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Local Planning Framework Adopted: 06 July 2026
Local Planning Framework Effective: 06 July 2026

This Local Planning Framework shall be read in conjunction with the Wicklow County Development Plan.

A:1 INTRODUCTION

This is the Arklow Local Planning Framework (LPF) 2026 which forms part of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and has been adopted into the County Development Plan via the variation procedure set out under Section 13 of the of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The purpose of this LPF is to put in place a land use framework that will guide the future sustainable development of the settlement of Arklow as shown on Land Use Map No. 1 appended to this document. This LPF, in conjunction with the County Development Plan, will inform and manage the future development of the LPF area.

The previous local area plan for the town was prepared in 2018. This LPF will build upon the successful strategies and objectives developed in the previous plan but will adapt where necessary to reflect updated national and regional planning policy and guidance, and general emerging planning issues.

Pre-draft consultation with the public, local community groups and commercial / business interest in the area, as well as public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies and infrastructure providers was carried out during the course of 2024 and early 2025. This consultation was carried out in accordance with the provisions set out under Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) on the basis at that time it was intended to prepare a Local Area Plan under Part II, Chapter II of the 2000 Act. Having regard however to the passing of the Planning & Development Act 2024, it has been decided to adopt a new plan / framework for this area via the making of a variation to the Wicklow County Development Plan.

All of these consultations, including submissions made, have been considered in the crafting of this LPF.

Note: Details shown on all maps are for information purposes only. Further details on any item should be clarified with Wicklow County Council. The maps have been produced by Wicklow County Council with available Local Authority and Tailte Éireann Surveying Base Data.

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A:2 COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY FOR ARKLOW

The Arklow Local Planning Framework must be consistent with the objectives of the County Development and its Core Strategy.

A:2.0 Strategic Goals

Healthy placemaking, climate change and economic opportunity are the three overarching cross-cutting themes of the Wicklow County Development Plan and therefore are the three strategic objectives that inform and shape this LPF. The legislative and policy context for each theme is outlined in the Overall Strategy of the County Development Plan. These cross-cutting, overarching themes align with the key principles identified in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region.

There is significant overlap between the three themes;

- **Placemaking** integrates with the creation of sustainable communities which includes housing, sustainable mobility, healthy town centres and economic development.
- **Climate change** has implications for sustainable mobility, economic development and heritage and biodiversity¹.
- **Economic development** is increasingly integrated with our response to climate change and to the delivery of healthy placemaking.



¹ The provisions of this LPF aim to support Wicklow County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

A:2.1 County Development Plan Core Strategy

Local plans / frameworks exist in a hierarchy of plans flowing from national level (NPF) to regional level (RSES) to County level (Wicklow County Development Plan). It is through the County Development Plan that these higher order strategies, as well as other national and regional policies (e.g. relating to compact growth, regeneration, transportation, climate action and the environment) are translated to a 'local level'. The County Development Plan includes a 'Core Strategy' which sets out the 'direction' for the future growth of the County, in accordance with these higher level strategies, and in particular sets out the settlement and population growth strategies up to 2031, evaluates the demand for housing and adequacy of zoned lands to meet those needs, as well as providing strategies for regeneration, infrastructure, environmental protection, climate mitigation and adaptation, and retail development.

Arklow is a Level 3 settlement in the County settlement hierarchy – a 'self-sustaining growth town'. Table 1 below sets out the key elements of the Wicklow County Development Plan 'Core Strategy', as they apply to Level 3 settlements.

Table A:1.1 Wicklow Core Strategy for Arklow

Core Strategy of the CDP	Application to Arklow
Settlement, Population & Housing Strategies	Level 3 settlements are designated 'Self Sustaining Growth Towns' described as ' <i>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</i> '. These towns range in size (as per the Census of population in 2022) from c. 6,000 to 22,000 persons. Population growth in Level 3 towns is targeted to be in the 25%-30% range between 2016 and 2031.
Economic Development Strategy	Self-Sustaining Growth Towns are identified as 'Level 3' in the County Economic Development Hierarchy.
Retail Strategy	Arklow is identified as 'Level 3' in the County Retail Hierarchy.
Community Development Strategy	Arklow falls into the 15,000-30,000 population range and should be ideally serviced by the following community infrastructure: Multi-purpose Community Resource Centre, Regional and Local Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities, Swimming Pool/Leisure Centre, Youth Centre, Athletics Track and Field Facilities, Arts and Cultural Centre, Local Multi-Purpose Community Space/Meeting Rooms, Outdoor Water Sports Facilities (where applicable), Neighbourhood Parks and Local Parks, Outdoor (full size) Multi-Use Games Areas – Synthetic / Hardcourt, Playground(s), Playing Pitches, Alternative/Minority Sports Facilities, Open Space/Urban Woodlands/ Nature Areas, Library.
Infrastructure Strategy	In accordance with the County Development Plan: - Measures will be required to facilitate a modal shift to more sustainable transport options including promotion of development patterns, and the development of enhanced infrastructure, to facilitate walking, cycling and increased use of public transport; - Only locations that are already served, or are serviceable with water and wastewater infrastructure shall be identified for new development.
Environmental Strategy	To ensure the objectives of the plan are consistent with the conservation and protection of the environment.

A:2.2 Role and function of the settlement

Arklow is designated a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town' in the Wicklow County Development Plan, in the 'Core Region' of the Eastern and Midlands Region. It is located in the southeast of the County approximately 70km south of Dublin, 25km south of Wicklow Town and 90km northwest of Wexford Town.

The RSES recognises that the 'Core Region' contains a strong network of county and market towns that have a good level of local employment, services and amenities, which serve not just their resident populations but a wider catchment area, including towns such as Arklow.

Arklow is the main centre in the south of the County. It provides for the service needs of its residents and a large geographical catchment extending to Avoca, Aughrim, Redcross, Rathdrum, a significant rural population, and to some extent to Tinahely / Shillelagh / Carnew. It is serviced by public transport facilities including the Dublin to Rosslare rail line and Bus Eireann services. In addition, the town is located on the M/N11 road link with ease of access to Dublin and the south-east.

As set out in the RSES and County Development Plan, Arklow is identified for growth in residential, employment and service functions and this will need to be supported by enhancements to the built environment, water services and public transport links. Accommodating such additional functions must be balanced with protecting and improving the character and quality of the town centre and the natural environment.

Arklow is identified as growth centre which should become more economically self-sustaining and is a key focus for economic growth in the County. The town should aim to attract a concentration of major employment generating investment including high quality knowledge based employment and should target investment from foreign and local sources in a mixture of 'people' and 'product' intensive industries.

The regional ports are recognised in the RSES as important centres of economic activity, and the RSES seeks to protect and support the role of regional ports, including Wicklow and Arklow Ports as economic drivers for the Region.



A:2.3 Town Centre Development

Level 3 town centres perform a variety of roles and functions for their residents and their wider rural communities. The strengths of these settlements lie in their capacity to accommodate a mix of uses including employment, residential, community and other functions in a compact walkable environment that provides a high quality of life. They are a hub for social, economic and administrative functions in addition to providing places for recreation, worship and leisure.

Town and village centres have experienced significant challenges to retain vibrancy and vitality. The National Planning Framework (NPF) places a strong emphasis on strengthening Ireland's urban structure by targeting both population and employment growth in urban areas, promoting urban infill and brownfield development and ensuring that towns and villages are attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and wellbeing.

Retail is a key function of Level 3 towns and a thriving retail sector is essential to maintain vitality and vibrancy in the core areas of the town and to maintain the town as the focal point for the wider rural area in which it is located.



In line with the Retail Planning Guidelines and the County Wicklow Retail Strategy, Arklow has been designated a 'Level 3 Sub County Town Retail Centre' serving a large geographical catchment extending to Avoca, Aughrim, Redcross, a significant rural population, and to some extent to Tinahely/Shillelagh/Carnew area (although some expenditure is lost from these centres to Gorey and Carlow). It is the vision that Arklow will be the principal shopping and service destination for this wide catchment area. The retail function of Level 3 towns is as set out in the County Retail Strategy.

