

# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016-2022

## 1.1 Introduction

The Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022 sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Wicklow for the plan period and beyond. The Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022 has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act). The plan relates to the whole functional area of Wicklow County Council.

## 1.2 What is the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022?

The County Development Plan (CDP) will set out a strategic spatial framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Wicklow for the period between 2016 and 2022. While the CDP is in place for a six year period, it is framed having regard to the long term development objectives of the County beyond 2022.

The CDP in the main, focuses on 'big picture' planning issues<sup>1</sup>. The plan is not a 'spending plan'; however it sets a framework within which developments could be undertaken, in the event that the public or private sectors have the finance to develop.

The CDP provides for, and controls, the physical, economic and social development of the County, in the interests of the overall common good and in compliance with environmental controls. It includes a set of development objectives and standards, which set out where land is to be developed, and for what purposes (e.g. housing, shopping, schools, employment, open space, amenity, conservation etc). It informs decisions on where public services such as roads and water infrastructure are to be provided, and affects the type of buildings that can be constructed and the use to which land can be put. It affects many facets of daily economic and social life, in terms of where you can live, what services and facilities are available and where job opportunities are to be sited.

## 1.3 Structure of the Plan

The plan consists of a written statement and plans that indicate the development objectives for County Wicklow.

**Volume 1** of the plan contains the primary written statement including the 'Core Strategy' and main chapters of the plan.

**Volume 2** contains a set of town / settlement plans for the following settlements: Ashford, Aughrim, Avoca, Baltinglass, Carnew, Donard, Dunlavin, Enniskerry, Kilmacanogue, Laragh-Glendalough, Newcastle, Roundwood, Shillelagh and Tinahely.

**Volume 3** contains the appendices to the plan that inform and clarify the broader strategic context of the written statement.

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<sup>1</sup> The County Development Plan does however include a set of more detailed town plans, which are more 'local' than 'strategic' in their focus (see Volume 2).

Separate **Local Area Plans** are in place, or will be in place, for the following towns: Bray, Wicklow-Rathnew, Arklow, Greystones-Delgany and Kilcoole, Rathdrum, Blessington and Newtownmountkennedy. These Local Area Plans are reviewed and made under Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act, and as such do not form part of the CDP. However, the CDP does provide the key parameters for these Local Area Plans such as the future population and housing targets and sets out the broad strategy for the future economic and social development of these towns.

#### 1.4 Statutory Content of the Plan

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) sets out the statutory requirements regarding the content of a development plan.

As required by the Act, the Wicklow CDP 2016-2022 is consistent, in so far as is practicable, with such national plans, policies and strategies as the Minister determines relate to proper planning and sustainable development. In this regard, Appendix 13 sets out a list of statutory provisions, plans, policies and strategies that set the context within which the plan is framed and which have influenced the strategies and objectives of the plan.

Section 28 of the Act requires the Planning Authority to append a statement to the development plan including information which demonstrates how the Planning Authority has implemented the policies and objectives of the Minister, contained in Ministerial Guidelines, when considering their application to the area of the development plan. This statement is included in Appendix 12.

In making the plan, the Planning Authority shall have regard to the development plans of the adjoining planning authorities and shall co-ordinate the objectives in the development plan with the objectives in the plans of those authorities, except where the planning authority considers it to be inappropriate or not feasible to do so. The Planning Authority shall take into account any significant likely effects the implementation of the plan may have on the area of any adjoining planning authority. Accordingly, the objectives of this plan have been prepared having regard to the plans of the adjoining planning authorities of Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown, South Dublin, Kildare, Carlow and Wexford.

Wicklow County Council, being a planning authority within the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) shall ensure that its development plan is consistent with the transport strategy of the National Transport Authority.

The development plan shall include a 'Core Strategy' which shows that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the relevant regional planning guidelines (which in the case of this plan is the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022). The 'Core Strategy' is set out in Chapter 2 of this plan.

The written statement shall include a separate statement which shows that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment. The Environmental Report (included as part of the draft development plan) and Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement (included upon the 'making' of the development plan) form part of the development plan process. It is considered that these reports satisfy the statutory requirements in this regard.

Section 10(2) of the Act includes a list of the objectives that shall be included in a development plan. A list of additional objectives that may be included in the plan are set out in the First Schedule of the Act. These lists are included in Appendix 14.

## 1.5 Local Economic and Community Plan for County Wicklow

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 put into effect reforms set out in the Government's 'Putting People First - Action Programme for Effective Local Government' which was published in 2012. 'Putting People First' sets out a programme for the overall reform of the local government system. The programme aims to increase the efficiency and level of service of local government, based around the themes of government structures; funding accountability and governance; economic development and job creation, and delivering services efficiently.

An important element of the reform identified in 'Putting People First' is the preparation of plans for the integration of economic and local and community development at local level. It is intended that these plans will facilitate the emerging local development role of local government and bring about better alignment of the work of local development companies with that of the local authority and other providers of social, community and economic development, thereby achieving better returns for the communities they serve.

Accordingly, Wicklow County Council has prepared a Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for County Wicklow. The LECP sets out, for a six year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

The LECP and CDP are closely linked. The LECP must be consistent with the Core Strategy of the development plan and the development plan will need to underpin the aims of the LECP where there are 'land use' or 'development' related objectives contained in the LECP.

The objectives of the development plan have been crafted bearing in mind the role and function of the LECP. The development plan will not duplicate objectives that are considered to be within the remit of the LECP. However, the objectives contained in the development plan will be formulated in a manner that aims to complement and give effect to the objectives of the LECP.

## 1.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The purpose is to *"provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development"*, (European Directive 2001/42/EC).

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Wicklow CDP 2016-2022 has been carried out in compliance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and those regulations transposing the Directive into Irish Law. Lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment should consider the sensitivities identified in Section 4 of the SEA Environmental Report that accompanies the development plan.

The SEA has been informed by the findings of the Appropriate Assessment and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The Environmental Statement of the Wicklow CDP 2016-2022 is included in Appendix 9.

## 1.7 Habitats Directive - Appropriate Assessment

The Wicklow CDP 2016-2022 has been prepared in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment requirements under EU Habitats Directive (43/92/EEC) and the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and Section 177 of the Act. These Directives form the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy, built around the Natura 2000

network of nature protection areas made up of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)<sup>2</sup> and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)<sup>3</sup>.

The Planning Authority is required to ensure that any plan or programme and any projects that arise therefrom, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan / project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to a full Appropriate Assessment. The plan / project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan / project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest - all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.

The Appropriate Assessment carried out for this plan is attached in Appendix 10.

## **1.8 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022 has been prepared in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for planning authorities' (2009).

The SFRA is attached in Appendix 11.

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<sup>2</sup> Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are sites designated under European Communities Directive 92/43/EEC known as the 'Habitats Directive'. This requires the conservation of important, rare or threatened habitats and species (not birds) across Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are sites designated under the European Communities Directive 79/409/EEC, known as the 'Birds Directive', to conserve the habitats of certain migratory or rare birds.