

## CHAPTER 9

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 9.0 Introduction

This chapter will set out the objectives of the County Development Plan for the sustainable development of Wicklow's economy that are relevant to and implementable through a land-use plan. Economic opportunity is identified as one of the over-arching and cross cutting themes that informs the County Development Plan. Economic development and employment is one of the key elements in delivering sustainable communities.

In accordance with the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Eastern and Midland Region will accommodate around 320,000 additional people in employment by 2040. It is important that the objectives in the County Development Plan are sufficiently agile to accommodate new employment opportunities in the county thereby improving resilience and reducing the number of people undertaking daily long distance commutes.

The land-use objectives of this plan aim to support the strategies of the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan and the Wicklow Local Enterprise Office, all of which have a wider remit than the County Development Plan in the area of economic development.

Sustainable economic development requires balance in terms of location and diversity of economic activity, as well as the protection of the environment and people's quality of life. In this regard, it is intended that this chapter will clearly articulate where the Council will promote and support proposals for new or expanded employment generating development, what type of development will be facilitated in various locations and what criteria will be used to evaluate such proposals. The Council's requirements with respect to the design, layout, servicing etc of new or expanded developments are set out in the Development & Design Standards in the Appendix.

### 9.1 Strategic Context

#### 9.1.1 National & Regional Policy

Policy drivers with respect to economic development from the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) are set out in detail in Chapter 2 of this plan. The national and regional strategies highlight the importance of aligning population growth with employment development to ensure the delivery of sustainable self-sustaining communities and to reduce reliance on unsustainable commuting. The legacy of rapid growth in commuter settlements needs to be addressed by facilitating jobs growth.

In accordance with NPO 5 of the NPF it is important that we develop our key towns and self-sustaining growth towns that are of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity. The RSES sets out guiding principles for investment prioritisation. Among these is the need to consider the capacity of places having regard to implications of commuting on quality of life.

The preferred Economic Strategy set out in the RSES promotes smart specialisation strategies based on identified strengths and competitive advantages, combined with cluster policies that promote economies of scale and network effects in certain locations. The Strategy should also support diversification of local economies and development of innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems for sustained national growth that can withstand external shocks.

The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) that forms part of the RSES identifies a number of large-scale employment and mixed-use development areas within the metropolitan area, which should be developed in co-ordination with the sequential delivery of infrastructure and services.

In Wicklow, the identified strategic locations are:

Strategic Corridor	Strategic Employment Locations	Employment Potential
North-South corridor (DART)	Bray, extension to Fassaroe	Re-intensification of commercial town centre functions and new mixed-use district.
	Greystones	Redevelopment of IDA strategic sites at Greystones to strengthen employment base for North Wicklow

Source: Table 5.2 RSES

The RSES identifies economic growth as a growth enabler for the region. This entails harnessing opportunities for economic growth by supporting synergies between talent and place, building on identified assets to strengthen enterprise ecosystems and provide quality jobs. It will involve re-intensifying employment within existing urban areas, complemented by strategic employment growth in the right locations and diversification of local and rural economies to better withstand economic shocks and sustain national growth.

The NPF notes that placemaking is critical to economic prosperity. The RSES identifies placemaking as one of the 5 key principles for economic opportunity. The other principles include smart specialisation, clustering, orderly growth and future proof & risk management.

**Table 9.1 Key Principles for Economic Opportunity**

Key Principles for Economic Opportunity	
<b>Smart Specialisation:</b>	<p>Smart specialisation is part of the EU’s cohesion policy and the Europe 2020 Strategy that focuses on each region’s strengths and the activities that support these strengths. As a place-based approach, it is characterised by the identification of strategic areas for intervention based both on the analysis of the strengths and potential of the economy and on an Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) with wide stakeholder involvement. The Industrial Development Agency (IDA), Enterprise Ireland (EI), Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and other enterprise agencies, as well as Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs) and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), ensure industry, education institutions and communities play a key role in this entrepreneurial discovery process.</p> <p>Smart specialisation focuses on boosting productivity, regaining lost competitiveness, increasing export intensity and diversity of markets, taking measures to improve our attractiveness as a location for investment either national or foreign, and to increase our entrepreneurial activity. Smart specialisation also recognises that supporting strong and dynamic enterprises and investing in Science, Technology and Innovation will accelerate the economic and societal return on investment. Strengthening enterprise engagement with academic research and driving more commercialisation of publicly performed research is an essential component of supporting an innovative and enterprising economy.</p>
<b>Clustering</b>	<p>These are initiatives that create, maintain, or upgrade an economic stronghold, by strengthening linkages or facilitating collective action to improve the cluster-specific business environment. Modern cluster policies aim to put in place a favourable business ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship in which new players can emerge and thus support the development of new industrial value chains and emerging industries. Clusters are more a reflection of cross-industry linkages and ‘related diversification’ than of narrow specialisation. Clusters in the vast majority of cases are not ‘created’, rather they emerge, because different locations provide different types of opportunities for specific companies to invest, succeed and grow. Clusters are the result of a cumulative process, take a long time to develop and are inherently unpredictable. Nevertheless, the State can play a facilitative and supportive role. There is potential to further strengthen collaboration and clustering activities between foreign and Irish owned enterprises, and between enterprises, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and the research base.</p>
<b>Orderly Growth</b>	<p>Through the identification of locations for strategic employment development in line with the RSES Growth and Settlement Strategy, compact growth will be achieved. This involves managing and facilitating the growth of Dublin and to increase the scale of the Regional Growth Centres to be able to provide the range of functions to their hinterlands. This needs to be facilitated by appropriate, effective and sustainable infrastructure development in these centres, and at the same time avoid sprawl. This encompasses connectedness aimed at</p>

	facilitating a network of skills and talent living in our settlements. It requires a support network of infrastructure - including broadband - in order to make the Region more connected and competitive. This will help to deliver high quality jobs that are well-paid and sustainable.
<b>Placemaking</b>	<p>From an enterprise development perspective, investment in the creation of place is key to realising regional potential. Business leaders and entrepreneurs make the decision about where to establish, invest or expand. Internationally, and in Ireland, the trend is increasingly toward urban areas of scale and concentrations of economic activity. The global environment has become increasingly competitive – not only in terms of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), but also in terms of the challenges facing our Irish owned enterprises as they aim to gain a foot-hold in, or diversify their export markets. Entrepreneurs and Irish owned enterprises are increasingly mobile and they are making location choices in a global context. Indeed, many now face international competition on their doorstep, reinforcing the imperative to innovate and to invest in areas of the business that improve competitiveness. In addition and in line with RSO 2 of Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration, there is a need to reduce consistent poverty rates and deprivation indices in the Region and to avoid depopulation of the smaller towns and rural areas. Similarly, region-wide unemployment blackspots require attention by identifying and addressing their causes.</p> <p>In general, companies are attracted to invest in locations where they can access human capital (skills and talent), higher education institutes and lifelong learning prone environments, where people will want to live and work and where the surrounding infrastructures are supportive of business. It is a combination of factors, such as innovation capacity in the location, continuous flow of infrastructure investments to ensure connectivity, competitive services and amenities, property solutions, housing, quality of life and access to trade and markets, that delivers efficiencies, economies of scale and wider societal benefits. The Smart City concept (see section 6.6) plays to our strengths in ICT and our small international scale, and in this respect constitutes an opportunity to develop a differentiated offering, to attract mobile talent, entrepreneurship, FDI, and to stimulate innovation across all enterprise.</p>
<b>Future Proof and Risk Management</b>	With emerging global development and challenges, such as Brexit, tax developments, trade wars, it is important to constantly foresee and scan the horizon to identify unforeseen challenges and be ready to act upon them accordingly.

Source: EMRA RSES

The RSES identifies Bray and Wicklow – Rathnew as ‘key towns’ in the region. In accordance with RPO 4.27, ‘*Key Towns shall act as economic drivers and provide for strategic employment locations to improve their economic base by increasing the ratio of jobs to workers*’.

The RSES recognises that the ‘Core Region’ contains a strong network of county and market towns that have a good level of local employment, services and amenities, which serve not just their resident populations but a wider catchment area, including towns such as **Arklow**. It is recognised that these towns have capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining and to attract high quality knowledge based employment at strategic accessible locations.

The regional ports are recognised in the RSES as important centres of economic activity, and the RSES seeks to protect and support the role of regional ports, including Wicklow and Arklow, as economic drivers for the Region.

<b>Key Town: Bray</b>	The RSES recognises that Bray has a highly concentrated and diversified employment base and provides employment for its residents and surrounding towns as far as Wicklow, Arklow and Gorey. Due to Ardmore Studios, the town has been at the centre of the Irish Film Industry for 60 years. The town aims to attract major employment generating investment in the retail, services and industrial sectors with a particular focus on promoting Bray as a destination for high value investment in people-based industries, at locations accessible by public transport. There is also scope for employment growth at Fassaroe to improve the local employment base in Bray.
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<p><b>Key Town:</b> <b>Wicklow-Rathnew</b></p>	<p>The RSES recognises that Wicklow-Rathnew is a major employment hub, with a strong employment base attracting inflows of workers from around the County. The largest sectors in the settlement are commerce, manufacturing and education/ health/ public administration. There are a number of active business and industrial parks, with potential for expansion, as well as a supply of undeveloped zoned employment land available for growth.</p> <p>Wicklow Town plays a significant role in the provision of administrative services, delivering the functions of local government from Wicklow County Council, the provision of tertiary educational facilities at the Wicklow County Campus at Rathnew (in conjunction with Carlow IT) and higher order health facilities at Knockrobin Primary Health Centre. There is potential for the town centre to strengthen and promote economic development associated with retail and commerce, the expansion of port and harbour activities and the nearby Ashford Studios.</p> <p>Wicklow Port is home to commercial businesses and fishing as well as providing an important leisure amenity with tourism potential. Wicklow Port is well positioned to become a hub for the service of the off-shore wind energy sector in particular. Wicklow has a long maritime tradition with leisure events such as the Wicklow Regatta and the Round Ireland Yacht race which starts and ends in Wicklow Port.</p> <p>There is potential to develop Wicklow-Rathnew as a recreation and tourism hub due to its attractive coastal location and its proximity to key destinations such as the Wicklow Mountains, Glendalough and Brittas Bay and the key attractions within the town including the Wicklow Gaol, the Murrough, coastal walks, beaches, architectural heritage, sports facilities and as a terminus of the planned Greystones – Wicklow Coastal Route.</p>
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**Realising our Rural Potential: The Action Plan for Rural Development 2017** aims to unlock the potential of rural Ireland through a framework of supports at national and local level which will ensure that people who live in rural areas have increased opportunities for employment locally, and access to public services and social networks that support a high quality of life.

