

PROPOSED VARIATION NO. 1 (I) TO THE WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2016

AVOCA SETTLEMENT PLAN

SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED DURING THE NON-STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1. Introduction

The Avoca Settlement Plan is to form part of the Wicklow County Development Plan (CDP) 2010-2016. The plan is to be adopted as a variation to the CDP under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

In advance of the preparation of the Avoca Settlement Plan the planning authority undertook a non-statutory public consultation in order to get the views and opinions of the public and prescribed bodies on the future development of the area.

The public consultation was carried out over a four-week period from 10th January 2011 to 7th February 2011, during which time written submissions on the preparation of the plan were invited. The consultation also included a public meeting on 20th January 2011 at which members of the public and local stakeholder groups were invited to attend. In order to stimulate debate, an 'Issues Leaflet' was published.

This document includes a summary of the issues that were raised during the public consultation period and includes a brief response to each of these issues. The summary includes the issues raised in written submissions, and the issues raised during the public meeting and at the stakeholder meetings undertaken on 20th January 2011.

2. Summary of Issues Raised in Submissions and Evaluation

Population and Development

Summary of Issues Raised

- Residents are keen to retain a 'village' status and rural atmosphere.
- The population figures are misleading. VADA have undertaken estimates of housing and population and argue that the current population exceeds the 2022 figure.
- Suggestions for the expansion of the boundary include west of the regional road and lands to the northeast. Allowing growth towards south of Kilmagig is spreading the settlement out too far and growth should be concentrated beside the core.
- Suggestions to increase housing provision at the following locations within the settlement boundary: WCC owned land in Kilqueeny, close to entrance to Woodview Park, vacant units in new developments on Main Street, Fitzgeralds property, behind Nagles fields, area at end of Station road.
- Suggestions for extending the existing settlement boundary to include the following lands for new housing development:
 - Winterbottom site, i.e. site of derelict caravan park
 - Coillte lands located contiguous to the east of the existing settlement boundary (Coillte submitted request to extend existing settlement boundary, and to identify their suitability to accommodate residential development based on the eco-cluster concept subject to any proposals protecting the existing environmental qualities of the area.
 - Request submitted by Mr. Fergal Macken for 2 sites (0.37ha and 2.16ha), located west of R752 to be rezoned for either residential or holiday home use.

Evaluation

The Avoca Settlement Plan provides for growth up to 2022. The calculations and assumptions that form the basis for providing for future population growth along with rationale regarding extensions to the settlement boundary are set out in Appendix A.

Avoca is designated a 'rural town' in the Settlement Hierarchy of the CDP. As such, the technical term 'town' has been used throughout the plan to describe the settlement.

Avoca Town Centre

Summary of Issues Raised

Town Centre:

- Avoca is served relatively well with retail and tertiary services at present.
- In order to protect the vitality of the town centre, shops should only be permitted in the town centre. Shops should not be permitted in outlying residential areas.
- The vitality of the town centre can be increased by measures such as better parking provision, redevelopment of derelict and vacant buildings, development of new businesses, opening the railway line and station and provision of an ATM.
- New developments should be in line with the existing traditional rural look of the town.
- Derelict property at junction of the bridge and beech road should be dealt with.
- A public toilet is required in the town centre

Traffic Management and Parking in the Town Centre:

- Traffic congestion in town centre requires attention.
- Improvements are needed for traffic and pedestrian safety, e.g. at Nagles/Fitzgeralds junction, need consistency in dealing with paths, approach roads need improvement, need to extend path to church, better signage required.
- There is insufficient parking provision:
 - Short term parking should be reserved for local use on the main street of the town centre. Long term parking should be provided at an alternative site for tourists.
 - The car park opposite the church is in private ownership and it cannot be assumed that this can accommodate the needs of the town. Additional car parking facilities are required. The car parking shortfall could be addressed by the following measures: extend car parking close to church onto floodplain, provide herringbone parking to front of Garda Station, car and bus park at Tinnahinch adjacent to the current bus shelter, deal with car parking enforcement issues, a disabled parking space is required, need better directional signage to car park, parking signs need replacing

Evaluation

The Settlement Plan includes objectives to ensure that the character, charm and setting of the Avoca is preserved and enhanced. The plan includes a number of objectives that have been included as a response to the particular matters that have been raised by the residents of the settlement, including the following: AV33 (allowing the development of shops at town centre locations only), AV25 (promoting safe movement of traffic and pedestrians in town centre including improved parking facilities), AV30 (railway station), AV29 (public toilet), AV31(ATM), AV24(Nagle's property).

