



Pre Draft Bray LAP Submission - Report

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Pre-Draft Submission

Bray Municipal District Location Area Plan 2025

Lands at Monastery, Enniskerry

**On behalf of
The Leddy Family**

December 2024

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1. Introduction

On behalf of the Leddy Family, [REDACTED] I wish to make a Pre-Draft Submission regarding the preparation of the Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2025.

2. Executive Summary

In summary, it is requested that the following matters be taken into consideration in the preparation of the Draft Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2025.

Housing, Population & Compact Growth

- Enniskerry has expanded extensively to the north, south and west of the town centre and lands currently zoned for New Residential development are located at the edge of town.
- Government policy requires the consolidation of urban settlements, with the revised draft National Planning Framework requiring 40% of new housing to be located within the built-up footprint of settlements.
- Undeveloped agricultural lands at Monastery are located between the town centre and existing residential developments at the northern end of the town.
- The subject lands are sustainably located between 400m and 1km of the town centre.
- The lands are accessed from the R117, which includes a footpath to the centre and bus stops adjacent to the lands.
- The zoning of the lands for residential development would support national and regional planning policy to consolidate the town, connecting the town centre with the substantial residential area to the north.
- It is requested that the lands be zoned for Residential Development.

Natural Heritage

- The subject lands are located adjacent to the Knocksink Wood Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is designated under the European Habitat's Directive.
- The protected habitats in the SAC are:
 - Petrifying springs with tufa formation
 - Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles
 - Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior

- The legal framework for the protection of SACs is established in the Habitat's Directive, as transposed into Irish law.
- All development proposals located within the zone of influence of the SAC require consideration of potential impacts as part of the development management process.
- The current zoning map contained in the *Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2018-2024* conflates zoning objectives and conservation objectives by superimposing a 'Conservation Area' designation across both the Knocksink Woods SAC and the Leddy family's agricultural and residential lands.
- It is the function of the NPWS / Department of Environment to set the boundary of European sites. There is no legal basis for designating additional conservation 'buffer zones' beyond the legally defined boundary of a Natura 2000 site.
- The additional conservation designation serves no purpose in protecting the SAC, as all development on the subject lands must be assessed under European and Irish law.
- The 'Conservation Area' designation imposed on the Leddy land is wholly unnecessary and it is requested that it be removed.

3. Location & Context

The submission relates to an agricultural and residential landholding at Monastery, Enniskerry, located north of the town centre and accessed by road via the R117 which runs along the eastern boundary.

The lands accommodate 2 dwellings and associated outbuildings which are centrally located on the landholding. The landholding extends to c.25 acres.



Figure 1: Site Location Map

The northern part of the lands comprise a large open field which is bounded by the R117 to the east/north-east, by a cluster of dwellings to the north and by Knocksink Wood to the west.



Figure 2: Northern field looking north-west



Figure 3: Northern field looking south-east

The southern part of the lands comprise the landscaped grounds of the original house and a network of paddocks.



Figure 4: View from front gardens looking south

The lands are located between the town centre and an established residential area to the north in the Monastery Road/Ballymany Road area. A cluster of community facilities are located within 500m of the southern boundary including Enniskerry National School, Enniskerry Montessori, St. Mary's Church and Enniskerry Football Club.

The lands are between 400m and 1km from the town centre and are currently accessed via an entrance from the R117. A footpath on the east side of the R117 connects the site to the town centre. The R117 is served by the No.44 bus route, which connects Enniskerry to the city centre via Stepside, Sandyford, Dundrum and Ranelagh. Bus stops in each direction are located adjacent to the lands.

As illustrated on the Context Map below, the town has developed considerably to the north, south and west and lands currently zoned for New Residential development are located at the outer edges of the settlement.