The Plan contains 276 actions across five key pillars. The five pillars are:

- i) Supporting Sustainable Communities,
- ii) Supporting Enterprise and Employment,
- iii) Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential,
- iv) Fostering Culture and Creativity in Rural Communities, and
- v) Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity.

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) was established in 2012 in recognition of the economic challenges facing rural Ireland. The subsequent **CEDRA Report 2014** – ‘*Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy*’, recognised that the changing nature of rural areas means that rural economic development is not amenable to single sector strategies but requires new integrated approaches to economic development. The report acknowledges that ‘there is an abundance of natural, physical, human and capital resources and a wide variety of high quality, including dormant assets in many rural communities that could be leveraged to support national economic growth and the development of these communities’.

The RSES (Section 6.4) notes that ‘*the smaller towns and the rural economy are an important part of the social fabric of the Region*’. It acknowledges the need for promotion in rural places of new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise as well as more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism), underpinned by the quality of life offering. It further notes that new business formation and innovation in rural areas depend on drivers such as the presence of human capital, proximity and access to higher education institutions, ICT infrastructure including broadband, transport infrastructure and the presence of a wide sectoral mix.

## 9.1.2 Local Context

### Wicklow Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides a stronger and clearer role for local government in economic and community development. This process is driven by the provision of the **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)** which aims to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of each local authority, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

Wicklow LECP was adopted in 2016, and includes objectives and actions promoting and supporting economic development and the local and community development of the County. The LECP identifies 10 overarching goals for economic and community development within County Wicklow. With regard to economic development the following goals are relevant:

<b>Goal 6</b>	<i>Develop infrastructure and measures that are positive and supportive to investment, enterprise, innovation and knowledge creation in strategic locations.</i>
<b>Goal 7</b>	<i>Sustain existing enterprise and develop quality employment and income opportunities for the wide range of employment needs in the County, with possibilities for reversing commuting patterns.</i>
<b>Goal 8</b>	<i>Capitalise on Wicklow's unique attributes and proximity to the Dublin market, excellent quality of life, human capital, tourism, landscape, marine, agricultural and forestry resources.</i>
<b>Goal 9</b>	<i>Support a shift towards low carbon and climate change resilient economic activity, reducing energy dependence, promoting the sustainable use of resources and leading in the Smart Green Economy.</i>
<b>Goal 10</b>	<i>Harness efficiently the full resources of the County and promote interagency collaboration.</i>

With regard to economic development and opportunity the LECP identified a number of objectives as follows:

<b>LECP Economic Objectives</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	<i>Stimulate and support the development and expansion of micro-enterprises and SME's facilitating the growth of economic activities, development of innovative sectors, promotion of business engagement and the creation of new employment opportunities, decent jobs and sustainable, meaningful livelihoods.</i>
<b>5.2</b>	<i>Develop training and education programmes based on alignment of employer needs / employment trends.</i>
<b>6.1</b>	<i>Support inward investment and promote the creation and expansion of new and existing employment opportunities in the County to drive economic development within the County.</i>
<b>6.2</b>	<i>Support and develop the Wicklow County Campus to allow it to reach its full potential as a centre of learning and innovation in the County.</i>
<b>6.3</b>	<i>Support the provision of high quality infrastructure throughout the County that will facilitate and support economic expansion.</i>
<b>6.4</b>	<i>Enhance the attractiveness of town centres and retail premises across the County.</i>
<b>7.2</b>	<i>Harness the County's existing assets and encourage collaborative opportunities and business engagement amongst sectors to develop new markets and initiatives, maximising opportunities for business development and employment creation.</i>
<b>8.1</b>	<i>Promote and direct the tourism development of the County in a sustainable manner that conserves, promotes, protects and enhances the County's natural, built and cultural heritage and derives optimal economic benefit from visitors to the County.</i>
<b>8.2</b>	<i>Capitalise on the immediate and future economic opportunity in the Film and Television Industry and support the expansion of the sector in the County.</i>
<b>8.3</b>	<i>Realise the potential benefits of the County's maritime assets.</i>
<b>8.4</b>	<i>Support the rural economy and promote rural economic diversification.</i>

<b>8.5</b>	<i>Maximise the economic development in the County through improved and strategic branding and marketing.</i>
<b>9.1</b>	<i>Support the development of renewable energy and a low energy future for Wicklow.</i>

The implementation of the objectives of the LECP and higher order national and regional economic strategies is ongoing, with particular focus on key sectors including film the maritime sector, the food industry and tourism.

The role of the County Development Plan is not to duplicate the LECP (which has a much wider remit in the area of economic development), but rather to provide the land-use framework that will support the achievements of these goals and objectives.

## 9.2 Analysis of Employment Trends in County Wicklow

A detailed overview of Wicklow's economic profile is set out in Chapter 2.

The updated socio-economic analysis carried out as part of the LECP process found that County Wicklow's industrial profile correlates, in spatial terms, with its occupational profile. Furthermore, the County's economic geography also correlates with its socio-economic profile. The northeast of the County, and in particular the Greystones MD, has a higher proportion of resident workers, who are employed in professional occupations and who, by extension, belong to the higher socio-economic groups. In contrast, the south and west of the County – in both urban and rural communities – have higher proportions of persons who are in manual occupations and who belong to the lower socio-economic groups. The data highlights the importance of promoting economic diversification in these parts of County Wicklow, in tandem with socially oriented interventions – supporting integrated human capital and economic development.

Employment growth has not been commensurate with population growth in many towns throughout the County. Census 2016 revealed that almost 40% of the County's working population (23,451) are travelling outside the County for work. Of these 19,008 are travelling to Dublin city and suburbs for work<sup>1</sup>. The north of the county has high levels (>50% in most EDs) of commuting to the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and commuting to the GDA is manifestly more significant than travel to any other destination. Proximity to the GDA shapes the socio-economic profile of much of North Wicklow, particularly Greystones and its wider environs. The M11 from Bray to Wicklow – Rathnew and the N81 from Tallaght to Blessington are very significant transport and economic corridors. Movement along both corridors is predominantly by private modes of transport, thus posing challenges for County Wicklow in respect of environmental degradation and energy security. Long-distance commuting also affects communities, as County Wicklow responds to spillover effects from the GDA, particularly in respect of housing. There are also quality-of-life considerations for commuters and their families.

### Census 2016 – Commuting in County Wicklow

- Nearly 6,300 workers travelled from Bray to work in Dublin city and suburbs. Sixty per cent travelled by car, 20 per cent took the train and 10 per cent used the bus. The average travel time of these commuters was 41 minutes and the average age was 41 years.
- Nearly half of Greystones workers commuted to Dublin city and suburbs and 25 per cent of them travelled by train, 66 per cent travelled by car. Three quarters of these workers left before 8am and their average travel time was 50 minutes.
- Almost 4 in 5 of Wicklow town's commuters to Dublin city and suburbs travelled by car. Almost 30 per cent of these left for work between 6:30 and 7am. Their average travel time was 58 minutes.
- In Blessington, 84 per cent of commuters into Dublin city and suburbs travelled by car. Half of these left for

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp6ci/p6cii/p6www/>

work before 7:30 am and the average journey time was 45 minutes.

Source: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp6ci/p6cii/p6www/>

The Council commissioned the County Wicklow Commuter Study in 2019<sup>2</sup>. The Study found that County Wicklow commuters at work are highly educated with 53% holding a third-level or higher qualification, compared to 52% for the state. They are also over-represented in the construction, information, communications & finance industries, with 27% of commuters travelling to work in these industries compared with 24% for the state. 37% of those who completed the commuter survey were working in the business or financial sector. The survey carried out as part of the study revealed that 70% of commuters who work outside County Wicklow indicated that they would be likely or very likely to consider switching to a job in County Wicklow if one were available and 33% said that they would be likely or very likely to consider a lower salary if it meant they could work in County Wicklow.

Census 2016 was the first census for which data on the 'daytime population' of areas was published. The daytime population includes everybody who indicated they worked or studied in the area, along with persons in that area who do not work or study (and so are there during the day). Wicklow's daytime population is 123,125 persons which is significantly lower than the night time population, 142,425. This highlights the high number of people that leave the County for work or education during the day.

This data can be mapped at an ED (electoral district) level, as shown below, which provides a clear spatial picture of locations where daytime population is lower or higher than night-time population. This data may assist in identifying locations where existing high levels of daytime employment should be supported and enhanced, as well as locations where the focus should be the development of new employment opportunities, linked to the overall Core Strategy.

The data indicates that the key town of Bray and many other settlements are under performing in terms of employment opportunities for residents leading to unsustainable commuting patterns.

