

Appendix B

Kilkenny Housing Strategy

1. Introduction

The Housing Strategy is prepared in accordance with Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Part II of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002. This Strategy is for the period 2021-2027, which is the lifetime of the Development Plan. The Acts specify that the housing strategy shall provide sufficient residential zoned land for the period of the Development Plan, ensure that housing is available for persons of different income levels with particular provision for those in need of social or affordable housing, ensure a mixture of house types and sizes to meet the requirements of different categories of households, including the needs of elderly and disabled persons and counteract undue segregation of people of different social backgrounds.

The key purpose of the current strategy is to identify the overall need for housing in the City and County and ensure that Kilkenny County Council facilitates the creation of an environment that will allow this need to be satisfied in line with the overarching principle of delivering sustainable communities.

At the time of the last review of the Housing Strategy, the economy was still in recession and the economy and housing market has since recovered to the extent that demand outstrips supply, making the activation of housing supply the most important priority for the plan. The plan is made in the later stages and aftermath of the Covid -19 pandemic, which has impacted and continues to impact the Irish economy. The economic ripples of this pandemic will likely continue to be felt over much of the lifetime of the plan, which in turn may impact housing provision and affordability. The fundamentals of the Irish economy were however strong going into the pandemic and thus, for the purpose of the plan, the long-term economic outlook remains optimistic, although adjusted downwards to account for a temporary Covid-19 impact.

This Housing Strategy replaces the strategy which was prepared for the period 2014 to 2020.

2. Statutory Background

2.1 Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended):

The preparation of a Housing Strategy is a requirement under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) Part V and Part II of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002. The Act requires each Planning Authority to prepare a housing strategy which is to be integrated into their County Development Plan. In particular the Acts specify that the Housing Strategy shall:

- Ensure that adequate zoned and serviced lands for residential purposes are available in appropriate locations to meet the requirements of the Housing Strategy and the existing and future housing demand – including social and affordable housing.
- Ensure that housing is available to households of different income levels and determine the distribution of this housing.

- Ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of the different categories of households, including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities as reflected in the Housing Needs Assessment carried out the Housing Authority.
- Counteract undue segregation in housing between households of different social backgrounds.
- **As amended by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015**, provide that a specific percentage (not exceeding 10%) of the land zoned in the Development Plan for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for those in need of social or affordable housing in the area. Part V applies to all applications for residential development on sites in excess of 0.1ha or 9 units on residential/mixed use (where residential is part) zoned land.

2.2 Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations

The Planning and Development Amendment regulations allow for the temporary change of use of some vacant commercial premises to residential use as exempt development.

2.3 National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018:

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is a high-level strategy that will shape growth and development in Ireland up to the year 2040. The NPF provides a framework for the sustainable growth and development of Ireland's existing settlements to accommodate 1 million additional people by 2040. This is to be achieved in a co-ordinated fashion, with the **"Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (July 2018)"** projecting growth figures for settlements throughout the state to be achieved through the implementation of policy at National, Regional and Local Level.

The NPF contains a number of National Outcomes and National Policy Objectives that support the delivery of residential development at suitable locations.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) has introduced a new requirement for each Local Authority to develop a **Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA)**. The HNDA will support the preparation of housing strategies and all related housing policy outputs, e.g. city and county development plans, local area plans, traveller accommodation plans etc.

The NPF, indicates the purpose of the HNDA tool to:

- Assist local authorities to develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures.
- Provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall national housing profile.
- Inform policies about the proportion of social and affordable housing required, including the need for different types and sizes of provision.
- Provide evidence to inform policies related to the provision of specialist housing and housing related services.

The NPF states that HNDAs are designed to give broad, long run estimates of what future housing demand may entail. As such it is not based on precision estimates.

2.4 Project Ireland 2040 - National Development Plan 2018-2027

The National Development Plan proposes the creation of a new land-management agency. This 'National Regeneration and Development Agency' will be established to work with local authorities, public bodies and the business community, harnessing public lands as catalysts to stimulate regeneration and wider investment.

In terms of social housing, the National Development Plan will, through a planned capital investment of over €4.2 billion, support the delivery of some 40,000 new social housing homes by 2021. Direct Local Authority build, acquisitions, rejuvenation of formerly empty homes and provision by housing bodies are identified as the chief delivery mechanisms. By 2021, it proposes to make 12,000 social housing homes available annually through Local Authorities and approved housing bodies. This level of provision is to be maintained over the remainder of the period of the National Development Plan, resulting in 112,000 households having their housing needs met in a social housing home by 2027. The NPF warns against the intensification of social housing properties in areas that are already dense with social housing and advocates the development of diverse neighbourhoods with a healthy balance of public and private housing.

2.5 Rebuilding Ireland – An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (2016)

The plan aims to address the needs of homeless people and families in emergency accommodation, accelerate the provision of social housing, deliver more housing, utilise vacant homes and improve the rental sector.

Rebuilding Ireland aims to increase Residential house construction to 25,000 homes per annum and to deliver 47,000 units of social housing over the period of the Plan to 2021. The plan has five pillars, each of which has a series of actions set out to address the opportunities and challenges presented by Ireland's housing sector. The five pillars are defined as follows;

1. address homelessness,
2. accelerate social housing,
3. build more homes,
4. improve the rental sector, and
5. utilise existing housing.

The Action Plan pledged to support the enhanced role of existing initiatives for Social Housing delivery and also introduced a number of new initiatives and schemes, as follows:

- **Local Authority Construction & Acquisition (also known as the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP))**

The SHIP provides funding to local authorities for the provision of social housing by means of construction and acquisition and covers expenditure under the RapidBuild Housing Programme, Part V acquisitions, Land Aggregation Scheme and the Special Resolution Fund for unfinished housing developments.

- **Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)**

To provide essential funding to Approved Housing Bodies for the provision of accommodation for persons with specific categories of housing need such as Homeless and Older Persons, People with Disabilities, Returning Emigrants and Victims of Domestic Violence.

- **Vacant Housing Repair and Leasing Initiative:**

This scheme enables local authorities, having identified appropriate vacant privately-owned properties in their functional areas, to provide upfront financial assistance to meet reasonable renovation works and to enter into long term lease arrangements with property owners. Renovation costs will be recouped from rent over an agreed period.

- **Part V Delivery:**

The Action Plan sets out a commitment to ensure adequate resources are made available to both local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies. This is to allow them to purchase or lease newly built private dwellings to the fullest extent envisaged by Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000. In addition, where appropriate, the leasing of additional privately developed dwellings beyond the extent envisaged by Part V is supported. Furthermore, the up-front purchase of the Part V social housing requirement will be facilitated, subject to the introduction of strict controls.

- ***National Vacant Housing Reuse Strategy 2018-2021***

Published in 2018, the National Vacant Housing Reuse Strategy supports Pillar 5 of the Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. The Strategy draws together relevant policy initiatives and actions to reduce vacancy in Ireland's housing stock and bring as many habitable homes back into use as possible. To support this overall Strategic Objective the Strategy sets out five key objectives and relevant Key Actions to support their accomplishment:

- **Objective 1:** Establish robust, accurate, consistent and up-to-date data sets on vacancy.
- **Objective 2:** Bring forward measures to ensure, to the greatest degree possible, that vacant and underused privately owned properties are brought back to use.
- **Objective 3:** Bring forward measures to minimise vacancy arising in Social Housing Stock.
- **Objective 4:** Continued engagement with and provision of support to key stakeholders to ensure suitable vacant properties held by banks, financial institutions and investors are acquired for social housing use.
- **Objective 5:** Foster and develop cross-sector relationships, collaborating in partnership to tackle vacant housing matters.

2.6 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020:

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region is a Regional plan for the co-ordination of regional development in the South of Ireland. The Plan provides the context and sets the vision and strategy for the achievement of the strategic outcomes and investment priorities contained in both the NPF and the NDP. Some of the key strategies in the RSES relate to compact growth, sustainable mobility, strengthening rural economies and communities and a strong economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills. The NDP in turn sets Housing and Sustainable development as one of the strategic investment priorities.

The NPF identifies Kilkenny City as a Key Town and the RSES sets clear objectives (RPO 12) for its development. Similarly some Southern areas of Kilkenny proximate to Waterford, including Ferrybank, will be included in the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan catchment. This

Plan will provide the future structure for compact urban Growth in and around Waterford City.

The RSES provides that a Housing Needs Demand Assessment be undertaken by each Local Authority with the co-ordination of the Regional Assembly to inform house prices, housing strategies and zoning policies to determine where new policy areas or investment programmes are to be developed. The plan aims to set up a coordination and monitoring unit to assist local authorities with their respective HNDA. For the purpose of this Housing Strategy, this coordination facility could not yet be utilised.

4. Assumptions and Approach

Pending the issuing of guidance documents and the setting up of a regional co-ordination structure, a comprehensive Housing Needs Demand Assessment as envisaged in the NPF and RSES cannot yet be undertaken for this Housing Strategy. This Housing Strategy is however based on the most recent and up to date data, where available, but for the most reliant on 2016 census data. Throughout the calculations and subsequent analysis, a number of assumptions have been made. Where possible data at county level has been used. If this has not been possible data has been accessed at regional/national levels. The analysis sets out to determine housing need and housing affordability by analysis of county level estimates of population size, household size, household income and house prices.

5. Housing Policy

Kilkenny County Council seek to meet the needs of those requiring accommodation through a range of social housing options. The core objective of housing policy is to ensure that all our citizens enjoy an adequate standard of housing accommodation appropriate to their needs and, as far as possible in a location and tenure of their choice and to provide a responsive and supportive housing service for those in need of assistance.

5.1 County Settlement Strategy

Chapter 3 of the City and County Development Plan sets out the Core strategy, including population projections for the period 2021 to 2027 and defines a settlement strategy for both the City and County. These projections were done within the parameters set out in the National Planning Frameworks and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. The core strategy set out in the plan is consistent with the objectives and population projections of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and accordingly will ensure that sufficient land will be available for housing over the Plan period.

5.2 Housing Trends, Demand and Affordability Predictions up to and including 2027

5.2.1 Population Projections

The 2016 census give Kilkenny County's population at 99,232, a 4% increase on 2016. At the time of the census, within the CSO boundary Kilkenny City had a population of 26,512, which is up 8,5% on the 2011 census figure, compared to a 3,15% figure for the South East Region and 3,7% for the State. As can be seen from the data above, Kilkenny City has grown more than twice as fast as the County. The National Planning Framework (NPF) projects that by 2026, the County's population will grow to between 108,000 and 110,000, rising to 114,500 by 2031. Over the same period, it is estimated that

Kilkenny City's population will grow to 29,822 (2026) and 31,477 (2031)¹. For the purpose of this plan the upper limit of the 2026 projection of 110,000 is used. Using these NPF roadmap figures, a per annum growth rate was derived to obtain approximate figures for the population estimate for the years 2026 and 2031. Also, as the plan extends to 2027, the projected growth has been extrapolated beyond 2026 to 2027.

