

15.3.1 Rathvilly Plan

Vision

To support the vitality and vibrancy of Rathvilly by consolidation of the town centre with an appropriate mix of uses, to promote healthy placemaking within the town core, accommodating additional population growth, promoting employment opportunities within the town, whilst pursuing a continued pattern of high quality development that respects the inherent characteristics of the natural and built environment.

15.3.1.1 Location

Rathvilly is located in North Carlow bordering counties Kildare and Wicklow. It is surrounded by a strong agricultural hinterland, and acts as an important economic centre for the surrounding rural hinterland in providing daily commercial needs. The River Slaney passes northwest and west through the town centre, while the N81 traverses the town centre.

Given its location in the north of County Carlow and on the N81, the town is heavily influenced by outward commuting to the Greater Dublin Area. It is designated as a Small Town under the Core Strategy with an urban structure providing local services and employment functions catering for a wider rural hinterland.

Rathvilly	
Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Small Town
2016 Population	944
2011 Population	881
% Change 2011-2016	7%
Households	341
Committed Units not yet Built	63 ¹
Core Strategy Housing Allocation	62
Population Projection 2028	1,085
Education Facilities	Primary School
Community Facilities	Community Centre, Sports Facilities etc
Architectural Conservation Areas	None
Protected Structures	20 no.
Zone of Archaeological Potential / NMR	6 no. Sites
Natura 2000 Sites	River Slaney runs through the settlement and is a designated SAC.
Water Services Infrastructure / Capacity	Sufficient capacity exists in Water and Wastewater Infrastructure to accommodate development

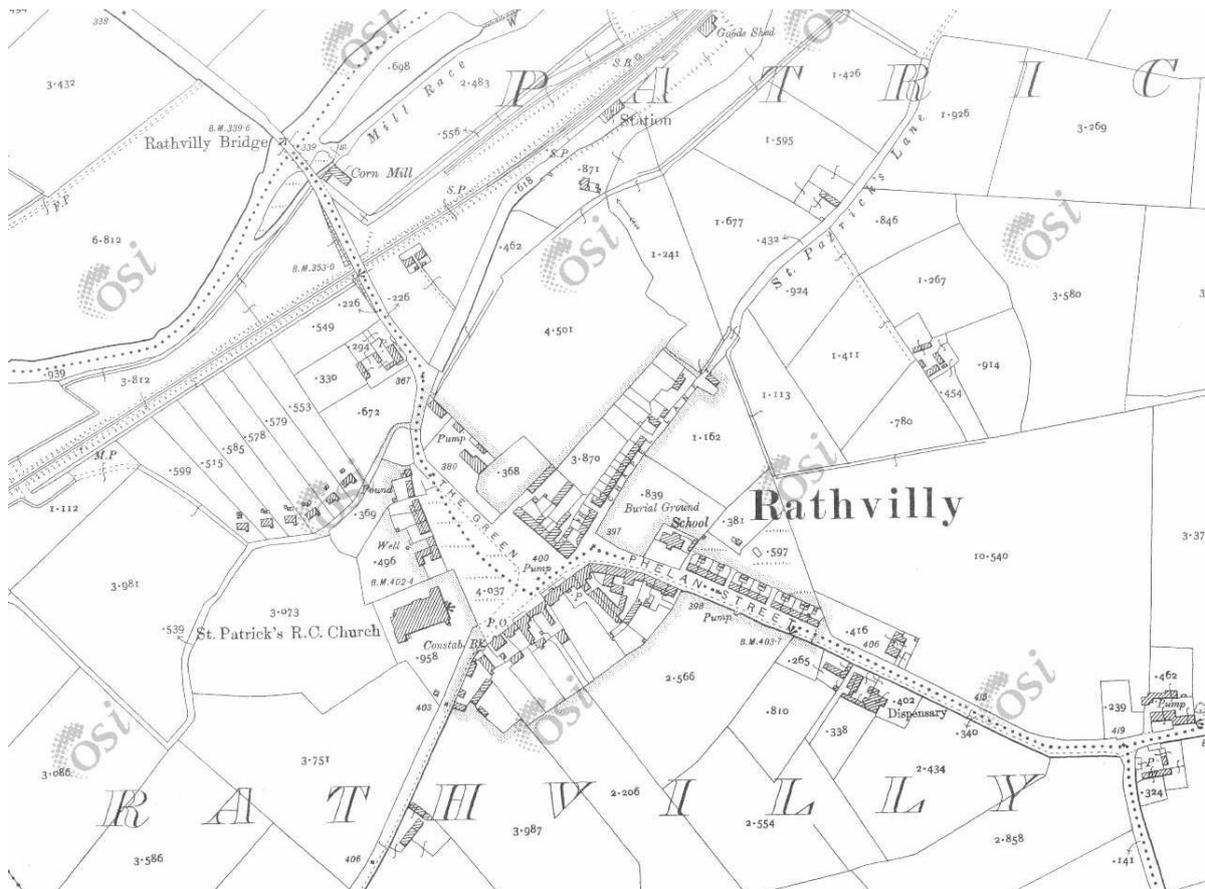
¹ Local Authority Development (Max. 20 no. units to be accommodated during the life of this plan – remaining lands zoned strategic reserve).

