

Arklow Town Council

&

Wicklow County Council

Preparation of Arklow Town and Environs Development Plan 2011-2017

BACKGROUND ISSUES PAPER

Planning Department Wicklow County Council County Buildings Wicklow October 2009



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Arklow Town Council intends to prepare a Development Plan for Arklow Town and Environs 2011-2017. It is proposed to amalgamate the current Arklow Town Plan 2005-2011 and the Arklow Environs Plan 2006-2012 into the one updated and combined plan which will provide a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Arklow and its Environs and for the protection, conservation and enhancement of its natural and built environment.

The review process will take two years to compete and will involve public consultation at three stages:

- pre-draft stage,
- draft Plan stage,
- proposed Amendments stage.

1.2 Why you should get involved:

As part of the first stage, the Planning Authorities are engaging in pre-draft consultation with the general public and a wide range of organisations and interest groups.

You may wish to view the current Arklow Town Plan 2006-2012 and the Arklow Environs Local Area plan prior to making your submission and this can be viewed at <u>www.wicklowcoco.ie</u> and found under "Planning" then "Forward Planning" and finally under "Local Area Plans and Towns Plans".

It is important that you have your say on how Arklow and its Environs develop into the future and what you feel are the issues that need to be examined to provide a sustainable and balanced development. We therefore would be grateful to receive your views or those of any group or organisation you represent, on what the Arklow Town and Environs Plan should contain.

1.3 Public Consultation:

A public information session on the Town and Environs Plan will be held on Tuesday the 10th of November

2009 in the Arklow Town Council Offices 3pm-5pm and 7pm-9pm

During the period 28th October 2009 to 23rd December 2009, copies of this "Background Issues Paper" will be available from:

- the Council's website www.wicklowcoco.ie
- Arklow Town Council's offices,
- The Council's Area Office in Arklow,
- the Councils Planning Development, County Buildings, Wicklow

You are invited to submit your views on what the Draft Development Plan should contain and what issues it should address. Submissions and observations should be marked *Arklow Town and Environs Plan* and should state your name,address and, where appropriate, the body represented, in writing to:

Town Clerk, Arklow Town Council, Avoca River House, North Quay, Arklow

Submissions and observations may also be made by email to the following address: arklowplanreview@arklowtc.ie

It should be noted that there will be other opportunities later on in the process for you to further express your views and make additional submissions.

Further public notices will be published in newspapers and on the Council's website indicating when further submissions may be made.

1.4 Timeframe of Plan & Structure of Issues Paper

The Development Plan shall set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Plan area. The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007 provide for the preparation of the Plan in three stages:

- Pre-Draft,
- Preparation of the Draft Plan,
- Making of the Development Plan.

Within each of these stages there are four common requirements:

- Public Notification
- Public Consultation
- Manager's Report
- Preparation of the Plan

Public input at the start of the plan making process is important so that the Development Plan reflects public aspirations and concerns, as well as Government Policy, Strategies and Guidelines. The Development Plan for Arklow Town and Environs must be consistent with the policies and objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2006-2010 and any subsequent changes that the new development plan will contain, which is currently at draft stage.

This 'Background Issues' Paper has been prepared as part of Stage 1 of the process. It is intended to stimulate public debate on the planning issues that the 2011 – 2017 plan will contain.

It deals with some of the main issues under various topic headings. These headings are not exhaustive and you are invited to raise other matters you may consider relevant.

- 1. Population & Housing
- 2. Employment & Industry
- 3. Town Centre & Retailing
- 4. Community Facilities
- 5. Tourism & Recreation
- 6. Heritage & Landscape Conservation
- 7. Infrastructure
- 8. Agriculture & Forestry
- 9. Flooding

Following this initial period of consultation, the Planning Authority will prepare a report on all submissions received, for distribution to the elected members of Arklow Town Council and Wicklow County Council. The members will consider this report and may make directions to the Planning Authority regarding the contents of the draft plan. Both the submissions and any members directions will be taken into consideration in the draft plan, which is due to be put on public display in June 2010. This draft plan will then be placed on public display for a period of at least 10 weeks, during which time the public may make further submissions or observations. These submissions will then be considered by the Planning Authority and the elected members in the adopting of a final plan.

2.0 IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES

2.1 Population & Housing

Arklow is designated as a Large Growth Town 2 in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010. The last comprehensive data that is available in terms of population figures is the 2006 census where the population stood at 11,712.

