



Wicklow Town - Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

Who are you:	State Body
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05th September 2023

Planning Department,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings,
Station Road,
Wicklow Town

Re: Issues Paper for Wicklow Town - Rathnew LAP 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

The Department of Education welcomes this opportunity to engage with Wicklow County Council in the preparation of the Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2024.

The Department notes that Local Authorities, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), are obliged to make all their statutory plans consistent with the core strategies and objectives of the NPF and the relevant RSES. The Department welcomes the reference to this statement in the Issues Paper. It is noted that the current Wicklow CDP 2022- 2028 designates Wicklow Rathnew as a 'Key Town' and provides a projected population for the settlements in 2031 of 19,470. Allowing for the recent Census 2022 population figures of 12,957 for Wicklow Town and 3,482 for Rathnew, this will see a projected increase of 3,031 persons for Wicklow Rathnew by 2031. If this projected population increase materialises, a requirement for additional education provision at both primary and post-primary level may emerge over the lifetime of the plan.

The Department also notes in the section titled Housing – Population - Compact Growth in the Issues Paper the reference to the sustainable growth of compact urban settlements and the potential regeneration of existing areas within the town's core. The Department welcomes that the LAP must consider the cumulative impacts of regeneration and redevelopment on existing community facilities. Population growth within the existing "built-up" footprint of the town has the potential to upset the balance of use relative to education provision in the area. The absence of specific school site provision in such locations can significantly challenge the delivery of required school places associated with intensified residential development. It is, therefore, critical that explicit provision for school development to cater for such development be made in existing "built-up" areas, within Wicklow Rathnew.

The Department notes in the section titled Economic Opportunity – Tourism - Shops & Services - Community Facilities in the Issues Paper the reference to the vital role of community infrastructure within the town and its environs and in this regard requests

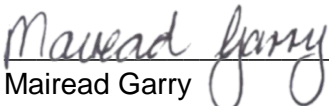


that the Draft Plan would be explicit in its support for the provision of adequate and suitable school accommodation, including the development of new schools and the expansion or alteration of existing ones.

In terms of assessing current and future capacity, the Department of Education has to be mindful of potential unforeseen circumstances such as the Ukrainian crisis, which have the ability to put undue pressure on school place provision and could necessitate reassessments of school place provision from time to time. The Department will engage with the Council where the findings of an assessment require a review of existing or future school site provision within a specific location. The Department also anticipates that additional special education needs provision at both primary and post-primary level will be required in the future throughout the country and this may result in schools requiring additional accommodation to meet this growing need. The Department will consult with the Council if and when additional special education needs accommodation is required within specific locations.

The Department looks forward to engaging with the Council in regard to the draft plan.

Yours sincerely,


Mairead Garry
Statutory Plans,
Forward Planning Section