

Chapter 9 Social and Community Development

9.0 Introduction

National policy makes it clear that sustainability is not confined to the physical environment. Sustainability also includes the concept of stable, integrated communities and planning for such communities must embrace both tangible issues such as the timely provision of school places and community facilities and intangible issues such as people's perception as to what constitutes an attractive secure environment and how to create a sense of belonging.

There are a significant number of stakeholders involved in the provision of quality social, health and community facilities for the County. Waterford County Council, local development agencies, regional health and educational boards, and the Community Forum all provide a range of services for the County. Such facilities include childcare facilities, health facilities, and community facilities such as arts centres, public libraries, exhibition centres, schools and playgrounds.

The Council acknowledges that some areas in the County have a community infrastructure deficit and it is the aim of the Council that all residents of Waterford have access to social and community infrastructure. This can be achieved by ensuring residential development is balanced with social and community development and the Council may also in appropriate locations provide sites and support for community development.

Policy CS 1

It is a policy of Waterford County Council to co-operate with all service providers in the provision of new health, social and community facilities through the re-use of existing institutional buildings and community facilities or where new buildings are required, that they would be suitable for multi-use.

Policy CS 2

It is the policy of the Council to utilise the Development Contribution Scheme to form a basis for the improvement of existing community and recreational facilities and the funding of new facilities.

9.1 Social Inclusion

The *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016: Building an Inclusive Society*, complimented by the social inclusion elements of the *National Development Plan 2007-2013, Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All* (2007), sets out how the social inclusion

strategy will be achieved over the period 2007-2016. The new strategy framework facilitates greater co-ordination and integration of structures and procedures across Government at National and local levels, as well as improved reporting and monitoring mechanisms.

Waterford County Council is one of the key stakeholders in progressing local anti-poverty and social exclusion strategies. Social and Community Development aims to create an inclusive society and the County Development Plan has a vital role to play in broadening and developing the social and cultural landscape of Waterford County. This is achieved by collaboration and co-operation of a number of stakeholders through common policies and objectives contained in the Development Plan. Waterford County Council, with the support of the County Development Board, and the Social Inclusion Forum contributes directly to combating social exclusion through a range of service and infrastructural provisions including housing, library services etc.



Policy CS 3

It is the policy of the Council to support the principals of social inclusion and universal access to ensure that all individuals have access to services and facilities.

It is the policy of the Council to support the Social Inclusion Forum.

9.2 Health Care

Responsibility for the provision of health-care facilities lies with a number of public, voluntary and private agencies. The Health Service Executive is the primary agency responsible for delivering health and personal social services. Day care centres, sheltered housing, family resource centres, health centres, youth work programmes, residential care centres for children and those with disabilities, along with other community services, require locations which are easily accessible and are integrated with new and existing communities.

The optimum location for nursing homes and health care facilities is within or immediately adjacent to designated settlements. This is to ensure that health care facilities can avail of the existing infrastructure, both social and physical within a town, and to ensure that such facilities are integrated into society.

Policy CS 4

It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with all relevant stakeholders in the provision of health care facilities throughout the County.

Policy CS 5

It is the policy of the Council to allow for nursing homes and health care facilities in or immediately adjacent to designated settlements as set out in the zoning matrix in Chapter 10 of this Plan. Furthermore the Planning Authority shall have regard to the “*National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland 2009*” in the assessment of planning applications.

Policy CS 6

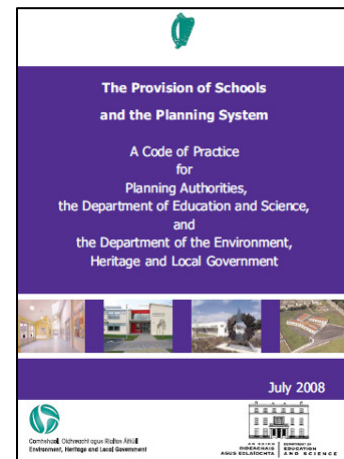
It is the policy of the Council to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities through the implementation of the Barcelona Declaration (1995) and the National Disability Strategy 2004 (or any amendment of same).

