



# Rural Fingal

## Chapter 5

## CHAPTER 5 RURAL FINGAL

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## CHAPTER 5

# RURAL FINGAL

### 5.1 Introduction

Rural Fingal is made up of a rich variety of natural amenities, vibrant towns, attractive villages, arable pasture and horticultural lands, uplands, inland rivers and streams and a scenic coastline. The landscape character and biodiversity of rural Fingal is characterised by gently rolling countryside in the central area of the County and the uplands around Garristown and the Naul located in the northern part of the County. The County's quality soils are a key feature, with the consequence that the area is extremely suitable for agriculture, cereal production and horticulture, particularly around the areas of Rush and Lusk. The County is rich in archaeological and historical sites. Rural Fingal is home to a diverse range of uses ranging from agriculture, horticultural and equine industries, centres of local food production, agri-food businesses and recreational activities. These combine to provide both residents and visitors with a quality environment to live, work and recreate. It also provides opportunities to harness the food, leisure, recreation and tourism sectors in a sustainable manner.

Having regard to the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005*, rural Fingal can be classified as an area under 'Strong Urban Influence' due to its location in close proximity to Dublin City and major transport corridors. It is the Council's objective for this area to facilitate the rural generated housing requirements of the local rural community (as identified in this Chapter) while on the other hand directing urban generated rural housing to areas zoned for new housing development into towns and villages. It is the Council's policy to promote a balance between reinforcing and strengthening sustainable rural communities whilst protecting the rural environment from over-development. The Rural Settlement Strategy is aimed at facilitating those genuine rural generated housing needs of the local rural community (as identified in this Chapter) whilst ensuring that Fingal's rural villages offer an attractive housing alternative to those that want to live in a rural environment but do not comply with the settlement strategy.

This policy is geared towards a shift in developing the rural area of Fingal into a Stronger Rural Area, as identified in the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005*, promoting well-developed and stable rural communities, which can support the provision of educational, community and social services, improved amenities and sustainable employment opportunities.

The Council recognises the need to carefully manage future development in rural Fingal. It is imperative that a balance is achieved between development within the rural area of the County and the on-going need to protect its natural and built heritage. Rural Fingal has a wealth of valuable rural assets from which tangible economic benefits can be derived.

Among the many valuable assets of the county are Fingal's rural villages located both within the Metropolitan and Hinterland area. These villages are important rural assets providing a viable alternative housing experience to the open countryside with the advantages of a rural setting. However, there is a need to control expansion to prevent excessive development so as to protect the unique identity of these villages. These villages will be allowed to grow to support sustainable development in the context of the Council's Core Strategy. Village plans have been prepared for a number of the villages to provide a planning framework for their future development and are noted in this Chapter.



The Council is committed to promoting balanced and inclusive sustainable rural communities and to achieving an appropriate scale of development. The Council supports farming, horticulture and other rural based economic activity as important sources of income and sustainable economic diversification of a scale and nature appropriate to rural areas. The Council will continue to support the work of local agencies and groups responsible for rural development within the county.



## Statement of Policy

- Protect and enhance the natural biodiversity, the integrity of the landscape and the built and cultural heritage of the rural area
- Maintain and enhance existing rural communities to ensure vibrant sustainable rural areas
- Protect and enhance the attractiveness of rural towns and villages as places in which to work and live and as locations for appropriate sized enterprise, services and tourism investment
- Promote rural development and encourage the sustainable development of resources in agriculture, horticulture, agri-tourism, tourism, farm diversification, and renewable energy resources
- Ensure that new development is physically and visually integrated with and compliments the character of the rural landscape without undue negative impacts on the visual/scenic amenities
- Require that existing and proposed signage be rationalised where possible or sensitively designed and located. The proliferation of new signage should be avoided within the rural landscape

## Planning Context

### National Level

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas [CEDRA] was established in 2012 in recognition of the severe impact of the downturn in the economy on rural Ireland. The subsequent CEDRA Report 2014 – ‘Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy’, confirmed that,

*‘there is an abundance of natural, physical, human and capital resources and a wide variety of high quality assets including dormant assets in many rural communities that could be leveraged to support national economic growth and the development of these communities.’*



The fundamental message of this report is that rural Ireland is a valuable national resource with significant potential that can play an important role in assisting the national economic recovery. A significant proportion of the report focuses on how to capitalise on the physical, human, cultural and social resources of rural areas. The primary task given to CEDRA was to identify strategic initiatives that will ensure rural areas contribute to sustained and sustainable national economic growth and development in the future. Other key messages from the report are that Ireland's rural communities will play a significant role in Ireland's emerging rural economy and new integrated approaches to rural economic development are required. Key initiatives proposed include:

- Rural Economic Development Policy Statement at National Level.
- Funding Mechanisms.
- Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) have been identified as a way to revitalise rural towns and villages and a REDZ Programme will be subsequently prepared.
- Rural Towns Initiatives.

The forthcoming National Planning Framework will identify national priorities with regard to future employment growth and development. Intrinsic to this will be a clear policy framework within which there will be more dynamic participation by rural areas in overall regional development. It will also re-emphasise the contribution made by rural-based enterprise in food, tourism, natural resource and innovation sectors.

Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 [Leader] is based on the EU framework for rural development. Fingal LEADER Partnership (FLP) has been designated by the Dublin Rural Local Action Group (LAG) as the programme's implementing body. The objective of the programme is to foster the development of rural areas through innovation, locally based, bottom-up development strategies. Rural development measures are delivered by, or in partnership with, statutory agencies and the local development sector. The programme outlines a series of themes that were identified as overarching needs in rural Ireland. Theme 1 is Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation, Theme 2 is Social Inclusion and Theme 3 is the Rural Environment. Each theme is given further definition through a number of sub-themes, which reflect the key areas that stakeholders believe require the most support and have the greatest potential to promote the sustainable development of rural communities.

The CEDRA Report confirms that the tourism industry is a key driver of local economic development, building upon key assets such as our landscape, history, people, culture and human resources and is arguably one of Ireland's most important and successful sectors. However, in order to realise that potential, targeted research, innovation, capacity building, cross sectoral organisational supports and capital investment is required if it is to contribute to the rural economy. Fingal's Tourism Strategy 2015-2018 recognises that tourism is an important indigenous sector of the Fingal local economy generating income and employment.

### **Regional Level**

The *Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022* recognise the need to facilitate rural development by improving the overall viability of the rural economy together with the provision of improved Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly broadband. It highlights, in particular, the growth of the specialist food production sector in the region. It acknowledges that peri-urban areas and green belt zoned lands across the fringe of the Metropolitan area



can exploit markets through offerings in specialised green oriented activities, rural tourism and leisure for both international and local markets alongside more traditional rural activities capitalising on strong connectivity to urban populations and markets.

### Local Level

Ireland is currently undergoing a process of local government reform, 'Putting People First' sets out reforms to local government to provide it with a more central role in local economic, social and community development. The new system will be fully cognisant of the need to involve rural communities in their own development choices. The success of the LEADER approach will form the basis on which to develop a local and rural development framework that will support the creation and development of sustainable rural communities into the future.

The *Local Government Reform Act 2014* gave legislative affect to various commitments, including the establishment of Local Enterprise Offices [LEO] and Local Development Committees which can promote and foster rural development. Fingal's Local Enterprise Office [LEO] promotes and fosters business start-ups and develops existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and provides accessible high quality business supports for business ideas. New or existing businesses in rural Fingal can avail of this support.

Fingal's Local Community Development Committee [LCDC], facilitates the Dublin Rural Local Action Group (LAG), and in conjunction with the Local Authority, will be responsible for national funding programmes at local level, including the implementation of the Social Inclusion Community and Activation Programme (SICAP) and the Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014-2020. These programmes will tackle social exclusion, promote local economic and enterprise development and maximise the potential of the environment to contribute to the sustainable development of rural parts of Fingal. The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) was adopted by the Council in December 2015. The economic element of the plan was developed by the Local Authority Economic, Enterprise and Tourism Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and the community element was prepared by the LCDC. One of the high level goals identified is to support the sustainability of rural communities through the development of a resilient economy.

## 5.2 Fingal's Rural Settlement Strategy

The Rural Settlement Strategy will guide the location of residential development within the rural area in a manner which recognises the rural area of Fingal as an area under 'Strong Urban Influence', and therefore provides for rural-generated housing need within the rural area, and directs urban-generated housing away from the open countryside to towns and villages. This Section indicates policy and objectives for villages, clusters and houses in the open countryside, and objectives for layout and design associated with each settlement type. It sets out the Rural Settlement Strategy which guides and promotes the formation of the rural community by providing a strategic approach to settlement. A sustainable Rural Settlement Strategy plays a key part in supporting the rural nature of the countryside and maintaining life and vibrancy in the villages. Specifically, the Rural Settlement Strategy promotes a sustainable pattern for rural settlement, which orders settlement within the villages, clusters and the open countryside and encourages the reuse and adaptation of the existing building stock in preference to new build.



## Rural Villages

Fingal's network of designated Rural Villages has the potential to develop as attractive vibrant, resilient communities.

### Statement of Policy

- Promote attractive and vibrant villages
- Ensure sustainable expansion and development at a level appropriate to and integrated with the existing village
- Meet the socio-economic and civic aspirations of the community, whilst at the same time affording maximum environmental protection
- Preserve the villages' distinctive character, heritage, amenity and local identity

The Rural Villages are zoned RV- The RV zoning objective seeks to,

*'Protect and promote the character of the Rural Village and promote a vibrant community in accordance with an approved local area plan and the availability of physical and community infrastructure'.*

Villages are designated in the Regional Planning Guidelines as either "commuter villages" or "key villages". In addition to the villages of Balrothery and Loughshinny (discussed in Chapter 4, Urban Fingal) there are 9 villages in the Plan, designated with RV zoning. Commuter villages, include all the villages in the Metropolitan Area, namely: Coolquay, Kinsaley, Rivermeade and Rowlestown; as well as Balscaddan in the Hinterland Area. They are located close to Dublin or on major routes to the city. The RPGs indicate that future growth in commuter villages should be curtailed or safeguarded so that they do not act as a catalyst to facilitate continuing expansion of unsustainable growth patterns.

In addition to the above, the villages of Ballyboghil, Garristown, Naul, and Oldtown are designated as Key Villages, and should be considered as "local service centres" providing a key local role for services for the people who live in the village, or in the surrounding countryside. The RPG's indicate that future development of key villages as a key local centre for services and local enterprise should be supported, without resulting in growth beyond local need or creating unsustainable commuting patterns.

All of the villages are small settlements, with a relatively low level of commercial activity and populations of less than 600 residents. Development within each of the villages is managed through Local Area Plans (LAPs) within the context of the RPGs and the Draft Plan.

### Rural Villages in the Metropolitan Area

#### Coolquay

Coolquay is a linear settlement located in a rural area focused on the junction of the R135 and the R130. It is a commuter village in the Metropolitan Area. It includes the Coolquay Lodge – a public house and restaurant and Chez Emily, an artisan hand-made chocolate enterprise, all located within the village boundary on the R130. A petrol station is located at the northern end of the village along the R135. The recently refurbished Kilcoskan National School is centrally located within the village settlement. There are a number of 'one-off' houses along the R130 between the shop and National School. Given its status as a commuter village, within the Metropolitan Area, the level of growth must be carefully managed to ensure a vibrant sustainable community



through the Local Area Plan process. A Local Area Plan will be prepared for this village within the lifetime of the Development Plan. Coolquay has a current population of approximately 100 persons.

