

4.0 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter sets out the strategic and statutory planning context for the River Dargle at Bray.

4.2 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AREA

The Scheme Area lies within the Urban Area of Bray. The Study Area extends over the two administrative areas of Bray Town Council and Wicklow County Council. The area from the Diamond Valley Apartments up to the N11, on the northern bank of the River, lies within the administrative area of Wicklow County Council, as shown in Figure 4.1. The remaining area lies within the administrative area of Bray Town Council. The area in the vicinity of the river (within the Study Area) is for the most part developed, with the exception of Bray Golf Club Lands; the Peoples Park and the lands which are referred to as 'Rehills' lands under the Bray Development Plan 2005, as shown in Figure 4.2.

Development within the Bray Town Council Administrative Area is controlled by the development standards set out in the Bray Development Plan 2005 - 2011. Development within the Wicklow County Council administrative area is controlled by the development standards set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004 – 2010.

4.3 NATIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

4.3.1 MAKING IRELANDS DEVELOPMENT SUSTAINABLE, 2002

This Department of the Environment Publication recognises that Ireland is now challenged by significant economic growth and changing population, consumption and settlement patterns which are impacting on environmental quality both nationally and locally.

The Strategy therefore advocates that the Government will aim at improving the quality of life now and for future generations by:-

- keeping the economy competitive in a rapidly changing world, including by the pursuit of greater eco-efficiency,
- providing a strong basis for further economic prosperity,
- bringing about a fairer and more inclusive Ireland,
- promoting and securing a high quality environment,
- contributing well to sustainable development at the global level

4.3.2 NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY, 2002

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a twenty year planning framework intended to set a national context for spatial planning which will inform regional and local land use planning policy. In particular, the Strategy seeks to achieve a better balance of

social, economic, physical development and the population growth between regions. The Strategy sets out a national context for spatial planning guidelines and strategies, as well as county and city development plans and strategies. The Strategy also seeks to secure:-

- The vital national role of Greater Dublin Area, by improving mobility, urban design quality, social mix, international and regional connections;
- Support a better balance of activity and development between areas experiencing rapid development and congestion and areas that are economically under-utilised;
- Promote certain strategically located places which energise the potential of urban and rural areas;
- Set out general principles of spatial planning practice to help to develop ways in which the location of people and employment and the use of environmental resources can best serve national competitiveness, sustainability and high quality of life.

4.3.3 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2007-2013

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 sets out a programme of integrated investments that will underpin the States ability to grow in a manner that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Under the Community Infrastructure Programme set out in the Plan it is proposed to invest in:

- relief from flooding where such occurs
- preventing the creation of new problem areas; and
- the maintenance of existing defences.

This will be achieved through structural works involving the construction of Flood Relief Schemes in a number of locations throughout the country. This programme of structural works is being designed and implemented in many areas at flood risk throughout the country. The spending in this area in the coming years will benefit, in many cases, older, less developed areas of towns which have had less development for the very reason that they are at risk from flooding. All these schemes will be implemented in an environmentally friendly fashion as far as possible, taking account of the principles of the Government's National Biodiversity Plan, which requires that:

- Damage to biodiversity is kept to a minimum and where possible, mitigation measures are implemented;
- Significant damage to biodiversity is avoided; and
- Where possible biodiversity is enhanced.

In addition a range of non-structural measures will be funded. The major programmes being undertaken to underpin the non-structural measures include:

- Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies;

- Flood Forecasting and Warning Programme;
- Emergency Response Development Programme;
- Planning and Development Programme;
- High-Risk Channel designation; and
- Research Programmes.

4.4 REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES

4.4.1 REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR THE GREATER DUBLIN AREA 2004-2016

These Guidelines seek to provide a sustainable planning framework, processing the principles of proper planning guidance for the Greater Dublin Area as set out in the *Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area*.

The Guidelines aim to enhance economic strength, employment, education and population whilst ensuring the physical consolidation of the Metropolitan Area.

The key objectives for the future development of the Metropolitan Area are to ensure the following:-

- *Consolidation of the urban centres located within the Metropolitan Area.*
- *Development of brownfield sites, in urban centres throughout the Metropolitan Area, especially those along public transport corridors.*
- *Delivery of well designed urban environments enhancing the quality of life for residents and workers alike.*
- *Provision and facilitation of an integrated public transport system and the achievement of a greater use of sustainable transport modes through the integration of land use and transport planning.*
- *Clear definition of the boundaries of urban centres to ensure a clear division between rural and urban areas.*

The Guidelines advise that the locations closest to Dublin City should be developed to a relatively large scale as part of the strategy for the consolidation of the Metropolitan Area. Bray is identified as a Metropolitan Consolidation Town. An indicative population range of between 40,000 – 100,000 persons is set for these towns. However, future development within Bray is restricted due to the risk of flooding. The proposed Flood Defence Scheme will allow this growth in population in accordance with the strategy for the consolidation of the Metropolitan Area as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

4.5 LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

4.5.1 WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2004-2010

The Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010, sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Wicklow County area for the period 2004-2010.

