The Castlecomer ACA covers the core of the town, extending along Barrack Street, Chatsworth Street, the Square/High Street and Kilkenny Street. A walking trail, the Wonder Wander, was devised in 2025, to raise awareness of the architectural features.



Extract from the Castlecomer Wonder Wander, 2024

Description and Historical Background

The earliest record of Castlecomer dates from 1200 when a Motte and Norman Castle was erected east of the existing bridge. In 1685 Sir Christopher Wandesforde began the construction of the town and demesne near the site of the old Castle. The town's surviving built fabric makes a significant contribution to the quality and character of the environment and townscape.

There is a distinct cross pattern to the street layout in the centre of Castlecomer, with the four most significant streets converging on one central point offering a focal point to the townscape. In the mid 17th century the lands on which Castlecomer are now located were given to Sir Christopher Wandesforde who laid out the town to his own specifications. Due to the carefully planned proportions of the town, a strong sense of formality can be observed in the urban environment. Several significant vistas can be observed within the designated areas, with notable viewpoints looking east from Barrack Street down High Street and looking south down Kilkenny Street.

Statement of Character (see Figure CC3 for ACA boundary)

High Street, also known as The Square, is an example of the impressive character of Castlecomer, with its generous dimensions, lime tree lined footpaths and buildings of distinguished architectural merit such as the prominent Creamery House. The street width to building height ratio is particularly generous, with the street width exceeding forty metres at some points and building heights ranging from two to three storeys. The resulting urban environment benefits from its east west orientation in providing a bright, spacious but formal urban environment.

Classically proportioned buildings augment the formal character of the streetscape, with the majority of the buildings fronting onto High Street having historical or architectural merit. Features of significance include Wyatt styled tripartite fenestration and applied renderings. There is a sharp definition between public and private open space in the town, with public space in the spaces between building frontages and private space accessed through laneways under distinctive carriage arches.



High Street, Castlecomer

Chatsworth Street

The street slopes, from the Square, gradually down to the Cloghogue River/Castlecomer Stream, a tributary of the Dinin River. The street is bookended between the former RIC Barracks, where it meets the Square, and the attractive 19th century bridge of civil engineering heritage significance which spans the stream. There are a number of appealing middle-size houses on the street, with features including tripartite windows that enhance the visual aesthetic of the streetscape, while a cluster of 19th century worker's cottages are also visible on the northern end of the street.

Market Square is located south of High Street, taking the pattern of a square siding onto Kilkenny Street. The court house at the centre of the square acts as a focal point, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the townscape on account of distinguishing attributes including the octagonal lantern articulating or marking the skyline. The structure, originally a Market House, was subsequently converted into a court house, and is now in community use. Market Square offers an important and distinctive break in the streetscape, providing formal open space to an otherwise narrow street.



Market House, Castlecomer

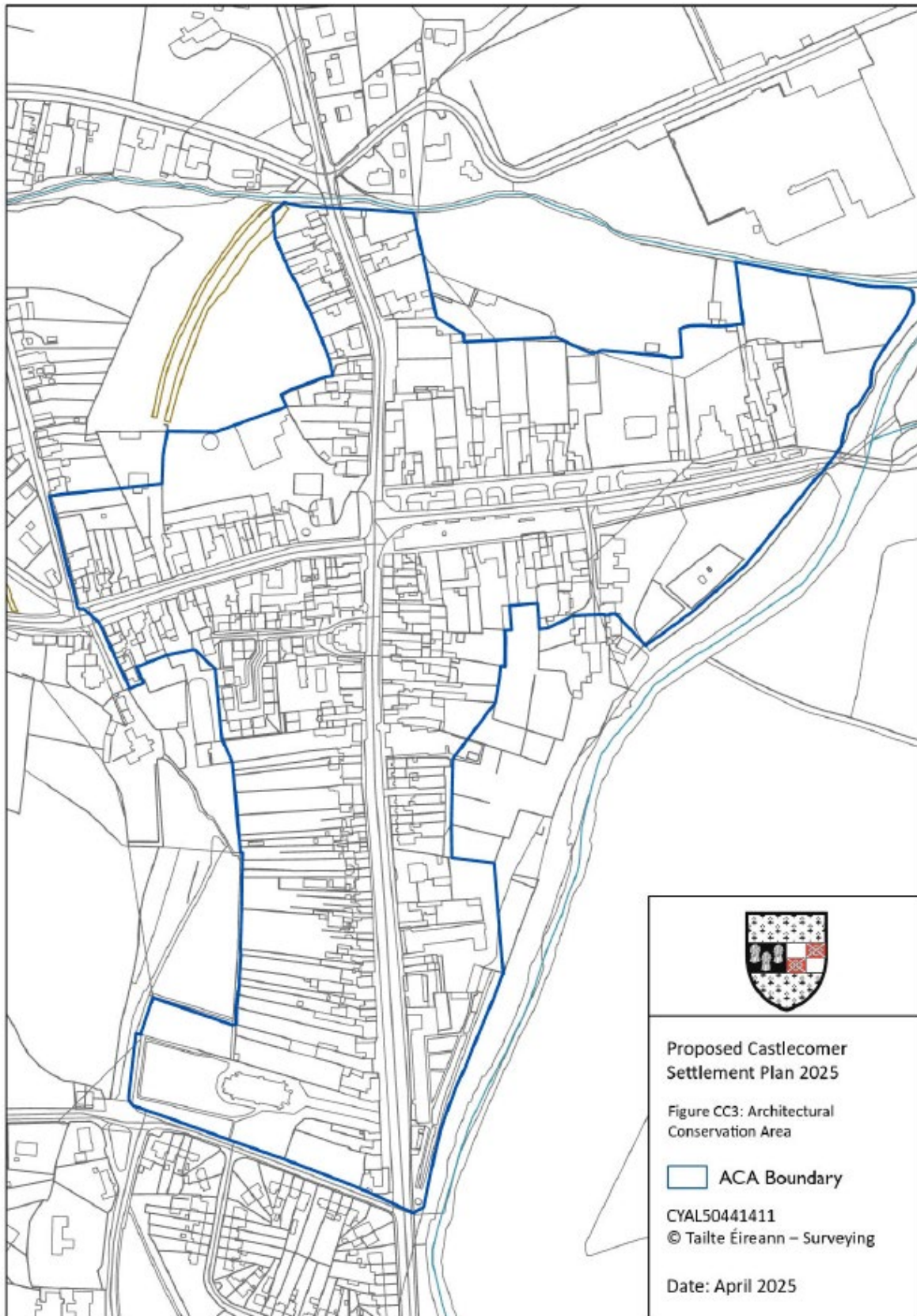
Kilkenny Street contrasts with the generous dimensions of High Street, with street widths ranging from 10 to 15 metres and building heights not exceeding three storeys. The street has a north south orientation and is relatively flat in nature. Several significant clusters of institutional buildings are located on the street that reflects the evolution and heritage of the town.

