



Draft Wicklow Town – Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

Who are you:	Agent
Name:	Noel Heatley
Reference:	DWTRLAP-210849
Submission Made	November 19, 2024 9:17 PM

File

Noel Heatley Bollarney North Port Road LAP-2025 Submission 19-11-25.pdf, 3.37MB

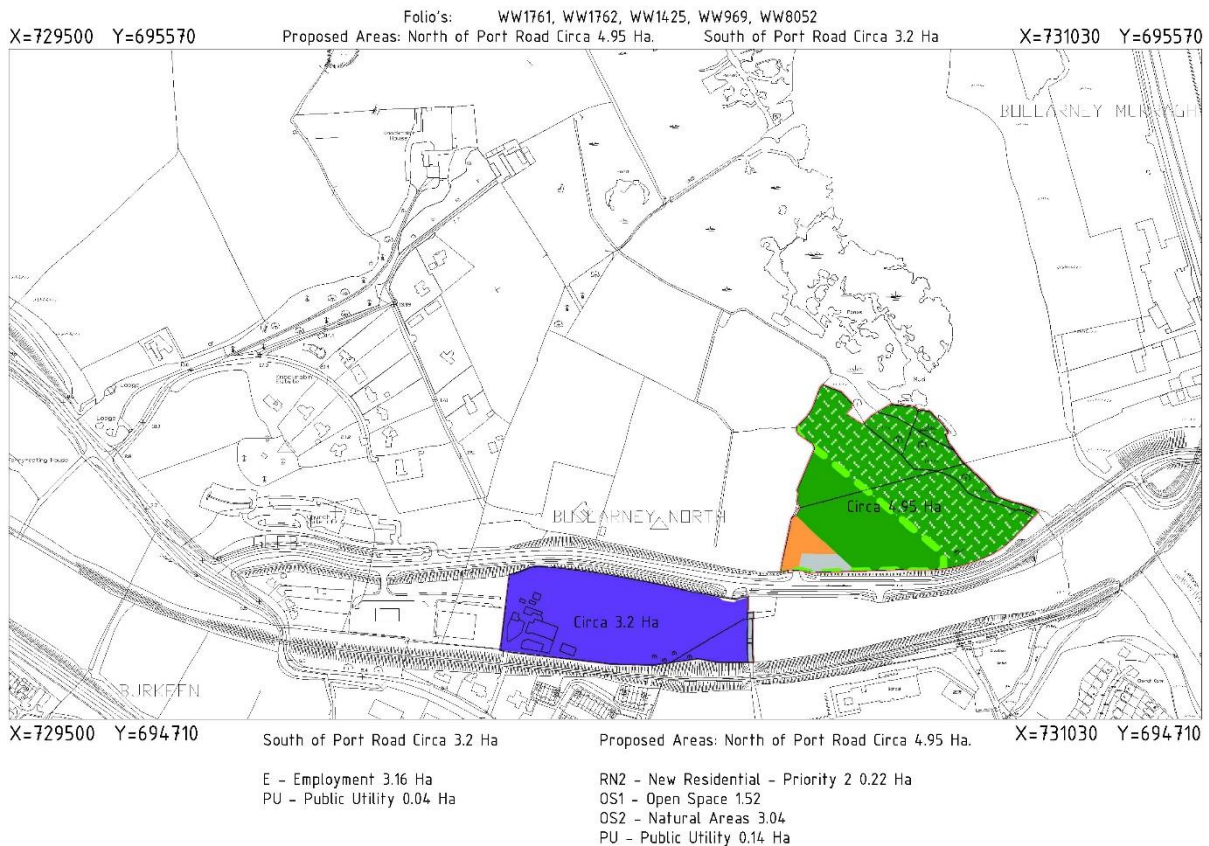
Forward Planning Section
Planning and Development
Wicklow County Council
County Buildings
Wicklow

**SUBMISSION DRAFT STAGE – POPULATION – COMPACT GROWTH
WICKLOW TOWN - RATHNEW LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025**

