



Draft Wicklow Town – Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

Who are you:	State Body
Name:	Inland Fisheries Ireland
Reference:	DWTRLAP-101117
Submission Made	November 19, 2024 10:16 AM

Topic

Overall Vision and Strategy of LAP

Submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached submission on the Wicklow/Rathnew LAP 2025. If you have any issues opening the same, please contact dublin@fisheriesireland.ie.

Many thanks,
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Topic

Infrastructure (inc. Infrastructure Delivery Schedule)

Submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached submission on the Wicklow/Rathnew LAP 2025. If you have any issues opening the same, please contact dublin@fisheriesireland.ie.

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Topic

Heritage / Biodiversity / Heritage Maps

Submission

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Topic

Land Use Zoning Map

Submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

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Topic

Any other issues

Submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached submission on the Wicklow/Rathnew LAP 2025. If you have any issues opening the same, please contact dublin@fisheriesireland.ie.

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File

Wicklow- Rathnew_Local Area_Plan_2024_RM.pdf, 0.36MB



**Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland**

Forward Planning Office,
Wicklow County Council
Station Road
Wicklow Town

Date 18.11.2024

Re: Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

We refer to your correspondence regarding the Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025 and are grateful for the opportunity to make our observations.

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is a Statutory Body whose principal function is the protection, management, and conservation of the inland fisheries resource. Protection of the aquatic environment and habitat is a vitally essential element of IFI's work. In the context of the Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan, the issues of water quality, fisheries habitat and the necessary wastewater and drainage infrastructure required to protect them should be given due priority.

"Fisheries" includes all inland fisheries recreational and commercial, sea angling and mollusc fisheries stipulated under the Fisheries Acts, the physical habitat upon which the fishery relies, the facilities and access, the quantity and quality of the water and the plant and animal life on which fish depend for shelter and food and the spawning areas wherein fish deposit their eggs. The protective role of IFI relates to all aspects of the aquatic environment and all factors that influence the biotic communities within waters, which in any way relate to the propagation of fish stocks.

IFI has the following observations to make regarding the Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025:

Chapter 2 Overall vision and Strategy

Future Compact Growth of the Settlement

"The key parameters for the future physical development of Wicklow Town - Rathnew are based around protection of the environment, sustainability,"

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR WICKLOW TOWN - RATHNEW

"To ensure sufficient zoned and serviced land is available at appropriate locations capable of meeting the housing needs of the targeted population of the settlement over the plan period in a sustainable manner."



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IFI welcomes the Compact Growth Settlement strategy for the future physical development of Wicklow Town – Rathnew with the key parameters based around protection of the environment which includes the European Sites of the Murrough Wetlands SAC, Murrough SPA and the watercourses within the LAP area.

In recognising the physical and infrastructural limitations including water services infrastructure etc, development must be carefully controlled in order to safeguard these legally protected sites.

“Having regard to the characteristics of these protected sites, it is important to ensure that the lands surrounding these sites are protected from new development and to limit the extension of existing development in this area.”

“To ensure that the lands surrounding the European Sites of the Murrough Wetlands SAC and the Murrough SPA are protected from adverse impacts arising from new development and to carefully manage and control the extension of existing development in proximity to these areas.”

IFI would respectfully recommend that the above referenced strategies are extended to not only include those proposed development areas in close proximity to protected sites but also to lands adjacent to rivers and streams within the LAP area.

Development outside of lands immediately surrounding the European sites has equal potential to adversely impact these sites through the connectivity of the rivers and streams which discharge into them, conveying potential pollutants from the drainage and foul infrastructure.

Because of the connectivity of the drainage network to rivers and streams and to the protected sites, it is recommended that the LAP recognises the importance for the maintenance of all existing and future drainage infrastructure.

IFI are aware that the above referenced strategies, will be difficult to realise in their entirety and in a sustainable manner due to a number of factors, including:

- Inadequate wastewater infrastructure, in particular the conveyance pipe network and pumping stations currently servicing the needs of the existing built environment both residential and commercial.
 - Required maintenance of the existing drainage network, including all agreed SuDS measures in the new and existing built environment for which the Local Authority do have limited resources to maintain.
 - Some of the existing and proposed zoned residential lands within the LAP - RN1 & RN2 will require the installation of sewage pumping stations to facilitate the conveyance of sewage into a network that appears to be already hydraulically overloaded.
- IFI are increasingly concerned about the rising frequency of incidents within the sewage network, which have led to surcharging. These surcharging events have resulted the release of harmful substances into the aquatic environment.



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IFI would contend that while there may be adequate capacity within the Wicklow Town Wastewater Treatment Facility, there is inadequate capacity in the conveyance network, which has the potential to increase the number of overflow events into our rivers.