As provided in the (draft) County Development Plan 2010-2016, the indicative population for Arklow in 2016 is 19,000 and 23,000 in 2022. It is intended that the necessary physical infrastructure will be in place in the town to cater for this level of growth. The town will serve as a hub for the development of social, cultural and economic services, which are necessary to maintain and improve quality of life and which will develop a sustainable community.

- What housing difficulties are the people of Arklow experiencing?
- How can the Plan cater for a range of different housing needs, including, the elderly, students, the homeless, the mobility impaired, traveller families, ethnic groups and first time buyers?
- What considerations should be taken into account for proposed infill developments within existing residential areas?
- Are there deficiencies in the existing residential areas within the town and if so what measures can be introduced to improve residential areas
- What are the issues that have a detrimental effect on the residential amenity?
- What are the perceived preferable formats for housing layout and housing types for the town and at what density and height?
- What contributes to an attractive residential layout?
- What should accompany residential developments for the convenience of new residents?







2.2 Employment & Industry

Background

In 2006, there were 5,998 Arklow residents 'at work' with 75 people looking for their first regular job and 649 people unemployed (this equates to an unemployment rate of proximately 12%). At the time of the 2006 Census, the County unemployment rate was 8%.

The 2006 Census found that the principle employment of Arklow residents was in manufacturing and construction. The locations of the majority of manufacturing industries are in the environs of the town. A significant number of Arklow residents leave the town and its environs for work, particularly for south Dublin and city centre areas.

Clearly the economic situation has worsened since 2006 - the National unemployment rate has increased to 12.4% by August 2009. While detailed local figures are unavailable, unemployment in the Arklow area is expected to have increased at a higher rate than the National Average given the high dependence on industries associated with the Construction Sector and Manufacturing Sector.

- What categories of employment are appropriate for Arklow, and how can we encourage such employment to develop and locate in the town and environs
- How can the Plan integrate enterprise land uses with other forms of land use such as residential, transportation, tourism etc?
- Is there need to zone more land for employment and industry?
- Should facilities such as crèches, restaurants, leisure etc., be provided within employment centres?







2.3 Town Centre & Retailing

Background

The retail and commercial core of Arklow has been historically the town itself and is predominately concentrated on Main Street and surrounding streets. The Bridgewater Shopping Centre a fully enclosed shopping centre of 350,000sq.ft opened on the waterfront area in October 2007. The town core has a number of derelict sites/buildings and poor signage. In addition the footpaths, kerbs, road surfaces and street furniture require attention. The Draft County Retail Strategy (published October 2009) is incorporated into the draft County Development Plan and sets out specific objectives for retail in town centres. Arklow is designated as "Level 3" sub-county town centre. This document sets out specific objectives for retail in town centres.

Main Issues

- What measures can be taken to improve the town centre environment to make it more attractive to visit for shopping and leisure activities?
- Are there any deficiencies in the existing retail provision within the town, e.g. what kind of shops are required that are not present?
- What other kind of uses and services should be provided?
- What uses are inappropriate in the main retail area of the town?
- What form should any new retailing take? Should it be a shopping centre or in a more traditional urban form typical of a shopping street
- Are there enough appropriate retail facilities available within walking distance of residential areas in the town?
- Are there derelict sites, which should be used to consolidate the provision of retail services?
- What measures should be taken to ensure there is sufficient parking adjacent to retail facilities?
- How can public transport, walking and cycling links to retail facilities be improved?

 Does advertising and signage cause visual clutter in the town, and what measures can be taken to reduce and counteract this?







2.4 Community Facilitates

Background

The Planning and Development Act 2000 has placed greater emphasis on planning authorities to provide specific policies and objectives for the development of community facilities within their administrative areas. These objectives relate firstly to the provision of community services, including schools, crèches and childcare facilities. Secondly the objectives must encourage the integration of planning and sustainable development with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area.

The (draft) County Development Plan(2010-2016) sets out objectives with regard to community facilities, including open spaces. Such facilities and objectives include education and training; play policies; sports and recreation facilities; arts and library developments; childcare facilities and health services.

Main Issues

- Are there deficiencies in the existing community facilities in the Towns and Environs?
- Is there adequate sports and recreation space available in the town?
- Are open space/recreational areas within close walking distance of residential areas and are such areas easily accessible?
- Are there any significant interest groups or community activities without adequate accommodation or satisfactory location to carry out their activities?
- Where should community centres be provided? What activities should they cater for? Where is there an existing shortfall?
- Which community and cultural facilities (such as schools, churches etc.) within the town are in need of expansion?
- Are there adequate provisions for training and education in the town? Should additional primary, post

primary or adult education facilities be provided?