The actual 2016 Census population for County Kilkenny differed somewhat from the growth rate as projected in the now expired Regional Planning Guidelines, which estimated that by 2016 the County would have had 6,366 more residents. The projections are therefore only a best estimate of future growth and can vary depending to various factors, including fertility, mortality, economic growth, migration and housing availability.

As part of the Housing Strategy review of the County Development plan, the potential to review upwards the population allocation for the district towns was considered. This revision was set in the context of the overall county allocation, the particular function of the town in the County context, aligning all population projections to a common date, planning decision since the adoption of the LAPs, the availability of Engineering Services Infrastructure (Water and wastewater), Social Services such as Primary and Secondary Schools and the ration of resident workers and total jobs in the towns. The assessment concluded that some 150 additional people could be allocated over the plan period to the towns of Callan and Thomastown over and above that allocated in their respective Local Area Plans. 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.

It is expected that the rural settlements between 50 and 1500 people will grow proportionally over the period 2021 to 2027. A settlement is defined by the Central Statistics office as having a minimum of 50 occupied dwellings, with a maximum distance between any dwelling and the building closest to it of 100 metres, and where there was evidence of an urban centre (shop, school etc). Growth in these predominantly rural settlements is anticipated to take place within the settlement boundaries as proposed in the Core Strategy.

The growth will however be restricted by the availability of wastewater and the wastewater capacity is a big growth inhibitor in some of the larger settlements like Paulstown, Bennettsbridge, Piltown, Fiddown and Gowran. The Irish Water Small Settlements program aims to make available funding and may provide wastewater capacity within the lifetime of the plan. For this reason, capacity for growth in some of the candidate settlements have been retained, but subject to the delivery of the projects during the lifetime of the plan.

¹ These estimates are produced by assuming a linear increase in population on an annual basis.

| District Town | Free Wastewater Capacity | Water Capacity | Jobs per resident workers | Location | Social infrastructure | Growth potential | Houses at 2.75 ppu |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------|
| Callan | 812 PE | Positive | 0.923 | Strong links and proximity to Kilkenny City | Primary School – limited, 4 spaces in two schools post LAP Approx. 60 spaces temporary accommodation (2 rooms) approved Secondary schools- adequate, 78 spaces post LAP | 150 Requires 18 primary and 12 Secondary School spaces | 55 |
| Castlecomer | 555 PE | Negative | 0.838 | Strong links with proximity to Kilkenny City | Primary School – limited Secondary school- some but limited | 100 | 36 |
| Graiguenamanagh/ Tinnahinch | 1103 PE | Negative | | Peripheral | Primary, At capacity, getting approximately 30 spaces. Secondary- At capacity | 112 | 41 |
| Thomastown | 4189 PE | Positive | 0.682 | Strong links and proximity to Kilkenny City, Rail link | Primary School – limited, no current capacity Approx. 60 spaces permanent rooms approved Secondary schools- adequate, 36 post LAP and getting approx. 120 spaces | 150 Requires 18 primary and 12 Secondary School spaces | 55 |

Table 1: Review of District Town population allocations

| Kilkenny County Population Growth Projections from NPF and RSES as distributed | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | 2016 | RSES – 2026 | RSES - 2027 | Uplift to 2027 | RSES - 2031 | Additional population to 2027 | Adjusted Housing to 2027 (2.75 ppu) | Additional Land required ² |
| Kilkenny County | 99,232 | 110,000 | 111,077 | 11,845 | 114,500 | | | |
| Kilkenny City (Based on CSO City Boundary and 30% growth by 2040) | 26,512 | 29,822 | 30,153 | 3,641 | 31,477 | | | |
| Ferrybank (MASP) City and Suburbs | 5,288 | 6,608 | 6,740 | 1,452 | 7,268 | | | |
| Remainder | 2,951 | 3,321 | 3,358 | 407 | 3,508 | | | |
| Total | 8,239 | 9,929 | 10,098 | 1,859 | 10,776 | | | |
| Callan | 2,475 (2,49%) | 2,750 | 2,766 | 291 | | 150 (to 2916) | 55 | 2.75Ha ³ |
| Thomastown | 2,445 (2,46%) | 2,706 | 2,732 | 287 | | 150 (to 2882) | 55 | 2.75Ha |
| Castlecomer | 1,502 (1,5%) | 1,650 | 1,666 | 164 | | 100 (to 1766) | 36 | 1.2Ha |
| Graiguenamanagh | 1,389 (1,4%) ⁴ 1,476 (1,5%) ⁵ | 1,540 1,650 | 1,555 1,667 | 166 278 ⁶ | | 112 (to 1667) | 41 | 2.0Ha (already in LAP) |
| | | | | | | | | |

Table 2 Projected populations for the Urban Settlements of County Kilkenny

² LAP to be amended accordingly

³ At 20 units per ha

⁴ Graiguenamanagh has shown a population decline in the intercensal period 2011-2016.

⁵ The 2011 figure represents 1.5% of the County population in 2011 and is used in the Core Strategy to represent the Town’s potential

⁶ The uplift represents the difference between the projected 2027 figure and the 2016 figure of 1,389, thus being 278 instead of 191.

| Settlement | Population 2016 | Percentage | Population 2027 | Uplift to 2027 | Irish Water Wastewater Capacity 2020 |
|------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Ballyhale | 174 | 0.17 | 188 | 14 | 38 |
| Ballyragget | 1082 | 1 | 1110 | 28 | 682 |
| Bennettsbridge | 745 | 0.75 | 833 | 88 | 0 ⁷ |
| Clogh-Chatsworth | 344 | 0.34 | 378 | 34 | 743 (with Moneerroe) |
| Moneerroe | 722 | 0.72 | 799 | 77 | - |
| Fiddown | 369 | 0.37 | 411 | 42 | 0 |
| Freshford | 662 | 0.66 | 733 | 71 | 409 |
| Goresbridge | 347 | 0.35 | 388 | 42 | 174 |
| Gowran | 804 | 0.81 | 899 | 96 | 673 |
| Inistioge | 285 | 0.28 | 311 | 26 | 0 ⁸ |
| Johnstown | 444 | 0.44 | 488 | 45 | 236 |
| Kells | 274 | 0.27 | 300 | 26 | 23 |
| Kilmacow | 647 | 0.65 | 722 | 75 | 1743 |
| Kilmoganny | 245 | 0.24 | 267 | 22 | 182 |
| Knocktopher | 166 | 0.16 | 178 | 0 | - |
| Mooncoin | 1175 | 1.18 | 1311 | 136 | 1438 |
| Mullinavat | 233 | 0.23 | 255 | 22 | 26 |
| Paulstown | 905 | 0.91 | 1011 | 106 | 0 |
| Piltown | 1220 | 1.12 | 1344 | 124 | 37 |
| Slieverue | 476 | 0.47 | 522 | 46 | - (see MASP) |
| Stoneyford | 376 | 0.37 | 411 | 35 | 174 |
| Urlingford | 1038 | 1.04 | 1155 | 117 | 227 |
| Total | 11837 | | | 1284 | |

Table 3 Projected growth for the Rural Settlements of County Kilkenny

⁷ Bennettsbridge, Paulstown, Piltown and Fiddown may benefit from Irish Water’s Capital investment in small settlements during the lifetime of the plan.

⁸ Inistioge will be in the next Irish Water Capital program and housing is subject to delivery of the wastewater capacity.

5.2.2 Household Size Cohort

By 2016, CSO figures indicate Kilkenny had 99,232 persons in 34,855 household, or 2.84 persons per household and Kilkenny City had 2.6 persons per household. The household size remained fairly static from 2011. The 2016 Census indicates that the average size of households throughout the State has however increased from 2.73 to 2.75 between 2011 and 2016. However, the NPF states that this is expected to decline to around 2.5 by 2040, while also acknowledging that household sizes in urban areas tend to be smaller than in the suburbs or rural parts of the country. As, with the exception of Kilkenny City, Ferrybank and the district towns, County Kilkenny is predominantly rural, this plan projects a household size of 2.75⁹ persons per household to account for an expected decline in household size during the lifetime of the plan.

5.2.3 Housing Demand to 2027

Having regard to the 2016 Census figures and applying the growth rates as estimated by the National Planning Frameworks and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, it is anticipated that the population of the County could grow by 11,845 persons which would give a population of 111,077 by 2027 (see table 1). The application of an average household composition of 2.75 is considered reasonable for Kilkenny and gives an estimated housing requirement of approximately 4,307 units for the County over the period 2016-2027, which includes 1,324 units for Kilkenny City over the same period.

| | Kilkenny County | Kilkenny City |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Population projection by 2027 | 111,077 | 30,153 |
| Population uplift to 2027 | 11,845 | 3,641 |
| Number of housing units required at 2.75 persons per household | 4,307 | 1,324 |

Table 4: Projected Housing need in Kilkenny County and City

There are sufficient lands proposed for zoning within Kilkenny City and the four district towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Thomastown, Graiguenamanagh to facilitate the urban housing requirement over the period of the plan. As regards the Ferrybank component of the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), the Planning Authority will review housing figures with Waterford County Council and the Regional Authority in order to give effect to the concentric city objective for Waterford as envisaged in the Waterford MASP. This could potentially affect the population allocations for the Ferrybank area and accordingly impact the zoning contained in the LAP. It is an objective to revise the Belview - Ferrybank LAP once these figures are agreed.

⁹ A decrease of 0.1per annum will amount to an average of 2.73 persons per household in 2027 in County Kilkenny, but as the average household occupancy in the State in 2016 was 2.75, this figure is used as a guide.

5.3 Assessment of Supply and Demand since the 2014 Strategy

In framing a housing strategy, two classes of housing need must be identified: that which exists at the commencement of the strategy period (accumulated demand) and that which is likely to arise during the period (prospective demand).

5.3.1 Accumulated demand

Following the severe downturn in housing construction from 2007/ 2008, the market never sufficiently recovered to a point where supply meets demand. Over the term of the previous Development Plan (2014-2020) the lack of liquidity on the supply side and affordability on the demand side strongly inhibited the market, with slow recovery only starting in the past three years as is evident in the housing completions for that period.

County Kilkenny:

According to 2016 Census figures, the total housing stock in County Kilkenny consisted of 39,226¹⁰ housing units including 2,995 vacant units. Kilkenny City’s share was 10,769 houses, including 697 vacant units. The number of vacant units in 2016 equated to a vacancy rate of 7.6%, which is lower than the 10.6% vacancy rate recorded in 2011. This however includes houses that did not respond to Census where owners may have been in a nursing home or away for a number of reasons. It is accepted that the actual vacancy rates are much lower. According to a Vacant Pilot Survey undertaken by the Dept of Housing and following two waves of survey, the actual vacancy rate is closer to 2.9%, with the vacancy nationally ranging from 1.1- 5.2%.

