

Chapter 7

Retail



7 RETAIL

The following chapter is based on work carried out on the Draft County Retail Strategy (work in progress) it is anticipated that the County Retail Strategy will be completed in tandem with the development plan. Accordingly any changes to the County Retail Strategy will affect the content of this chapter and vice versa.

7.1 Background

The framework for retail planning has greatly changed since the publication of the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) in December 2000. These required local authorities to prepare retail policies for their administrative areas and they set out the matters which are to be included in future development plans.

The Retail Planning Guidelines (RPGs)¹ required that a comprehensive retail strategy be prepared for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), comprising the Dublin (Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin) and Mid East (Kildare, Meath and Wicklow) Regions. Kildare County Council worked in co-operation with the other local authorities in the preparation of the Retail Planning Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (the GDA Strategy), which was published in November 2001. Following the publication of the GDA Strategy, in accordance with the RPG's, the County Council prepared a detailed County Retail Strategy for Kildare (currently in draft form). The Draft County Retail Strategy provides the basis for the retail objectives and policies in this Plan.

The need for a more coherent framework for retail planning is founded on the sustained rate of growth of the Irish economy, which has brought considerable pressures for additional retail floorspace for convenience, comparison and bulky goods. Such pressure in Kildare, is largely fuelled by the significant increase in population in the period between the 1996 and 2002 Censuses of Population, the proximity of the County to Dublin and the increasing affluence of its residents. Over this period, the population increase was 21.5%, one of the highest in the country.

The quality and quantum of retail floorspace in the County has been slow to respond to the affluence and needs of this expanding population. At the time of the preparation of the GDA Strategy, there were no major retail applications with full planning consent. The GDA Strategy indicated that the County had low outflows (8%) and inflows (9%) of convenience expenditure, which is generally a feature of convenience shopping across the GDA. It however had the second highest outflow of comparison expenditure (47%) and the second lowest level (6%) of imported comparison expenditure in the GDA. Comparison of Kildare with the other Hinterland counties of the GDA - Meath and Wicklow - illustrated that, while the County had a significantly larger population than both, it had a lesser quantum of retail floorspace. There were clearly issues in the County's retail offer, profile and competitiveness that are required to be addressed.

¹ For the purpose of this chapter the abbreviation 'RPGs' refers to the Retail Planning Guidelines 2000 Where reference is made to the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines this shall be stated in full.

Although, the County's convenience sector appeared to be performing relatively well, closer inspection indicated that there were few modern format stores in the County and main food shopping requirements were met largely in the County's main centres of Naas and Newbridge or, in the north east and south of the County, in adjacent counties. The high level of comparison expenditure leakage reflected the limited presence of higher and middle order national and international multiples, the lack of quality retail warehousing floorspace and the easy accessibility to the larger modern shopping centres within the GDA Metropolitan Area and Dublin City Centre. The low level of comparison expenditure inflow from visitors further confirmed Kildare did not have a comparison offer that was sufficiently attractive to establish the County as a leading shopping destination.

The GDA Strategy baseline floorspace survey of the County established that the total net retail floorspace of the County was just over 71,000m². Of this, some 37.6% was convenience, 41.7% comparison and 15.5% bulky goods floorspace. Vacant floorspace accounted for only 5.1% of total floorspace and indicated a generally healthy retail sector, accepting that it does differ across the different centres of the County. Some 31% of all retail floorspace was located in Newbridge; 15.1% in Naas; 11% in Athy; 8.5% in Maynooth; 6.7% in Leixlip; 6.2% in Celbridge; and, 4.5% in Kildare Town. In summary, approximately 83% of the County's floorspace was located in its seven main centres.

Since the publication of the GDA Strategy, the County's attraction and potential as a retail location for convenience, comparison and retail warehousing floorspace has been well endorsed by the substantial rise in planning applications, the considerable market interest in new major developments and the granting of full planning permission for both major and smaller scale retail floorspace. The market interest and delivery of new floorspace is predominantly focussed, to differing degrees, on the seven main centres. Permitted retail developments that are in the pipeline and the emerging potential new floorspace will help address the deficiencies in the County's retail offer through the delivery of modern quality floorspace by main convenience and discount operators, national and international high street comparison retailers and the bulky goods sector.

