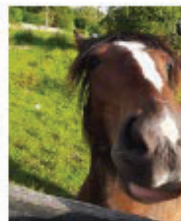
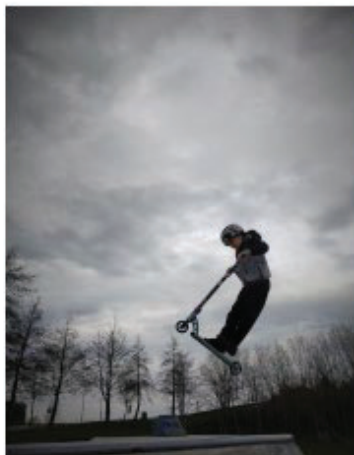
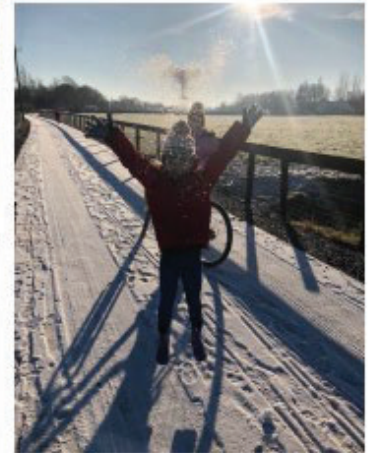


# APPENDIX 11

## SINGLE RURAL DWELLING DENSITY TOOLKIT



**OUR KILDARE  
OUR PLAN**



## Single Rural Dwelling Density Toolkit

National guidelines and the County Development Plan policy has generally been formulated to manage rural housing to avoid a proliferation of one-off houses, extensive ribbon development, piecemeal and haphazard development.

The application of such criteria, while generally clear to the planner undertaking the assessment, can be problematic for the applicant to decipher. In order to provide some guidance on the matter, the Planning Authority will (in association with other relevant criteria) assess applications for one-off housing in the countryside having regard to the overall rural residential density in the area.

When the density or intensity of one-off houses becomes overly concentrated in any one particular area, the rural character of the area is gradually eroded, as bungalows replace vernacular dwellings, as modern buildings replace traditional local materials, as hedgerows are replaced with a wide range of boundary treatments (including non-native hedging, timber fencing – painted or treated in different colours, metal/weldmesh fencing, brick/concrete block/rendered/pebble dashed walls), and access lanes and boreens are replaced with tarmac driveways. The intrinsic rural character is gradually transformed into a suburban, peri-rural character.

This critical question therefore becomes, “at what point does that the character change” i.e., “what is the tipping point”?

One of the evaluation criteria is the examination of Rural Residential Density (RRD) at the scale of a square kilometre surrounding the proposed site for a one-off house.

- In general, RRDs of less than 15 units per square kilometre will be acceptable.
- In very enclosed landscapes with well-defined hedgerows and/or mature trees, which would partly screen or enclose one-off houses, RRDs of c. 30 per square kilometre may be open for consideration.
- Where the RRD exceeds 30 units per square kilometre there will be a presumption against further one-off houses, however in certain circumstances the above limits on RRD3 may be exceeded subject to the exceptions outlined in section 3.14 of Chapter 3 of Volume 1.

This guideline provides a quantitative assessment of qualitative criteria such as piecemeal and haphazard development. It is not intended to be a rigid tool and there may be instances where the existing pattern of development may facilitate some consolidation of one-off housing due to the prevailing pattern in the area, local topographical conditions or in very enclosed country (defined by mature trees and hedgerows). In these instances, the planning authority may deem a site to have the capacity to absorb additional residential unit/s without any significant adverse visual/physical/environmental impact on the countryside. Generally, such one-off housing would be facilitated only in very exceptional circumstances, where there is a significant need demonstrated, for example, those actively engaged in agricultural or in an occupation heavily dependent on the land.

It is important to note however, that environmental considerations and relevant standards in relation to the suitability of soils for percolation and/or potential impact on the receiving waters will take precedence to these guidelines.

In terms of the application of these guidelines, Kildare County Council will be avoiding a monotone, standardised density emerging across the countryside. For this reason, backland development will be prohibited (and ribbon development controlled) - though exceptions will be made for backland sites to active farmers and others who are applying for planning permission on their own land and whose livelihood depends on the land and who can justify a need to live at their landholding, i.e. animal husbandry.