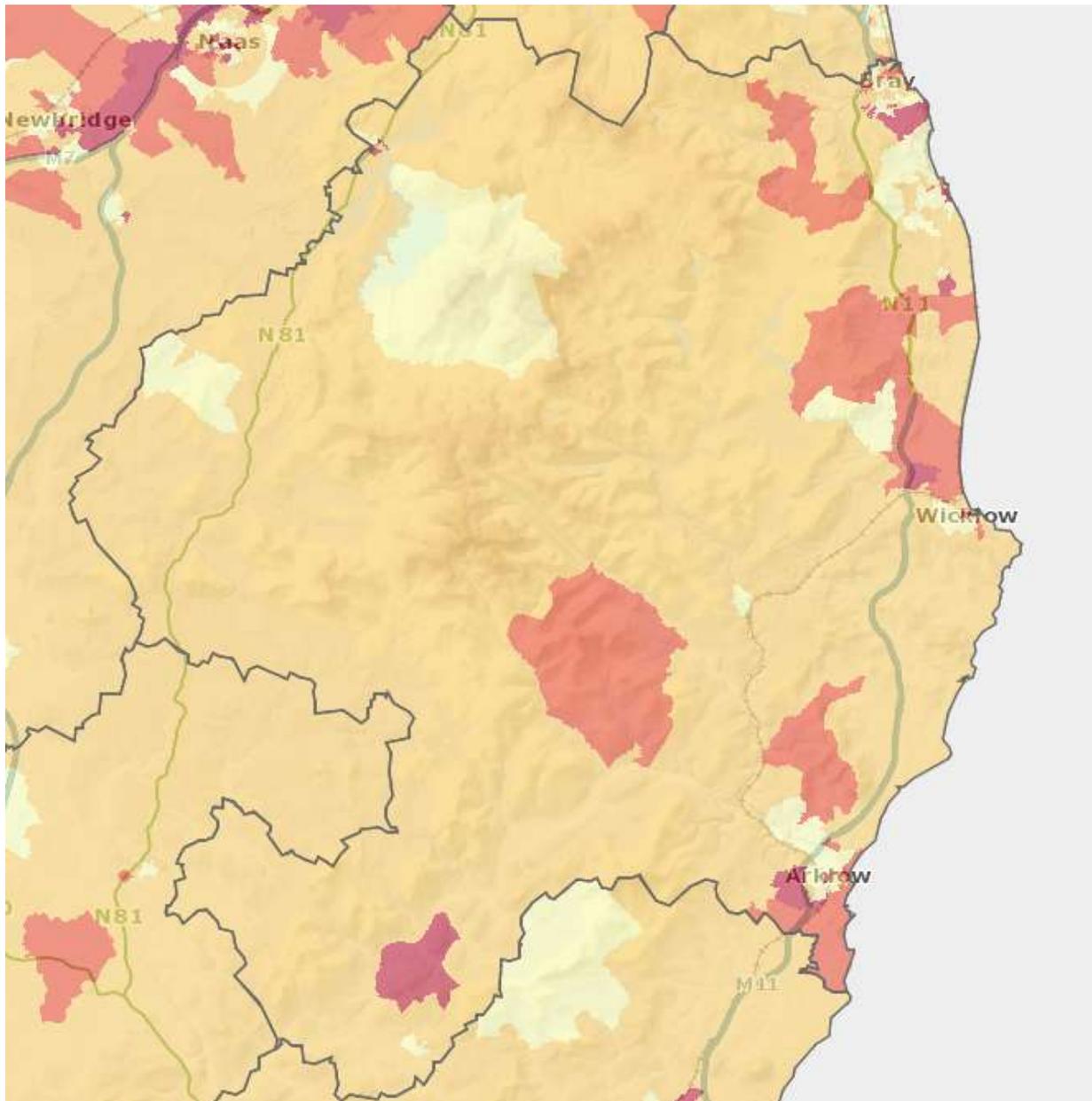
By undertaking an analysis of the Census 2016 database it is possible to develop a profile of both the number of resident workers and the actual number of local jobs (known location and excludes mobile workers and blank destinations) in all areas. The NPF and EMRA RSES used this approach to identify the ratio of resident workers to local jobs. According to Census 2016, there are 58,247 resident workers in County Wicklow relative to 32,551 jobs. This gives a ratio of 0.55. This compares very positively with the 2011 jobs ratio which was 0.42. However it is still below the regional average which is 0.63. In accordance with national and regional policy to create self-sustaining settlements and improve quality of life, it is the aim of Council to increase the 'Jobs Ratio'<sup>3</sup> to 0.7 by 2031. The RSES notes that a ratio of 0.7 plus indicates a strong economic function.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/Documents/Business/Business-Environment/Wicklow-Facts-Figures/Commuter%20Study%20Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The 'jobs ratio' is the ratio between the number of jobs in the County to the number of people in the workforce resident in the County.

<sup>4</sup> <https://emra.ie/dubh/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Appendices-EMRA-RSES.pdf>

Figure 9.1 Workplace Zones<sup>5</sup>



**Employers, Occupations and Industry**

Percentage of workers over daytime population

- 8.1% - 25%
- 25.1% - 50%
- 50.1% - 75%
- 75.1% - 100%

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp11eoi/cp11eoi/dtpn/>

### 9.3 The Role of Land Use Planning in Economic Development

#### (i) To set out a spatial planning framework for economic development.

Through the policies and objectives, the County Development Plan outlines the appropriate locations for economic development. The objectives for economic development must sit within the overall planning framework (Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy) set out in Chapters 3 and 4 and must be consistent with the NPF and RSES.

Table 9.2 sets out the economic hierarchy, detailing the function and type of economic activity that will be promoted and facilitated at each level. The larger towns of the County clearly have the most potential to deliver larger scale and a wider range of employment developments and these locations should act as the key economic drivers within the County, with smaller towns and villages focusing on the micro/local economy. Enablers of enterprise development include availability of human capital, proximity to a third level institution, transport infrastructure, broadband infrastructure and a diverse local sectoral mix.

The RSES identifies Bray and Wicklow – Rathnew as ‘key towns’ in the region. In accordance with RPO 4.27, ‘Key Towns shall act as economic drivers and provide for strategic employment locations to improve their economic base by increasing the ratio of jobs to workers’.

Relevant Regional Policy Objectives for Economic Development in Wicklow’s Key Towns	
RPO 4.37	Support the continued development of Bray including the enhancement of town centre functions, development of major schemes at the former Bray golf course and Bray harbour, along with increased employment opportunities and co-ordination between Wicklow County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, and the transport agencies to facilitate the delivery of key infrastructure required for the westward extension of the town, including Bray-Fassaroe public transport links and road improvements.
RPO 4.38	Support the development of Bray as a strategic employment location with a particular focus on attracting high value investment in ‘people’ based industries at accessible locations, in order to increase the number of local jobs.
RPO 4.39	To promote the consolidation of the town centre with a focus on placemaking and the regeneration of strategic sites to provide for enhanced town centre functions and public realm, in order to increase Bray’s attractiveness as a place to live, work, visit and invest in.
RPO 4.40	To support ongoing investment in public transport infrastructure, including the appraisal, planning and design of the LUAS extension to Bray. The development of Bray-Fassaroe should be undertaken in collaboration between Wicklow County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and the transport agencies to ensure the delivery of enabling transportation infrastructure and services.
RPO 4.54	Support an enhanced role and function of Wicklow-Rathnew as the County Town, particularly as a hub for employment, training and education.
RPO 4.55	Support Wicklow-Rathnew’s role in the provision of third level education at the Wicklow County Campus Rathnew (in association with Institute of Technology Carlow) and in particular, to support the development of the campus as a hub for the Film Industry and Screen Content Creation Sector.
RPO 4.56	Support enhancement and expansion of Wicklow Port and Harbour, to expand commercial berthing and pleasure craft capacity subject to a feasibility study with particular focus on avoiding adverse impacts on the integrity of adjacent European Sites.
RPO 4.57	Support the development of Wicklow- Rathnew as a tourism hub having regard to its accessibility to key tourist destinations in the Region.

The RSES identifies guiding principles to identify locations for strategic employment development. In this regard the following locations are considered appropriate for strategic employment development – Bray, Wicklow-Rathnew, Arklow, Greystones and Blessington.

### Guiding Principles to Identify Locations for Strategic Employment Development

Planning to accommodate strategic employment growth at regional, metropolitan and local level should include consideration of:

- Location of Technology and Innovation Poles - Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and Universities, as key strategic sites for high-potential growth of economic activity.
- Current employment location, density of workers, land-take and resource/infrastructure dependency, including town centres, business parks, industrial estates and significant single enterprises.
- Locations for expansion of existing enterprises.
- Locations for new enterprises, based on the extent to which they are people intensive (i.e. employees/customers), space extensive (i.e. land), tied to resources, dependent on the availability of different types of infrastructure (e.g. telecoms, power, water, roads, airport, port etc.) or dependent on skills availability.
- Locations for potential relocation of enterprises that may be better suited to alternative locations and where such a move, if facilitated, would release urban land for more efficient purposes that would be of benefit to the regeneration and development of the urban area as a whole, particularly in metropolitan areas and large towns.
- Within large urban areas where significant job location can be catered for through infrastructure servicing and proximity to public transport corridors.

Source: EMRA RSES

#### (ii) Ensuring an adequate supply of zoned and serviced land for employment

In accordance with national and regional policy the focus of all new development including economic development should be on regeneration and redevelopment of brownfield lands and infill sites within or adjacent to the town centres. Additional greenfield lands will also be zoned, where deemed necessary, in town plans and local areas plans to facilitate economic growth that cannot be accommodated on town centre sites or within the existing built up area. The amount of land to be zoned will be determined on a case by case basis having regard to the particular characteristics of a settlement, the need for new employment opportunities and the availability of brownfield lands or infill sites.

##### a) Determination of appropriate amount of zoned employment land.

It is the aim of Council to increase the 'Jobs Ratio'<sup>6</sup> to c. 70% by 2031. The 'jobs ratio' target for each settlement will be calculated having regard to the existing jobs ratio and the position of the town in the settlement hierarchy. On the basis of that target, the target number of new jobs will be derived, having regard to the overall population target for that town / area.

In accordance with sustainable planning principles, the priority location for new jobs growth shall be the existing town centres and existing developed lands (such as brownfield lands). In circumstances where the total jobs growth cannot be met within the existing town centre / brownfield lands or where certain uses are not suitable to locate in existing built up areas, this growth will be targeted to occur in 'greenfield' locations.

The amount of undeveloped 'greenfield' land zoned for employment use in any settlement shall be determined on a case by case basis, having regard to the particular characteristics of the settlement and the strategy for job creation, and shall include an assessment of the likely employment type and density that would be suitable at each location.

<sup>6</sup> The 'jobs ratio' is the ratio between the number of jobs in the County to the number of people in the workforce resident in the County.

**b) Land use zoning principles**

New employment development shall be required to locate on suitably zoned / designated land in settlements.

The priority for new employment development shall be in the designated 'town' and 'village' / 'neighbourhood centres' or 'primary zone' in settlements with development plans, or in the historic centre of large and small villages, through densification of the existing built up area, re-use of derelict or brownfield sites, infill and backland development. In doing so, particular cognisance must be taken on respecting the existing built fabric and residential amenities enjoyed by existing residents, and maintaining existing parks and other open areas within settlements.

In acknowledgement of the challenges presented by such sites, and taking into account that certain employment types, such as large scale manufacturing facilities, may require large sites and separation from residential areas, new employment development shall also be permitted on greenfield lands that are zoned / designated for employment.

The zoning / designation of greenfield land for new employment shall adhere to the following principles:

- application of the 'sequential approach' whereby zoning extends outwards from centres, contiguous to the existing built up part of the settlement;
- promotion of a sustainable land use and transportation pattern, whereby 'people intensive' employment forms are located close to public transport routes (mostly relevant to larger towns such as Bray and Greystones), in centres and mixed use areas or within easy accessibility of residential areas, whereas 'goods based' employment types shall have good access to road transport corridors;
- lands already or easily serviced by appropriate standard of roads, a gravity fed water supply and waste water collection system;
- cognisance will be taken of the need to provide upmost protection to the environment and heritage, particularly of designated sites, features and buildings; and
- the need to maintain the rural greenbelt between towns.