The old school house, now the library, is said to have been the first purpose built educational building in the town and it offers an imposing landmark on the street.

Two significant residential clusters are located on Kilkenny Street, the first was built to house the Royal Irish Constabulary officers, stationed at the nearby barracks. Built in the early 20th century, Sunlight Villas is a cluster consisting of four dwellings with the same design features relating to the arts and crafts and partly the Edwardian movement distinguishing the buildings from their surroundings.

The second significant residential cluster, called Florence Terrace, was built by Captain Wandesford in the early 20th century to house workers of the nearby coalmines. The cluster is distinguished from the surrounding built form due to its distinctive locally manufactured red brick with the locally produced wrought iron fencing embellishing the street presence of the cluster.

Figure CC3 Castlecomer ACA boundary



Development management requirements based on assessment of special character

See policies in Vol. 1, Section 9.3.3 relating to all ACAs

- CCACA 1: Newly proposed signage must not interfere with, or result in visual clutter or obscure architectural heritage detailing in the streetscapes of Castlecomer. New signage proposals for buildings in the ACA will require an Architectural Heritage Impact assessment.
- CCACA 2: To ensure the distinctive character of residential clusters such as Sunlight Villas and Florence Terrace, and those located on Chatsworth Street are retained.
- CCACA 3: To ensure early / original fenestration is retained, and where new fenestration is proposed, to replace later inappropriate insertions, that they enhance the character of the ACA.

1.8.2 Natural Heritage

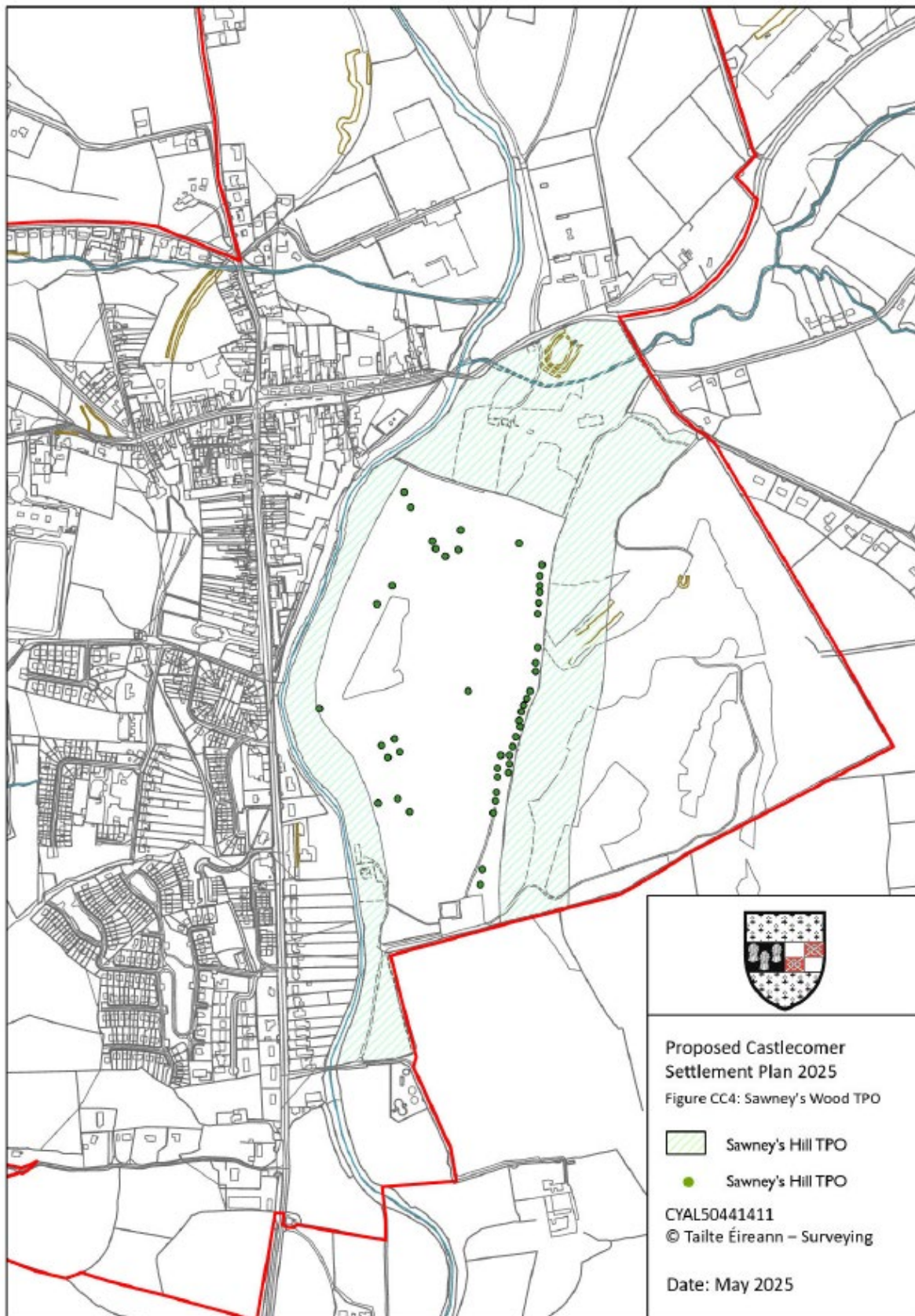
In terms of natural heritage, the key feature in Castlecomer is the River Dinin which forms part of the River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