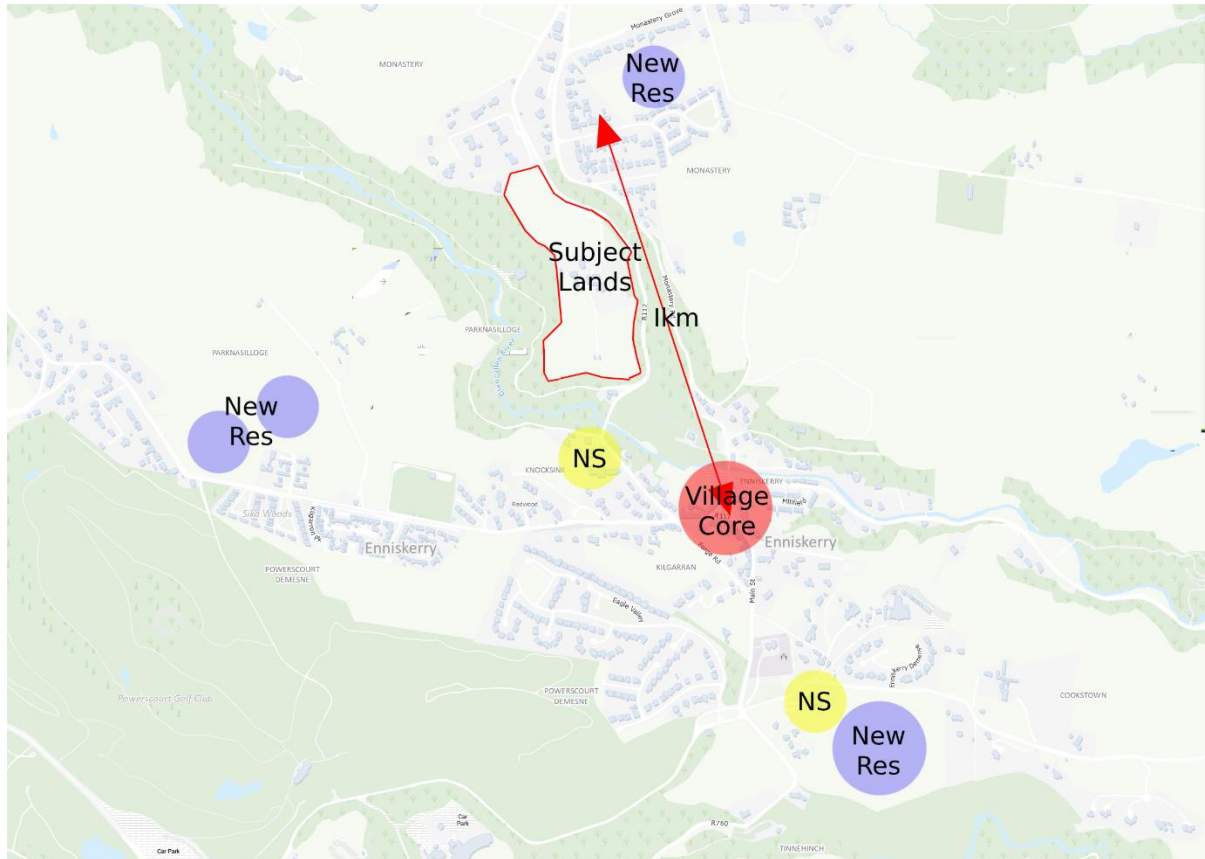


Figure 5: Enniskerry Context Map

4. Environmental Considerations

The subject lands are located adjacent to the Knocksink Wood SAC at the west and south boundary. The protected habitats in the SAC are:

- Petrifying springs with tufa formation
- Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*

It is noted that there is a significant difference in levels between the 2 areas, with a steep embankment defining the boundary.

The potential impacts on the SAC of rezoning the lands to Residential were assessed by Openfield Ecological Services in the form of a *Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment* prepared in 2018. The assessment noted

- The habitats on site are of negligible or low biodiversity value and are not associated with any which are listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive.
- The lands lie on an elevated ridge which slopes steeply to the east and west.
- Based on the conservation objectives of the SACs within the zone of influence, no significant effects are likely to arise to the Knocksink Wood SAC.
- Future development on the site would be subject to project level AA Screening.

5. Current Local Area Plan

5.1 Land Use Zoning

Under the provisions of the *Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan (BMD LAP) 2018-2024*, the lands are zoned Agriculture and c.3-4 acres is zoned Existing Residential.

In addition, the lands and the Knocksink Wood SAC are designated ‘Conservation Area’.