The development of zoned / designated land should generally be phased in accordance with the sequential approach:

- Development should extend outwards from centres with undeveloped land closest to the centres and public transport routes being given preference, i.e. 'leapfrogging' to peripheral areas shall be discouraged;
- a strong emphasis should be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and better use of under-utilised lands; and
- areas to be developed should be contiguous to existing developed areas.

Only in exceptional circumstances should the above principles be contravened, for example, where a barrier to development is involved. Any exceptions must be clearly justified by local circumstances and such justification must be set out in any planning application proposal.

**(iii) Resilient Town Centres and Retail Development**

It is no longer feasible to rely solely on retail as the economic focus of town centres. There is significant potential in Wicklow to expand the role of towns and villages and to develop as enterprise hubs, becoming viable and attractive alternatives to major employment centres (refer to Chapter 5). These smaller settlements have a comparative advantage to the large cities in terms of lower costs. Wicklow boasts a highly skilled workforce and this is a significant asset for towns and villages particularly in terms of making them attractive to new employers. Technological advances are making it easier to work remotely. There is potential to greatly expand the provision of shared / remote working hubs.

The retail strategy for County Wicklow is set out in Chapter 10 of this plan. Town Centres will continue to be the primary location for retail development. The development and expansion of town centres/core areas within local area/town and settlement plans facilitates the achievement of a strong retail sector which in turn supports local employment.

Where feasible all local area/town or settlement plans will identify key opportunity sites capable of achieving the objectives of the retail strategy. The development and expansion of these areas will be supported wherever possible, as this is viewed as key to supporting local job growth within each designated settlement.

**(iv) Promoting and facilitating an overall improvement in the quality of life in all parts of the County**

Making a place attractive for both employers and employees as a place to live, work and do business is fundamental to attracting new employers to the County. Specific actions to improve quality of life include:

- Promoting and facilitating high quality residential development with supporting social and community facilities;
- Ensuring town centres are vibrant with high quality public realm and a good range of retail and retail services;
- creating an attractive urban and rural environment to facilitate residency and recreational needs of the projected labour force; and
- increasing and improving the range of quality recreational, amenity and cultural facilities.

Within the settlements situated within Levels 1-6 of the Employment Hierarchy (Table 9.2) Local Area and Town Plans shall address the above actions in a targeted manner capable of maximising the individual assets and potential of each of these areas.

**(v) Supporting education facilities and the knowledge economy**

The promotion and facilitation of educational facilities, in particular third level and further educational facilities, is recognised as a key catalyst for future economic activity within the County. The presence of Wicklow County Campus at Clermont House, Rathnew offers significant opportunities for the development of a centre of excellence for higher education and research, capable of establishing partnerships with wider industry, creating jobs, addressing social challenges and driving economic growth within the County.

The objectives of this plan promote and facilitate the future development of further education throughout the County with a particular focus on the future development of the Wicklow County Campus. The Council will support and encourage opportunities to strengthen links with third level institutions and investigate opportunities in relation to climate change, biodiversity and developing a carbon neutral economy.

**(vi) Facilitating and promoting entrepreneurial activity**

Wicklow has a higher percentage of professionals (8.6%) than the state average (8.1%). Wicklow also has a higher proportion of managerial and technical professionals (31.8%), which is higher than the average for the State (28.1) and the Eastern and Midland region (29.8%). The number of persons educated to third level or higher in Wicklow is also slightly higher than the national average.

The data suggests that County Wicklow residents have the skills, abilities and education to run businesses, to establish new enterprises and to be innovators and entrepreneurs, but they are for the most part not doing so in the County. A key challenge will be to put in place an environment and a framework that encourages Wicklow residents to establish businesses in the county and in particular within the County's identified key urban centres.

Entrepreneurial activity will be supported and facilitated wherever possible, for example, by facilitating developments / applications engaged in training and education, and business start-up and incubator facilities. Supporting small scale, start-up developments in rural areas, town / village centres and in suitable residential areas, will be supported wherever possible, as this is seen as key stepping stone to the development of a larger enterprise.

The Council will support and facilitate the development of Tech Hubs. These are co-working spaces that provide desk and office space, a co-working community, and the supports and networks that technology entrepreneurs and businesses need to start, internationalise, and grow their business. It is an objective of the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) to build a network of innovative co-working spaces in the Mid East.

#### **(vii) Supporting employment growth around Wicklow's natural resources**

The role the rural economy can play in fuelling the economic recovery is recognised and it is acknowledged that there are certain scenarios where it is practical and sustainable to facilitate the provision of rural orientated enterprises in the open countryside. In this regard the objectives for the rural economy set out in this plan are focused on addressing the challenges and facilitating new opportunities. The objectives will aim to support existing resource based industries, including agriculture, forestry, fishing, food and the extractive industry, while also promoting the diversification of the rural economy.

In addition, the natural and man-made assets of Wicklow create significant opportunities for the expansion of the tourist and recreational sectors. While these areas already make a significant contribution to the county's economy, further opportunities exist to increase this offering. The objectives set out in Chapter 11 of this plan aim to facilitate the expansion and further development of this sector over the lifetime of the plan in a sustainable manner.

#### **(viii) Supporting key sectors for growth**

Through the research and analysis undertaken for the LECP and the data gathered by Census 2016, it is clear that certain sectors / industries have great potential in County Wicklow, above other locations. While this plan will support the development of all sectors/industries within the County subject to normal planning criteria, the following key sectors have been identified, with this plan setting out particular policy supports for the future growth of these areas.

The key sectors identified within the County include:

<b>Film Industry</b>	Wicklow is an important centre for film making, based largely on the presence of Ardmore Studios in Bray and Ashford Studios located on the outskirts of the town of Ashford. The industry contributes significantly to direct and indirect employment and also contributes to the international image of the County. The RSES (RPO 6.9) supports the development of the Mid-East as a hub for the Screen Content Creation Sector. It is envisaged that the development of the film industry cluster will enable the County to realise the potential value from film making directly, plus film tourism, accommodation services and other support services.
<b>Food Sector</b>	Within Wicklow there is an established cluster of artisan / SME Food processing companies, estimated to be in excess of 50 companies, with potential for growth. In addition there is vibrant food service industry in the County, many being customers of the artisan segment. There is potential to develop a food incubation hub in the County. Such a development would provide a unique environment for food companies, greatly enhancing their research and innovation capacity and ability to innovate.  'Wicklow Naturally' was launched in 2019. It has been created as part of the ongoing implementation of the Wicklow Food and Beverage Strategy, will champion local producers, their products and the businesses which sell and serve those products. It also aims to boost

	tourism by highlighting Wicklow as a leading “foodie” destination in Ireland’s Ancient East.
<b>Bioeconomy</b>	<p>The bioeconomy uses renewable, biological resources sourced sustainably from land and sea such as crops, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, micro-organisms and animals and converts these resources and waste streams into value-added bio-based products including proteins, feeds, fertilizers, plastics and energy. The National Planning Framework highlights the potential of the bioeconomy in terms of Ireland’s future economic and environmental wellbeing. Ireland has numerous renewable biological resources with the potential for the creation of high value products. These include agricultural products and by-products, food residues and processing side streams, forestry and forestry by-products, municipal and industrial waste, waste water and marine and marine by-product resources. Our largest indigenous industry, the agri-food sector, provides significant co-processing streams in the food and beverage industries. In terms of marine resources, Ireland has rich resources in one of the largest sea beds in Europe (10 times our landmass).</p> <p>The National Bioeconomy Forum was launched in October 2020 to promote, support and advocate for the sustainable development of the bioeconomy in Ireland. The bioeconomy has the potential to create new, sustainable opportunities for farmers and high-quality, green jobs in rural and coastal areas. It can play a significant role in meeting our climate change targets. The National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy was published in March 2018. It sets out a framework to strengthen the bioeconomy in Ireland. There is significant potential to expand the bioeconomy in County Wicklow.</p>
<b>Tourism &amp; recreation</b>	<p>Tourism and recreation make a positive contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of County Wicklow. In 2016, there were 272,000 overseas visitors to Wicklow who spent €86 million. There were 329,000 domestic visitors who spent €71 million<sup>7</sup>. This represents 33% of the domestic nights spent in the East and Midlands region and 4% of the total nights in Ireland, which compares well with Wicklow’s 23% (regional) and 3% (national) share of the bed stock.</p> <p>The County’s tourism and recreational attractions are important assets, which form the basis of the County’s tourism industry and which are fundamental to the enjoyment of the County by both visitors and residents. Attractions range from areas of scenic beauty, which provide attractive natural bases for outdoor pursuits, such as the Wicklow Mountains, which comprise mountain peaks, valleys, rivers and lakes, the coastline with long stretches of sandy beaches and dunes and the numerous woodlands. The County has a rich heritage of archaeological and historical sites, manor homes and gardens, and attractive towns and villages. In addition, there are a number of golf and resort hotels, and adventure centres, which are within driving distance of Dublin that are attracting increasing numbers of visitors and business related events.</p>
<b>Maritime</b>	<p>The marine economy is a key enabler of effective economic growth. The maritime sector in Wicklow benefits from a host of assets and activities capable of expansion and development including: shore-side services, shipping services, repair and maintenance, fishing, tourism and leisure, servicing of the off-shore renewable energy industry, maritime financial services etc. Established ocean and coastal economic sectors include seafood related enterprise, such as commercial fishing and aquaculture, products of marine biotechnology and bio-discovery, marine tourism, energy exploration and production, maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship leasing. Wicklow County Council supports the identification and realisation of the economic opportunities within this sector.</p> <p>Off-shore wind energy is a significant opportunity area for the County. The County has already established itself as a location for off-shore wind. There are further opportunities for employment and skills development through the development of Operations and Maintenance bases. This is a significant opportunity for the redevelopment of brownfield harbour lands.</p>