- How can the Plan provide for childcare facilities in existing residential areas? How can this be balanced with the protection of residential amenity?
- How can the level of safety be improved around schools and play areas?
- What can be done to improve walking and cycling routes to and from schools within the county?
- Is there a requirement for additional services such as healthcare services or local libraries?
- Where should amenity walks in an around the town be located?







2.5 Infrastructure

Background

Infrastructure within the town and environs includes a wide variety of services and functions, without which it could not function socially and economically. These include:

- Waste, effluent and emission control (wastewater treatment, the protection of existing groundwater aquifers and the recovery and disposal of household and hazardous waste).
- Water supply.
- Fire service.
- Roads.
- Public Transport.
- Infrastructure.

Wicklow County Council is currently upgrading the town's water supply. There was planning permission granted for a new Waste Water Treatment facility for Arklow however this decision is subject to legal proceedings at the moment. Any lack of sewage treatment facilities in the town will have an impact on the future growth in terms of town and its environs.

It is an objective of the County Council to improve existing road networks in the interest of safety and free flow of traffic. Measures to achieve this objective may include footpath provision and improvement, the improvement of junctions, horizontal and vertical alignments, pavement strengthening and the provision of cycleways. The Dublin-Rosslare train line with eight departures serves Arklow daily to and from Dublin. Recent investments have occurred at the train station. It is an objective of the Council to encourage the use of public transport.

Main Issues

• Which infrastructural improvements should take priority within the new Development Plan? For example transport, water supply, waste treatment, telecommunications etc?

- How can the use of public transport, cycling and walking be promoted and the use of the private motor car reduced?
- Are there any deficiencies in, or difficulties with, existing linkages (vehicular, pedestrian, cycle) between different parts of the town?
- Are you prevented/ or hindered from walking to the town centre?
- How do you travel to school? If you do not walk or cycle, what are your reasons?
- How can transport and land use planning be integrated to produce a sustainable living and working environment?
- Is car parking an issue in Arklow Town? How could this be addressed in the Plan?
- Is traffic congestion a problem in the town? How could this be addressed in the Plan?
- What roads or junctions in the town require upgrading to improve safety or traffic flow?
- How do you travel to school and work/ If you do not walk or cycle what are your reasons?





2.6 Heritage and Landscape Conservation

Heritage Background

Under the Heritage Act 1995, Heritage is composed of the following elements: monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens, parks and inland waterways. The Council will need to have regard to the relevant aforementioned elements when forming Heritage Policy.

Natural Heritage

Wicklow has a rich and diverse natural heritage. The Council has a role to play in helping to ensure the conservation of this resource for current and future generations. Of importance are designated wildlife habitats and species, areas of geological interest, and non-designated habitats for wildlife such as coastlines, trees, hedgerows, stone walls, rivers and lakes.

In formulating additional policies the Council will need to have consideration to EU Habitats and Bird Directives, as well as national legislation in the form of the Natural Habitat Regulations.

Built Heritage

The Wicklow County Development Plan 2004-2010 includes policies for the protection of archaeological sites and monuments and protected structures. The Development Plan lists National Monuments in State care and indicates areas of archaeological importance as well as architectural conservation areas. All National Monuments in the County are offered protection under the National Monuments Acts. Also listed in the Plan are Development buildings. landmarks, structures and items of industrial and mining heritage importance.

Arklow has forty-one number of protected structures. The Council has a responsibility to review its Record of Protected Structures and to form an opinion as to whether or not existing recorded structures warrant continued inclusion and whether or not to make additions to the record.

Environmental Considerations

The Arklow Town Marsh is a proposed Natural Heritage Area p(NHA) and is located in the town of Arklow. Arklow Environs is in close proximity to the NHA of the Arklow Sand Dunes and Avoca River Valley. The Development Plan will have regard to these environmental designations in terms of formulating policy.

During the plan preparation process a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be carried out in order to ensure that the plan policies are crafted to compliment the environment to the greatest possible extent. The output of the process will be an Environmental Report, which should be read in conjunction with the Draft Arklow Town and Environs Development Plan.

The Environmental Report will identify and help develop a plan, which aims to protect those areas likely to be environmentally sensitive in the local town and environs.

- How can the Plan advance the protection and conservation of habitats and species that are outside designated areas?
- How can the Plan best work with other interested bodies in promoting and increasing awareness about our natural heritage?
- What role does the Plan have in nature conservation?
- How can the Plan best protect the character of the landscape while at the same time facilitating modern settlement and development needs?
- Is there a need to review current landscape policies in response to increased development pressures?
- Are there other views, areas of special amenity, which are worthy of protection in the town?
- How can the Plan best offer protection to Arklow's architectural heritage?
- How can the policies of the Development Plan contribute to the protection and appreciation of protected structures?