In 2014, Gross Housing Demand on Kilkenny County Council’s Approved Housing List was 2,456 households on Kilkenny’s housing list, increasing to 2,744 in 2015. The Council’s housing list included 468 more persons in 2014 than in 2019, when a need of 1,988 was identified. These Numbers relate to total on housing list and some persons may have applied and been on the list for several years. Over the period of the last Development Plan there has therefore been a significant decrease in households applying to go on the list, which may be due to a combination of an increase in supply of housing stock and to people’s income levels going up, (due to gaining employment as the economy improved) which excluded them from the housing list.

| Year | House completions | County Population Growth |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2014 | 103 | |
| 2015 | 110 | |
| 2016 | 160 | 99,232 (Census) |
| 2017 | 196 | 100,308 |
| 2018 | 221 | 101,384 |
| 2019 | 288 | 102,460 |
| Total 2014 - end 2019 | 1078 | |

Table 5: House completions in Co. Kilkenny 2014-2019

Sources: CSO New Dwelling Completions

¹⁰ Census 2016, E1071: Housing Stock and Vacancy Rate 1991 to 2016 by County and City, Census Year and Statistic

Notwithstanding the need for 1,988 social housing units, when adjusting the NPF and the RSES projections to 2027, the resultant demand for housing over the period 2016-2027 is estimated at 4,307 additional houses, equivalent to an average of 392 new houses per year. According to CSO figures, New Dwelling Completions from 2016-2019 amounted to 865 units. The projections however required that 1174 houses should have been constructed over this period to cater for the population (3230 persons) growth over the same time. With 865 houses constructed from 2016-2019, there has been a shortfall of 309 houses on the required projection from 2016-2019.

Kilkenny City:

There are currently 1,093 persons on the social housing list for Kilkenny City. The housing list represents various needs, including people struggling with affordability in the rental market. Accordingly, approximately 34% of the list are “dependant on rent supplement” – meaning they are housed in either RAS or HAP houses i.e. considered adequately housed within existing housing stock. The remainder of the people on the housing list in result from other reasons related to housing need that cannot be met by exiting rental stock. It is estimated at approximately 56% or 612 persons are represented in these categories. This would potentially add a requirement for an additional 222 units at 2.75 per unit, theoretically requiring 6Ha at 35 units per Ha.

| ORDER OF PREFERENCE | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| AREA OF CHOICE | Kilkenny City | | | | | |
| BASIS OF NEED | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total | |
| Concluded that Mortgage is unsustainable | | 2 | 1 | | 3 | 0.3% |
| Currently Dependent on Rent Supplement | 162 | 155 | 73 | 6 | 396 | 36.2% |
| Disability - unspecified | 6 | 1 | | 1 | 8 | 0.7% |
| Disability requirement - intellectual | 8 | 53 | | | 61 | 5.6% |
| Disability requirement - mental health | 7 | 2 | | | 9 | 0.8% |
| Disability requirement - physical | 8 | 7 | | 1 | 16 | 1.5% |
| Disability requirement - sensory | | 3 | 1 | | 4 | 0.4% |
| Exceptional Medical or Compassionate Grounds | 13 | 9 | 13 | 2 | 37 | 3.4% |
| Homeless, Institution, Emergency Accommodation or Hostel | 18 | 6 | 3 | | 27 | 2.5% |
| Involuntary Sharing | 17 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 33 | 3.0% |
| None | 13 | 4 | 4 | | 21 | 1.9% |
| Overcrowded | 12 | 24 | 20 | 10 | 66 | 6.0% |
| Unfit | 7 | 10 | 7 | | 24 | 2.2% |
| Unsuitable - Particular Household Circumstances | 159 | 138 | 80 | 11 | 388 | 35.5% |
| Grand Total | 430 | 428 | 203 | 32 | 1093 | |

Table 6: Basis of Housing Need in Kilkenny City

5.3.2 Prospective demand for Housing Lands

Kilkenny County:

According to NPF projections, 4,307 additional housing units will be required in the County over the period 2016 to 2027. With 865 units already constructed over the period 2016-2019, this requires the construction of an additional 3,442 units from 2020 to 2027, increasing the average requirement from

392 to 430 units per year to provide for the anticipated population growth. When adding the social housing need, the prospective demand for houses at the start of the plan would be 3953 units¹¹, equating to 359 units per year.

Over the period 2016-2019, approximately 665 of the 865 units constructed were rural. The bulk of the remainder of the houses were built in Kilkenny City and the district towns. The development of these houses was already included in figures when considering housing need in the respective Local Area Plans undertaken since 2018. Based on the housing calculations contained in figures 2 and 3, Urban and Rural Settlements in County Kilkenny, the following land requirements are projected for the County. These calculations will inform the Core strategy contained in Volume 1 of the Plan.

| (1) | Core Strategy population allocation 2016 - 2027 (2) | Density (3) | Housing land requirement to 2027 (4) | Compliance with NPO 3C (5) | Zoning (Hectares) (6) |
|---|--|----------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| County Kilkenny | 11,842 | | | | |
| Ferrybank/Belview (Part of MASP) | 1,452 | 35/ha | 15 | (50%) 7.5ha inside CSO boundary and (50%) 7.5ha outside CSO boundary | 28Ha |
| District Towns | | | | | |
| (a) Callan | (441) ¹² | 20/ha | 7.65 | | 7.65Ha |
| (b) Castlecomer | (264) | 20/ha | 5.5 | | 5.5Ha |
| (c) Graiguenamanagh | (278) | 20/ha | 6 | | 6Ha |
| (d) Thomastown | (437) ¹³ | 20/ha | 6.7 | | 6.7Ha |
| Smaller Settlements | 1,284¹⁴ | 10/ha | 128 | | |
| Remainder area** | 4,045 | | | | |
| (d) Rural Housing | | | 122¹⁵ | | |

Table 7: Housing requirement calculations for the Core Strategy 2016-2027

¹¹ Adding the existing 1988 social housing units required to the 3,442 units required from 2020 to 2027, minus the 865 houses constructed and minus 1477 units with rent affordability issues and unsuited issues.

¹² The figure for Callan is an increase of 150 persons to 2027 over and above the 2019 LAP following review under this Core strategy..

¹³ The figure for Thomastown Includes an additional 150 persons to 2027 over an above the 2019 LAP.

¹⁴ See housing strategy

¹⁵ 4,045 divided by 2.75 = 1,470 households divided by 12 units/ha = 122.5ha

Kilkenny City:

The RSES have allocated a targeted growth for the City, of 30% by 2040 from the base of 2016. This has been adopted by the council reflecting the ambition of the local authority and the historically strong growth performance of the City.

To meet the population targets set for Kilkenny City in the NDP and RSES It is expected that an additional 3,641 persons will require to be housed in Kilkenny City over the period of the plan. This represents approximately 1,324 new households at an average of 2.75 person per household.

| (1) | Core Strategy population allocation 2016 - 2027 (2) | Density (3) | Housing land requirement to 2027 (4) | Compliance with NPO 3C (5) | Zoning (Hectares) (6) |
|---------------|--|----------------|---|--|--|
| Kilkenny City | 3,641 | 35/ha | 37.8 ¹⁶ | (30%) 11.3Ha ¹⁷ inside CSO boundary and (70%) 26.5ha outside CSO boundary | 39.46 Ha ¹⁸ zoned (outside CSO) |

Table 8: Housing requirement calculations for the Core Strategy 2016-2027

Inside CSO boundary:

From National Policy Objective 3c of the NPF, 30% of the new housing earmarked for the City must be catered for within the existing built-up footprint within the CSO boundary for the City, representing 11.3Ha inside the CSO boundary at 35 units per Ha.

Since 2016, approximately 130 houses were constructed within the CSO boundary for Kilkenny City, representing a theoretical demand of approximately 3.7Ha, leaving 7.6Ha of existing zoned lands to be to be developed for growth, either through site activation, infill or redevelopment.

In combination with the 7.6Ha required for growth, the addition of Social Housing need (4.45 Ha) increases the land requirement within the CSO boundary of the city to approximately 12ha. It is considered that the 11.3Ha projection remains a reasonable estimate.

In order to achieve the required 30% growth, the City Plan has the following lands available for infill development within the CSO boundary:

- Vacant lands zoned residential = 19.77Ha
- Abbey Quarter = 4.41Ha (residential 30%-35%)
- Mixed Use = 25.79ha

¹⁶ 3641 divided by 2.75 = 1324 ha divided by 35units/ha = 37.8ha ..

¹⁷ The Council has established through its own research that there is more than sufficient capacity within the existing built up area to cater for this increase.

¹⁸ See City Core Strategy for zoning justification

Since the inception of the Vacant Site Levy, 13 sites have accordingly been activated within the CSO boundary. It is anticipated that over the lifetime of the plan, the Council will be well positioned to meet the 30% compact growth target for the City.

Outside CSO boundary:

From National Policy Objective 3c of the NPF, 70% of the required zoning on Greenfield lands will be outside the existing built-up footprint, representing 26.5 hectares, see Table 2.2 City Core Strategy above. When Considering Social Housing need, with a theoretical distribution of 30% of the existing need located inside the CSO boundary and the remaining 70 percent redistributed outside, there is a potentially requirement for an additional 155 units. At a density of 35 units per ha this would require 4.45Ha of greenfield development outside the CSO boundary.

5.3.3 Zoning approach and Infrastructure Assessment:

The provision for housing in the plan is based on the zoning of the appropriate extent of land to accommodate the anticipated population. Zoning of lands in Kilkenny City and the LAPs for District towns undertaken since the adoption of the NPF have been preceded by Infrastructure Assessments to ensure that lands are developable over the lifetime of the plans. The Methodology for a Tiered Approach to Zoning (MTZ) in Appendix 3 of the NPF was followed for this plan. This approach distinguishes between Tier 1 and Tier 2 lands as follows:

Tier 1: Serviced Zoned Land

This zoning comprises lands that are able to connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available, and can therefore accommodate new development.

These lands will generally be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a settlement or contiguous to existing developed lands. The location and geographical extent of such lands shall be determined by the planning authority at a settlement scale as an integral part of the plan-making process and shall include assessment of available development services. Inclusion in Tier 1 will generally require the lands to be within the footprint of or spatially sequential within the identified settlement.

Tier 2: Serviceable Zoned Land

This zoning comprises lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have potential to become fully serviced within the life of the plan i.e. the lands are currently constrained due to the need to deliver some or all development services required to support new development, i.e. road or footpath access including lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage, water supply and/or additional service capacity. These lands may be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a settlement, or contiguous to existing developed lands or to tier 1 zoned lands, where required to fulfil the spatially sequential approach to the location of the new development within the identified settlement.