Smaller schemes and individual stores, which largely meet local need, have also been granted permission in the different centres of the County. The focus of developer and operator interest has been predominantly in Naas and Newbridge, reflecting the importance and potential of the two key towns in the County's retail and settlement hierarchies. This is positive in terms of enhancing the retail competitiveness and attraction of the County for shoppers, residents and visitors alike.

However, Kildare can be geographically divided into the northeast, central, southern and rural western zones. With the exception of the central zone (Naas/Newbridge), there are no definitive proposals for the delivery of the quantum and quality of retail floorspace for each of these areas to fulfil their roles within a coherent framework that best contributes to the competitiveness of the County as a whole or to more sustainably meet the needs of the County's urban and rural

communities. Specifically, there is a requirement for the designation and delivery of a Major Town Centre within North East Kildare, a substantial enhancement of the retail offer of the two Sub-County Town Centres of Athy and Kildare and an improvement in the convenience offer of smaller centres around the County. The assessment of the requirement for additional retail floorspace in the Draft County Retail Strategy indicated that there was substantial expenditure capacity for both new convenience and comparison floorspace, including retail warehousing, within Kildare over the period of the County Development Plan 2005-2011, even after new planning permissions had been taken into account.

These were the key facts and issues that prevailed over the period that the Draft County Retail Strategy was being prepared and have been responded to in the Strategy. Consistent with the requirements of the RPG and the strategic guidance of the GDA Strategy, an important role of the Draft County Retail Strategy was therefore to provide the detailed planning guidance on the location and scale of new retail development to achieve a distribution which is efficient, equitable and sustainable, which would subsequently inform the retail planning goals, objectives, policy programmes and proposals of the County Development Plan.

7.2 Goal

To sustain and improve the retail profile and competitiveness of County Kildare within the retail economy of the Greater Dublin Area and beyond, through harnessing the assets and potential of centres at all levels of the County Retail Hierarchy

7.3 Objectives

1. To address leakage of retail expenditure from the County by providing the means to strengthen the range and quality of its retail offer through securing the development of the appropriate quantum and quality of additional convenience, comparison and bulky goods retail floorspace in centres across the County.
2. To ensure an efficient, equitable and sustainable spatial distribution of main centres across the County.
3. To confirm a hierarchy which assists in defining the County's settlement structure and objectives and provides clear guidance on where major new retail floorspace would be acceptable.
4. To ensure that the retail needs of the County's residents are met as fully as possible within Kildare, taking due cognisance of the Retail Hierarchy set out in the GDA.
5. To encourage and facilitate the preservation and enhancement of the retail role of both individual villages and village/settlement clusters around the County.
6. To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail uses, with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach.
7. To promote and sustain the importance of retailing in the County's tourism economy.
8. To encourage and facilitate innovation and diversification in the County's retail offer and profile.
9. To provide the criteria for the assessment of retail development proposals [outlined in Schedule 4.1].

Schedule 7.1 Criteria for retail Development Proposals

In accordance with the RPG requirements, all applications for significant retail development should be assessed against a range of criteria. What is significant will vary around the County. Consistent with the GDA strategy and the Draft County Retail Strategy as a general rule, developments in excess of 1,000m² (gross) of convenience development and 2,000m² (gross) of comparison development, will be required to undergo such assessment.

The criteria to be considered in the assessment of significant applications will include:

- i. Testing the proposal against the sequential approach and that other options have been considered.
- ii. The impact on town and village centres, including cumulative impact;
- iii. The baseline information and capacity/impact assessment is fit for its purpose and is transparent;
- iv. There is demonstrable need for the development;
- v. The relationship of the application to any development plan allocation;
- vi. Its contribution to town/village/centre improvement;
- vii. Its contribution to site and/or area regeneration;
- viii. The quality of access by all modes of transport and by foot and bicycle;
- ix. Its role in improving the competitiveness of the County and sub-areas of the county;
- x. Its role in sustaining rural communities;
- xi. The extent to which it is relevant to consider the imposition of restrictions on the range of goods permitted for sale; and
- xii. Any other development plan allocations.