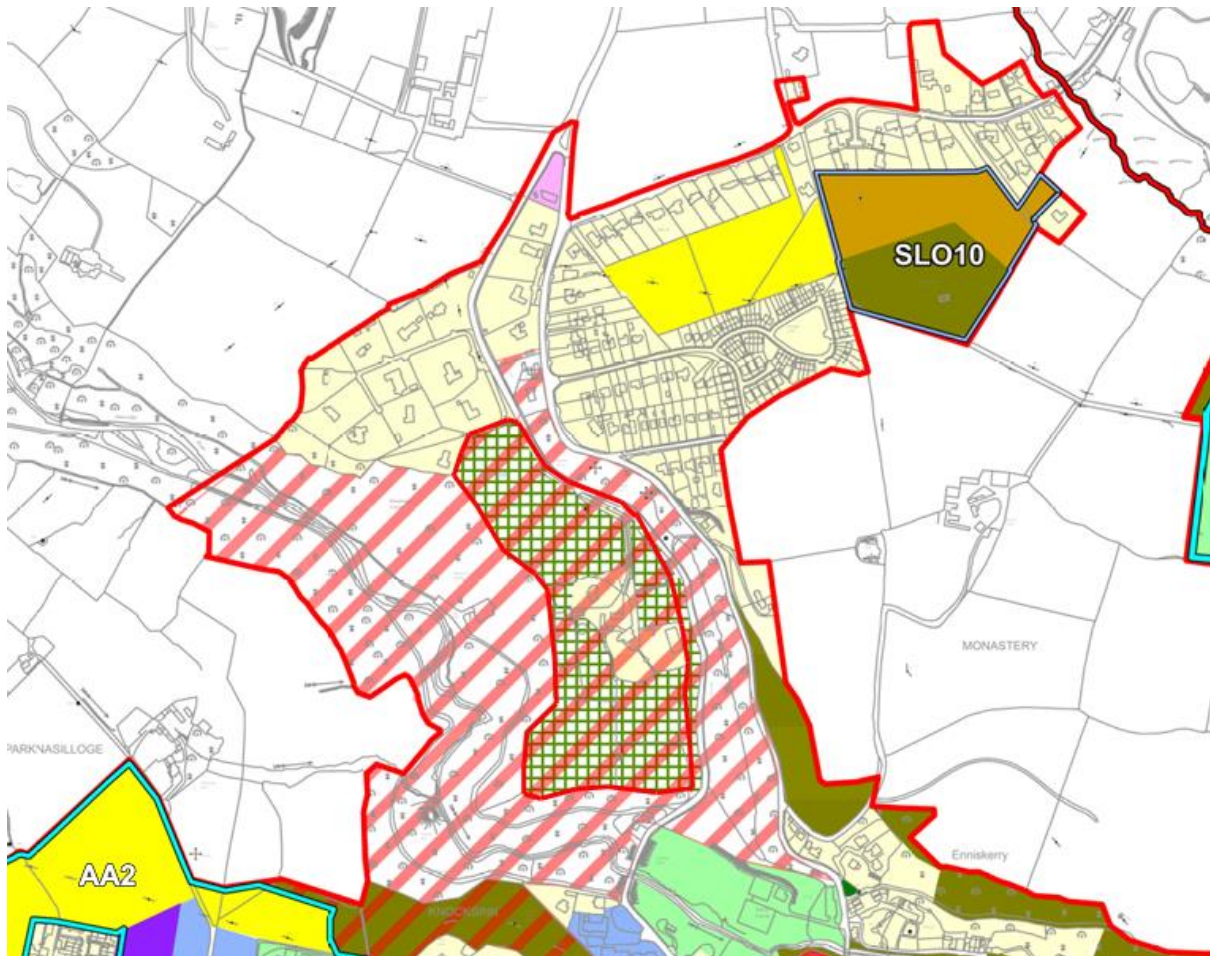


Figure 6: Extract from BMD LAP 2018-2024 Zoning Map with lands outlined in red

5.2 Development Strategy

Chapter 2 of the BMD LAP explains the development strategy for Enniskerry as follows:

In deciding how the town should develop there are many options given the fashion of its spatial development history. Again the key parameters however, must be based on environmental protection, sustainability and developing the town in a manner that would generate the minimal number of car journeys. The solution adopted in this plan is to designate residential lands as close as possible to the town centre and existing community facilities whilst avoiding the environmentally sensitive and EU designated areas (Knocksink Wood and Ballyman Glen are both SACs), with new employment being located on existing zoned land to the west of the settlement.

In recognition of the above this plan has aimed to consolidate the existing built pattern in Enniskerry by maximising the potential of large sites close to the settlement core and any infill sites along the main roads within the settlement. The designation of specific

lands for residential development has been provided in a manner that facilitates greater connectivity between the settlement core and the existing developed lands within the plan area. Sufficient lands have been zoned in order to meet the projected population targets as set out in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan. [emphasis added].

