

9

Retail

Aim: To continue 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.

9.1 Background

The preparation of this chapter has been informed by the 2008 – 2016 *Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area* (GDA Retail Strategy) and the 2008 – 2016 *Kildare County Retail Strategy*.

The review and update of the County Retail Strategy was undertaken to ensure that the Development Plan's retail policies are in accordance with all national, regional and local planning frameworks, including the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's (DoEHLG) 2005 *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and the 2008 *GDA Retail Strategy*. Furthermore, retail planning guidance requires that Local Authorities regularly monitor and update their retail policies to ensure that policies, objectives and the baseline on which they were based remain up to date and valid. It is an objective of this Plan to realise the objectives of the Retail Strategy over the period of the Plan and beyond. As required by the Retail Planning Guidelines, the County Retail Strategy covers the matters that should be included in development plans, namely:

- (i) Confirmation of the retail hierarchy, the role of centres and the size of main town centres;
- (ii) Definition, in the development plan, of the boundaries of the core shopping area of town centres;
- (iii) A broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floorspace;

- (iv) Strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development;
- (v) Preparation of policies and initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres; and
- (vi) Identification of criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

This Chapter provides the strategic retail planning framework and retail policies of the Council, with the more comprehensive guidance provided in the County Retail Strategy. Together, they provide guidance to assist the formulation and assessment of development proposals.

9.2 Retail Context

Over the last five to ten years, the county has witnessed an unprecedented growth in the quality and quantum of its retail offer. In 2000, Kildare had a total net floorspace (excluding vacancies) of 67,368m² comprising 40% of convenience, 44% of mainstream comparison and 16% of bulky goods floorspace. Retail floorspace is currently estimated to total 172,387m², representing a significant increase over the interim period with some 69% of the total being comparison (both mainstream and bulky goods) and the remaining 31% convenience. The proportion of comparison floorspace as a percentage of the total has increased by almost 10% since 2000. This underpins the increasing attraction and competitiveness of the county for shopping. In addition, there remains a substantial quantum of further retail floorspace which has full planning permission. However it is accepted that, in view of the very changed economic context which has emerged over the last couple of years, it is unlikely all of this permitted floorspace will come to fruition in the format and scale originally proposed.

The above increase responds to the previously generally limited offer of the county which failed to meet the needs of Kildare's rapidly growing population. This was evidenced in particular in the high levels of comparison expenditure outflow (47%) and low inflows (6%). These were the second highest and lowest respectively in the GDA in 2001. Convenience expenditure outflows and inflows were much lower, reflecting that food shopping is generally undertaken locally. Comparison shopping attraction and offer is the foundation of a county or town's retail offer and importance and the major improvement in the quality and quantum of Kildare's comparison floorspace has been reflected in the county's shopping patterns. Surveys conducted as part of the preparation of the 2008-2016 Draft County Retail Strategy identified that comparison expenditure leakage had decreased by 14% to 33% and inflows increased by 9% to 15%.

These are substantial improvements in the county's attraction as a retail destination with key influences on its improved competitiveness being the Whitewater Shopping Centre in Newbridge and the Kildare Village Outlet Centre at Kildare Town. Both have mass appeal beyond Kildare and the GDA's boundaries in view of the quantum and quality of their retail offers and the profile of the retailers that have been attracted. There have also been considerable improvements to both Naas and Maynooth's retail floorspace, with Naas' bulky goods offer being one of the best in the GDA. Both, however, have more local catchments due to the nature and profile of retailers. In the remainder of the county other centres have generally witnessed more modest improvements, with some of the main centres such as Athy, Celbridge and Kilcock continuing to underperform in respect of their role and function. For each of these centres, there has been strong market interest and proposals in the pipeline which would serve to see this issue redressed.

Overall, although there has been almost a doubling in the amount of convenience floorspace

in the county, many of the large format proposals that have come forward have not progressed to implementation. The effect of this is that people in all but a few of the Kildare's centres are having to travel to higher order centres in the county and to a lesser degree neighbouring counties to meet the majority of their main food shopping needs. Key centres where there has been no substantial improvement include: Celbridge; Kilcock; Leixlip; Athy and Kildare Town. This Plan provides the retail planning framework for this to be redressed and the continued improvement in the more local offers of smaller centres to be progressed.

Although there has been a major improvement in the quality and amount of retail floorspace, there remains considerable scope for further improvement. This is of key importance if the county's performance and attractiveness for living, working, leisure, visiting and investment is to be sustained. It is recognised that following a period of unprecedented economic growth that the country and county have witnessed a significant economic slowdown which has had a dramatic effect on the retail sector in terms of schemes being implemented, new proposals coming forward, vacancies increasing and businesses closing in response to the severe reduction in retail expenditure.