Towns and villages are continually evolving; this is essential for their survival. It is important that Wicklow's planning policy is flexible to allow town centres to evolve and diversify. The strategy for Arklow town centre will therefore be based on the following objectives:

Town Centre and Retail Development Strategy

- To support the continued **enhancement of Arklow Town Centre** as the heart of the settlement, where people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities can avail of services and interact within their communities;
- Ensure that the town centre is an **attractive place to live in, to work in and to visit**, easy to get to, **easy to walk and cycle within** and is a **competitive place to conduct business**;
- Create a **compact town by reusing existing buildings and maximising the potential of infill and brownfield sites**; use all mechanisms and processes available to drive forward the redevelopment and regeneration of vacant, underutilised and derelict sites;

- Use **public realm improvements to stimulate investment and economic confidence**; encourage public art in publicly accessible spaces such as town streets and squares and along existing or future parks and amenity routes;
- **Promote healthy placemaking and prioritise walking and cycling** by improving linkages between the core town centre, existing community infrastructure, existing residential areas and lands earmarked for future housing development;
- To **allow a relaxation in certain development standards in the town centre zone in the interest of achieving the best development possible**, both visually and functionally while maintaining the highest quality of design in all new developments;
- **Embracing and protecting the historic character and heritage attributes/features** of the town centre and strengthen the strong sense of place;
- Facilitating a **diverse mix of uses**, and particularly encourage residential usage at appropriate town centre densities, and the concept of 'living over the shop';
- **Facilitate the redevelopment of lands within the town core area**, particularly those sites with frontage onto the main streets and squares of the town, which shall provide for a street fronting building of a **high quality design** or for a **high quality urban space**, including hard and soft landscaping, and appropriate street fixtures and furniture, in order to **enhance and create a more attractive streetscape**;
- Facilitate an expansion of retail floorspace to reduce leakage of expenditure from both the town itself and the wider County. Guide and **promote the expansion of retail floorspace first and foremost within the core retail area** and thereafter in accordance with the sequential approach to retail development;
- Provide for **an expansion in the variety of retail and retail service facilities so that the town includes a range of retail outlets that provide for the day to day needs of the local population and the needs of other businesses and tourists**, in accordance with the provisions of the "Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoEHLG 2012), and any subsequent Ministerial Guidelines or directives and the Wicklow County Retail Strategy.

A:2.4 Population and Housing

The population and housing targets for Arklow are provided in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan 2022-2028, expressed as growth from 2016 to 2031. These figures are summarised in the table below.

Table A:2.1 Arklow Population and Housing Targets

Arklow	2016 Census	2022 Census	CDP Target Q2 2028	CDP Target 2031	Growth 2016-2031
Population	13,226	13,399	15,419	16,441	+3,214
Housing Stock	5,406	5,585	6,461	6,627	+1,221

This LPF will ensure adequate zoned land and supporting objectives to allow for the housing targets, as set out in the County Development Plan prevailing at the time of the adoption of this LPF, to be met. The lands that are needed to be zoned to meet the current target will be zoned 'New Residential'.

Population and Housing Development Strategy
- To adhere to the relevant objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan with regard to population and housing and ensure that the provisions of the LPF creates a flexible land use framework that allows for existing and potential future higher housing targets to be fulfilled; - To promote and facilitate in-fill housing developments, the use of under-utilised / vacant sites and vacant upper floors in the town centre for residential use and facilitate higher residential densities at appropriate locations, subject to a high standard of design, layout and finish; In this regard a minimum of 30% of the targeted housing growth shall be directed into the existing built up area of the settlement, on lands zoned 'town centre', 'existing residential' and 'mixed use'. Noting that the potential of such regeneration / infill / brownfield sites is difficult to predict, there shall be no quantitative restriction on the number of units that may be delivered within the built up envelope of the town; - To ensure that overall housing and population targets can be delivered, land will be zoned for new residential development outside of the existing built up envelope, subject to the amount of zoned land not exceeding 70% of the total housing target for that settlement; - New residential development shall represent an efficient use of land and achieve the highest density possible, subject to a high standard of quality, design, layout and finish, the reasonable protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of the area; Housing occupancy controls: As a 'self-sustaining growth towns', Arklow should provide for the housing demands generated from people from across the County and region.

A:2.5 Economic Development & Employment

The County Economic Hierarchy identifies that Level 3 'self-sustaining growth towns' such as Arklow are strategically important locations for economic growth and employment development, and would be suitable locations for both foreign and local sources of investment in a mixture of 'people' and 'product' intensive sectors. Depending on their degree of accessibility, scale of population / workforce and market catchment, and the availability of support services, the Level 3 towns have varying roles to play in acting as attractors for investment.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) supports continued population and economic growth throughout the Eastern and Midlands Region. The RSES identifies Arklow as having strategic natural, cultural and green infrastructure assets in the region due to the nature of the maritime town and beaches and the proposed Arklow-Shillelagh Greenway. Arklow is noted in the RSES as having a regional port of significance. The regional ports are recognised in the RSES as important centres of economic activity, and the RSES seeks to protect and support the role of regional ports as economic drivers for the Region, while supporting their complementary economic use including the development of offshore renewable energy developments.

The factors that make a town economically viable and attractive to investors and visitors are numerous and often hard to predict and influence, but for the purpose of this land use framework, the strategy for economic development will be based around:

- a) Providing a land-use framework for the town, which makes the Council's requirements and expectations with respect to the location and type of new employment generating development abundantly clear;
- b) Supporting and facilitating, to the highest degree possible (subject to environmental and other relevant planning considerations) all forms of employment generation and in particular, to encourage employment and commercial uses as a key activity in the town centre;
- c) A focus on 'placemaking' to create attractive and sustainable communities, with high quality services and public realm, to create attractive places to live, work, visit and invest.

An established measure of the employment 'health' of a settlement is a measure called the 'jobs ratio'. This is the relationship between the number of resident workers and the number of jobs in any defined area. It is the aim of the County Development Plan to increase the County's job ratio to 70% by 2031, which will require some locations to exceed this level, and even to exceed 100%, in order to counter balance areas, such as smaller settlements and rural areas, that would be unlikely to reach such a high level of employment.

The 2022 Census indicates that the jobs ratio in Arklow was 70%. It is important that a high level of employment is maintained and increased into the future as resident population grows.

Economic Development and Employment Strategy

- To facilitate and support the highest degree possible, all forms of employment creation **on appropriately zoned land and to promote the intensification of activities on existing employment sites** and to take advantage of the existing economic assets of the town in order to stimulate further employment within the area;
- To increase the quality and range of employment opportunities by facilitating developments **that involve foreign and local investment in a variety of forms, including 'people' and 'product' intensive industries.** The Council will particularly support the development of 'people' intensive employment generating developments at locations served by sustainable and active modes of transport, those that provide for the local convenience and social service needs of the area and those that provide for the needs of tourists and visitors. The Council will support the development of 'product' intensive industries at appropriate locations, and will particularly support developments based on the use of a local rural resource;
- To promote in the first instance the **growth of economic activity and employment in the town centre, built**

up parts of the town and the intensification of activities on existing employment sites; and where a demand for 'greenfield' employment development is identified, to **ensure zoned, serviced land is available in appropriate locations in accordance with the zoning principles of the County Development Plan;**

- To encourage the **redevelopment of town centre and brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the settlement** and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided;
- To encourage and facilitate the development of **small to medium scale indigenous industries and services at appropriate locations within Arklow**. The Council acknowledges that the development of small scale projects with long term employment potential are important in sustaining both urban and rural settlements in County Wicklow and as such, the Council will adopt a proactive and flexible approach in dealing with applications on a case-by-case basis;
- To support a shift towards **low carbon and climate change resilient economic and enterprise activity**, reducing energy dependence, promoting the sustainable use of resources and leading in the Smart Green Economy in particular noting Arklow's designation as Co. Wicklow's first **decarbonisation zone**;
- To **facilitate home-working**, the development of co-working hubs and innovative forms of working, which **reduce the need to travel**;
- To **promote high quality housing, community facilities and a built and natural environment** that is attractive to indigenous and foreign industry and employees;
- To **promote tourist developments at suitable locations that are of an appropriate scale and design**, particularly developments that are associated with the tourism products or themes associated with the town (e.g. maritime, pottery) and its hinterland, and maximise the town's location as a destination and gateway between the tourism assets.

A:2.6 Social & Community Development

The provision of accessible social and community infrastructure, including open space and leisure / recreational facilities, contributes to the quality of life for all and it is important that existing and future residents of the town and its catchment are provided with such facilities. High quality social and community services in an area can also make a place more attractive for the establishment of new businesses and to encourage long stay visitors. In particular, new community facilities will be required to be provided in tandem with the development of significant new residential developments and new neighbourhoods.