A Tree Preservation Order, or TPO, currently applies to the area of Sawney's Wood/Hill (TPO 1/67), which forms part of the Castlecomer golf club, see Figure CC4 TPO Map.

Objectives

V3CC3: Protect the area designated for the TPO at Sawney's Wood

Figure CC4 Sawney's Wood Tree Preservation Order



1.9 Recreation and Tourism

Tourism is an important industry in the local economy and it is acknowledged as a catalyst for a considerable amount of commercial activity in the town. The Avalon Hotel, which opened in 2019, is a significant addition to the town. The hotel has expanded since opening, with a recent grant of permission for development on the Nurse's Cottage site, which adjoins the hotel to east.

1.9.1 Discovery Park

The Discovery Park, including Craft Yard is an attractive asset, and opportunities to expand and promote the offering are embedded in this Plan. This includes appropriate zoning and objectives.

A Masterplan for the Discovery Park was published in 2024, and this set out the long term plan for expansion and enhancement of the Park's facilities. The new facilities proposed under the Masterplan include tourist accommodation, cultural and recreational buildings and various access improvements. Within the settlement boundary, the Discovery Park is zoned as 'Open Space', which includes for the expansion of tourist facilities, see Vol. 1, Chapter 13. The Agricultural zoning, north of Prince Grounds, also allows for tourist accommodation.

The Masterplan includes an ambition to enhance the connectivity with the town centre; both physically and with signage. This Plan includes an objective (PC3) to link the Park to the land north of Prince Grounds, see Section 1.11 Movement.

The Masterplan identifies a number of areas for expansion of facilities outside the zoned area of the Castlecomer settlement; Section 5.3 Tourism and specifically 5.3.4 Camping/Glamping sites of Volume 1 will apply outside the settlement boundary.

The Masterplan identifies the need for improvements to the access arrangements to accommodate the expansion envisaged. These include a proposed access to the Clogh Road, the R426, and additional access points on the N78. Any such proposals affecting the national secondary road (N78) will be subject to engagement with the TII, see Section 1.11 Movement.

1.9.2 Open Space/Sports facilities

There are two sports grounds serving the town; the Princes Ground, home to Deen Celtic, and the Erin's Own Sports ground, at Ballycomey, just outside the town boundary. The Community school contains a large number of recreational facilities, such as an athletics track, basketball court and playing fields.

For neighbourhood parks, there is a small park with playground beside the Fire Station, along Kilkenny Street. It is acknowledged that the Discovery Park is a fantastic resource for the town, however other opportunities for pocket parks should be explored nearer to the Square.

Market Square offers opportunities in this regard. At present Market Square is dominated by car-parking and circulation. A reconfiguration of the west-facing Square, containing the interesting features of the former Market-house, to accommodate seating and planting, could be a pleasant addition to the town centre.

There is a considerable area of land along the River Dinin, which is located within the flood zones²⁸. In general, where land does not pass the Justification Test²⁹, the land is zoned for Open Space. The 2018 Local Area Plan contained a long term objective for the creation of a walk/cycleway along the river, to the rear of the Community Hall, library and school along Kilkenny street, with access from some of those, and connecting on to the Wandesforde school and the Square, along by Mill Lane. This connection remains an objective of this Plan (see PC1 in Section 1.11).

Objective 8Ka in Vol. 1 Chapter 8, Open Space and Recreation, relates to the potential of developing a Greenway from Kilkenny to Castlecomer and Ballyragget and onwards to Co. Laois as part of the development of Greenways and Blueways within the County. Objective 8Ka is a long term objective, but this link through the town could be a contribution in the achievement of this.

Besides the Discovery Park, the other large area of open space zoning encompasses the Castlecomer Golf Club which is located east of the town. At present this area is disconnected from the town. There is an opportunity for greater connectivity between the town and golf club's northern end. Any development which would impede such a connection will not be permitted.