The NPF states that land that does not comply with the requirements of Tiers 1 and 2 should not be included in the zoning or in zoning calculations. An Infrastructure Assessment for Kilkenny City preceded the zoning of lands in the City and formed the basis for same. Zoning in the Plan only included lands that complies with the requirements for Tier 1 and Tier 2, with due consideration of extant permissions. Lands with extant permissions is a legacy issue and will not be reflected in future

plans. For details please see the **Kilkenny City Infrastructure Assessment** which is attached as Appendix **MA**.

5.4 Disposable Income

Disposable income is defined as follows:

Total income minus Current taxes on income (i.e. Income taxes, other current taxes) minus Social insurance contributions (i.e. Employers', employees', self-employed, etc.). The average disposable income for Kilkenny is derived from CSO incomes data. At State level, the average disposable income per person in 2017 amounted to €24,983, with 63.3% of individuals having an equivalised disposable income that was less than this amount. Nearly two thirds of households in the state had a gross income below €60,000, with the median gross household income in 2016 being €45,256. Over the same period the median household gross income for Kilkenny was €44,234, which compares well with the National gross income. The CSO gives the 2017 disposable income per person in the South East as €19,627, up 1,2% on 2016 when it was €19,387, but still only 90% of the National average, which was €21,397. Kilkenny's disposable income per person in 2017 was estimated at €19,337, roughly on par with the regional average for the South East.

5.5 Disposable Income and Economic Outlook

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, the Irish economy was showing strong signs of growth with unemployment at 4,5%. This strong economic growth, in combination with pent up demand, low levels of construction and an influx of workers into the economy¹⁹ placed significant pressures on the housing market. Increases in disposable income led to some increase in lending, but many are still locked out of the private housing market and the demand for housing is strong. The strong long-term growth trajectory of the economy prior to the Covid-19 pandemic has slowed and the medium to long term impact of Covid-19 at this stage remains uncertain.

The ESRI regularly provide data and forecast economic trends for the country in their Quarterly Economic Commentaries. This provides information to obtain an update of disposable income levels to the present and to forecast the likely trends. The impact of the Covid -19 virus has not yet been felt to its full effect, but the ESRI predicted in its March 2020 commentary that the impact of many outlets, particularly in the retail, food and hospitality sectors having simply stopped trading, would be felt for an extended period and that the Irish Economy will significantly contract in 2020. This is a short sharp unpredicted shock to the economy which could have a significant impact on disposable income and which renders projections based on past longer-term trends somewhat unreliable. It was expected that job losses will potentially have a significant impact on migration to Ireland and affordability of housing, subsequent reducing the market demand for housing.

However, following the gradual emergence from the hard lockdown in mid-2020, in September 2020 the impact of Covid-19 was however still very much part of the mid-term economic forecast. As regards housing, the working from home trend is slowly becoming entrenched and the housing market is showing signs of slowly responding to changing trends. The Irish independent of 28 September 2020 reports trends of House hunters returning to their home Counties. The focus of home owners has changed and they are expressly looking for access to broadband, home office potential and garden spaces rather than factors such as commuter friendliness and transport links. People are moving from

¹⁹ According to the CSO, In the year prior to April 2016, 82,346 persons arrived to live in Ireland, of which 72,419 were aged 15 or over. Just over 34 per cent (24,768) of this group were Irish nationals and 47,651 were non-Irish nationals.

Dublin to larger houses. The article however shows that house prices of a 3bed semi-detached in County Kilkenny have remained stable for the period June to end September 2020 with a reported 0% change. This would seem to indicate the impact of Covid-19 on County Kilkenny has not led to major changes in the housing market.

In a statement on the 29th of September 2020, The Department of Finance forecasted that the economy as measured by Gross Domestic Product, will only shrink by 2.5% for 2020 and not the anticipated 10.5% as expected in April 2020. This revision is explained by the continuing strong performance of the multinational export sector, with the impact of Covid-19 on the domestic economy still described as “severe” for when the multinationals are stripped out of the growth predictions, the forecast is for a shrinking of 6.5% in the Modified Domestic Demand, down from 15.1% in April 2020.

The short and medium to long term impact of Brexit on the housing market is however still uncertain, with a no-trade deal outcome predicted in September to lead to a marginal growth of 1.4% in the GDP in 2021 as opposed to a 6% bounce back predicted by the Department of Finance in April 2020.

5.6 Unemployment

Unemployment rates were also examined as an indicator of trends in average disposable household income. The CSO Live register for August 2020 showed a large increase in numbers due to the Covid-19 outbreak. CSO figures from February 2020, which precedes the Covid -19 outbreak, however show a 2,95 % year on year decline in numbers on the live register for the South East. The rate of unemployment will impact on the level of households on Kilkenny County Councils’ housing list.

5.6.1 Impact of Covid -19 on Live Register to August 2020

The ESRI’s Quarterly Economic Indicator for Spring 2020 was the last such report prior to the full impact of Covid -19. This report however includes the latest economic projections and anticipates that at a National level, unemployment will rise from an average 5% in 2019 to 12,6% in 2020 whilst GDP will contract by an average of 7,1%. Under this scenario economic activity both domestically and internationally begins to recover significantly in Q3 and Q4 and the unemployment rate will fall back from height of 18% to 11% by end 2020.

Figure 1 Live Register Seasonally Adjusted

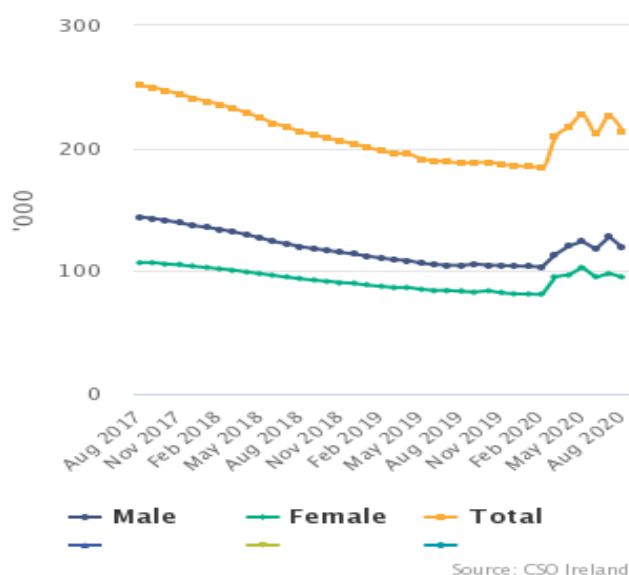


Figure 1: Live Register Seasonally adjusted

The recovery has however been muted due to the lasting impact of Covid -19 to Q3. Although the Department of Finance predicted in April 2020 that the average unemployment in 2020 will be 13.9%, this figure was revised upwards at the end of September 2020 to 15.9%. This may yet have significant knock on effects on housing affordability in the Kilkenny.

5.7 Interest Rates

The average interest rate on a new mortgage has fallen since the economic downturn of the late 2000s and the European Central Bank’s repo rate has been set at 0% since March 2016. In this climate the banks have been able to lend at very favourable rates. However, apart from tracker mortgages, lending rates at the main Irish banks have been high compared to the European average. The Irish Times reported on April 9th 2020 that according to Brokers.ie, the average Irish mortgage has been 2.91% over the past two years, more than double the European average of 1.35% over the same period. This average however includes tracker mortgages which are well below the average. By implication new mortgages are well above the Irish average rate.

5.8 The Cost of Housing

A sign of recovery in the housing market prior to the impact of Covid-19 was that according to the Geodirectory, at a national level, the number of house transactions completed in the last 9 months of 2019 exceeded those of 2010 by 133% and between Oct 2009 and Oct 2019, the average national house price rose by 16.9%.

According to the Daft.ie [House Price Report 2019 Q3](#) the average asking price for **County Kilkenny** was €215,935. This is higher than the average asking prices in the adjacent counties: of €187,027 in Carlow, €177,036 in Laois, €182,492 in Tipperary, €234,674 in Waterford County, and €205,366 in Wexford. This is a decrease of 3.1% from last year’s average asking price. The relatively high cost of housing in Kilkenny is indicative of demand exceeding supply.

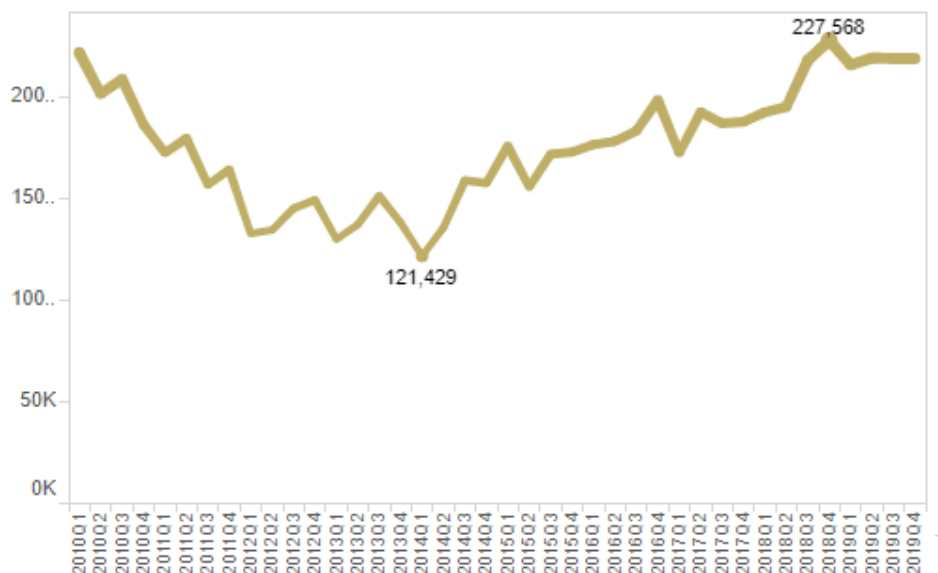


Figure 2: Mean House Price for Kilkenny City for the period 2010- 2019. (Source RPPI 2020)

According to the Residential Property Price Index (RPPI), the Mean house price in **Kilkenny City** over the past 10 years was €222,535, up from a low of 121,429 in 2014 to a height of 227,568 at the beginning of 2018.

According to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), during 2019 the average rent across all house types for **County Kilkenny** was €837 and €849 for **Kilkenny City**. This is higher than the average rent in most of the adjacent counties: of €820 in Carlow, €674 in Tipperary, €741 in Wexford, and €793 in Waterford County (€833 in the City) over the same period.

The ERSI estimates that, given that they predict an unemployment rate of close to 20 per cent in the quarter of the Covid -19 shock, net loss will be 20% for investment in dwellings and improvements as, if the impact lasts for a quarter, housing investment will rebound to 80% thereafter.