Community Infrastructure Development Strategy

- To facilitate the development of **a range of high quality community and recreational facilities that meet the needs of the local population**, and in particular to require that new community and recreational facilities are developed in tandem with new housing, through the implementation of the objectives the County Development Plan and this LPF;
- To manage the pace of **new housing developments commensurate with existing / planned community facilities**;
- To **support existing clubs and sporting organisations** in providing continued sports activities for those living in the settlement and the wider area;
- To support the **creation of functional and healthy public spaces and pedestrian routes** within the settlement, in order to maximise opportunities for outdoor activity;
- Where projects for new recreation projects (such as riverine parks, greenways, walking routes, trails etc) identified in this LPF are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the overall LPF relating to sustainable development.



A:2.7 Built Heritage & Natural Environment

The protection and enhancement of heritage and environmental assets through the LPF area will help to safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of the town and its surroundings, providing local economic, social and environmental benefits. The maps included in this LPF include heritage maps indicating the key natural and built heritage features.

Built Heritage and Natural Environment Strategy for Arklow

- To protect **the natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of Arklow**, in accordance with the objectives set out in the County Development Plan and this LPF;
- To **enhance the quality of the natural and built environment of Arklow**, to enhance the unique character of the town and environs as a place to live, visit and work;
- To promote **greater appreciation of, and access to, local heritage assets**;
- To ensure the **protection and enhancement of natural habitats, cultural heritage, ecological resources and biodiversity** and in particular, to safeguard the integrity of protected sites, watercourses and rivers in the area.



A:2.8 Service Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure is vital for the facilitation of the future development of Arklow. This includes water services, effective road and public transport networks, energy, telecommunications, waste management etc. The provision of transport and services infrastructure is essential to the development of any town or village, providing ease of movement within settlements, connecting settlements to surrounding areas and providing sufficient service infrastructure capable of meeting the demands of the resident, commercial and employment populations.

The County Development Plan, and various programmes of the Council's Transportation and Environmental Services Departments, as well as outside agencies such as Uisce Éireann and the National Transport Authority, provide detailed strategies and objectives for a whole range of service infrastructure.



Service Infrastructure Strategy for Arklow

- Promote a development pattern and the development of enhanced infrastructure to **facilitate walking, cycling and increased use of public transport; in particular:**
 - to support and facilitate the implementation of measures to **improve walking / cycling opportunities** within the town and between the town and other centres of population and activity in the wider area;
 - to support and encourage action to address traffic on main streets, **to reduce and slow traffic through the town centre and give priority to pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and public realm improvements;**
 - to promote the delivery of **improved public transport** by facilitating the needs of existing or new bus providers with regard to bus stops and garaging facilities (unnecessary duplication of bus stops on the same routes / roads will not be permitted); facilitating the provision of bus priority where a requirement for such is identified; **requiring the developers of large-scale new employment and residential developments in the town to fund / provide high quality pedestrian and cycling facilities to public transport routes /**

nodes;

- to support design solutions and innovative approaches in order **to reduce car dependency;**
- to **cooperate with NTA and other relevant transport planning bodies** in the delivery of a high quality, public transport systems;

- Facilitate and promote the **delivery of reliable and effective water, drainage, energy, waste management and communications** infrastructure to service the existing and future development needs of the settlement. In particular:
 - To support and facilitate the **improvement and increased resilience of the water distribution, supply and storage systems;**
 - To continue to **facilitate Uisce Éireann in the provision of necessary waste water infrastructure, in a sustainable manner;**
 - To **ensure the separation of foul and surface water discharges in new developments** through the provision of separate networks;
 - Ensure the **implementation of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)** and in particular, to ensure that all surface water generated in a new development is disposed of on-site or is attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved surface water system;
 - To **promote energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy projects;**
- **To ensure that only appropriate land uses are provided on lands identified as being at risk of flooding;**
- **Where projects for new infrastructure identified in this LPF are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the LPF relating to sustainable development. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection, and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.**

The key factors that will drive the development strategy for Arklow are:

- The development and growth strategies / objectives for the settlement as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 (derived from the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy) **detailed in Section A:2 above;**
- The findings and recommendations set out in the various studies / assessments accompanying this LPF, including in particular the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, Local Transport Plan, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Social Infrastructure Assessment, Green Infrastructure Assessment, as detailed in the **Appendices to the LPF;**
- The impact of climate change on the future development of the settlement including measures to reduce our carbon footprint as well as mitigate against the future potential impacts that climate change may bring, such as flooding. Tackling transport emissions will be key, through the delivery of a development pattern that will allow for a reduced dependency on the private car and increased use of more sustainable and active travel modes;
- The historic pattern of development and the physical context (including any constraints to future development). In this regard the main physical and environmental considerations are also opportunities and contribute positively to the town. Arklow's Maritime Heritage in particular has shaped the physical and economic development of the town. While the port still has a strong commercial function a number of industrial sites have become and remained vacant over the years in the northern and southern waterfront zones. There is now an opportunity to regenerate these sites while still protecting and possibly enhancing the commercial and leisure functions of the port and marina.

A:3.1 Climate Change

One of the key influences in the drafting of this LPF is addressing climate change. Projections for climate change include continued sea level rise, potentially more severe Atlantic storms, which could generate more significant storm surges and extreme waves, increase in the number of heavy rainfall days each year, and wetter winters. The potential impacts from these projections include increasing flood risk for communities and infrastructure along rivers, estuaries and the coast, with accelerating rates of coastal erosion threatening coastal habitats and environments. Arklow is particularly vulnerable noting its coastal and riverside location.

While the commencement of the development of the Arklow Flood Relief Scheme is welcomed, other interventions need to be considered such as the use of sustainable urban drainage systems in existing and new developments and the protection of existing water courses, wetlands, marshes and other urban sponge areas in the settlement boundary which have the ability to naturally absorb and attenuate rainwater, reduce surface runoff and act as carbon sinks.

Arklow's Town Marsh, the network of green spaces throughout the town including planted areas, tree lines, parks and its blue network of streams, rivers, ponds, wetlands etc all have an important part to play not only as places for wildlife and biodiversity to be allowed to thrive, but also to act as areas of natural attenuation during periods of heavy rainfall.



A: 3.1.1 Impact on Future Development Options

The future development in Arklow needs to consider the potential future impacts on the settlement as a result of climate change. Future development should seek to preserve and protect the natural assets in the settlement while still allowing for the planned and sustainable development of the town improving both the quality of life for its residents and enhancing the natural environment within and around the town.

The LPF has been underpinned by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), prepared in accordance with '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*' guidelines (DoEHLG 2009), including flood maps which have been prepared as part of this LPF process and appended to this LPF. The flood maps prepared for this SFRA have used the most up to date flood maps and predictions available, noting these have been updated since that last plan was prepared. The guidelines follow the principle that certain types of vulnerable development should not be permitted in flood risk areas, particularly flood plains, except where there are no alternative and appropriate sites available in lower risk areas that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. The findings of this document are reflected in the land use zoning map accompanying this LPF.

In addition, the LPF will take into account the OPW Climate Change Mapping by requiring that additional objectives are applied to lands that may be at risk of flooding in the future due to climate change.

As a result of the updated SFRA, changes in zoning will be necessitated compared to the previous plan and strengthened objectives for site specific flood risk assessments for lands at potential risk of flooding in the longer term (having regard to the OPW climate change scenarios flood projections) will be required.

A Green Infrastructure (GI) Audit has also been prepared in support of this LPF and identifies Green Infrastructure Assets, which are primarily watercourse-based green corridors, identified to form the core of ecological corridors in the area. Other areas of potential biodiversity value were also identified, and thereafter potential linkages between same were evaluated in order, where feasible, to connect the individual sites into a coherent, interlinked network of ecological corridors and 'necklace' effect routes and appropriate buffers from proposed development, which are reflected in the land use zoning map accompanying this LPF².

As a result of the GIA, changes in zoning will be necessitated compared to the previous plan and strengthened objectives for nature conservation will be required.

