

Section 5 Context for the Development Plan

5.1 Legislative Context

Under Section 9 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, every planning authority must make a development plan, setting the framework for all future development in the planning authority's area for the stated period, for the whole functional area of the authority every six years.

The Draft Arklow Town and Environs Development Plan 2011 - 2017 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended. It sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Arklow Town and Environs over the period 2011- 2017.

The Plan relates to the functional area of Arklow Town Council (Arklow Town) and Wicklow County Council (Arklow Environs).

5.2 Structure of the Plan

The Development Plan consists of a written statement, as detailed below, with accompanying maps. The maps give a graphic representation of the proposals of the Plan, indicating land use and other control standards together with various objectives of the Council.

The written statement comprises 11 chapters and a number of appendices, the content of which are briefly outlined below.

Chapter 1 Legislative and Plan Context

This section sets out the legislative background to the plan and the overall context of the plan area.

Chapter 2 Core Strategy

Chapter 2 sets out the overall vision for the development of the Arklow Town and Environs Area up to 2017.

Chapter 3 Settlement and Housing Strategy

This chapter sets out the population projections and housing allocations for the plan area.

Chapter 4 Main Street Strategy

Here a strategy for the rejuvenation of the main street in Arklow is set out.

Chapter 5 Transportation

This section sets out the future objectives regarding the transportation needs of the plan area

Chapter 6 Economic Development, including Retail and Tourism

Specific objectives directing employment, retailing and tourism developments to appropriate locations are set out in chapter 6.

Chapter 7 Natural and Built Heritage

Here objectives relating to the natural and built environment are set out.

Chapter 8 Service Infrastructure - Waste, Water & Energy

This section relates to Water and Sewage, telecommunications and energy infrastructure within the plan area.

Chapter 9 Social & Community Infrastructure - Recreation, Amenity

The plan strategy and objectives for meeting community, recreational, amenity and educational needs of the projected population is set out in this chapter.

Chapter 10 Action Area Plans

Details relating to the three proposed Action Area Plans at Kilbride and two at Tinahask.

Chapter 11 Land Use Zoning Objectives

Sets out specific details relating to each zoning type.

Appendices

Map 1	Land –Use Zoning
Map 2	Specific Objectives
Map 3	Built Heritage/Natural Heritages

5.3 Vision Statement

Following a public consultation process a number of key themes emerged regarding the future development of Arklow Town and Environs. These themes have been amalgamated and expressed in the following vision:

“For Arklow town and its Environs (plan area) to be a cohesive community of people enjoying distinct but interrelated urban and rural environment; where natural surroundings and important resources are protected; where opportunities abound to live and work in a safe atmosphere, allowing people to enjoy the benefits of well paid jobs, a variety of housing choices, excellent public services, ample cultural and leisure opportunities, and a healthy environment”.

5.4 Alternatives:

Section 6 & 7 of this report identify, describe and evaluate different alternative development scenarios for the Plan, taking into account the relevant land use strategic actions, the SEOs identified in section 4 as well as the geographical scope of the functional area of Arklow Town

and its Environs. The evaluation of the alternatives results in the identification of potential environmental effects. These environmental effects are considered alongside planning - social and economic - effects leading to the emergence of a preferred alternative.

5.5 Interactions with relevant Planning Policy:

5.5.1 European framework

While a wide range of EU policies and directives have bearing and influence on the crafting of this plan, the principle areas of relevance to this plan are those addressing water quality and protected habitats

Water Framework Directive (2000) & Groundwater Directive 2006

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is an important piece of EU environmental legislation, which aims at improving our aquatic environment. It requires governments to take a new holistic approach to managing their waters. It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters. The Groundwater Directive complements the WFD by establishing environmental objectives for groundwater chemical status and ensuring continuity with previous Groundwater Directives. These directives aim to achieve good ecological status in all waters by 2015, protect high ecological status in our pristine waters and authorities must ensure that this status does not deteriorate in any waters. Local Authorities are charged with implementing the Water Framework and Groundwater Directive objectives.

For the purpose of implementing the WFD, Ireland has been divided into eight river basin districts or areas of land that are drained by a large river or number of rivers and the adjacent estuarine / coastal areas. The management of water resources will be based on these river basin districts. Within each River Basin District - for the purpose of assessment, reporting and management - water has been divided into groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine waters and coastal waters which are in turn divided into specific, clearly defined water bodies. River Basin Management Plans list the current status of our waters and detail the measures required to bring those failing back to good status and maintain the high status of our pristine sites.

Habitats Directive (1992)

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – the ‘Habitats Directive’ - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9

provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as *Natura 2000*. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

5.5.2 National Framework

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)

The NSS is a plan that takes a longer and more strategic view over a twenty-year period than the six-year life span of a Development Plan. Its focus is on balanced regional development throughout the regions in Ireland. Balanced regional development is defined as “developing the full potential of each area to contribute to the optimal performance of the state as a whole –economically, socially and environmentally”. The Dublin and Mid East Region being the Greater Dublin Area, of which Wicklow is a part, includes the remaining two counties of the Mid East, Kildare and Meath and the four Dublin authorities. The eastern part of the County forms part of the Dundalk – Dublin – Waterford strategic corridor. Arklow is strategically located along this corridor and as a result benefits from good linkages to air and sea international transport connections.