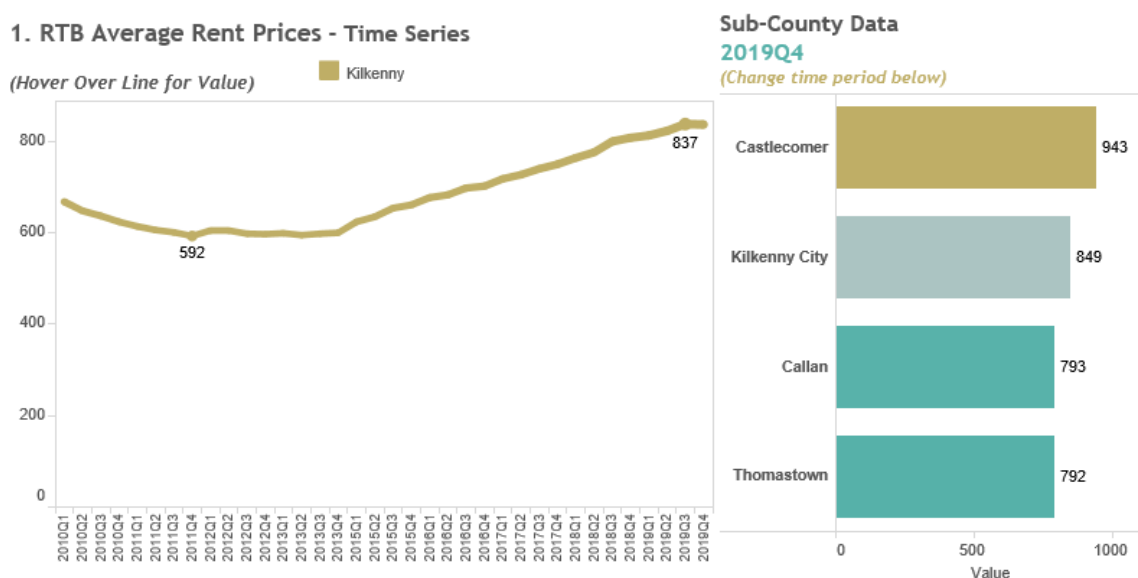


Figure 3: Average Rent Prices 2010-2019: Source: Kilkenny Social and Community Monitor 2020.

5.9 Mortgage lending

Over the period of the last plan there was a steady improvement in mortgage lending which is indicative of an upswing in the mortgage market. Data from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government²⁰ show that following the peak of the bubble in 2006, when mortgage approvals were at 114,600 with a value of €32bn, that lending reduced in 2014 to a value of only €4.7bn. In 2011 mortgage approvals at 12,900 were the lowest since the 1970 total of 12,500 when the data series began. Cash buyers accounted for nearly half of all residential property purchases the first half of 2014, which had a significant impact on mortgages issued for the year.

The Banking and Payment Federation of Ireland, in their February 2020 report, reported a purchase mortgage approval activity which rose in volume terms by 4.5% year-on-year and increased in value terms by 9% over the same period and now stands at 49,402, valued at just over €11 billion for the year up to February 2020. Since 2014, there has therefore been a significant rise in the number and

²⁰ Finfacts.ie,

value of mortgages issued, which is indicative of a sustained improvement in the property market over the period.

It is anticipated that Covid-19 will have a significant impact on both housing affordability and the number of mortgages issued during the Covid -19 pandemic and in its aftermath.

5.10 Loan to Value Ratio (LTV)

In accordance with Central Bank Requirements, banks are now demanding larger deposits and more stringent stress test of applicants in the form of a loan to value ratio.

At the height of the housing market 100% loans were available for first time buyers, this favoured those on lower incomes who were not in a position to accumulate a deposit for a home loan that would reduce the LTV. Following the economic downturn, the Central Bank put in place requirements for a deposit for all home purchases, which aims to limit exposure for home buyers and financial institutions whilst keeping a damper on house prices.

Since 1 January 2017, for first-time buyers of principal dwelling homes, a limit of 90% LTV applies on the full value of all residential property. By implication this requires first-time buyers to pay a deposit of 10% for any house or apartment, regardless of price.

However, for **non-first-time home-buyers**, there is a limit of 80% of LTV on new mortgage lending, whatever the price of the property, so they will need a deposit of 20% of the total purchase price.

For **properties other than principal dwelling homes**, including buy-to-let properties, a limit of 70% LTV applies, thus requiring a deposit of 30%.

5.11 Affordability Analysis²¹

The affordability assessment is done based on the assumption that the minimum Loan to Value deposit of 10% for first time buyers and 20% for second time/switcher buyers can be paid. It is also assumed that the advised 28% advised maximum of gross household income is available and that the mortgagee is not already overexposed as regards other commitments. The key variables used in the formula for calculating affordability are household gross income, house prices, Loan to Value requirements and mortgage details.

Although the average interest rate in the state over the past two years was 2,91%, this interest rate is not always attainable to first time buyers. It is nonetheless a good indicator of the expected average rate over the coming years. When considering a household may have a joint mortgage based on two annual disposable incomes, the assumption is that these will be added together for the purposes of the calculations. For Kilkenny, where the Gross annual household income in 2016 was €44,234. More recent data from the CSO give the disposable income per person in 2017 as €19,337, which would amount to a household disposable income of €38,674.

Using the mortgage calculator of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, and when considering the average disposable income for Kilkenny, the following affordability table applies.

²¹ The affordability analysis is done without sufficient data available about the medium to long term impact of Covid-19 on employment numbers and wages and the analysis is made on CSO figures pre-dating the Covid -19 pandemic.

| Kilkenny mean House price | Loan to Value | Loan Size | APR % | Term | Annual cost | Household Annual disp. income | Average Gross household income | % of gross household income |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------|------|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| €215,935 | 90% first time | €194,341 | 2,91 | 25 | €10,950 | €38,674 | €44,234 | 24,7% |
| €215,935 | 80% second time/ switcher | €172,748 | 2.91 | 25 | €9,732 | €38,674 | €44,234 | 22,0% |

Table 9: Affordability analysis for Kilkenny Based on average purchase price -2019

| Monthly Rental Price | Annual Rental cost | Household Annual Disposable income | Mean Gross household income | Percentage of gross household income | Advised maximum % of disposable income |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| €837 | €10,044 | €38,674 | €44,234 | 25,97% | 28% |

Table 10: Affordability analysis for Kilkenny based on Rental -2019

When applying the 28%²² rule, which requires that a mortgage should not comprise more than 28% of the gross income of a household, it is considered that for first time buyers, the average house price in Kilkenny is marginally below that percentage. It should however be considered that income levels from 2016 are applied to house prices from 2019 and as most incomes would have risen somewhat between 2017 and 2019²³, households may find a mortgage more affordable. The average rental price is also marginally below the advised 28% of Gross household income, but is comparatively slightly more expensive. Average house prices at average mortgages are therefore currently at affordable levels in the County as a whole, as is rental cost. The average cost however does not account for variables such as location, size and type. Affordability in the housing market will benefit from an increase in output, which should make units more affordable. Under an economic growth scenario for the economy it is anticipated that the supply of houses should increase, however when supply is lacking, proactive land management should be used as the tool for encouraging housing delivery. The medium to long term impact of Covid-19 on the housing market is however unclear at this stage.

6. Various needs in the Housing Sector:

It is important that the housing strategy analyse the housing needs for a changing society. This plan supports the varying housing needs that are required to be met and includes provision for the following housing sectors:

²² The term 28/36 rule refers to a common-sense rule used to calculate the amount of debt an individual or household should assume. According to this rule, a household should spend a maximum of 28% of its gross monthly income on total housing expenses and no more than 36% on total debt service, including housing and other debt such as car loans and credit cards. - <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/twenty-eight-thirty-six-rule.asp>

²³ In 2016 the minimum wage in Ireland was €9.15. On the 1st February 2020 the national minimum wage in Ireland was increased to €10.10 per hour from €9.80 in 2019. The 2020 rates is €9.95 per hour above the 2016 rate. A worker getting paid €10.10 an hour who works for 39 hours a week will earn €20,483 a year before deductions. Moneyguideireland.com

6.1 Older people,

According to the Department of Health, by the year 2036 the number of older people aged 65 and older living in Ireland is expected to increase by 250%. According to the CSO, those aged 65 and over already increased by 3.4% to 720,100 in the year to April 2020. The CSO indicated that this age group has increased by 14.3% since 2016 and now accounts for 14.5% of the total population. For County Kilkenny, an increase of 250% would mean that the older population of 14,053 in 2016 will increase to 35,132 in 20 years' time.

The concept of an Age Friendly community is linked to an initiative of the World Health Organisation started in 2007. This initiative seeks to engage older people and their communities in making their communities better, healthier and safer places for older people to live and thrive. In 2017 Kilkenny County Council adopted Kilkenny Age Friendly County Strategy. Positive ageing can be facilitated by means of various age friendly initiatives, including universal design and can be supported by the adoption of the appropriate development objectives to facilitate same.

| Age | 0-4 | 5-12 | 13-17 | 18-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65+ |
|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2011 | 7.86 | 11.49 | 6.68 | 7.8 | 29.84 | 23.89 | 12.25 |
| 2016 | 7.17 | 11.86 | 7.11 | 7.09 | 27.67 | 24.93 | 14.16 |

Table 11: Age Cohorts in County Kilkenny

With more older people expected during the lifetime of the plan and beyond, the Plan acknowledges the need to provide for older people in their communities. This specific need should not only be considered in all new developments, but particularly where urban renewal takes place and where infill opportunities present. Most older people will benefit from single level living, within close proximity to shops and other social infrastructure. New housing estates should ideally present a mix of house types which includes an agreed level of single level living units for older people, whether through the provision of interspersed single units in areas where lower urban densities are appropriate or through the provision of lift assisted multi storey units in areas of higher densities closer to town centres. The plan supports the provision of opportunities for both independent living and cohabitation of older people in either non-assisted living units or assisted living units such as nursing homes, provided that adequate shops and social infrastructure is available in close proximity. Planning and design policies in County Kilkenny will continue to be inclusive of age friendly designs and consistent with established best practices.

Objective;

- **To ensure that all new housing developments and developments for renewal which includes housing, includes a mix of house types with universal design and single level living units so as to provide for an aging population.**

6.2 People with disabilities,

People with disabilities sometimes find older housing units unsuited to their living requirements. The Plan supports the provision of adequate housing solutions for people with disabilities in all developments. People with disabilities need to be adequately provided for in their existing community and over and above existing requirements for new developments, the retrofitting of units to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations may be required where urban renewal takes place or where infill opportunities present. However, Part M compliance and Universal Design may not always be adequate though, some houses have to be specifically designed for the individual, based on

occupation therapist reports. “Disabilities” covers a range of requirements and includes autism etc. The promotion of universal design would however assist in catering for this housing need.