9.3 Education

The *Provision of Schools and the Planning System - A Code for Planning Authorities*, issued by the Department of Education and Science and the DoEHLG sets out best practice approaches that should be followed by Planning Authorities to ensure that the planning system plays its full part in facilitating the timely and cost effective roll out of school facilities in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

The Planning Authority will support the provision of schools in line with the development standards as per the Technical Guidance Document TGD 025 on the identification and Suitability Assessment of Sites for Primary School (September 2007).

In accordance with the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, issued by the DoEHLG, planning applications for 200 or more dwellings should be accompanied by a report identifying the demand for school places likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools in the vicinity to cater for such demand. In larger developments (800+) the development may need to be phased with the provision of new school facilities.



Policy CS 7

It is the policy of the Council to ensure that school and college sites are made available with the requirements of the relevant education authorities.

Policy CS 8

It is the policy of the Council to support and assist the Department of Education in ensuring the timely provision of school sites and to continue to co-ordinate with the Department in accordance with the Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities (2008)

9.4 Childcare, Youth and Children's Needs

The Department of the Environment's guidelines on childcare facilities (DoEHLG 2001) emphasises the importance of local assessment of the need to provide such facilities at the development plan stage, having regard to existing facilities in the area. The location of such facilities should be easily accessible by parents and the facility may be combined with other appropriate uses, such as places of employment

The Waterford County Childcare Committee (WCCC) was established in 2002 to ensure the provision of sustainable childcare facilities throughout the County while having regard to the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP). The Childcare Committees vision statement is *"to develop a quality childcare environment where all children in County Waterford have opportunities of holistic development"*. This vision is to be achieved with direct co-operation with key stakeholders. Childcare is taken to mean full access to day care and sessional facilities for pre-school children and school going children out of hours.



Cappoquin Community Centre Childcare Facilities

The Waterford County Childcare Committee has successfully completed a survey and assessment of the current levels of childcare provision across the County. The results of the survey as are out in Table 9.1 Childcare Provision in County Waterford.

			Under 1	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-14
Total Notification Status		Facility Capacity within this DED	0	0	0	0	0
Child Minding	65	Population of this DED	4	13	13	19	62
Drop In	0	DED Population Coverage	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Full Time	11	Facility Capacity within all chosen	71	179	1166	26	219
Part Time	6	Population of all chosen DED's	927	1842	1854	1900	7017
Sessional	45						
Unknown (Parent & Toddler Groups)	18						
		Total Population Coverage	8%	10%	63%	1%	3%

Source: Waterford County Childcare Committee 12th April 2010

Table 9.1 Childcare Provision in County Waterford

The Childcare Committee has identified a widespread shortage of places to cater for the 1-2 year age group and the school age group including 5-6 year olds and the 6-12 year olds in the County. The Committee will focus on those areas with an identified shortage and will work closely with groups/individuals within those areas who demonstrate both the need for the childcare including pre-school, full day and school age care and child minding places, and the capacity to provide those places.

The WCCC estimate that there are 1,515 childcare places available in County Waterford. However, it is estimated that there are in the region of 600 paid and 400 unpaid childminders in the County (WCCC Strategy 2002-2006). The 2006 Census figures show that the total number of children under 14 in the County is 13,639 representing 21.9% of the overall population of 62,167 and indicating a total increase of 939 children since 2002. This indicates a growing need for:

- Preschool and school-age services;
- Full day services; and
- More childminding services.

The Council shall require that proposed developments assess the requirement and the need for childcare as part of the planning application and will require where possible the integration and sharing of facilities. For developments in excess of 74 dwellings, applicants are requested to consult with Waterford County Childcare Committee prior to lodging an application so as to ensure that the appropriate childcare facilities are provided in conjunction with residential development.

Childcare planning applicants are advised to refer to the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 www.dohc.ie/publications/ and to *"We Like This Place - Guidelines for Best Practice in the*

Design of Childcare Facilities” (NCNA & ADM 2002) www.pobal.ie (publications/childcare) in preparing applications. Planning applicants should also contact Waterford County Childcare Committee and the HSE Preschool Inspection Team for advice.

Appropriate locations for childcare facilities are:

- Appropriately zoned lands within town /village centres;
- Neighbourhood centres;
- Adjacent to community services such as schools;
- Adjacent to nodes of public transport; and
- Centres of employment.