<sup>7</sup> Wicklow Tourism Strategy & Marketing Plan

	<p>There is potential to develop synergy between the off-shore wind and industry and third level institutes.</p> <p>The aims of the County Wicklow Maritime Business Development Group are to develop a Maritime Strategy for County Wicklow and to progress proposals for the major development of port facilities in the County. The Wicklow coastline has four harbours and Wicklow Harbour is designated as a Port of Regional Significance. All four offer many opportunities to enhance and expand the local economy in a sustainable manner as well contribute to the county, regional and national economy. The coastal area of Wicklow supports and sustains important social, economic and environmental functions.</p> <p>The blue economy is an important pillar of the County's economic development strategy and realising the potential of the County's maritime assets is of prime importance. Rapid urbanisation, coastal erosion and the need to accommodate varied needs and interests, have put significant pressure on the coastal area. It is now recognised that there should be a coordinated approach and integration of sectoral interests to achieve the sustainable development of the coastal and maritime area while fostering blue growth.</p> <p>In the future, Wicklow could face significant changes with the potential development of marine renewable energy, more specifically wind, following the identification of the Assessment Zone 2 – Wind and Tidal in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP). The Government is committed to generating at least 70% of energy from renewable sources by 2030. There are 3 major offshore wind projects at various stages of planning off the County Wicklow Coast. The Arklow Bank Project is proceeding under an extant permission. The Codling Bank and the Dublin Array have been designated as Relevant Projects which allows them to proceed to develop planning applications in advance of the adoption of the Marine Planning and Development legislation.</p> <p>The Local Economic Community Plan (LECP) recognises the need to prepare a maritime strategy for County Wicklow as a means to promote the County's marine assets in a sustainable manner. Several actions contained in the plan particularly aim at harnessing the potential of the County's marine assets, either built or natural. It specifically seeks to build on the potential of the County's ports and harbours to deliver improved marine commercial, tourism and leisure activities. As a result of this, Wicklow County Council has appointed consultants to assist the Council in delivering a Maritime Strategic Review for County Wicklow. There are 4 main strategic recommendations for developing County Wicklow's Marine Assets;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establishing a strong offshore wind offering to ensure that County Wicklow takes maximum advantage of this emerging sector;</li> <li>ii. Exploring the feasibility of constructing a new outer harbour near Wicklow Port to attract international business and to larger scale industrial users such as offshore wind</li> <li>iii. Develop a plan for supporting aquaculture development;</li> <li>iv. Develop a dedicated marketing strategy for marine tourism.</li> </ol>
<b>Forestry</b>	<p>The national forest estate is still expanding and has now reached 11% of the total land area, with a wide variety of forest types present. The total forest area has increased from 697,842 ha in 2006 ha to 770,020 ha in 2017. Wicklow has the largest proportionate forest cover by county with over 44,500 hectares, equivalent to almost 22% of the land area in forestry.</p> <p>Over half (50.8%) of forests in Ireland are in public ownership and 378,663 ha (49.2%) are in private ownership. The total growing stock volume of Irish forests is estimated to be over 116 million m<sup>3</sup>. The national forest estate is important for carbon sequestration. Based on the National Forestry Inventory data, Ireland's forests have removed an average of 3.8 Mt of carbon</p>

	dioxide equivalents per year from the atmosphere over the period 2007 to 2016. There is also an important biodiversity resource within Irish forests, with many non-tree plant species and lichens found across the forest estate.
<b>Wholesale, retail trade, transportation and storage</b>	<p>This sector forms the largest industrial group within the County. In regard to wholesale and retail sector significant opportunities to develop this area arise from the identified expenditure outflows from the County in particular to Dublin. Measures specifically addressing this sector are set out in the County Retail Strategy contained in this plan.</p> <p>From a transportation and storage sector perspective the locational strengths of Wicklow offer significant opportunities for the expansion of this sector. The County's positioning along the east coast 'strategic transportation corridor', made up of the N11 / M11 and the Dublin to Rosslare rail line creates excellent connectivity between ports within the County and between the County and the ports in Dublin and Rosslare. These connections ensure Wicklow's role as a key entry point to the Greater Dublin Region with the potential to facilitate the expansion of existing or create new spin off industries within this sector.</p> <p>The promotion of the Leinster Outer Orbital Route connecting the N11 and the east of the County (Arklow town/port) to the west of the County and the major national primary routes within Kildare namely the M9 and M7 create further potential for the expansion of this sector with ease of accessibility to the north and south of the Greater Dublin Region.</p>
<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<p>The information and communications sector forms the second largest industrial group in Wicklow. With Ireland being a technology hub of choice for many when it comes to attracting the strategic business activities of ICT companies, significant opportunities exist to develop this sector with the County. The presence of Clermont Campus and its envisaged expansion as a third level centre of excellence alongside Wicklow's highly educated workforce further enhance the attractiveness of the County to prospective new companies within the ICT sector maximising the potential of the County. In addition, a number of large scale data centres are either under construction or have permission in the County.</p>

#### 9.4 Economic Development Hierarchy

In accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy and the Economic Development hierarchy, the towns of Bray, Wicklow-Rathnew, Arklow, Greystones-Delgany and Blessington are the key focus for economic growth within the County.

The key trends within these settlements highlight the significant leakage of Wicklow's educated workforce predominantly into Dublin City and the south/south west Dublin areas. In this regard this plan must place an emphasis on creating the right environment within each of these settlements to ensure that they are capable of attracting potential employers to appropriately zoned lands and thus increase employment within the County. The local plans crafted for these settlements shall address these challenges in a targeted manner.

While a significant focus should be placed on the further development of Wicklow's towns, Wicklow's vast open countryside, mountainous areas and coastline offer further significant opportunities to enhance and expand Wicklow's rural economy in a sustainable manner. The key areas within Wicklow's rural economy that present these opportunities fall within the agriculture, food and forestry sectors and to a lesser extent within the maritime / fishing and extractive industry. These key areas, alongside the expansion of the tourism sector, are dealt with in more detail in sections (vii) and (viii) to follow.

**Table 9.2 County Wicklow Economic Development Hierarchy**

Settlement Level	Settlement Type	Town	Economic Function	Investment Target
1	Metropolitan Key Town	Bray	Main attractor for major investment	Foreign direct investment  'People' intensive, knowledge based industries
2	Core Region Key Town	Wicklow / Rathnew	Main attractor for major investment	Foreign direct and local investment  'People' and 'product' intensive industries.
3	Self Sustaining Growth Town	Arklow Greystones/Delgany Blessington	Subsidiary attractor for inward investment	Foreign direct and local investment  'People' and 'product' intensive industries.
4	Self Sustaining Town	Baltinglass Newtownmountkennedy Enniskerry Kilcoole Rathdrum	Attractor for substantial investment	Local investment  'Product intensive' industries, with some 'people' emphasis
5	Small Towns (Type 1)	Ashford Aughrim Carnew Dunlavin Tinahely	Attractor for investment	Local investment  'Product intensive' industries, with some 'people' emphasis
6	Small Towns (Type 2)	Avoca Donard Kilmacanogue Newcastle Roundwood Shillelagh	Attractor for investment	Local investment  'Product intensive' industries, with some 'people' emphasis
7 & 8	Large & Small Villages		Small rural-based enterprises	Local investment  Generally small scale non-intensive industry
9 & 10	Rural Nodes & Rural Areas i.e. any location outside the development boundary of any settlement in Level 1-8		Objectives set out in this chapter for rural employment and economic development	

## 9.5 Objectives for Economic Development

### General

- CPO 9.1** To support all forms of employment creation, especially where this can mitigate long distance commuting, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with all other objectives of this plan. Strategic employment development will be directed into the towns of Bray, Wicklow-Rathnew, Arklow, Greystones and Blessington.
- CPO 9.2** To support and encourage proposals that maximise economic opportunities and strengthen the economic structure of the south and west of the County by facilitating economic diversification and new enterprise development including remote working opportunities.
- CPO 9.3** To normally require new employment generating developments to locate on suitably zoned or identified land in settlements. Proposals in settlements with no zoning plan should be assessed on the basis of their individual merits, taking into consideration the objectives set out in this chapter of the plan and all other matters pertaining to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, including ensuring that the proposal is appropriately sited in a location so that it enhances, complements, is ancillary to or neutral to the existing land uses in the area. All other proposals for employment generating developments outside of settlements will be assessed on the 'Objectives for Wicklow's Rural Economy'.
- CPO 9.4** To protect employment zoned land from inappropriate development that would undermine future economic activity or the sustainable development of such areas.
- CPO 9.5** To permit proposals for employment generating development where it can be demonstrated that the development complies with the relevant development standards and is not detrimental to residential amenity or to environmental quality, and is acceptable with regard to its impact on the character and visual amenity of the area. Regard will be paid to ensuring that existing or planned infrastructure can acceptably accommodate a proposed development. Developments that result in a high level of traffic generation that cannot be accommodated by the local road network in the vicinity, that are detrimental to residential amenity, the character or visual amenity of an area or to existing service infrastructure will not be permitted.
- CPO 9.6** To promote the development of employment generating uses at locations which comply with sustainable transportation objectives, i.e.
- promoting the development of 'product' intensive industries (typically manufacturing and logistics based uses) at locations that are accessible to strategic roads infrastructure;
  - promoting the development of 'people' intensive industries (typically office, services and start-up entrepreneur based uses) at locations that are accessible by public transport networks and substantial residential areas, served by cycle networks and walking routes;
  - promoting the intensification of existing employment land uses that are in proximity to good public transport facilities; and
  - where appropriate, promoting the integration of employment uses with other land uses, including residential, tourism and retail uses, in an effort to provide mixed use developments, which can reduce the need to travel.
- CPO 9.7** To support and facilitate the development of digital / remote working hubs and enterprise / innovation hubs in town centres. Such hubs should also be considered in village centres where it is demonstrated that there is a need for such a facility and where the development will have a positive impact on commuting patterns.

- CPO 9.8** To promote and facilitate the development of employment generating uses that maximise Wicklow’s locational strengths along the east coast ‘strategic transport corridor’ and the potential of the ‘Leinster Outer Orbital Route’.
- CPO 9.9** To promote locations for new State agencies, Departments and enterprises in County Wicklow to support the Government’s regional development objectives.
- CPO 9.10** To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the County and to consider allowing ‘relaxation’ in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided.
- CPO 9.11** To facilitate the development of childcare facilities at places of employment, and in particular at ‘people’ intensive places of employment (see Chapter 8).
- CPO 9.12** To promote and support the enhancement of the built, natural and social environment to attract and sustain employment creation initiatives.
- CPO 9.13** To facilitate the provision of a mix of ancillary services such as a shop or food outlet, crèche etc on large sites zoned for employment at peripheral locations where a detailed justification/need for such facilities has been demonstrated and where it has been demonstrated that the provision of such facilities does not impact on existing facilities, in particular, town centre or local neighbourhood centre activities.
- CPO 9.14** To require employment based developments to be of the highest standard of architectural design and layout and comply with the Development & Design Standards set out in this plan.
- CPO 9.15** To provide for employment development at the following locations as shown on maps 09.01, 09.02 and 09.03).