If the retail proposal, whether significant or not, accords with Development Plan policies and proposals in all material respects it should expect to meet with approval. In compliance with the RPG, in such instances, it should be necessary for the applicant to provide additional supporting background studies. However, the onus is on an applicant to demonstrate convincingly that the proposal does comply closely with the development plan. Where there is doubt on any aspect of a planning application, the Council will require a detailed justification related to the matter that is questionable.

7.4 Policy Statements

The policy statement has been subdivided into three categories:

- (A) Strategic Policy Framework
- (B) Retail Policies for Towns and Settlements in Kildare
- (C) General Retail Policies

7.4.1 (A) Strategic Policy Framework

The strategic policy framework that underpins the specific retail policies and proposals of the Development Plan addresses the specific requirements and guidance of the RPG and the objectives set out above. It comprises:

- County Retail Hierarchy
- Sequential Approach
- Core Retail Areas

County Retail Hierarchy

SP 1 It is the policy of the Council to guide major retail development in accordance with the framework provided by the County Retail Hierarchy (table 4.1) to enable an efficient, equitable and sustainable spatial distribution of floorspace throughout the County.

Table 7.1 County Retail Hierarchy

County Retail Hierarchy		
	Metropolitan Area	Hinterland Area
Level 2	Major Town Centres	Twin County Town Centres
	Celbridge, Leixlip or Maynooth	Naas and Newbridge
Level 3	Town Centres	Sub County Town Centres/Town Centres
	Celbridge, Leixlip or Maynooth (subject to Major Town Centre designation) and Kilcock.	Tier 1 Level 3 Sub County Town Centres: Athy and Kildare Tier 2 Level 3 Town Centres Clane, Kilcullen and Monasterevin
Level 4	Village Centres	Local Centres - Small Towns and Village Centres
	Straffan	Tier 1 Small Town Centres: Castledermot, Prosperous, Rathangan and Sallins Tier 2 Village Centres: Ballymore Eustace, Johnstown and Kill
Level 5	Corner Shops	Smaller Village Centres/Crossroads/Rural Settlements
<i>Note: definitions are set out in Kildare County Draft Retail Strategy Main Document</i>		

Sequential Approach

The Sequential Approach is incorporated in the strategic policy framework for guiding new retail development in the County Development Plan. It recognises the importance of sustaining the retail importance, vitality and viability of town centres. Proposals for major retail schemes in the County are required to take due cognisance of this as follows:

- In the first instance, the priority should be in locating new retail development within town centres.
- If town centre locations are not readily available within a reasonable and realistic timescale then edge of centre sites should be looked to. In the RPG, these are defined as sites that are within 300 - 400 metres of the Core Retail Area.
- Only after the options for town centre and edge of centre are exhausted should out of centre locations and sites be considered.

SP 2 It is the policy of the Council to guide retail development where practical and viable in accordance with the framework provided by the Sequential Approach to enable the vitality and viability of existing town, village and district centres to be sustained and strengthened

Core Retail Area

SP 3 It is the policy of the Council to define the Core Retail Area of the County's main centres to provide guidance on the application of the Sequential Approach

7.4.2 (B) Retail Policies for Towns & Settlements in Kildare

Hinterland Area: Twin County Town Centre - Naas

Naas is one of the fastest growing towns within the GDA and country. It has a higher population than Newbridge, but has considerably less retail offer both in respect of the quantum and quality of retail floorspace, even when the recent full planning permissions are taken into account. The strategic objective for Naas, over the timescale of the County Development Plan and the Draft County Retail Strategy, is to enable its growth into a key retail destination comparable with Newbridge and become a centre that can effectively compete with main centres within the GDA. This will require both the County Council and Naas Town Council to closely work together to help realise the town's potential and real role in the GDA retail hierarchy.