9.3 Economic Context

The current economic position has been taken into account in the preparation of the County Retail Strategy and the assessment of the potential for additional retail floorspace. The assessment is primarily based on authoritative population and economic forecasts published by the DoEHLG and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) respectively. The latter predicts a return to positive economic growth post 2010, albeit at levels well below those that were experienced in the period pre-2008. Retail planning needs to take account of immediate trends but given the long timeframes generally involved in retail proposals being delivered then a longer perspective, which takes account of both low and high growth scenarios, requires to be adopted. This underpins the assessment of the requirement for new retail floorspace in the County Retail Strategy. It is an approach that is consistent with that adopted in the GDA Retail Strategy.

The emphasis is on ensuring that the county sustains its role and importance in the shopping patterns of local people, the region and nationally. This will be largely driven by continuing improvement of Kildare's comparison shopping offer particularly in its main centres. There remains considerable scope for further enhancement of mainstream comparison shopping in Naas and Newbridge as well as the county's Level 3 centres. The further expansion of the Kildare Village Outlet Centre and improvements in Athy are of particular importance. However, a key focus will be to ensure that the Level 2 Major Town Centre at Leixlip, including Collinstown, is progressed in order that this long recognised deficiency in North East Kildare is redressed. This Plan sets out the objectives and policies at the strategic, specific settlement and general levels to guide achievement of these aims over the period of this Plan and beyond.

9.4 Strategy

The overall strategy for retail development in the county is subdivided into three categories:

- Strategic Policy Framework;
- Retail Policies for Towns and Settlements in Kildare; and
- General Retail Policies.

The strategic policy framework, that underpins the specific retail policies and proposals of the Development Plan comprises the County Retail Hierarchy, the Sequential Approach and Core Retail Areas.

9.4.1 County Retail Hierarchy

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 1: To guide major retail development in accordance with the framework provided by the County Retail Hierarchy (Table 9.1) to enable an efficient, equitable and sustainable distribution of floorspace throughout the county.

Table 9.1 County Retail Hierarchy

Level	Metropolitan Area	Hinterland Area
Level 2	Major Town Centres	Twin County Town Centres
	Leixlip (including Collinstown)	Naas and Newbridge
Level 3	Town Centres	Sub County Town Centres/Town Centres
		Tier 1 Level 3 Sub County Town Centre Athy, Clane and Kildare Town
	Celbridge, Kilcock and Maynooth	Tier 2 Level 3 Town Centre Kilcullen, Monasterevin and Sallins
Level 4	Village Centres	Local Centres – Small Towns & Village Centres
		Tier 1 Small Town Centres Castledermot, Prosperous and Rathangan
	Straffan	Tier 2 Village Centres Allenwood, Athgarvan, Ballitore/Crookstown/ Moone/Timolin, Ballymore-Eustace, Derrinturn, Johnstown, Kill, Killeel
Level 5	Corner Shops	Smaller Village Centres/Crossroads/Rural Settlements
<i>Note: Definitions are set out in the Kildare County Retail Strategy</i>		

9.4.2 Sequential Approach

The Sequential Approach is incorporated in the strategic policy framework for guiding new retail development. It recognises the importance of sustaining the vitality and viability of town and village centres. Proposals for 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 retail development in town centres or village 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 Retail Planning Guidelines, these are defined as sites that are within 300 – 400 metres of the Core Retail Area of a centre, and less in smaller settlements.
- Only after the options for town centre (or village centre) and edge of centre sites are exhausted should out of centre locations and sites be considered.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 2: 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.

9.4.3 Core Retail Areas

The Core Retail Area is that part of a town centre which is primarily devoted to shopping. It is normally defined as the area including and immediate to the 'prime pitch'. This is the area that achieves the highest rentals, best yields, is highest in demand from retailers/ operators/ developers and investors and the area in which pedestrian flows are greatest.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 3: To define the Core Retail Area within the development plan / local area plan of the county's main centres to provide guidance on the application of the Sequential Approach.
- R 4: To consider including a specific zoning for Multiple Retailers, for individual retail stores in excess of 1,100 sqm net retail floorspace. Where appropriate, application of this policy will be considered as part of the LAP process. This policy will assist in locating new multiple developments on appropriate sites that will optimise their significant power to direct retail activity into locations that achieve town strengthening objectives.

