



Wicklow Town - Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

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Topic

Compact Growth - Housing - Population Growth

Submission

One place that comes to mind in terms of redevelopment is the north quay in Wicklow town. There are some unsightly unused buildings on the north quay that have been derelict (or look as though they have been) for years and years now. This could be a good place to build apartments, possibly mixed with some cafes/shops, depending on space and access possibilities.

In terms of housing more generally, it would be a really important and valuable thing to mandate that there is a minimum amount of public green space in new housing estates for kids to play on, or for neighbours to gather. People spend their whole lives in these estates and having a green space to gather on is invaluable for mental and physical health, both of the individual and of the community that live in these housing estates. Otherwise you just get a more isolated community over time, which isn't good for society.

Topic

Regeneration of Communities & Places - Healthy Placemaking - Urban Design - Opportunity Sites in Wicklow Town - Rathnew

Submission

See suggestion above in terms of areas/vacant buildings that would benefit the town if redeveloped/regenerated.

In terms of enhancing the public realm in Wicklow town, there is an area between the Murrough and Broad Lough, situated between the Murrough car park and Knockrobin wastewater treatment plant, which is a real eyesore at the moment. The space in question is currently occupied by Multimetals Recycling and a business called Wicklow Tyre Services. As you drive from the Wicklow Primary Health Centre over the bridge to the Murrough car park, you are greeted on your left with the sight of enormous piles of metal waste, along with some commercial buildings, some of which are or appear to be derelict. The Multimetals business currently occupies one of the potentially most beautiful locations in the whole region, situated as it is on the shores of Broad Lough.

If there were a way to relocate the metal recycling business to another, less visible and less desirable location, there would be great potential to turn the vacated space into a recreational space for the community - a park, perhaps with boating/kayaking facilities on the shore, with a cafe to get a coffee and sit and watch the sunset over the hills from that unique vantage point, and perhaps a walkway along the shore to connect with the path along the lough shore that currently runs from the south side of the railway bridge down towards the town. It's honestly such a pity to have such a potentially beautiful space given over to piles of metal waste and possibly derelict buildings that are visible every time you cross the bridge towards the sea, when it could be such a wonderful focus point for the community instead.

Topic

Economic Opportunity - Tourism - Shops & Services - Community Facilities

Submission

I think Rathnew in particular really needs a public park to act as a counterpoint to all the new housing developments. The village has increased in population massively, and is now constantly busy with traffic passing through to or from Wicklow town, but I don't see any public spaces for residents to just

sit and be in nature and to seek respite from the constant traffic, or for families or young (or older) people to gather and hang out, play a game of football, or whatever they'd like to do. The only space there is is the avenue leading up to Tinakilly House hotel, which is private and so doesn't really count - and this private ownership factor is underlined by the fact that there may be a new housing development going up on the grounds of the avenue, which would be a travesty for local residents who are starved of green space as it is.

I'm based in Ashford so I'm not so familiar with the topography of the wider Rathnew area in terms of where a public park might possibly be situated, but perhaps one place that comes to mind is some of the space abutting the new Tinakilly Park housing estate. Perhaps there would be space in that area for a new public park? In any case, it's badly needed.

Free, permanent public toilets (ie not chemical toilets) down by the Murrough would be a very good idea, given the amount of people that use the amenity.

Topic

Heritage - Biodiversity- Green infrastructure- Climate Action- Energy

Submission

In terms of flood risk and extreme weather events, coastal erosion is a major issue. Rock armour needs to be installed up to beyond the location of Knockrobin wastewater treatment plant, at the very least, if not further. And preferably, if at all possible, it would be great if steps down to the beach could be installed periodically along the stretch of rock armour, so that access to the beach isn't cut off from people who use the area.

In the aftermath of Storm Betty in August '23, part of the walking path along the Murrough was decimated by sea waves. There is a kilometre long stretch that remains barely walkable since the storm. In the days following the storm I contacted four senior members of Wicklow council, including the CEO, about the importance of addressing the issue. I still haven't received a reply. It's very discouraging and leaves you feeling like the people responsible for addressing such issues don't seem to care about addressing them.

Topic

Infrastructure - Sustainable Movement - Transportation

Submission

In terms of services infrastructure issues, the Knockrobin wastewater treatment plant is a major problem and has been since its inception. Walking past it is a constant stress as the smell from the plant is atrocious, toxic and utterly ruins the effort made to spend some quality time by the sea. There is one set of circumstances in which it is not an issue. If the wind is blowing from offshore (easterly) then it blows the smell away from the Murrough path, and you are free to walk past the plant unaffected. If there is no wind at all, it is possible that you might be able to walk past the plant without being bothered, though this is not guaranteed. But if the wind is coming from literally any other direction (which is most of the time), regardless of whether it's a mild breeze or a stronger gust, it's just horrible. It's been like this for years and years now. Although my understanding is that Irish Water are responsible for the plant's operation, so perhaps there is nothing Wicklow Council can do in this regard? Thought I would mention it in any case as it seems to come under the remit of services infrastructure.

Transport - if there were a bus service every 15 minutes along the 133/131 Bus Eireann route I think that would make a huge difference to getting people to leave their cars at home. Speaking from my own point of view, there is now a bus every 30 minutes from Ashford into Wicklow town and vice versa, which is a great improvement on the previously hourly service. But to be able to get between Wicklow and Newtown Mount Kennedy for shopping purposes every 15/20 minutes would be a big help, and would I think be a big incentive for people to make the shift from car to bus.

Also, and it probably goes without saying, but having much more frequent train services from Wicklow town to Greystones/Bray/Dublin would be a game changer. An extension of the Dart service to Wicklow would make sense given the population density in the area now and going forward into the future.

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