

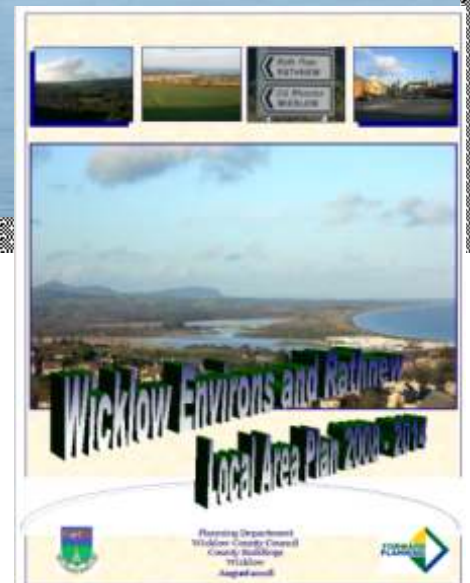
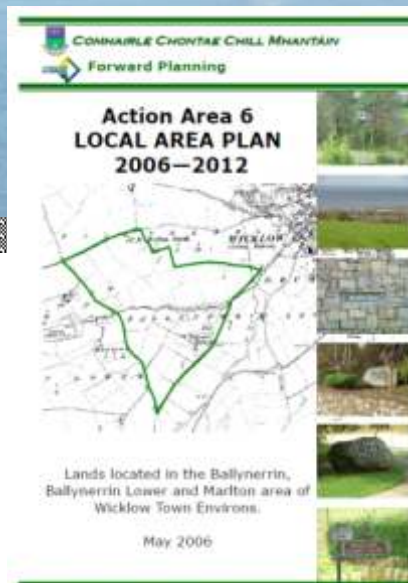
WICKLOW TOWN COUNCIL & WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Preparation of Wicklow Town and Environs Development Plan 2013-2019

Background Issues Paper

1st July 2011

**Joint Plan
incorporating the Wicklow Town Development Plan 2007, Wicklow Environs and
Rathnew Local Area Plan 2008 and Action Area Six Local Area Plan 2006**



Wicklow Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Wicklow Town
Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Station Road, Wicklow
Town





Have your say in the
future development
of your area!

INTRODUCTION

Wicklow Town Council and Wicklow County Council intend to prepare a Development Plan for Wicklow Town and Environs (including Rathnew) that will cover the period 2013 – 2019. Both Councils have approved the preparation of a joint plan, amalgamating the Wicklow Town Development Plan, Wicklow Environs and Rathnew Local Area Plan and the Action Area Six Local Area Plan into the one updated and joint plan which will provide a framework for the coherent, strategic and sustainable future development of Wicklow town and environs as a whole. As part of the plan preparation process, the planning authority is currently consulting with the people of Wicklow Town and Environs along with all interest groups, service providers, statutory bodies and stakeholders.

The Planning Authority has prepared this Background Issues Booklet in order to clarify the topics which the plan will deal with, and in order to encourage participation in the plan making process and to stimulate public discussion and interest. The booklet has a brief introduction to the document and the process involved, followed with identification of the key issues and concludes with how you can get involved in the process at this stage. Therefore it is important that you express your views right from the beginning, as this plan is relevant to you and the future development of your area.



Settlement boundary
Town Plan Boundary
Action Area Six Boundary
Wicklow Environs Boundary

What is the Wicklow Town and Environs Development Plan?

The Plan will set out a vision and a planning framework for the sustainable development of Wicklow Town, its environs and Rathnew as a whole for 6 years from 2013. The plan will be consistent with the current National, Regional and County planning policies and objectives. The Plan will include a written document, environmental assessment and a land use zoning map for the future development of the lands within the plan area.

Plan making process and timeframe

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), provides for the preparation of the Plan in three stages, within which there are four common requirements:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Pre-Draft | } | ! Public Notification |
| 2. Preparation of the Draft Plan | | ! Public Consultation |
| 3. Making of the Development Plan | | ! Manager's Report |
| | | ! Preparation of the Plan |



This Booklet has been prepared as part of the 'Stage 1' public consultation. Following this, the Planning Authority will prepare a report on all submissions received for distribution to the elected members of Wicklow 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 drafting of the plan, which is due to be put on public display in 2012. 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. These submissions will then be considered by the Planning Authority and the elected members in the adopting of a final plan.

