



Who are you:	Group
Name:	Fine Gael Arklow & Rathdrum Branch
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- Proposed Changes to Volume 2 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

Local Planning Framework PART A Strategy

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Local Planning Framework PART B Settlement Specific Objectives.

- B.1 Town Centre Regeneration
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Maps:

- Roads & Transportation Strategy Maps

Upload a File (optional)

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Fine Gael Arklow & Rathdrum Branch

Submission on Proposed Variation No. 5 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022–2028

Arklow Local Planning Framework

Submitted by: Members of the Fine Gael Arklow & Rathdrum Branch

Introduction

We respectfully submit the following observations on the Draft Arklow Local Planning Framework 2025. Our intention is that the proposals and recommendations outlined herein will be considered with sincerity, integrity, and an appreciation of the lived experiences of Arklow's residents.

While the plan presented by professional consultants sets out a broad vision for the town's development, we believe it fails to adequately address the day-to-day challenges faced by Arklow's citizens—particularly in moving between the northern and southern parts of the town.

1. Accessibility and Mobility

The Framework emphasises Active Travel through improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, which we welcome in principle. However, there appears to be no provision for elderly or mobility-impaired residents, who are disproportionately affected by the absence of a local bus service. Their needs must be explicitly considered in all transport and movement strategies.

We therefore propose the introduction of a Town Circular "Round Robin" Bus Service, designed to connect residential areas with the town centre, local amenities, and transport hubs. This service would greatly enhance accessibility for older residents, people with disabilities, and visitors.

2. Southern Port Access Route (SPAR)

We welcome the proposal to progress the Southern Port Access Route (SPAR) and the associated upgrades to the supporting road network. We acknowledge its importance in diverting heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic from the Nineteen Arches Bridge and the town centre.

However, we recommend that the route alignment be relocated further inland, to mitigate future risks arising from coastal erosion and the effects of climate change (see attached map). This would future proof the investment and ensure long-term resilience of the town's transport infrastructure.

3. Second Vehicular Bridge over the Avoca River

The draft plan states that the feasibility of a second vehicular bridge will be explored “in the longer term”. We believe this approach is insufficient. The need for a second bridge is immediate and urgent.

We therefore urge that the feasibility, design, and environmental studies for a new vehicular crossing be undertaken as part of this current plan, not deferred to a future review.

Furthermore, the proposed Beech Road–Kilbride–Vale Road link offers an ideal alignment for this crossing. We strongly advocate that this becomes a vehicular bridge, not merely a pedestrian or cycling route. When connected to a new junction on the N11, this route would dramatically reduce congestion in the town centre and revitalise Main Street and its environs (see attached map).

4. Town Centre and Retail Development

We support initiatives to enhance the vibrancy and appearance of Arklow's Main Street and propose the following measures:

- Extend the Parade Ground area along Main Street to create a more defined civic space.
- Construct high-quality footpaths using durable, attractive materials.
- Install appropriate street furniture, trees, and public lighting, including underground ducting to accommodate festival and Christmas lighting systems.
- Develop segregated cycleways that integrate with future Greenway connections.
- Preserve and promote the heritage and character of shopfronts, encouraging restoration in keeping with the town's architectural style.

5. Built Heritage and Natural Environment

It is essential to safeguard Arklow's natural, architectural, and archaeological heritage. The harbour area and former pottery site have significant potential to become a focal point for tourism and local enterprise if sensitively redeveloped.

We recommend:

- Relocating large industrial operations currently based in the harbour to sites nearer the N11, freeing up waterfront space for mixed-use and tourism development.
- Installing heritage lighting to highlight key landmarks and enhance the town's evening appearance.
- Reviewing the preservation order on the Ormond Cinema, which has deteriorated beyond viable restoration. If redevelopment remains unfeasible, we propose the site be repurposed as a public open space capitalising on views of the castle and the Avoca River.
- Extending the walkways along the Avoca River to connect the Nineteen Arches Bridge with the harbour, thereby improving access and amenity for residents and visitors alike.

6. Sustainable Transportation

We support the shift towards active and sustainable travel but stress the need for practical solutions that balance pedestrian, cycling, and vehicular requirements.

Proposals include:

- Routing through-traffic away from Main Street, to create a safer, more pedestrian-friendly town centre.
- Establishing a safe, dedicated cycling network connecting all educational, recreational, and sporting facilities.
- Providing adequate parking management and accessibility features for those unable to rely on active travel modes.