9.5 Retail Policies for Towns and Settlements in Kildare

9.5.1 Hinterland Area: Twin County Town Centre – Naas

Naas is recognised as one of the fastest growing towns in the GDA and country and this position has been sustained over the last decade. This is set to continue as a designated Large Growth Town (1) in the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines. It is projected to grow over the period of this Plan and beyond. Although the largest town in the county, until recently Naas had substantially less retail floorspace than Newbridge, the County's other Level 2 Hinterland Area Twin County Town Centre. Naas is now the largest retail centre in the County, largely as a result of its critical mass of bulky goods floorspace located in modern retail parks in the town's environs. These combine to make Naas one of the best bulky goods shopping locations in the GDA. While it has a greater quantum of retail floorspace than Newbridge, the quality of its offer and in particular its comparison offer still does not match its role and potential as a key retail destination that is comparable to Newbridge or the majority of other Level 2 centres in the GDA. This issue is recognised in the GDA Retail Strategy's Council Specific Policy Recommendations.

While Naas has witnessed a significant increase in the quality and quantum of its retail offer, it is recognised that there has been a decline in the general ambience of the designated Core Retail Area and an increase in the vacancies in the area. Key town centre schemes that are underway and substantial development/regeneration opportunities that are emerging should serve to redress this over the period of this Plan. To ensure that the profile, role and attraction of Naas continues to be sustained and grow, will require both the County Council and Naas Town Council working closely with other key stakeholders. The detail of the policy framework and approach required is set out in the Naas Town Development Plan and the County Retail Strategy.

It is the policy of the Council:

R 5: To promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of retail floorspace and town centre functions in the Hinterland Area Twin County Town of Naas, to reflect its role as a major town centre and further develop its competitiveness and importance as a key centre in the GDA.

9.5.2 Hinterland Area: Twin County Town Centre - Newbridge

Although Newbridge is no longer the largest retail centre, it is the most important comparison shopping retail destination in Kildare with mass appeal that extends beyond the county's boundaries. This is based on the combined quality and quantum of the Whitewater Shopping Centre and Penneys' higher and middle order comparison offer, which have elevated the town to one of the most important Level 2 centres in the GDA. As a result of the town centre location of both, they have been able to provide the catalyst for the major improvement in the ambience and attraction of Newbridge Town Centre through the increased footfall and town centre activity that has been generated. It has been further enhanced through the introduction of the cinema, as part of the expansion of the Whitewater complex. This is an important boost to the evening and night time ambience of the town centre and a further benefit to trade in local restaurants, cafes and bars. In parallel, there has been a very visual environmental improvement of the quality of Newbridge Town Centre which has redressed issues that previously prevailed. These benefits require to be spread throughout the town centre by facilitating enhanced linkages along Main Street and to the Edward Street/ Main Street North/ Charlotte Street/ Eyre Street area.

Over the period of the County Development Plan and beyond, the priority is for Newbridge to sustain and enhance its role and importance in the

national and regional retail hierarchies. Unlike the majority of higher order centres in the GDA and wider country, Newbridge has the scope and potential to achieve this within the town centre through the regeneration of land and buildings. The objective must be to maximise the potential of regeneration to consolidate, integrate and visually improve the town centre.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 6: To support and implement appropriate development of lands for the future expansion of Newbridge Town Centre.
- R 7: To provide the framework for a more integrated approach to the planning of the town centre through the forthcoming Newbridge Local Area Plan, and in particular Edward Street/Main Street North/Charlotte Street/Eyre Street area being a focus for achieving greater linkage and commercial synergy.
- R 8: To continue to enhance the profile of Newbridge through strategic environmental enhancement, the creation of spaces and places of interest and the introduction of public art.
- R 9: To identify locations for retail provision as appropriate within existing and expanding residential areas in future local area plans during the period of this Plan.

9.5.3 Metropolitan Area: Major Town Centre – Leixlip, including Collinstown

In accordance with the 2001 GDA Retail Strategy, Leixlip, including Collinstown, was designated as the location for the Metropolitan Area Level 2 Major Town Centre to serve North East Kildare in the County Development Plan. This was in response to the high levels of population growth in this area of the county and in recognition of the need to counteract the high levels of expenditure leakage, particularly comparison from the North East. The detailed framework of how this should evolve over the next twenty years is set out in the 2010 Collinstown Local Area Plan. The Plan provides for the development of Leixlip, including Collinstown, into a mixed use centre that is attractive to leading national and international retailers providing the same level of attraction and profile as other Metropolitan Area Level 2 Major Town Centres. It is envisaged that the new centre will ultimately comprise some 65,000m² net of comparison floorspace with associated non retail services and other town centre uses.

In parallel, although recognising its limited potential for any major enhancement, the framework requires the vitality, viability and attraction of Leixlip Town Centre to be sustained and enhanced. The 2010 Leixlip Local Area Plan, promotes the continued enhancement and consolidation of the traditional heart of Leixlip Town Centre, including the creation of a new street between Captain's Hill and Mill Lane. It also encourages the enhancement and expansion of the established neighbourhood scale centres at Confey and Louisa Bridge. In addition, Leixlip has the relatively untapped potential of its heritage and tourism assets which requires to be harnessed.