Objectives:

V3CC4: To support the implementation of the Discovery Park Masterplan, including improvements to the access arrangements, on a phased basis as resources permit subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

V3CC5: To support the provision of appropriate heritage/tourism directional signage throughout the town, including those covered under the Public Realm Plan for the Square.

V3CC6: To examine the reconfiguration of Market Square, to allow for an area of public seating and planting.

1.10 Infrastructure and Environment

1.10.1 Water services

The main issue affecting development in Castlecomer over the last number of years is the lack of capacity in water services. The Castlecomer area is served by the Clogh-Castlecomer Water Resource Zone (WRZ), and there is currently no capacity in this zone. The water treatment plant is located north of the Plan area, in Clogh, abstracting water from the River Dinin. Uisce Eireann are exploring new groundwater sources to supplement supply. This has included the grant of planning permission for bored test water wells at Ardra.

The Council will work with Uisce Eireann to ensure the provision of an adequate water supply to serve the needs of Castlecomer.

²⁸ See the accompanying Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Variation 5: Castlecomer Settlement Plan

²⁹ See Section 4 of *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

Wastewater

The waste water treatment facility is located at Smithstown, and this was upgraded in 2017. Capacity is available in wastewater services.

1.10.2 Flood Risk Management

Castlecomer is subject to flood risk, as detailed in the accompanying Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to this Settlement Plan. Arising from the SFRA, a number of site-specific objectives have been identified as follows:

Objectives:

V3CC7: For the residential zoning to the east of Kilkenny Street, no additional residential units, or any ‘Highly vulnerable developments’ are to be permitted within Flood Zone A or B. Less vulnerable uses will not be permitted within Flood Zone A. Applications for extensions to existing uses or structures will be considered.

V3CC8: For the Community Facilities zoning at Wandesforde School, no additional ‘Highly vulnerable developments’ are to be permitted within Flood Zone A or B. Less vulnerable uses will not be permitted within Flood Zone A. Applications for extensions to existing uses or structures will be considered.

V3CC9: For the Residential zoning north of Castlecomer stream, no additional ‘Highly vulnerable developments’ are to be permitted within Flood Zone A or B. Less vulnerable uses will not be permitted within Flood Zone A. Applications for extensions to existing uses or structures will be considered.

V3CC10: For the General Business zone on the site of the Garda Station and the house adjoining the Garda station to the north, no additional ‘Highly vulnerable developments’ are to be permitted within Flood Zone A or B. Applications for extensions to existing uses or structures will be considered.

1.10.3 Broadband

The National Broadband Plan aims to ensure that every home, farm and business in Ireland has access to high-speed broadband. National Broadband Ireland (NBI) are contracted to roll this programme out. According to the NBI, the Castlecomer Deployment Area includes 2,618 premises and is far advanced. In relation to the town of Castlecomer, the town centre and main roads are outside the NBI Intervention Area, as they are receiving, or can receive the minimum broadband speed from commercial operators.

The Council will support the continued roll out of high speed broadband in the area, see Vol. 1 Section 10.4.1.4 Telecommunications Antennae, at appropriate locations.

Objectives:

V3CC11: To continue to advocate and collaborate with Uisce Eireann to ensure the provision of an adequate water supply to serve the needs of Castlecomer.

1.11 Movement and mobility

A Transport Assessment has been carried out to inform this Plan. The transport and land use policy for the Plan is to promote modal shift away from the car, by appropriate zoning and by increasing permeability for pedestrians and cyclists, with a particular focus on access to schools. The *Castlecomer Mobility Management Plan (2023)* was reviewed as part of the transport assessment.

The mobility objectives are set out below, and mapped in Figure CC5. A number of the objectives are to be reviewed following the commencement of operation of the mixed use development at the former Creamery site, to determine the appropriate approach.

Traffic safety at the Castlecomer Business Park, on the Kilkenny Road, has been identified as an issue. This access is located within the 80 kph speed limit. An objective is included for the carrying out of improvements to the road in this area to enhance pedestrian and traffic safety alike. In line with the policy set out in Volume 1, Section 12.11.3, Access to National Roads, the policy is to avoid the generation of increased traffic from this access. There is no additional zoning proposed at this location.



Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer

Transport and Mobility Objectives, see Figure CC5

Type	Map Ref.	Description
Key site (Former Creamery)	KS1	To improve permeability at the former Creamery site including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a new street from Chatsworth Street/The Square to the Ballinakill Road. • To provide pedestrian/cycle access through the site to Love Lane. • To provide a pedestrian/cycle route to Chatsworth Street. • To examine provision of pedestrian facilities on Chatsworth Street, following implementation of any planning permission on the former Creamery site.
Key site (The Barracks)	KS2	To create new connections between Barrack Street and Maryville, as part of the completion of the Masterplan for the area. This to include the formalising of the pedestrian/cycle route from Maryville to the Community School.
Key site (The Boys school)	KS3	To provide a pedestrian/cycle link from Boys' school site to Donaguile
Key site (The Square)	KS4	To improve permeability and safety at the Square, providing for all users, to include consideration of the following (in conjunction with the Urban Realm Plan): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of the pedestrian crossings, including an assessment of need for additional • Connections from the backlands to the rear of properties along the north side of the Square • Bicycle parking • Provision of a cycle link to the Discovery Park • EV charging facilities • Age-friendly parking bays • Car parking configuration • Upgrade of the junction with Barrack Street, following implementation of the planning permission on the former Creamery site.
Key Site (East of Kilkenny Street)	KS5	To examine provision of a pedestrian/cycle route along the Dinin between the Athy road/Miners bridge and the former Convent on the Kilkenny road, with a branch exiting through the lane central to Florence Terrace, see Section 1.12.5.
Kilkenny Road	KR1	To improve accessibility and safety on the Kilkenny Road to include consideration of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the access arrangements to the Castlecomer Business Park • Provision of a gateway