RP 1 It is the policy of the Council to promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of retail floorspace and town centre functions in the Hinterland Area Twin County Town Centre of Naas to further develop its competitiveness and importance as a key centre in the GDA

Hinterland Area: Twin County Town Centre - Newbridge

Newbridge has evolved as the largest retail centre within the County and this is set to be reinforced through the mixed-use development of the former Irish Ropes site within the heart of the town centre. This development, combined with existing retail floorspace, will result in Newbridge emerging as one of the larger retail centres in the GDA. It has considerable scope for further expansion through the regeneration of land and buildings within the town centre.

Improvements to the environment and ambience of the town centre will achieve wider appeal from shoppers beyond its immediate catchment area.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP 2 To promote and encourage the continuing enhancement and expansion of the Hinterland Area Twin County Town Centre of Newbridge to sustain and improve its role and importance within the County and the GDA.
- RP 3 To support and implement appropriate development of lands for future expansion of Newbridge Town Centre, which is identified for an Action Area Plan, in the current Local Area Plan. As part of the review of the existing Local Area Plan the Council will prepare a land use and design framework, which will enable the town centre to evolve into a more integrated and attractive focus for the town.
- RP 4 To enhance the profile and attraction of Newbridge through strategic environmental enhancement, the creation of spaces and places of interest and the introduction of public art.
- RP 5 To identify locations for neighbourhood and district centres within existing and expanding residential areas when reviewing the local area plan and/or preparing action area plans.

Metropolitan Area: Major Town Centre

The GDA Strategy identified the need for the designation of a Major Town Centre within the Metropolitan Area of North East Kildare in order that the retail needs of this area of the County were more equitably, efficiently and sustainably met. The choice of which of the four main towns - Celbridge, Kilcock, Leixlip or Maynooth - should be designated as the Major Town Centre was a matter left to the County Council to determine in its County Retail Strategy and Development Plan. It was envisaged that one of the centres would be given this designation with the remaining centres being classified as lower order Town Centres within the County Retail Hierarchy.

During the preparation of the Draft County Retail Strategy, there was an examination of the roles and potential of the four centres and the scope for all or any of them being able to accommodate critical mass and quality of offer of a Major Town Centre comparable to existing Metropolitan Major Town Centres. This examination was informed by the Draft Integrated Framework Plan for North East Kildare which was also in preparation and thus it addressed not only retail matters but included consideration of strategic settlement planning economic development frameworks, access and transportation and sustainable development.

It is acknowledged that all three towns have constrained town centres, largely stemming from their historical development and many fine buildings of architectural importance and attraction.

The location of the Major Town Centre that will serve the future retail needs of the NE over the timescale of the County Development Plan and beyond must be determined. The selection of a Major Town Centre location has been informed by the Integrated Framework

Plan land Use and Transportation and should be easily accessible by road and public transport, both bus and rail.

Based on this assessment and having regard to the Draft County Retail Strategy the County Council have decided that the most appropriate location for the major town centre to serve northeast Kildare is Collinstown in west Leixlip.

None of the town centres have sufficient land available in the town centre to provide for the scale of retail development, which is required to meet Major Town Centre status, without seriously threatening their special qualities and attractions and compromising conservation objectives importance. Furthermore, none of the town centres have adequate road infrastructure, existing or proposed, to accommodate the level of traffic that would be generated by a Major Town Centre development.

The Collinstown proposal will help further promote the attractiveness of North Kildare for further economic development by providing a range of high-quality lifestyle facilities to serve the cosmopolitan needs of the workforces of existing major employees in the area. A substantial area of land will remain at Collinstown to accommodate further inward investment projects, in addition to the town centre.

The Collinstown lands have the following key characteristics that cannot be met by any of the four town centres:

Sufficient land to enable the provision of a centre attractive to the leading national and multiple retailers that can compete on level terms with other Metropolitan Major Town Centres such as Liffey Valley, Blanchardstown, Dundrum etc.

- Provide integrated leisure facilities such as multiplex cinema, bowling alley, theatre.
- Redress the deficit of existing shopping facilities in Leixlip
- Provide a new railway station on the Maynooth - Connolly commuter rail line
- Provide a Park-and-ride facility for west Leixlip and Celbridge
- Potential to be served by a QBC corridor and local bus interchange.
- Have excellent high capacity road connections to all four towns.
- Linked by dual carriageway to the Celbridge/Leixlip West junction of the M4 which has spare capacity.
- The detail of the development will subject to a Masterplan for the Collinstown lands.
- The lands at Collinstown are currently zoned for a mix of industrial and transportation uses in the Leixlip Local Area Plan, and are subject to a proposed Action Area Plan.