It is submitted that this strategy, if continued in the new Local Area Plan, supports the rezoning of the subject lands.

5.3 Conservation Buffer Zone

The rationale for the inclusion of Conservation Buffer Zones beyond the legally defined boundary of Natura 2000 sites is outlined below.

There are a number of Natura 2000 sites located in or in close proximity to the plan area. The sites themselves are protected from inappropriate development through the legal provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives, as well as the Planning Act. Such sites, where they are located within the plan boundary are shown on the heritage map associated with the plan as 'Natura 2000' site and on the land use map as a 'conservation area', which is not a land-use 'zoning' but an objective to signify that these are areas where the goal is to conserve and enhance habitats and attributes for which the site was selected for EU protection.

In a number of locations, there are lands adjoining Natura 2000 sites, which while not being included in the legally designated site, are linked to the site in terms of similar or supporting habitats, water flows or other characteristics which render them important to protect from inappropriate development which may have a direct or indirect affect on the designated site itself. The extent of any such 'buffer zone' has been determined through both desktop and field assessment by the plan team and a professional ecologist, as well as consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This 'buffer zone' has similarly been identified as being within the 'conservation area'. [emphasis added].

It is submitted that the subject lands are not 'linked to the site in terms of similar or supporting habitats, water flows or other characteristics'.

6. Wicklow County Development Plan 2022

6.1 Core Strategy

Section 3.3 of the Wicklow County Development Plan (WCDP) categorises Enniskerry as a Level 4 *Core Region Self Sustaining Town*.

Table 3.3 Wicklow Settlement Hierarchy

Level	Settlement Typology	Description	Settlement
1	Metropolitan Area Key Town	Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres.	Bray
2	Core Region Key Town	Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres.	Wicklow - Rathnew
3	Core Region Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Self-Sustaining Growth Towns with a moderate level of jobs and services – includes sub-county market towns and commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.	Arklow Greystones - Delgany Blessington
4	Core Region Self-Sustaining Towns	Self-Sustaining Towns with high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.	Baltinglass Enniskerry Kilcoole Newtownmountkennedy Rathdrum
5	Towns & Villages Small Towns Type 1	Small towns with good local service and employment functions.	Ashford Aughrim Carnew Dunlavin Tinahely
6	Towns & Villages Small Towns Type 2	Small Towns with moderate local service and employment functions.	Avoca Donard Kilmacanogue Newcastle Roundwood Shillelagh
7	Villages Type 1	Villages with moderate capacity for development	
8	Villages Type 2	Villages with limited capacity for development	
9	Rural Clusters	Existing clusters of rural housing, suitable for new rural generated housing	
10	Open countryside		

Figure 7: WCDP Table 3.3 Settlement Hierarchy

Section 3.4 deals with Population & Housing Allocation and notes that Level 4 towns are generally targeted for growth rates of 20-25%.

Level	Settlement	Justification
1, 2	Bray	Key Towns are identified for growth rates of c. 35% having regard to their identification in the RSES as towns suitable for higher levels of growth.
	Wicklow - Rathnew	
3	Arklow	Towns in Level 3 are targeted for growth rates of 25%-30%, with slight variations based on capacity / past trends. It is estimated that growth in Greystones – Delgany will exceed this target range before the end of the plan period due to legacy housing developments under construction.
	Greystones - Delgany	
	Blessington	
4	Baltinglass	Towns in Level 4 are generally targeted for growth rates around 20%-25%. Newtownmountkennedy (at c.65%) and Rathdrum (at c.45%) will significantly exceed this target due to legacy housing developments under construction. The goal for these towns is to limit further development, other than for town centre / infill / regeneration. It is estimated that growth in Kilcoole will exceed this target range before the end of the plan period due to legacy housing developments under construction.
	Enniskerry	
	Kilcoole	
	Newtownmountkennedy	
5	Rathdrum	Towns in Level 5 are generally targeted for growth rates of 15%-20%. Ashford (at c.60%) will significantly exceed this target due to legacy housing developments under construction. The goal for this town is to limit further development, other than for town centre / infill / regeneration.
	Ashford	
	Aughrim	
	Carnew	
	Dunlavin	
6	Tinahely	Towns in Level 6 are generally targeted for growth rates of 10%-15%.
	Avoca	
	Donard	
	Kilmacanogue	
	Newcastle	
	Roundwood	
	Shillelagh	
7-10	Villages / clusters Open countryside	Growth rate of 5%-10% identified as appropriate for rural villages and open countryside.