What are we looking for from the public at this stage?

We are seeking your views on any issue that the Local Authority is allowed to address in a development plan, such as:

- | zoning of land;
- | provision of infrastructure;
- | conservation and protection of environment including archaeological, architectural and natural heritage;
- | social, community and cultural requirements and the preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
- | development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration;

This list is not exhaustive and further information can be provided about the full requirements for development plans on request.

However, at this stage of the plan preparation process, input is only sought on the more 'strategic' issues such as establishing the overall vision for the area, the overall development strategy and the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats in the area. Submissions requesting the zoning of any particular piece of land for a particular use cannot be made at this stage; however, submissions with regard to zoning issues in general may be made.

Submissions are also welcomed on environmental issues affecting the area, as the assessment of such issues will form an integral part of the plan making process. More details about this process are provided on page X.

Set out to follow is some information about principle areas that the plan will address. However, please feel free to make a submission on any other issue you may consider relevant.

Vision for the area

It is intended that the plan will include a statement of the 'vision' for the future development of the settlement. This 'vision' should reflect the goals and aspirations of the existing residents of the settlement and should also reflect the vision that the Government and the Regional Authority has for the area. Once this 'vision' has been determined, the policies and objectives that will allow this 'vision' to be fulfilled will be developed. All policies and objectives will essentially be 'tested' against this vision to ensure that they are all working towards the same goal.

- What is your vision for the settlement?
- What kind of town should Wicklow be in 2022?
- What in your view is the role of Rathnew in the wider settlement?
- What kind of opportunities and facilities will the settlement need to fulfill this vision?



Settlement Strategy for Region

Core Strategy

The Planning Act requires all development plans to include a 'core strategy'. This essentially is a statement at the beginning of the plan showing how the overall development strategy for the settlement is in compliance with 'higher level' planning and land-use strategies for the area.

- The principle national strategy affecting the area is the 'National Spatial Strategy 2002 -2020'. Other national documents to be considered are the various planning acts and regulations, Government policies and guidelines;
- The regional strategy affecting the area is the 'Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 -2022'
- The county strategy affecting the area is the 'Wicklow County Development Plan 2010 -2016'.



The 'core strategy' must include a statement showing how the plan is in compliance with the objectives of the higher level plans, for the following;

- ! the population target for the settlement,
- ! the amount of land zoned for housing; matching up with population & housing targets,
- ! retail policies and objectives for the town and environs, and transport infrastructure policies and objectives.

- Do you think that the settlement of Wicklow/Rathnew is fulfilling the role set out for it in national, regional and county strategies?
- If the current amount of land zoned for housing is found to be in excess of what is needed to meet population & housing targets, what should be done?... Should land be de-zoned?... If so what land?
- If the amount of land zoned and policies with regard to retail development do not match the higher level plans, what should be done?... Should land designated for new shopping development be de-zoned?

Population and Housing

It is intended that the plan will include a statement of the 'vision' for the future development of the settlement. This 'vision' should reflect the goals and aspirations of the existing residents of the settlement and should also reflect the vision that the Government and the Regional Authority has for the area. Once this 'vision' has been determined, the policies and objectives that will allow this 'vision' to be fulfilled will be developed. All policies and objectives will essentially be 'tested' against this vision to ensure that they are all working towards the same goal. of land zoned should accommodate the population target and should adhere to the core strategy and vision for Plan.

Housing Strategy

The County Wicklow Housing Strategy 2010 has evaluated the housing needs of all sectors of the community including the needs of specific groups such as the homeless, travellers, older people and persons with disabilities. The Plan must ensure that there is sufficient serviced land available to meet anticipated housing demand over the period of the plan and secure the over-all implementation of the Housing Strategy within the plan area.

House Design and Standards

The existing Wicklow Town Development Plan 2007 and the Wicklow County Development Plan 2010 have specific residential design standards that are implemented at development management stage. The plan needs to review these design standards, and in doing so will have regard to Government guidelines and best practice.