It is the policy of the Council:

Local Area Plan.

- R 10: To assist in the promotion and expansion of Leixlip, including Collinstown, as the Level 2 Major Town Centre in the Metropolitan Area of North East Kildare over the next twenty years to ensure that the retail needs of this area of the county, consistent with regional retail policy, are fully met and enable it to grow into one of the key retail centres within the GDA.
- R 11: To prepare a Masterplan for the lands at Collinstown in accordance with the details outlined in the Collinstown LAP 2010. The development of these lands shall be phased over a 20-year period. The Masterplan shall be prepared prior to the commencement of any development and shall have regard to the strategic retail policies for the towns within the Metropolitan area as outlined in this Plan and the specific objectives relating to retail development within the Local Area Plans for Leixlip, Maynooth, Kilcock and Celbridge. In the interests of sustainability and as part of this Masterplan, a new railway station to link Maynooth and Kilcock centres to the area shall be delivered as part of Phase 1 of the overall development of the lands at Collinstown and a Transport Hub shall be located adjacent to the train station to ensure sustainable integrated planning.
- R 12: To work with development interests/landowners, other key stakeholders including local organisations, businesses and people in the development of a detailed masterplan for the area zoned Major Town Centre in the 2010 Collinstown

- R 13: To work with national and regional bodies to ensure that the strategic infrastructure is programmed and implemented to enable the phased development strategy for the new Level 2 Metropolitan Area Major Town Centre to be progressed.
- R 14: To encourage and facilitate sustaining and enhancing the retail and services offer of Leixlip Town Centre and harnessing the potential of its heritage asset.

9.5.4 Metropolitan Area: Town Centres – Celbridge, Kilcock and Maynooth

Reflecting their continued strong population growth, there has been keen market interest in new retail development in the three Metropolitan Area Level 3 Town Centres of Celbridge, Kilcock and Maynooth. However, there has only been a substantial enhancement of Maynooth's retail offer over the last five years with the town becoming the third largest retail centre in the county. Although Celbridge and Kilcock have continued to underperform in their roles as Level 3 centres in the county and GDA retail hierarchies, there are proposals in the pipeline which will serve to redress this over the period of this Plan. With the introduction of Leixlip, including Collinstown as the Level 2 Major Centre to serve North East Kildare and the continued growth of other higher order centres in neighbouring counties, it is important that Celbridge, Kilcock and Maynooth continue to develop their role, functions and attraction as Metropolitan Area Level 3 Town Centres that better meet the needs of their town and hinterlands' growing populations in a more efficient, equitable and sustainable way.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 15: To encourage the development of the retail and service role of Celbridge, Kilcock and Maynooth as self sustaining main centres in the Metropolitan Area of the county and GDA.
- R 16: To promote and progress the delivery of the integrated expansion of Celbridge Town Centre while taking account of its Georgian streetscape and historic setting and to facilitate town centre consolidation through the re-use and regeneration of backlands and other key lands and buildings around the town centre.
- R 17: To encourage and facilitate the regeneration of land and buildings in the

Kilcock Core Retail Area and other Town Centre zoned lands and to facilitate the provision of retail warehousing to the north west of the town.

- R 18: To secure the continued consolidation of Maynooth Town Centre through progressing implementation of the Harbour Action Area Plan and the regeneration of backland areas in the town centre.
- R 19: To investigate the need for any additional retail provision as appropriate within existing and expanding residential areas in future local area plans during the period of this Plan.

9.5.5 Hinterland Area: Sub County Town Centres – Athy, Clane and Kildare

In addition to Athy and Kildare Town, in recognition of the growth in Clane's population and retail floorspace, its further potential and the strategic spatial deficiency in main centres in the north of the Central Sub Area of the County, Clane has been designated as Tier 1 Level 3 Sub County Town Centre in the County and GDA retail hierarchies. Sub County Town Centres in the Hinterland Area of the County should play an important strategic role in the shopping patterns of their generally extensive hinterlands particularly, but not exclusively, in respect of main food shopping. The health check/retail potential assessments of each centre in the County Retail Strategy have identified deficiencies in the offers of all three Sub County Town Centres, which is undermining their strategic role, importance and potential. It is recognised that the introduction of the Kildare Village Outlet Centre to Kildare Town's retail offer has significantly raised its profile and made a major contribution to enhancing the attraction and competitiveness of the county as a retail destination. However, Kildare Town Centre remains weak and does not adequately meet the shopping needs of the town and its catchment area. It is an important priority over the timescale