- How can the policies of the Development Plan contribute to the protection and appreciation of Arklow's archaeological sites and areas?
- How can we achieve a balance between development pressures and the protection of built heritage?



2.7 Agriculture/Horticulture and Forestry

Background

The Wicklow County Development Board Outlook 2002-2012 states that the percentage of people employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing in County Wicklow has fallen to 8.5%.

Forestry has undergone many changes and has become one of the major land uses in the County with positive and negative consequences.

The County Development Plan recognises the importance of forestry to the economy of the County and states that the Council will encourage the development of both State and private afforestation that is compatible with the sustainable development of the County.

The Development Plan also supports the development of agriculture that is compatible with the sustainable development of the county and commensurate with maintaining the farming community. In recent times with alternative farm practices, allotments have become very popular in and surrounding the environs of cities and towns.

- How can agriculture/horticulture and forestry in the areas surrounding Arklow be supported and encouraged by development in the town?
- What facilities or services in the town would encourage and support agriculture/horticulture and forestry?
- How should the Plan balance the demands of agricultural development with the amenity value of landscape and residential areas?
- What measures can be taken to ensure that forestry plantation does not damage the visual aspects of the landscape?







2.8 Tourism and Recreation

Background

County Wicklow has compelling advantages as a destination and centre for tourists. With its close proximity to the Dublin Metropolitan Area, it is ideally located to benefit economically from the day-tripper, the foreign visitor and the stay over visitor markets.

Like any industry, tourism has its advantages and disadvantages. When operating to its capacity, it attracts significant visitor spending in the local economy, creates employment and assists investment. On the other hand there can be disbenefits ranging from traffic congestion and parking problems, to the commercialisation of historic and attractive environments. Pressure to provide tourist orientated facilities to meet the needs of visitors may create problems such as proposals for tourist orientated development in the form of accommodation units, restaurants, and retail outlets that are not always compatible with the character and scenic amenity of the area.

- What shortfall in tourist facilities exist in Arklow and its Environs
- What forms of alternative tourism should be encouraged within the Development Plan Area?
- Can the Development Plan provide facilities that are useful to both tourists and the residents of Arklow?
- How can signage be improved to allow ease of access to tourist facilities in the town?
- What provisions need to be introduced to improve parking facilities adjacent to existing tourist attractions?
- How can the Development Plan provide recreational facilities for all age groups?







2.9 Flooding:

The Avoca River catchment area and Arklow Town have been subject to periodic flooding over a number of years. Heavy storms in 2000 caused severe flooding in Lower Main Street, South Quay and Ferrybank. The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland. This gives the OPW a role in policy advice and coordination in addition to its operational roles. The Council has undertaken a flood relief study and programme, which has been carried out by White Young and Green Consultants. This study is likely to impact on the future zonings and development within the town and environs. The Council shall implement the provisions of "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Draft Guidelines 2008", which were published by the Office of the Public Works (OPW) in the carrying out of their development management functions when assessing applications in flood risk areas.

- In what way should the Plan make provision to prevent flooding from occurring in Arklow
- How do we protect existing Floodplains
- What measures can be implemented to prevent roadside flooding
- What design features can be introduced in relation to urban developments to minimise flooding







Timeframe for the Preparation and Completion of the Arklow & Environs Development Plan 2011-2017

Date	Council	Action
28 Oct 2009	meeting	Advertise intention to review existing plan and prepare new plan.
		Call for submissions.
		- Notice given to Minister and any relevant Government bodies/ boards/ officials.
		 Planning authority takes whatever additional measures it considers necessary to consult with the general public and other interested bodies. Public meetings held.
23 Dec 2010		End of consultation period, last date for submissions.
↓		- Manager prepares report on submissions and matters arising out of consultations.
10 Feb 2010		Manager's Report on submissions / consultations issued to members.
		-Consideration of the Manager's Report by the members. -Members issue directions to Manager for preparation of draft
10 Mar 2010	01 Mar	development plan.
	(WCC) 10 Mar	Latest date for directions by members.
•	(ATC)	-Preparation of draft development plan and submit to members for consideration.
05 May 2010		Draft development plan issued to members for their consideration.
↓ ↓		Consideration of draft development plan by members.Draft development plan may be adopted or amended by resolution.
09 June 2010	07 June (WCC)	Draft development plan made
	09 June	
•	(ATC)	-Notice and copy of draft plan sent to Minister and any relevant Government bodies/ boards/ officials.
23 June 2010		-Notice of preparation of draft published in newspaper.
		Display of draft development plan commences
		- Draft plan on display for not less than 10 weeks, during which time written submissions invited
		- Notice served on the owners / occupiers of protected structures of the proposed addition / deletion of structure from the record of protected
▼		structures. Copy of proposed addition / deletion on display for not less