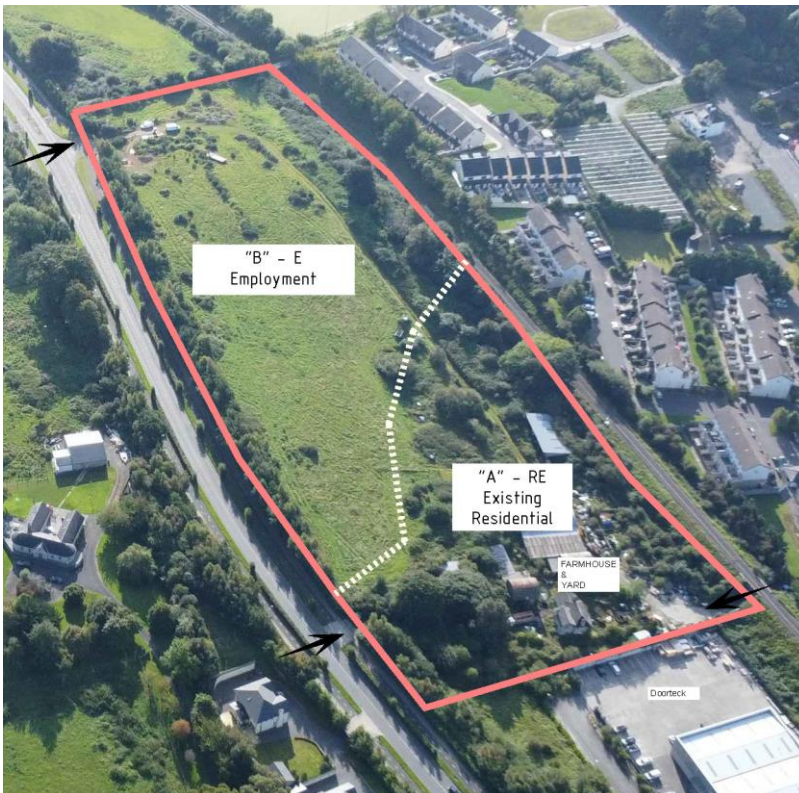
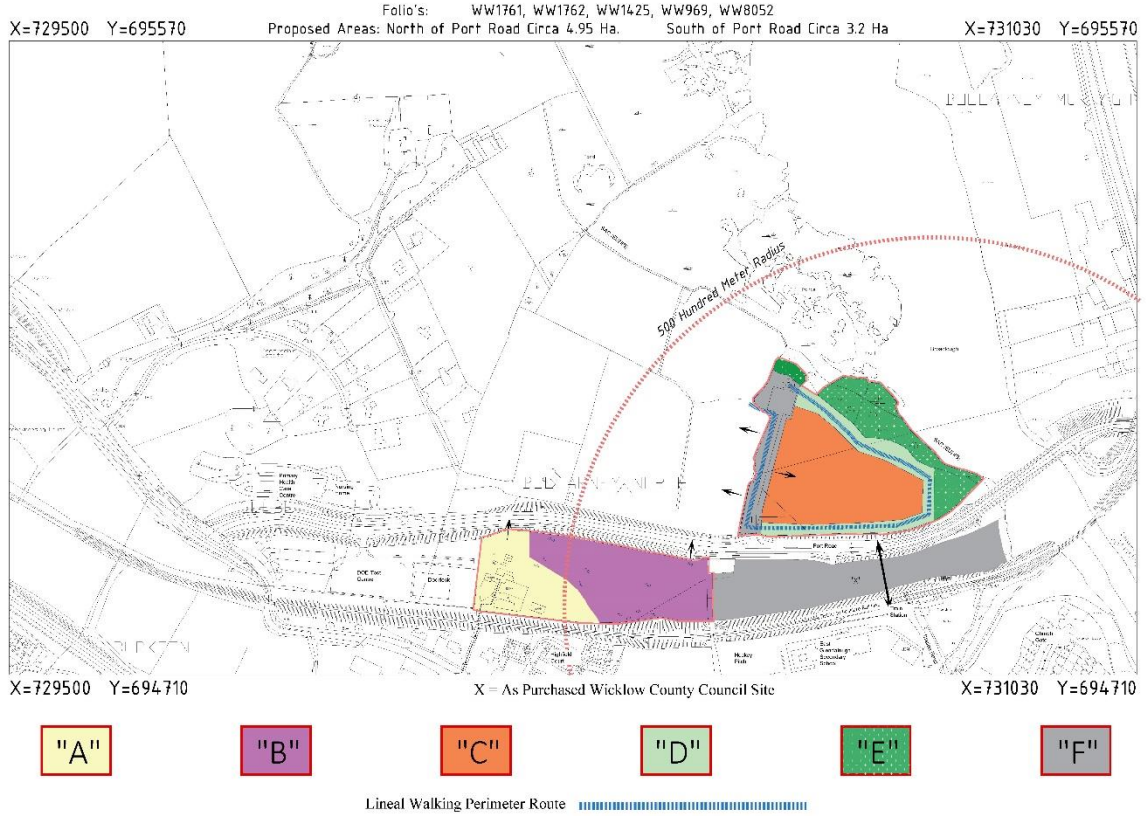
19th November 2024

