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What area does your submission relate to? Core Strategy

Your comments

Density • I agree with the issues paper in that much higher densities should be considered, in particular for town cores. Many of our rural towns and large villages are very sparse and could support a higher density of three-story enclosed development on the main roads. In addition, short pedestrian streets radiating off the main road should be encouraged to allow further development behind the main roads. Underground parking and indeed basements in general should be encouraged to further provide sustainable density.

- I would like to see a parking policy in place that helps limit the amount of cars parking on main roads and improve pedestrian safety and access.
- We should continue to be extra vigilant about development outside urban boundaries. The plan should incorporate green belts around settlements to protect the rural nature of our surroundings and avoid having settlements that adjoin each other.
- Transport density is far too low to sustain the high building rates happening in some parts of north Wicklow. Park and rides, increased train frequency and cycle path connections to public transport are required to sustain this growth. Allotments
- Some county authorities in Ireland have been very proactive regarding provision of allotment gardens (for example Fingal), however Wicklow has taken no action in this regard. In this plan we have the opportunity to reverse this trend. Some think of Wicklow as rural in nature and not needing allotment gardens but this is far from the case. High density town and village developments are generating unmet demand for spaces in which communities and individuals can grow their own food in close proximity to their homes. Greenfield developments should provide a portion of their space for allotment gardens and the county should adopt a policy to develop allotments on a per-capita basis. These spaces have extremely positive knock-on effects on health and well-being, and can mitigate against unemployment or under-employment. Afforestation • Planting new woodland mitigates climate change and adds huge amenity value when done in close proximity to population centres. Greenfield sites should be offset with planting of additional woodland and the county should pursue afforestation in the green belt areas between villages when the opportunity presents itself. Every settlement should have a woodland where local people can go to experience the unmatched well-being benefits that come from human contact with this habitat.

- The county should have afforestation goals and be as specific in these goals as we are with housing development action plans. Coastal wetlands
- We should continue to protect and even expand the coastal wetlands complex from Wicklow Town up to Kilcoole. There are a number of areas here where low-output agriculture is pursued in areas that were historically high quality wetlands. The county should have a strategy to re-flood and re-wild these areas as the opportunity to purchase land presents itself, in order to extend and protect the nationally important environment here. Water quality
- A number of older wastewater treatment plants are discharging into our coastal streams which undoubtedly has an impact on fish stocks and coastal health. The development plan should contain strategies on how to reduce and eliminate wastewater discharge to our sensitive water bodies and also how to mitigate against future development which will impinge on water quality. We should have buffer requirements in our development plans which allow for native vegetation along streams to an appropriate distance. We should also be working to replace over the coming years bridges which obstruct the free flow of trout and salmon from the sea. Walkways
- Our rural walkways are a priceless heritage from previous years and should be rigorously protected. We have only a very small handful of protected rights of way; we should have a policy of expanding this number. We should document the customary rights of way and class them according to their amenity value. Development should be discouraged and prevented within a certain distance of these ways. Future generations will thank us for protecting the heritage that has come down to us in the form of rural paths.

2019-12-16