Objective;

- **To ensure that all new housing developments and developments for renewal which includes housing, includes a mix of house types with universal design and single level living units so as to provide for people with disabilities in accordance with Kilkenny Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability (2016-2020) as may be reviewed .**

6.3 The Travelling Community

6.3.1 Existing Housing need for Traveller Accommodation

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 -2024 was adopted by Kilkenny County Council on September 21st 2019. In the preparation of this programme, an assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers was undertaken (Section 6.1 of the 1998 Act) as directed by the Minister, who are assessed under S.20 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as being qualified for social housing support, including the need for sites.

The current (2019) number of approved Traveller households seeking assistance with accommodation further to the Housing Needs Assessment is 41.

6.3.2 Projected Housing for Traveller Accommodation

The estimate of projected accommodation needs of Traveller Families arising during the duration of the Programme (1 July 2019 to 30 June 2024) has identified an additional 25 households.

| | Total Current | Total Projected | Total |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Standard Housing | 23 | 13 | 36 |
| Group Housing [Traveller Specific] | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| Residential Caravan Site [Traveller Specific] | 2 | 10 | 12 |
| Rural Cottage | 10 | 0 | 12 |
| Total | 41 | 25 | 66 |

Table 12: Breakdown of need for Traveller Housing (current and projected) based on family requirement

It is therefore intended to provide 66 units of accommodation in accordance with the provisions of the agreed Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024. Of these 20 units will be Traveller Specific Accommodation – Group Housing or Residential Caravan Site. The ‘standard housing’ and ‘rural cottage’ units are intended to be provided as part of the general Housing Delivery Programme.

There was no identified requirement for transient or halting sites so the provision of this type of accommodation is not proposed.

It is an objective of the Plan to implement the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 -2024.

6.4 Social Housing

The Plan supports the integration of social housing into all new developments. The Planning and Development Act 2000-2020 and this plan requires the provision of 10% Social housing as part of all new developments exceeding 9 units or on land of 0.1 Ha or above in size. It is the policy of the plan to provide adequate numbers of social housing units in combination with all housing developments, but to also support the construction of multi-unit social housing developments through the Approved Housing Bodies and both Turnkeys and Direct Builds by Kilkenny County Council.

6.4.1 Needs for Social Houses

Under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1988, each Local Authority is required to carry out an Assessment of Housing Need every three years, to assess the need for the provision of adequate and suitable housing accommodation for persons who are:

- a) homeless
- b) travellers
- c) living in accommodation that is unfit for human habitation or is materially unsuitable for their adequate housing
- d) living in overcrowded accommodation
- e) sharing accommodation with another person or persons and who, in the opinion of the housing authority, have a reasonable requirement for separate accommodation
- f) young persons leaving institutional care or without family accommodation
- g) in need of accommodation for medical or compassionate reasons
- h) elderly
- i) disabled or handicapped or are, in the opinion of the housing authority, not reasonably able to meet the cost of accommodation which they are occupying or to obtain suitable alternative accommodation.

6.4.2 Housing List

The current **gross** Housing demand (households approved for social housing supports at 31st December 2019 is 1,988 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

| Year | Number on Housing List |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| December 2019 | 1,988 |
| December 2018 | 2,070 |
| December 2017 | 2,180 |
| December 2016 | 2,059 (Statutory Assessment 2016) |
| December 2015 | 2,744 |
| December 2014 | 2,456 |
| December 2013 | 2,144 (Statutory Assessment 2013) |
| December 2012 | 3,688 |
| December 2011 | 3,118 |
| December 2010 | 2,876 |

Difference from 2010 to 2019 = a decrease of 888 (30%)

Table 13: Numbers on the County Kilkenny Housing List over the past 10 years.

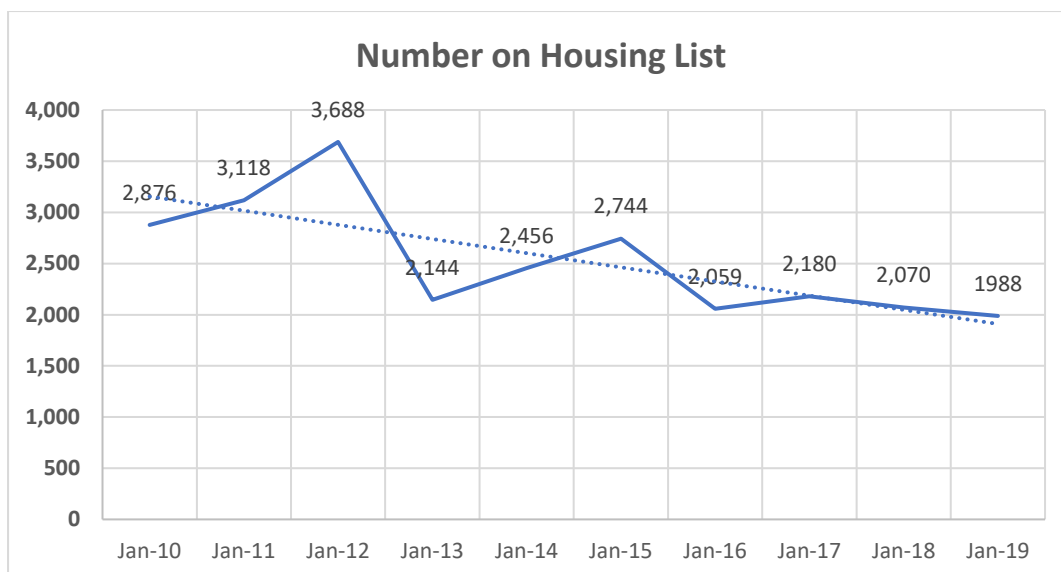


Figure 4: Number of persons on the County Kilkenny Housing list

A snapshot of the current (Gross as at April 2020) range of social housing need is included in the following table. Of note is that 55% of the total need is for Kilkenny City, with a further 20% in the scheduled towns. 77% of the need is for 1 and 2 bed units. This is reflective both of the smaller family units approved for housing and the lack of existing stock in this category (those needing 3 bed units tend to get housed sooner as there is more stock available). Kilkenny County Councils future housing delivery plans will be based on the main areas of need highlighted below.

| AREA_OF_CHOICE | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total | Area as a % of Overall | |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|------------------------|------------|
| Kilkenny City | 430 | 428 | 203 | 32 | 1093 | 55% | 75% |
| Callan | 45 | 57 | 28 | 3 | 133 | 7% | |
| Ferrybank | 25 | 26 | 25 | 2 | 78 | 4% | |
| Thomastown | 29 | 27 | 12 | 3 | 71 | 4% | |
| Castlecomer | 28 | 18 | 13 | 1 | 60 | 3% | |
| Graigenamanagh | 27 | 21 | 8 | 1 | 57 | 3% | |
| Ballyragget | 17 | 27 | 8 | 4 | 56 | 3% | |
| Bennettsbridge | 20 | 25 | 8 | 2 | 55 | 3% | |
| Mooncoin | 11 | 19 | 13 | | 43 | 2% | |
| Urlingford | 7 | 17 | 7 | 3 | 34 | 2% | |
| Piltown | 13 | 10 | 11 | | 34 | 2% | |
| Freshford | 9 | 14 | 9 | 2 | 34 | 2% | |
| Kilmacow | 7 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 26 | 1% | |
| Gowran | 7 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 23 | 1% | |
| Johnstown | 7 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 21 | 1% | |
| Inistiogue | 10 | 8 | 1 | | 19 | 1% | |
| Moneenroe | 4 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 18 | 1% | |
| Ballyhale | 7 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 17 | 1% | |
| Goresbridge | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 1% | |
| Paulstown | 6 | 4 | 2 | | 12 | 1% | |
| Slieverue | 5 | 1 | 4 | | 10 | 1% | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----|
| Glenmore | 3 | 5 | 1 | | 9 | 0% |
| Kells | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0% |
| New Ross Environs | 5 | 1 | 2 | | 8 | 0% |
| Fiddown | 4 | 1 | 2 | | 7 | 0% |
| Stoneyford | 3 | 2 | 2 | | 7 | 0% |
| Kilmoganny | 4 | 2 | 1 | | 7 | 0% |
| Coon | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 6 | 0% |
| Clogh | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 6 | 0% |
| Knocktopher | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 5 | 0% |
| Mullinavat | 2 | 3 | | | 5 | 0% |
| Windgap | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0% |
| Kilmanagh | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | 0% |
| Tullaroan | 1 | | | | 1 | 0% |
| Hugginstown | 1 | | | | 1 | 0% |
| The Rower | 1 | | | | 1 | 0% |
| Clara | | | 1 | | 1 | 0% |
| Skeoghvosteen | | 1 | | | 1 | 0% |
| Grand Total | 753 | 775 | 392 | 68 | 1988 | |
| | 38% | 39% | 20% | 3% | | |
| | 77% | | | | | |
| BASIS_OF_GROSS NEED | | | Total | | | |
| Concluded that Mortgage is unsustainable | | | | | 25 | 1% |
| Currently Dependent on Rent Supplement | | | | | 714 | 36% |
| Disability | | | | | 141 | 7% |
| Exceptional Medical or Compassionate Grounds | | | | | 73 | 4% |
| Homeless, Institution, Emergency Accommodation or Hostel | | | | | 38 | 2% |
| Involuntary Sharing | | | | | 63 | 3% |
| Overcrowded | | | | | 131 | 7% |
| Unfit | | | | | 40 | 2% |
| Unsuitable - Particular Household Circumstances | | | | | 763 | 38% |
| Grand Total | | | | | 1988 | |

Table 14: Breakdown of need on the County Kilkenny Housing List

The statutory triennial Assessment of Housing Need was carried out in 2019. The net social housing need in Kilkenny County Council at 31st of December 2019 was 1988, steadily declining from a height of 2744 at the end of 2014. That represents a reduction of approximately 756 persons over the lifetime of the last development plan. It should be noted that 1477 applications (74% of net need) are for applicants living in private rented accommodation, adequate to meet their needs, and are on the Councils list solely because of “rent affordability issues” or “suitability”. In the current difficult economic climate and in light of Covid-19 impacts, the ability of the State to support major capital expenditure on housing may be limited in the medium to long term.

For Kilkenny City, the net number of approved applicants on the Housing Waiting List as at 25th June 2019 was 821. The Net Need figure excludes transfers, RAS and HAP (i.e. those already in receipt of social housing support), those housed by housing bodies, those approved for mortgage to rent and those in sheltered/supported accommodation. As of the 08th of November 2020, this net Housing Need Figure for Kilkenny City had been further reduced to 756.