- Where and how do you think this population growth should be best accommodated?
- What additional services and facilities would you like to see to support Wicklow's growing population?
- How in your opinion should the design of new residential developments be improved?
- How can the Wicklow Town and Environs Development Plan facilitate and encourage good design and layouts in new residential developments?
- What are the problems, if any, with the newer residential developments in Wicklow and Rathnew?
- Is there a need for the plan to provide for higher density residential development in Wicklow and environs and if so, where should this be located?





Economic Development

Economic development and the creation of employment opportunities are fundamental to the creation of sustainable communities. Wicklow in the past had a tradition of light industry and manufacturing, along with services in town centre areas and it is acknowledged that currently a significant amount of the population travel outside of the town and environs for work. The Plan should provide a framework to allow for the successful continuation of existing enterprises and for the development of new employment opportunities for Wicklow, providing jobs within the town for residents of the town and the wider County. While a land-use plan in itself will not create employment, the plan can influence the development of the elements needed to make a place attractive to new employers such as:

- | zoned, serviced land
- | good access to transport corridors by road, rail and sea
- | high quality communications infrastructure
- | wide pool of well skilled and educated employees
- | an attractive town centre, good retail services and high quality housing for employees.

It is considered that Wicklow will be well positioned in these regards when economic growth returns to the wider economy. However, it is important to ensure that the policies and objectives of the new plan further enhance these factors.

Wicklow Town Council and Wicklow County Council are working in partnership with other organisations such as the Town and County Enterprise Boards, The Chamber of Commerce, IDA and Enterprise Ireland to promote economic development and employment opportunities in the town and environs.

The Town Centre has the dual function of providing employment and also services to employees / residents of the town and its hinterland. It is of utmost importance to protect the traditional role of the town centre as the primary retailing and business core of the settlement.

County Policy envisaged that **Wicklow town** should seek to have a full range of all types of retail services from newsagents to specialist shops and boutiques, department stores, foodstores of all types, shopping centres and high level of mixed uses to create a vibrant, living place. **Rathnew** should seek to have a limited range of supporting shops, retail services and facilities.

- [How can Wicklow best maximise its strengths and attractiveness for investment?](#)

- Are the existing zoning provisions in the Plans flexible enough to allow for a sustainable mix of employment types?
- Where should new employment be located in the town? What type of employment would you like to see there?
- How can Wicklow town centre and Rathnew Village centre be improved in terms of its physical attractiveness as a prime shopping location?
- What other retail services would you like to see within Wicklow and Environs? Where would you like to see these other shops and services located?
- In new residential areas what type of shops and services would you like to see provided?

Community Facilities

In order to encourage a high 'quality of life' standard in Wicklow Town and environs, it is important to ensure that high quality and a sufficient quantity of social infrastructure, facilities and services are in place. Community facilities cover a range of social infrastructure such as schools, crèches, places of worship, hospitals, nursing homes, health centres, facilities for older and younger people; people with disabilities, libraries, traveler accommodation, community halls etc.

Education - Within the plan area, there are 7 primary schools and 4 secondary schools with a large secondary school currently under construction at Keatingstown (incorporating 2 existing secondary schools). At tertiary level, Carlow Institute of Technology provides a growing number of courses in Clermont Campus, Rathnew. The plan has an important role in identifying and protecting school and community facilities sites. Close co-operation between the Councils, the Department of Education, the VEC, religious organisations and lay groups will be necessary so as to ensure that educational facilities are provided however it is important to note that the reservation of such sites by zoning is not in itself a guarantee of the provision of the facility.

Sports and Recreation - Wicklow Town and Environs has a number of recreational/sporting facilities including rugby, Gaelic, hockey, tennis and soccer clubs, a golf course, community pool, playgrounds and a ball alley in both private club and public ownership. Wicklow is also well placed to utilise its hill, coastal and river amenities for recreational purposes.

..... turn over for questions on community facilities



Community Facilities....

- What type of community facilities and local services are needed in new and existing residential communities and within the town? Where should new facilities be located?
- How can local residents and community groups be encouraged to engage in the planning and delivery of community facilities in their area?
- What educational deficiencies are there in the settlement? Are new facilities needed and if so, where in the wider town should they be located?
- What type of additional sports and recreational facilities would you like to see in Wicklow and environs?