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An active travel link from the town to Erin's Own GAA club <p>A pedestrian crossing at Erin's Own GAA club</p>
Road	R1	To support the provision of additional accesses to the Discovery Park, in line with the Discovery Park Masterplan (2024) ³⁰
Road	R2	As a long-term objective, to link the Kilkenny Road/N78 to the Kilkenny Road employment area, extending to the Acorns Upper/Oak Hill.
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC1	To provide a pedestrian/cycle link from Boys' school site to Maryville across the railway line
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC2	To examine the feasibility of a pedestrian link from the Golf Club grounds to the N78 near the Miners' Bridge.
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC3	To examine the provision of a pedestrian/cycle link from Prince Grounds to the Discovery Park.
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC4	To examine the provision of a pedestrian crossing at the Ballyragget Road (R694)/Barrack Street Junction.
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC5	To examine the provision of a school zone outside the Castlecomer Community School, to include pedestrian crossing facilities.
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC6	To complete the pedestrian connection along the former railway line between Church Avenue and the Boys School site.
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC7	To extend the PC6 link to the entrance to Oak Hill.
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC8	To provide pedestrian access between the Council yard at Maryville/Donaguile and The Acorns (southern connection).
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC9	To provide pedestrian access between Maryville at the graveyard and Oak Hill (northerly connection).
Pedestrian/ cycle	PC10	To provide a pedestrian/cycle link between Donaguile Heights and the Community School
Gateway	GW1	To examine provision of a Gateway on the R694 (Ballyragget Road).
Gateway	GW2	To examine provision of a Gateway on the eastern segment of the N78 to the east of the Castlecomer Discovery Park.
Gateway	GW3	To examine provision of a Gateway on the R426 on the northern side of the cemetery.

³⁰ Subject to the requirements of Vol. 1 Chapter 12, in relation to access to national roads

1.12 Urban Design Framework

This Plan sets out the broad principles for development in Castlecomer, by way of the policy statements, objectives and zoning map. Five key areas have been identified, three of which contain significant development potential; the former Creamery site, the Barracks/Parish lands and the Boys school site. The fourth key area is the Square, and the fifth is a large area comprising various community uses. The creation of improved access in this area would greatly enhance the setting for all these uses.

The approach to each of these is detailed below.