### **Kinsaley**

Kinsaley is a small village settlement within the Metropolitan Area with a strong visual identity and landscape quality formed by the Sluice River, running east-west through the village, and by the stone walls and mature trees associated with the nearby Abbeville Demesne. The busy Malahide Road (R107) runs north-south to the west of the existing village. Chapel Road which splits the village runs east-west and forms a junction with the R107 at the Parish Church of St. Nicholas of Myra, a protected structure. The village is about mid-way between Malahide to the north and Balgriffin to the south and is surrounded by greenbelt. The village core is centred on the parish church, some cottages and the relatively recently developed lands at St. Olave's local centre and residential development. Functionally, the village can be described as a commuter village under development pressure. Lands within the village boundary are subject to new residential planning permissions with one such development at Cooper's Wood to the east of Kinsaley Lane which is nearing completion.

Local employment exists in the form of Kinsaley Business Park, comprising light industrial units and offices built in the late 80's and accessed off Kinsaley Lane. Until recently, the Teagasc site to the south of the village offered significant rural based employment but this has ceased since consolidation into the Teagasc Centre in Blanchardstown. Other employment uses are focused on existing retail services along the Malahide Road, many of which are non-conforming in the context of their greenbelt location. Kinsaley has a current population of circa 340 persons.

### **Rivermeade**

Rivermeade is located within the rural area of Fingal approximately 7km to the west of Swords and 8km north of Finglas. The settlement of Rivermeade comprises a housing estate constructed by the Council in 1970's to accommodate the residential needs of the displaced community affected by the development and operation of Dublin Airport. It was further developed in the 1980s and later in 2002. There are currently 175 existing houses within the village boundary, all located on the southern side of the Ward River. In addition to the residential development there is a primary school, a community building, one small shop, a playground and small football pitch serving the settlement. Access to Rivermeade is from the Toberburr Road to the west, just north of Killeek Lane. Keelings, a large agri-business is situated south of Killeek Lane. Rivermeade functions as a commuter village within the Metropolitan Area. A Local Area Plan for the Rivermeade was adopted on 10th June 2013. The village has a current population of circa 550 persons.

#### **Objective RF01**

Review the Rivermeade Local Area Plan before end of 2017.

### **Rowlestown**

Rowlestown is a commuter village located in the Metropolitan Area on the main Swords to Ashbourne Road (R125) and consists mainly of one and two storey residential development. Development within the village is highly dispersed. Significant structures include a church and the community centre, both on the north eastern edge of the village, and the new national school which is located on the northern side of the village.



Rowlestown is an attractive rural village, of strong landscape quality elevated above the steeply sloping banks of the Broadmeadow River. It is located around two parallel roads joined together by an intersecting road which crosses the Broadmeadow River by an old cut stone bridge. The Regional Road R125 travels along the southern side of the village connecting Rowlestown eastwards to Swords, (7.5km) and westwards to Ashbourne (6.5km). Part of the village is designated as an ACA.

The small village centre is situated just north of the R125 along a county road. Rowlestown is part of a network of villages in Fingal which function as small service centres for their immediate agricultural hinterland. Service provision is limited. Rowlestown National School - St. Brigid's, a recently built generous and attractive modern school accommodates 282 pupils and is located just north of the village. Rowlestown Community Hall, a distinctive plaster and corrugated structure is a busy hub of activity in the village centre adjacent to the St. Brigid's RC Church. The Fingal Raven's GAA club grounds and club house are located approx.1.6km north of the village. Given its proximity to Swords, Rowlestown functions as a commuter village, under development pressure. A Local Area Plan for Rowlestown was adopted on 13th May 2013. The level of growth will be carefully managed through the Local Area Plan process. The current population of Rowlestown is around 350 people.

### **Rural Villages in the Hinterland Area**

#### **Ballyboghil**

Ballyboghil is a key village centre situated at the crossroads of the R108 and the R129 linking Swords to Naul and Blakes Cross to Oldtown and is part of the network of rural villages functioning as small local service centres for the surrounding rural hinterland. The village has developed in a linear form over time from the original village core which was centred on the church and school. The Ballyboghil Stream is a key natural asset in the centre of the village.

Hedgerows and trees contribute strongly to its unique character and charm and link the village with the adjoining agricultural landscape. The significance of hedgerows in the village and surrounding area is celebrated by the Ballyboghil Hedgerow Society through a number of educational walks throughout the year in co-operation with the local landowners.

The Council will support the development of new initiatives such as walking trails around the village and along the Ballyboughil Stream linking the village to Oldtown, both for the enjoyment of local people and as an attractor for visitors to the area, promoting local economic development. The village has a current population of circa 350 people. A Local Area Plan for Ballyboghil was adopted on 11th June 2012.

#### **Garristown**

Garristown is an attractive rural village with a distinct rural ambience, located in the north-west of the County approximately 18 kilometres from Swords, 6kms north east of Ashbourne and just inside the County boundary with Co. Meath. The village is situated at one of the highest points in the County. Garristown is a key village within the Hinterland and forms part of a network of rural villages which functions as local centres, with a small but significant retail/commercial base that provides services to the village and a large rural hinterland.

The village consists of a wide main street running north-south, the most distinguishing feature is the tree lined Mall which runs along the western side of Main Street. It consists primarily



of nineteenth and twentieth century buildings comprising generally well maintained, short, two storey terraces and detached dwellings, forming a compact village settlement focused on a linear village green. The busier part of the village is at the juncture of the Naul Road and Main Street. The main landmarks are the Church of the Assumption and Carnegie library on Main Street, and the former Church of Ireland [in ruins] and graveyard. The village core of Garristown has been identified as an area of high quality vernacular architectural character and is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area.

Limited development has occurred within the village in recent times with new residential development mainly to the west and east of the village. There are considerable areas of undeveloped land within the village boundary. The downturn in the economy has resulted in the closure of a number of long established agri-businesses in the centre of the village. These lands have considerable potential for future employment and enterprise uses and are important for the economic development of the village. Given its attractive village form and scenic landscape setting, the village has considerable potential for tourism and leisure based enterprises.

Garristown has a current population of circa 450 people. A Local Area Plan for Garristown was adopted on 13th September 2010 and extended for five years in July 2015 until 12th July 2020.

### **Naul**

Naul village is located in north Fingal, near the boundary with County Meath, It functions as a key village within the Hinterland area and is part of the network of rural villages which function as small local service centres for the surrounding rural hinterland. The Village Square and Main Street provide the focus of the built form of the village and are located within a designated ACA. The Square contains a range of nineteenth and twentieth century buildings, including the re-thatched Seamus Ennis Arts Centre. Naul has significant potential to develop further as an attractive destination given its charming village form, its scenic landscape setting, notable archaeological, architectural and musical heritage and its proximity to archaeological sites in County Meath.



The Seamus Ennis Arts Centre located in the heart of the village hosts many of today's foremost musicians, songwriters and artists and attracts considerable interest from around the country. The centre already has a major local role as well as further potential for regional, tourism and consequential local economic development. Fingal County Council is committed to building upon the success of the Seamus Ennis Arts Centre. It is the Council's intention to develop a Recreational Hub on lands adjoining the existing Clann Mhuire GAA grounds, providing active recreational facilities for the wider area. Naul has a current population of around 450. A Local Area Plan for Naul was adopted on 9th May 2011.

### **Oldtown**

Oldtown is a small attractive rural village located approximately 10km north of Swords and 6km east of Asbourne, in Co. Meath. The R122 regional road passes through the village connecting Oldtown southwards to Swords, and northwards to The Naul. The Daws River meanders through the village. Oldtown is a key village centre in the Hinterland area and is part of a network of rural villages which functions as small service centres for their surrounding agricultural hinterland. It has a distinctive village character and strong identity with traditional buildings and a defined street network. This is reflected in the ACA designation for the village.

The heart of the village has undergone considerable redevelopment over recent years with the addition of stone faced terraced townhouses enhancing the streetscape. Oldtown Local Hall, a distinctive corrugated structure is located in the village centre. The Wild Geese GAA club grounds and clubhouse are located just north of the village.

Oldtown Village is located within a reasonable walking distance of Ballyboghil via the R129. Fingal County Council will support the development of new initiatives such as an off road-walking trail between these two attractive villages, both for the enjoyment of local people and as an attractor for visitors to the area, promoting greater community interaction and local economic development. Oldtown has a population of approximately 450 people. A Local Area Plan for Oldtown was adopted on 11th June 2012.

### **Balscaddan**

Balscaddan is a small rural village settlement located approximately 3km northwest of Balbriggan and 2km south of Gormanston in County Meath. It is separated from the town of Balbriggan by the designated Greenbelt. Given its proximity to Balbriggan town, Balscaddan is a commuter village within the rural Hinterland. The village has not experienced pressure for development in recent times, due to drainage capacity constraints. Recent developments comprise mainly "one-off" one and two storey residential developments.

The village has developed in an easterly direction from the original village core, which is centred on the Church of the Assumption and graveyard. The core is identified by the area known as 'The Square' a grouping of formerly thatched dwellings arranged in a 'clachan' style, reminiscent of the west of Ireland. The village core is an area of unique architectural character and is a designated ACA. A significant portion of the settlement has road frontage bounded by mature hedgerows and traditional stone walling. Development within the village includes a church, national school and a public house.

Balscaddan is located in an elevated landscape where the landform slopes steeply from south to north affording panoramic views of the countryside to the north towards the Mournees and west over the surrounding countryside. It is a charming village within an exceptional landscaping



setting. It is likely to come under development pressure once the drainage capacity constraint is resolved. Given its status as a commuter village, the level of growth must be managed, to preserve the unique character of the village. The village has a current population of circa 150. A Local Area Plan for Balscaddan will be prepared during the lifetime of the Development Plan.

### Village Settlement Strategy

The villages of Fingal have strong, locally distinctive characteristics, whilst the built village form varies from village to village all are set within a remarkable landscape context. Fingal's villages are also important for their rivers, streams, trees, hedgerows and stone-walling which all contribute to the green infrastructure network throughout the County. The villages, as a collective, are a valuable rural asset to the County that needs to be protected from excessive inappropriate development. Their function as either Key Villages or Commuter Villages within the Metropolitan and Hinterland areas, as defined in the RPGs, is an important determining factor for the scale and type of development proposed, but of equal importance is preserving the uniqueness of all our Villages, acknowledging their contribution to the cultural richness of the County.

Settlement within the designated Rural Villages will continue to be open to all. The settlement strategy will not require that a person is from a rural or urban area. This policy will promote the vitality of the villages and facilitate the provision of appropriate facilities. This is a policy response to the low levels of growth in many of the villages over recent years. However, the level of growth within villages must be managed. Rapid expansion will not be permitted as it would put undue pressure on services and the environment and encourage higher levels of unsustainable commuting. The level of growth will be managed through the Core Strategy and the Local Area Plan process.

A particular need within the rural community is for sites where houses are designed to meet the applicant's own requirements. To this end, serviced sites, designated as such in village LAPs within the villages will serve to meet people's needs for house sites on which they can develop individual or "one-off" houses. These houses will accord with design parameters which will be set out in the Village LAPs and accompanying Village Development Framework Plans.

#### Objective RF02

Manage the development of each village, within the existing RV boundaries, having regard to;

- Government Guidelines set down in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, 2009;
- The settlement strategy for rural villages set out in the RPGs, and;
- The Core Strategy of the Draft Fingal Plan.

