



## Wicklow Town - Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

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### File

Local Plan Submission.pdf, 0.6MB

Here are some sample questions on this topic, all ideas are welcomed.

## What are the key transport and movement issues affecting residents, workers and visitors?

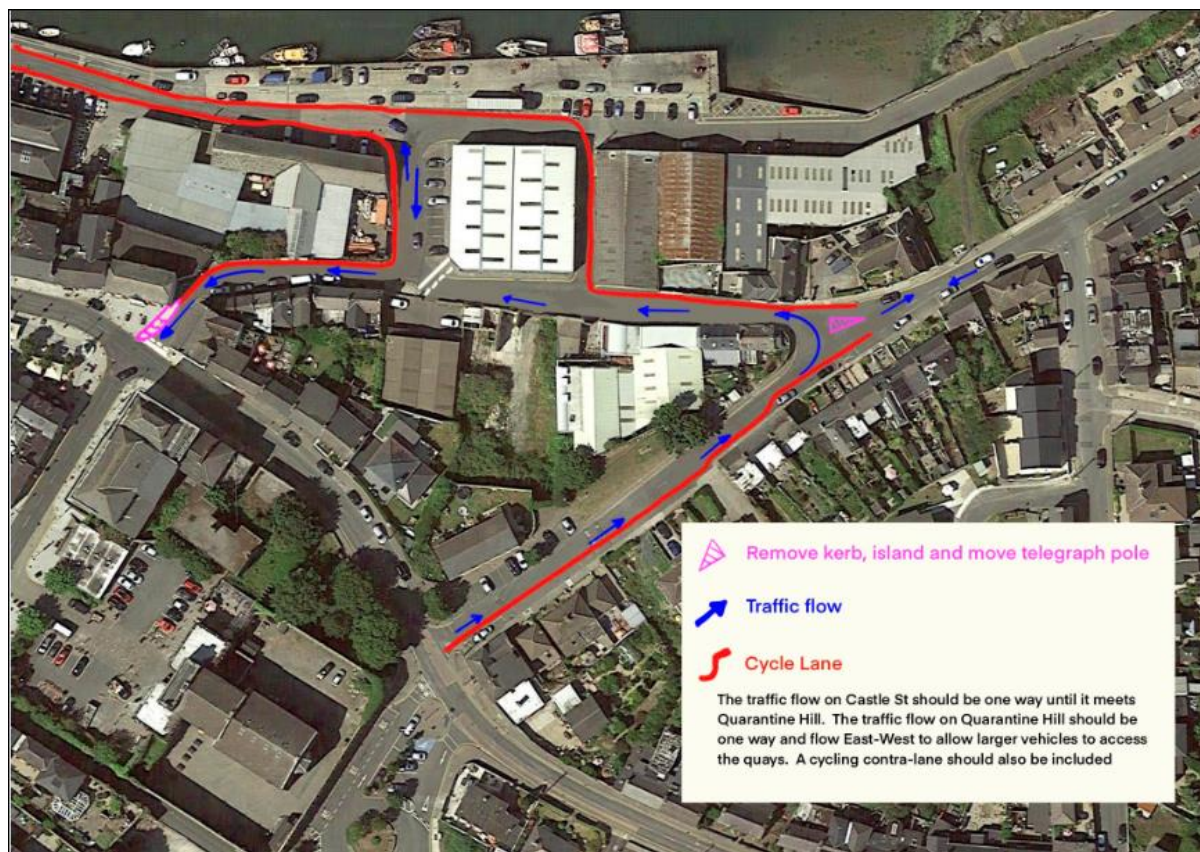
The trial One-Way system does not feel like a safe system to have in place and for residents living on the Dunbar Lower side of town, it forces drivers to use the Quays more frequently which is not practical given it is a working quay.

If the system is not reversed, then I would appeal to the planning team and Wicklow MD to make the driving experience safer for residents taking on board some of the following suggestions.

### Quarantine Hill/Castle Street

This road would be safer as a one-way road as there is simply not enough space to fit two cars through as you approach the top of the hill. Failing that, in order to provide better visibility for drivers coming up the hill, ideally the island would be removed and mirrors put in place across the street so drivers can see any cars approaching from Castle Street. Most importantly, double yellow lines need to be placed on both sides of the road on castle street so that drivers turning right onto Castle Street are not forced to turn onto the wrong side of the road into oncoming traffic. Below are images highlighting the problem as well as an example of how an improved one-way system in this zone could incorporate cycle lanes and make for a safer travel experience for all.

Pic 1: Proposed layout for Quarantine Hill/Castle Street to include cycle lanes



Pic 2: Example of how cars turning up the hill have no visibility and are forced to turn into the wrong side of the road facing into oncoming traffic because of cars parked on Castle Street



Pic 3: Road is too narrow as you approach the top of the hill, there is no visibility to castle street and the island and telephone pole are an added obstacle





The footpaths on the main street are too narrow especially with obstructions such as shop signs placed outside and bins in the middle of the path. I often have to step onto the road with small children to allow others to pass which is not safe given the volume of traffic on the street.