15.3.1.2 Settlement Form and Function

Rathvilly was originally a market town which served a broad agricultural hinterland with housing originally located primarily in the town centre. The buildings on the Main Street are mainly two storeys in height. The town centre is small and is focused around ‘The Green’ which is the centre of the village. Social housing was traditionally built in the town however, since the 1970s private housing provision has been located largely on the approach roads creating a more dispersed settlement pattern. The River Slaney traverses the town providing potential tourism and recreational opportunities but largely remains inaccessible.

Uses in the town centre comprise a mix of retail and residential. Traditional shop fronts have been largely maintained. Phelan Street has a very distinctive character with many buildings faced with granite stone.

There are a small number of shops within the town centre, serving the daily needs of locals (convenience store / grocers, pharmacy, hairdressers) with a limited diversity of uses being accommodated. The existing shops primarily serve the local population and that of the surrounding rural catchment for daily needs. There is one public house in the town and a take-away. There are a number of vacant retail units to the west of the Green.



Historic Map 25 Inch (1888-1913) of Rathvilly, railway line and station visible (Source: www.osi.ie)

15.3.1.3 Population and Socio – Economic Profile

According, to the 2016 data, Rathvilly has a population of 944 representing an increase of 7% from 2011 (881). Rathvilly is the largest of the Tier 3 settlements (Smaller Towns) with substantial growth of 56% occurring between 2002 and 2006.

Population, Demographic / Nationality

Rathvilly has a relatively young population with 37% of the population in the 0-24 age group which is in excess of the national average of 33%. 50% of the population were aged between 25-64 with the remaining 13% of the population in excess of 65 years of age which is similar to the national average.

Approximately 5% of the population comprise non-Irish nationals, a figure substantially below the National (11%) and County (11%) average.

Economic Profile

2016 CSO data indicates that there were 420 persons in the labour force (aged 15 years and over who were able to work; excluding students, retired, those looking after family or unable to work due to illness or disability). Of those in the labour force 75% were in employment (316 persons). The biggest sectors of employment were professional services (23%), followed by commerce and trade (21%), and manufacturing industries (14%).

Rathvilly had an unemployment rate of 25% (2016 data), which was almost double the national average. Of persons not in the labour force, 16% were retired, 9% were students (aged 15 yrs and over) and 5% are unable to work due to illness or disability. A further 10% were categorised as looking after home /family. Within the Rathvilly ED greater than 12.5% of the population in 2016 were recorded as commuters employed in the Greater Dublin Area. Less than 200 jobs were recorded in the Rathvilly ED in 2016 (POWCAR data).



Aerial imagery of Rathvilly captured between 2011-2013 (Source: www.osi.ie)

15.3.1.4 Housing

Of the 341 households (CSO 2016) 43.3% were built between 2001 and 2010. 66% of units are owner occupied. One and two persons households made up 52% of all households which is similar to the national average.

The Core Strategy, as described in Chapter 2 of this Plan gives a target of 62 new residential units in the town between 2022-2028. A Part 8 Council development has been approved for 63 no. units, it is intended that no more than 20 no. units will be delivered over the period of this Plan. The remainder of the site has therefore been identified for Strategic Reserve. Ard Bhaile Housing estate is located to the southern periphery of the town. It is an objective of this Plan to seek to facilitate the completion of this estate with a maximum of 18 no. new additional units to be permitted at this location. The remainder of the units allocated to Rathvilly will be accommodated on residential zoned land and / or as infill / mixed use development on appropriately zoned land throughout the town.