Location	Map No.	Size (ha)	Zoning Objective
<b>Mountkennedy Demesne, Kilpedder</b>	09.01	34.7	To provide for a data centre facility <sup>8</sup> and associated related industries set in open parkland with extensive landscaping, a high architectural standard of layout and building design with low site coverage. Employment types other than those strictly related to data storage shall show a clear process related requirement to locate in proximity to a data centre.
<b>Kilpedder Interchange</b>	09.02	27.7	To provide for employment uses including industrial, transport, distribution and warehouse developments of good architectural design, layout and landscaping including substantial screening from N11. The provision of transport and warehouse facilities will not be at the expense of facilities in existing settlements. Any redevelopment of the (former) Dan Morrissey / SM Morris sites shall include significant proposals to address the unsightly

<sup>8</sup> A data centre is a facility used to house computer systems and associated components, such as telecommunications and storage systems. It generally includes redundant or backup power supplies, redundant data communications connections, environmental controls (e.g., air conditioning, fire suppression) and security devices.

			<p>appearance of these sites.</p> <p>In addition, any development on these lands shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain and improve the surface of the Drummin mass path along its historic established route as shown on Map 09.02</li> <li>▪ Provide that access to the lands to the north of the Farrankelly Road be from the roundabout only;</li> <li>▪ Provide a continuous footpath from the Farrankelly Road to Drummin Lane along both sides of the access road serving employment lands to the north of the roundabout.</li> <li>▪ Connect the footpath from Greytsones towards the pedestrian bridge at Kilpedder.</li> </ul>
<b>Inchanappa South and Ballyhenry, Ashford</b>	09.03	60	<p>To provide for the development of and expansion of the existing film studios in Ashford on the lands shown on Map 5.05 in accordance with the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the development of these lands shall be strictly limited to facilities for the production of film, TV, animation etc including any directly associated spin offs such as visitor facilities; however, residential development or other non film related commercial activities are not to be permitted;</li> <li>(ii) the location and design (density, height, building format etc) of any development on these lands shall take into account the prevailing landscape pattern, the rural nature and character of the area and shall ensure that impacts on visual, residential and rural amenities are minimised and ameliorated to the greatest extent possible;</li> <li>(iii) the agreement of a master plan for the entire area which shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a detailed phasing plan which shall be linked to the conclusions and recommendations of a Traffic and Transport Assessment, which shall clearly set out the traffic generation model for the entire development and its constituent phases, and a detailed evaluation of the capacity of all roads serving the site, including all N11 junctions and the N11 itself and their abilities to accommodate the development without impacting on the carrying capacity of the national road for strategic inter-County traffic;</li> <li>(b) sequence of development, that shall be generally from south to north;</li> <li>(c) the infrastructure plans for the servicing of the site;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iv) this zoning shall be for the lifetime of this plan only.</li> </ul>

## Specific Objectives for Employment Types

### Seveso Sites

#### CPO 9.16

The Seveso Directive 96/82/EC as amended by Directive 2003/105/EC and more recently by Directive 2012/18/EU is concerned with the prevention of major accidents that involve dangerous substances and the limitation of their consequences for humans and the environment. It applies to establishments where dangerous substances are produced, used, handled or stored. This EU directive seeks to ensure the safety of people and the environment in relation to major industrial accidents involving dangerous substances.

The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (the "COMAH Regulations", (S.I. No. 209 of 2015) implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU)

and are the main regulations that give effect to this Directive in Irish law. The National Authority for Occupational Safety Health (i.e. the Health and Safety Authority – HSA) has been designated as the central competent authority for enforcement of these regulations.

There is one Seveso site in County Wicklow (as of July 2019), located at Sigma Aldrich Fine Chemicals, Arklow.

In relation to the Prevention of Major Accidents (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) legislation, it is the objective of the Council to:

- comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents;
- where proposals are being considered for the following: (i) new establishments at risk of causing major accidents, (ii) the expansion of existing establishments designated under the Directive, and (iii) other developments proposed near to existing establishments; the Council will require that applicants must demonstrate that the following considerations are taken into account:
  - a) prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances,
  - b) public health and safeguarding of public health, and
  - c) protection of the environment;
- ensure that land use objectives must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest; and
- have regard to the advice of the Health and Safety Authority when dealing with proposals relating to Seveso sites and land use plans in the vicinity of such sites.

### **Large-Scale Employment Generating Developments**

**CPO 9.17** To support engagement with the IDA with a view to providing sizeable investments in County Wicklow and especially west of a line from Manor Kilbride to Arklow.

**CPO 9.18** To promote and facilitate the development of large-scale employment generating developments, including industrial, knowledge, high-technology, office and service based and science space developments, at appropriate locations.

### **Knowledge, High-Technology and Service Based Industries**

**CPO 9.19** To encourage and facilitate the development of knowledge, high-technology and service<sup>9</sup> based specialist industries at appropriate locations, in accordance with the relevant development and environmental standards, and to support and strengthen the capability and quality of research and development functions in the County. The Council will promote the clustering of these type industries and other inter-related industries.

### **Office Developments and Small-Scale Service Industries**

**CPO 9.20** To encourage and facilitate the provision of office developments and small-scale service industries at appropriate locations. The most suitable location for local or small-scale office developments

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<sup>9</sup> Service Based Industry includes software development, data processing and electronic commerce, technical and consulting service, commercial laboratory services, administrative centres, co-ordination and headquarters services, research and development services, media, multimedia and recording services, entertainment and leisure services, training services, publishing services, international financial services, healthcare services, construction related services, environmental services, logistics management services.

and small-scale service industries is generally in above-ground floor commercial premises at appropriate locations in town / village centres and neighbourhood centres<sup>10</sup>. The development of these types of uses in neighbourhood centres can reinforce the existing service function of these centres, as well as create new opportunities for local employment in locations that are accessible to residential areas. The Council will permit office development in appropriate employment zoned locations that are deemed suitable with regard to sustainable traffic and land use considerations.

### Green Industry

**CPO 9.21** To encourage and facilitate the development of 'green' industries, including industries relating to renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, waste recycling and conservation.

**CPO 9.22** To encourage and facilitate the development of off-shore wind operation and maintenance bases which will create new opportunities for employment and skills development. Such development is particularly suited to the redevelopment of brownfield harbour lands.

### Small and Medium Enterprises<sup>11</sup>

**CPO 9.23** To encourage and facilitate the development of small to medium scale indigenous industries and services at appropriate locations within all Level 1-8 settlements. The Council will require the provision of incubator/starter units in all major planning applications on employment zoned land.

The Council acknowledges that the development of small scale projects with long term employment potential are important in sustaining both urban and rural settlements in County Wicklow and as such, the Council will adopt a proactive and flexible approach in dealing with applications on a case-by-case basis.

### Home Based Economic Activity

**CPO 9.24** To encourage, where appropriate, home-based economic activity<sup>12</sup> including the provision of small-scale individual enterprises. Proposals which involve the change of use and/or new development for purposes of home-based employment will generally be considered favourably where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- the nature of the proposed process or activity to be carried out shall be appropriate to and compatible with the character and amenity of the adjoining area;
- the proposed development is of an appropriate scale for its location;
- there is no adverse environmental, health and safety impacts; and
- the development is not detrimental to residential amenity.

In dealing with applications for such developments, the planning authority will have regard to the following:

- the nature and extent of the work;
- the effects on the amenities of adjoining properties particularly as regards hours of operation, noise and general disturbance;
- the anticipated level of traffic generation; and
- the generation, storage and collection of waste.

<sup>10</sup> This objective does not relate to the use as an office, as set out in Class 2 of 'Part 4, Exempted Development-Classes of Use' of the 2001 Planning and Development Regulations.

<sup>11</sup> The term small enterprise refers to an individual business/enterprise, which employs less than 10 persons, and the term medium enterprise refers to those, which employ up to 50 persons.

<sup>12</sup> Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial activity carried out by residents of a house which is subordinate or ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a place of residence.

Permissions for change of use shall be temporary for a period of five years, to enable the Planning Authority to monitor the impact of the development. Permission will not normally be granted for such changes of uses in apartments.

The Planning Authority will determine the appropriate number of employees that will be permitted at a development. In certain cases, it may be appropriate that a development is restricted to owner-operator use only, and no other employees will be permitted. In any case, no more than three people, including the owner-operator will be permitted to be employed at such a development.

### **Wicklow County Campus, Clermont House**

**CPO 9.25** It is the objective of the Council to further develop Wicklow County Campus, Clermont House in conjunction with the Carlow Institute of Technology and other stakeholders as a third level education facility and as a centre of excellence for enterprise development, education, training, research and development.

### **Film Industry**

**CPO 9.26** To facilitate and support the film industry in the County, including the development of production facilities at appropriate locations and the use of the County for film locations, including the erection of temporary structures and services.

### **Port Activities**

**CPO 9.27** To support and facilitate existing and future commercial port activities within the County and to resist developments that would undermine the commercial potential of these areas.

**CPO 9.28** To support and facilitate regeneration and renewal of lands within and adjacent to the County's ports that will serve to diversify and strengthen the role of the ports.

### **Food Sector**

**CPO 9.29** To support and facilitate the development and expansion of the food sector which has benefits for urban and rural areas.

**CPO 9.30** To support and facilitate the development of a food incubation hub to provide a unique environment for food companies, greatly enhancing their research and innovation capacity and ability to innovate.

## **9.6 Objectives for Wicklow's Rural Economy**

The objectives in this section are focused on the forms of rural development that are employment and wealth generating (other than tourism, which is addressed separately in Chapter 11 of this plan). Improving the rural economy is only one strand that needs to be addressed in order to result in a strong rural community that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The issues of social wealth and environmental protection are addressed in Chapters 7, 15 and 17 of this plan, and therefore these objectives should be considered dually with the objectives set out in this chapter.

## Economic Development in a Rural Area

The objectives set out in this section shall be applied to all forms of economic development proposals that are located in the rural area, and where relevant, shall be considered jointly with the objectives set out below that specifically relate to agriculture, food, forestry, fishing and the extractive industry, with the following exceptions:

- applications pertaining to proposals for commercial waste facilities shall be assessed on the basis of objectives set out in Chapter 15 Waste and Environmental Emissions; and
- applications pertaining to proposals for commercial tourist related developments shall be assessed on the basis of objectives set out in Chapter 11 Tourism & Recreation.