It is the policy of the Council:

RP 6 Metropolitan Area: Major Town Centre - Collinstown, Leixlip.

To assist the promotion and development of Collinstown in west Leixlip as the Major Town Centre, within the Metropolitan area of North East Kildare, to ensure that the retail needs of this area of the County are fully met and to enable it to grow into one of the key retail centres within the GDA.

- RP 7 To identify and zone, where required, the specific location for the Major Town Centre and work with other public agencies and the private sector to achieve this.
- RP 8 To prepare a Local Area Plan for the area covering the extent of the Town Centre that will identify the location of the different land uses and strategic infrastructure required. An integral component of the Local Area Plan will be the Masterplan for the Major Town Centre that will incorporate a design brief and concept plan.
- RP 9 To assist, as required, in achieving the land assembly necessary to achieve the Major Town Centre and work in partnership with the private sector in same.
- RP 10 To prepare in parallel consolidation and enhancement strategies for the towns within the North East to assist in the potential vitality and viability of these centres being maximised,
- RP 11 Ensure that the Masterplan for provision of a Major Town Centre at Collinstown identifies adequate land in the immediate vicinity to accommodate further substantial inward investment in industry to this area.

Metropolitan Area: Town Centres - Celbridge, Kilcock, Leixlip and Maynooth

Over the period of the County Development Plan and County Retail Strategy, it is important that Celbridge, Kilcock, Leixlip and Maynooth develop their role and functions as more self sustaining Metropolitan Area Tier 1 Level 3 Town Centres within the GDA retail hierarchy. As a result of their proximity and accessibility to the Dublin conurbation and its employment opportunities, all have become commuter towns with little parallel growth in shopping, leisure and community facilities and supporting infrastructure. They have also been overshadowed by the major attraction and quality of shopping at Liffey Valley, which can be reached with ease along the M4. As a result of these factors, the towns are under-performing in respect of the quality and quantum of their retail offer. The Council would seek to ensure that they expand from predominantly commuter towns into more self-sustaining communities.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP 12 To encourage the development of the retail and service role of Celbridge, Kilcock, Leixlip and Maynooth as self sustaining main centres within the Metropolitan Area of the County and the GDA.
- RP 13 To promote and progress the expansion of Celbridge Town Centre through the Area Action Plan for the Donaghcumper lands designated in the Celbridge Development Plan, currently under preparation.
- RP 14 To enhance the offer of Celbridge Town Centre, through the preparation of a heritage and interpretation strategy.
- RP 15 To work in partnership with local people, businesses, organisations and landowners to facilitate the regeneration of Kilcock Town Centre.
- RP 16 To work with the local community, businesses, organisations, landowners and the market in preparing a blueprint for the future of Leixlip Town Centre. This will set the

framework for improving the attraction and offer of the town centre and will include promotion of the heritage and educational profile/potential of the town.

- RP 17 To prepare, in association with local interests and institutions, a Masterplan for Maynooth Town Centre, at the review of the Local Area Plan. This will set the framework for improving the attraction and offer of the town centre and will include promotion of the heritage and educational profile/potential of the town .
- RP 18 To identify and zone adequate lands for retail warehousing and district and neighbourhood centres, at the next Review of Local Area Plans