7. Recreational Infrastructure

We recommend:

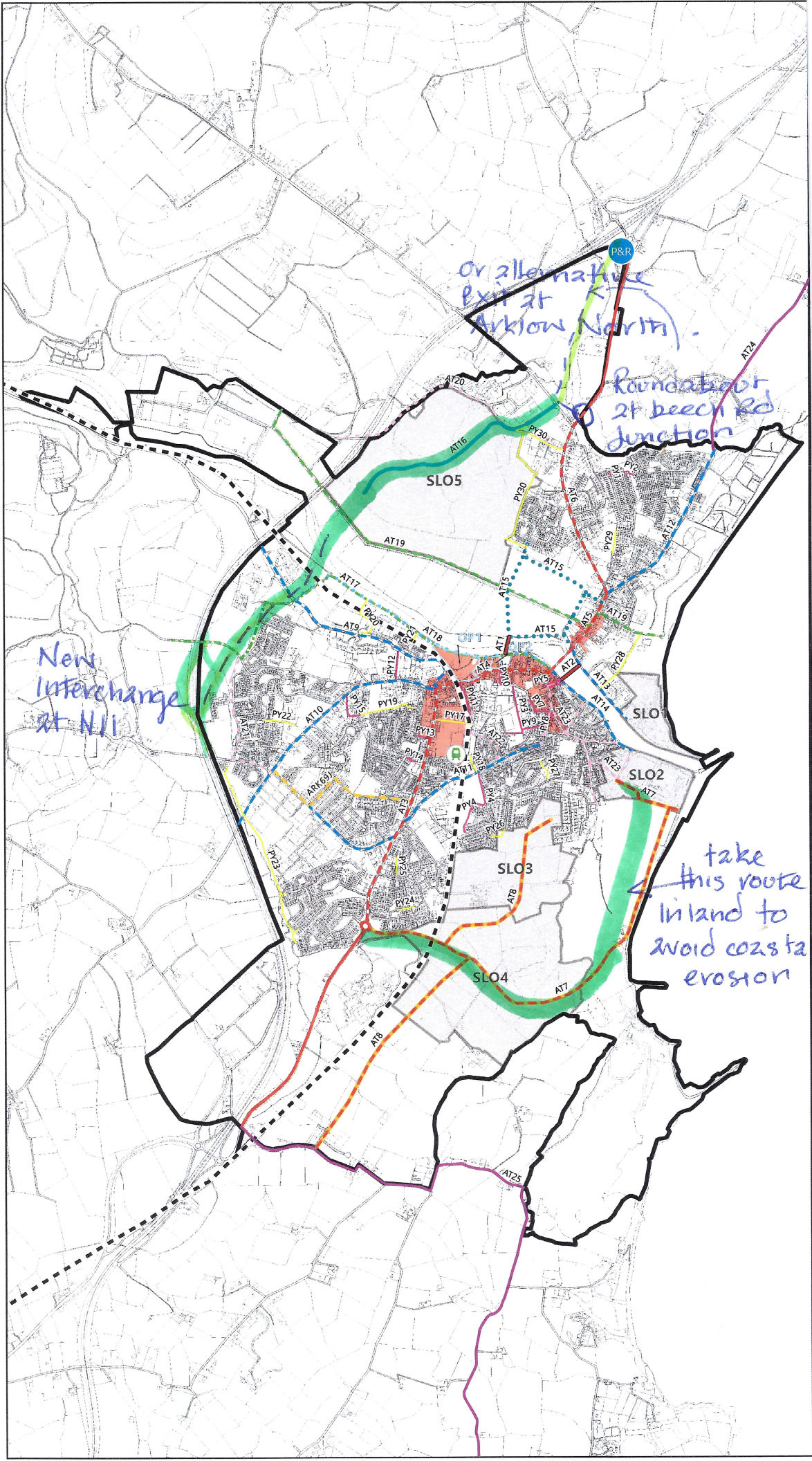
- The running track at the northern waterfront should be fully resurfaced to professional standards, recognising its vital role for local athletics, schools, and community groups.
- At the southern waterfront (adjacent to Site E), a pedestrian and emergency-access route to the South Beach should be prioritised for development.

Conclusion

Arklow's future success depends on a balanced approach that combines environmental sensitivity, accessibility, and economic regeneration. The proposals outlined above aim to make Arklow a safer, more inclusive, and more prosperous town for all its residents.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this process and look forward to continued engagement as the plan progresses.

Signed: Members of the Fine Gael Arklow & Rathdrum Branch



or alternative exit at Arklow North.

Roundabout at Beech Rd junction

New Interchange at N11

take this route inland to avoid coastal erosion