- All of the collected wastewater from within the Wicklow, Rathnew, Ashford agglomeration converges to central pumping station on the Murrough where there have been ongoing operational difficulties resulting in numerous complaints to the Local Authority and to the licencing authority, the EPA.

It is important to note that Article 5 of the 2009 Surface Water Regulations requires that a public authority, in performance of its functions, shall not undertake those functions in a manner that knowingly causes or allows deterioration in the chemical or ecological status of a body of surface water.

The concerns outlined above are challenging for the Local Authority and Uisce Éireann to address, but they must be considered and corrected when identified, to comply with statutory obligations to protect the aquatic environment and to allow for sustainable development to take place.

It is recommended that before considering future development within the LAP, Uisce Éireann should confirm that there is sufficient hydraulic capacity within the sewage conveyance network and pumping stations servicing the Wicklow, Rathnew areas, to convey foul waste to the Wastewater Treatment Plant without risk to the aquatic environment.

Where it is identified that the wastewater infrastructure does not have sufficient capacity, the planning authority should be notified to ensure that no additional loading is added to this infrastructure until the necessary upgrades or remediation works have been completed.

It is further recommended that the Local Authority conduct an audit of all the drainage assets in their charge, to ensure operational status, maintenance and repair requirements before considering any future development within these areas.

2.10 Built Heritage and Natural Environment

The key heritage and environmental factors that have influenced the shape of this plan include:

- *Protection and enhancement (where possible) of European Sites (the Murrough SPA, the Murrough Wetlands SAC, and Wicklow Head SAC), including lands adjacent to and linked to these sites.*
- *Identification of rivers and watercourses and their associated green corridors, and the recognition of same as a 'Green Infrastructure' resource.*



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There are two proposed zonings within the LAP, one of which is RN1- Existing Residential (Ref., SL02) and the other RN2- New Residential Priority 2 (Ref SLO4), both of which are located in high risk / sensitive areas in respect of environmental receptors.

Given the risk of sewage infrastructure failure and potential discharge into waterbodies connected to the "Murrough Wetlands SAC," it would be very difficult to rule out a significant impact on these Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), either alone or in combination with other nearby developments, and for this reason, IFI recommends that the Local Authority should reconsider the designation of SLO4 as potential development lands.

WTR95 *Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive*

CHAPTER 9 INFRASTRUCTURE

13.2 Water Services Objectives (Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028)

IFI wish to highlight the following objectives in relation to Water Quality, Water Supply, Waste Water and Storm & Surface Water Infrastructure as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

These objectives are very positive in their aims to protect and improve water quality within both surface and groundwater sources and to protect the aquatic environment and its riparian zones.

It also highlights the complexity and interconnections between, wastewater, surface water/drainage and drinking water infrastructure and the need to approach all future development in a joined-up manner, ensuring that all three components have sufficient capacity and are fit for purpose to facilitate sustainable development in the Wicklow Rathnew LAP.

IFI are concerned that the current waste water infrastructure in the area does not have capacity to support any further growth within the Wicklow – Rathnew & Ashford area at this time. It is recommended, as previously stated, that an audit of the waste infrastructure within the LAP (to include the Ashford agglomeration, as it is part of the same wastewater infrastructure) be undertaken by the relevant authority, and where issues such as conveyance capacity limitations are identified, remedial actions are undertaken. This will help to ensure sustainable development occurs in accordance with the objectives set out in the County Development Plan (CDP) and LAP.

IFI recommends that adequate resources are assigned to maintain and service the drainage network and associated infrastructure to protect the aquatic environment and prevent or minimise future flooding events.



Water Quality (CDP)

- CPO13.1** To ensure and support the implementation of the EU Groundwater Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and Blue Dot Catchment Programme, to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the County, including rivers, lakes, ground water, coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to a deterioration in water quality. The Council will also have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.
- CPO13.2** To prevent development that would pollute water bodies and in particular, to regulate the installation of effluent storage and disposal systems in the vicinity of natural water bodies or development that would exacerbate existing underlying water contamination.
- CPO13.3** To minimise alterations or interference with river / stream beds, banks and channels, except for reasons of overriding public health and safety (e.g., to reduce risk of flooding); a buffer of generally 25m along watercourses should be provided (or other width, as determined by the Planning Authority having particular regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland for urban locations) free from inappropriate development, with undeveloped riparian vegetation strips, wetlands and floodplains generally being retained in as natural a state as possible.
- CPO13.4** To ensure that any development or activity with the potential to impact on ground water has regard to the GSI Groundwater Protection Scheme (see Map 17.06 Groundwater Vulnerability). CPO 13.5 To ensure compliance with and to implement the provisions of the Nitrates Directive in so far as it falls within the remit of the Council to do so.
- CPO 13.6** To encourage and promote the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and comply with the River Basin Management Plan.