of the County Development Plan and beyond that Athy, Clane and Kildare Town all fully develop into their designated roles in the County Retail Hierarchy.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 20: To promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of the retail offer and town centre functions of Athy, Clane and Kildare Town to sustain and enhance their importance as Sub County Town Centres within the Central and South Sub Areas of the County.
- R 21: To work with Athy Town Council in delivering the policy objectives of the County Retail Strategy in order that it delivers its vision and potential as the mechanism for redressing high shopping expenditure leakage from its catchment area and from the south of the County as a whole.
- R 22: To progress the redevelopment/regeneration of town centre sites. Any expansion of Clane's main food and comparison offer should be in the town centre or appropriate edge of centre locations.
- R 23: To confirm in the emerging Kildare Town Local Area Plan the priority of strengthening the retail core of the town through identifying appropriate and effective linkages with the Kildare Village Outlet Centre. The LAP shall identify key town and edge of centre sites as the locations for the consolidation and expansion of the retail and town centre functions for Kildare Town Centre and the inappropriateness of out of centre locations for new main convenience and mainstream comparison floorspace.
- R 24: To encourage and facilitate the expansion

of the Kildare Village Outlet Centre in accordance with the guidance in the Retail Planning Guidelines and achieve greater linkage and commercial synergy with Kildare Town Centre and the offers and attractions of Naas and Newbridge.

- R 25: To investigate the need for any additional retail provision as appropriate within existing and expanding residential areas in future development plan / local area plans during the period of this Plan.
- R 26: To identify and zone suitable locations for retail warehouse development in Kildare Town in the emerging local area plan.

9.5.6 Hinterland Area: Town Centres – Kilcullen, Monasterevin and Sallins

Kilcullen, Sallins and Monasterevin's retail development potential is closely linked with their roles within the County's designated Primary and Secondary Dynamic Clusters and proximity to the higher order centres of Naas, Newbridge and Kildare Town respectively. This has limited the scope for these centres to grow into Hinterland Area Tier 1 Level 3 Sub County Town Centres and has detracted from their potential to develop into more self sustaining Tier 2 Level 3 Town Centres in the County Retail Hierarchy. All grew to have populations of the order of 3,000 – 4,000 between 1996 – 2006 but overall their retail and non retail services floorspace has not kept pace with the needs of the centres and their catchment areas. It is an objective that this position is addressed over the period of the County Development Plan and beyond.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 27: To encourage the growth and development of retail and other town centre services/functions in Kilcullen, Monasterevin and Sallins to enable them to grow into more self sustaining towns in

the county's settlement and retail hierarchies

serve to consolidate and enhance the quality of the Village Centre.

R 28: To investigate the need for any additional retail provision as appropriate within existing and expanding residential areas in future local area plans during the period of this Plan.

R 29: To consolidate and expand Kilcullen, Monasterevin and Sallins town centres through mixed use retail-led regeneration.

R 30: To develop and build on the tourism potential of Kilcullen and Monasterevin's heritage and natural environments and that of Sallins' location on the Grand Canal as part of an integrated strategy for raising their profiles and identities.

9.5.7 Metropolitan Area: Village Centre – Straffan

Straffan remains the only designated Metropolitan Area Level 4 Village Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. It is a village that, in view of its structure, lack of village centre or edge of centre opportunities and limited residential development potential, will only witness limited growth in its retail and non retail services offer over the timescale of the County Retail Strategy and beyond. Any enhancement will generally be through infill development and the re-use and regeneration of land and buildings, with quality of design and respect for the character of the village being key requirements. Additionally, Straffan has scope and potential to improve its tourism profile, which is largely generated from its close association with the K Club.

It is the policy of the Council:

R 31: To monitor the sustainability of local shopping and services provision in Straffan and encourage applications for retail and tourism related development that

9.5.8 Hinterland Area: Small Town Centres

There are a number of centres in the Hinterland Area of Kildare that have a range of shopping, non retail services and to differing degrees civic and community functions which render them Small Town Centres in the County context. They are designated as Tier 1 Level 4 Small Town Centres in the County Retail Hierarchy and are **Castledermot, Prosperous and Rathangan**. These centres all experienced population growth between 1996 – 2006, with that in Prosperous and Rathangan being significant and Castledermot recovering from modest population decline over the period 1996 – 2002. However, there has not been a parallel increase in shops and services to meet the needs of their growing populations or that of their rural hinterlands. This requires to be redressed, particularly in respect of convenience shopping, over the period of the County Development Plan.

It is the policy of the Council:

R 32: To facilitate and encourage the provision of shops and services to consolidate and strengthen the role of Tier 1 Level 4 Small Town Centres in meeting the needs of their existing and expanding populations and those of their rural hinterlands.

R 33: To respond positively to applications for retail and other town centre developments in Castledermot, Prosperous and Rathangan where they serve to consolidate the town centres and respect and enhance the existing built fabric.