**Strategic Objective** To preserve the amenity, character and scenic value of rural areas, and to generally require employment-generating development to locate on zoned / designated land within existing settlements. Notwithstanding this, it is the objective of the Council to enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services including those addressing climate change and sustainability and through the development of appropriate rural based enterprises, which are not detrimental to the character, amenity, scenic value, heritage value and environmental quality of a rural area.

### Rural Employment Objectives

- CPO 9.31** To permit the development of employment generating developments in rural areas, where it is proven that the proposed development requires to be located in a rural area (e.g. dependent on an existing local resource) and will have a positive impact on the location.
- CPO 9.32** Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.
- CPO 9.33** To support proposals to maximise economic opportunities and strengthen the economic structure of the south and west of the County by facilitating economic diversification and new enterprise development including remote working opportunities.
- CPO 9.34** To permit the development of small-scale commercial / industrial developments in rural areas that are not dependent on an existing local resource, subject to compliance with all of the following criteria:
- The proposed development shall be a small-scale industrial / commercial scheme or service and the number employed shall be appropriate in scale to the location and its characteristics, including proximity to the workforce and customers;
  - the proposed development shall be located on the site of a redundant farm building / yard or similar agricultural brownfield site; and
  - the nature and scale of the proposed development and the proposed process or activity to be carried out, shall be appropriate to and compatible with, the character of the rural environment of the site at which the development is proposed, and shall not be detrimental to the rural amenity of the surrounding area. In the assessment of planning applications, cognisance shall be taken of the location of the site vis-à-vis the proximity of the site to the national and regional road network.

**CPO 9.35** To encourage, where appropriate, home-based economic activity<sup>13</sup> in rural areas including the provision of small-scale individual enterprises. Proposals which involve the change of use and/or new development for purposes of home-based employment will generally be considered favourably where it can be demonstrated that the nature and scale of the proposed development and the proposed process or activity to be carried out, shall be appropriate to and compatible with the character of the rural environment.

## Agriculture

**Strategic Objective** To encourage the continued operation of farming and its associated uses where it already exists, and to facilitate the diversification of the agricultural economy through the support of appropriate alternative farm enterprise sources.

**CPO 9.36** To facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural activities, whereby watercourses, wildlife habitats, areas of ecological importance and other environmental assets are protected from the threat of pollution, and where development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside. Developments shall not be detrimental to archaeological and heritage features of importance.

**CPO 9.37** To encourage and facilitate agricultural diversification into suitable agri-businesses. Subject to all other objectives being complied with, the Council will support the alternative use of agricultural land for the following alternative farm enterprises:

- Specialist farming practices, e.g. organic farming, horticulture, specialised animal breeding, deer and goat farming, poultry, flower growing, forestry, equine facilities, allotments, bio-energy production of crops and forestry, organic and speciality foods; and
- suitable rural enterprises.

**CPO 9.38** To protect agricultural or agri-business uses from incompatible uses, which are more suited to being located within an urban settlement.

**CPO 9.39** To ensure that agricultural developments do not cause increased pollution to watercourses. Developments will be required to adhere to the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC), the Nitrates National Action Programme and the EC (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended), with regard to storage facilities, concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources. Developments will be required to comply with relevant measures, which operate to protect water quality from pollution by agricultural sources. The disposal and storage of agricultural waste shall comply with the standards required by Council.

**CPO 9.40** To permit the development of new, appropriately located and designed agricultural buildings, which are necessary for the efficient and environmentally sound use of the agricultural practice. New buildings will generally only be permitted in cases where there are no suitable redundant buildings on the farm holding which would accommodate the development and where the Council is satisfied that the proposal is necessary for the efficient operation of the farm. Developments shall be compatible with the protection of rural amenities, and should not create a visual intrusion in the landscape or be the cause of an environmental nuisance.

**CPO 9.41** To encourage proposals for farm shops<sup>14</sup> where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- the products to be sold are primarily produce grown on the farm holding;

<sup>13</sup> Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial/industrial activity carried out by the residents of a house which is subordinate or ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a place of residence.

<sup>14</sup> Farm shops refer to premises primarily for the sale of produce originating from the farm holding or the local area.

- the scale and scope of the retailing proposed will not harm the viability or retail facilities in any nearby town or village; and
- the proposed shop is operated by the owner of the farm and is ancillary to the main use of the property for agricultural activities.

## Forestry

**Strategic Objective** To promote state and private afforestation, to a scale and in a manner which maximises its contribution to the County's economic and social well being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment.

**CPO 9.42** To facilitate afforestation in appropriate locations, in accordance with the 'Wicklow Indicative Forestry Strategy' (Wicklow County Council, 2002), and in co-operation with forestry operators and the Forest Service. The Wicklow Indicative Forestry Strategy was produced by the Council in 2002, in consultation with the Forest Service. The strategy is intended to be a tool of assistance to planners in dealing with proposals for forestry applications. The strategy includes a list of areas that are preferred for afforestation and a list of areas where afforestation would be inappropriate by virtue of landscape, soil type, settlement or environmental grounds. The strategy also includes a series of objectives which are intended to guide planning decisions. The Council will have particular regard to developments that are located in the areas included in 'Table 3: Areas Sensitive to Afforestation', and as per the Strategy, should be consulted on all forestry grant applications in these areas.

**CPO 9.43** To promote afforestation in co-operation with relevant agencies, including the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) and forestry operators and to ensure that afforestation is undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the principle of 'sustainable forest management'. The Council will only permit development that complies with the following:

- The development is compatible with the protection of the environment, and does not cause pollution or degradation of wildlife habitats, natural waters or areas of ecological importance;
- the development does not have a negative visual impact on the scenic quality of the countryside, and is of an appropriate nature and scale to the surrounding area;
- the development is not detrimental to archaeological or other historic/heritage features; and
- the Council will permit forestry development where it is considered that the roads infrastructure (in terms of design, width, surfacing etc.), which is to serve the development, can accommodate the proposed development. No development will be permitted that will result in damage to roads infrastructure or undue nuisance to other road users. The Council may apply a special financial levy to certain developments for works that are required to be undertaken to the road network.

**CPO 9.44** To promote the use of forests for appropriate recreation purposes and to facilitate the development of appropriate recreation facilities at suitable locations. The recreational use of forests will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the recreational use is compatible with the other forest objectives, functions and values of the forest, such as timber production, sensitive habitats and important archaeology. Developments will only be permitted that are acceptable in terms of other planning considerations, including the provision of acceptable infrastructure such as roads, car parking, water and sewerage infrastructure.

**CPO 9.45** To promote County Wicklow as a 'centre of excellence' in the forestry research and management field. The Council will facilitate the development of forestry research / interpretative centres, at appropriate locations.

- CPO 9.46** To promote the use of native hardwood species using seed of native provenance where possible in afforestation schemes. The use of native species or a broadleaf / conifer mixture and age class diversity can enhance the visual impact and biodiversity of forests.
- CPO 9.47** To encourage the development of farm forestry as a means of promoting rural diversity and strengthening the rural economy.
- CPO 9.48** To encourage the development of forestry for timber biomass, which can be used as a renewable energy source.

### Fishing

**Strategic Objective** To promote the development of the County's sea and river fishing industry, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the County's economic and social well-being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment.

- CPO 9.49** To support the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture industry in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Inland Fisheries Ireland. The Council will not permit development that has a detrimental impact on the environment. In particular, development that has a detrimental impact on the environmental/ ecological/ water quality of seas, rivers and streams, will not be permitted.
- CPO 9.50** To facilitate the provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing and aquaculture industry. Infrastructure and buildings in coastal or riverbank locations should be located in proximity to existing landing facilities and shall be of a design that is compatible with the area. Any development, which by reason of its nature or scale is detrimental to the character or amenity of an area, will not be permitted. Any development in the coastal zone shall comply with the objectives of this plan, as set out in Chapter 19.

### Extractive Industry

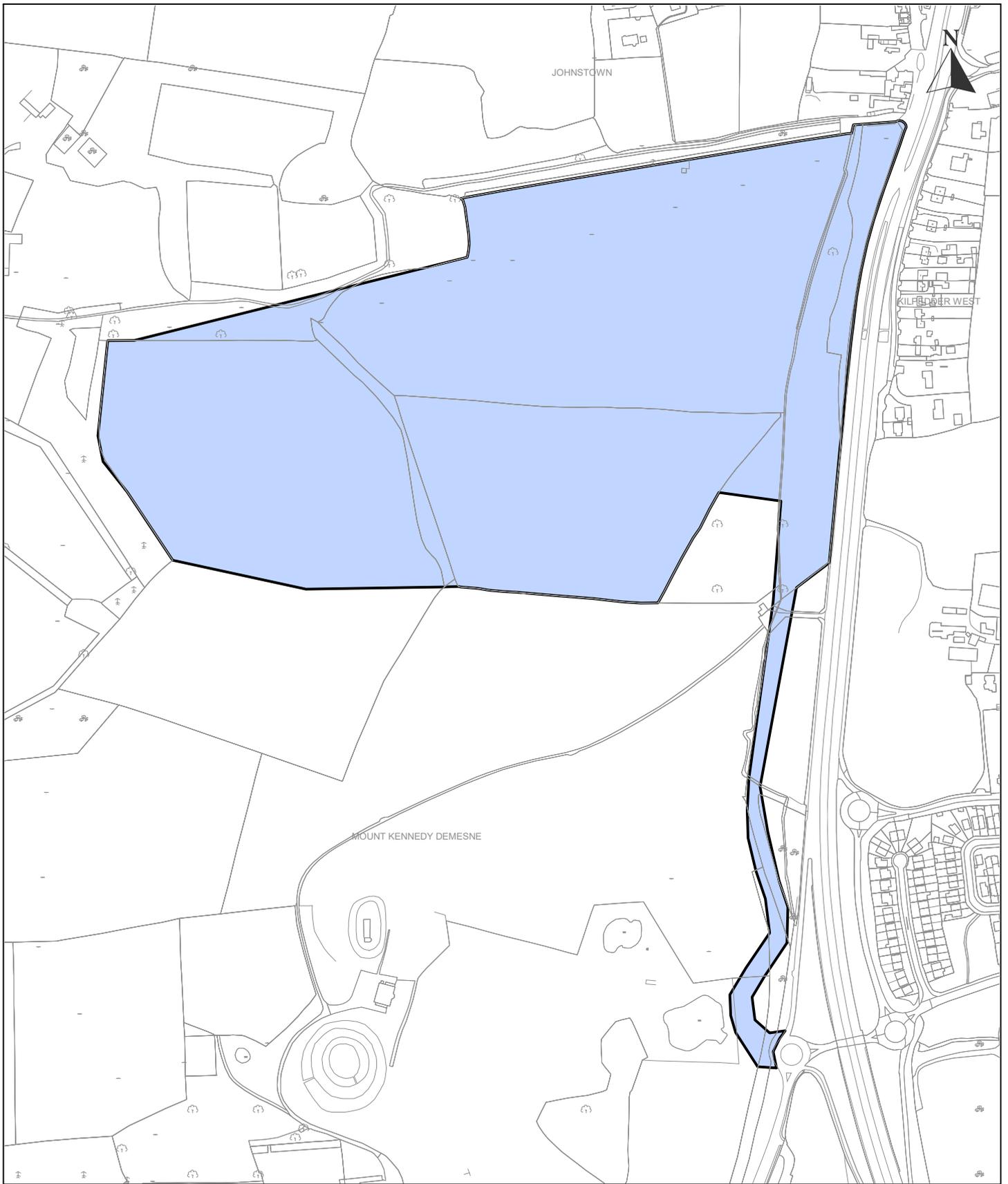
**Strategic Objective** To support and facilitate the exploitation of County Wicklow's natural aggregate resources in a manner, which does not unduly impinge on the environmental quality, and the visual and residential amenity of an area.