## **What are the issues to overcome in moving from the private car to public transport or walking and cycling?**

Having moved to Wicklow in recent years, I now use my car more than ever simply because safe supports are not in place for cycling and the trains do not run late enough in the evening. When living in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, we constantly cycled with the children to school and to the shops at the weekends as safe cycle lanes were in place in Dundrum/Ballinteer/Stillorgan areas. European Sports Day takes place this Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September and our children's school are encouraging us to increase their activity as part of the Active Schools Flag Programme, the initiative supported by Healthy Ireland and part of the National Physical Activity Plan. However, the trial One-Way system has made no provision for residents living East of Market Square and it is not safe or possible for my young children to cycle down to the Quays or up Kilmantin Hill. There are no designated cycle lanes on Dunbar Road, cars are allowed to park on the pavement blocking the path of cyclists and there are dangerous driving conditions and a lack of visibility around Quarantine Hill. The abundance of dog faeces on the footpaths also makes walking an unpleasant experience. Every time I walk into the town with the children someone stands on dog poo its unpleasant and hazardous. I can't imagine how awful the experience is for wheelchair users.

Pic 4: Dunbar Road. Example of cars parking on the footpath blocking the flow of traffic and making it unsafe for cyclists. Ideally this road would be double yellow as there is no visibility of oncoming traffic as you drive up the hill. This is also a barrier for pedestrians/cyclists as the cars block the way of buggies/wheelchairs and cyclists.



Pic 5: Dunbar Road Lower. Who owns this land is it the Council or the Golf Club? Could this land be better utilised and turned into a cycle track? This would stop the need for maintenance of ugly hedging/brambles which blocks a beautiful view and would allow residents on the East side of Wicklow Town to cycle safely into the town. Could the footpath on the golf course side of the street be turned into/accommodate a cycle path to facilitate travel in and out of the town and as a tourist attraction on this coastal road? The current one-way system would need to be altered to allow for cyclists approaching from this side of town.





Pic 6: Proposed cycle track along coastal road on Dunbar Road



More frequent trains are needed to allow residents to work and socialise in Dublin/Greystones and avail of trains running until later in the evening and to avoid driving. This would also encourage tourism into the town.

### **Are there any services infrastructure issues in the area?**

During the summer months, bus services to the beaches would help avoid the problem of parking issues outside of places like Magheramore and Brittas Bay Beaches and decrease car usage. Cycle lanes from the town to the beaches would be fantastic and something residents I have spoken to would welcome. On a summers day it would be amazing to cycle from the town to the beach and spend the day there with no parking issues so bike storage/parking at the beaches would be ideal or bike rentals for tourists. Improved toilet facilities/rubbish disposal etc would also be welcome at the beaches as well as monitoring of dogs/horses on the beach to avoid sickness caused by animal waste in the water. I have been in the carpark at Brittas Bay and watched the parking attendant allow horse boxes to enter at a time when horses are not allowed on the beach. I know there are signs in place but who is policing this?

There are also no services in the harbour for swimmers. My children took part in the Water Safety Ireland sea swimming lessons on Watsons slip but there were no toilet/changing facilities which is a bit oversight for a community living by the sea with initiatives encouraging swim safety and sea swimming.

Pic 7: Busy harbour in summer full of swimmers highlighting the popularity of sea activities but no facilities



Continuing the topic of healthy activities and swimming, Coral Leisure is lacking in adequate facilities. The centre is run down and in need of refurbishment – changing room doors are broken, the gym is dirty and there is not enough availability for children to avail of swimming lessons. If this centre was upgraded, I would happily pay a family membership if we could avail of swimming lessons and a gym that is clean and user friendly (free hair dryers & showers, functioning lockers etc). At present we have to commute to Dublin (in the car) for swimming lessons.

Aside from boutique shops, there are no larger shops where basic family clothing can be purchased. A small shopping centre would be a wonderful addition to the town with resources for families such as a cinema & family eatery (not pubs) which the growing population needs.

Lack of accommodation for visitors locally means we do not invite family and friends to Wicklow town as there is no hotel for people to stay in. When celebrating my daughter's communion, relatives from Dublin had to hire a private bus to go home as there was no accommodation in the town for them to avail of and no late train service.

We are also lacking in town pride as the footpaths in the town are littered with dog waste to the point that it is problematic and a health hazard and there are weeds everywhere along the pavements/roads. Is there a means by which the dog waste could be cleared and the paths cleaned/weeds tackled? Campaigns to educate dog owners clearly are not working so the policing of this and actually implementing fines may be more effective.

Unoccupied properties on the main streets also have a negative impact on the towns culture and If there was a penalty for leaving buildings unoccupied this might motivate landlords to rent properties at an affordable rate to new businesses.

Wicklow Town has the potential to be the best place to live on the East Coast especially as people embrace a hybrid/working from home culture and embrace living by the sea and more outdoor activities. We have such beautiful beaches but no transport or facilities to encourage people to utilise them more. Supporting cycling in a meaningful way could transform the towns appearance, traffic problems and most importantly benefit the physical & mental health of the residents greatly. Cleaning up the footpaths and tackling the dog poo problem would go a long way to improving town pride and appearance.

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