

	Proposed Variation No. 7 to the Wicklow County Development Plan Submission Report
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Submission Details

Ref	VAR7-141427
Who Are You?	Private Individual
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Submitted Time:	September 26, 2026 2:30 PM

Proposed Variation Parts

Topic	Part 1: Proposed Variation to town / settlement zoning maps and, where relevant, proposed new or amended site specific policy objectives.
Submission	1. Level 5: Ashford

Topic	Part 2
Submission	Changes consequent to Chapter 3 (Core Strategy) of the County Development Plan

Topic	Part 3
Submission	2. D. Call for Sites – Summary of Assessment

Write your observations here:

1. Introduction & Reason for Submission

As a local resident of Ashford, I wish to make a formal submission expressing significant concerns regarding Proposed Variation No. 7 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022–2028.

Specifically, I am objecting to proposals that seek to rezone additional greenfield land for residential development within or directly adjacent to the settlement boundary of Ashford. This proposed rezoning is contrary to proper planning and sustainable development for a Level 5 Settlement and risks compromising the village character and quality of life of current residents.

2. Existing Zoning & Housing Capacity

Under the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022–2028, Ashford is identified as a Level 5 Small Town.

Adequate Capacity within Settlement Boundary: The current statutory plan and existing land zonings already provide ample capacity to meet the housing delivery targets allocated to Ashford. A substantial volume of land is currently zoned, permitted, or in the planning pipeline within the established settlement boundary.

Prematurity of Greenfield Zoning: Seeking to rezone further greenfield sites outside or beyond the designated development boundary is unnecessary, premature, and directly violates principles of sequential development (where existing serviced and zoned lands should be developed before greenfield additions are considered). There are multiple sites that house derelict or warehouse structures in the key core of the town that have been kept idle for years. No incentive to develop these exists, especially should additional

greenfield sites be rezoned instead.

3. Deficit in Critical Social & Physical Infrastructure

The proposed expansion of residential land in Ashford is taking place in the absence of necessary concurrent investment in local infrastructure and services:

School Capacity: Local educational facilities (both primary and post-primary serving the area) are operating at or near maximum capacity. Proposed Variation No. 7 makes no realistic provision or binding commitment for additional educational capacity to absorb further population growth.

Traffic, Pedestrian Safety & Active Travel: Ashford's existing road network, key junctions, and footpaths face significant pressure. Additional greenfield residential expansion will exacerbate private vehicle dependence. Crucially, there is no concurrent infrastructure strategy for pedestrian priority schemes, traffic calming, or safe active travel routes connecting new lands to the village core. Adding new residential beyond the sustainable growth targets also serves to add additional burden to the already congested N11 at peak commuter times. I would urge the Council to review not only this Variation, but all current and pending planning permissions within Ashford, to see the cumulative and combined traffic impact of these additional residential developments on the overall town.

Community Facilities & Amenities: Sustainable development requires balanced growth. The addition of housing without matching investments in civic amenities, open space, youth and healthcare services will erode the social fabric of the village.

4. Planning Principles & Policy Framework

Proposed Variation No. 7, in respect of Ashford, conflicts with several overarching planning policies:

National Planning Framework (NPF) & Compact Growth: National policy calls for compact, consolidated development that prioritises infill and brownfield development over suburban spillage onto greenfield sites.

Sequential Approach: Sustainable land use requires fully utilizing existing zoned

served land within the settlement core before extending boundaries outwards.

Infrastructure-First Development: Core Strategy principles dictate that housing allocations must be backed by necessary physical and social infrastructure delivery.

5. Conclusion & Relief Sought

Rezoning extra greenfield land for residential development in Ashford is unjustified, premature, and detrimental to the balanced growth of our community.

I respectfully request that Wicklow County Council:

Omit/Reject any proposed additions or extensions of residential greenfield zoning within Ashford under Proposed Variation No. 7.

Prioritize the development of existing served, zoned lands within the current Level 5 settlement boundary.

Ensure that any future growth is strictly tied to clear, binding commitments for infrastructure delivery, including increased school capacity, pedestrian safety, and community facilities.

Thank you for considering this submission. I trust these concerns will be given full weight during the assessment of public feedback for Variation No. 7.

Yours faithfully,
Alice Gibson
Ashford Resident