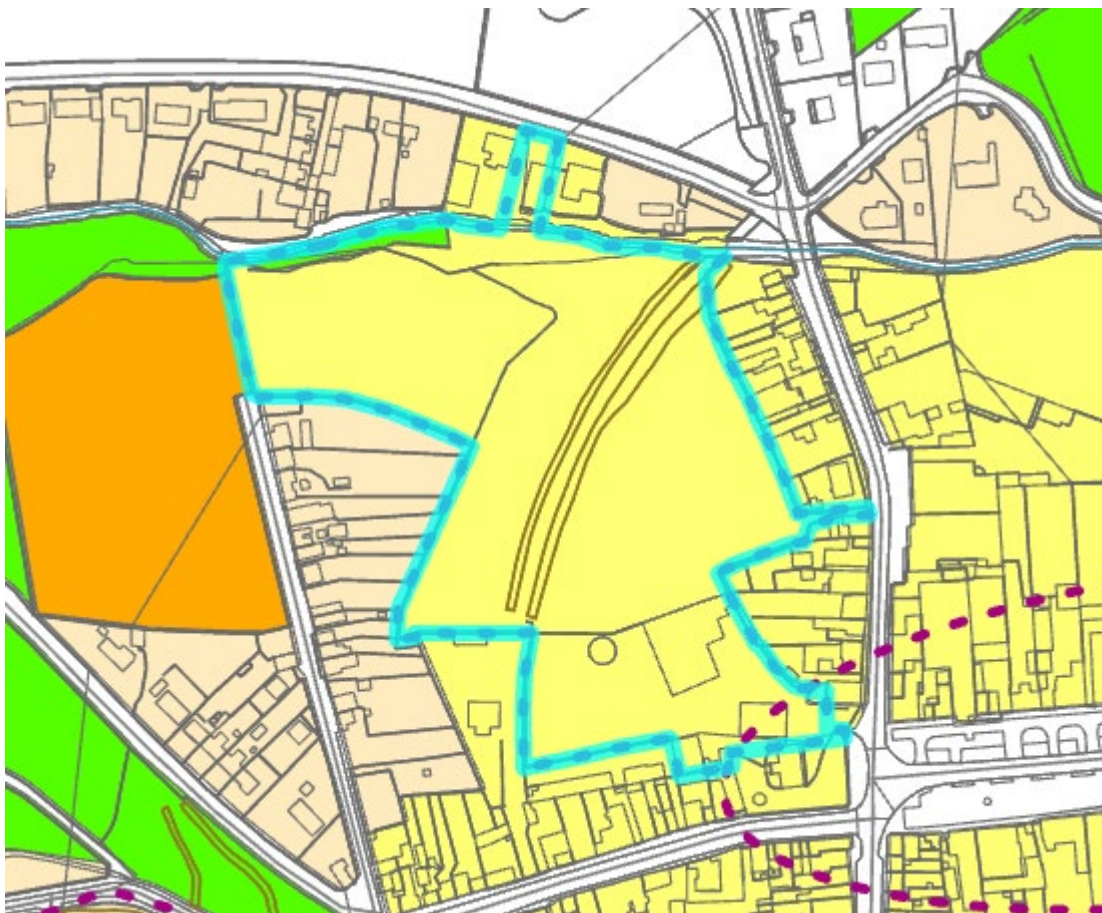
1.12.1 The Creamery site

Permission was granted for a significant mixed use development on this site during the period of the last Plan (under P.20/112 and P.23/60610). This site is centrally located, and has the potential to be realised as an extension to the urban core, revitalising existing buildings and using backland and brownfield land, in line with the Plan priorities of Section 1.2.

The existing permission comprises one anchor convenience shop of almost 1,800 sqm of gross retail area, and nine retail units, café, offices and a total of 39 residential units. This development includes vehicular access through the site from the Square to the Ballinakill Road, and pedestrian/cycle access to both Love Lane and Chatsworth Street.

These elements; of mixed use, re-use of historic buildings, and focus on pedestrian and cyclist permeability, remain valid for any future development proposal on this site.

Key Site 1: The Creamery Site



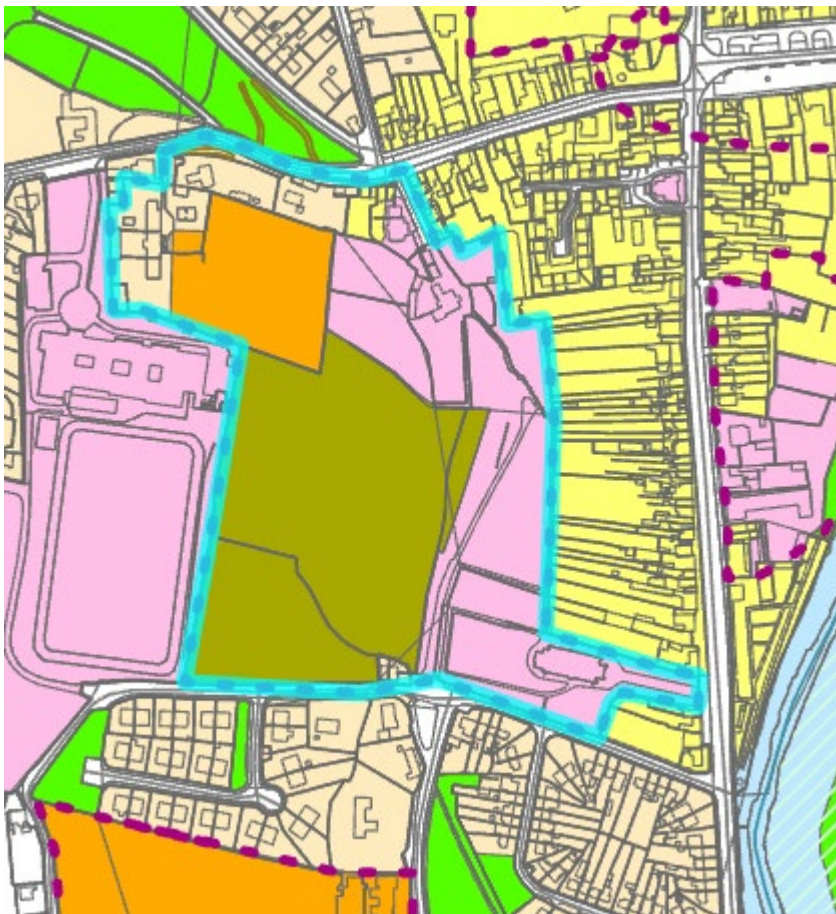
1.12.2 The Barracks/Rear of Kilkenny Street Masterplan

There is a significant tract of under-developed land to the west of Kilkenny Street, from Maryville, stretching to Barrack Hill, adjoining the Community School. There are four components to the land here;

- the land to the rear of Kilkenny Street, in use as back gardens,
- the graveyard and Parochial house
- the Parish lands
- the Barracks site

The Barracks site, comprising an area of 1.1 hectares, is currently in the ownership of Kilkenny County Council. The Barracks is a protected structure, C486, and is a significant nine-bay, three-storey over part basement barrack, built 1801-2. The building is overgrown, and in very poor condition at present. The site also contains a telecommunications exchange.

The development of this area will require the establishment of pedestrian and cyclist linkages through the site from Barrack Hill to Donaguile/Maryville. In order to optimise the benefit of the development of this area for community and the town, a Masterplan shall be prepared, setting out the required development parameters. In the short-term, improvements to the appearance of the Barracks site, will be examined.



Key Site 2: The Barracks Site/Rear of Kilkenny Street

Objectives:

V3CC12: To seek improvement to the appearance of the former Barracks building in an authentic, sensitive manner.