9.5.9 Hinterland Area: Village Centres

The importance of key Tier 2 Level 4 Hinterland Area Village Centres in the County Settlement Hierarchy and ensuring their proper planning and sustainable development is recognised in the Council's programme of existing and emerging Village Plans (Chapter 17 refers). Village Centres play an important part in rural community life within the county. By reason of their size, and the increasing influence of larger centres, they serve on the whole, smaller catchment areas and have a more limited range and quality of retail and non retail services floorspace than Tier 1 Level 4 Small Town Centres. The designated Tier 2 Level 4 Village Centres in the County Retail Hierarchy are **Allenwood, Athgarvan**, the grouping of **Ballitore/Crookstown/Moone/Timolin, Ballymore-Eustace, Derrinturn, Johnstown, Kill**, and **Kilteel**. The performance and potential of each centre at this level in the County Retail Hierarchy varies. The retail planning policy for the majority of the centres over the timescale of the County Development Plan is to secure the consolidation of these centres through the re-use and regeneration of existing lands and buildings.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 34: 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.
- R 35: To positively respond to and encourage applications for small retail developments in designated Village Centres, particularly those that will facilitate the re-use and regeneration of existing land and buildings, in the interests of consolidating and reinforcing the traditional heart of these centres.

9.6 General Retail Policies

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

9.6.1 Corner Shops and Smaller Villages / Settlements

Meeting the retail and community needs of Kildare is an important objective of the County Development Plan, while being consistent with the Retail Planning Guidelines and GDA Retail Strategy.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 36: To retain, encourage and facilitate the retail role of Corner Shops and Small Villages around the County.
- R 37: To encourage and facilitate preservation of retail and other services within established rural centres.

9.6.2 Enhancement of Towns and Villages

Over the last five to ten years Kildare has witnessed a considerable improvement in its attraction for shopping for both residents of the county and visitors. This has helped decrease the outflows of expenditure from the county and increased the level of inflows. It is recognised that the quality and quantum of retail floorspace is not the only factor underpinning Kildare's attraction as a place people want to live, work, invest in and visit. Key in this equation is the quality of the public realm and the design of new developments. Progress on improvements to the public realm has been achieved to differing degrees in the county in recent years and the quality of design of new developments has been a key criterion in the

assessment of proposals. This progress and approach requires to be maintained and pursued over the period of this County Development Plan and beyond if Kildare and its towns and villages are to remain key attractors for living, working and investing in across all sectors of the economy.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 38: To encourage and facilitate the enhancement and environmental improvement of the county's towns and villages.
- R 39: To pursue all avenues of funding to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the public realm of the county's towns and villages.
- R 40: 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 the different towns and villages in the county in terms of design, scale and external finishes.
- R 41: To protect and enhance the amenities and character of town centres in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The Council will encourage the further improvement and development of commercial, service, social and cultural functions which town centres perform while ensuring the protection of architectural quality of streetscapes. This will apply to the skyline, shop fronts and advertising structures.

9.6.3 New District and Neighbourhood Centres

Kildare has continued to witness one of the largest increases in population in the country since 1996. Growth has been based on the rapid expansion of new residential areas in the county's towns and villages, which followed development/ expansion

trends of the previous twenty to thirty years. To respond to the needs of these growing areas of population, the Council recognises that provision for new District and Neighbourhood Centres may be required in existing and expanding residential areas to ensure that needs are met in a more efficient, equitable and sustainable way.

New District and Neighbourhood Centres should complement rather than compete with town centres. In accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines definition, their predominant retail role should be main food shopping supported by a mix of local, civic, community and non retail services and a limited quantum of comparison shopping, which should be lower order in nature. What is appropriate will be determined by the application of the tests of the assessment criteria for retail developments as outlined in Section 19.10 of Chapter 19, Development Management Standards. Neighbourhood Centres will be of a more limited size and function, in accordance with national and regional retail guidance. They will typically be anchored by a small supermarket/general grocery store and have a small range of local shops and services.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 42: To investigate the need for any additional retail provision as appropriate within existing and expanding residential areas in future local area plans during the period of this Plan and having regard to the possible impact on town centres.

9.6.4 Retail Warehouse Parks

There has been increasing pressure in the County in recent years for alternative forms of retailing to bulky goods shopping to be permissible in retail parks, specifically main food and discount convenience and mainstream comparison floorspace. To protect the vitality and viability of the county's town centres and avoid retail parks emerging as out of centre shopping centres, this pressure has been resisted by the Council. This responds to evidence noted in the Retail Planning Guidelines that planned retail parks do not have any material impact on town centres provided that the range of goods sold is limited to truly bulky goods or goods generally sold in bulk. To remove the potential for any adverse impact on town centres, the Council will continue to restrict by condition the range of goods sold in retail parks to the sale of bulky goods. In accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines, if there are or have been a number of retail park applications over a period of three years in the same area then the Council will require applicants to provide an assessment of the cumulative impact of more than one retail park proposal.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 43: To prohibit mainstream and discount convenience retail developments in retail parks.
- R 44: To prohibit mainstream comparison floorspace or retailers in retail parks.