Client Noel Heatley
Location: Bollarney North - Lands - North & South of Port Relief Road Wicklow Town.
Folio WW1761, WW1762, WW1425, WW969, WW8052
Proposed Areas North of Port Road Circa 4.95 Ha.
South of Port Road Circa 3.2 Ha

Extract DRAFT Wicklow County Council Wicklow Town Rathnew Development Plan 2025



South of Port Road



Area "B" 2.0 HA-circa

*Retain E – Employment as Shown
 DRAFT LAP 2025*

Area "A" 1.20 HA-circa

*RE - Existing Residential (Existing
 Farmhouse Out-buildings)*

My client's lands, identified as "A," include the original farmhouse yard outbuilding and family home that is still in active use.

The farmhouse and yard have been designated as an Area E (Employment) zone in the draft Local Area Plan, a change that directly conflicts with the objectives outlined in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022–2028. Specifically, Other Structures & Vernacular Architecture Objectives, CPO 8.18 states the intent to “seek (through the development management process) the retention, conservation, appropriate repair, and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as traditional dwellings and outbuildings.”

The proposed zoning line would follow the 17.00 OD contour, designating all lands below this level as associated with the farmhouse, while retaining the E – Employment zoning for lands above. The farmhouse is fully connected to all services and is in good repair, requiring only minor refurbishment and retrofitting of insulation to meet modern Part L regulations.

My client intends to complete these upgrades and construct a meandering private driveway leading to the timber gate at the designated entrance/exit point on the Port Road. This proposal aligns with the County Development Plan's objectives, particularly its emphasis on preserving and appropriately reusing vernacular architecture, ensuring that the character and heritage of the farmhouse are maintained while meeting contemporary standards.

Lands North of the Port Road

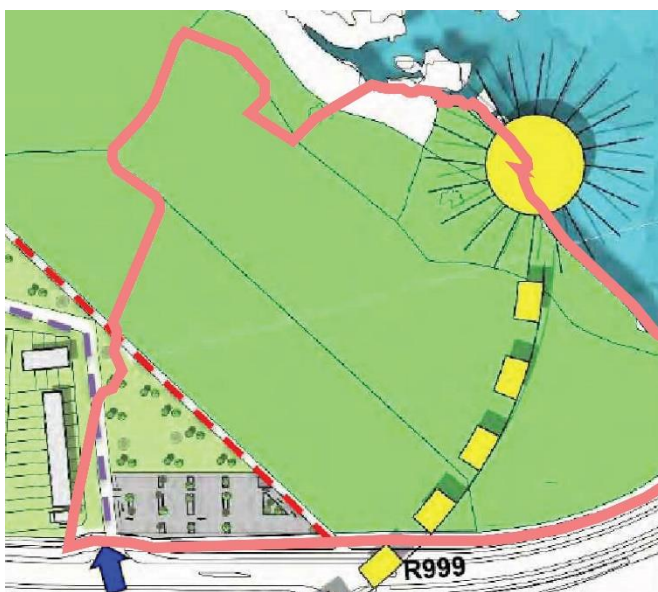
“DRAFT WICKLOW TOWN – RATHNEW LOCAL AREA PLAN, CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION, 1.1 Preamble”

States the following:

“Furthermore, this Local Area Plan shall only include objectives that are area specific and achievable, and avoid those that are aspirational”

In its current form the Draft LAP plan zoning objectives relating to my clients’ lands published seeks to designate 4.59 hectares of my clients’ lands to “OS2 - Natural Areas - OS1 - Open Space.

If SLO4-Bollarne North is referenced as the basis for my client’s obligations, the following is expected:



RN2 Zoning (New Residential - Priority 2):
On a 0.22-hectare site, the provision of vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian access to all lands north of the Port Road.

PU Zoning (Public Utility):
The development of a car park with 50 spaces, including dedicated cycle parking facilities.