#### Objective RF03

Ensure that a suitable mix of housing type and tenure is available within the villages.

#### Objective RF04

Ensure that Local Area Plans contain provision for the location of serviced sites within the Rural Village boundaries.



## Community Infrastructure

The vitality of the Rural Village involves people living, working, and interacting within the village communities or indeed within a community of villages. Community activity will be supported by objectives focusing on enabling the provision of commercial and community infrastructure which will allow communities to thrive and prosper. Uses such as care homes, health services clinics and educational centres, located within the boundaries of the Rural Villages have connection and interaction with the local community. Such uses in rural villages can contribute significantly to the dynamism and economy of the local community.

In line with Fingal's Local Economic and Community Plan [LECP], Local Area Plans for the villages will seek to achieve a reduction in the need for travel, by provision within the boundaries of the villages of areas suitable for the development of appropriately sized enterprises.

These Rural Villages, only short distances from Dublin City, both individually and as a collective, are a valuable resource for tourism development, attractive to locals and day trippers. Tourist type activities based around walking, cycling, landscape, heritage, music, food, leisure and adventure activities, are examples of the type of activities that are intrinsically associated with rural areas. Collaboration between the tourism offering and local service providers, such as local shops, restaurants, cafes, farmer's markets, has the potential to significantly expand the economic impact on the rural areas of the County. Fingal County Council will encourage and support such collaboration within and between the Rural Villages and their hinterlands.

### Objective RF05

Preserve, protect and enhance the natural, built and cultural heritage features that form the basis of the attraction of Fingal's villages.

### Objective RF06

Strengthen and consolidate the built form of the Rural Villages, providing a viable housing alternative to the open countryside with the advantages of a rural setting

### Objective RF07

Encourage the re-use and adaptation of the existing building stock within the Rural Villages.

### Objective RF08

Promote the provision of essential services for living within the local community including, social, employment and retailing services, health, recreation, leisure amenities and community facilities.

### Objective RF09

Assess the need for additional schools provision as part of the preparation of Rural Village LAPs.

### Objective RF10

Promote the provision of childcare facilities within Rural Villages to meet local demand and encourage the location of such facilities near schools in order to facilitate parents.

### Objective RF11

Promote suitable uses, including care homes, health service clinics, and educational centres, within the areas zoned RV, to a scale appropriate to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of each village.



**Objective RF12**

Promote the provision of suitable appropriately sized enterprises within rural villages to minimise the need for commuting.

**Objective RF13**

Promote the tourism potential of Fingal's villages by facilitating the provision of visitor services and accommodation, encourage collaboration between service providers and co-operate with the relevant bodies in the marketing and promotion of tourism in the area.

**Rural Village Local Area Plans**

LAPs and accompanying Village Development Framework Plans have been prepared and adopted for Ballyboghil, Garristown, Naul, Oldtown, Rivermeade and Rowlestown. LAPs and Village Development Framework Plans will be prepared for the remaining villages.

The Local Area Plan is a statutory plan and public statement of planning policies and objectives for the development of the rural village. It sets out the development strategy emphasising the proper planning and sustainable development of the village. It includes measures for the protection of the built and natural environment, the economic, social and cultural development of the village.

Its preparation involves public consultation with the local community to get their ideas as to how they would like to see their village develop. It is valid for six years from the date of adoption by the Council; its validity may be extended, in year 5 of the LAP for a further 5 years, if deemed appropriate by a resolution of the Council. Most of the villages zoned RV have approved Local Area Plans (LAPs). Where existing LAPs reach the end of their statutory lifetime, new ones will be prepared.

The Local Area Plan and the Settlement Strategy will work together to consolidate the existing footprint of each village, while achieving the managed development of the village having regard to Government Guidelines set down in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, 2009, the settlement strategy for rural villages set out in the RPGs and the Core Strategy. This expansion will occur in a way which enhances and does not detract from the distinct character of each village.

**Village Development Framework Plans (VDFPs)**

Village Development Framework Plans are companion guidance documents appended to the statutory Local Area Plan. The Village Development Framework Plan is an assessment tool to identify and protect the distinct physical and cultural characteristics of each village. It also provides guidance to promote best practice architectural solutions for the overall development of the village. VDFP's are long term strategies for the sustainable development of the village with a diversity and mix of uses to create a place where a balance is achieved between the natural and built environment.

Village Local Area Plans and VDFPS are a mechanism for collaboration between the Elected Members and broad based community interest. Public consultation with the local community plays a significant role in the adoption of the LAPs/VDFPs.

Fingal County Council has been responsibly protecting Fingal's rural villages from



overdevelopment, protecting their character and individual identity through the Local Area Plan and Village Development Framework Plan process.

**Objective RF14**

Ensure Rural Villages are developed in accordance with adopted Local Area Plans and accompanying Village Development Framework Plans.

**Objective RF15**

Promote local distinctiveness and character through Village Development Framework Plans prepared as part of the Local Area Plan for each of the Rural Villages. The VDFPs will set out comprehensive guidelines for the urban design for all the villages.

**Objective RF16**

Prepare a Local Area Plan and VDFP for each of the villages, where necessary, involving public consultation with the local community, to provide a planning framework for appropriate village development. The LAPs will protect and promote:

- i. Village character through preparation of a Village Development Framework Plan;
- ii. A sustainable mix of commercial and community activity within an identified village core which includes provision for appropriate sized enterprise, residential, retail, commercial, and community facilities;
- iii. The water services provision within the village;
- iv. Community services which allow residents to meet and interact on a social basis, and include churches, community and sports halls, libraries and pubs;
- v. A mix of housing types and tenure which will appeal to a range of socio-economic groups;
- vi. Retail activity, consistent with the Fingal Retail Strategy, in the form of village shops which will meet the needs of the local community.
- vii. A public realm within the village which allows people to circulate, socialise and engage in commercial activity in a manner which balances the needs of all involved;
- viii. The provision of Green Infrastructure, including natural, archaeological and architectural heritage, and green networks within the village.

**Amendments to RV Boundaries**

In the course of preparation of LAPs for each of the Rural Villages, consideration may be given to the extent of the RV zoning objective. This may result in a reduction or small scale extension of the existing zoning. Changes to the RV zoning will be considered only where it can be clearly shown that this contributes significantly to the development objectives for the village, and that there is a clear evidence base for such a proposed change.

**Rural Clusters**

Many Rural Clusters have more limited characteristics and a more residential focus with fewer services available than the villages. They provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside through the consolidation of rural residential development within existing small clusters. For the most part, they will provide an opportunity for family members of existing households within the cluster to build a new home, or reuse and adapt an existing structure, in proximity to their family home, by sub-dividing large sites. They will also provide the rural community with an opportunity to choose more rural-style housing to that which is provided within the Rural Villages. Existing clusters are diverse in their role and function within the rural area. For instance, clusters such as Ballymadun offer limited existing services which



have traditionally served the local community. Other clusters have a lesser role, being simply based on an existing small number of individual houses with little or no associated services. Consideration of planning applications within the clusters must have regard to the role and form of the cluster within the wider rural area taking particular care that clusters do not compete with villages in the services they provide or the role and function they play within the rural area.

There are 34 Rural Clusters within Fingal located at:

Balcarrick, Baldwinstown Cross, Ballykea, Blackhills (Ardgillan), Balcultry, Ballymadun, Baltrasna, Castlefarm (Kilsallaghan), Colecut, Dallyhaysy (Balbriggan), Dermotstown (Bog O' the Ring), Grougha, Moonlone Lane (Naul), Dubber Cross, Effelstown (Lusk/Rush train station), Holmpatrick, Hedgestown (Five Roads), Jordanstown, Killalane, Magilstown, Malheney (Man O' War), Milverton, Moyne Road, New Haggard, North Beach, Palmerstown, Staffordstown/Corduff, The Quay (Portrane), Thornton, Tobersool, The Commons (Lusk), Turvey Lane, Wimbletown (Ballyboghil) and Wyanstown (Oldtown).

#### Objective RF17

Encourage consolidation of rural housing within a limited number of existing Rural Clusters which will cater for rural generated housing demand, as an alternative to housing in the open countryside, and encourage the reuse of existing buildings within the cluster over any new development.

### Rural Cluster Settlement Strategy

The Rural Clusters serve as areas where members of the rural community can live as an alternative to housing in the open countryside. The Settlement Strategy identifies opportunities for infill development and encourages appropriate levels of consolidation allowing families living in such clusters to build a needed new home by subdividing large sites, where drainage requirements allow. This meets the County's rural generated housing need and avoids encroachment into viable agricultural lands. Settlement within the Rural Clusters will be open to members of the Fingal rural community who demonstrate a rural-generated housing need.

For the purposes of the settlement strategy for Rural Clusters, rural-generated housing need is defined as either:

- Persons currently living and who have lived continuously for the past ten years or have previously lived for a minimum of ten continuous years, or
- Persons working continuously for the past ten years,

Within areas of the County currently zoned rural. These areas are zoned Rural Village (RV), Rural Cluster (RC), Agriculture (RU), Green Belt (GB), or High Amenity (HA).

#### Objective RF18

Permit only persons with a rural-generated housing need, as defined within this Section of the Draft Plan, planning permission for a house within a Rural Cluster where the site size is a minimum of 0.2 hectares for on-site treatment systems, and conforms to the drainage and design standards required by the Council, and 0.125 hectares where connecting to a public sewer.



**Objective RF19**

Ensure that the requirements set out by the Council in the Development Management Standards Chapter for on-site treatment systems are strictly complied with, or with the requirements as may be amended by future national legislation or guidance.

**Layout and Design in Rural Clusters**

Sensitive layout and design of new houses within the Rural Clusters will ensure that they contribute positively to the rural character of the area. The layout and design of new housing within the Rural Clusters should be consistent with the requirements set out in Chapter 12, Development Management Standards.

The development of any individual site within a cluster must ensure that the future development potential of adjoining sites is not compromised, particularly in relation to on site layout and design and vehicular and pedestrian access. All sites within the cluster must be provided with sustainable drainage infrastructure.

New housing in rural clusters will be required to be rural in character and respectful of the existing pattern of development in the immediate vicinity. Entrances to new sites will be by means of shared access with an existing dwelling for preference or via an existing entrance to reduce the number of entrances onto rural roads and the subsequent need for the removal of significant stretches of established hedgerow and trees.

**Objective RF20**

Permit only development within the Rural Clusters which has regard to the existing character and role of the cluster within the wider rural area, with particular care being taken that clusters do not compete with villages in the services they provide or the role and function they play within their rural area.

**Objective RF21**

Ensure that proposals for new dwellings do not compromise the development potential of adjoining sites by means of on-site layout and house design and both vehicular and pedestrian access. All sites must provide sustainable drainage infrastructure.

**Objective RF22**

Minimise the number of new entrances to sites within a rural cluster with a preference for sharing accesses with existing dwellings or using existing entrances. New entrances will only be considered where the potential for sharing is not possible. Any removal of hedgerows, trees and walls or other distinctive boundary treatment required to accommodate sight lines must be limited in extent and must be replaced with the same type of boundary. The use of native species for replacement planting shall be used where appropriate.

**Objective RF23**

Allow for small scale home-based economic activity and local services at a level commensurate with the size, scale and character of the Rural Cluster.