6.4.3 Income Levels

From the income figures, 65% of households approved for social housing supports have a gross household income of €15,000 or less. Income limits apply for inclusion on the housing list, this is reflected in the bands below.

| TOTAL_GROSS_ANNUAL_INCOME | Total | |
|---------------------------|-------|-----|
| Below €10,000 | 331 | 18% |
| €10,001 to €15,000 | 886 | 47% |
| €15,001 to €20,000 | 301 | 16% |
| €20,001 to €25,000 | 223 | 12% |
| €25,001 to €30,000 | 118 | 6% |
| Over €30,000 | 29 | 2% |

Table 15: Income Bands of persons on the County Kilkenny Housing List

6.4.4 Age Profile

Table 16 illustrates the age profile of those seeking housing support and shows that most of those registered as in need of social housing are aged under 40 years of age (70%)

| Age Range | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------|------------|
| 71 and Over | 49 | 2% |
| 61-70 | 155 | 8% |
| 51-60 | 316 | 16% |
| 41-50 | 478 | 24% |
| 31-40 | 628 | 31% |
| 26-30 | 236 | 12% |
| Up to 25 | 145 | 7% |

Table 16: Age profile of persons on the County Kilkenny Housing list

6.4.5 Length of Time on Waiting List

The table below gives details of the length of time households had applied for social housing support. 16% had applied to the local authority for housing less than one year ago, and 21% of households had been waiting for social housing for more than 5 years.

| Time on Waiting List | Total | |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|
| Less than 1 year | 331 | 16% |
| Between 1 and 2 years | 294 | 15% |
| Between 2 and 3 years | 193 | 10% |
| Between 3 and 4 years | 223 | 11% |
| Between 4 and 5 years | 237 | 12% |
| Between 5 and 6 years | 185 | 9% |
| Between 6 and 7 years | 118 | 6% |

| | | |
|-------------------|------|-----|
| More than 5 years | 426 | 21% |
| | 2007 | |

Table 17: Length of time persons spent on the County Kilkenny Housing list

6.4.6 Composition of Households

Table 9 summarises the structure of the households identified as needing social housing. Of note is that 54% of the housing list is a single person household or a lone parent with one child. This is reflected in the high demand for smaller housing units i.e. 1 and 2 bed units. It is considered that this trend will continue, and thus smaller units should form a significant proportion of new social units provided.

| FAMILY_COMPOSITION | No of Applicants (Families or Individual) | |
|---|--|--------|
| Single Person Household | 728 | 36.44% |
| Lone Parent with One Child | 350 | 17.52% |
| Lone Parent with Two Children | 150 | 7.51% |
| Lone Parent with Three or More Children | 58 | 2.90% |
| Couple Without Children | 99 | 4.95% |
| Two Adults | 98 | 4.90% |
| Couple with 1 child | 147 | 7.36% |
| Couple with 2 children | 149 | 7.46% |
| Couple with 3 or more children | 95 | 4.75% |
| Other family units | 124 | 6.21% |
| | 1998 | |

Table 18: Structure of Households on the County Kilkenny Housing List

6.4.7 Provision of Social and affordable Housing

As is clear from the Social Housing Data, a large number of households qualify for social housing assistance from the State. Having regard to the affordability analysis above, the Part V objective of the 2014 – 2020 Development Plan as prescribed for by Section 95 of the Planning and Development Act will continue to be implemented for the period 2021-2027. This requires that 10% of the land zoned in the Plan for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses shall be reserved for the provision of social housing. The Local Authority has a number of methods of meeting the social demand.

| Year | LA New Build | AHB New Build | Part V - New Build | LA Acquisition | AHB Acquisition | Leasing Total | RAS | HAP | Overall Totals |
|------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----|-----|----------------|
| 2016 | 10 | 12 | 0 | 37 | 19 | 11 | 50 | 324 | 463 |
| 2017 | 29 | 19 | 3 | 39 | 16 | 1 | 38 | 272 | 417 |
| 2018 | 45 | 45 | 2 | 30 | 33 | 22 | 43 | 216 | 436 |
| 2019 | 4 | 90 | 17 | 48 | 120 | 15 | 68 | 187 | 549 |
| | 88 | 166 | 22 | 154 | 188 | 49 | 199 | 999 | |

Table 19: Local Authority and Approved Housing Board provision of housing 2016-2019

6.4.8 Local Authority Housing Provision

- A total of 88 units were constructed by Kilkenny local authorities from 2016-2019,
- A total of 22 units have been acquired from 2016 to 2019 under Part V
- 154 units have been purchased
- Approved Housing Boards built 166 new Houses and acquired 188 units.

6.4.9 The Role of the Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector continues to play an important role in the provision of accommodation for persons with low incomes who are in receipt of rent subsidy. The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) is an initiative to cater for the accommodation needs of certain persons in receipt of rent supplement, normally for more than 18 months and who are assessed as having a long-term housing need.

One of the main features of the scheme is that local authorities in sourcing accommodation for these households make use of the private sector and enter into contractual arrangements to secure medium to long-term availability of rented accommodation. From 2016 to 2019 a total of 199 households were included in the scheme in Kilkenny.

HAP (Housing Assistance Payment) is a form of social housing support provided by all local authorities. HAP means that local authorities can provide housing assistance for households who qualify for social housing support, including many long-term Rent Supplement recipients. Under HAP, local authorities will make payments, subject to rent limits, on behalf of the HAP recipient directly to the landlord in respect of rent. The HAP recipient will then pay a rent contribution to the local authority. The rent contribution is a differential rent – that is, a rent set by the local authority based on income and the ability to pay.

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

The requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) in relation to any particular site should be incorporated into any development proposal at an early stage in the development process. The Council therefore require housing developers, to whom the 10% [or any percentage that may apply subject to further legislative amendments] requirement, will apply to discuss the likely terms of Part V agreements at pre-planning consultations, or directly with the Housing Section in advance of pre-planning. The Council and the developer should then have a provisional agreement in place before prior to submission of a planning application.

Conditions attached to planning permissions for residential development will require developers to enter into a formal agreement with the Housing Section of Kilkenny County Council in relation to the provision of social housing under Part V of The Planning and Development Act, prior to commencement on site.

Kilkenny County Council may choose to nominate an Approved Housing Body to purchase the units but the Developer must engage with Kilkenny County Council Housing Section in the first instance and the Part V agreement must be made with Kilkenny County Council directly.

The various options for compliance are set down in the Section 96(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The following preferred options are available to satisfy the requirements of the housing strategy, **in descending order of preference** of Kilkenny County Council –

Option 1

Build and transfer to the ownership of the planning authority, or persons nominated by the authority, of a number of housing units on the site subject to the planning application (section 96(3) paragraph (b)(i)).

Provision of units within the proposed development is the preferred Part V solution. Units should be spread throughout the scheme insofar as possible, and delivered in accordance with any proposed phasing of development.

Housing Unit types and sizes must be agreed with Kilkenny County Council Housing Section at pre-planning stage. Details of social housing need in the relevant areas can be supplied to developers on request.

Option 2

Transfer to the ownership of the planning authority of a part or parts of the land subject to the planning application (section 96(3) paragraph (a)).

This land may be fully or partially serviced by the Developer.

Option 3

Transfer to the ownership of the planning authority, or persons nominated by the authority, of housing units on any other land in the functional area of the planning authority (section 96(3) paragraph (b)(iv)).

This would be subject to units being deemed suitable by Kilkenny County Council. Second hand houses are not usually the preferred option, new houses in a turnkey condition are preferred.

Option 4

Grant a lease of housing units to the planning authority either on the site subject to the application or in any other area within the functional area of the planning authority (section 96(3) paragraph (b)(iva)). This option of leasing units might only be considered where the development consists of apartments only, but it is not a preferred solution.

An agreement that provides for a combination of options 1-4 above can also be entered into.

6.4.10 Targets for Social Housing Provision:

Social Housing Projects will be planned in accordance with identified need, within the constraints of available land, infrastructure and funding. Current social housing projects (as at June 2020) comprise 389 social units under construction or planned for Kilkenny City. Currently 55% of of the County's social housing demand is in the city, and it is expected that this dominance of Kilkenny City would continue into the future. A further 20% of social housing need is in the district towns and most of the social housing will be delivered on that basis into the future. Plans for the provision of social housing throughout the County are very much constrained by the lack of water and wastewater services in certain areas. What is of note is that 75% of the social housing need is for 1 and 2 bed units, accordingly new social housing projects proposed will be focussed on these unit types. The Council will continue to meet social and affordable housing needs in the towns, villages and rural areas of the county in a balanced way avoiding overconcentration in any one particular area. The Council in its house building programme will place an emphasis on well-designed and integrated schemes appropriate to the scale and character of the area, close to relevant amenities and services.

Objectives:

- **To require 10% of the land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, be made available for the provision of social housing.**
- **To require that a mixture of residential unit types and sizes are developed to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households within the city and county.**

6.4.11 Role of Approved Housing Bodies

The Council recognises the important role played by Approved Housing Bodies in meeting social housing need and will support and facilitate the expansion of that role.

The Council will seek to meet the increased demand for social and affordable housing in a number of ways as a housing authority through:

- The Approved Housing Bodies through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)
- RAS and HAP schemes
- The disabled persons grant,
- The essential repairs grant and other measures,
- Through sale of private sites subject to available lands and funding' Traveller Accommodation Programme.

6.5 Families of varying sizes and income levels

It is important to ensure that the full spectrum of family house types is provided in both the urban and rural areas of the County. This will ensure that the housing market caters for the full variety of family sizes with their respective accommodation needs. Family homes comprise 78% of houses throughout Kilkenny County and 76% throughout Kilkenny City. As regards social housing, following on from single persons being the largest grouping, the second largest group (17.5%) is comprised of a single parent with one child and the third largest group (7.5%) is comprised of a single parent with two children. It is important that especially social housing also provide for these smaller families within their range of house types.

Although the average household size may be falling, there is a need for new family homes ranging from two to three-bedroom apartments, terrace houses and semi-detached homes closer to the city centre and in town centres. Although not precluded but discouraged from central areas, lower density three to four-bedroom semi-detached and detached family homes are best suited towards the urban periphery, in smaller towns, villages and in rural areas. It is important that private households are able to find a range of opportunities to express their lifestyle needs through housing within the city's boundaries and within towns and villages and not only through one-off rural houses.