15.3.1.5 Services and Facilities

Rathvilly has a primary school accommodating c.215 pupils on Phelan Street. The Phoenix Centre comprises the main community hall. Other community facilities located in the town centre include a health centre, post office, credit union, two churches and a garda station. Sporting and recreation facilities include GAA, soccer and tennis.

15.3.1.6 Economic Development

Rathvilly is designated as a level 3 small town under the Retail Hierarchy for the County. A level 3 town generally has a more limited retail role and function than other towns in

the area. Retail is often limited to the provision of services and convenience shopping. Retail and commercial development should be located within the town centre area of Rathvilly in order to consolidate and strengthen the role of retail. Retail and commercial development in the town of Rathvilly should take the planned population growth into consideration.

15.3.1.7 Vacant / Derelict Units and Sites

Vacancy, dereliction and unfinished sites have an adverse effect on the visual amenity of the town. In 2016, 7.4% of residential properties were recorded as vacant. Commercial vacancy is also evident within the town centre particularly by the Green. Ard Bhaile housing estate comprises an unfinished estate with 13 units completed located on the periphery of the town. The Council is currently undertaking works to bring the estate to a level whereby it can be taken in charge. Completion of this estate with a maximum of 18 no. additional units is an objective over the period of this Plan.

15.3.1.8 Sustainable Travel and Mobility

Rathvilly is well connected by road with the N81 (Baltinglass to Tullow) traversing through the town centre, providing direct access to the Dublin Region (60km). Carlow town is situated 21km southwest of the town along the R726 which travels in the direction of the M9 Kilkenny / Waterford/ Dublin roads. The R726 connects with Hacketstown to the west.

Despite its location on the N81 traffic volumes are not significant but there remains a steady volume of traffic through the town. Car parking is generally provided on street and at the local convenience store. An improved pedestrian environment could be achieved through improved public realm including upgrading and maintenance of public

footpaths and improvements to public lighting.

The Bus Eireann service from Enniscorthy to Dublin, route 132, passes through the town of Rathvilly. Rathvilly is also served by the Hacketstown to Carlow route provided by JJ Kavanagh and Sons.

15.3.1.9 Regeneration/ Redevelopment Opportunities

The Council promotes and supports the use of previously developed brownfield and infill opportunity sites within the established built footprint of Rathvilly, as well as the redevelopment of existing sites and buildings. This will contribute to:

- Securing more compact and sustainable growth.
- Enhancing the public realm and overall character and appearance of the town.
- Retaining and increasing vibrancy and vitality in the town centre, including viability for local services, shops, and public transport.
- Increased opportunities for sustainable travel such as walking and cycling.

Development proposals on brownfield, infill, and backland sites must be accompanied by a

Site Brief. The Site Brief must demonstrate how a proposal incorporates principles of good urban design and placemaking as contained in Chapter 12, as well as compliance with national policy and guidance on the achievement of compact growth.

15.3.1.10 Intervention Area – Town Centre Backland Site

This backland site is situated centrally in the town and extends to an area of c. 0.2ha. It is positioned between the rear of commercial properties fronting The Green / Phelan Street to the north, and residential properties at St. Patrick’s Park to the south. The site has potential to contribute to more compact urban growth in the town, by opening up and redeveloping underutilised backland for appropriate town centre uses. This could include residential development and uses that would strengthen the commercial base of the town, thereby improving the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Backland development by its very nature has a close relationship to the existing context in terms of the built environment. Therefore, any development proposal for the site should be informed by immediate buildings and by the character of this historic town



Map 15.3.1: Intervention Area – Town Centre Backland Site

15.3.1.11 Water, Drainage and Environmental Services

From 2020 Irish Water data, the existing design capacity for the Rathvilly Wastewater Treatment Plant is 2,000 PE and has an available spare capacity of 899 PE.

The Carlow North Regional Water Scheme provides the town of Rathvilly with good quality water.