Tourism

Tourism is becoming an ever -important factor in the drive to enhancing the economic development and performance of the town. County Wicklow and its County Town, Wicklow, have a rich variety of heritage, cultural activities, recreational facilities and natural assets, which compliment its strategic location, excellent infrastructure and natural setting. The existing plans in place facilitate the provision and development of tourism facilities and accommodation within the town and environs. The Council works with a number of tourism bodies, like Fáilte Ireland to promote Wicklow as a tourist destination and visitor attraction. The built and natural assets of the town, as well as the public realm play, an important role in promoting Wicklow as a tourist location. The Plan should seek to ensure the protection, appropriate development and promotion of the town and environs assets.

- How can the plan facilitate the provision and development of tourism facilities and accommodation?
- What needs to be done to promote the arts in Wicklow town and Environs?

Infrastructure

The infrastructural network servicing the entire town and environs plays a crucial role in facilitating growth in the town and making the town an attractive and safe place to live.

Footpaths, cycle paths, rail and roads - The continued improvement of the road network in the town, including the provision of footpaths, pedestrian crossing, cycle lanes, traffic management proposals and car parking, are important considerations for incorporation into the Development Plan.

Public transport - Wicklow Town and Environs and Rathnew are serviced by Bus Eireann and a number of private link buses. The town is serviced by the southern rail-line servicing Dublin/ Connolly and Rathdrum/ Rosslare.

Water services - Wicklow Town and County Councils recently upgraded the wastewater treatment plant for the town and environs to accommodate the existing and future population of the town. The town is supplied with water from the Dublin City Council Vartry waterworks in Roundwood, and while there is sufficient supply, not all areas in the town can be serviced unless new infrastructure is constructed to reach lands at the higher elevations. This will be an important consideration in the new plan.

Wicklow Port is a cargo only port that operates the whole year round by the Wicklow Port Company. There is a large packing pier and a number of river berths on both the north and south quay.

Communications and Energy - Wicklow has multiple providers of broadband, which places it in a very strong competitive position. The Plan needs to incorporate policies and objectives to promote sustainable communications and energy services.

Flooding is a natural event that can be made worse by manmade developments and climatic change. The plan needs to address issues in relation to surface and groundwater quality and how to manage development in areas that are susceptible to flooding. The Development Plan should aim to ensure that new development should not individually or cumulatively give rise to new flood risks.

The **Waste Management Plan** for County Wicklow for the period 2006 -2011 sets out proposals for managing waste in accordance with national and EU policy. The plan identified the current position with regard to waste management and sets out policy and targets for future improvement and development.

- Are there current deficiencies in the transport network in the town?
Are improvements required to public transport networks, and if so, what are they?

.... turn over for more questions on infrastructure



Infrastructure...

- What might make you move away from private car use to public transport?
- What needs to be done to improve the walking and cycling network in the town?
- Do you think are any improvements needed in the harbour/port area?
- Do you think the harbour has the potential for future development... or should it be protected in its current condition? If so how would you like to see this happen?
- What measures should the Development Plan include to ensure energy conservation, reduced carbon footprint and to promote sustainable energy in Wicklow?
- How can we ensure that developments in Wicklow do not contribute to deterioration in waters –ground water, rivers, and coastal waterways?
- What additional measures can the town do to promote and facilitate the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste?
- Are you aware of any areas of flooding that need to be addressed?

Heritage and Natural Environment

The Planning Authority has a legal responsibility to prepare a **Record of Protected Structures** and to protect individual structures of architectural, cultural, social, etc merit from destruction or damage. Archaeological features are protected under the National Monuments Acts. An area or group of structures or townscapes may be designated an **Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)**, which aims to preserve and enhance the appearance of an area. The current Wicklow Town Development Plan has an adopted ACA in the town centre area and a limited number of protected structures and archaeological sites.

Wicklow town and environs contains a wealth of **natural heritage** assets including marine, wetland, river and upland habitats that support a rich variety of plant and animal species. Four special areas have been designated within the plan area, with two designated for the conservation of plants, animals and wildlife habitats and the other two designated for the conservation and protection of rare and threatened bird species and their habitats.