9.6.5 Retail Development in Business Parks and Employment Areas

Single use large employment areas, be they business parks or industrial parks and estates, have generally been superseded by more mixed use sustainable development models that combine working, living, leisure, shopping and local services provision. In addition to being a more sustainable development strategy for major

strategic greenfield and brownfield locations, the introduction of local shopping and services provision is an important ingredient in the attraction to, and competitiveness of such areas. In respect of older employment areas, retail provision will be limited unless it directly interfaces with existing and expanding residential areas and forms part of a strategic approach to provision in the suburbs of the county's main centres. Any further retail floorspace in employment areas will be restricted to the wholesale sector.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 45: To ensure that the level of retail and local services provision in existing and new major employment areas sustains and enhances their attraction as locations for investment.
- R 46: To provide the land use and retail planning framework to ensure that the mixed use strategies for new employment areas respond to the wider context of need and demand in related expanding residential areas and individual main centres in the interests of ensuring that these locations are attractive to new residents, workers and employers.
- R 47: To limit the level of shopping and local services provision in existing industrial estates or parks. Standalone mainstream and discount convenience or comparison floorspace will not be permitted in existing employment areas unless it is proven to be part of the wholesale retail market sector.

9.6.6 Re-Use and Regeneration of Derelict and Underutilised Land and Buildings

Re-use and regeneration of derelict/ obsolete/ underutilised land and buildings in town and village centres is a sustainable and desirable objective. In the context of the county, regeneration and renewal are particularly important in town and village centres as they will help achieve preservation and restoration 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 or underutilised sites in town centre locations should be promoted in the formulation of retail and mixed use development proposals. Only where suitable, available and viable land and buildings cannot be found should alternative options be considered by applicants.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 48: To identify obsolete and potential renewal areas and to encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings in the county's main towns and villages. The Council will use its statutory powers, where appropriate, to facilitate this and consider such buildings and lands for inclusion in the Register of Derelict Sites.
- R 49: To work with landowners and development interests to pursue the potential of suitable, available and viable land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses.

9.6.7 Retailing in Tourism and Leisure

The county is rich in its tourism potential through its: natural assets, rivers and canals; built heritage; equine industry and internationally important racecourses; recreational assets; visitor attractions such as Castletown House, the Japanese Gardens and National Stud; excellence in its hospitality sector; and, more recently the introduction of the mass appeal of the Kildare Village Outlet Centre. To date, the retail dimension of the county's tourism economy has not been harnessed. As this is of considerable importance to the wider Kildare economy, retail-related tourism requires to develop a greater critical mass and profile in the interests of the attraction and competitiveness of the County.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R 50: To encourage and facilitate the development of retailing in the tourism and leisure sectors subject to protecting tourism and leisure amenities from insensitive and inappropriate development.
- R 51: To encourage and facilitate the delivery of tourism related retail developments and initiatives, subject to compliance with County Retail Strategy objectives and assessment criteria.

9.6.8 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 the policy of the Council:

- R 52: To prosecute in situations where the Casual Trading Act 1995 is being contravened.

R 53: To take cognisance of the proper and sustainable development of the County's towns and villages, including: the preservation and improvement of amenities; the safety and convenience of pedestrians; the traffic likely to be generated by Casual Trading and the promotion of tourism.

9.6.9 Non Retail Uses in Core Retail Areas and Other Main Streets

While the retail offer and attraction of Kildare's main centres has witnessed a significant improvement over the last five to ten years, the parallel introduction of non retail and lower grade retail uses in Core Retail Areas and other main streets has changed the characteristics and ambience of these centres. Such uses may include Amusement/Gaming Arcades, bookmakers, hot fastfood outlets, budget shops, charity shops, telephone/mobile shops and business and financial services. It is recognised that in the majority of the county's main centres the retail footprints do not meet the requirements of national and international operators and the space provides the opportunity for the introduction of alternative occupiers, often without a planning application for a change of use being required. To maintain the integrity, critical mass of quality retail activity, viability and vitality of Core Retail Areas and other main streets, the Council will seek to discourage an overconcentration of the aforementioned uses in prime retail areas. While the Council recognises innovation in the retail sector it is also clear that other forms of new retailing e.g. Head Shops can have a detrimental impact on the attractiveness and image of town and village centres and their shopping areas and streets.