Domestic, commercial and industrial waste are collected and disposed from Rathvilly by private operators. There is a Bring Bank located at the Phoenix Centre which allows for the collection of beverage cans and glass bottles/jars. The Council encourages recycling and the minimisation of waste through its environmental education programme and the Green-Schools programme.

15.3.1.12 Public Realm

Rathvilly has a high quality natural and built environment and its location on the River Slaney adds character to the town. It is a traditional and picturesque small market town, with well-maintained streets. The town centre is small, with St. Patrick's Catholic Church dominating the streetscape. The buildings along the main street are typically two storeys in height, and the traditional shop fronts have been largely maintained. Improvements to the centre of the town could be achieved through the introduction of a building improvement scheme, occupancy of vacant units, attractive window displays, maintaining open green areas, an improved signage programme to reduce clutter and high-quality finishes to the public realm including footpaths, seating, hard and soft landscaping.

The Council in co-operation with local communities, businesses and other relevant

stakeholders are seeking to continually improve the physical presentation and appeal of many towns in the County such as Rathvilly, both through the planning process, initiatives such as County Tidy Towns, and through funding from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

15.3.1.13 Natural Heritage

The River Slaney located adjacent to the Village is an important natural feature of Rathvilly while a small mill on the River Slaney adds to the heritage of the Village. The opportunities presented by the location of the River in the town have not been maximised and there is potential to strengthen the connectivity of the town centre with the River Slaney, subject to Habitat Directive assessment. This would contribute significantly to the amenity value of the river for the residents of the town. The River Slaney is designated for protection as a Special Area of Conservation i.e. Slaney River Valley SAC. The Council has a statutory obligation to conserve and protect this SAC.



River Slaney Rathvilly

15.3.1.14 Architectural Heritage

There are 8 listings (comprising 21 structures) on the Record of Protected Structures. Structures in this record are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, technical interest or value. Chapter 10 of this Plan

outlines policies and objectives for protecting architectural heritage within the County.



Phelan Street Rathvilly

RPS	NIAH	Description	Address
CW221	10400104	A six-arch, hump-backed bridge with granite arches, cutwaters and granite coping to the walls. It probably dates from the 1790's. The flat surfaces have been cement rendered.	Slaney River Bridge, Rathvilly
CW426	10400101	A small, five-bay, single-storey former railway station from circa 1886.	Rathvilly Railway Station, Rathvilly
CW427	10400102	A small signal box	Signal Box, Rathvilly Railway Station, Rathvilly
CW428	10400103	A detached, three-storey mill building of circa 1750.	Rathvilly Mill, Rathvilly
CW429 - CW441	10400108	A group of thirteen terraced three-bay two-storey houses, c. 1903,	No.1 - 13 Phelan Street, Rathvilly
CW463	10400106	Originally this was two houses of three bays and two storey each with half-dormer windows, painted rendering and natural slates on the roof. The houses are difficult to date but may date from circa 1850.	Rathvilly Inn, The Square, Rathvilly
CW464	10400105	The church is a very fine, French, gothic-revival essay of circa 1885.	St. Patrick's Catholic Church, The Square, Rathvilly
CW465	10400109	A very fine church with a nave, transepts and West tower with a spire.	Church of Ireland Church, Rathvilly

Table 15.3.1.1: Protected Structures and NIAH Listings for Rathvilly

15.3.1.15 Archaeological Heritage

Rathvilly and its environs contain six features listed in the sites and monuments record. This creates a unique archaeological value in the area and adds to the character of the town.

Ref. No	Description	Address
CW003-002	Ringfort - rath	Rathvilly
CW004-008	Bridge	Rathvilly
CW004-009	Castle – unclassified	Rathvilly
CW004-011	Ogham Stone	Patrickswell
CW004-014	Castle – motte	Knockroe, Rathvilly
CW004-062	Excavation – miscellaneous	Ballyoliver, Rathvilly

Table 15.3.1.2: Recorded Monuments in Rathvilly

15.3.1.16 Land Use Zoning

Lands within the development boundary of Rathvilly Zoning objectives are contained in Chapter 16 Development Management Standards.

15.3.1.17 Rathvilly - Policies

The policies outlined hereunder for Rathvilly are in addition to policies and objectives included in all other chapters of this Plan, and therefore should be read in conjunction with same, including the Development Management Standards in Chapter 16.