## Housing in the Countryside

The countryside for the purposes of this section of the Plan are those areas with the rural zoning objectives identified as Agriculture and Rural Amenity (RU), Greenbelt (GB), and High Amenity (HA). In response to the typology identified in the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, the rural area of Fingal is considered to be an area under 'Strong Urban Influence' due to its proximity to Dublin City and the Metropolitan Area, and the resultant pressures for housing in the open countryside. Therefore, those with a rural-generated need for a house will be accommodated while those with urban-generated housing need will be directed to towns and villages. The reuse of existing buildings within the countryside for residential development will be encouraged.

### Objective RF24

Ensure the vitality and regeneration of rural communities by facilitating those with a genuine rural generated housing need to live within their rural community.

### Objective RF25

Recognise and promote the agricultural and landscape value of the rural area and prohibit the development of urban generated housing in the open countryside.

### Objective RF26

Encourage the re-use and adaptation of the existing rural residential building stock and other building types, where practical, in preference to new build.

## Settlement Strategy

### Rural Generated Housing Need

The Settlement Strategy for housing in the open countryside serves to meet settlement needs which are the result of a genuine rural-generated housing need. Rural-generated housing needs are considered to be the housing needs of people who have long standing existing and immediate family ties, or occupations which are functionally related to the rural areas of the County, and are specifically defined as:

- Members of farming families who are actively involved in the family farm which is located within rural Fingal as defined in Objective RF35.
- Persons who have close family ties to the Fingal rural community as defined in Table RF03 paragraph (i).
- Persons who have been in long term employment which is related to, and supportive of, the rural community as defined in Table RF03 paragraph (ii) and where the employment is dependent on the residence of the person within the rural community.
- Persons who are a member of a rural-located family, who are considered because of exceptional and demonstrated health reasons to have a need to reside beside their family home in the rural area as defined in Table RF03 paragraph (iii).
- Persons who are "a bona fide" applicant, as defined in Table RF03 paragraph (iv), and who have a demonstrated commitment to set up a rural-related business and who may not already live in the area, nor have family connections there, or be engaged in particular employment or business classified with the local needs criteria. The applicant must have a clearly demonstrated need to live in the rural area to ensure the functioning of the business.



People who have a genuine rural-generated housing need will be considered for planning permission for a house in those parts of the open countryside which have zoning objective RU or GB. Only members of families actively involved in farming within the rural area will be considered for a rural house in areas of the County which have a zoning objective HA.

To ensure the sustainability of new housing in the countryside, such that the assets and values of the countryside are not negatively impacted upon and that any proposed development of rural houses does not detract from the experience of the rural value, the maximum number of incremental houses which will receive planning permission within the rural area on the basis of an existing house is limited. Each of the rural zoning objectives has a limit to the number of incremental houses which will be permitted. Where exceptional health circumstances can be demonstrated an additional house will be considered under each of the rural zoning objectives. The maximum number of dwellings permitted under any of the above zonings will be less any additional house which has been granted planning permission since 19th October 1999. No individual applicant will receive planning permission for more than one house. The maximum number of houses permitted for each rural zoning type is shown in Table RF01.

**Table RF01: Maximum Number of Houses Which Will Be Permitted Per Existing House**

Area zoning objective	Maximum no. of houses to be granted planning permission per existing house
RU	2 (+1 for exceptional health reasons)
GB	1 (+1 for exceptional health reasons)
HA	1 (+1 for exceptional health reasons)

Table RF02 outlines eligibility for housing in the open countryside under the Rural Settlement Strategy.

**Table RF02: Who Is Eligible For Planning Permission?**

Zoning objective	Involved in the family farm	Close family ties	Employment related to the community	Exceptional health reasons	“bona fide” business
RU	√	√	√	√	√
GB	√	√	√	√	√
HA	√			√	

**Example – housing under RU Zoning Objective**

*A grant of planning permission to any farming family member in an area subject to the RU zoning objective based on their involvement in running the family farm will not preclude any other member of the family from applying for planning permission based on their eligibility under the additional qualifying criteria as outlined above. In an area zoned RU the total number of incremental houses granted to any one family within the rural area shall not exceed two with the potential for a third house to be granted planning permission where exceptional health circumstances can be demonstrated.*



**Objective RF27**

Provide that the maximum number of dwellings permitted under any of the rural zonings will be less any additional house which has been granted planning permission to a family member since 19th October 1999.

**Objective RF28**

Permit a maximum number of two incremental houses for those who meet the relevant criteria set out in this chapter within areas with zoning objective RU plus one house for a person with exceptional health circumstances.

**Objective RF29**

Permit a maximum number of one incremental house for those who meet the relevant criteria set out in this chapter within areas with the zoning objective HA or GB plus one house for a person with exceptional health circumstances.

**Objective RF30**

Permit houses in areas with zoning objective HA, only to those who have a defined essential housing need based on their involvement in farming or exceptional health circumstances.

**Objective RF31**

Require that any house which is granted planning permission in the areas with the zoning objective, RU, HA, or GB will be subject to an occupancy requirement whereby the house must be first occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant and/or members of his/her immediate family for a minimum period of seven years.

**New Housing for Farming Families**

Planning permission will be considered for one incremental house in areas which have the HA or GB zoning objective, and up to two houses in areas with the RU zoning objective, on a family farm for close family members who are demonstrated to be actively and directly engaged in the running of the family farm. In recognition that farming is no longer a full-time occupation for many farmers, consideration will also be given to farmers whose income is supplemented by off-farm work. In all applications for planning permission for a rural house on the basis of involvement in an existing farm, proof of direct participation in farming must include verifiable evidence of family ownership of a working farm.

**Objective RF32**

Permit up to two additional dwellings per farm family in areas with the zoning objective, RU, and one additional dwelling per farm family within areas with the zoning objective, GB or HA, where the applicant demonstrates their direct participation in running the family farm and is considered to have a demonstrated need related to the working of the farm to reside on the family farm.

**Objective RF33**

Demonstrate that any proposed dwelling is for use as the applicant's primary residence and the proposed dwelling will be located on a farm where the applicant's family currently resides.

**Objective RF34**

Allow for consideration of any additional house, in the case of a fragmented farm, to be located on an area of the farm not physically connected to the main portion of the farm, and which area has been in the applicant family's ownership and part of the overall active farm holding for at least three years prior to the date of application.



**Objective RF35**

Demonstrate that the farm has been a working and actively managed farm in the ownership of the applicant's family for a minimum of three years preceding the date of the application for planning permission.

The applicant will be required to demonstrate the following in relation to their working of the family farm:

- (i) The applicant is a member of a family which operates a farm within the rural area of Fingal, and is actively engaged in farming the family farm. Verifiable documentary evidence (such as dated and stamped Land Registry Documentation) showing details of the farm ownership, details of the family relationship with the farm owner, and the nature of the applicant's involvement in farming the family farm will be required
- (ii) The farm on which the application for planning permission for a rural house has been submitted has been a working and actively-managed farm in the ownership of the applicant's family for a minimum of three years preceding the date of the application for planning permission
- (iii) The location of the family home on the existing farm
- (iv) The location of all other houses on the family farm which have been granted planning permission since the 19th October 1999. Submission details will include the date of grant of planning permission and the Council's file Register Reference under which any Planning Permissions were granted
- (v) The family farm has been a working farm for the preceding three years. The criteria which are considered to constitute a working farm and the size thresholds for various types of farm are set out below. The minimum threshold area of a farm excludes the area of the farm occupied by the farm yard and farm buildings, the area of the existing family home and its curtilage, and the area of the site of the proposed dwelling
- (vi) Documentary evidence that the applicant resides on a working family farm within the planning application.

Documentary evidence (i.e. of a working farm) which is required is detailed below:

- a) For livestock (including equestrian), tillage and mixed livestock/tillage farms:
  - a) A Herd Number or other Business Number which is allocated by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
  - b) Single Farm Payment details for the preceding three years
  - c) A REPS number for those farmers who participate in REPS
  - d) A Forestry number for those farmers who manage forestry
  - e) For dairy farms, details of the previous year's supplies to a milk processor
  - f) For equestrian farms, depending on the type of equestrian farm, current horse training licences issued by the Irish Turf Club, racing licences, documentation demonstrating that the farm is a recognised teaching school, records of bloodstock sales, details of stud production for the preceding three years or equine identification documents, i.e. passports issued by Horse Board Ireland or by Wetherbys



- b) For horticulture farms:
- Confirmation of involvement in the Quality Assurance Scheme managed by An Bord Bia for the previous three years
  - Evidence of investment within the farm to demonstrate its current active engagement in the horticulture sector
  - Details of the supply of product from the farm which demonstrates that the applicant was supplying substantial produce to market in the preceding year
- c) Size thresholds for farms:
- The minimum size for an active livestock, tillage, or mixed livestock/tillage farm is 15 hectares
  - The minimum size for a horticultural farm is:
    - For a vegetable farm, six hectares
    - For an apple farm, thirteen hectares
    - For glasshouse production, 0.4 hectares

Applications for planning permission will be considered where the documentary evidence clearly and comprehensively demonstrates that a farm has been an active and viable holding for the preceding three years, even though it falls below the thresholds set above, or is a specialist operator not of the types described above. The applicant must demonstrate a need for the applicant to be resident on the farm in such cases.

### **New Housing for the Rural Community Other than For Those Who Are Actively Engaged In Farming**

New dwellings will also be considered in areas which have an RU or GB zoning objective for members of the rural community who are not involved in farming.

#### **Objective RF36**

Permit new rural dwellings in areas which have zoning objectives RU, or GB, on suitable sites where the applicant meets the criteria set out in Table RF03.

**Table RF03: Criteria for Eligible Applicants from the Rural Community for Planning Permission for New Rural Housing**

- i. One member of a rural family who is considered to have a need to reside close to their family home by reason of close family ties, and where a new rural dwelling has not already been granted planning permission to a family member by reason of close family ties since 19th October 1999. The applicant for planning permission for a house on the basis of close family ties shall be required to provide documentary evidence that:
- S/he is a close member of the family of the owners of the family home
  - S/he has lived in the family home identified on the application or within the locality of the family home for at least fifteen years
- ii. A person who has been in employment in a full-time occupation which is considered to satisfy local needs by predominantly serving the rural community/economy for fifteen years prior to the application for planning permission, and has not already been granted planning permission for a new rural dwelling since the 19th October 1999. Documentary evidence of such employment is required.



iii. A person who is an immediate member of a rural family who has not been granted permission for a rural dwelling, since the 19th October 1999, and is considered to have a need to reside adjacent to the family home by reason of that person's exceptional health circumstances. The application for a rural dwelling must be supported by two sworn affidavits from relevant and qualified professionals, with at least one from a registered medical practitioner. A qualified representative of an organisation which represents or supports persons with a medical condition or disability may supply the other.

It is to be noted that criterion no. (iii) applies in areas which have zoning objective, HA, as well as in areas with zoning objective GB and RU.

iv. A "bona fide" applicant who may not already live in the area, nor have family connections there or be engaged in particular employment or business classified with the local needs criteria, subject to the following considerations:

Such applicants will be required to satisfy the Council of their long term commitment to operate a full-time business from their proposed home in a rural area, as part of their planning application.

The applicant will outline within a submitted business plan how their business will contribute to and enhance the rural community, and will demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the nature of their employment or business is compatible with, and addresses and satisfies local needs, and will protect and promote the rural community.

The applicant will satisfy the Council that the nature of their employment or business is dependent on its location within the rural area so as to discourage applicants whose business is not location-dependent.

The applicant will demonstrate their commitment to the proposed business through the submission of a comprehensive and professionally-prepared Business Plan, and through submission of legal documentation that they have sufficient funding committed to start and operate the business.