Tourism

Summary of Issues Raised

The following suggestions were made for the future development of tourism in the area:

- promote walking and cycling and provide services for walkers, e.g. storytelling, craft
- Develop Avoca Mines – development of Miners Memorial Park, outdoor recreational activities and walks over Department of Energy land
- Loop walk and picnic area in Kilmagig
- Sli na slainte routes
- Provision of River Walk from park in the town to Avoca Handweavers along banks of The Avoca River
- Upgrade existing pathway from Morans Garage to Moores pub
- Exploit potential of old cemetery and turn stile behind 'The Old Hall'
- Viewing points, including The Mottee Stone, The White Cross and The Bell Rock to be improved and made accessible
- Landscape plan required at The Meeting of the Waters and erection of tree
- Redevelop derelict hotels, the Valley Hotel and the Vale View Hotel
- Opening of Avoca Railway Station and provision of 'park and ride' facility.

The following infrastructure is needed for the promotion of tourism: better signage, increased parking provision, public toilets, ATM, footpath from Avoca Handweavers, more self catering accommodation, e.g. camp site – possibly Winterbottom site or Nagles field.

Request submitted by Mr. Fergal Macken for 2 sites (0.37ha and 2.16ha), located west of R752 to be rezoned for either residential or holiday home use.

Evaluation

The plan includes a number of objectives that aim to promote the development of tourist products and infrastructure that are particular to Avoca including AV2, AV3, AV5, AV17, AV19, AV37. Many of the submissions related to matters pertaining to the promotion of the tourist industry at locations outside the settlement boundary. The objectives included in the plan apply only to lands located within the settlement boundary as shown on the map. Objectives for the promotion of tourist activities outside the settlement boundary are included in Chapter 9 of the CDP. The rationale pertaining to the future spatial growth of the town is set out in Appendix A. The promotion of growth onto lands to the west of the regional road is not considered appropriate for reasons pertaining to traffic and pedestrian safety.

Employment

Summary of Issues Raised

The following measures would stimulate employment: development of tourism products, development of retail outlets, convert derelict property on road to the 'Meetings of the Waters' into enterprise park, development of opportunities in crafts or engineering.

Evaluation

The plan includes a number of objectives to stimulate employment including AV2, AV19 and AV37. The plan only includes objectives that relate to lands within the settlement boundary. Developments pertaining to lands outside the settlement boundary, including properties at 'Meetings of the Waters', are subject to the general objectives of the CDP.

Community Facilities

Summary of Issues Raised

- The following types of community facilities are required for future growth: community facility for teenagers, e.g. skate park, youth centre, playground for young children
- Possible locations for development of new community facilities: redevelopment of existing community centre for multi-purpose centre, develop to rear of existing building, opposite recycling centre, on Council land
- Department of Education and Skills submitted information outlining how the Department calculates the extent of school provision needed in an area, and the matters to be considered in allocating land for school development.

Evaluation

The plan includes a number of objectives to promote the development of community facilities in the town, including AV26 (Old School House Community Centre), AV4 (facilities for young people).

In preparing the plan the future schools requirements of the town was considered (refer to 'Education', as set out in Appendix A).

The plan only includes objectives that relate to lands within the settlement boundary.

Developments pertaining to lands outside the settlement boundary, including the recycling centre, are subject to the general objectives of the CDP.