Arklow has been designated as County Wicklow's first decarbonisation zone. While the protection of green and blue infrastructure assets such as the Town Marsh which act as a natural carbon sinks will be key, the LPF will also support more ways to reduce our carbon footprint now and into the future including the re-use and upgrading of existing buildings to become more energy efficient, the replacement of fossil fuels with solar, wind and other renewable resources.

Another key intervention is the promotion of more sustainable forms of travel and reducing our dependency on the private car through appropriate zoning and promoting sustainable travel patterns.

²The following non-statutory local studies were also considered in the GI mapping process: Arklow Town Urban Habitat Study 2008, Arklow Biodiversity Action Plan 2021, Arklow Marsh Protection Report May 2025, Arklow and Environs Hedgerow Survey 2024

A3.2 Sustainable Transportation

Wicklow County Council, with DBFL Consulting Engineers Ltd. and the support of the NTA and TII, have prepared a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Arklow (Appendix 3), which has been used to inform both the overall development strategy of this Local Planning Framework, and its roads and transportation objectives, and will form the basis for the completion of a Local Transport Plan on the adoption of the LPF. The key aim of the LTP is identify ways to facilitate a modal shift away from private vehicles, to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport, to provide a sustainable and safe transport environment and integrate these proposals with the existing and future land use strategy for the settlement.

The objectives and measures recommended in the LTP were developed following assessment of the transport weakness and opportunities in the area, in particular:

- There is a **high dependency in the area on travel to work and education by car**. The 2022 Census data shows that of the total 8,996 work/education trips within Arklow, 63% were made by private vehicle;
- With respect to trips to work, after the private car, walking is the second most popular mode (12%) and trips by bus (2%), bike (1%) and train / DART / Luas only account for 4%, reflecting the currently poor level of cycling infrastructure and public transport provision;
- With respect to trips to education, private vehicles account for over half (59%) of trips, walking is the second most popular mode (31%) and trips by bus (6%), bike (25) and train / DART / Luas only account for 1%. The number of trips to education by 'active travel' modes fell between 2016 and 2022;
- At present there is no dedicated town bus service for Arklow, rather, existing bus services comprise national and regional routes. The infrequent nature of the scheduled bus services can disincentivise public transport usage, contributing to the low use of sustainable modes identified in the Census. Arklow Train Station is located within a 5-minute walking distance from the town centre at St. Mary's Road and is serviced by the Dublin Connolly – Rosslare rail route. The railway line is a single track between Bray and Rosslare which limits the capacity for increased services.
- Key trip attractors in the area are:
 - The town centre of Arklow;
 - Employment areas, in particular at the Kilbride and the Avoca River Park Industrial Estates north of the river, at Roadstone, Arklow South Quay, Knockenrahan Industrial Estate, Croghan Industrial Estate, Servier, Kish Business Park and IDA Park Arklow south of the river;
 - Retail areas in particular Arklow Main Street, the Bridgewater area north of the river and Tesco Extra/Supervalu area south of the river;
 - Schools;
 - Arklow Train Station.
- As a significant number of key destinations (such as the Main Street, schools, retail, employment locations) are within a 15-minute walk and cycle time of a large proportion of the existing residential population, there is excellent potential to further increase the use of walking and cycle throughout the area.
- The Main Street is dominated by traffic further diminishing the pedestrian experience impacting the attractiveness of the town centre, the inclusivity of the town centre for all users and in turn, overall footfall.
- Many footpaths in the town centre streets are narrow and often impeded by poorly placed signage and bins. There are opportunities in the area for improved walking and cycling infrastructure through the enhancement of existing laneways in the town, along existing public roads, in particular Main Street, through road space re-allocation and public realm improvements, as well as new links through existing and new residential developments and greenspaces. In this regard topography in the town generally leads itself to encouraging walking and cycling;
- There are currently limited cycle facilities with Arklow town centre due to narrow carriageways and the disproportionate allocation of road space in favour of private vehicles. Where cycling infrastructure exists, it is substandard in places and lacks safety elements such as segregation from the carriageway.
- Pedestrian and cycle linkages between the Main Street and the riverbank are currently limited and the town centre tends to turn its back on the riverfront. There is an opportunity to enhance pedestrian linkages through utilising and enhancing existing laneway connections in conjunction with the improvements the Arklow Flood Relief Scheme will bring to the public realm along South Quay.

- While there are two pedestrian crossings on the Bridge Street junction and one traffic light crossing on Main Street which allow for good linkages between the two sides of the Main Street, the LTP has identified a prevalence of pedestrian collisions along Main Street which indicates that more opportunities for safe crossing are needed to improve pedestrian movement in the town centre.
- A significant impediment to accessibility and public realm improvements in the town centre (particularly in and around Lower Main Street) and the south quay / harbour / Tinahask area, as well as on the Nineteen Arches Bridge, is the presence of significant flows of commercial traffic and HGVs in these areas. HGVs from both the Roadstone Quarry and the port / harbour area on the south side of the river can only access the regional and national road network from these locations via the narrow (and predominantly residential) streets in the Lower Main Street, South Quay and Tinahask areas. As per previous development plans and transport studies for Arklow the identified solution to this issue lies in the construction of a **Southern Port Access Road** from Knockmore to the south of the town into the south quay / harbour area, connecting into the Roadstone Quarry. This route has been examined further in the LTP and it has confirmed that this is a necessary and high priority project.
- A second challenge to the overall improvement of movement and transportation in the town is the 'bottleneck' created by the Nineteen Arches Bridge, the only bridge across the river in the settlement. In previous development plans and transport studies, an identified 'solution' to this issue comprised the development of a new bridge between the Nineteen Arches and the M11 bridge to the west, from Kilbride in the north, passing over the Marsh, connecting to Vale Road, Lamberton Avenue and then continuing onto the Coolgreaney Road (the '**Western Distributer Road**'). As part of the LTP, this option has been re-evaluated and it has been determined that this would not be a short or medium term option for addressing this issue as further feasibility and environmental / ecological studies (particularly as the Arklow town marsh is a pNHA and the principal wetland area in Arklow), as well as stakeholder and traffic / transport assessment would be required before such a project could be progressed. In addition, the LTP identifies that this potential new route should only extend as far as Vale Road and that the development of a southern continuation of a distributor road from Vale Road to Lamberton and Coolgreaney Road is not required.

The high level transport objectives identified in the LTP are:

- Objective 1:** Encourage the use of sustainable low carbon transport modes (walking, cycling and bus) to reduce car dominance in line with Arklow's designation as County Wicklow's pilot decarbonisation zone.
- Objective 2:** Enhance the vibrancy, accessibility and liveability of Arklow Town Centre and immediate environs through a better balance of public space.
- Objective 3:** Enhance and maximise the use of existing and future natural environmental assets such as Avoca River Walk, Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway and Arklow to Laragh Greenway.
- Objective 4:** Maximise and enhance connectivity and permeability by removing barriers to walking and cycling and addressing traffic issues within the town.
- Objective 5:** Support the 15-minute-town concept within Arklow through the delivery of a permeable and connected walking and cycling network so that a range of facilities and services are available in short walking and cycling distances from home.

The key measures identified in the LTP are:

- Provide **continuous high-quality walking and cycling facilities** on identified Primary Routes, which directly connect to Arklow's town centre.
- Provision of safe and attractive walking and cycling facilities and public realm-led enhancement measures along Arklow's **Central Spine** (Wexford Road, Main Street, Ferrybank and Dublin Road)
- Provision of **New Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge(s)** to reduce reliance on the Nineteen Arches Bridge, minimise traffic congestion, and provide additional connectivity to lands zoned for development on both sides of the river.
- Delivery of active travel facilities and traffic calming measures on **link roads**.
- Delivery of **Town Centre** public realm improvements and **Quayside** walking and cycling facilities.
- Advancing and providing connectivity to the **Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway**.

- Formalising existing **permeability** links and introducing new permeability links to maximise accessibility and connectivity.
- Identifying the need for **town centre bus services**.
- Future integrated transport hub (**Park and Ride**) at Templeraíne.
- Advancing the delivery of the **Southern Port Access Road**, and the **Western Distributor Road** with revised route alignment(s).
- Safeguarding and enhancing the strategic function of **national roads**.
- Supporting gradual **HGV restrictions** through the town centre, facilitated by new road infrastructure.
- **Area-based parking management** and destination based parking measures, including formal park and ride facilities.

