



Draft Wicklow Rathnew Draft LAP Amendment Stage Submission - Report

Who are you:	Private Individual
Name:	Fiachra O'Maolagain
Reference:	DWTRLAP-212740
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Topic

LAP - Proposed Material Amendments No 1 Submission

Submission

Please see text below.

Topic

LAP - Proposed Material Amendments No 26 Submission

Submission

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Objection to Proposed Material Amendments Nos. 1 & 26 – Fernhill House/Glebe (SLO-9) Wicklow Town & Rathnew Local Area Plan / Wicklow County Development Plan 2022–2028

I am writing to object to the proposed rezoning of lands at Glebe/Fernhill House (SLO-9), which include a change from 'Community/Education' (CE) to 'New Residential' (RN1 and RN2).

1. Community and School Infrastructure Under Pressure

Wicklow-Rathnew is already experiencing significant population growth. Local schools are at or over capacity, with families being refused school places. Rezoning land formerly designated for community/education use for housing, without delivering essential infrastructure first, exacerbates this pressure and undermines the town's long-term sustainability.

2. Loss of Vital Community Space

Fernhill House has historic and cultural significance and served the community for decades. Reducing CE-zoned land limits the opportunity to provide essential services — such as schools, youth centres, and cultural hubs — especially as the town grows. There is no clear justification for this loss or evidence that the land cannot be fully retained for public benefit.

3. Ecological Concerns

The site is known to host rare bird species including the Red Kite and Great Spotted Woodpecker. Development threatens their habitat and the local biodiversity, with lasting environmental consequences.

4. Unsuitable Pedestrian/Cycle Link Through Friarshill and Glebemount

Proposals for connectivity through Friarshill and Glebemount estates are inappropriate. The estates are not designed for through-traffic for pedestrian, cyclists and/or vehicles, the estates struggle with congestion. Any new route would endanger residents, especially children and elderly people, and reduce quality of life.

Recommendations

- Retain full CE zoning across the 3.15ha site.
- Retain the subject lands on the list of Sites Identified for the Delivery of Schools (LAP Page 49 and Appendix 2, Table 2.10).
- Develop a community-led masterplan for Fernhill House, independent of residential interests.
- Reject connectivity proposals that would compromise residential estates like Glebemount and Friarshill.
- Prioritise investment in school and community infrastructure before further residential expansion.

This land represents a unique opportunity to serve the growing needs of the Wicklow-Rathnew community. Once lost to housing, that potential is gone forever.

Yours Sincerely,
Fiachra O'Maolagain.

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