



# 1. County Profile

County Wicklow had an estimated population of 114,676 in 2002<sup>1</sup>. Wicklow is one of the most rapidly growing counties in Ireland and as part of the Greater Dublin Area, it is subject to many of the pressures emanating from the expansion of the capital city.

Rural Wicklow is now under even greater development pressure generated by increasingly easier road access to the county from Dublin, greater prosperity and the continued urbanisation of the county. The model of rural land use, dominated by traditional agriculture, is changing to include more varied patterns of rural land use such as alternative crops and animals, farm forestry, recreation, tourist accommodation and activities.

The typical topography in Wicklow is one of mountains, rolling foothills, forests, coastline, and lakes with attractive views and prospects. The County is dominated by the Wicklow Mountains. With the exception of a narrow coastal strip and some low ground in the south, most of County Wicklow lies above the 200 metre contour line and over one third of the County lies above the 300 metre contour line.

The spine of the mountain range formed of granite runs in a Northeast to Southwest direction across the county. The glaciation period in Wicklow contributed significantly to the overall physical appearance of the County with the distinctive glaciated “U” shaped valleys, moraines, corries and glacial lakes, along with other glacial, and peri glacial features and landforms. Among the most distinctive features are the Sally Gap, Powerscourt Waterfall and Glendalough, which accommodates the internationally renowned early monastic site. Wicklow also has a 66-km coastline, which is renowned for its shingle and sandy beaches.

The principal towns in County Wicklow are located along the east coast with a second linear arrangement of smaller centres in the west. The principal transport routes are the N11 in the east and the N81 in the west. East-west movement is restricted by the mountains.

The east of the County is served by the mainline railway with stations at Bray, Greystones, Kilcoole, Wicklow, Rathdrum and Arklow. DART services are provided from Greystones. In addition there are regular bus services throughout the County.

There are five electoral areas for Wicklow County Council (Bray, Greystones, Wicklow, Arklow and Baltinglass) and three Town Council areas (Bray, Wicklow, Arklow). In addition Greystones has a Town Council.

# 2. Context

## 2.1 – THE NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

The NSS for Ireland is a “twenty year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. Its focus is on people, on places and on building communities. Through closer matching of where people live with where they work, different parts of Ireland will for the future be able to sustain:

- A better quality of life for people
- A strong, competitive economic position and
- An environment of the highest quality”

## 2.2 – THE STRATEGIC PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR THE GREATER DUBLIN AREA, 1999 (SPG)

The SPG’s have put in place a broad planning framework for the development of the Greater Dublin Area, of which County Wicklow forms part. The strategy provides an overall strategic context for Development Plans which promotes a sustainable settlement strategy and for the provision of major transportation, sanitary services and other infrastructure. They set out the preferred direction for the land use and transportation in the period up to 2011.

The vision of the Guidelines is that the Greater Dublin Area, as the capital city region of the country, should reflect the growing international role and significance of Ireland and be an area that can be promoted as a pleasant place to live in and visit with a high quality of both natural and built environment. The area should offer residents and visitors a high quality of life with excellent opportunities for education and leisure.

The Guidelines foresee in the future that the Greater Dublin Area will have a much improved transportation system, with a better balance between public and private transport. A sustainable settlement strategy will offer choice in terms of residential and employment location and create a clear demarcation between urban and rural areas. The Guidelines make a distinction between the existing built up area of Dublin (and its immediate environs) called the Metropolitan Area and the Hinterland Area with extensive areas of countryside and a range of towns of various sizes. The principle issues in the Metropolitan Area relate to pressure arising from rapid and intensive development such as severe traffic congestion, whilst an important issue in the Hinterland Area is overspill of development pressure from the built up areas of Dublin.

The Development Centres in County Wicklow include Bray and Greystones in the Metropolitan Area and Wicklow and Arklow in the Hinterland Area. Therefore in line with the SPGs, growth in County Wicklow will be primarily directed into the aforementioned growth centres.

<sup>1</sup>Central Statistics Office, Principle Demographic Results, 2003.