Members Make Development Plan

Members Make Development Plan

Key: ATC: Arklow Town Council WCC: Wicklow County Council

Appendix 2

GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIES TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN PREPARING THE NEW LOCAL AREA PLAN

- Guidance Notes on Planning and Development Act 2000
- Development Plan Guidelines (2007)
- National Development Plan 2007-2013
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, People Places Potential (2002)
- Sustainable Development A Strategy for Ireland (1997)
- Making Ireland's Development Sustainable (2002)
- Local Authorities and Sustainable Development: Guidelines on Local Agenda 21 (1995)
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016
- Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines Best Practice Guidelines (2005)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines & Implementation of SEA Directive (2004)
- AA
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities (September 2008)
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009 & Best Practice Urban Design Manual (Dec 08) Part 1 and 2
- Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines (2005)
- Social Housing Design Guidelines
- Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines (2007)
- Action on Housing, DOEHLG (2000)
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007) (Best Practice Guidelines)
- The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion
- A Platform for Change, Strategy 2000-2016 Dublin Transportation Office, November 2001
- New Institutional Arrangements for land Use and Transport in the Greater Dublin Area-Consultation Paper (2001)
- Transport 21, 2006-2015
- Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2030
- 2020 Vision Sustainable Travel and Transport: Public Consultation Documents
- Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2000)
- Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016
- The Provision of Schools and the Planning System Code of Practice for Planning Authorities (2008)
- Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)
- National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010
- Ready Steady Play! A National Play Strategy (2004)
- National Biodiversity Plan (2002)
- National Heritage Plan (2002)
- Architectural Heritage Protection for Places of Public Worship (2003)
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004)
- Framework and Principles for the protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999)
- National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012
- Landscape and Landscape Assessment (2000)
- Quarries and Ancillary Activities (2004)
- Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structure (1996)
- Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006)
- Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland (2007)

- Bio-Energy Action Plan, DCENR
- Waste Management Changing Our Ways
- Proposed National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008 2012
- Tree Preservation Guidelines: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (1994)
- Environmental Noise Regulations relating to the Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise
- Air Quality Plan for the Dublin Region 1999
- Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study, 2002-2031
- Greater Dublin Water Supply Strategic Study 1996-2016
- Development Management Guidelines (2007)
- Development Contribution Scheme for Planning Authorities (2003)
- Funfair Guidance (2003)
- EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC
- DoEHLG circular on Appropriate Assessment SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08
- Smartertravel, A sustainable Transport Future, A new Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020

This list is not exhaustive and additional documents will be considered as appropriate.

APPENDIX 3

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING A SUBMSISION

Please keep all submissions clear, simple and concise. A submission form is attached to this document and you may find this easy to use. However, submissions do not have to be made on this Form. In either case, please enclose a map, if appropriate and where necessary to identify land pertaining to the submission.

A good submission is that which relates to specific policies, locations or activities. If you have suggestions with regard to new policies or objectives, you could suggest where these could/should be included in the Plan.

A good submission should be in the best interests of proper planning and sustainable development. Consideration of submissions will be balanced against EU, National, Regional and local policy/guidelines, and submissions where possible should reflect that. Appendix 2 of this document identifies those documents referred to in the **preparation of the Plan**.

Submissions and observations should be marked *Arklow Town and Environs Development Plan* and should state your name and, where appropriate, the body represented, in writing to:

Town Clerk, Arklow Town Council, Avoca River House, North Quay, Arklow

Submissions and observations may also be made by email to the following addresses: **arklowplanreview@arklowtc.ie**

All submissions shall be lodged not later than **23rd December 2009**. These will be taken into consideration prior to the preparation of the Draft Arklow Town and Environs Plan. In order to facilitate the Plan preparation, please make your submission as early as possible.

Submission Form **Arklow Town & Environs Plan**

Name					
Address					
Comments:					
Signed:	 		Date:	 	



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Appendix 4

-ARKLOW TOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2005-2011 -ARKLOW ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006-2012 -COMBINED MAP OF ARKLOW TOWN & ENVIRONS