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP)

The ‘National Development Plan-Transforming Ireland- A better Quality of life for all’ sets out strategic development frameworks for regional development, for rural communities, for all-island co-operation and for the protection of the environment with common economic and social goals. In acknowledging the importance of the spatial management of the Country the NDP focuses upon regional development and environmental sustainability as being central to the investment structure of the plan. The NDP recognises the Dublin Metropolitan Area as the gateway within the Greater Dublin Area (of which Wicklow forms part) and the main catalyst of regional and national growth. Investment plans and priority spending areas have been identified. The integration of National Development Goals and Investment Strategies are highlighted, as are the challenges and general goals that are to be met during the term of this NDP.

Smarter Travel and Transport (National Transport Authority)

Transport 21 forms part of the NDP and comprises a ten-year investment programme for the development of the national road network, public transport and airports. It aims to expand

capacity, increase public transport use, increase accessibility and integration, enhance quality and ensure sustainability.

Smarter Travel is a policy document, which sets out a broad vision for the future and establishes objectives and targets for transportation. The document examined past trends in population and economic growth and transportation and concluded that these trends are unsustainable into the future. The main objectives are to reduce dependency on car travel and long distance commuting, increase public transport modal share and encourage walking and cycling, improve quality of life and accessibility for all, improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system, alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks, minimising the environmental impact by reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gasses and improving security of energy supply by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels.

The aim is that by 2020 future population and economic growth will have to predominately take place in sustainable compact urban and rural areas, which discourage dispersed development and long commuting. The documents outline ambitious targets, which involve a complete turnaround on current trends. It is envisaged that these targets will be achieved through a number of key actions, which can be grouped into four main areas:

- ⇒ Actions to reduce travel by private car and encourage smarter travel
- ⇒ Actions to provide alternatives to the private car;
- ⇒ Actions aimed at improving fuel efficiency;
- ⇒ Actions aimed at strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets.

National Energy Policy

The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020 outlines a strategy to reduce the Country's dependence on imported fossil fuels and improve efficiency across a number of sectors as a key step in a sustainable energy policy. Energy efficiency is internationally recognised as the most cost-effective means of reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The Government's energy policy framework for the period 2007-2020 incorporates this goal and is designed to direct Ireland towards a new and sustainable energy future; one that increases security of supply, makes energy more affordable, improves national competitiveness and reduces green house gas emissions.

National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012

This document outlines the measures that Ireland will take in order to meet its commitment to limit its greenhouse gas emissions over the 2008-2012 period to 13% above 1990 levels, which include the following policy mechanisms:

- ⇒ The need to take a long-term view having regard to likely future commitments and the economic imperative for early action.
- ⇒ The promotion of sustainable development, including integration of climate change considerations into all policy areas.
- ⇒ The protection of economic development and competitiveness, utilising market-based instruments with the exploitation of new markets and opportunities.
- ⇒ The maximisation of economic efficiency both on a macro-economic basis and within sectors;
- ⇒ An equitable approach to all sectors, having regard to the relative costs of mitigation between sectors.

National Heritage and Biodiversity Plans

A key objective of the National Heritage Plan (2002) is to “place heritage at the heart of public life”. The plan recognises that heritage is communal and we all share a responsibility to protect it. Protection of heritage must begin at local level enabling citizens to become actively involved in preserving and enhancing that, which belongs to us all. While this plan sets out a vision nationally for heritage management, it emphasises the needs to manage heritage locally, through the preparation of Local Heritage Plans.

The National Biodiversity Action Plan (2002) sets out actions for the promotion and delivery of biodiversity conservation at both national and local levels. The plan calls on each Local Authority to prepare a Local Biodiversity Action Plan, and emphasises the important role of local authorities in promoting and delivering biodiversity conservation through local plans and programmes. Wicklow County Council has prepared a County Biodiversity Plan.

5.5.3 Regional Strategies

Draft Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022(RPG'S)

The Greater Dublin Area incorporates the Dublin Regional Authority and the Mid East Regional Authority, being the geographical and administrative areas of Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin, Wicklow, Meath and Kildare. The Regional

Planning Guidelines (RPG) is a policy document, which aims to direct the future growth of the Greater Dublin Area over the medium to long term and works to implement the strategic planning framework as set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) published in 2002. The RPGs inform and direct the City and County Development Plans for each of the Councils in the Greater Dublin Area. They provide the clear policy link between national policies- the National Development Plan and the National Spatial Strategy and other national policy documents and guidance- and Local Authority planning policies and decisions.