Policy CS 9

It is the policy of the Council to ensure the provision of high quality and easily accessible childcare facilities in compliance with National Childcare Regulations, National and local childcare policy and local government guidelines for childcare – Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 (DoEHLG) or any amendments thereto.

Policy CS 10

It is the policy of the Council, *guided by National Policy “The Agenda for Children’s Services”* to support the integration of childcare, family support, education and community services and infrastructure where feasible and appropriate.

(Refer to *The Agenda for Children’s Services: A Policy Handbook* Office of the Minister for Children, Department of Health and Children, December 2007 www.omc.gov.ie (Children & Young Peoples Service Development).)

Policy CS 11

It is the policy of the Council to support the provisions of the Waterford County Play Policy and” *Ready Steady Play*” –A National Play Policy.

9.5 Access for Persons with Disabilities and the Mobility Impaired

The Barcelona Declaration Project is a movement, which helps local authorities to use their powers to remove barriers that cause intimidation and prevent individuals from participating in normal life. The Barcelona Declaration Project was adopted by Waterford County Council in May 2002. In February

2005, Waterford County Council agreed to the adoption of the policy for implementation of the Barcelona Declaration (as recommended by SPC4 Economic Development and Community Services.)

9.5.1 Universal Accessibility

The World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning Disability of Health which was adopted on 22nd May 2001 defines Accessibility as *“The ease of independent approach, entry and/or use of a building and its services and facilities, by all of the buildings potential users – with an assurance of individual health, safety and welfare during the course of those activities”*.

9.5.2 Universal Design

The Disability Act 2005 defines Universal Design as *“the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent by all people, regardless of their age, size or disability”*. It is on this basis that the National Disability Association established the Irish Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in Dublin in January 2007. The Centre is dedicated to the principle of Universal Access, enabling people in Ireland to participate in a society that takes account of human difference and to interact with their environment to the best of their ability.



Policy CS 12

It is a policy of the Council to promote the principle of Universal Access.

9.6 Sports and Recreational Facilities and Activities

Sports and recreational facilities are a vital community resource, and enhance the well-being and quality of life of the residents in Waterford. One of the key aims of the County Development Plan is to promote an excellent quality of life. The Council is committed to ensuring the provision of sporting and recreational facilities in line with new residential developments. Furthermore, the Council is committed to ensuring that the marginalised sectors of society are able to avail of sport and recreational facilities and are not excluded or further marginalised by any policies or objectives of this Plan.



The Council is committed to working with Waterford Sports Partnership (WSP) which commenced operation in 2002 with the key aim of increasing participation in sport and physical activity among target groups and to ensure that local resources are put to their best possible use. The WSP Strategic Plan 2007-2011 '*Everyone Active*' outlines the key aims and objectives of WSP and the approach to be taken in ensuring the delivery of a quality service to targeted groups.

Policy CS 13

It is the policy of the Council to promote and support the provision of shared and multi-use sport and recreational facilities to meet the requirements of all residents in the County especially target groups and those marginalised from society.

Policy CS 14

It is the policy of the Council to support the implementation of the Waterford Sports Partnership Strategy and their work to increase participation in sport and physical activity.

Objective CS 1: Playgrounds

It is the objective of the Council to:

- (a) Promote the increase of public, high quality, and safe play opportunities available to children;
- (b) Ensure that surfaces and play equipment provided in public playgrounds or publicly funded playgrounds conform to the Irish standards for play equipment and surfacing;
- (c) Continue to promote the objectives of the County Waterford Play Policy;
- (d) Seek the provision and suitable management of safe surfaced children's play areas in new housing developments, and to implement measures to find suitable sites for their provision in existing residential areas;
- (e) Engage with the community to assist and support them in the provision of playground activities; and
- (f) Support playground and related development from the Development Contributions Scheme.



Playgrounds in the County

9.7 Arts and Culture

County Waterford has a rich and varied living cultural heritage expressed through the medium of language and the arts. The County Waterford Arts Plan provides the overview necessary to support the Council's Arts Office in moving forward to create improved opportunities for the public and practitioners to engage in the developing arts environment.