Biodiversity refers to the whole variety of life on earth. It includes habitats and ecosystems covering all plants, animals and micro -organisms both on land and in water. The County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan 2010 – 2015 is currently in place with a number of proposals and policies that are invaluable in informing the review of the Development Plan.

- How can the next Wicklow Town and Environs Plan contribute to the protection, conservation and appreciation of the built and natural environment?
- How can a balance be achieved between protection of our heritage and at the same time, provide for the development and future needs of the town and its environs?
- What objectives do you think should be included in the Plan to protect the flora and fauna and promote bio -diversity?

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Appropriate Assessment Screening

(AA)

SEA is a process that aims to ensure that any significant environmental effects are taken into account in the preparation of the plan and that policies and objectives are formulated in the context of environmental protection and enhancement. AA is slightly different as it focuses on specific sites that are designed for protection under EU environmental law, this process identifies any such sites around the plan area and assesses the potential impact of the plans policies and objectives on these sites. Where policies and objectives are considered to have unavoidable negative environmental implications, mitigation measures must be included prior to the adoption of the Plan. SEA and AA aim to improve the quality of the plan making process by facilitating the identification and appraisal of alternative strategies, raising awareness of environmental impacts of the plan and encouraging the inclusion of measurable targets and indicators, thus facilitating the effective monitoring of the implementation of the plan.

- What do you think are the big environmental issues within the Wicklow and Environs Plan area?
- What measures should the Council take to ensure that the environmental impacts of development are minimised or mitigated?



FURTHER ISSUES FOR YOU TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON!

While specific zoning request cannot be made at this stage of the plan preparation process, the plan team would welcome your views of the future of these important sites in the settlement.

1. The Murrough area

The plan drafting process will include a consideration of existing and potential uses for this strategically located area. It is located between the amenity areas of Broadlough wetlands and the coastline, it has easy access to Wicklow Town centre, it is located a short distance from the train station, it is easily accessed by car with the new Port Access Route, the new Wicklow Town Wastewater Treatment Plant has recently been constructed here and it is an employment area with existing industrial uses.

2. Action Area Six in Marlton

There is a significant quantum of land zoned in the current Action Area Six Local Area Plan for a Development Centre with retail provision and mixed uses, however no development has been permitted on these lands.

3. The Port and Harbour

This is an important employment, infrastructural, tourism and amenity asset to the Town.

4. The Quayside

The south and north quay along the Leitrim River.