While ribbon development is generally classed as the development of 5 or more houses within a 250m stretch of road, this criterion fails to fully appreciate the impact of ribbon development over a longer or extensive stretch of road.

If the application site adjoins a large area of important habitat such as a natural peatland or extensive cut-away bog, a Natural Heritage Area, a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area or notable open landscape such as the Curragh, Punchestown Racecourse, Pollardstown Fen, Mouds Bog or a large protected demesne landscape (such as Castletown House or Carton House), such areas may be excluded from the calculation area and the rural residential density will be applied on a pro-rata basis for the remainder of the circle. This is to avoid a more intense proliferation of one-off housing immediately adjoining key landscape and habitat features or a much higher density of development emerging immediately adjoining such key landscape features which might erode the intrinsic rural character, amenity value or environmental quality of the landscape.

For the purposes of calculations, a clearly defined urban area may be omitted from the calculations (applying a pro-rata density on the balance of area within the square kilometre buffer), however, where extensive sprawl and ribbon development extends from an urban centre or village, then these units – if they fall within the circle – may be used in the calculation of the rural residential density. If the circle/area passes through the curtilage of a residential site, then it is included within the calculation.



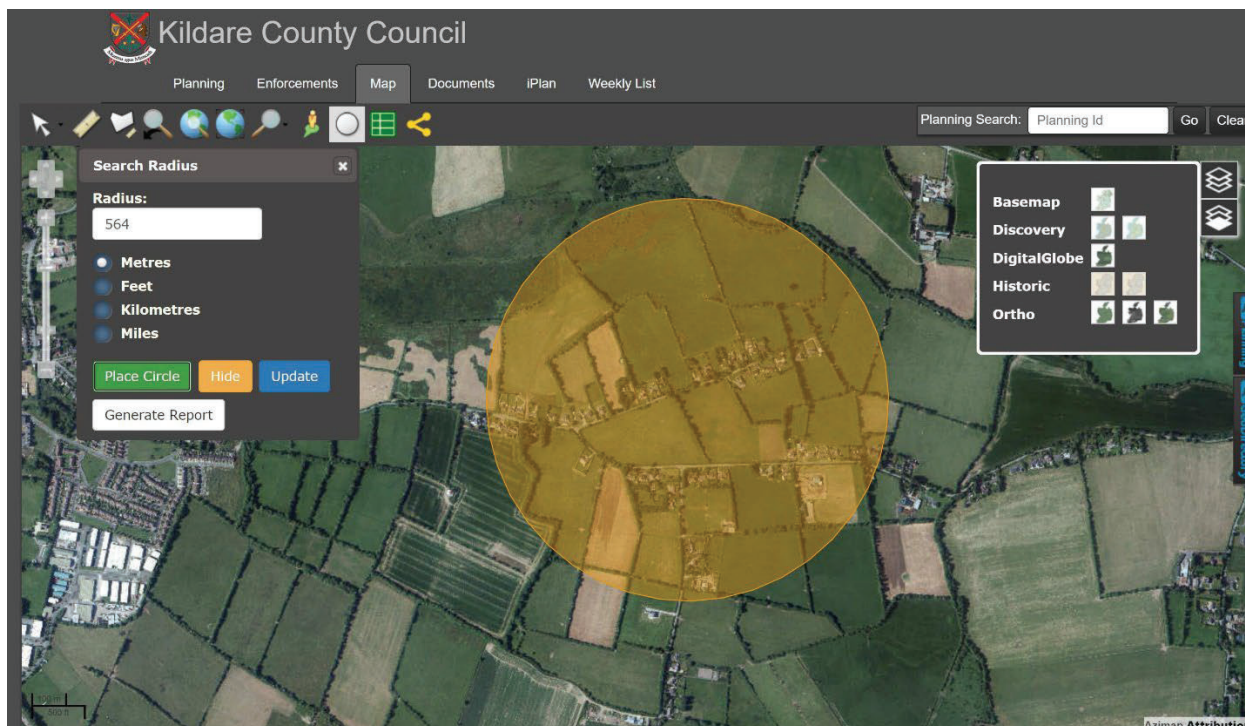
## How to calculate the One Square Kilometre Zone

When a planning application is lodged, the planning application material is uploaded onto the Council's Planning Enquiry system and the details are available for viewing (Kildare County Council's Planning Enquiry portal [www.kildarecoco.ie/planningenquiry](http://www.kildarecoco.ie/planningenquiry)).