Population Growth

Census figures from 2002 recorded the population of Bray at 28,002 (26,244 within the Bray Town Council area). Between 1996 and 2002, the population of Bray increased from 25,760 to 28,002, an increase of 8%.

As Bray is a designated Metropolitan Consolidation Town, Wicklow County Council advocate that the town will therefore be one of the main growth centres within the Metropolitan Area and experience significant levels of population growth.

The Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 sets out indicative population targets for Bray. According to the Development Plan the population of Bray is predicted to reach 32,012 by 2010 and 35,000 (maximum) by 2016. Such an increase in population levels will result in continued demand for housing and employment in the town.

Housing

In relation to housing, it is the vision of the Wicklow County Development Plan to:-

“ensure that, insofar as the resources and the remit of the Council permit, suitable accommodation is available for each household within the County, in an appropriate location and at a price and rent that they can afford; and to promote the development of stable and sustainable communities through policies relating to the location, scale character and tenure of dwellings built”.

The proposed Flood Defence Scheme will ensure that existing and future housing is protected from risk of flooding.

Employment and Industry

In relation to employment and industry it is the vision of the Development Plan to:-

“encourage and facilitate the expansion of the existing industry and creation of new industry without compromising high environmental standards or the principles of sustainable development, thereby creating an environment that is conducive to employment generation and attractive to potential employers”.

Future development within Bray is restricted due to the risk of flooding. The proposed Flood Defence Scheme will allow for the future growth of employment and industry.

Flooding

Chapter 9 of the Development Plan relates to Infrastructure. With Specific regard to Flooding, **Policy W7** states:-

“Within the variety of watercourses that the Council considers may be susceptible to flooding, developers may be required to provide hydraulic and flood impact information in support of their planning application. In such cases, developers must show the measures

they will take to minimise flood risk, including attenuation in situ and downstream of their development to the satisfaction of the Council”.

The proposed Flood Defence Scheme will reduce the future risk of flooding at Bray.

Tourism

Chapter 11 of the Development Plan relates to Tourism. It is the vision of the Development Plan:-

“To promote County Wicklow as a tourism destination and to support the development and diversification of the tourism and recreational product in an environmental and sustainable way”.

The proposed Flood Defence Scheme and associated landscaping, including the provision of walkways along the River Dargle, will help to promote Bray as a tourism destination within Wicklow.

4.5.2 BRAY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2005 – 2011

The Bray Town Council Development Plan 2005 – 2011, sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the administrative area of Bray Town Council for the period 2005 – 2011. The Development Plan provides for and controls *“the physical, economic and social development of the town, in the interests of the overall common good”.*

It is the strategic vision of the Development Plan to:-

“provide in full for the development needs of Bray in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, so that Bray becomes a thriving community, sustaining a high quality of life for all, while its valuable environment and heritage is safeguarded”.

The Development Plan recognises the importance of Bray’s location within the metropolitan area of the Greater Dublin Area. The Development Plan states that *“the town must consolidate its future development in a way that accommodates the future development in a way that accommodates the future development of business, residential accommodation and provision of services”.*

Population Growth

The population of Bray (Town Council area) has increased significantly in recent years from 25,252 in 1996 to 26,244 in 2002, an increase of 3.9%. Between 2002 and 2006, the population of the town increased from 26,244 to 26,985, an increase of 2.8%. According to the Bray Town Council Development Plan, indicative figures estimate that the population of the Town Council area will reach 31,000 by 2016.

Housing

It is the vision of the Development Plan to:-

“ensure that there is an adequate supply of genuinely available housing land in locations where people wish to live and to create safe, healthy and attractive opportunities for urban living”.

According to the Development Plan, housing demand within the period 2005-2011 will require the provision of approximately 2,600 units. However, the Development

Plan states that *“there will not be sufficient zoned and serviced land available within the jurisdiction of Bray Town Council, to meet the needs of the expected increase in households over the period to 2011”*. (Page 22).

Therefore additional land will need to be zoned to meet the demand for housing. The proposed Flood Defence Scheme will ensure that both existing and future housing will be protected from risk of flooding.

Economic Development and Tourism

It is the vision of the Development Plan to:-

“build on Bray’s distinctive qualities so that it develops a dynamic, regionally competitive economy that creates wealth and provides quality sustainable work opportunities for all the residents of the town and its environs”.

Future development within Bray is restricted due to the risk of flooding. The proposed Flood Defence Scheme will allow for the future growth of employment and industry.

With respect to Tourism, Section 5.4.6 of the Development Plan states that:-

“It is the policy of the Council to build up Bray’s capacity for tourism and to develop the potential of undeveloped resources, so that the town becomes a major tourist destination. The Council will direct appropriate tourism related development to the Seafront and to other suitable locations within the town, subject to the protection of residential amenity and environmental quality”.

The proposed Flood Defence Scheme and associated landscaping, including the provision of walkways along the River Dargle, will help to promote Bray as a tourist destination.

Recreation and Open Space

Chapter 9 of the Development Plan relates to Recreation and Open Space. It is the vision of the Planning Authority to *“create attractive open spaces and a range of facilities to provide for leisure and relaxation”*.