OS1 Zoning (Open Space Lands):
The creation of a 2.0-hectare public park.

As confirmed by the concept sketch referenced on the left, these obligations indicate that no residential development will be feasible for my client to fund any of the outlined objectives.

If the proposed zoning is adopted, my client has no legitimate incentive to open the gate to development. This renders the proposal entirely “**aspirational**” and far from “**achievable**.” As a result, it is highly likely that the land will remain in its current agricultural use for the foreseeable future.

Our Submission Objective:

Is to propose the zoning of lands within 500 meters of Wicklow's existing transportation hub for sustainable residential development at medium- to high-density, thereby advancing urban planning principles, enhancing connectivity, and promoting compact growth in line with sustainable urban development policies and national planning frameworks.

Port Access Road:

The Port Access Road, delivered by Wicklow County Council in 2010, is a vital infrastructural project that enhances connectivity and transportation links to Wicklow Town. During negotiations for the land required to construct the road through his landholding, assurances and commitments were made that the lands north and south of the road would be designated for development.

This commitment was initially fulfilled in the Wicklow Town Development Plan 2007–2013, where all of these lands were designated as Mixed Use, defined as: “ **provide for a range of uses and activities consistent with the policies and objectives of the designated Action Area Plans and Site Regeneration Areas.**”

In fact, it is important to note that Wicklow Town Council granted several permissions for a substantial quantum of residential developments on lands belonging to my client and adjoining landowners north of the Port Access Road. All these projects would have likely progressed to the development stage if not for the financial crisis of 2010, which was part of the global aftermath of the 2008 financial meltdown.

However, the 2013–2019 LAP Plan, was a complete reversal as the mixed-use zoning was rescinded. As a result, all my client’s lands were re-designated as Enterprise & Employment (E1), which restricts their use to: “ **provide for enterprise and employment development in the form of business parks, light industrial uses, and office or technology parks.**”

In the intervening 12 years, no approaches have been made by any interested party to purchase or develop these lands for uses consistent with the Enterprise & Employment (E1) zoning.

In this submission, we propose an alternative strategy for the proposed zoning, accompanied by a well-founded rationale that underscores the legitimacy of our proposal. Our alternative approach is designed to balance the development objectives with economic viability and community benefit, ensuring that the zoning aligns with sustainable growth principles while also allowing for the realistic funding and delivery of key infrastructure.

Residential Objectives WTR4

Most of the new residential development identified in the 2013–2019 Local Area Plan (LAP) was concentrated in the Tinakilly area. On the Wicklow Town side of Tinakilly Avenue, many units are either nearing completion or already occupied. However, the 11-hectare site on the Rathnew side of Tinakilly Avenue remains without planning consent.

A core objective outlined in **WTR4** requires that 75% of the **RN1 Priority Lands** be activated. This 11-hectare site represents over one-third of the RN1 Priority Lands, making its progression essential to meeting this threshold.

Regardless of how quickly developers at Tinakilly proceed or how efficiently Wicklow County Council processes Large Residential Development (LRD) applications, community protests opposing the development of the Tinakilly lands are likely to cause inevitable delays to the planning process.