It is the policy of the Council:

R 54: 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.

R 55: To discourage where possible within its statutory powers the introduction of non-retail and lower grade retail uses e.g. Head Shops in Retail Areas and other streets in the interests of maintaining and sustaining the retail attraction of the county's centres.

9.6.10 Innovation in the County's Retail Offer

As has been demonstrated in recent years, the retail sector is one of the most dynamic and competitive in the economy. To ensure that the county sustains and enhances its attraction and competitiveness as a retail destination, it must be proactive and responsive in respect of innovation in retailing and new retail market trends. The benefits of this approach are demonstrated in the success of the Kildare Village Outlet Centre and its role in raising the retail profile of the County in regional and national shopping patterns. Retailing is a key part of Kildare's tourism offer and, as such, is important to the County's economy as a whole. Encouraging and facilitating innovation, be that in trading format, location or product, will assist the county to build on the success that has been established to date and, consequently its retail profile and attraction.

It is the policy of the Council:

R 56: To encourage and facilitate innovation in the county's retail offer and attraction.

R 57: To review and monitor retail trends that could have an influence on the performance of the sector within Kildare and pursue harnessing new concepts and formats in the County's retail structure.

R 58: Applicants for retail planning consents 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 demonstrated that there will be no negative impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring areas. Proposed hours of opening for various uses may also be prescribed in LAPs.

9.6.11 Criteria for Assessing Retail Proposals

In accordance with the 'Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (January 2005) requirements, all applications for significant development should be assessed against a range of criteria. These criteria are provided in Section 19.10 of Chapter 19, Development Management Standards. As a general rule, developments in excess of 1,000m² (gross) of convenience floorspace and 2,000m² (gross) of comparison will be assessed by the criteria.

Where an application is made within existing defined Level 2 Major Town or County Town Centres it will not always be necessary to demonstrate the quantitative need for retail proposals in assessing such proposed developments. In setting out the retail impact, the focus should be on how the scheme will add/deduct from the quality of the town centre in respect of improving the retail offer, urban design, integration with the built fabric and quality of life within the town/centre. However, this approach only applies to town centres and edge of centre sites. Proposals not in compliance with the retail hierarchy should have a full assessment, specifically in respect of the tests of the Sequential Approach. This guidance is in accordance with that provided in the GDA Retail Strategy (2008-2016).

In making applications for retail development above the County Development Plan assessment criteria thresholds, applicants should also ensure that the proposal demonstrates compliance with the assessment criteria of both the Retail Planning Guidelines and the GDA Retail Strategy.

If the retail proposal, whether significant or not, is in compliance with Development Plan policies and proposals in all material respects, it should expect to meet with approval. In accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines, in such instances, it should not 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 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.

It is the policy of the Council:

R 59: To assess all applications for large retail development in accordance with the criteria set out above and in Section 19.10 of Chapter 19, Development Management Standards of this Plan.

9.7 Retail Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RTO 1: To ensure that the retail needs of the County's residents are met as fully as possible within Kildare, taking cognisance of the Regional Retail Hierarchy set out in the GDA and County Retail Strategy, to enable the reduction in the requirement to travel to meet these needs and in the interests of achieving greater social inclusion and accessibility to shopping and services across all sectors of the community.

RTO 2: To reinforce the retail hierarchy which assists in defining the County's settlement structure and provides clear guidance on where major new retail floorspace would be acceptable.

RTO 3: To ensure an efficient, equitable and sustainable spatial distribution of main centres across the county in the interests

of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

RTO 4: To continue to address leakage of retail expenditure from Kildare through securing the development of the appropriate quality and quantum of additional convenience, comparison and bulky goods floorspace in centres across the county.

RTO 5: To sustain and enhance the increase in comparison expenditure inflows to the County and its attraction as a retail destination in the GDA and beyond through delivering a quality and quantum of retail offer in the existing and newly designated main centres in the County Retail Hierarchy.

RTO 6: To reinforce the heart of town and village centres as the priority location for new retail development, with quality of design and integration/linkage being fundamental prerequisites.

RTO 7: To align, as far as practicable, new retail development with existing and proposed public transport infrastructure and services and encourage access by foot and bicycle to reduce the dominance of access by private car.

RTO 8: To encourage and facilitate the preservation and enhancement of the retail and services role of both individual villages and village/settlement clusters around the County.

RTO 9: To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses, with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach.

RTO 10: To promote tourism in Kildare and to facilitate the provision of tourism infrastructure.

RTO 11: To encourage and facilitate innovation and diversification in the county's retail profile and offer.

RTO 12: To support existing retail facilities and to facilitate the provision of new facilities as appropriate where such proposals are in accordance with the RPPGDA, the Draft Kildare County Retail Strategy and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.