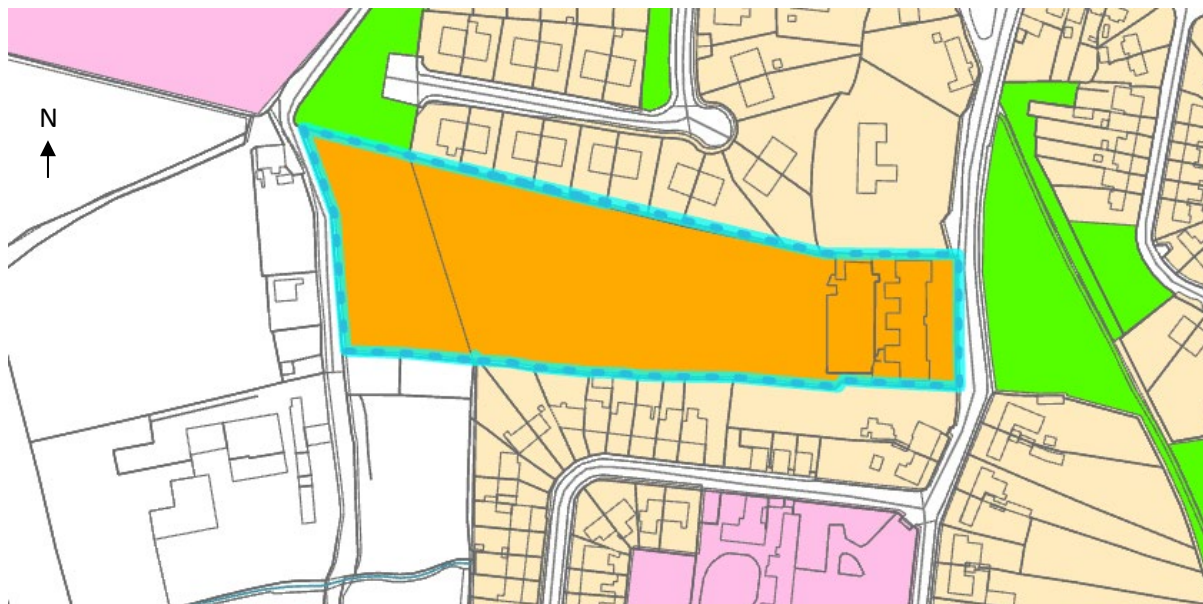
V3CC13: To complete a Masterplan for the Barracks/Parish lands to include the following elements:

- **Pedestrian and cycle permeability through the area, including the formalising of the current walk, and a link to Kilkenny Street**
- **Proposals for the appropriate redevelopment of the Barracks site**
- **Optimising the potential of the ‘Parish lands’ for the benefit of the community and town, having regard to the topography of the site**
- **A nature-based solution to the management of rainwater**

1.12.3 Boys’ School

As discussed in Section 1.7, the Presentation Convent and the Castlecomer Boys’ school are to amalgamate from September 2025, to operate from the Presentation Convent site. Acknowledging this, the Boys’ school is to be zoned for New Residential use. For any development on this site, the following is required:

- Connection to the Donaguile Heights open space, linking to the Community School
- Connection north-south through the site to improve overall permeability in the area
- A nature-based solutions approach to the management of rainwater
- In line with the Compact Settlements Guidelines, densities in the range of 25-40 per hectare are appropriate



Key Site 3: The Boys school site

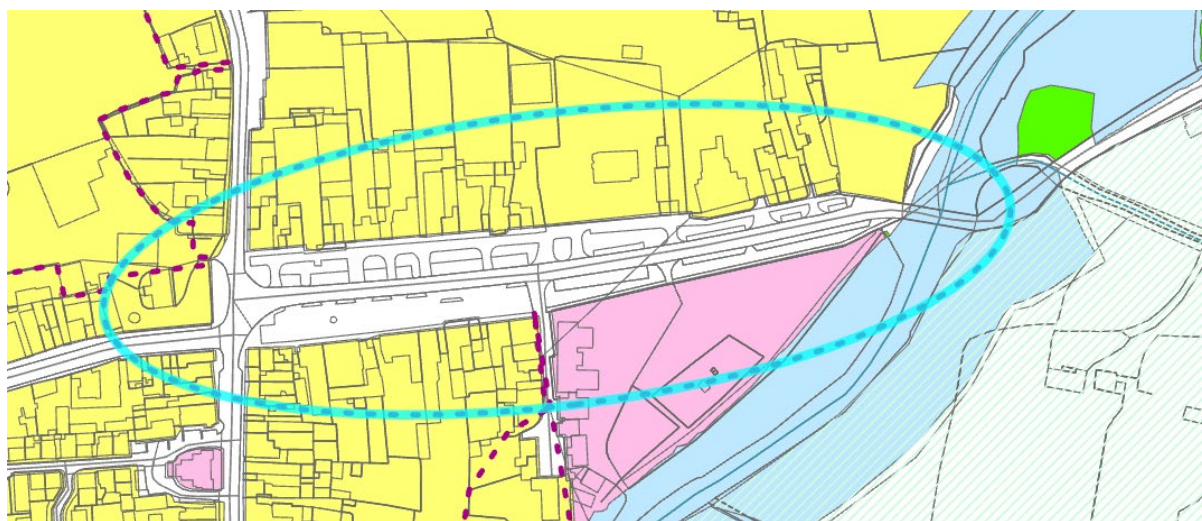
1.12.4 The Square

The Square is central to Castlecomer’s identity and character. The upper section of the Square has lost many of its original trees in recent times, which has led to an erosion of its character. In order to

clearly outline the priorities and vision for the Square, a public realm plan should be prepared, covering all aspects of built and natural heritage.