The Local Government (Planning and Development Act) 2000 gives statutory recognition to the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and states that Planning Authorities “shall have regard to any regional guidelines in force in its area when making and adopting a Development Plan” This County Development Plan generally complies with the principles and objectives of the SPG’s.

## 2.3 – REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES

The Regional Planning Guidelines set a 12 to 20-year strategic policy that should be considered by local authorities in their development plans.

"Strategic" refers to those policy directions which transcend the boundaries of individual planning authorities and which relate to the role of the region in delivering the National Spatial Strategy. These strategic policies will in turn be translated into policies and objectives in City and County Development Plans. The Regional Planning Guidelines will retain a strategic focus, considering the statutory obligations of all local authorities in the Region including in particular any national plans, policies or strategies specified by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government as relevant to the determination of strategic planning policies.

The two Regional Authorities in the Greater Dublin Area, the Dublin and Mid-East Regions, have come together as a unified authority to facilitate the preparation of the Guidelines. The Regional Planning Guidelines will address issues specific to the Greater Dublin Area. The structure will comprise two main parts:

**Part A:** An overall Development Report for the Region

The key issues relevant to strategic planning and socio-economic and physical planning in terms of broad trends, housing, employment, provision of services, accessibility, environmental issues, social and cultural development and overall goals for the region.

**Part B:** Regional Planning Guidelines for the Region

Development principles and strategic development options and scenarios are distilled into a preferred strategy for 2010 in a framework of 2016 to 2020.

The Dublin and Mid-East Regional Authorities, acting jointly, made the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004–2016 on April 27th 2004. The Regional Planning Guidelines came into effect in July 2004 and replaced the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, 1999.

As the review of the CDP commenced before the RPGs were adopted, it is proposed to review the CDP and if deemed necessary amend the CDP by way of variation.

## 2.4 – THE DUBLIN TRANSPORT OFFICE “A PLATFORM FOR CHANGE”

The Dublin Transportation Office prepared an integrated strategy which encompasses two major elements:

- The provision of infrastructure and related services
- Demand management which aims to reduce the number of trips taken in the private car and to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.

The principle components of the strategy are:

- An integrated public transport network which provides a radical transformation in the quality and quantity of the services provided;
- Strategic, but limited improvements to the road network which will be managed in a way which does not encourage peak hour car commuting;
- Traffic management policies;
- A freight management policy;
- Good quality cycling and pedestrian networks;
- A statement of policy on demand management;
- Guidance on complimentary land use policies.
- Integrated Framework Plans for Landuse and Transportation (IFPLUTS)

Other Guidelines and Strategies adhered to in the drafting of policies and objectives in the Plan are identified in Appendix 6.

## 3. Vision and Overall Strategy for County Wicklow

To support the principles of sustainability as manifested in Agenda 21 and to protect and enhance the unique identity of County Wicklow as the “Garden of Ireland”.

1. To provide for sustainable growth and regulate pressures from both urban and rural development and yet recognise the right for an individual to build a dwelling for use as their own home in a rural area, by providing a sustainable settlement and growth strategy.
2. To develop a high quality, sustainable and integrated transportation system embracing the road and rail transport sectors with an increased emphasis on improving and expanding public transport, cycling and walking, to achieve a more balanced and sustainable pattern of mobility.
3. To develop social, cultural and community facilities in appropriate locations and scale that are accessible to all members of the community, with the long term effect of sustaining and enriching the quality of life of people in Wicklow.
4. To encourage and facilitate the provision of infrastructure services to meet the demand for development and future population needs in a sustainable manner.
5. To strengthen and enhance the County’s image, both rural and urban, by encouraging and facilitating the principles of good design and high quality development.



6. To promote the sustainable development of the built and natural environment in County Wicklow and to ensure that new development is integrated sympathetically into the landscape in a manner that will ensure that the landscape can be handed on to future generations without being degraded.
7. To secure an economic and employment base in Wicklow that will attract high quality investment and provide a range of job opportunities thereby maximise social inclusion.
8. To assist in the implementation of objectives set out in Outlook that are appropriate to Land Use and Planning.