Public Art under the DoEHLG '*Per Cent for Arts Scheme*' is catered for under the remit of the Arts Office, and encourages the Local Authority to commission artists to create work for coinciding with new capital or infrastructure projects.

Significant private development shall be required to contribute to the public realm which may include the provision of artistic features.



Public Art

Policy CS 15

It is the policy of the Council to support the County Arts Plan and to support the development of arts and culture in the County.

Policy CS 16

It is the policy of the Council to utilise the "*Per Cent for Arts Scheme*" on all public capital projects.

9.8 Library Service

Waterford County Council's library service is responsible for providing and promoting an active public library service. A wide range of services are available such as internet access, premium reference services and heritage resources online. In addition, branches host extensive programmes which vary from branch to branch and include such events as book launches, exhibitions, storytelling, author visits and book promotions. The County Library Service participates annually in National events such as Seachtain na Gaeilge, Bealtaine Festival, the Children's Book Festival and the World Book Day and Heritage week.

Policy CS 17

It is the policy of the Council to support and promote the library services in the County and ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to access a high quality library and information service that is responsive to the changing needs of the community.

Policy CS 18

It is a policy of the Council to support the programme for Library development and the strategic aims contained within.

9.9 An Gaeltacht

Gaeltacht areas are considered to have unique cultural and environmental attractions, such as the use of the Irish language as a first language and their often unspoilt landscapes and scenery. As such, An Rinn/Sean Phobal Gaeltacht area constitutes an important part of the linguistic, social and cultural tradition of the County. Analysis carried out as part of the '*Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht*'¹ suggests that the proportion of active, integrated Irish speakers in a Gaeltacht Area needs to be maintained above 67% for the use of Irish in a community to be sustainable. The statistic evidences indicated that Irish speaking communities yield to the pressures of a language shift when the proportions of active speakers in a community fall below this threshold. The Linguistic Study classifies An Rinn having 44-67% of its total population (aged over three years) as daily Irish speakers². However, the 2006 Census identifies An Rinn as having experienced an increase in the proportion of Irish speakers between 2002 and 2006 and having the highest proportion of Irish speakers in a Gaeltacht area (79.5%). The Planning Authority is committed to protecting and enhancing the Gaeltacht and to preventing the dilution of its unique linguistic and cultural environment through the influx of non Irish speakers.

There is increasing pressure for one-off housing in the Gaeltacht area and the Planning Authority is committed to developing proactive policies that will protect the area from insensitive and unnecessary development. The Planning Authority may require, as part of a planning application, a Linguistic Impact Statement which would outline how a proposed development would support and sustain the character of the Gaeltacht. Furthermore the Planning Authority shall attach a linguistic condition, where necessary, for private housing developments requiring that 60% of the total residential element shall be restricted to ownership by persons who have demonstrated to the Planning Authority a reasonable fluency in the Irish language.

¹ Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht; Principal findings and Recommendations, A research report prepared for the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs by NUI Galway, 2007

² Based on 2002 Census and surveys

The social, cultural and infrastructural needs of the Gaeltacht are supported by the Department of Arts Gaeltacht and the Islands while economic needs are fulfilled through Uduras na Gaeltachta.

Policy CS 19

It is the policy of the Council to:

- Protect and sustain the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht area;
 - Promote the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht area, in the home, schools and in the workplace;
 - Focus residential development on accommodating the natural growth of the indigenous populations;
- and
- Promote appropriate economic development, which would sustain the area and promote the use of Irish in Business.

During the Plan period, the Council will liaise with the Department of Arts Gaeltacht and the Islands and Uduras na Gaeltachta to develop specific language planning objectives to establish and strengthen Irish speaking social networks and Irish medium institutions.

9.10 CLÁR

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is an investment programme for disadvantaged rural areas and is overseen by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. CLÁR provides funding and co-funding to Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities in accelerating investment in selected priority developments. These measures support physical, economic and social infrastructure across a number of sectors, e.g. roads, water & sewerage, enhancement of areas, community and sport initiatives, electricity, health and telecommunications.

Policy: CS 20

It is the policy of the Council to support the appropriate and sustainable development of the CLÁR areas