This would include the returning of the upper (western) part of the Square to its original form. The vista from the bridge to the Creamery building should remain unimpeded. Opportunities for seating and gathering should be explored. Historical text and maps may be used, in select instances, to support reinstatement of significant architectural features which have been removed or displaced from the town over time.

As part of this, a wayfinding strategy which links important landmarks in the town with the ACA trail (launched in 2025), and the Discovery Park, could be undertaken. Such a strategy would provide a consistent approach for signage in the town and improve connectivity.



Key Site 4: The Square

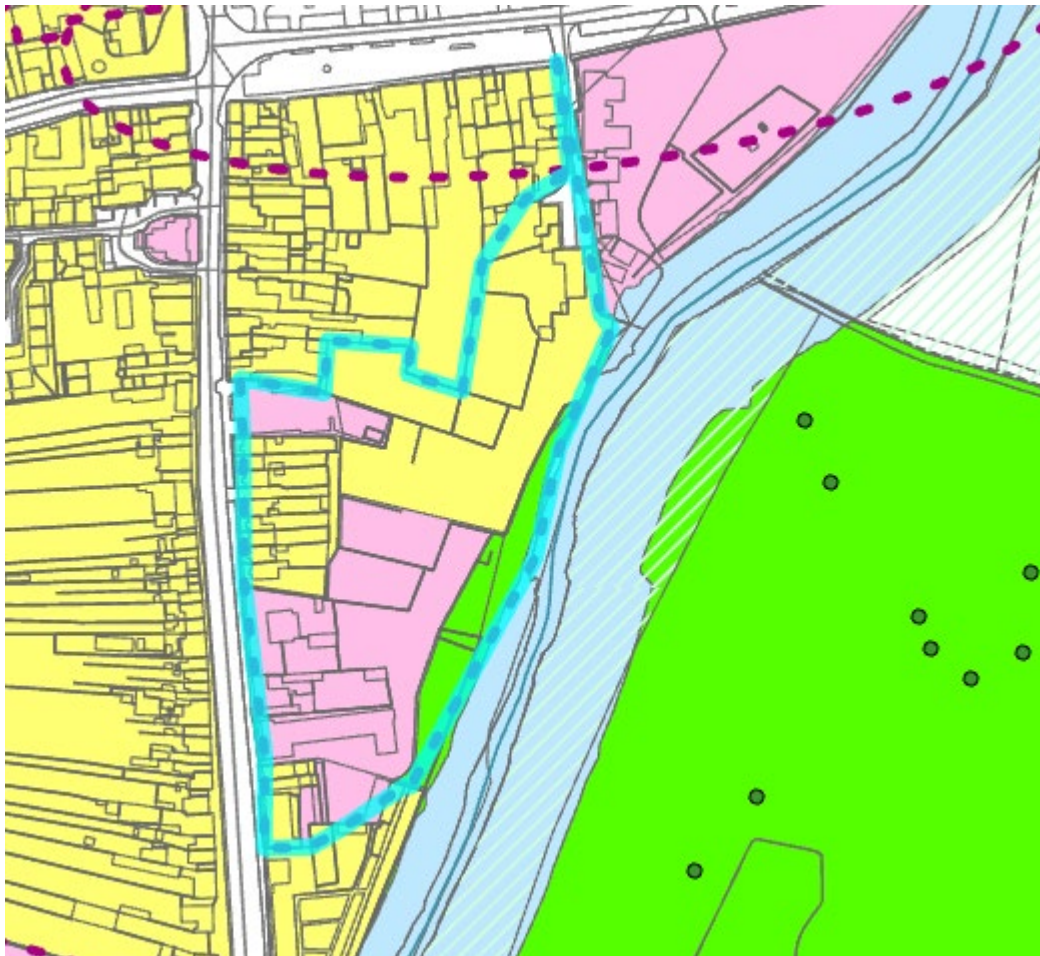
V3CC14: Prepare a Public Realm Plan for the Square, to include the replacement of trees, and the consideration of all built and natural heritage features, including the use of nature-based solutions where appropriate. Such a public realm plan should consider provision of appropriate signage, see Section 1.9 Recreation.

1.12.5 East side of Kilkenny Street

There are a number of community facilities located along Kilkenny Street, including the Presentation primary school, the library and Council Area office, and the Community Hall. The Plan contains an objective in relation to a walkway along the River Dinin, connecting all these facilities with the Square. The redevelopment of this backland area into an open, riverside, parkland setting, would be a significant addition to the amenity and permeability of the area.

The former convent, which was vacant for a number of years, is now in use as an educational facility, known as Core College (also known as the Irish School of Herbal Medicine). This building, a protected structure, C687, is an important feature in the town, and its re-use is welcome.

V3CC15: To explore all possible opportunities to increase permeability in this area, including access to the River Dinin to the rear of Kilkenny Street, and connecting through Mill Lane to High Street/The Square.



Key Site 5: East of Kilkenny Street

1.13 Implementation

A number of the objectives noted here could be pursued under the Town Centre First Plan, which will follow production of this Settlement Plan. Many objectives will be completed as part of the ongoing development of the area. It is fully acknowledged that water supply is the critical issue in Castlecomer, but this Plan is to provide for a long-term view, during which time the water supply issue will be resolved.