Hinterland Area: Sub-County Town Centres - Athy and Kildare

Athy and Kildare Town are Hinterland Area Tier 1 Level 3 Sub-County Town Centres in the County Retail Hierarchy. At present, Athy is demonstrating that it is performing this role within the south of the County. This is illustrated by the range and quality of retail floorspace and other town centre functions that characterise the centre, although there is leakage of expenditure to larger centres in neighbouring counties. In contrast, Kildare Town is a weaker town centre that does not serve its hinterland as well, particularly in respect of convenience floorspace. This can be attributed to its proximity to the higher order centres of Naas and Newbridge and the issues of congestion that have eroded the potential and attraction of the town. The opening of the N7 bypass in late 2003 has substantially removed through traffic and congestion and has enhanced the accessibility and attraction of Kildare Town as a place to live, work and visit. In addition, both Athy and Kildare Town are important towns in the history of the County but, as with many of the Kildare's heritage towns, there is a lack of promotion and interpretation of their history. The two towns serve wide rural catchment areas and through the following policies the Council aim's to further develop and enhance theses towns.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP 19 To promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of the retail offer and town centre functions of Athy and Kildare Town and to sustain and develop their importance as Sub-County Town Centres.
- RP 20 To promote the potential of both Athy and Kildare Town for additional convenience floorspace and identify appropriate sites for larger format convenience floorspace.
- RP 21 To examine and encourage the potential of Athy and Kildare Town to be centres for innovation in retailing and hence strengthen the attraction of their comparison offer.
- RP 22 To examine the need for a network of neighbourhood and district centres in both Athy and Kildare's expanding residential areas through the Development/Local Area Plan process.
- RP 23 To identify and zone suitable locations for retail warehousing when reviewing the Athy Development Plan, in order to meet the needs in this sector of the market more sustainably in the south of the County.
- RP 24 To work in association with Waterways Ireland, the Heritage Council and other relevant bodies, to promote Athy's waterways as locations for living and leisure.
- RP 25 To prepare integrated heritage and interpretation strategies for Athy, Kildare Town & Monasterevin that embrace signage, linkage and interpretation.
- RP 26 To recognise the tradition of Athy and Kildare as Market Towns and to encourage the development of modern artisan type markets.

Hinterland Area: Town Centres - Clane, Kilcullen and Monasterevin

The Draft County Retail Strategy has introduced a new sub-tier for specific centres in Level 3 of the GDA retail hierarchy - Clane, Kilcullen and Monasterevin. This is in view of their population size and their designations within the Regional Planning Guidelines April 2004 and County settlement structure. These are centres that fall between Sub-County Town Centres and Small Town Centre designations in the GDA retail hierarchy. Clane is a fast growing centre close to the Metropolitan Area and Naas and Newbridge. Its retail and service offer has failed to keep pace with its growth in population and this requires to be redressed. Both Kilcullen and Monasterevin are parts of dynamic clusters within the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County settlement structure. They have not however witnessed the levels of population growth found in centres closer to the Metropolitan Area although this is anticipated to change over the timescale of the County Development Plan. Additionally, all three centres need environmental enhancement along their main streets. With Monasterevin, this is unlikely to be before the completion of the town bypass. In order to enhance the retailing attraction of Clane, Kilcullen and Monasterevin it is the policy of the Council:

- RP 27 To encourage the growth and development of retail floorspace and other town centre services/functions in Clane, Kilcullen and Monasterevin to assist their transition from village centres to self-sustaining town centres within the County's settlement and retail hierarchy.
- RP 28 To facilitate within Clane at appropriate locations a larger format convenience store and a network of neighbourhood and/or district centres.
- RP 29 To seek to improve and consolidate Kilcullen Town Centre, particularly to the north of the River Liffey, and to prepare an environmental enhancement strategy, subject to the availability of resources.
- RP 30 To identify lands and buildings within the existing and expanding residential areas for neighbourhood centres when reviewing Local Area Plans and controlling development.
- RP 31 To prepare a heritage and tourism strategy that interprets the history of the town and uniqueness of the Monasterevin waterfront.

Metropolitan Area: Village Centre - Straffan

Straffan is designated as the only Metropolitan Area Village Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy and sits at the equivalent level of Neighbourhood Centres within the GDA retail hierarchy. In view of its constrained configuration, lack of village centre or edge of centre opportunities and limited residential expansion potential, it is envisaged that Straffan will grow in line with its recent local area plan and will remain a Village Centre within the County Retail Hierarchy over the period of the plan and beyond. There is however scope for enhancement of its tourism profile, largely building on its close association with the internationally known 'K Club'.

It is the Policy of the Council:

- RP 32 To sustain the role of Straffan as a Village Centre within the Metropolitan Area of the County and GDA.