With respect to the River Dargle, Section 9.4.1 of the Development Plan states that:-

“It is the policy of the Council to promote the use of the Dargle riverbank, between ‘La Vallee’ and Bray Harbour, as a leisure and natural amenity area, through the development of a Dargle River Walk. In particular, the Council will promote the area between ‘The Maltings’ and Bray Harbour as a focal point for leisure and recreational activities. The Council will control the location, layout and design of development that may have an adverse effect on the character, amenity and natural environment of the Dargle riverbank”.

The proposed Flood Defence Scheme, includes the provision of walkways along the River Dargle, in accordance with Development Plan policy.

The Council recognises that *“the Dargle river bank is an important natural habitat for flora and fauna”*. The Development Plan therefore states that *“all development that may affect these habitats will be strictly controlled so as to ensure that they are protected and enhanced”*.

The potential impacts of Flora and Fauna in relation to proposed Flood Defence Scheme have been assessed in Section 5.2 of this EIS. The Mitigation Measures identified in Section 5.2 will ensure that habitats will be protected.

Flooding

Chapter 10 of the Development Plan relates to Public Services. It is the vision of the Planning Authority to “*have reliable and effective water, drainage, energy, waste management and communications infrastructure to service the existing and future development needs of the town, in an environmentally sustainable manner*”.

Section 10.4.5 of the Development Plan relates to Flooding. It is the policy of the Council:-

“to ensure that no development will be permitted at any location, unless the Council and the Office of Public Works are entirely satisfied that all lands throughout the town, that are located in proximity to watercourses, are not put at a new or increased risk from potential flooding. All new development must be constructed in compliance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study document entitled ‘New Development Policy, Technical Guidance Document’.

The proposed Flood Defence Scheme has been designed having regard to the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study.

Bray Golf Club Area Action Plan

Under the Bray Development Plan 2005-2011, the Bray Golf Club Lands are zoned ‘FI’ – “*to provide for mixed-use development in accordance with the Bray Golf Club Lands Area Action Plan*”. This Area Action Plan, which is included within the Development Plan (Chapter 14), provides a specific framework for the development of the Golf Club Lands.

The Bray Golf Club Lands comprise a large area of land which extends into the administrative area of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. The Area Action Plan, presented under the 2005 Development Plan relates to that portion of the Golf Club Lands lying within the administrative area of Bray Town Council.

In relation to Flooding, the Area Action Plan states that:-

- *A site must be reserved for a sub-ground storm tank for the Bray Shanganagh Sewage Treatment Works;*
- *All development proposals must include appropriate measures for the protection of the subject site and other lands in its vicinity, from flooding;*
- *No development shall be permitted at any location on the Golf Club Lands until the Council and the Office of Public Works are entirely satisfied that all lands throughout the town, that are located in proximity to the riverbank, are not put at a new or increased risk from potential flooding associated with the development of the Golf Club Lands;*
- *Before there is any development on the Golf Club Lands Bray Town Council shall obtain its own expert advice from a competent hydrologist and other experts and from the OPW and permission on the said site shall not be granted unless all reports indicate that the land is suitable for development.*

A mixed use scheme was approved by Bray Town Council subject to conditions. The overall proposed development extended over the administrative boundaries of Bray Town Council and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (c. 21.05 hectares) and included residential, retail, office, recreation and amenity and community facilities.

The scheme was subsequently refused by An Bord Pleanála. In refusing permission, the Board considered that the scheme would be premature pending the approval of the Bray Flood Defence Scheme; premature pending the determination by the planning authority of a road layout for the area; and that adequate provision had not been made for active open space.

Bray Harbour & North Beach Area Action Plan

Under the Development Plan, the Bray Harbour and North Beach Area are zoned 'F5' – *“to provide appropriate mixed-use development, in accordance with the Bray Harbour and North Beach Area Action Plan”*. The Area Action Plan, which is included within the Development Plan (Chapter 15) provides a specific framework for the development of the Bray Harbour and North Beach Area.

The objectives of the Area Action Plan are as follows:

“To provide a high quality integrated harbour/marina mixed-use development with pedestrian and/or vehicular links to the Bray Golf Club Lands and Strands Road. The Council envisages that the harbour area will become synonymous as a high-class centre for water based outdoor/recreational pursuits and civil/social amenities.”

Rehills Land Area Action Plan

Under the Development Plan, the Rehills Lands are zoned 'F4' - *“to provide for mixed-use development, in accordance with the Rehills Land Area Action Plan”*. This Area Action Plan, which is included within the Development Plan (Chapter 16), provides a specific framework for the development of the Rehills Lands.

Rehills Land is located on the eastern side of the River Dargle at the edges of the western boundary of Bray Town Council. The lands are bounded by a steep sloped wooded area to the east and by the River Dargle and residential component on all other sides.

The Area Action Plan states that in order to ensure no damage to the River Dargle, *“all development proposals must include appropriate measures for the protection of the riverbank”*. In addition, *“all development proposals must include a flood impact assessment”*. Where appropriate, such an assessment should include appropriate measures for the protection of the subject site and other lands in its vicinity from flooding.

The proposed Flood Defence Scheme will reduce the risk of flooding along the Rehills Lands.