A:3.2.3 Impact on future development options

In light of these findings, in the determination of the future development pattern for the settlement of Arklow, a key consideration is ensuring that new development is or can be accessed and serviced by sustainable and active transportation modes. In this regard, greenfield lands have been identified for new residential and employment development **only where**:

- they are serviced or serviceable with footpaths and cycleways;
- are within c.30 minutes' walk time of a train station;
- are within c.15 minutes' walk time of an existing or a committed bus service;
- they are located within a c.15 minute walk of the town centre.

A consolidated map has been prepared which shows all locations in the LPF area that are within a 30 minute walk of Arklow Train Station and a 15 minute walk of existing or committed bus services. When this is overlaid with the zoning map from the 2018 Local Area Plan, the following is noted:

- Locations that were previously zoned for new residential and employment development (identified as AAPs (Action Area Plans) 1- 4 under the 2018 Local Area Plan) are within a reasonable walking distance of existing or committed public transport nodes;
- These isochrones are limited to existing public walking routes on the ground. There is an opportunity to bring all or most of these existing zoned undeveloped residential and employment lands into these walking distances as part of their future development by promoting walking and cycling connectivity as part of their overall design concept;
- These lands now also benefit from significant investments made by TII under the **Arklow North and Arklow South Cycle & Pedestrian Improvement Schemes** resulting in the development of high quality cycle and walking infrastructure along the Dublin Road to the north and Wexford Road to the south adjacent to this lands. As part of the development of these lands, cycle and walking routes shall link into this improved cycle and walking network.

Therefore, it is considered that these previously zoned lands fulfil accessibility criteria and are suitable to be continued in the LPF, subject to any amendments thereto to ensure compliance with other proper planning and sustainable development criteria.

It is acknowledged that the Avoca River Park Industrial Estate (former IFI Site) to the west, the IDA Park to the south west and the Kish Business Park to the south of the settlement, all fall outside the catchment of these walking isochrones. However the employment zoning is considered appropriate to maintain for these lands given that (a) part of the lands have planning permission or have already been developed for employment in particular by local businesses and (b) the role the IDA plays in attracting foreign direct investment in to Ireland.

With respect to the identified priority need in the LTP for a **Southern Port Access Route** to address serious traffic issues in the town centre / harbour / south quay areas, it is considered that the lands that would partially deliver the route / be opened up by the route should be identified as Phase 1 lands for development in the lifetime of this LPF.

A:3.3 Historical Development of Arklow

The following outlines the historical development of Arklow town and how this has shaped the town to date and continues to influence the future options for the further development of Arklow.

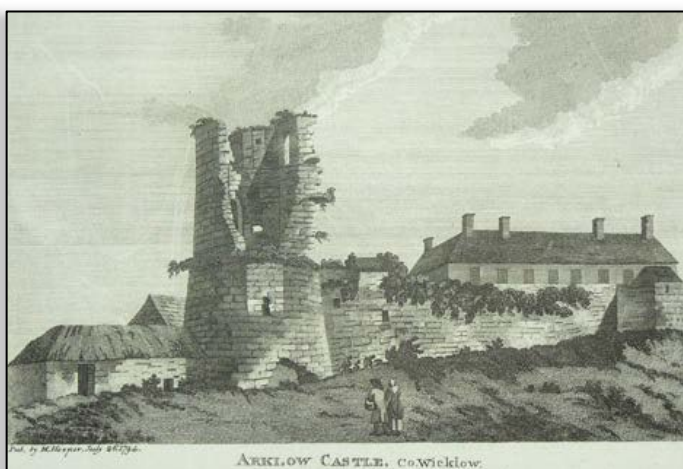
The name Arklow is of Scandinavian origin, with 'lo' meaning river meadow and 'Ark' being derived from the Viking name Arknell, i.e. Arknell's Meadow. Arklow town originally developed on the north side of the river, with the Vikings settling at the Town Marsh in the **9th century**, giving the town its current name. The Irish name for Arklow is An tInbhear Mór in Irish or the great/big estuary in English.

The Anglo-Normans followed in the **12th century** building 'Ormonde Castle' on the southern bank of the river. The town of Arklow and Ormonde Castle were granted to Theobald Fitzwalter (1st Chief Butler of Ireland and patriarch of the Butler family) circa **1185**, and it, along with a large amount of the hinterland remained in the hands of his family, the Butlers, throughout medieval times. During his time in Arklow, Theobald founded and endowed a Cistercian Monastery north of the river, which appears to have been short lived in existence. He also brought in many settlers to the area. He died in Arklow/Ormonde Castle on February 4, 1206.

In **1264** Thomas Fitzwalter founded the Dominican Friary. He granted the 'Dominican Order of Preachers' a large tract of land, now known as the townland of Abbeylands, to the south of the town, upon which they founded the Abbey of the Holy Cross. The Friary was suppressed in **1539**. Parts of the church and cloister buildings survived until the mid-18th century however none survive today. The site can be identified as Abbeylands Park/the Old Abbey Park and Rose Garden, a small park accessed off Main Street and formerly used as a graveyard.

In the **14th century**, Arklow came under pressure from the native Irish and the Ormonde Castle was captured in 1331. The town itself survived the Gaelic resurgence and managed to remain a bastion of the Pale. The 16th century saw the Butlers reasserting their interests in the manor. The town remained loyal to the crown during the nine years' war, and it was a supporter of the confederate cause between 1641 and 1649. The town surrendered to Cromwell in September **1649**, as his army passed through, on route to Wexford. Ormonde Castle was destroyed by Cromwellian troops with the remains located on Parade Ground (rear of the former Courthouse). The image below shows the remains of the Ormonde Castle in the late **18th Century**. This corner tower and perimeter wall still survive to the present day and can be seen from the Avoca River Walk. The early 18th century Arklow Barracks can be seen built within the castle walls, and surviving until the Irish Civil War 1922-1923.

Figure A3.8: Arklow Castle and Barracks c. 1797 along with remains today



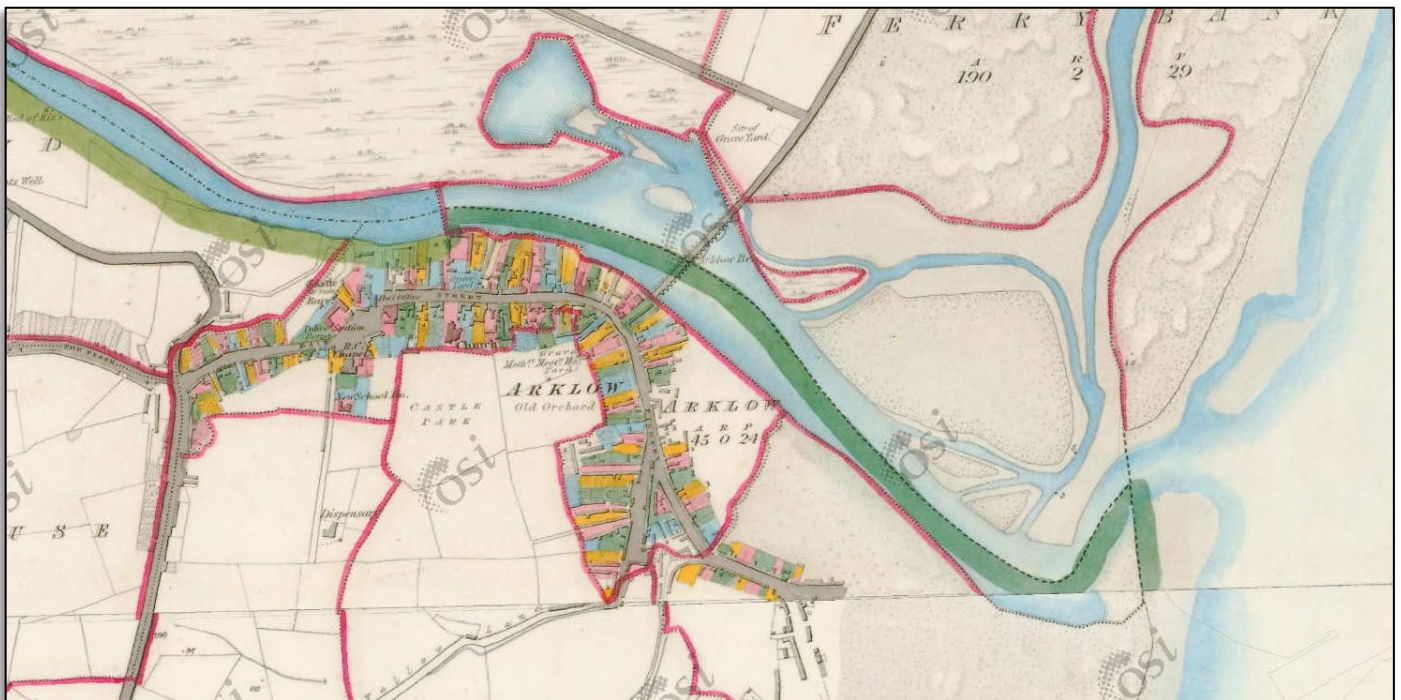
The Nineteen Arches Bridge was constructed between **1754-56**. This is the longest handmade bridge in Ireland and was built by Andrew Noble. This is the best known landmark in Arklow Town and is an impressive focal point.



