

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Local Area Plan

1.0 Introduction

Waterford County Council is the Planning Authority for Tramore Town and its environs. The Waterford County Development Plan was made by the Elected Members of Waterford County Council on 11th February 2011 and it is in this context that the review of the Tramore Local Area Plan was undertaken. The Tramore Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).



Tramore Beachfront

The Local Area Plan sets out the overall development strategy and framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of Tramore for the period 2014-2020.

This Chapter provides a brief review of the Tramore Local Area Plan 2007-2013, the legal context within which the current Plan was formulated, the purpose of the Plan, the processes involved in its preparation, and also the structure, context and duration of the Plan.

1.1 Review of the Tramore Local Area Plan 2007-2013

1.1.1 Residential Development

The last Plan period saw substantial residential development and pressure for houses in Tramore. A significant portion of the new residential development occurred in the vicinity of the Tramore ring road in the north of the Town. The newer estates that came on line provide a mix of house types and sizes to accommodate an improved socio-economic balance.

More recently, changes in the property market have seen a decline in demand for housing with an associated fall-off in the number of house completions. Whilst this can be viewed as an opportunity to allow infrastructural, social and community facilities to keep pace with the residential growth, there is also a need to ensure that residential development which commenced in this period is completed to a satisfactory standard.

1.1.2 Retail Development

Tramore is designated as the Secondary Service Centre in the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 and as a larger town in the National Spatial Strategy. The issue of Tramore having insufficient convenience and comparison retail floorspace was highlighted in the 2007 Plan. The Town has seen a significant increase in convenience retail floorspace provision over the last Plan period with the arrival of a number of large multi-national supermarket retail chains. Taken in conjunction with subsequent permitted developments, the additional retail floorspace has aided in alleviating this issue for convenience shopping.

It is acknowledged that the comparison shopping offer in the Town remains relatively limited and this is largely due to the close proximity of the larger retail centre of Waterford City. To assist Tramore in achieving its comparison floorspace potential, the roles and functions of the existing Town Centre were examined, and leading from this process the retail policies as set out in Chapter 4 and the land use zoning maps provide for the delivery on this issue and for the future planned sustainable development of the Town.

1.1.3 Economic Development

While Tramore's population has continued to grow in recent years the majority of Tramore's working population commute to Waterford City or other areas on a daily basis for work. To fulfil Tramore's role as the Secondary Service Centre and to provide a sustainable living environment for its current residents this is a trend that requires attention. Traditionally employment in Tramore has been largely related to the tourism sector and this has created an employment base that is over reliant on one seasonal sector. However developments such as the Riverstown Industrial Park have been successful in broadening the employment base in the Town, and despite the challenging economic climate, continue to provide year round light industrial employment.

1.1.4 Infrastructure

Construction of the first phase of the wastewater treatment plant at Riverstown was completed in 2008. The second phase of the Tramore Sewerage Scheme upgrade is scheduled to commence during the Plan period and consists of increasing the capacity at the treatment plant and also the separation of foul and storm water flows and storm water attenuation.

The Tramore Ring Road has assisted in alleviating traffic issues from the more congested areas of the Town Centre. In conjunction with this, the Riverstown Relief Road which will be completed during the Plan period should further improve traffic flows in Tramore.

1.1.5 Waste Management

The Tramore landfill which operated since the 1940's was finally closed by Waterford County Council on 31st December 2005. The restoration works at the landfill and the associated compensatory wetlands at Ballygunnmore and Castletown were completed by Waterford County Council in 2010. All waste in the County is currently being diverted to landfills outside of the County.

1.2 Legal Context

The Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that the Tramore Local Area Plan 2014-2020 be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan. It states that the Plan shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of Tramore, including detail on community facilities and amenities, and also development management standards for the design of developments and structures. In addition to these requirements the Plan also has regard to the policies and provisions of National, Regional and local planning policy and planning guidance documents.

On 17th May 2013 Circular Letter PL7/13 was issued by the Minister for Housing and Planning under Section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This letter was issued to remind planning authorities to take sufficient account of statutory submissions /observations of the Department in relation to Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

1.3 Purpose of the Local Area Plan

The purpose of this Local Area Plan is to establish physical development policies for Tramore up to the year 2019 and to identify specific objectives for the achievement of those policies. The Plan is ultimately guided by the 2011-2017 County Development Plan but has a local focus and is a medium for fostering and guiding future developments and meeting local needs. The Plan sets out the general nature, location and extent of development and provides a framework for public and private sector investment relating to land use. This written document with accompanying maps comprises the Tramore Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (hereinafter referred to as the Plan). The Plan will replace the Tramore Local Area Plan 2007-2013.

1.4 Preparation of the Local Area Plan

With the enactment of the Planning & Development Act 2000, Local Area Plans (LAP's) were placed on a statutory footing. The Planning Act 2000 (as amended) states that:

“A Planning Authority shall take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the public before preparing, amending or revoking a local area plan including consultations with any residents, public sector agencies, non governmental agencies, local community groups and business interest within the area”.

Public notice was given by Waterford County Council on 30th April 2013 that a new Local Area Plan was to be prepared for Tramore. Pre-draft submissions and observations from the general public including local residents, children or groups representing children, public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies, local community groups and local commercial / business interests within the Plan area were invited.