Figure 8: WCDP Population Justification

The actual growth allocation to Level 4 towns, as detailed in Table 3.4, is only 12%/.

Table 3.4 Wicklow Settlement / Aggregate Settlement Population Targets 2016, Q2 2028

Level	Settlement	Population 2016	Population target Q2 2028	% of total County growth to Q2 2028 by tier			
1	Bray	29,646	38,565	KEY TOWNS	49%		
2	Wicklow - Rathnew	14,114	18,515				
3	Arklow	13,226	15,419	SELF SUSTAINING GROWTH TOWNS	25%		
	Greystones - Delgany	18,021	21,727				
4	Blessington	5,234	6,145	SELF SUSTAINING TOWNS	12%		
	Baltinglass	2,251	2,607				
	Enniskerry	1,877	2,106				
	Kilcoole	4,244	4,778				
	Newtownmountkennedy	3,552	5,179				
	Rathdrum	1,716	2,339				
	Ashford	5,710	6,695	SMALL TOWNS	5%		
	Aughrim						
	Carnew						
	Dunlavin						
	Tinahely						
6	Avoca	3,835	4,230				
	Donard						
	Kilmacanogue						
	Newcastle						
	Roundwood						
	Shillelagh						
7-9	Villages / clusters	38,999	41,352	VILLAGES	9%		
10	Open countryside			OPEN COUNTRYSIDE			
	Total	142,425	169,658		100.0%		

Figure 9: WCDP Population Targets

Core Strategy Table A indicates that 72% of the development capacity of existing zoned land in Enniskerry is located within the built-up area. (28% of development land is outside the built up area).

Table A: LAP Towns

This analysis utilises the 2031 housing targets, having regard the likely timeframes of future LAPs (6-10 years), due to be adopted in the 2023 – 2025 period.

SETTLEMENT		POPULATION & HOUSING				ZONING							
Settlement Type	Settlement name	A Census 2016 Population	B Census 2016 (%)	C Housing Target 2016-2031 (less completed units 2017-2020) (units)	D Housing Target (as % of County 2031 target)	E Development capacity of existing zoned lands (units) ⁷	F Development capacity of existing zoned land within built up area (units)	G Development capacity of existing zoned land outside built up area (units)	H Development capacity of existing zoned land within built up area as % of total development capacity (F/E)	I Units required to be provided outside of built up area (units) (C – F)	J Surplus capacity of existing zoned land outside built up area (units) (G – I)	K Surplus land outside of existing built up area (ha)	L Method of addressing shortfall / surplus
County	Wicklow	142,425		11,719	100%								
Key Towns	Bray	29,646	21%	4,897	42%	6,500	2,000	4,500	31%	2,897	1,600	40 ⁵	Will be addressed in next LAP – comprises strategic sites
	Wicklow - Rathnew	14,114	10%	1,742	15%	4,200	2,000	2,200	48%	0	2,200	55 ⁹	21ha already under construction; remaining surplus will be addressed in next LAP
Self Sustaining (Growth) Towns	Arklow	13,226	9%	1,056	9%	5,200	2,100	3,100	40%	0	3,100	78	11ha already under construction; remaining surplus will be addressed in next LAP
	Greystones-Deigany	18,021	13%	1,078	9%	2,900	1,700	1,200	59%	0	1,200	30 ⁵	7.5ha already under construction; remaining surplus will be addressed in next LAP
	Blessington	5,234	4%	514	4%	1,450	300	1,150	21%	215	935	31 ⁹	Surplus will be addressed in next LAP
	Enniskerry	1,877	1%	91	1%	520	375	145	72%	0	145	5 ⁹	Surplus will be addressed in next LAP
	Kilcoole	4,244	3%	190	2%	600	460	140	77%	0	140	5 ⁹	Surplus will be addressed in next LAP

Figure 10: WCDP Core Strategy Table

7. National Planning Framework Review

7.1 Compact Growth

The delivery of compact growth in urban areas remains a cornerstone of national planning policy. Compact Growth is the Number 1 National Strategic Outcome and Priority of the *Updated Draft First Revision to the National Planning Framework* (November 2024) as detailed in the extracts below.

Compact Growth

Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.