Applicants whose business is not location-dependent will not be considered.

Verifiable documentary evidence to demonstrate compliance with Objective RF36 will be required in all planning permission applications for a new house in the open countryside including a sworn affidavit by the applicant stating that the applicant conforms to the requirements of the objective.

### **Housing within the Airport Noise Zones**

The development of new housing for those who are not involved in farming will be actively resisted within the area delineated by the inner noise zone for Dublin Airport. However, consideration will be given to the development of new housing for those not involved in farming but who have family homes within the inner noise zone in locations on suitable sites outside the inner noise zone but within two kilometers from that noise zone. To ensure that the need to live as close as possible to the existing family is met and to avoid undue pressure on certain areas of the Greenbelt, the M1 will provide an east-west boundary, with those living to the east being considered for housing on suitable sites to the east, and those living to the west being considered for housing on suitable sites to the west. Site selection should ensure that the rural character of the area is maintained and that multiple sites on single landholdings are avoided.



**Objective RF37**

Apply the provisions of the Rural Settlement Strategy, only with regard to 'New Housing for Farming Families' as set out within this chapter, within the Airport Inner Noise Zone, and subject to the following restrictions:

- Under no circumstances shall any dwelling be permitted within the predicted 69dB LAeq 16 hours noise contour.
- Comprehensive noise insulation shall be required for any house permitted under this objective.
- Any planning application shall be accompanied by a noise assessment report produced by a specialist in noise assessment which shall specify all proposed noise mitigation measures together with a declaration of acceptance of the applicant with regard to the result of the noise acceptance report.

**Objective RF38**

Apply the provisions of the Rural Settlement Strategy as it applies to "New Housing for the Rural Community other than for those who are actively engaged in farming" for rural community members located within the Inner Noise Zone on suitable sites located within two kilometres outside the Inner Noise Zone. For those living to the east of the M1, only suitable sites located to the east of the M1 will be considered, and for those living to the west of the M1, only suitable sites located to the west of the M1 will be considered.

**Replacement of Chalets and Seaside Huts**

There are a number of areas in Fingal, such as Portrane, Donabate and Rush, where chalets and seaside huts have been constructed prior and after the coming into effect of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 1963.

Proposals to replace these holiday homes with structures for permanent dwellings are from time to time submitted to the Council. The Council will assess such proposals having regard to the context, location, drainage provision, and appropriate site development standards. The Council is aware that in relation to the above locations, the following issues arise:

- A considerable number of such structures are located within the coastal regions and could be liable to the impacts of climate change in the form of coastal erosion and flooding.
- Given the ad hoc nature of some of these developments, there is little or no sewerage infrastructure.
- There are limited services including roads infrastructure or utilities in these areas.
- The creation of permanent housing may be unsustainable and significantly alter the character of the areas in which they are located.

Therefore, the replacement or conversion of existing seasonal chalets and seaside huts by dwellings which can be resided in all the year round will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the following criteria is fully met:

- Verifiable documentary evidence indicating the unit is occupied on a year round basis and has been for a period of 7 years or more.
- The proposal satisfies planning criteria in relation to appropriate design and layout, drainage, access and integration with the character of the landscape.
- The site shall not be liable to the impacts of climate change, including coastal erosion and flooding.
- Impacts on European Sites will be fully assessed by Screening for Appropriate Assessment or full Assessment where required.



**Objective RF39**

The replacement or conversion of existing coastal chalets and seaside huts by dwellings which can be resided in all the year round will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the following criteria is fully met:

- Verifiable documentary evidence indicating the unit is occupied on a year round basis and has been for a period of 7 years or more.
- The proposal satisfies planning criteria in relation to appropriate design and layout, drainage, access and integration with the character of the landscape.
- The site shall not be liable to the impacts of climate change, including coastal erosion and flooding.
- Impacts on European Sites will be fully assessed by Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

**South Shore Area Of Rush**

The South Shore area of Rush consists mainly of small landholdings with a mixture of market gardening and single and cluster housing. The pattern of development is increasingly residential, with some significant vacant sites and some retained horticultural activities. The road infrastructure within the area is limited and sub-standard in terms of modern road requirements but it forms part of the overall rural residential character of the area. The area also borders on Rogerstown Estuary, which hosts two Natura 2000 sites, Rogerstown Estuary SAC and Rogerstown Estuary SPA. These sites are subject to strict protection afforded by the Habitats Directive and the Council must ensure that development does not adversely affect the ecological integrity of these sites. Certain areas of the South Shore are also prone to flooding and are at risk from coastal erosion.

Recognising the established mix of horticulture and residential land uses within this area, and the availability of water services infrastructure, the settlement strategy for housing in the open countryside will be more flexible within the area demarcated on the Draft Plan maps. This area is located to the south and east of the R128 from the junction with Spout Road, immediately to the west of Rush.

Housing will be considered for persons who have been resident in the South Shore, or within the development boundary of Rush or within one kilometre by road of either of these areas for a minimum of ten years. Housing will also be considered for a mother, father, son or daughter of a resident who qualifies. Houses will be sympathetic to the rural and coastal character of the area. Given the sensitivities of the area, because of its location adjacent to the coast and to Rogerstown Estuary, there will be a requirement on applicants to demonstrate that any proposed new development will not be at risk of flooding or erosion and will not negatively impact, either directly or indirectly, the designated sites within Rogerstown Estuary.

**Objective RF40**

Consider planning applications for a house located within the South Shore area of Rush from persons who have been resident for a minimum of ten years within the South Shore area or within the development boundary of Rush or within one kilometre by road of either of these areas, subject to sustainable planning and consideration of climate change impacts.

**Objective RF41**

Consider planning applications for a house located within the South Shore area of Rush from a mother, father, son or daughter of a resident who qualifies under Objective RF40, and subject to sustainable planning and consideration of climate change impacts.



**Objective RF42**

Require that any house which is granted planning permission in the South Shore area will be subject to an occupancy requirement whereby the house must be first occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant and/or members of his/her immediate family for a minimum period of seven years.

**Objective RF43**

Require that an applicant for a house in the South Shore area demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that the site is not and will not be subject to flooding or erosion in line with national climate change predictions.

**Objective RF44**

Require that an applicant demonstrates that the impact of any proposed house will not adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the ecological integrity of any European site.

**Objective RF45**

Allow for new houses within the South Shore area, subject to normal sustainable planning criteria and in line with climate change impacts, which have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they cannot connect to a public sewer within a reasonable period of time, on sites no less than 0.2ha in size.

**Location of Houses between the Sea and Adjoining Roads**

The development of houses between a road and the sea will be discouraged because of the possible impact of climate change such as rising sea levels and coastal erosion, the potential impact of any new development upon scenic landscapes or vistas and the potential cumulative impacts of rural housing on Natura 2000 sites. No new houses will be permitted on lands with a High Amenity zoning objective which are located between the sea and the coast road. In the case of applicants for planning permission for a dwelling who comply with the settlement strategy for houses in the countryside, where the existing family farm is located entirely between the coast and the road, and no opportunities exist to convert existing/vernacular buildings to a new dwelling on the farm or extend the existing farm house, a suitable alternative site will be considered on the land holding.

**Objective RF46**

Require that no new houses are permitted on High Amenity zoned lands which are located between the sea and the coast road except in such cases indicated in Objective RF47.

**Objective RF47**

Consider a suitable alternative site for a new house, in the case of applicants who comply with the Settlement Strategy for houses in the countryside and whose existing family farm is located entirely between the coast and the road, and where no opportunities exist to convert existing/vernacular farm buildings as a new dwelling or to extend the existing house.

**Objective RF48**

Ensure that the development of any coastal site through the extension or replacement of existing buildings or development of any new buildings is of an appropriate size, scale and architectural quality and that it does not detract from the visual amenity of the area or impact negatively on the natural or built heritage.



## Residential Accommodation for Seasonal Workers

Having regard to the rich and diverse farming operations within the County the provision of residential accommodation for seasonal workers needs to be addressed. Seasonal agricultural workers, including overseas workers, have been employed on farms in Fingal for many years. In recent years, agricultural and horticultural employers have found it increasingly difficult to house temporary workers, especially at periods of peak activity.

In this regard many farmers house their workers in temporary on site caravans/porta-cabins, generally in a piecemeal and ad hoc manner which is considered a substandard form of accommodation for workers and their health and well-being. Permanent housing in the rural areas of the County which have the zoning objective RU, GB and HA are subject to compliance with the Rural Settlement Strategy. The provision of new on-site residential accommodation for seasonal farm workers shall be designed in a cohesive and purpose built manner resulting in a high standard of quality accommodation and minimising reduced visual impacts on the surrounding rural area. This policy is intended to make a sustainable contribution to the local economy which maintains a constant supply of workers to local farms which further facilitates food / crop / plant production.

It is considered residential accommodation for seasonal workers will only be required for the larger operations. In this regard, a minimum farm size of 50 hectares applies. This type of accommodation will only be permitted within the RU, GB and FP zonings. No accommodation of this nature will be permitted within the HA zoning.

Farmers wishing to provide accommodation for their workers are advised to consider the following sequential approach:

- Is other accommodation available, i.e. in an existing house (this includes agricultural workers and other rural dwellings), hotel, other types of residential building either in the rural area or adjoining towns or villages?
- Are other buildings available to convert to residential accommodation, either on or off-site?
- The onus is on the farmer/employer to demonstrate special circumstances for the requirement of accommodation and all other alternatives have been considered.
- The subject site must be the most suitable within the land holding.
- Adequate arrangements must be made for the disposal of refuse and sewage from the site.

### Objective RF49

Use of land associated with a farm for seasonal / temporary workers will be considered subject to the following requirements and demonstrate the following;

- The farm is a working and actively managed farm with a minimum size of 50 hectares.
- There is an essential need for the amount of and type of accommodation and this cannot be met anywhere else. The onus is on the farmer/employer to demonstrate this.
- The accommodation is for use by the workers associated with the farm only and shall not be for sale or rental independent of the farm.
- New on-site residential accommodation for seasonal farm workers shall be designed in a cohesive and purpose built manner resulting in a high standard of quality accommodation whilst minimising visual impacts on the surrounding rural area.
- A viable landholding can facilitate up to a maximum of 100 seasonal workers.
- New purpose built accommodation shall be provided in the form of a maximum 10 bed space unit.



- Each unit shall provide:
  - Accommodation and open space provision sufficient to provide an adequate level of comfort and amenity for occupants
  - Room sizes in accordance with minimum Development Plan standards
  - Shared kitchen, living and dining room based on a minimum 4 sq.m per bed space in the unit, in addition to any circulation space
  - Each bedroom shall have an en-suite shower, toilet and basin
  - Appropriate indoor and outdoor communal and recreational facilities at a combined level of 5-7 sq.m per bedspace
  - Communal facilities and services shall be provided for and include laundry and refuse facilities.
  - Compliance with Building and Fire Regulations.
- Transport arrangements to allow workers ease of access to nearby towns and villages. One of the following shall be provided:
  - Footpaths linking the development to the nearest town or village,
  - Footpaths linking the development to the nearest public transport link,
  - Provision of a privately operated shuttle bus to the nearest town or village.
- Design, height, scale and finishes shall have regard to the landscape context.
- Existing trees and hedgerows shall be maintained in so far as possible and new planting shall be of native species.
- A Landscape Plan shall accompany applications for new purpose built accommodation.
- Sufficient drainage and wastewater infrastructural capacity to serve the development.
- Sufficient access and car-parking arrangements to serve the development.