To assist in this public consultation process an Issues Paper was prepared which sought to identify the key planning issues that the Local Area Plan could address. The Issues Paper was made available at the Library and Council Offices in Tramore and was also available online. A public information open day was held in the Tramore Civic Offices on 25th June 2013. In conjunction with the Issues Paper public consultation period, two further periods of public consultation took place between 10th June to 23rd July (draft Plan) and 04th November to 02nd December 2013 (amended draft Plan). Manager’s Reports were prepared on the submissions received and all submissions received were material considerations in the formulating of the Plan.

1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Under the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment Amendment) Regulations 2011, the Planning Authority is obliged to carry out an assessment of the likely environmental effects arising from the implementation of the objectives and policies contained in the Local Area Plan where the associated population is in excess of 5,000 persons.

The function of the SEA is to ensure that the environmental consequences of a Plan are identified during the preparation of the Plan and before its final adoption. Due consideration has been given to the SEA in the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report should be read in conjunction with this Plan.

1.6 Habitats Directive Assessment

The Habitats Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 as amended. Under this Directive, the Planning Authority is obliged to carry out an appropriate assessment of the ecological implications of the Plan on the Natura 2000 sites within the Plan area as part of the Local Area Plan process. Natura

2000 sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and provide for the protection of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

The strategic nature of many of the policies and objectives contained in this Plan will require an Appropriate Assessment screening to be carried out at individual plan and project level to ensure there is no negative impact on the integrity and conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and that the requirements of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Support of policies contained in other policy/strategy and guideline documents shall be subject to AA screening where required, prior to implementation by the Local Authority.

1.7 Vision

The Vision Statement of the County as set out in the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 is as follows:

“To develop Waterford as a County, where the wellbeing of the community is enhanced through balanced economic development, the creation of attractive places to live and work and through the sustainable management of our natural assets as we strive to become a Green County.”

In achieving this vision, the following goals have been set:

- *Support and facilitate the development of **sustainable vibrant communities** and the provision of necessary supporting services and amenities;*
- *Promote sustainable economic development through the development of **key strategic sites**, supporting and fostering **entrepreneurship** and building the foundations for a **knowledge based economy**;*
- *Sustain rural communities by supporting **rural diversification** and sustainable tourism development;*
- *Protect, enhance and promote appropriate access to the County's **Built, Natural and Linguistic heritage**;*
- *Manage the challenges of **climate change** and increased **flood risk**;*
- *Develop County Waterford as the leader of the **green economy** by facilitating sustainable renewable energy infrastructure and promoting use of renewable energy among businesses and households throughout the County; and*
- *Create an inclusive society by encouraging a **partnership approach** between statutory bodies, community groups and all other relevant stakeholders.*

Tramore as the Secondary Service Centre has a significant role to play in the achievement of this vision. The vision is at the forefront of how Tramore should develop over the Plan period and to achieve this, a number of goals which are specific to Tramore have been formulated and are as follows:

- To develop Tramore in a sustainable manner as a leading retail and economic centre and realise its Secondary Service Centre status.
- To provide high quality residential development catering for a mixture of house types and sizes to provide for the current and future population of Tramore.
- To encourage industrial development in Tramore through a plan led approach.
- To provide for services and infrastructure in a coherent and strategic manner that will compliment and aid future development and growth.
- To ensure the educational needs of the Town are catered for throughout the lifetime of the Plan.
- To develop a Town park which will provide a public amenity and recreational facility in Tramore.
- To ensure that Community facilities are provided in conjunction with new residential development.
- To improve mobility and accessibility throughout the Town and to prioritise pedestrian movements.
- To protect and enhance the natural heritage of Tramore, including Tramore Dunes & Back Strand SAC and SPA and features of local importance.
- To continue to strengthen Tramore's tourism sector, which respects and promotes its natural, built and cultural heritage, whilst seeking to develop a modern and diversified year round tourism offering.

1.8 Plan Period

The Plan relates to the development of the defined area over the period 2014-2020, and shall be taken as six years from the date the Plan is made, or until it is subsequently reviewed or another Plan is made.

1.9 Structure and Format

This Plan consists of a written statement containing policies, objectives and development standards, and accompanying maps and appendices. Each chapter deals with a topic and the Council's policy in respect of each topic is clearly identified.

The zoning maps provide a graphic representation of the proposals of the Plan illustrating the various landuses. Should a discrepancy arise between the maps and the statement, the statement shall prevail.

The supporting documents are set out in the appendices and include the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and an Environmental Report.

The format and content of each Chapter is outlined as follows:

Chapter 1 highlights the legal context of the Local Area Plan, and outlines its format.

Chapter 2 outlines the development context of the Town and the framing documents which have informed the Plan.

Chapter 3 sets out the statistics relating to population and demographics and in the Core Strategy illustrates how the Plan is consistent with National and Regional policies and strategies.

Chapter 4 consists of the policies and objectives with respect to economic development and tourism for Tramore.

Chapter 5 relates to infrastructure, and includes information on future Council investment proposals and schemes.

Chapter 6 examines the issues relating to the built and natural heritage of Tramore and outlines the policies and objectives for the preservation and enhancement of these resources during the Plan period.

Chapter 7 looks at social and community development, examines issues relating to social exclusion and the provision of community facilities.

Chapter 8 provides information relating to development management and outlines the definitions and permitted uses classes across the various land use zonings.