- CPO 9.51** To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of minerals in the County in a manner, which is consistent with the principle of sustainability and protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities.
- CPO 9.52** To encourage the use, development and diversification of the County's indigenous natural dimensional rock industry, particularly where it can be shown to benefit processing, craft or other related industries.
- CPO 9.53** To support and facilitate the development of related and spin-off industries of the extractive industry such as craft and monumental stone industries and the development of the mining and industrial tourism heritage. Consideration will be given to the development of such related industries within or in association with existing operations of worked out mines or quarries, at locations such as the disused granite quarries at Ballyknockan, where this does not conflict with other objectives and objectives of the plan.

**CPO 9.54**

To have regard to the following guidance documents (as may be amended, replaced or supplemented) in the assessment of planning applications for quarries and ancillary facilities:

- 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2004, DoEHLG);
- 'Environmental Management Guidelines – Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non Scheduled Minerals)', EPA 2006;
- 'Archaeological Code of Practice between the DoEHLG and the Irish Concrete Federation' 2009;
- 'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry', 2008; and
- 'Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry – Guidelines for the protection of biodiversity within the extractive industry', NPWS 2009.



**Employment Zoning:  
Mountkennedy  
Demesne, Kilpedder**

**Map No. 09.01**



**Legend**

 Employment Zoning

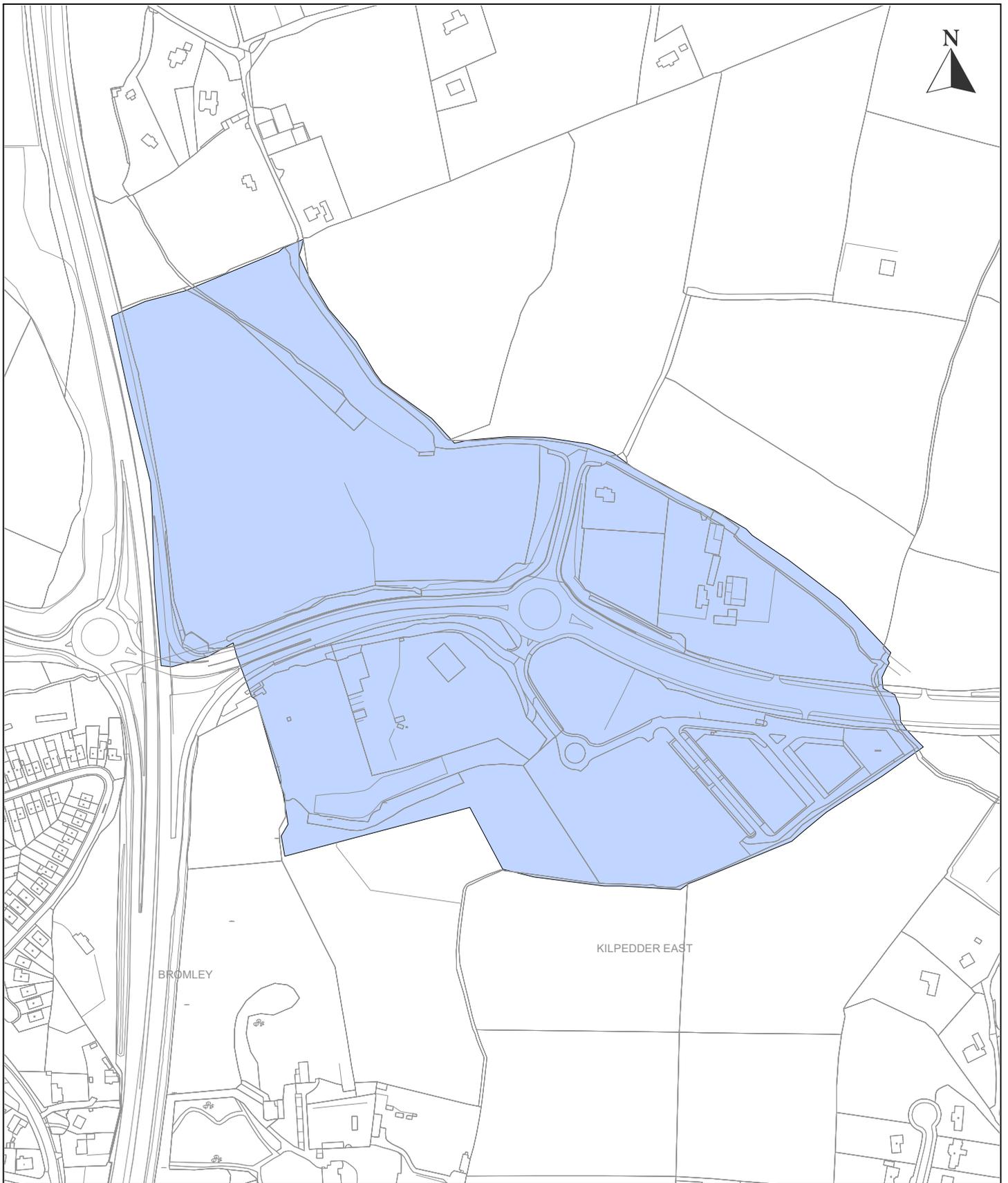
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Planning Department



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**Employment Zoning:  
Kilpedder  
Interchange**

**Map No. 09.02**



**Legend**

 Employment Zoning

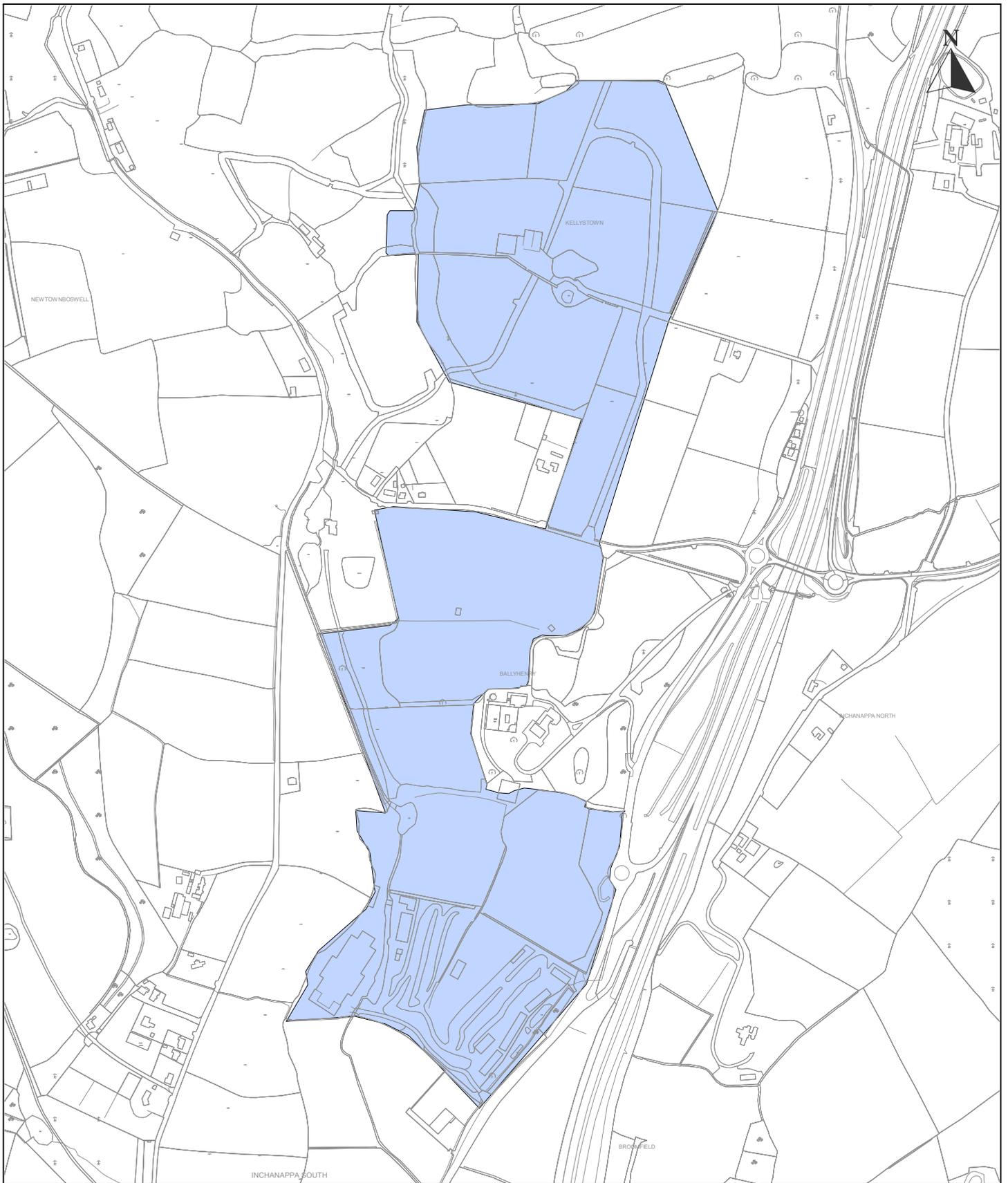
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**Employment Zoning:  
Inchanappa South  
and Ballyhenry,  
Ashford.  
Map No. 09.03**



**Legend**

 Employment Zoning

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