#### Objective RF50

Seasonal worker accommodation will not be permitted within the HA zoning.

### Houses Displaced By Infrastructural Works

The Council recognises the situation of rural dwellers whose houses must be acquired, whether compulsorily or by agreement, to facilitate infrastructural improvements and works which are in the interest of the common good. The Council will undertake to consider any planning application by a member of the family of such a home owner for a rural house subject to the same provisions that would apply if the dwelling, which has been acquired, were the original and long-standing family home of the applicant.

#### Objective RF51

Consider any planning application by a member of the family whose house has been acquired in the interest of the common good, whether compulsorily or by agreement, for a rural house subject to the same provisions that would apply if the dwelling which has been acquired were the original and long-standing family home of the applicant.

### Ribbon Development

“Ribbon development” is formed by the development of a row of houses along a country road (resulting in five or more houses on any one side of a given 250m of road frontage). It can promote the unsafe proliferation of vehicular entrances onto country roads, negatively impact on views and the character of the area, and reduce biodiversity, in particular, by loss of hedgerows. Therefore, ribbon development will be discouraged. The Planning Authority will



determine whether a particular proposal would create ribbon development, having regard to the following;

- The type of rural area and circumstances of the applicant.
- The degree to which the proposal might be considered infill development
- The degree to which existing ribbon development would be extended or whether distinct areas of ribbon development would coalesce as a result of the development.
- Local circumstances such as planning history and normal planning considerations.

Attention is drawn to Objectives RF56 and RF60 which also address the retention of hedgerows in new development.

**Objective RF52**

In areas which are subject to either the RU, GB, or HA zoning objective, presume against development which would contribute to or intensify existing ribbon development as defined by *Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005*. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on the grounds of meeting the housing needs of the owner of land which adjoins an existing house of a member of his/her immediate family where it is clearly demonstrated that no other suitable site is available.

**Objective RF53**

Presume against the opening up of a new additional vehicular entrance into the site of any proposed house unless necessary in the interest of safety or because no viable alternative exists.

**Objective RF54**

Require that the provision of safe access to a new house be designed so that it avoids the need to remove long or significant stretches of roadside hedging and trees. Where this is not possible, an alternative site or access should be identified.

**Layout and Design for Housing in the Countryside**

It is an aim of the Draft Plan to limit the visual impact of new houses upon the countryside. Prior to the decision on planning permission, the visual impact of any proposed house upon the rural landscape must be evaluated. The visual impact of a house on the rural landscape is strongly related to siting and design and must reflect the nature of the site and the surrounding landscape.

The hedgerow network throughout Fingal is a valuable natural resource and should be protected. While it is recognised that development sometimes necessitates the loss of trees and hedgerows, this should be minimised and where removed should be compensated and replaced on site. In general, the retention of trees and hedgerows is critical in protecting the positive attributes of landscape character and heritage features and providing for an attractive living environment. Existing trees, hedgerows, townland boundaries and watercourses which are of amenity, historic or biodiversity value shall be protected and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management in future development proposals.

By requiring high standards for siting and design, the impact of any proposed house on the landscape can be minimised. The siting of new dwellings should take into account the nature of the site, existing site contours, and the scale, form and layout of any existing or adjoining dwellings, where appropriate. Design and materials need to reflect the County's rural built



tradition. High quality modern designs which reflect the tradition will be supported but dwellings which are suburban in design or dominant, intrusive, or incongruous in a rural setting, will not be permitted. To promote the objective of high quality house design within the rural area, reference should be made to Chapter 12, Development Management Standards.

Proposals for new dwellings should be designed and laid out in a manner that prevents the increase of new entrances onto any public road, preference is for the sharing of entrances with existing houses or farmyards belonging to the family of the owner of the new home.

#### **Objective RF55**

Ensure that new dwellings in the rural area are sensitively sited, demonstrate consistency with the immediate Landscape Character Type, and make best use of the natural landscape for a sustainable, carbon efficient and sensitive design. A full analysis/feasibility study of the proposed site and of the impact of the proposed house on the surrounding landscape will be required in support of applications for planning permission.

#### **Objective RF56**

Ensure that the design of new dwellings have regard to the Development Management Standards Chapter with specific reference to the following;

- (a) Encourage new dwelling house design that is sensitively sited, demonstrates consistency with the immediate Landscape Character Type, respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing of existing places, materials and built forms;
- (b) Protect existing trees, hedgerows, townland boundaries and watercourses which are of amenity, historic or biodiversity value and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management in future development proposals.
- (c) Promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design and encourage proposals to be energy and carbon efficient in their design and layout;
- (d) Require appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominantly indigenous/local species and groupings.

#### **Objective RF57**

Ensure that any planning application for a house within an area which has a Greenbelt or High Amenity zoning objective is accompanied by a comprehensive Visual Impact Statement.

#### **Objective RF58**

Encourage new dwellings in the rural area to be sited at a location in close proximity to the family home where the drainage conditions can safely accommodate the cumulative impact of such clustering and where such clustering will not have a negative impact on the amenities of the original house. Where this arrangement is clearly demonstrated not to be available, permit the new dwelling to be located on an alternative site which is within two kilometres from the family home, or, in the case of applications made under Objective RF38 within two kilometres outside the Inner Noise Zone and subject to the East/West of the M1 stipulation.

#### **Objective RF59**

Ensure that the design of entrances and front boundary treatment is sensitive to the rural setting. In this regard, block walls and ornamental features will be discouraged and native hedging will be utilised where appropriate.



**Objective RF60**

Ensure the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary/provision of agreed species of similar length will be required within the site.

**Restoration of Vernacular Buildings**

The many vernacular buildings that are dotted throughout the countryside form a key part of Fingal's rural landscape. "Vernacular" is a term used to describe something that is common to a specific place or area. When the term is used in relation to buildings or architecture it refers to the ordinary structures that functioned as the homes, farms, workplaces and community buildings of a locality. They were generally built using locally sourced materials, such as timber, stone, mud, lime and thatch. The buildings tend to be simple in design and form. Most of these structures date from the 18th, 19th and early 20th century. Fingal has a significant number of particularly attractive vernacular structures within the rural area some of which are on the Record of Protected Structures, either in their own right, or as part of the curtilage of a Protected Structure and therefore are subject to the objectives set out in Chapter 10 Cultural Heritage. *(See also Chapter 10 Cultural Heritage, Architectural Heritage, Historic Building Stock/Vernacular Heritage and Chapter 12 Development Management Standards)*

Many of the vernacular buildings within the rural area do not have "Protected Structure" designation, however, they are none the less important to establishing the distinctive character of rural Fingal. 18th and 19th century vernacular houses, typically two-storey, built of simple materials and the many stone outbuildings are strong components of rural Fingal. Recognising this important building stock, Fingal County Council promotes the retention, reuse and refurbishment of vernacular buildings, retaining their form and appeal which contributes so positively to the identity and character of the rural area.



## Vernacular Dwellings

To encourage the viable re-use of historic vernacular dwellings, applications for the sensitive restoration of disused vernacular houses and cottages will not be subject to the Rural Settlement Strategy for housing in the countryside that applies to new dwellings as long as:

- The distinctive character of the vernacular dwelling is retained.
- The original historic fabric is repaired using appropriate traditional construction methods and materials.
- The structure must have been a residence. Where the dwelling has been unoccupied for a long period of time evidence must be supplied to prove that it was previously in residential use.
- Where the building is derelict it must be proved that it is structurally capable of supporting the proposed works.
- Measures are taken to support and protect the building from collapse prior to, and during, the construction works.
- The proposal complies with the drainage standards for new dwellings in rural areas.

Where it is proposed to increase the size of the vernacular dwelling by extending it then the design, scale, footprint and materials used for the extension should be in keeping or sympathetic to the existing dwelling and its setting. The Council will consider the re-use of vernacular outbuildings in extending vernacular dwellings.

## Vernacular Outbuildings

Another element of the vernacular building form is the traditional farm complex and associated buildings which play an important role in the sense of place and local distinctiveness enjoyed by both the rural community and visitors. Due to changes in farming methods, some of these buildings may no longer be suitable for modern farming practices and therefore their traditional economic function within the rural economy has changed. Where this is the case, it may be appropriate to consider their sensitive re-use. These buildings could provide an opportunity for a high quality environment for farm diversification into tourism or other uses, as long as these uses are permitted within the relevant land use zoning. Where the conversion of an outbuilding to residential use is proposed then the terms of the Rural Settlement Strategy for housing in the countryside will pertain unless the outbuilding is a Protected Structure or the conversion is proposed as an extension to a vernacular dwelling as outlined above, and as long as the proposed development conforms with the following;

- The re-use of any historic outbuilding, whether protected or not, must ensure that the original historic fabric is repaired using appropriate traditional construction methods and materials.
- The conversion of protected outbuildings must be sensitively designed, respecting the setting, form, scale and materials of the existing structures.
- Any proposal must comply with the drainage standards for new dwellings in rural areas.
- Where the building is derelict it must be proved that it is structurally capable of supporting the proposed works.
- Measures are taken to support and protect the building from collapse prior to, and during, the construction works.



**Objective RF61**

Retain, appreciate and revitalise appropriately the vernacular buildings of Fingal by deterring the replacement of good quality vernacular buildings with modern structures and by protecting vernacular buildings where they contribute to the character of the rural area.

**Objective RF62**

Encourage the sensitive restoration and/or conversion of vernacular rural buildings and discourage their demolition or replacement.

**Rural Drainage**

The issue of drainage is increasingly critical as the number of houses in the countryside grows. The use of on-site waste water treatment systems has the potential to negatively impact on ground water quality, and the ability to breach statutory obligations to prevent deterioration in the status of any waters under the Water Framework Directive. (Refer to Chapter 12 Development Management Standards for requirements for on-site treatment systems).

**Objective RF63**

Ensure that the requirements set out for on-site treatment systems are strictly complied with, or with the requirements as may be amended by future national legislation, guidance, or Codes of Practice.

**Objective RF64**

Implement the recommendations of the Ground Water Protection Scheme.

**Rural Transport**

The availability of public rural transport plays a major role in combatting rural isolation and acts as a catalyst in creating models of partnership, at all levels, where key sectors actively engage in transport provision, to ensure equality of access for all. The NIFTI Transport Service within Fingal was established under the Rural Transport Programme and provides bus transport for rural residents supporting communities in Oldtown, Garristown, Ballyboghil, the Naul and Rowlestown. This invaluable service provides access to public services, employment, training, health and social facilities. In recognition of the importance of improving access to and from rural locations, the Council supports the extension of the Rural Transport Programme and other such initiatives which respond to local travel needs throughout the County.

**Objective RF65**

Support the Rural Transport Initiative and the provision of an integrated rural community public transport system as a means of reducing social isolation and as a viable long-term sustainable public transport option.

**Objective RF66**

Support and encourage public transport providers to enhance the provision of public transportation services to Rural Villages within Fingal and to support and facilitate rural community transport initiatives where possible, aimed at providing new services to villages and enhancing and expanding existing services.



### 5.3 Rural Economy and Enterprise

There are currently a variety of small, medium and larger-scale commercial enterprises operating in rural areas throughout the County. These provide important sources of employment and contribute to the diversification of the rural economy.