The Battle of Arklow occurred on the 9 June **1798** when a force of United Irishmen from Wexford launched an assault into County Wicklow, on the then British-held town of Arklow. This was an attempt to spread the rebellion into Wicklow and to threaten the capital of Dublin. It was a significant historical event, where English crown forces defeated Irish insurgents. Two memorials, one on Parade Ground and one on Coolgreany Road commemorate the Battle of Arklow.

The Arklow First Edition 6 Inch Map Surveyed **1829-1834** shows the development of Arklow on the southern side of the river. This is an elevated area away from flood risk, with the Main Street the initial focus of growth. The original N11 national road was Arklow's Main Street, linking Arklow to Wicklow Town in the north and Wexford to the south, with the Nineteen Arches Bridge over the Avoca River.

Figure A3.9: Arklow OSi First Edition 6 Inch Map Surveyed 1829-1834



In the **1800s**, post survey of the Arklow First Edition 6 Inch Map shown above, Charles Stewart Parnell commenced quarrying at Big Rock to the south of the town at the location of the modern day Roadstone Quarry. Arklow Railway Station was also opened in **1863**. Arklow Town now began to expand to the south towards the location of the Railway Station and to the north along Ferrybank. At the **end of the 19th Century** the population of Arklow was circa 4,944 persons.

The **late 19th Century** saw the establishment of the Kynoch large munitions factory on the northern side of the town, from the site of the new Waste Water Treatment Plant/former chemical works, up to and including Arklow Caravan Park. The factory originally supplied explosives for mining but also supplied munitions during wartimes. This factory employed between 3,000 and 5,000 people at its peak during World War I. In 1917 there was an explosion on the site. Twenty seven men were killed. A verdict of unknown causes was returned on the incident. The factory closed shortly after.

The map across shows the location of the Kynoch Factory Site which they acquired from Arklow Chemical Works. Munition magazines and buildings associated with the factory were dotted further along the coastline.

The map below shows the further development of Arklow, north of the river and the Nineteen Arches Bridge along Ferrybank and west of the site of Kynoch Munitions.

Figure A3.10: Chemical Works/ Kynoch Factory Site - OSi 25 inch Map 1888-1913

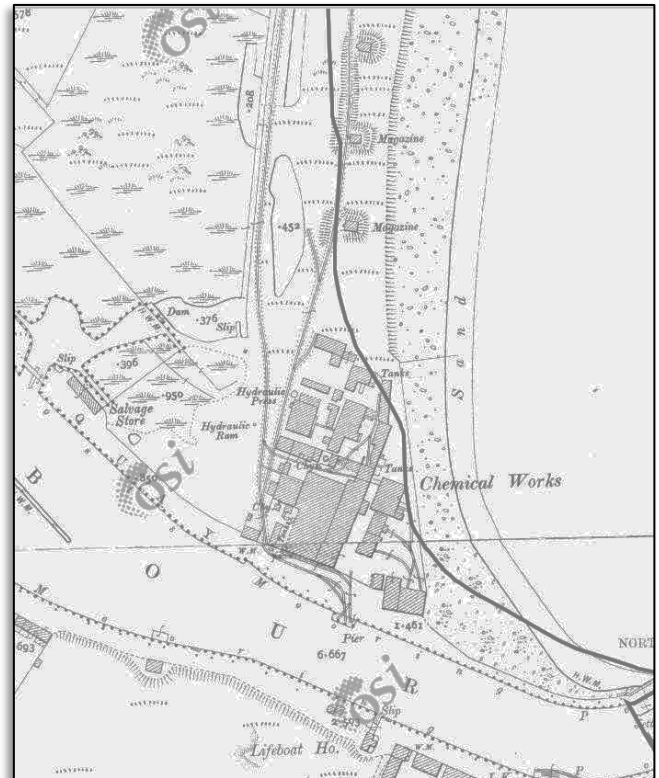
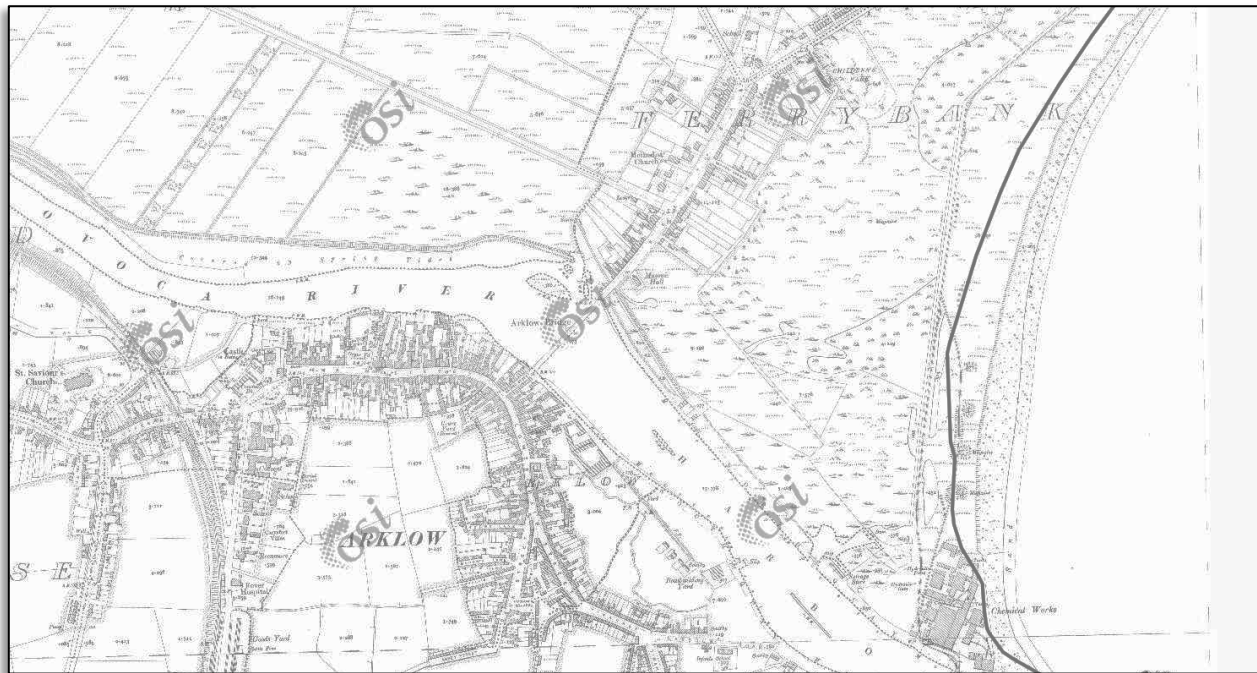


Figure A3.11: Wider view of Arklow OSi 25 inch Map 1888-1913



A3.3.1 Modern development patterns

The town saw very little change in population numbers between **1901 and 1946** when the population was **c. 4,915** persons. This period saw the establishment of Arklow Pottery in 1934, which was to be a major employer in the town up until the mid-1990s.

There was a steady increase in population between **1946-1956**, largely due to state-built residential development. This saw the construction of housing estates to the south of Main Street, infilling lands between Chapel Lane (now St. Marys Road) and Lower Main Street and Back Street, and to the west of the Wexford Road. The late 1940s/early 1950s were also one of the busiest periods for Arklow Pottery with the expansion of the factory, including the installation of new ovens and kilns which saw the demolition of the four bottle kilns on site.

