

Housing Delivery Action Plan.

Wicklow County Council.

December 2021.



Introduction.

Housing for all was published by the government in September 2021.

This sets ambitious targets for Local Authorities in the provision of social and affordable housing over the next 5 years, up to 2026. Details of how those targets will be achieved in Wicklow are set out in this action plan.

Located on the east coast of Ireland, Wicklow covers an area of 2,027 square kilometres. The County has a population of 142,425 persons according to the most recent Census (2016). This represents an increase of approximately 13% since 2006. The growth in population is a reflection of the County's appeal as a place to live and enjoy a high quality of life. The County, which is within easy reach of Dublin city, has 21 towns including the major towns of Bray, Greystones-Delgany, Wicklow-Rathnew and Arklow on the east coast and Blessington, the largest town on the western side of the County. The County also has a range of attractive villages which are dotted throughout the rural landscape. The proximity of parts of the county to the metropolitan area of Dublin presents challenges for Wicklow, in particular in relation to affordability of housing.

Estimating Housing demand.

The most up to date population data is the 2016 census. This indicates that Wicklow's population increased by 4.2% between 2011 and 2016. In accordance with national and regional policy the draft Wicklow Core Strategy 2021 to 2027 sets out population and housing targets for the county. These targets have been distributed in the Housing Strategy and used to estimate housing targets by settlement as set out in table 1.

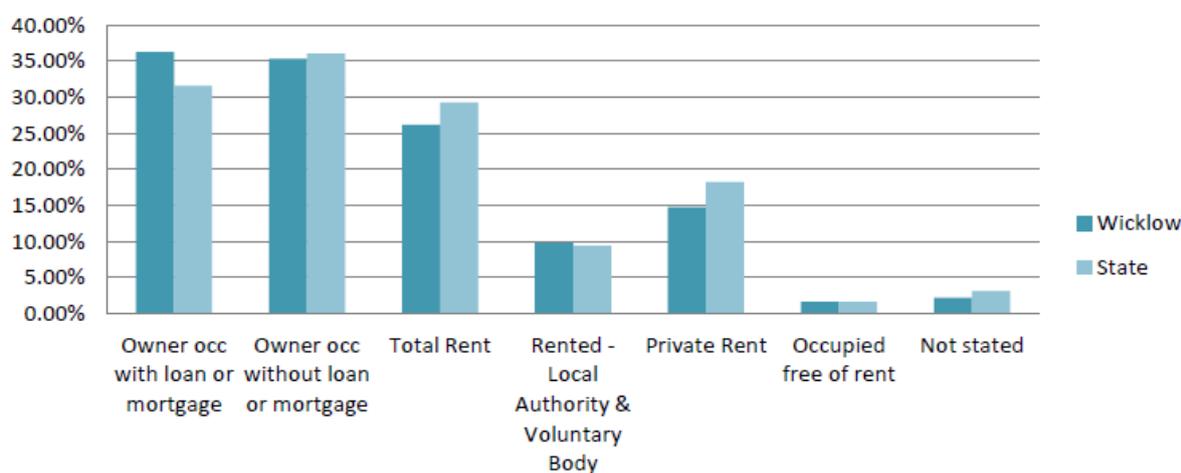
The census also indicates that average age is increasing, going from 35.7 in Wicklow in 2011 to 37.2 in 2016. This has implications for future planning in housing as increased need for age friendly housing and smaller unit sizes is required.