Infrastructure

Summary of Issues Raised

Transportation:

- Signage needs to be improved and maintained, e.g. require 'welcome' signs and directional signage from main county transportation routes, stop, yield and Right of Way signs are confusing in town centre, require signage for cemetery
- Welcome pathways to Woodenbridge and Meetings of the Waters
- Need for more regular bus service
- Open railway
- Poor road and footpath maintenance
- Development contributions should be channeled to deal with infrastructural deficiencies

Waste Water Treatment:

Inland Fisheries Ireland expressed concern with planned growth of Avoca. Avoca Waste Water Treatment Plant discharges to the Avoca River, a salmonoid system of national importance. The existing plant is overloaded and non compliant with the standards of the Urban Wastewater Directive. Further expansion of the town is unsustainable without an upgrade of Avoca WWTP.

Flooding:

- Map prepared indicating flood prone areas. Flood prone areas include Millmount meadows and Woodview park
- photos available

Evaluation

The Council will undertake the maintenance and upgrade of transportation networks in accordance with the infrastructural works programmes for the county.

Matters pertaining to the operation of the public transport system are not within the remit of the current plan.

Objective AV12 aims to manage signage in the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the area and safety of the public.

The CDP includes growth targets for the town, so that it grows to a maximum population of 800 people by 2016 and 900 people by 2022. Notwithstanding the lack of capacity of the Avoca WWTP, the Avoca Settlement Plan is required to be prepared in accordance with these targets. A review of these targets is not within the remit of consideration for the current Settlement Plan. As set out in AV11, it is a particular objective of the planning authority to ensure that the Waste Water Treatment Plant and water supply infrastructure is upgraded to meet the requirements of the future population. However, the provision of such infrastructure is subject to finance being raised or otherwise made available, which is beyond the scope of the plan. In addition, it should be noted that the plan includes an objective requiring that phasing of development may be undertaken for ensuring the delivery of infrastructural services, including water services infrastructure, in tandem with development.

In accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management', an assessment of flood risk has been formally taken into account in the preparation of this plan. The Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the plan.

Heritage

Summary of Issues Raised

- Existing built heritage needs to be protected and enhanced and new development needs to respond to local character and respect the visual context of the area.
- There is a need to develop an architectural framework for Avoca and its hinterland.
- Built heritage contributes to sense of place and identity – features that underpin this identity should be recognised in plan (not just confined to protected structures)
- Mines and heritage of area should be enhanced
- Protection of Court House
- National Parks and Wildlife Service have no comment.

Evaluation

Objectives AV7 and AV28 aims to protect and enhance the character, setting and environmental quality of heritage, including natural, architectural and archaeological heritage. In addition, Chapters 16 and 17 of the CDP include policies for the protection of heritage.

Other Issues

Summary of Issues Raised

The following consultees had no observations to make on the public consultation process:

- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- An Bord Pleanala
- Health and Safety Authority
- National Roads Authority

It is noted that 'Avoca Tidy Towns' supports the submission of the 'The Vale of Avoca Development Company Ltd'

Evaluation

Noted

APPENDIX I
LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

Written Submissions

Reference Number	Consultee	Submission prepared by:
Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government		
1	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Development Applications Unit)	David Tuohy
Prescribed Bodies		
2	An Bord Pleanala	Bill Coleman
3	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Office of the Minister)	Kevin Galligan
4	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Office of the Minister)	Carmel Conaty
5	Department of Education and Skills (Forward Planning Section)	Lorraine Brennan
6	Health and Safety Authority	Olivia Walsh
7	Inland Fisheries Ireland	William Walsh
8	National Roads Authority	Michael McCormack
Public Submissions		
9	Avoca Tidy Towns Committee	Sammy Stewart
10	Coillte Teoranta	John Spain Associates
11	Mr. Fergal Macken	Freddie Millar Building Consultancy
12	Paula and Tony Kelly	
13	Vale of Avoca Development Company Ltd	Bernie Ivors Angela Hendley
14	Vale of Avoca Tourism Committee	Own O'Neill

Submissions made at Stakeholder Meeting Sessions

Reference Number	Consultee
15	Isaac Lett
16	Paula Fitzpatrick/ Kelly
17	Sean Porter
18	Vale of Avoca Development Company Ltd
19	Vale of Avoca Tourism Committee