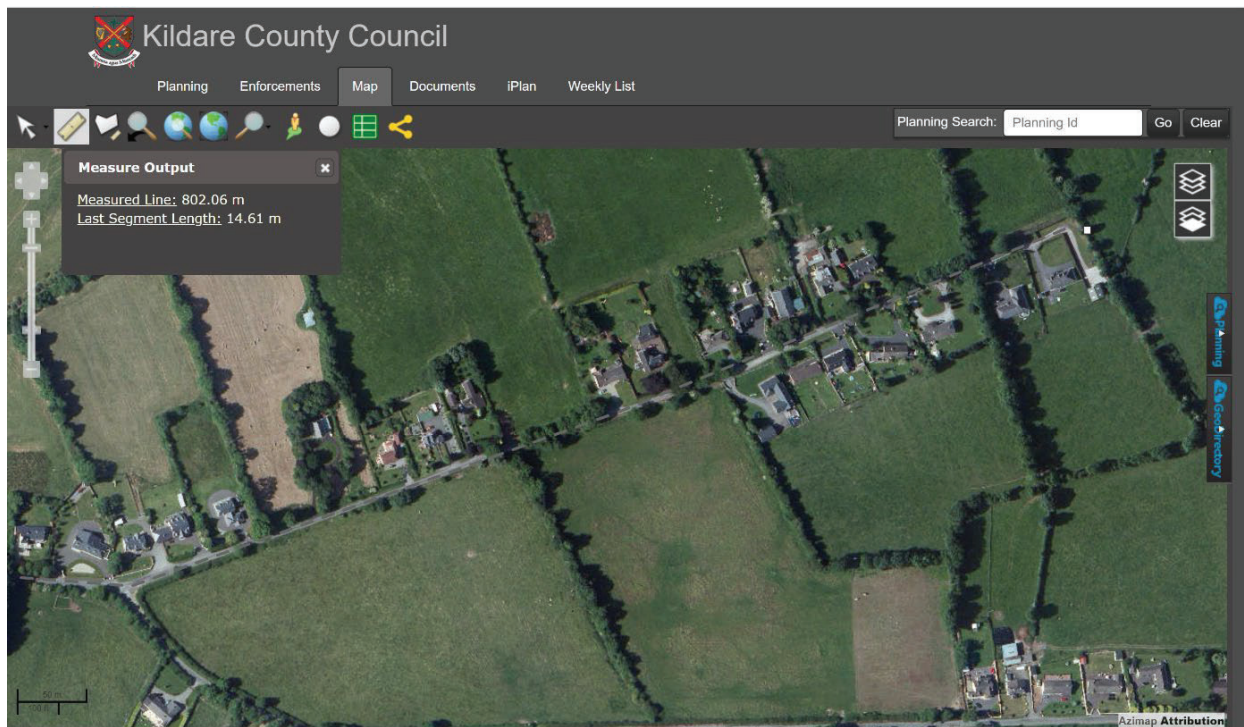
It is possible to use the Planning Enquiry system to calculate the area (i.e. a 1 square kilometre area) around the subject site.

Under the 'Planning' Tab, go to 'File Number Search', then enter the number (omitting any hyphens –'/'). Then click on the 'Map' tab. There are four icons towards the top left hand corner. The fourth of these from the right, shows a circle. By moving the cursor over the circle a 'place radius' information box appears; clicking on this links to a radius distance i.e., a 564 metre radius equates to a 1 square kilometre area; then hit the green tab 'Place Circle' – and then click on the subject site on the map and the circle tool will automatically generate an image of the area of interest and it creates a buffer circle around the planning application site (i.e., the square kilometre area). Potential applicants can also search for a local historical application and once in the map, they can place the circle over their prospective site/s as part of their pre-application evaluation.

It is possible to generate a report (refer to 'generate report' tab) which will calculate the planning applications/decisions within the circle/buffer area. It is also possible to manually count the number of other one-off housing within the zone/area, though care needs to be taken for non-residential uses, particularly agricultural buildings and occasional commercial/industrial uses in rural areas.



**Figure 1** - Kildare County Council's Planning Enquiry System – creation of the 1 square kilometre buffer circle.



**Figure 2 - Kildare County Council's Planning Enquiry System – linear length (dashed grey line) for the purposes of calculating ribbon development in an area.**