Table 1 Wicklow Settlement / Aggregate Settlement Housing Targets 2016-2031

| Level | Settlement | Housing Stock 2016 | Housing Stock Growth Target 2016-2031 ⁷ | Housing Units completed post 2016 | Further Housing Unit Growth Target up to 2031 |
|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Bray | 11,232 | 5,062 | 165 | 4,897 |
| 2 | Wicklow - Rathnew | 5,456 | 2392 | 650 | 1,742 |
| 3 | Arklow | 5,406 | 1221 | 165 | 1,056 |
| | Greystones - Delgany | 6,766 | 1953 | 875 | 1,078 |
| | Blessington | 1,914 | 519 | 5 | 514 |
| 4 | Baltinglass | 903 | 195 | 46 | 149 |
| | Enniskerry | 648 | 125 | 34 | 91 |
| | Kilcoole | 1,451 | 287 | 97 | 190 |
| | Newtownmountkennedy | 1,222 | 882 | 250 | 632 |
| 5 | Rathdrum | 669 | 331 | 132 | 199 |
| | Ashford | 2,390 | 515 | 255 | 260 |
| | Aughrim | | | | |
| | Carnew | | | | |
| Dunlavin | | | | | |
| 6 | Tinahely | 1,534 | 218 | 46 | 172 |
| | Avoca | | | | |
| | Donard | | | | |
| | Kilmacanogue | | | | |
| | Newcastle | | | | |
| | Roundwood | | | | |
| 7-10 | Shillelagh | 15,395 | 1249 | 510 | 739 |
| | Villages / clusters Open countryside | | | | |
| | Total | 54,986 | 14,949 | 3,230 | 11,719 |

County Wicklow has a higher rate of owner occupied houses than the regional or national average. The full breakdown from 2016 is set out in figure 1.

Fig 1 Housing Tenure 2016.



Household size has been declining for some time and is expected to decline to 2.5 persons by 2040. The average household size in Wicklow in 2016 was 2.87.

Housing type in the county is primarily dwelling houses, with only 8.5% of households residing in apartments, lower than the state average. Planning permission data since 2016 indicates that this trend has not continued with a significant increase in applications for apartments.

Section 1. Social Housing Delivery.

Unit size:

There are currently in excess of 4,000 applicants on the housing list in Wicklow. A breakdown by area is given in the attached templates. This demand can also be broken down by house type as follows:

| | Demand | Projected delivery. |
|--------------------|--------|---------------------|
| 1 Bedroom | 33% | 278 / 20% |
| 2 Bedroom | 45% | 643 / 46% |
| 3 Bedroom | 19% | 447 / 32% |
| 4 or more Bedroom. | 3% | 28 / 2% |

Given that the household size is decreasing and average age is increasing, the trend toward greater demand for one and two bed units is likely to continue. Accordingly there will continue to be a large proportion of these in our future delivery.

Vacant / infill/ brownfield properties.

Wicklow County Council is currently in the process of acquiring 10 vacant properties by CPO in the county utilising the Buy and Renew scheme. Further properties will be considered as they are identified.

A number of infill schemes of 1 or 2 units are being developed in front and back gardens of Council properties.

A number of our larger schemes are on brownfield sites, with an expected delivery of 37 units over the next few years.

Traveller Accommodation.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2019 – 2024 was adopted by WCC in September 2019

An assessment of needs was conducted in the preparation of the TAP - and the need reflected the accommodation preference for the Travellers concerned was found to be c.80 units of accommodation spread over the Municipal Districts

The majority of this need is for standard housing - the quota system in terms of Traveller accommodation allocation policy is 1 in 16 which should yield c.84 units over the life time of the plan.

In addition a number of Traveler specific group housing projects are between the planning and construction stage and will be completed over the lifetime of the plan -

- 3 in 2022 (Ballintekin),
- 4 in 2023 (Avondale)
- 2 in 2024 (Barndarrig).

These schemes when added to the allocation of standard housing should exceed the overall target for traveller accommodation set in the TAP.

Housing for people with a disability.

The Co. Wicklow Strategic plan for Housing People with Disability 2022-2027 sets out the overall strategy for the provision of housing options and services to support independent living for those persons with a disability.

At the end of 2020 4,487 people were on the Council’s waiting list for social housing support.

