

	Arklow LPF Variation No.5
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Choose one or more categories for your submission. Please also select which settlement you wish to make a submission / observation about.

- Proposed Changes to Volume 1 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Proposed Changes to Volume 2 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

Local Planning Framework PART A Strategy

- A.4 Overall Strategy

Local Planning Framework PART B Settlement Specific Objectives.

- B.1 Town Centre Regeneration
- B.2 Arklow Waterfront Zone
- B.4 Economic Development & Employment
- B.5 Tourism Development
- B.6 Social & Community Development
- B.7 Heritage, Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure
- B.8 Physical Infrastructure

Map

Site Description:

Upload a File (optional)

Local Area Plan.pdf, 0.34MB

Dear Wicklow County Council Planning Department,

I welcome the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Arklow Local Area Plan. I strongly support the Council's ambition to revitalise the town but believe greater emphasis should be placed on **regeneration, entertainment, and tourism development** to help Arklow reach its full potential as a vibrant coastal community.

1. Town Centre Regeneration

Arklow's town centre has excellent potential but needs a focused and funded regeneration strategy. The Plan should:

- Prioritise **reviving Main Street and Bridge Street** through targeted reuse of vacant buildings, encouraging mixed retail, dining, and cultural uses.
- Introduce **incentives for upper-floor living** and shopfront improvement grants to attract people and investment back into the town.
- Deliver **public realm improvements** – lighting, planting, seating, and wider footpaths – to make the centre more welcoming and walkable.
- Support **local independent businesses, cafés, and small markets**, helping to build a strong local identity and year-round footfall.

A thriving, attractive town centre is essential to bring people back into Arklow and restore a sense of pride in the town.

2. Waterfront & Pier Regeneration

The Arklow waterfront and pier are the town's greatest but most underused assets. The Plan should:

- Deliver a **continuous public walkway and cycleway** from South Quay to North Beach, with viewing points and recreational spaces.
- Retain **public access to the river and harbour** and avoid private, gated developments along the waterfront.
- Create a **maritime and tourism hub** at the pier area, featuring cafés, artisan markets, and water-based recreation such as kayaking, paddleboarding or small boat hire.
- Redevelop the **old pier and harbour area** into a "**Maritime Quarter**", featuring cafés, restaurants, craft shops, and small event spaces.
- Include **heritage interpretation** that tells the story of Arklow's shipbuilding and maritime past.

With careful design, the waterfront could become Arklow's signature attraction – connecting the town centre to its coastal identity.

3. Infrastructure, Relief Roads & Second Bridge

Arklow's growth is constrained by traffic and accessibility issues. To support regeneration, the Plan should:

- Expedite the **Arklow Relief Road** to divert heavy and through-traffic from Main Street.
- Advance planning for a **second bridge over the Avoca River** to relieve pressure on the existing one and improve connectivity between north and south Arklow.
- Deliver **safe pedestrian and cycle routes** linking housing areas with schools, shops, and the seafront.

These improvements will make Arklow safer, more connected, and more attractive for both residents and businesses.

4. Tourism, Leisure & Entertainment

Currently, Arklow offers limited entertainment or leisure options, meaning residents often have to travel to nearby towns for activities such as bowling, cinema, or family attractions. This is a major barrier to retaining young people and attracting visitors.

The Plan should actively support the creation of **new entertainment and leisure facilities**, including:

- A **family entertainment complex** with activities like **bowling, crazy golf, laser tag, or go-karting**, providing all-weather options for families and teenagers.
- **Multi-purpose arts and performance venue** capable of hosting concerts, community events, and film screenings.
- Development of **indoor recreation spaces** and **youth facilities**, particularly for evenings and weekends.
- **Seasonal outdoor events** such as food markets, open-air concerts, and waterfront festivals to bring life back to the town.
- Integration of these facilities within or near the **town centre and waterfront**, ensuring they contribute to local footfall and do not become isolated.

Investing in entertainment and leisure facilities would transform Arklow from a “pass-through” town into a **destination** — a place where people can live, socialise, and spend time locally.

5. Access, Transport & Wayfinding

To tie all these improvements together, it's vital that people can easily reach and enjoy Arklow's key destinations. The Plan should:

- Introduce **clear signage and wayfinding** from main roads and residential areas to the pier, beach, and town centre.
- Provide **seasonal shuttle transport** linking key points (e.g. train station, Main Street, seafront, and major housing areas).
- Enhance **public transport connections** between Arklow and nearby coastal towns to attract day visitors.

Improved access will support both tourism and everyday life, making Arklow a more convenient and connected place.

6. Public Transport – Buses and Train Services

Arklow's long-term growth and tourism potential depend on reliable and frequent public transport connections. The Plan should support improvements to both **bus and rail services**, ensuring that residents and visitors can easily travel within the town and to nearby centres.

- Bus routes should be **expanded and better coordinated**, with more frequent local services connecting residential areas such as Ballyraine Court, the town centre, and the seafront.
- Additional **bus shelters, real-time information boards, and improved accessibility** would make public transport more user-friendly.
- The **train station** should be promoted as a key transport hub, with better pedestrian and cycle access, clear signage, and integrated links to local bus routes.
- Iarnród Éireann should be encouraged to **increase service frequency and reliability** on the Dublin–Rosslare line, as Arklow's population and commuter base continue to grow.

Enhanced public transport options would reduce traffic congestion, support sustainable development, and make Arklow more accessible for both locals and visitors without reliance on private cars.

Conclusion

Arklow has the natural setting, history, and community to become a model coastal town. To unlock that potential, Wicklow County Council should prioritise:

- **Town centre and pier regeneration,**
- **Development of the waterfront for tourism and recreation,**
- **Delivery of the relief road and second bridge, and**
- **Creation of meaningful entertainment and leisure options** for residents and visitors alike.

These initiatives would create local jobs, attract investment, improve quality of life, and make Arklow a place people are proud to live in and excited to visit.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,
Bernard Fox