The Council acknowledges that the development of rural enterprise and employment opportunities will be vital to sustaining the rural economy. In accordance with the economic strategy for the overall County, appropriate scaled enterprises should be directed to small towns, villages and rural business zones. Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism, renewable energy production and rural resource based enterprise should be facilitated. The Council recognises a balance between rural development, including diversification and protection of the rural environment, requires careful management. The Council supports existing rural employment and commercial enterprises and will promote and encourage appropriately scaled enterprises.

Fingal is well placed to sustain its population and its services, to promote its communities and its tourism product, to protect its built and natural environment and to diversify in terms of local enterprise, tourism and employment. Fingal Leader Partnership and the Fingal Local Enterprise Office supports existing and new start-up enterprises within Fingal. The Fingal LECP seeks to strategically target Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) to revitalise rural towns and villages and to prepare a REDZ Programme. This is also an objective of this Plan.

#### Objective RF67

Protect and promote the sustainability of rural living by facilitating rural-related enterprise for rural dwellers.

#### Objective RF68

Reduce the need for commuting to employment in adjacent urban areas.

#### Objective RF69

Maintain commerce and vitality within the rural area and particularly within the villages.

#### Objective RF70

Prepare and implement a Rural Economic Development Zone Programme.

### Fingal's Rural Sectors

The following section of the Chapter looks at the individual rural sectors within rural Fingal and specific objectives for these sectors. Rural resources (physical, human and cultural) can provide specific advantages for the development of rural economies across sectors such as the agriculture, horticulture, food, rural tourism, renewable energy and the creative sectors. When looking at rural resources the potential for economic growth in rural areas depends significantly on the interaction between activity inside the farm gate and the products and processes that add value to agricultural products. Such interactions are an integral part of the broader rural economy. From agriculture to tourism and in line with its overall approach to integrated rural economic development, there is a need for a more integrated approach to the management of rural resource potential as identified in the CEDRA Report.



A number of specific sectors of the rural economy emerged as having particular potential to contribute to the economic development of rural Fingal include:

- Agriculture
- Horticulture
- Agri-Food
- Agribusiness
- Equine
- Forestry
- Land Reclamation and Aggregate Extraction
- Farm Diversification
- Renewable Energy Projects
- Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
- Home-Based Economic Activity
- Rural Tourism

## Agriculture

Agricultural activity in Fingal includes tillage of cereals and other crops, pasture and dairying and is an important part of the economic life of rural Fingal helping to sustain, enhance and maintain the rural economy. Agriculture will continue to be an important component of Fingal's rural economy. The agricultural sector must adapt to the challenges posed by modernisation, restructuring, market development and the increasing importance of environmental issues.

It is recognised that there is a need for diversification from traditional agricultural practices. The Council will encourage farming practices and production methods that have regard to conservation, landscape protection, the protection of wildlife habitats, endangered species, flora and fauna and water quality. Sustainable agricultural practices will be encouraged to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside or on the architectural heritage of the County and that watercourses and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution. The Council will continue to support and facilitate agriculture and new agricultural initiatives.

### Objective RF71

Support the maximum number of sustainable, working farms within the County, and ensure that any new development does not irreversibly harm the commercial viability of existing agricultural land.

### Objective RF72

Require a Visual Impact Statement where an application is lodged for agricultural buildings in areas which have a HA zoning objective.

### Objective RF73

Encourage the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside and that watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution.



## Horticulture

The horticultural sector within Fingal plays a vital role in both the local and national economy. The Council recognises the importance of this sector and the need to protect productive horticultural land from inappropriate industrial, commercial or residential development. The development of a well-managed, sustainable horticulture sector which can capitalise on the proximity to the available markets in the Greater Dublin Area and beyond will be supported and facilitated.

### Objective RF74

Support and facilitate horticultural development in Fingal encouraging the establishment/expansion of new enterprises where appropriate.

### Objective RF75

Support and facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable horticultural practices.

## Agri-Food

The agri-food sector continues to be one of the most important and dynamic indigenous manufacturing elements in the Irish economy. Fingal has a well-established agri-food sector with a number of successful agri-food companies. This sector is well placed to play a significant role in the economy into the foreseeable future. The Council will support and facilitate existing and new agri-food businesses within Fingal and will engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities to develop the agri-food sector in Fingal.

The growing trend of farmers markets for the sale of locally produced goods will be encouraged at appropriate locations. Such country markets can increase the commercial and social vitality of the area in which they are held.

### Objective RF76

Support and facilitate the growth of the agri-food sector in Fingal.

### Objective RF77

Engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities to develop the agri-food sector in Fingal and to ensure that the economic potential of the sector is secured for the benefit of the local economy, and national economy.

### Objective RF78

Support the licensed operation of local country markets at suitable locations within towns and Rural Villages.

## Agribusiness

“Agribusiness”, for the purposes of this Plan, refers to a business which is directly related to the agricultural or horticultural sectors, involving the processing of produce of which a significant portion is sourced locally. The creation of value-added products is an important aspect of agribusiness which can complement locally sourced produce and increase competitiveness and innovation. The designation can also cover support services for agriculture and horticulture.



The Council will support and facilitate existing and new agribusinesses within Fingal and will engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities to develop agribusiness in Fingal.

**Objective RF79**

Support and facilitate the growth of agribusiness in Fingal and encourage agribusiness and support services which are directly related to the local horticultural or agricultural sectors in RB zoned areas.

**Objective RF80**

Require that any proposal to locate an agribusiness within the rural area is supported by a comprehensive traffic impact study of the vehicular, including HGV, traffic generated by such an enterprise.

**Objective RF81**

Direct and encourage agribusiness which relies primarily on imported food and produce into areas which have adequate road infrastructure and which are appropriately zoned.

## Equine

Fingal's equine sector plays an important role in the rural economy offering high quality equestrian centres, riding schools and livery services. Fingal is an ideal destination for equestrian holidays catering for trekking and schooling. In recognising the importance of this sector both in land use and in terms of direct and indirect employment generation, the Council will continue to support and encourage the continued development and expansion of a vibrant equine industry.

**Objective RF82**

Support and encourage the development and expansion of the equine industry in the county, including supporting equine related activities of an appropriate size and at suitable locations.

## Forestry

Forests and woodlands are a natural resource which can provide commercial, recreational, environmental, amenity and aesthetic benefits to the county. Forestry can provide a supplementary form of farm activity through planting maintenance and harvesting and can also provide a sustainable construction material and a source of renewable energy.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine published a new forest policy in 2014. 'Forests, Products and People - Ireland's Forest Policy – A Renewed Vision' sets out Government policy in relation to this important sector of the rural economy.

**Objective RF83**

To facilitate the sustainable development of forestry provided that it is in harmony with the surrounding landscape, that no significant adverse impacts are caused to natural waters, wildlife habitats, or conservation areas and that it does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the local landscape and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.



## Land Reclamation and Aggregate Extraction

The Council recognises the importance of extractive industries to the local and national economy as valuable sources of raw material for industry in general and the construction industry in particular and as an important source of employment. Currently, Fingal has a limited number of operating quarries and all of the extractive quarries in north Fingal have been exhausted to date.

It is acknowledged that the industry can have serious detrimental impacts on the landscape and amenities generally, including traffic generation, vibration, dust, noise, water pollution and visual intrusion. Aggregate extraction from the coastal zone results in increased levels of erosion in coastal areas. This type of development has the potential to interfere with natural coastal processes such as those occurring in ecologically rich dune systems. In a similar manner, land reclamation in the coastal zone, particularly around the estuaries, has the potential to disrupt natural coastal processes and to degrade or destroy valuable coastal habitats.

It is recognised that in certain instances quarries can also be beneficial to the environment, particularly at the decommissioning phase when opportunities for habitat creation and alternative uses can arise. (See Chapter 12 Development Management Standards in relation to Quarry development)

In light of the seriously detrimental impacts of extractive industries, permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that,

- It is necessary in the light of the availability of recycled construction and demolition waste, or other more sustainable sources of material;
- Environmental quality and amenity will be fully protected, and;
- Appropriate provision for the restoration of the landscape is being made.

### Objective RF84

Consider proposals for extraction only where the Council is satisfied that environmental quality and amenity will be fully protected and appropriate provision for the restoration of the landscape has been made.

### Objective RF85

Encourage the recycling of construction and demolition waste to reduce the need for extraction.

### Objective RF86

Prohibit mineral extraction and land reclamation along the coast, particularly in proximity to estuaries, except in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impact on the environment, visual amenity, heritage or the conservation objectives of European Sites.

### Objective RF87

Ensure that any future proposals for extraction of aggregates and land reclamation proposals include an assessment of the impact(s) on the natural and cultural heritage, and on the coastal processes of erosion, deposition accretion and flooding. Any such proposals may need to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement and/or Screening for Appropriate Assessment.



**Objective RF88**

Carry out processing and storage of extracted aggregates in a manner which minimizes the impact on the natural environment and residential amenities.

**Objective RF89**

Prohibit the removal of beach material, aggregates, sand and gravel, including the removal of material from sand dune ecosystems.

**Objective RF90**

Preserve and protect coastal wetlands, coastal habitats, and estuarine marsh lands in coastal areas from inappropriate development, including land reclamation. Any proposals for land reclamation in coastal areas shall be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment and to an assessment of impacts on any such wetlands, coastal habitats, and estuarine marsh lands and its impacts on coastal processes including erosion, deposition, accretion and flooding particularly in light of climate change.

**Objective RF91**

Require that applications for planning permission for any proposed land reclamation are supported by a Visual Impact Statement which comprehensively describes the visual impact of the proposed development.

**Farm Diversification**

There is an increasing economic need for farmers to consider ways to develop their land holding outside traditional farming. This proposed development provides additional or alternative income which is especially important given sustained downward pressure on income sourced from purely agricultural outputs. Diversification will be facilitated, provided the proposal is consistent with, and enhances, the rural nature of the surrounding area, and does not compromise the future potential for food production on the proposed site, or within the surrounding vicinity.

A number of alternative schemes have been identified by Teagasc that are considered suitable for farmers to enter into for the purposes of diversification including production of dairy products (such as cheese and yogurt), forestry, equine enterprises, adventure tourism, conversion of redundant farm and renewable technologies.

**Objective RF92**

Support proposals for farm diversification where the proposal is related directly either to the agricultural operation engaged upon on the farm or the rural nature of the area.

**Objective RF93**

Ensure that any proposal for diversification takes account of and is compatible with the existing road infrastructure in the area.

**Objective RF94**

Promote farm diversification where it does not unacceptably impact on the landscape, environment and character of the area.

**Objective RF95**

Promote farm diversification where the proposal does not necessitate the permanent removal of quality agricultural land from production.



**Objective RF96**

Promote the sensitive re-use and adaptation of existing farm buildings for farm diversification. Where a new building is necessary, it shall be sited, where practical, in or adjacent to the existing group of farm buildings and shall relate to existing buildings and the surrounding countryside in terms of design, siting, and materials.

**Objective RF97**

Support and facilitate the work of Teagasc and other farming / local bodies within the county in the promotion of the rural economy, including agriculture development, rural diversification and in the development of new initiatives to support farming.

**Renewable Energy Projects**

Developing renewable energy is an integral part of Ireland's sustainable energy objectives and climate change strategy. Renewable energy contributes to meeting all three energy policy goals such as energy security, cost competitiveness and protection of the environment through the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Rural areas have the potential to be harnessed for renewable energy projects – including wind, hydro and solar energy. In addition, waste to energy projects, such as bio-mass, anaerobic digestion and dry digestion. The Council recognises that wind energy can make a significant contribution to reaching Ireland's renewable energy targets to 2020 and beyond.