There were 1,503 individuals who identified with a disability.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|----------|--------------|-------|
| Total on list | 1,509 | | | |
| Sensory | Mental Health | Physical | Intellectual | Other |
| 167 | 362 | 628 | 104 | 242 |

Targets and deliverables:

It is intended to target a minimum of 7% of allocations for people with a disability.

The annual target for Wicklow County Council over the next 5 years is 1348 units, and when you apply 7% to this total it will yield the provision of 94 units to people with a disability.

Age friendly housing.

All ground floor accessible accommodation once it becomes available is reserved in the first instance for age friendly accommodation or for people with a disability depending on the specific area the units are available in and the demand in that area

We are currently involved in 6 age friendly projects throughout the County which should deliver 32 units during the lifetime of this plan.

Infrastructure:

Wicklow County Council works closely with infrastructure providers to ensure all of our zoned land can be developed. At present there are some significant deficiencies with water and wastewater infrastructure in parts of the county. However in most cases plans are in place to rectify this in the lifetime of this Action Plan.

Arklow: Wastewater plant, work commenced, due for completion in 2025.

Blessington: Wastewater plant, work ongoing, completion 2022.

Aughrim: Wastewater plant, works planned, completion 2025.

Kilcoole: Gravity sewer required across private land, however interim pumping station approved.

Kilcoole: Strategic water storage required.

At present ESB Networks are experiencing supply issues with medium voltage cable, which is causing significant delays to one of our schemes. It is hoped that this will not be a long term issue.

Land:

Many of the available larger sites in the county have been developed over the last number of years for social housing. There are 3 large sites in the north east of the county where we are considering mixed tenure housing, one of which is included in the tables in Appendix 1. We also have a large site in Arklow which we plan to develop in line with the provision of the wastewater plant.

We have identified a shortfall in land in particular in the Greystones area to achieve our targets under this plan, but we also need to acquire land in order to provide social and affordable housing in subsequent years after 2026. This will particularly be needed in the main settlements of Bray, Greystones, Wicklow, Arklow and Blessington. As potential sites are identified and analysed for suitability, potential for affordable housing will also be assessed.

Type of delivery:

This plan demonstrates that delivery of social housing will come from a number of sources. Delivery of units will be in the following proportions:

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Part V | 18% |
| LA schemes on own land | 43% |
| LA turnkey | 1% |
| LA buy and renew | 1% |
| AHB Calf | 29% |
| PPP | 7% |
| Repair and Lease | 1% |

We estimate that approximately 50% of part V units will be delivered through AHB sector.

Accordingly the overall split is 55% Local Authority and 45% other, which includes AHB and PPP.

Section 2. Affordable Housing Delivery.

A full Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) has not been carried out by Wicklow County Council as the Development Plan process had commenced before the HNDA guidelines were issued. However, the HNDA calculation tool was used to look at some preliminary figures as part of the preparation of this plan.

This was based on the best information available at the time, but does not include new population figures as outlined in the National Planning Framework and Regional Planning Guidelines and is not fully compatible with County Development plan growth figures.

In addition the affordability figures are at a county level and do not reflect the geographical spread and variance of house prices, housing demand and disposal income in Wicklow.

As detailed previously, social housing developments between 2016 and 2021 together with those planned in the 2022 to 2026 period have resulted in the majority of residential land being developed. Most of the remaining identified sites are located where affordable housing may not be viable and the LA is looking at solutions for these. Purchasing of land for affordable houses (in high demand areas) is currently being assessed, but is unlikely to be feasible due to high cost.

Due to the above, the affordable part of the delivery plan is based on the anticipated supply figures. These will be reviewed as the Development plan is progressed to reflect specific geographical variance i.e. the HNDA data will be analysed at sub-county level and compared to unit costs at this level.

Wicklow County Council has advertised for expressions of interest in the advanced purchase scheme as part of the national campaign to source affordable housing from the private sector. It is hoped that this will yield affordable units in the county, but due to the lead in time for construction it is not anticipated to deliver units before 2024.