Figure A3.12: Arklow Pottery Factory c. 1950 prior to the demolition of the bottle kilns



Housing development also occurred in the **1960s and 70s** north of the river on either side of the Dublin Road. In the **1960s** the NET fertiliser factory opened up in Arklow at Shelton, which was one of the first major chemical plants in Ireland and was a significant employer for the area.

The emergence of the Knockenrahan Industrial Park in the **1970s** and Croghan Industrial Estate from the late **1980s/early 1990s** provided more employment opportunities on the south side of the town leading to the development of further housing on the south western and southern edges of the town. Servier (Ireland) Industries Ltd established itself to the south of the town along the Wexford Road in **1989** with modest beginnings but is now a major employer in the town today.

By **1981** the population of Arklow had reached 8,646; however there was a decline in the population in the 1980s likely due to emigration. This trend continued until the mid-1990s when the population began to rapidly grow from 8,557 in **1996** to 11,712 in **2006**, an increase of 37% over 10 years.

During this time of growth Arklow Town continued to expand south and south westwards with the development of housing estates, associated open space areas, schools and neighbourhood shops.

Figure A3.13: Aerial View of Arklow South c. 1995 – Source OSI



To the north of the river, the late **1990s** saw the establishment of the Arklow Bay Hotel and the development of further housing accessed via Sea Road such as Woodbine Avenue, Mountain View Crescent and Hawthorn Drive, and from the R772 such as Windermere Avenue, Murell Drive and Tyronel Close and the beginnings of Avondale Crescent and Willow Grove.

Figure A3.14: Aerial View of Arklow North c. 1995 – Source OSI



Unfortunately on the south side of the river, the late 1990s also saw the permanent closure of Arklow Pottery on South Quay, which had been a major employer in the town since its establishment in 1934.

The Arklow M11 by-pass was opened in **1999**; it defined a new western boundary for the settlement and since that time, the development strategy has generally been to allow sequential development from the centre out to the by-pass. This strategy is reflected in the land use zonings with the centre of the town as the focus for development, with phased development planned for edge of centre locations. The aerial photograph below shows **Arklow c. 2000** post construction of the M11, with the main built up area shaded.

Figure A3.15: Aerial photograph showing the main built up area of Arklow c. 2001



The early **2000s** saw the arrival of large scale retail into Arklow with the construction of Tesco and Lidl on the southern end of the town centre along the Wexford Road. The opening of the Bridgewater Shopping Centre and Aldi on North Quay would follow in **c. 2007**. Prior to this Supervalu was the main supermarket in the town (established circa 1989). The development of the Bridgewater, while bringing modern indoor mall shopping format and new cinema facilities to Arklow, has not brought the hoped for overall increase and spin off benefits to the wider Arklow town centre. The early 2000s also saw the construction of the residential development known as Marina Village at North Quay.

The population of Arklow continued to rapidly grow from **2006 until 2011** by which time it had reached 13,009. This population growth was likely driven by people moving from north Wicklow and Dublin to the commuter belt in search of more affordable homes during the property boom of the early/mid 2000s. The main areas where the built up area has expanded since 2000 are on the southern side of the town towards the M11.

The arrival of the economic crash in **2008** and the lack of waste water treatment facilities to serve Arklow town meant that very little development, in particular residential development, has occurred in Arklow since **2011**. The years between **2011** and **2022** saw a modest increase in population of just 390 persons or 3%.

Figure A3.16: Aerial photographs showing the main built up area of Arklow c. 2006 and 2020.



A: 3.3.2 Impact on Future Development Options for Arklow

The historical pattern of development within Arklow creates path dependencies that will shape the future development of the settlement within a variety of constraints and opportunities. This LPF acknowledges existing uses while facilitating future residential, open space, community and educational uses at appropriate locations around the edge of centre lands.

The map below illustrates that the main built up area of Arklow falls within a 2km radius of the Town Centre (junction of Nineteen Arches Bridge with Main Street). Within this radius, there are still substantial undeveloped lands at Kilbride to the north and the Abbeylands/Tinahask lands to the south. These lands are currently zoned under the 2018 Arklow and Environs Local Area Plan as 'Action Area Plans' for mixed use development with residential development the primary use proposed.

These areas are still considered appropriate to facilitate the future expansion of the settlement; however more certainty is required with regard to the location and quantum of land use zonings in these areas along with the appropriate phasing of these lands, having regard to their walking distance to the town centre and public transport. Within this radius there are also areas of environmental and heritage importance and vulnerability, in particular the Arklow Town Marsh directly south of the Kilbride lands, and therefore it is necessary to identify and evaluate these areas with respect to their acceptability for any further 'greenfield' development, including the provision of appropriate green buffers (OS1 and OS2 zoning) from future development.

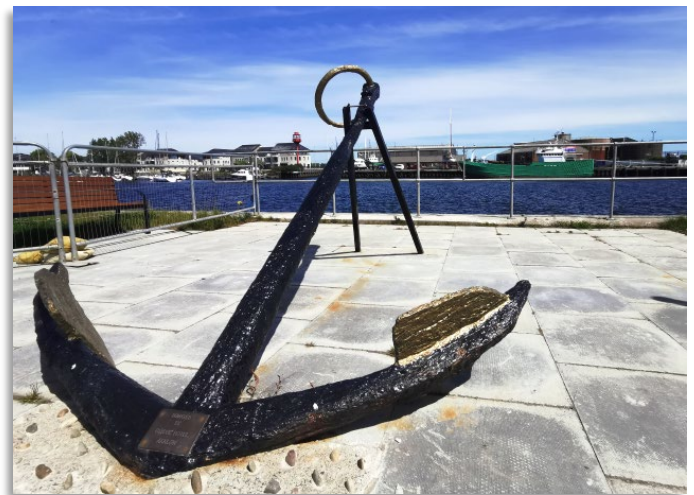
Figure A3.17: Existing Built Up Area of Arklow with 2km radius Arklow Town Centre



A: 3.4 Arklow's Maritime Legacy

Arklow's coastal location has greatly influenced its socio economic development and is an important element in the town's sense of identity and culture. While historically dependent on fishing, improvements to Arklow port meant that by the late 19th century it had an extensive fleet to service the trade in ore from Avoca mines, the export of quarried stone from Arklow Rock, and chemicals for the Arklow Manure Company and Kynoch munitions factory. The town at one time had the largest fishing fleet based in the Irish Sea and a thriving shipbuilding industry. The town was also famous for its 'Arklow Pottery' which was located on the south quays. This maritime tradition provided the main source of employment and influenced the location of houses, the development of local schools, shops and services.

To this day the waterfront area has a strong industrial and shipping base; however there has been a decline in commercial shipping/port activities with the result that there are large amount of lands and warehouse units vacant and some in a state of disrepair. The presence of the port and associated maritime heritage contributes greatly to the character of the town. The collection held by Arklow's Maritime Museum traces this aspect of the town's history and is of national significance, while the Arklow Seafarers Memorial Garden, on the south quay, highlights this aspect of the town's heritage.



The waterfront area, north and south, presents a key redevelopment opportunity to accommodate new residential and mixed use development at this strategic location, reconnecting the town back to its waterfront and beachfront, whilst also facilitating the existing port activities and further tourism, community, recreational and maritime uses.

The waterfront zone is divided into two distinct areas described as follows.

A:3.4.1 Northern Waterfront Zone

North Quay is now the less industrialised side of the Waterfront Zone. The potential for this area has been acknowledged and partially realised with the development of Marina Village apartments, Bridgewater Shopping Centre and more recently with the Arklow Shipping Building and the newly constructed Arklow Waste Water Treatment Plant. This area also currently accommodates some of Arklow's key public recreational assets including Coral Leisure, Kynoch Park and Duck Pond, the sea front walk, Arklow running track, outdoor gym, Arklow playground and skatepark.

The development of the following vacant sites has the potential to maximise this area's waterfront location and proximity to existing services and recreational facilities:

- **Site A:** Vacant triangular site measuring circa 1ha, to the west of Arklow Shipping. This site has frontage onto the running track to the north and would provide excellent passive surveillance over this public amenity space while responding to the recently developed Arklow Shipping building to its east and the existing residential development, Marina Village, to its south west;
- **Site B:** Vacant site to south of Arklow Shipping and north of Arklow Marine Services which has the potential through its redevelopment to provide cycle and pedestrian connectivity between Arklow Marina and Waterfront through to Site A and to the facilities at Coral Leisure, Kynoch Park and across to Bridgewater;
- **Site C:** Located to the south west of the new waste water treatment plant. Due to its location, this would be suited to marine based industry and commercial use with potential for some residential development on its southern side benefitting from waterfront views.