Settlement Form and Function

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RV P1: Support the role of Rathvilly by facilitating development that will contribute to the character and services function of the town while complementing and enhancing the quality of its attractive built and natural environment by delivering a high-quality standard of design.
- RV P2: Preserve the character of the town by requiring that the height, scale, design and materials of any proposed development respects the character and distinctive built heritage of the town and does not diminish its sense of place.
- RV P 3: Retain traditional painted timber shopfronts and ensure any new shopfronts or advertisements do not detract or erode the special character of the town.

Regeneration/Redevelopment

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RV P4: Promote and support the use of previously developed brownfield, infill, derelict and backland sites in Rathvilly, including the

redevelopment of existing sites and buildings, and to continue to identify regeneration opportunities in the town during the lifetime of this Plan.

- RV P5: Encourage the redevelopment of the Town Centre Backland Site (See Map 15.3.1) with appropriate development to contribute to more compact growth in the town that will contribute to enhancing the vibrancy of the existing community, and to the more efficient use of serviced lands.

Economic Development

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RV P6: Encourage the provision of retail and services to consolidate and strengthen the role of Rathvilly in meeting the needs of its population and its rural hinterland.
- RV P7: Facilitate and encourage the expansion of established enterprises operating in Rathvilly, to promote additional enterprise and employment opportunities and to ensure that future development is compatible with the character, scale and function of the town.
- RV P8: Support tourism related uses, activities and amenities that complement the natural and built heritage assets of the area including the River Slaney subject to environmental assessments.
- RV P9: Support the provision of co-working spaces within the town centre facilitating the establishment of new businesses and remote working opportunities for residents of the town.

Movement and Transport

It is the policy of the Council to:

RV P10: Maintain and improve where appropriate the local road network /streets and to improve the pedestrian environment including the quality, aesthetics and width, where appropriate, of footpaths in the town, to promote active travel measures and to improve access for mobility impaired.

RV P11: Promote and facilitate the development of walkways and cycleways at appropriate locations throughout the town to encourage sustainable transport.

Housing

It is the policy of the Council to:

RV P12: Seek to encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of Ard Bhaile (incomplete estate) for residential purposes (max 18 no. units).

RV P13: Support and encourage residential development on appropriately zoned land, under-utilised and/or vacant lands including 'infill' and 'brownfield' sites, subject to a high standard of design and layout being achieved, and compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.

RV P14: Ensure that future growth is balanced and sustainable and is appropriate to the scale, size and character of the existing town.

Social Infrastructure

It is the policy of the Council to:

RV P15: Seek to enhance and provide recreational and community amenity facilities in Rathvilly and to enhance

connectivity and accessibility to the River Slaney for passive recreational uses subject to environmental assessments.

RV P16: Support the development of a multi-functional community centre that facilitates community, recreational and sporting activities in a shared space subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.

RV P17: Support the development of zoned open space and amenity lands for the provision of appropriate amenity facilities for the local community.

Water and Environmental Services

It is the policy of the Council to:

RV P18: Liaise with and support Irish Water to ensure adequate water services are in place to meet the development needs of Rathvilly within the Plan period and beyond.

Public Realm

It is the policy of the Council to:

RV P19: Encourage public realm enhancements to the centre of the town and to facilitate mixed town centre uses to ensure the continued vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.

RV P20: Continue to support public realm improvements in the town, including where appropriate, the provision of appropriate signage, public seating, open space, hard and soft landscaping, retention of old stone walls and improvements to the public road and footpath network.

RV P21: Promote and support the utilisation of available funding and the implementation of any projects or

schemes for which funding has been received that would contribute towards the maintenance and improvement of the public realm of the town.

Built and Natural Heritage

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RV P22: Support the retention of buildings with architectural merit, significant architectural features, historic /heritage structures and archaeological sites that contribute to the town’s character and setting.
- RV P23: Protect individual trees, groups of trees, hedgerows and stone walls in so far as possible within the settlement and on all approach roads which contribute significantly to the character and visual amenity of the town.
- RV P24: Require development proposals to outline how they integrate / respond to green infrastructure and contribute to the development and protection of green infrastructural assets in the town and wider area.