- RP 33 To monitor the sustainability of local retail provision in Straffan and encourage retail applications for limited development/redevelopment within the village centre.
- RP 34 To prepare a heritage & tourism strategy that interprets the history & uniqueness of Straffan.

Hinterland Area: Small Town Centres

Kildare is predominantly a rural county with local needs being met to differing degrees through a dispersed network of local centres within the Hinterland Area of the County. In the preparation of the Draft County Retail Strategy, some four centres were identified as having the characteristics of Small Town Centres, as opposed to Village Centres, within the County Retail Hierarchy. The centres are Castledermot, Prosperous, Rathangan and Sallins. Each of these centres were categorised as Small Town Centres against a set of factors including population size, amount and diversity of retail floorspace, level in the County settlement structure and geographical location. These are important centres in helping to ensure that the retail needs of the rural areas of the County are met in an equitable, efficient and sustainable way.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP 35 To facilitate and encourage the provision of shops and services that consolidate the strength of Tier 1 Level 4 Small Town Centres to meet the needs of their existing and expanding populations.
- RP 36 To ensure market awareness of the convenience needs of these expanding centres, particularly Sallins in the early years of the Retail Strategy.
- RP 37 To respond positively to applications for retail and other town centre developments within Castledermot, Prosperous, Rathangan and Sallins, where they respect and enhance the existing built fabric.

Hinterland Area: Village Centres

Village Centres play an important part in rural community life in the County and around the remainder of the country. In general, they serve smaller catchment areas and have a more limited range and quality of retail floorspace than Small Town Centres. Centres in the County that are designated as Tier 2 Level 4 Village Centres within the Draft County Retail Hierarchy (see table 4.1) are Ballymore Eustace, Johnstown and Kill. Ballymore Eustace is a small village with increasing pressure for residential development, Johnstown is an emerging centre and Kill is a greatly expanding satellite of Naas. To secure the enhanced development of the retail offer of these centres and ensure that in particular retail needs are better met locally, it is the policy of the Council:

- RP 38 To facilitate the local provision of shops and services in Tier 2 Level 4 Village Centres to meet the needs of existing and expanding populations.
- RP 39 To positively respond and encourage applications for small retail developments in designated Village Centres.
- RP 40 To work to enhance the market awareness of the potential of the designated Village Centres of Ballymore Eustace, Johnstown and Kill and monitor their growth and roles in the County Retail Hierarchy.

- RP 41 To work with the community and local businesses to secure the improvement and enhancement of Village Centres.

7.4.3 (C) General Retail Policies

In addition to specific policies there are a number of general policies that are defined to shape retailing in the County over the period of the County Development Plan. The foundations and detail of these policies are provided in the Draft County Retail Strategy, the paragraphs below summarise the context that underpins them.

Corner Shops and Smaller Villages/Crossroads

Consistent with the RPG and GDA Strategy, as Kildare is a rural county then meeting retail and community needs locally is an important objective of the County Development Plan and Draft County Retail Strategy. Small Village Centres and local freestanding stores are an integral component of the life in the country serving needs wider than shopping.

It is the policy of the Council:

- GR 1 To retain, encourage and facilitate the retail role of corner shops and small villages around the County.
- GR 2 To encourage and facilitate preservation of retail and other services, such as post offices, within established rural settlements

Enhancement of Towns and Villages

The importance of the environment has been recognised in attracting trade and sustaining the vitality and viability of centres. This illustrated by the Council and other bodies' investment in the fabric and public realm of many of the County's centres in recent years. Urban renewal and environmental improvement is a continuous requirement if the attraction of the County's centres is to be maintained. Importantly, enhancement can also be achieved through ensuring quality of design in all new retail development and this should be a key criterion in the assessment of proposals.

It is the policy of the Council:

- GR 3 To encourage and facilitate the enhancement and environmental improvement of the County's towns and villages.
- GR 4 To pursue all avenues of funding to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the County's towns and villages.
- GR 5 To develop the tourism retail potential of Heritage Towns by encouraging and supporting the establishment of a retail arts centre that can also act as a showcase for the County's Artists.
- GR 6 To ensure that the best quality of design is achieved for all new retail development and that design respects and enhances the specific characteristics of different town and village centres.