The Council will support renewable energy projects in rural areas. However, the Council recognises that such projects have to be carefully balanced against the need to protect landscape sensitivities, residential amenities, views or prospects, public rights of way, wildlife habitats, special areas of conservation, protected structures and bird migration paths. All new wind energy developments in the County are required to comply with the guidelines contained within draft Fingal County Council Wind Energy Strategy or any subsequent strategy or associated guidelines applicable within the lifetime of the Plan.

**Objective RF98**

Facilitate and encourage the development of the alternative energy sector, in line with a Local Renewable Energy Strategy, and work with the relevant agencies to support the development of alternative forms of energy where such developments do not negatively impact upon the environmental quality, and visual, residential or rural amenity of the area.

**Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

The Council acknowledges that the development of rural enterprise and employment opportunities will be vital to sustaining the rural economy. In accordance with the economic strategy for the overall county, employment, servicing the rural areas, should, in general, be



directed to the local employment centres of small towns and villages (See Rural Village Local Area Plans) and rural business zones, catering for local investment and small scale industry. Within the rural countryside, horticulture, agriculture, equine, recreational, tourism, energy production and rural resources based enterprise is promoted.

The Fingal Leader Partnership supports individuals and groups to develop skills, resources, and opportunities that help strengthen the rural economy. The Council supports innovation in indigenous industry (both high tech and traditional) and encourages business start-ups in the local employment centres of Fingal. It is acknowledged that certain kinds of rural enterprises, especially those that involve natural resources and serve rural communities, at an appropriate scale, has a major role to play in rural development into the future.

**Objective RF99**  
Encourage and support local enterprise within Fingal's small towns, villages and rural business zones by facilitating the provision of space for small scale employment including office development through the Local Area Plan process.

**Objective RF100**  
Encourage the re-use of vacant and under-utilised buildings within Rural Villages as accommodation for small and medium sized enterprises.

### Home-Based Economic Activity

Opportunities which exist for home-based economic activity in rural areas (such as a home-based childcare facility, business, or craft workshop) will be positively considered provided the proposed business protects and promotes the physical environment, does not impact, in an excessively negative way, the existing character or nature of any area, and does not encourage significant increases in traffic.

**Objective RF101**  
Permit home-based economic activities in existing dwellings, where by virtue of their nature and scale, the activities can be accommodated such that the proposed activity does not impact in an excessively negative way on:

1. The operation of agriculture or horticulture farms in the vicinity,
2. The rural ecology and landscape of the area,
3. Any adjacent residential use,
4. The primary use of the dwelling as a residence.

### Broadband

Access to and cost of high quality broadband emerged from the CEDRA report as one of the most significant challenges faced by rural communities particularly from a business perspective. While many rural businesses and households have access to a basic broadband service they are unable to access the kind of cost effective, high capacity internet services that are required in a modern business environment. In a significant number of areas the quality and types of services that are currently available are not sufficient to support efficient and effective business practice. While improved broadband speeds are a national issue, it is particularly important to ensure next generation broadband for rural businesses and e- working. The Council will support the expansion and rollout of high speed broadband services as an essential component of rural living and business.



**Objective RF102**

Support and facilitate the expansion and rollout of high speed broadband services within rural areas.

**Rural Tourism**

Rural Fingal offers a range of attractions and natural features, including the coastal scenery and harbour towns, as well as the experiences of outdoor activities, food and drink. A comprehensive range of activities for the visitor is currently promoted in rural Fingal. These include golf, equestrian, adventure centre and walking and cycling.

The Fingal Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2018 was adopted in May 2015 and seeks to provide an attractive, vibrant and sustainable tourism destination delivering a distinctive experience for local residents, domestic and international visitors.

The Council will seek to promote the economic and social opportunity which tourism within the rural area represents to both Fingal and the wider area. The Council will look favourably on sustainable tourism developments and especially on supporting tourism infrastructure, which is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

**Objective RF103**

Support sustainable tourism initiatives which develop the tourist potential of the rural area while recognising and enhancing the quality and values of the rural area.

**Recreational Pursuits Requiring Natural and Built Landscape Features**

In the context of tourism, the natural environment, landscape, built heritage and attractive villages play a key role. Significant natural attractions include the uplands areas to the north of the County and the coast. The rich architectural and archaeological heritage of the county is also acknowledged with many renowned heritage properties including Ardgillan Castle, Skerries Mills and Bremore Castle.

**Objective RF104**

Support recreational pursuits which promote the use of natural landscape features in a way which does not detract or cause undue damage to the features upon which any such proposed initiatives rely. Where the proposed pursuit involves land use changes either within or adjacent to European sites, proposals will be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

**Walking Trails**

Walking trails provide opportunities to develop new and innovative rural tourism initiatives that can contribute to the economic sustainability of rural communities. Research highlights the significant economic contribution of trails in Ireland today. It is envisaged that, with further development, sustainable management and promotion of a recreational trail network, the economic benefit to rural communities throughout Ireland will be very significant. By attracting people into rural areas, recreational trails can:

- Generate significant economic activity;
- Create employment;



- Increase real-estate values; and
- Produce additional rural income through activities like festivals and events.

Businesses such as bed and breakfast establishments, hostels, pubs, restaurants, tour-guiding companies, self-catering establishments, retail outlets, farm based activities, have been developed around trails and this leads to an increase in employment in the local area.

The County has considerable potential for the development of walking trails. Fingal's largely unspoilt, clean countryside, and rich heritage make it an ideal walking destination. It can offer most types of walks including hill/countryside walks, riverside walks and village walks. Many community groups have spent much time and energy in developing the walking product and services for both their own community and visitors. It is against this background that walking trails within rural Fingal will be supported and developed. The Council will promote and facilitate a co-ordinated network of walking trails in the County through the development of a Recreational Trails Plan within the lifetime of this Draft Plan. (See Chapter 6 Economic Development – Section 6.9 Recreational Trails Network)

**Objective RF105**

Promote informal recreation, particularly walking through the development and expansion of a network of safe walking trails within towns and villages and their environs. Such routes can link with existing way marked trails, Slí na Slainte walks and parts of the Green Infrastructure Network and other local resources, such as existing or new rights of way.

**Objective RF106**

Support the provision of proposed long distance walking trails that provide access to scenic uplands, riverine and coastal features, subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

**Public Rights Of Way**

Section 10(2)(o) of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) requires that a development plan has objectives in relation to public rights of way, that public rights of way be identified on at least one map forming part of the development plan and that a list of public rights of be appended to the development plan.

**Objective RF107**

Map and document existing rights of way within two years of the adoption of this Development Plan. This work will be completed in consultation with landowners and the public for inclusion in the Development Plan by way of a Variation.

**Objective RF108**

Seek to negotiate the implementation of rights of way as part of new developments where appropriate.

**Objective RF109**

Support existing rights of way, and facilitate their further expansion throughout the County, resisting development which would prejudice public access to rights of way unless specific arrangements are made for suitable alternative linkages, in a manner which is consistent with the sustainable development and land use zoning objectives of the area.



**Objective RF110**

Seek to negotiate access to lands using permissive access agreements, where appropriate and feasible, in order to provide public access to lands for public amenity purposes.

**Objective RF111**

Improve signposting on all existing public rights of way.

**Golf**

The location of golf courses within the rural area has been particularly popular over recent years and has contributed to the economic and social development of rural Fingal. The impacts of any proposed golf course development upon the landscape and the ecosystems and biodiversity of the rural area, and the cumulative impact of additional proposed golf courses upon the rural landscape must be considered in any new proposals for golf courses.

**Objective RF112**

Facilitate the creation of golf courses, pitch and putt courses, and driving ranges in the Greenbelt where such development does not contravene the vision and zoning objective for the Greenbelt or impact on any historic designed landscapes, and subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

**Objective RF113**

Require that all applications for planning permission for golf courses are accompanied by Impact Statements, including proposed mitigation measures, which assess

- The visual impact,
- The cumulative effect of the proposed additional golf course upon the landscape,
- The impact of the proposed golf course on the existing biodiversity, archaeological and architectural heritage,
- The impact on drainage, water usage, and waste water treatment in the area, and proposed mitigation of these impacts,
- Any landscaping plans should not prescribe planting/screening with inappropriate non-native or alien species e.g. *Hippophae rhamnoides* (Sea Buckthorn) as a boundary treatment particularly in proximity of sensitive coastal habitats, and
- Subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

**Tourism and Fingal's Rural Villages**

The Council recognises the potential to make tourism a key economic function of the rural villages. These picturesque villages are a resource that is currently underdeveloped. The Council promotes appropriate sustainable tourism activities within the villages and encourages the development of cultural/recreational facilities and services to attract visitors and tourists where appropriate. These would include for example the development of cafés, restaurant(s), tourist accommodation such as a guest house/hostel, artists' studios and galleries, walking/bicycle hire supplies for visitors and tourists.

**Objective RF114**

Develop and maximise the tourism potential of the rural villages by facilitating the provision of visitor services and accommodation, the promotion of new environmentally sustainable tourism products and co-operate with the relevant bodies in the marketing and promotion of tourism in the area.



### Seamus Ennis Arts Centre

The Séamus Ennis Arts Centre (formerly The Séamus Ennis Cultural Centre) is located in the Naul, in the north of the County. This centre is in the ownership of Fingal County Council and it is of significant importance for the local economy. The aims of the centre are to promote and develop the Traditional Arts and The Arts in general on a local and regional basis, and to this end, the centre host performances, sessions, workshops and classes weekly. This Draft Plan and the existing Naul Local Area Plan aim to build on the success of this Centre.

#### Objective RF115

Promote the extension and development of the Seamus Ennis Arts Centre, to incorporate a purpose built theatre /performance venue and ancillary facilities.

### Provision of Visitor Accommodation within Rural Fingal

Adequate provision of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of tourists is a vital component of any successful tourism offering. The Council will support the provision of such accommodation, in the form of hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and campsites. Hotels and guesthouses should generally be located in towns or villages, although the conversion of large houses within the countryside to tourist accommodation will also be considered. The provision of bed and breakfast accommodation, subject to the requirements of the Rural Settlement Strategy, and campsite accommodation will be considered within the open countryside. The Council will pay particular attention to the visual impact of any proposed campsite development on the rural landscape.

#### Objective RF116

Support proposed extensions to existing dwellings, within areas which have zoning objectives, RU, GB, HA, RV, or RC, which provide for bed and breakfast or guest house accommodation where the size, design, surface water management and foul drainage arrangements for the proposed development does not erode the rural quality and character of the surrounding area.

### Campsites

The Council recognises the need for the provision of camp sites to cater for touring holiday caravans, campervan and tents which are appropriately located and sensitively designed. These campsites are for touring caravans, campervans and camping. Static mobile homes will not be accommodated on these camp sites. Ancillary supporting facilities shall be carefully sited and designed. Existing trees and hedgerows shall be retained and new planting shall be of native species within campsites. Fingal has the potential to attract the recent niche tourism market of glamping (glamorous camping) which is gaining popularity throughout Ireland.

#### Objective RF117

Promote the development of appropriately located and sensitively designed campsites as an alternative form of accommodation for visitors to the County.

#### Objective RF118

Any campsite adjacent to settlements shall, in terms of scale, layout and design, have regard to the existing character of the village and residential amenity. A detailed hard and soft landscaping plan shall be submitted for camp site applications.