National Policy Objective 7

Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.¹²

2023 Expert Group Review of 2018 NPF Strategy and Implementation

The Report of an Expert Group appointed to undertake a high-level review of the NPF and its implementation, published in 2023, provides valuable insight and has informed the preparation of the revised Framework. Through engagement with relevant stakeholders, the Group found that there is widespread support for the NPF strategy and the long-term and principles-based approach it takes. Overall, the Group recommended that the NPF revision could strengthen the Strategy in three broad respects:

- Compact growth targets should be more ambitious and more clearly defined;
- The roles of the bodies involved in its implementation should be clarified and strengthened (particularly in relation to the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans) and mechanisms put in place for more detailed measurement and monitoring of its progress; and
- There should be greater coordination at whole of government level across all infrastructure projects (including the NDP) and new efforts made to generate broader support for national spatial planning across all of society.

The preferred approach involves compact development that focuses on reusing previously developed, 'brownfield' land, building up infill sites, which may not have been built on before and either reusing or redeveloping existing sites and buildings.

An increase in the proportion of more compact forms of growth in the development of settlements of all sizes, from the largest city to the smallest village, has the potential to make a transformational difference. It can bring new life and footfall, contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport, increase housing supply and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities, as well as to walk or cycle more and use the car less

7.2 Population Projections

To account for the possibility of higher net in-migration over the period to 2040, an allowance is made in the NPF to enable ambition and flexibility in planning for future growth. In effect, the Framework needs to plan to accommodate around 950,000 additional people in Ireland between 2022 and 2040, while also making provision for a higher in-migration scenario.

National Policy Objective 3

- **Eastern and Midland Region:** approximately 470,000 additional people between 2022 and 2040 (c. 690,000 additional people over 2016-2040) i.e. a population of almost 3 million

7.3 Location of Homes

Future homes are required to be located where people have the best opportunities to access a high standard quality of life. In Ireland, the location of housing has taken on a dispersed and fragmented character, which has led to people living further away from their jobs and often being at a sizeable remove from important services such as education and healthcare.

Development sprawl at every settlement level in Ireland has manifested as scattered development, 'leapfrogging', continuous suburbs and linear patterns of strip or ribbon development. This type of development has made it costly and often unfeasible for the State to align and invest in infrastructure delivery where it cannot be justified. It has also hampered effective responses to climate change, compounded issues such as congestion and pollution, increased commuting times and has had an overall negative impact on people's health and wellbeing.

As part of the 'Settlement Capacity Audit' prepared as an input to the Development Plan process, local authorities should map brownfield/ infill sites that have regeneration and development potential and publish the outputs.

8. Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLG, 2022)

8.1 Sequential Approach to Zoning for Residential Development

In undertaking the zoning function for new residential development at individual settlement scale, it is recommended that planning authorities adopt a sequential approach which reflects the compact growth, utilisation of existing infrastructure and town regeneration national policy objectives of the NPF, further developing the Tiered Approach.

The spatial pattern of the growth of settlements, often along radial access routes, characterised by ribbon and low density development, has served to 'lock-in' extremely high levels of car dependence and render settlements too spread out and incoherent to comfortably get around on foot or by bicycle. In many cases, undeveloped lands and sites have been left idle, even though they may be centrally located with good access and availability of services infrastructure to enable development. This pattern of development has contributed to the decline of town centres and has resulted in a neglected appearance to many towns and other urban areas.

It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that planning authorities adopt a sequential approach when zoning lands for development, whereby the most spatially centrally located development sites in settlements are prioritised for new development first, with more spatially peripherally located development sites being zoned subsequently.

Sequential Test for Residential Zoning in Settlements

- STEP 1:** As outlined in Chapter 4, the core strategy of the development plan will be formulated and provide a housing unit targets for settlements and rural areas This will be based on a **Settlement Capacity Audit** providing estimates of housing yield for (i) Served [Tier 1] lands and (ii) Serviceable [Tier 2] lands in settlements.-
- STEP 2:** n accordance with the **Sequential Test**, identified lands with potential for new residential development that are situated within or closest to the settlement core (including brownfield, infill and redevelopment sites) shall be zoned to facilitate residential development with/without other land uses as appropriate to fulfill the identified core strategy requirement. This exercise should be based on an assessment of the quantum of housing to be delivered on individual sites or land parcels, such that when aggregated, there is sufficient capacity to deliver the core strategy housing target for the subject settlement.
- STEP 3:** Where it is necessary to zone serviced, but spatially less central lands (i.e. 'Tier 1' lands) to meet core strategy requirements, these shall be identified and prioritised on a spatially sequential basis (i.e. with those most proximate to the core, given preference, and first zoned for development). As part of this process, estimates of housing yield from such zonings must be considered against **Core Strategy** requirements.
- STEP 4:** Subsequently, where it is also necessary to zone unserved, but serviceable, spatially less central lands (i.e. 'Tier 2' lands) in order to meet core strategy requirements, these shall be identified and prioritised on a spatially sequential basis (i.e. with those most proximate to the core, given preference and first zoned for development). Clear estimates of housing yield from such zonings must be considered against **Core Strategy** requirements.