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) make a distinction between the existing built up area and its environs, where the built up area is the "metropolitan" and the remainder the "hinterland" with a wide range of settlement sizes that have the potential to attain an enhanced level of sustainability. In this regard Wicklow is identified as the Dynamic Metropolitan cluster and Arklow is regarded as the hinterland, in this regard Arklow is identified as a large growth town II.

Greater Dublin Area Retail Strategy

The Greater Dublin Area Retail Strategy sets out a co-ordinated and sustainable approach to the assessment and provision of retailing within the Greater Dublin Area so that:

- ⇒ Adequate and suitable provision is made to meet the needs of changing population patterns, and provide for healthy competition and consumer choice.
- ⇒ Retail in suitable locations is provided and integrated within existing growth areas and public transport investment.
- ⇒ Significant overprovision, which would place more marginal locations under severe pressure and undermine sustainability driven policies aimed at revitalising town centres, is avoided.

By setting out a strategic framework for retailing, the strategy seeks to give guidance on where future retail should be provided and what issues need to be addressed. To this end, the strategy proposes a retail hierarchy as a core spatial policy around which future growth, rejuvenation and expansion in the retail sector needs to be focused. The Retail Strategy for County Wicklow is set within the context of the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. In the regional retail strategy Arklow is identified as a level 3 Town and/or district centres & sub county town centres.

5.5.4 Local plans, strategies and studies

Wicklow County Development Plan

The County Development Plan addresses the issues set out in Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. In the settlement hierarchy of County Wicklow, Arklow is designated as a Large Growth Town II. These settlement types are defined as the most likely to be successful in attracting concentration of employment generating investment and these areas should have the greatest accessibility/connectivity to public transport. These centres should be economically self-sustaining, with population, including its catchments, which are able to support a wide range of facilities. While only that part of the plan area outside of the administrative boundary of Arklow Town Council is bound by the County Development Plan, the County Development Plan includes the following strategies that apply also in the Town Council area:

- ⇒ The County Wicklow Retail Strategy
- ⇒ The County Wicklow Housing Strategy

County Development Board (CDB) 'Outlook – a 10 year strategic plan for County Wicklow'

The main function of the County Development Board is to co-ordinate the plans and activities of all the main players in County Wicklow. This will ensure that the people of Wicklow will benefit from a more efficient and effective service delivery. It is important that any overlaps or gaps in this delivery are identified and addressed, in an integrated way. In order to achieve this, the CDB has drawn up a ten year Strategy for the Social, Economic and Cultural Development of County Wicklow. In addition, the strategies and operational plans of agencies and groups in the County will be proofed against the CDB strategy. This plan can be seen as a framework for decision-making, a look into the future, a problem-solving initiative and a shared values document. The strategy will be delivered by the member organisations of the CDB through their own operational plans. Both CBD strategies and development plans are required to formulate strategies for the development of counties and consider the socio-economic and physical issues. They exist at parallel statements on the future development of the area. The focus of the CDB Strategy is on economic, social and cultural development, while the focus of the development plan is on physical development and land-use and how this can serve wider social, economic and environmental objectives. Land-use decisions must be informed by socio-economic considerations, while the spatial dimensions of the CBD strategy will reflect the land-use policies and objectives of the development plan.

IFPLUTS

An Integrated Framework Plans for Land Use and Transportation (IFPLUT) was prepared for Arklow in 2003. The purpose of an integrated land use and transport plan is to review the planning, development and transportation context of a settlement and its environs, and to provide land use and transportation guidance for future development.

While the principal role of such studies is to inform local planning strategies, transport has a regional dimension and therefore these plans were considered in the crafting of the town and environs plan.

Wicklow Outdoor Recreation, Sports and Play Strategies

Strategies have been adopted for 'outdoor recreation', 'sports and recreation' and 'play' during the life of the County Development Plan 2004-2010. All of these strategies set out policies and objectives with the ultimate goal of improving quality of life and wellbeing of Wicklow residents and visitors, and making maximum use of the County's resources, in a sustainable and sensitive manner. These strategies particularly influence the new Development Plan in the areas of tourism and recreation and community development.

Wicklow Waste Management Plan

A new County Waste Management Plan was adopted in 2006. The overriding aim to reduce and manage waste pervades all aspects of land use and development planning and therefore is influential in the formulation of the Development Plan.

Ministerial Guidelines

Ministerial Guidelines have been prepared on a wide range of topics, and regard has been taken of all such guidelines in the preparation of this plan. Of particular relevance however are the following:

Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

These guidelines set out the manner in which development plans should contain policies and objectives underpinning the creation of sustainable developments. They also include clear guidance on implementation measures, particularly with regard to the phased and co-ordinated provision of physical infrastructure, public transport and community facilities.

Guidelines on Flood Risk Management

These Guidelines contain advice to local authorities to incorporate measures to manage the risk of flooding from climate change and rising sea levels in their development plans and development management systems. Advice is also given to developers and architects on designing for flood risk including sustainable urban drainage systems. In the case of Arklow, as per these guidelines, a justification test has been carried out in the preparation of the Town and Environs Development Plan, which relates to the zoning of lands.