Objective;

- **To ensure the widest possible range of housing options in each new development and to prevent the proliferation of limited option house types in any particular area.**

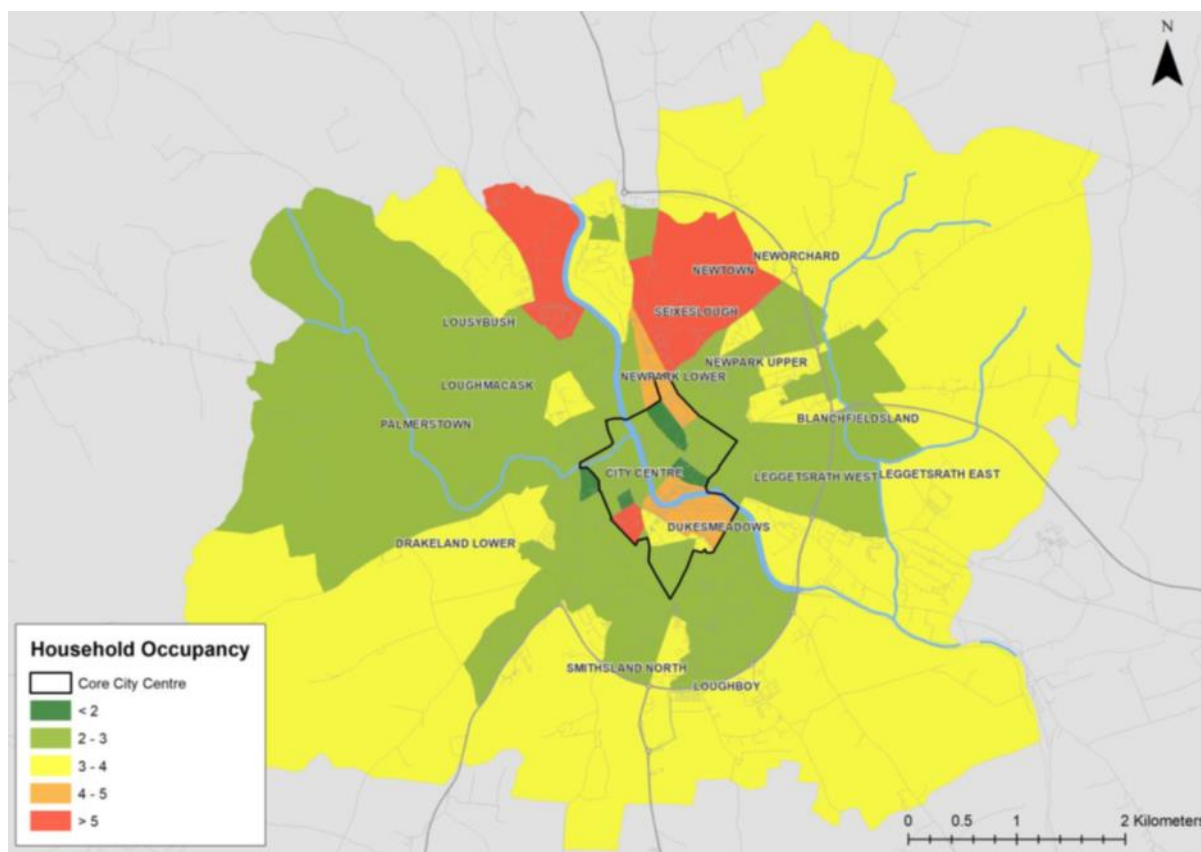


Figure: 5 Household occupancy per small area in Kilkenny City

6.6 Single people and student accommodation.

The biggest single grouping of people (36.44%) on the County’s social housing list require single occupancy housing units, which is a clear indication for the need of this type of housing unit, comprising either a bedsit, one- or two-bedroom units. An ageing population will likely also require more single occupancy units, particularly in more central locations where social and community facilities are more readily available.

Although there has been a marginal increase in single occupant households in the County during the period 2011 to 2016, the 2016 census figures indicate that in Kilkenny City, the number of households made up of single person has marginally decreased. Given the exceptional economic circumstances over this period, this trend could have been brought about by either a shortage in supply or economic necessity and may not be indicative of long-term housing requirements.

| Status | 2016 | 2011 |
|------------------------------|------|-------|
| One-person household- County | 22% | 21.7% |
| One person household - City | 26% | 26.7% |

Figure 6 Single person households in Kilkenny County and City

in accordance with the NPF prediction It is anticipated that household size will shrink generally and may be down to 2.5 persons by 2040. This by implication will mean that the need for single occupancy residences will grow. Single persons may to some extent share the need for two-bedroom units with smaller families (single parent and one or two children). It is considered that smaller units of up to two bedrooms should proportionally comprise up to 22% of new houses in Kilkenny County and 26% in Kilkenny City over the period of the development plan. These units should be proportionally dispersed throughout new developments and redevelopment projects.

Although Kilkenny at present has limited availability of student accommodation, it is anticipated that demand for single occupancy units and student units will increase as the establishment of the Technical University of the South East (TUSE) gets more traction.

Objective;

- **To ensure that in all new developments and renewal projects located particularly in central locations and close to educational facilities, student accommodation and living quarters suitable for single persons are provided as part of the mix of housing options.**

6.7 Rural Housing:

Rural housing comprises housing in small towns and settlements with a population below 1500 and one-off housing in the rural countryside.

One off housing:

Rural one- off housing has comprised a significant element of the total housing provision in Kilkenny over the recent years. An average of 147 houses per annum was granted over the lifetime of the last plan (2014-2020) and 135 per annum over the last 10 years. Especially in years where Urban housing output stalled, there was a constant stream of applications for one off rural housing which alleviated housing pressures.

| Year | Number of Rural Houses Approved |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 2011 | 127 |
| 2012 | 101 |
| 2013 | 89 |
| 2014 | 87 |
| 2015 | 107 |
| 2016 | 143 |
| 2017 | 177 |
| 2018 | 155 |
| 2019 | 190 |
| 2020 | 174 (87 to end 06/20) |
| Total | 1350 |

Table 20: One-off rural housing approved over the ten-year period 2011-2020

It is anticipated that rural housing will over the period of the plan continue to comprise a considerable element of the total housing supply of the County. As the average is off a low base at the depth of a recession, it is projected that due to continued growth, this average figure may be exceeded with approximately 850 to 1000 houses complying with the Rural housing policy expected to be granted over the lifetime of this plan (2021-2027).

The Plan acknowledges the need to provide for rural families who have a social and economic need to live in rural areas. The National Planning Framework addresses rural housing as an integral part of the Rural Growth Strategy, which aims to provide for rural housing whilst also ensuring that rural house provision does not impact on the vitality and viability of rural settlements.

Rural Settlements:

Although important to provide for rural families with local need, when considering the National Planning Framework’s aspirational outcome of “Compact Growth”, rural housing remains inefficient as regards land use and leads to significant costs related to car dependency and its inability to utilise

economies of scale as regards infrastructure provision. Rural communities should be viewed as more than a conglomeration of rural houses, rather a community built up around a core of local services such as church, school, shop and more.

Therefore, although both social and economic need is facilitated in this plan, (see Core Strategy **Chapter 4**), the plan gives effect to the National Policy Objective in so far as it aims to provide alternative rural settlement options, including serviced sites in smaller towns and villages which will enhance their sustainability, long term vitality and viability and ability to service their surrounding rural hinterland. The relevant Policy Objectives of the National Planning Framework (NPF) which gives effect to this aspiration are as follows:

National Policy Objective 18a:

Support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.

National Policy Objective 18b:

Develop a programme for ‘new homes in small towns and villages’ with local authorities, public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages.

National Policy Objective 19:

Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:

- *In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;*
- *In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.*

The Core Strategy includes figures for the remainder of the County, to include sites in the large urban district towns, smaller towns and villages and environs of New Ross and the rural area of the county. It is considered that the growth allowed for rural settlement will comprise approximately 45% of the total growth of the County up to 2027.

Objective;

- **To, in accordance with the National Policy Objective 19, continue to facilitate rural housing according to specific categories of rural housing need whilst ensuring that targeted smaller towns and settlements are supported in terms of their continued viability.**

6.8 Homeless

Homeless Services in Kilkenny City and County are co-ordinated by Kilkenny Homeless Action Team (KHAT). This interagency team, which was formed in 2017, is managed by Kilkenny County Council and includes membership of both statutory and NGO service providers. The principle aim of KHAT is to work in partnership to ‘develop and enhance the delivery of Homeless Services, in an integrated,

efficient and effective way', with a key objective to assist homeless persons in to their own homes as quickly as possible. Homeless Services are informed nationally through Rebuilding Ireland – Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness and at a regional level by the South East Homelessness Action Plan.

At a regional level a Homeless Prevention and Support Project has been adopted which is being operated in all 5 Local Authorities in the region. This Homeless Prevention and Support Project sees Council staff operating a service which prioritises homeless preventions by way of applying early interventions, mediation and prevention measures to those presenting and seeking homeless services/emergency accommodation. This project also provides a care and case management model of support to homeless clients in non-supported temporary emergency accommodation by working with them on a client specific support plan which identifies the services or supports that the clients need to help them deal with issues and improve their chances of sustaining future tenancies by bringing these supports with them.

Objective:

- **To ensure consistency across the region in prioritising homeless prevention and supports with a view to further reducing the numbers in emergency accommodation and providing appropriate supports to those exiting same so that the numbers rebounding back into homelessness can be significantly reduced.**

7. Universal Design:

Given the wide diversity of the population, a universal design approach, which caters for the broadest range of users from the outset, can result in buildings and places that can be used and enjoyed by everyone. That approach eliminates or reduces the need for expensive changes or retrofits to meet the needs of particular groups at a later stage.

In all development proposals it will be the policy of the Council to promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in accordance with best practice and the policies and principles contained in Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and its companion document Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide.

Objective:

- **To Promote Universal Design in order to provide solutions for housing and amenities that would suit and accommodate the widest possible range of community groupings.**

8. Housing Activation and Active Land Management:

Housing activation will hinge on the successful implementation of measures to encourage the use of appropriately located sites and active land management by the Local Authority. The most important measure for active land management has been the implementation of the Vacant Site Levy.

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 introduced a Vacant Sites Levy as a site activation measure to ensure that vacant or underutilised land in urban areas is brought into beneficial use. This Plan will encourage and facilitate the appropriate development of sites and areas in need of development and renewal in order to prevent:

Adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of:

- the ruinous or neglected condition of any land
- Urban blight or decay

- Anti-social behaviour, or
- A shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses

Since the Vacant Site Register was introduced in 2017, in total Kilkenny County Council added 68 sites over the last three years. Since then 12 of these were activated or improved, which led to their cancellation from the Register. The targeted settlements to date have been Callan, Castlecomer, Thomastown and Kilkenny City. The Vacant Site Register comprises an ongoing programme of identifying and registering vacant sites, in order to ensure activation of appropriate sites for housing.

9. Conclusion

The provision of decent housing for all has long been a central aim of public policy. The general strategy for realising this aim is that those who can afford to do so should provide housing for themselves, and those unable to do so from their own resources should have access to social housing or to income support to secure and to retain private housing. The overall aim of housing policy is to “enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment and as far as possible at the tenure of its choice”.

The evolution and development of policy must take place against the backdrop a significant housing need and a tightening fiscal situation, being the result of significant National debt and the legacy of the Covid -19 pandemic. There will no doubt continue to be a strong emphasis on achieving value for money. To this end the use of the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and the long-term leasing scheme will continue to provide a significant part of social housing provision.

The Council will consider each planning application on its own merits and the preferred mechanism to satisfy the Part V requirement to provide social housing will be the one that best facilitates the development of strong, vibrant, mixed-tenure communities.