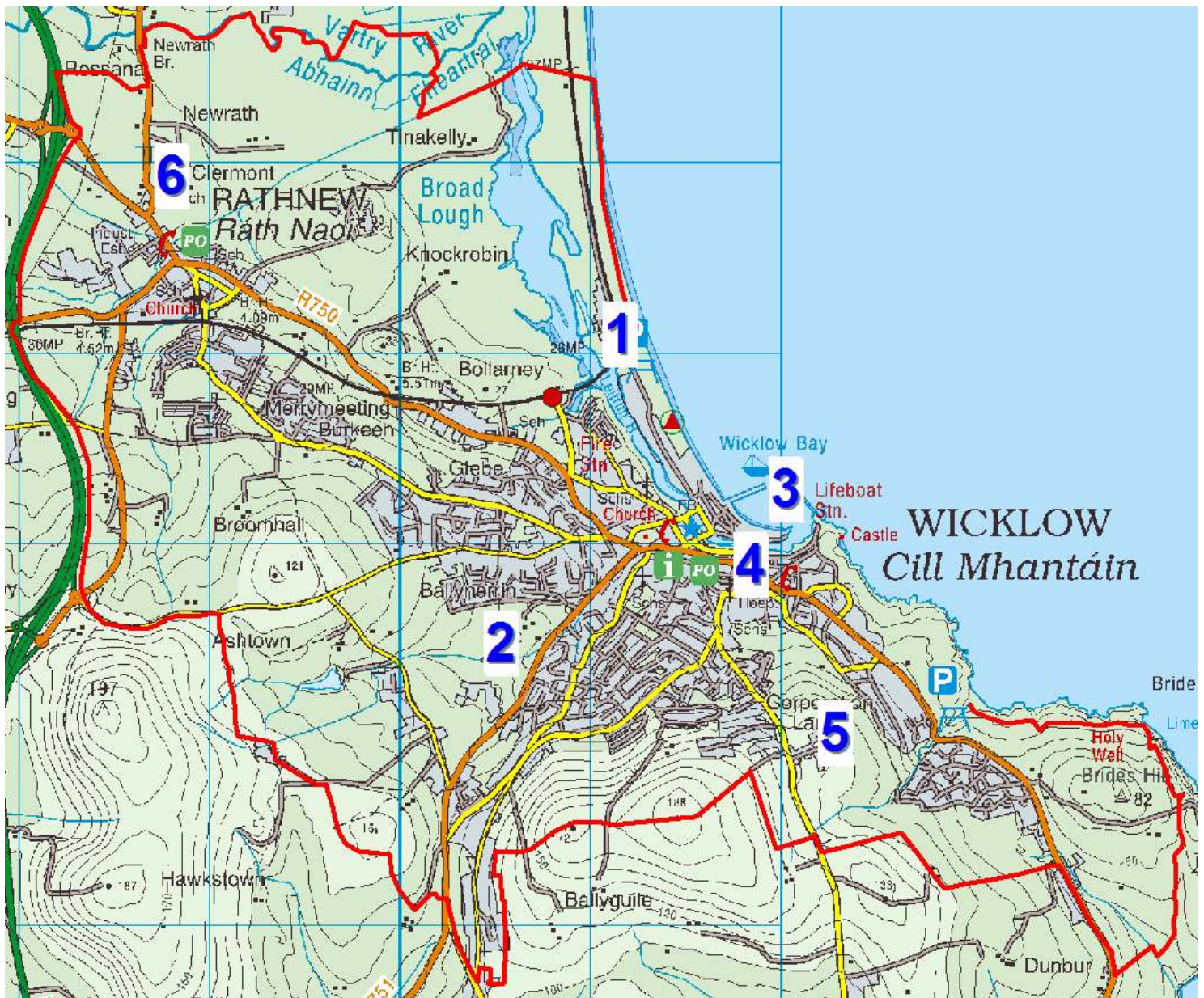
5. The Convent Lands

The green lands to the rear of the convent in Wicklow.

6. Clermont Campus

3rd level college in Rathnew and its future development.

This list is not exhaustive; submissions may be made on any area of the town and environs.



Map of Plan area with highlighting areas for further discussion.

? **Wicklow Environs Local Area Plan Boundary**

HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

We invite you to make a submission or observations on this Background Issues Booklet for the review of the existing plan and the preparation of a new Development Plan. Children, or groups or associations representing the interests of children, are entitled to make submissions or observations.

While a review the zoning of the area of the Development Plan shall occur as part of the plan making process, this stage of the plan review process is 'strategic' in nature in that it is for the purposes of developing the objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the Development Plan and the core strategy of the plan.

Submissions or observations may be made regarding the objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area may be made, BUT requests or proposals for zoning of particular land for any purpose shall not be considered at this stage and should not be made.

Submissions should be made in writing from **Friday 1st July 2011 to Friday 26th August 2011** and marked 'Wicklow Town and Environs Development Plan' and should be addressed to:

Submissions may be made in one of the following ways: -

- 1. Write to:** Administrative Officer, Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, Station Road, Wicklow Town.
- 2. Email to:** wicklownplanreview@wicklowtc.ie

A **public information day**, when staff from the Development Plan team will be available to answer questions and to assist in making a submission will be held on

Tuesday 12th July 2011 in **Rathnew Soccer Club**, Rathnew from 5.00pm to 7.00pm and

Thursday 14th July 2011 in **Wicklow Town Council**, Town Hall, Market Square, Wicklow Town 3.30pm -5.00pm and 6.30 -8.00pm.

Wicklow Local Authorities are committed to Access For All. All of the above documents are available in alternative format on request. Please contact Aoife Flynn, Access Officer, Wicklow County Council on 087 -0575938 or at aflynn@wicklowcoco.ie should you have any specific access requirements.