New District and Neighbourhood Centres

Kildare has witnessed one of the largest increases in population in the country since the 1996 Census of Population. In the County's larger centres, this has resulted in considerable expansion of the suburbs of towns. The town centres' retail offers on the whole have not or have not been able to accommodate the needs of the substantial population increases resulting in congestion and overtrading within existing floorspace, particularly convenience floorspace. In the main town centres, if the County is to improve its competitiveness, then the priority is delivering middle and higher order comparison floorspace - convenience retailing should not be the predominant shopping offer within town centres. This is consistent with the guidance within the RPG. There is therefore the need to look at how these needs should be achieved more equitably, efficiently and sustainably outside of main town centres.

It is the policy of the Council:

- GR 6** To encourage and facilitate the development of appropriately located new District and Neighbourhood Centres to meet the needs of new and growing centres of population.
- GR 7** To identify and zone, when reviewing Local Area Plans, appropriate locations for new District or Neighbourhood Centres within large established residential areas and where large scale residential development is planned over the timescale of the County Development Plan and County Retail Strategy.

Re-Use and Regeneration of Derelict Land and Buildings

Re-use and regeneration of derelict/obsolete land and buildings is a sustainable objective. In the context of the County, it is additionally important, as it will help achieve preservation of the character and quality of centres, particularly in terms of vernacular/historical architecture, scale, height, density and massing. The potential for the re-use and regeneration of derelict buildings and brownfield sites in town centres and in edge of centre locations should be considered in the formulation of development proposals.

It is the policy of the Council:

- GR 8** To survey obsolete and renewal areas and to encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings in both main and smaller centres. The Council will use its statutory powers, where appropriate, and consider such sites for inclusion in the Register of Derelict Sites.
- GR 9** To work with landowners and development interests to pursue the potential in centres across the County for the identification and delivery of suitable, available and viable land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses.

Retailing in Tourism and Leisure

In a large number of towns and villages in the County, tourism related retailing is a key economic driver in respect of the vitality, viability and sustainability of other retail floorspace and services. Tourism related retail developments and initiatives that will contribute to the health and wealth of the County's will be encouraged during the period of the plan.

It is the policy of the Council:

- GR 10 To encourage and facilitate the development of retailing within the tourism and leisure sectors.
- GR 11 To encourage and facilitate the delivery of tourism related retail developments and initiatives, subject to compliance with appropriate standards.

Casual Trading

The Council will carry out its statutory functions under the Casual Trading Act 1995, including the issuing of permits and the designation of Casual Trading areas where the Council considers these to be necessary.

It is Council's policy:

- GR 12 To prosecute in situations where the Act is being contravened.
- GR 13 To take cognisance, in the designation of areas, of the proper planning and development of the county, including the preservation and improvement of amenities, the safety and convenience of pedestrians, the traffic likely to be generated by casual trading, the promotion of tourism, and all other matters that the Council considers appropriate.

Gaming/Amusement Arcades

- GR 14 It is the Council's policy to refuse planning applications for Amusement/Gaming Arcades, as they are considered to be an undesirable use and potentially detrimental to the business and commercial environment of the county.

Innovation in the County's Retail Offer

This policy is consistent with the guidance in the RPG. The retail industry and market has been proven to be one of the most dynamic and competitive economic sectors across Europe. As the country's retail market matures, lessons from Europe indicate that this will further increase at a county and centre level. Encouraging and facilitating innovation, be that in trading format, location or product, will assist the County both sustain and increase its competitiveness and attraction.

It is the policy of the Council:

- GR 15 To encourage and facilitate innovation in the County's retail offer and attraction.
- GR 16 To review and monitor retail trends that could have an influence on the performance of the sector within the County and pursue harnessing new concepts and formats within the County's retail structure.
- GR 17 Applicants for planning permission will be required to confirm their proposed hours of opening and 24 hour opening of shops will only be permitted where it can be clearly shown that there will be no negative impact on residential amenity in neighbouring developments.