This 'Settlement Capacity Audit' (SCA) exercise accords with Appendix 3 to the NPF, which distinguishes between lands that are 'Served' (Tier 1) and those that are 'Serviceable' (Tier 2). This is to ensure that an informed decision can be made as to whether or not to zone land or sites in particular settlements for residential development and to inform the core strategy considerations set out in Section 4.4 above.

The SCA requires an infrastructural assessment of lands within and adjacent to settlements as a key research input to the settlement strategy formulation process.



9. Submission

9.1 Subject Lands are Suitable for Residential Development

In relation to future housing, the Issues Paper for the LAP review notes that

- the growth settlements within the Municipal District will need new homes built between now and 2031.
- The focus of growth will be in Bray, with additional growth in Enniskerry and modest growth in Kilmacanogue.
- To facilitate compact growth, 30% of new homes need to be in the existing built up area and town/village centres. Wicklow County Council are required to identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the best locations to meet the housing targets set out in the Core Strategy. These homes must be provided for in a sustainable manner, aligning with the provisions of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, and having regard to established and sustainable settlement patterns and the natural environment.

The Issues Paper poses the following question:

Where do we deliver our new housing in Bray and Enniskerry without contributing to urban sprawl?

Having regard to national, regional and local planning policy, it is submitted that the subject lands are appropriate for residential development for the following reasons:

- The lands have a long-established residential use.
- The location is consistent with the sequential approach, with the lands located entirely within 1km of the town centre and significantly closer than lands currently zoned for new residential development at the edge of the town.
- The spatial form of the town is one of sprawl. To the north, the established residential areas are disconnected from the rest of the town. The subject lands can connect and consolidate the town and combat further sprawl.
- The lands are serviceable due to proximity to built up areas.
- The lands are well connected to the town centre by the R117 and bus public transport.
- The lands are topographically disconnected from Knocksink Wood by significant level differences. Appropriate Assessment screening has concluded that the rezoning would not significantly impact the SAC.
- There is no basis to exclude the lands for environmental reasons.

9.2 *Subject Lands should not be designated as Conservation Area*

The Issues Paper for the LAP review notes that the Bray Municipal District area has a rich variety of built and natural heritage. The protection and enhancement of the area's natural and built assets is key to the future development of the settlements in a sustainable manner.

The Issues Paper poses the following question:

How do we continue to develop the settlements while protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and biodiversity in the area?

It is submitted that the inclusion of a Conservation Area designation on the subject lands in the current LAP is misguided and unnecessary for the following reasons:

- It is the function of the NPWS and Department of the Environment to designate Natura 2000 sites.
- The current zoning map contained in the *Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2018-2024* conflates zoning objectives and conservation objectives by superimposing a 'Conservation Area' designation across both the Knocksink Woods SAC and the subject agricultural and residential lands.
- The current Local Area Plan states that Conservation Areas located outside the legally designated Natura 2000 serve as 'buffer zones' which are *'linked to the site in terms of similar or supporting habitats, water flows or other characteristics which render them important to protect from inappropriate development which may have a direct or indirect affect on the designated site itself'*.
- The creation of an additional designation on adjacent lands is wholly unnecessary as the Habitats Directive, as transposed into Irish law, provides the appropriate legal framework for the assessment of impact on protected sites.
- There is no legal basis for designating buffer zones, as all proposed development within the zone of influence of a Natura 2000 site must be assessed in accordance with Article 6(3), regardless of whether it falls within or outside the additional 'Conservation Area'.
- The 'Conservation Area' designation imposed on the Leddy land has no statutory basis and is wholly unnecessary.
- It is requested that the Conservation Area designation be removed.