A: 3.4.3 Southern Waterfront Zone

South Quay is the more industrialised and active commercial part of the Waterfront Zone. Offshore wind energy presents new opportunities for future employment development and regeneration on South Quay in particular noting plans for an operation and maintenance facility to support the operation of Arklow Wind Bank 2 (See Site C below).

There are still a number of warehouses in active use to the west and south west of the harbour (Sites B and D). While Site B is mainly dominated by large warehouses, a strip of buildings along its northern riverfront edge (Site A) are characteristic of their harbour location and considered worthy of retaining as part of any redevelopment of this area. These buildings comprises of an old stone building with brick archways, flanked by Arklow Harbour Office on its eastern side and a 2-storey residential property on its western side.

The former site of the Arklow Pottery factory (Site E) represents the most significant redevelopment opportunity to accommodate a mixed use development with marine leisure/residential/ retail and historical/cultural uses, with provision retained for harbour associated activities/industries along its harbour and river edges. The development of this site would also serve to reconnect Arklow town back to its south beach noting that this site currently acts as a physical and visual barrier to this excellent local amenity.



A:3.5 Environmental and Physical Considerations

Key factors that will determine the appropriate future development strategy for Arklow are the physical context and natural/manmade constraints of the area and the ability of currently undeveloped areas to absorb new development without adverse impacts.

A:3.5.1 Natural Environment

The natural environment provides a habitat for a variety of species and is a source of amenity for human settlements. Despite the fact that Arklow is urban in character, the area includes several elements of the natural environment that need to be considered and protected as part of the future development of the area.

Map No.'s 2A and 2B 'Heritage Objectives' identifies three areas specifically designated as significant for wildlife and habitats; Arklow Town Marsh, Arklow Sand Dunes and Arklow Rock (proposed Natural Heritage Areas).

Arklow Town Marsh is the principal wetland habitat in the area, providing an important flood control role and supporting a variety of plant and animal life, in particular reed species and bird life. The Arklow Sand Dunes, located to the immediate north of the town, are afforded pNHA status for the plant and animal communities that this habitat supports, while Arklow Rock - Askinnity is afforded pNHA status also for the plant and animal communities supported.



Outside of the designated wildlife sites, there are other locally important habitats, which collectively have the potential as "green corridors" linking designated sites, to strengthen the overall biodiversity value of the wider town and environs area.

Another key natural asset is the Avoca River. Although it does not have legal national or EU protected status, it is an important natural resource within the settlement. The water quality of the river, in particular the section entering Arklow Town, has been poor mainly due to the historical presence of Avoca Mines; however the past lack of waste water treatment serving Arklow Town has also caused issues with the water quality in the river and in the seawaters around Arklow Town. The commissioning of the new state of the art waste water treatment facility will serve to improve the water quality in the Avoca River and the Arklow coastline enhancing these natural assets.



The settlement boundary also abuts Glenart Wood to the west and the Irish Sea coastline along the eastern edge of the town. The lands to the north east and south eastern boundaries of the town are designate Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty under the Landscape Assessment for County Wicklow.

The town settlement boundary is not bounded by any European Sites. The closest European Sites are Buckroney-Brittis Dunes and Fen SAC located circa 3km to the north and Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC located circa 3.3km to the south in Co. Wexford.

Arklow town and environs are within the coastal zone management 'Cell 11 - Arklow Environs'. The coastal zone management objectives relevant to this cell are set out in Chapter 19 of the County Development Plan.

A: 3.5.2 Impact on Future Development Options for Arklow

Apart from their intrinsic biodiversity value as habitats for a variety of plant and animal species, these elements of the environment provide direct and indirect benefits to the population of Arklow and the wider area. They are places where people can engage in recreational activities such as walking, sailing and playing informal field sports. These also provide a visual amenity that enhances the attractiveness of the settlement as a place in which to live and work. These assets are therefore worth protecting.

Each of these elements of the natural environment are utilised in some way by the settlements' population. These assets have come under pressure from development. For example, in the past it was not uncommon for watercourses to be culverted for relatively long sections for residential development. Tree stands and hedgerows have also been removed to make way for development on greenfield sites.

Therefore, in crafting a strategy for the future development of Arklow, appropriate buffer zones may be required to protect these important assets to maintain biodiversity value and green infrastructure services within the settlement of Arklow.

A:4 OVERALL STRATEGY

The key parameters for the future physical development of Arklow are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, climate change, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. In light of the above, and the factor described in Sections A3.1-3.5 above, the development strategy adopted in this LPF is as follows:

1. The area shall be a **high quality, attractive and sustainable place to live, visit and conduct business**. The settlement shall maximise the potential opportunities associated with its strategic coastal location within 1 hour of Dublin City and support the enhancement of Arklow Port and Harbour as both a commercial port and a leisure port.
2. To facilitate the **regeneration and future development of Arklow Town Centre** as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important recreational assets such as Glenart Woods, the Avoca River Walk extending to the east along South Quay, the seafront including South Beach, Coral Leisure and Kynock Park.
3. To **consolidate the existing built pattern in Arklow** by firstly prioritising and maximising the development potential of large and infill sites in the town centre and the waterfront zones (particularly vacant or under-utilised sites) and secondly by promoting the development of sites, brownfield and greenfield, that maximise their proximity to Arklow town centre.
4. To facilitate and prioritise the **appropriate development of brown and greenfield lands that are currently served by or proximate to public transport services and promote walking and cycling above the use of the private car**. Such sites shall be given priority above more peripheral greenfield locations and there shall be no further settlement expansion beyond the previous LAP boundary.
5. To promote and encourage the appropriate **regeneration of the waterfront areas** with a mix of uses including residential and other uses that provide local job opportunities such as tourism and leisure, and uses that support the existing marine functions of port and the town centre as the retail and service core of the town.
6. To provide for **new community, educational and recreational opportunities** on serviced / serviceable sites in built up areas principally and greenfield lands at appropriate locations where necessary that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities.
7. To provide for **new employment opportunities** on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas via walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure/services.
8. **Enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity throughout the town centre** by utilising and improving existing laneway connections, in particular between the Main Street and the residential areas to the south and west, and towards the River Walk and South Quay and across to Ferrybank, Bridgewater and North Quay.
9. To **promote cycle and pedestrian connectivity in new residential and employment developments** which serve to prioritise and encourage the use of active travel mode over the private car and provide safe and provide direct linkages back to the town centre, Arklow Train Station and existing residential areas, where feasible.
10. To support the following **priority transport / accessibility schemes in Arklow**:
 - (a) Provision of improved active travel connections (walking / cycling) over the River Avoca east of the Nineteen Arches Bridge linking the Town Centre and South Quay to North Quay and the Bridgewater Shopping Centre,
 - (b) Provision of an Active Travel Bridge over the River Avoca west of the Nineteen Arches Bridge linking the Town Centre and River Walk to Ferrybank and Kilbride,

- (c) The improvement of the public realm and overall pedestrian environment for all users in the Town Centre in particular along Main Street/Main Street Lower,
 - (d) The continued provision of new / improved footpaths and cycleways on all regional roads leading into the town,
 - (e) The construction of the SPAR (Southern Port Access Road) which aims to reduce the volume of HGVs from the town centre enhancing this environment for pedestrians, and
 - (f) To carry out a feasibility study, including environmental studies, regarding the provision of a second vehicular bridge crossing over the River Avoca between the Nineteen Arches Bridge and the M11.
11. To **ensure that Arklow Town Marsh, Arklow Sand Dunes and Arklow Rock (proposed Natural Heritage Areas) and other environmentally sensitive sites are protected** from adverse impacts arising from any new development and to carefully manage and control the extension of existing development in proximity to these areas. In particular transport proposals which traverse or infringe on the Arklow Town Marsh pNHA, shall be subject to a full Ecological Impact Assessment which fully assesses the potential ecological and environmental impacts of any such proposal on the Marsh during both the construction phase and operational phase of any such proposal.
12. To ensure that no development is facilitated that would **give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly)** arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects on the basis of this LPF.
13. To ensure that development proposals, **contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site network** and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats directive. All projects and plans arising from this LPF will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
14. To support the **Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029**.