Water Supply Objectives

- CPO 13.8** In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, Wicklow County Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Investment Programme, to ensure the provision of sufficient storage, supply and pressure of potable water to serve all lands



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zoned for development and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of regional and strategic water supply schemes and any other smaller, localised water improvement schemes required during the lifetime of the plan, as well as programmes to consolidate, and improve supply and resilience under the National Water Resource Plan. In particular, to support and facilitate the delivery of new / improved water treatment supplies and storage infrastructure in the following settlements/areas: - Newtownmountkennedy – Rathdrum - Dunlavin - The areas and settlements covered by the Mid Wicklow Water Supply Scheme

- CPO 13.9** To protect existing and potential water resources of the County, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plans, the Groundwater Protection Scheme and source protection plans for public water supplies.
- CPO 13.10** To require new developments to connect to public water supplies where services are adequate or where they will be provided in the near future, or where extension of an adjacent water supply system is technically and environmentally feasible.
- CPO 13.11** Where connection to an existing public water supply is not possible, or the existing supply system does not have sufficient capacity, the provision of a private water supply will be only permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in EU and national legislation and guidance, would not be prejudicial to public health, would not impact on the source or yield of an existing supply, particularly a public supply or would not adversely affect the ability of water bodies to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. Private water supplies for multi-house developments will not be permitted.
- CPO 13.12** To support Irish Water's ongoing investment in the Vartry Water Supply Scheme.
- CPO 13.13** To support the provision of a water supply to all large and small villages.

Waste Water Objectives

- CPO 13.15** In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy, Wicklow County Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Investment Programme, to ensure that all lands zoned or identified for development are serviced by an adequate wastewater collection and treatment system and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of regional and strategic wastewater schemes.



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CPO 13.17 Private wastewater treatment plants for multi-house developments will not be permitted.

CPO 13.18 Private wastewater treatment plants for commercial / employment generating development will only be considered where:

- Irish Water has confirmed the site is due to be connected to a future public system in the area or Irish Water has confirmed there are no plans for a public system in the area.
- It can clearly demonstrated that the proposed system can meet all EPA / Local Authority environmental criteria; and
- An annually renewed contract for the management and maintenance of the system is contracted with a reputable company / person, details of which shall be provided to the Local Authority

CPO 13.19 Where any application for a private treatment plant would require a discharge licence under the Water Pollution Acts, a simultaneous application for same shall be required to be made when submitting the planning application.

Storm & Surface Water Infrastructure Objectives

CPO 13.20 Ensure the separation of foul and surface water discharges in new developments through the provision of separate networks.

CPO 13.21 Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the Wicklow County Council SuDS Policy to ensure surface water runoff is managed for maximum benefit. In particular, to require proposed developments to meet the design criteria of each of the four pillars of SuDS design; Water Quality, Water Quantity, Amenity and Biodiversity.

CPO 13.22 To promote the use of green infrastructure, such as swales and wetlands, where feasible as landscape features in new development to provide storm / surface runoff storage and reduce pollutants, as well as habitat, recreation, and aesthetic functions.

CHAPTER 10 HERITAGE, BIODIVERSITY & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

There are a number of very positive objectives proposed within this section, and it is important that the Fisheries Service are consulted at as early a stage as possible where development plans are being considered to facilitate these objectives.



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It is recommended that the following Guidance documents are referenced when considering development strategies and policy.

- IFI guidelines- "Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment"
- Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage Strategy and guidance documents
 1. Nature Based Management of Urban Rainwater and Urban Surface Water Discharges A National Strategy.
 2. Rainwater Management Plans Guidance for Local Authorities.

There is a zone of influence associated with Greenway's/Blueway's which must be considered and planned for within some of these objectives of the LAP.

A wildlife corridor system that protects regional diversity should be at the forefront of the Greenway/Blueway planning processes. Riparian areas play a disproportionately large role in filtering out pollutants and sediment from overland surface runoff, flood defence, maintaining biodiversity and for these reasons greenways must not impinge on or degrade the riparian zones. In considering wildlife, focus should not be solely on the width of the path of the greenway, consider the wider area it may influence.

IFI are aware of incidents of considerable damage to biodiversity resulting from the construction of greenways and amenity walks where there has been an over engineering of the pathways and cycleways in terms of the widths and finishes used, which has resulted in a degradation of the natural environment.

Careful consideration should be given at the design stage and a balance should be struck in relation to moving access away from the riparian corridor along rivers and streams and sensitive areas of conservation to provide refuge for the flora and fauna within these areas.

IFI is grateful for the opportunity to have these views considered and incorporated as a component of the Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025.

Should you require clarification on any of the above or require a further consultation meeting please contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,

Ronan Matson,
River Basin District Director, IFI Dublin



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Inland Fisheries Ireland