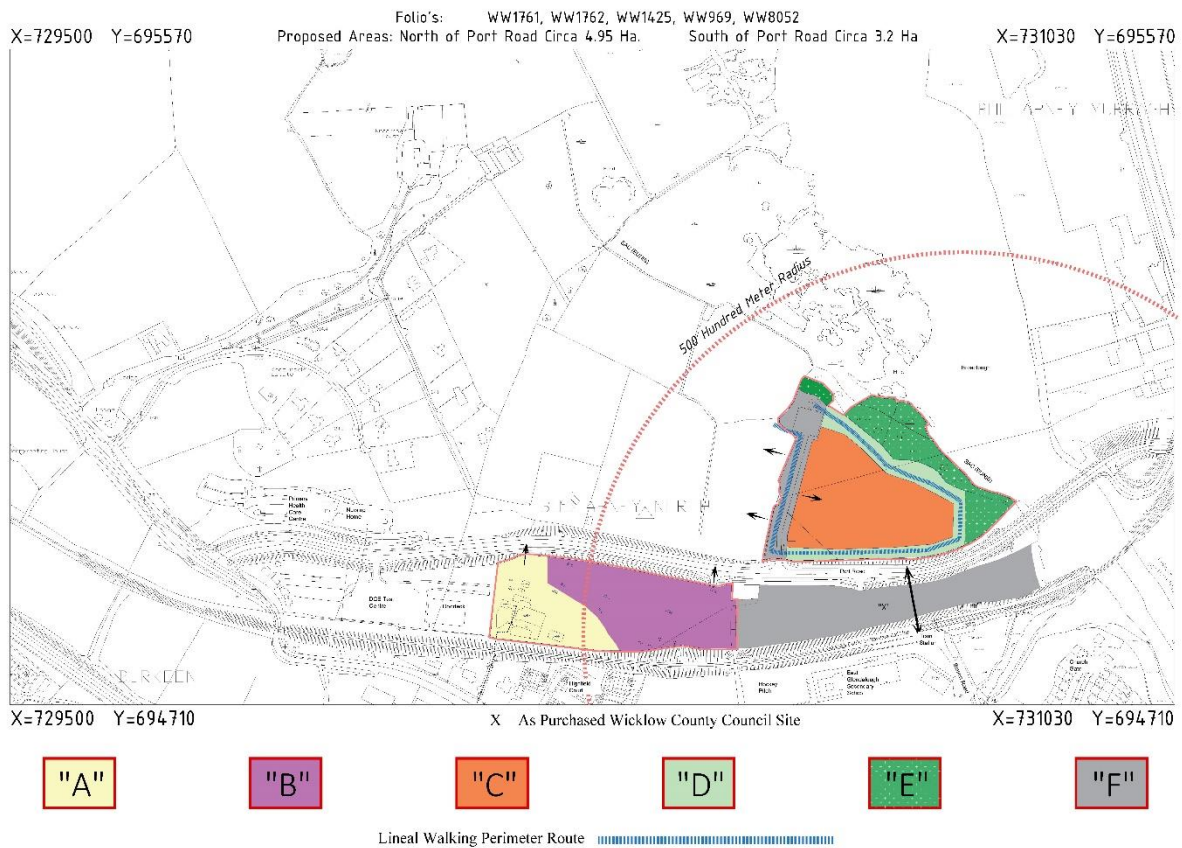
These delays risk stalling development in **RN2 Priority Lands**, which represents a serious threat to achieving the objective of delivering housing on zoned lands within the lifetime of this plan.

Moreover, any delay will impose unnecessary financial pressure on the viability of RN1 and RN2 Priority Lands, as landowners will be required to make payments from 2025 under the **Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)** in the intervening period before development can begin.

It is, therefore, entirely counterintuitive that this Local Area Plan (LAP) review process has not identified my client's lands, as was the case in 2007, as a key strategic location for immediate planning and development. Given their proximity to the Port Access Road, these lands are ideally positioned to support compact growth, sustainable development, and increased housing supply, aligning directly with the objectives of the **National Planning Framework (NPF)** and **Housing for All**.

These lands present a significant opportunity to address housing demand effectively while supporting both national and local planning policies. Their strategic location makes them an ideal candidate for inclusion as a priority area for immediate action in this LAP review.

Amendments to proposed Zoning LAP 2025



All lands north of the Port Road within my client's ownership are well-suited for residential development due to several key factors.

North of Port Road

<i>Area "C"</i>	<i>(2.14 HA-circa)</i>	<i>RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2</i>
<i>Area "D"</i>	<i>(1.15 HA-circa)</i>	<i>OS2 - Natural Areas</i>
<i>Area "E"</i>	<i>(0.9 HA-circa)</i>	<i>AOS - Active Open Space Walking Loop</i>
<i>Area "F"</i>	<i>(0.65 HA-circa)</i>	<i>PU - Public Utility Access Road - Carpark (Min 50- Spaces)</i>

Located directly across the Port Road from new pedestrian access routes to the rail line and train station, my client's lands offer excellent connectivity and accessibility, making them an ideal location for sustainable residential development.

We propose the designation of a 2.25-hectare area as RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2. These lands are situated entirely on the right-hand side of the existing designated Port entry/exit access, down to the port road bridge.

The lands are not part of the natural landscape and actively farmed are naturally segregated from the SAC and Broadlough by mature trees and shrubbery and are situated on elevated topography above the Broadlough and estuary, further ensuring their suitability for development while respecting the surrounding natural environment.

See below an aerial photograph and key points in favour of this proposal:



The lands are not part of the natural environment, having been in continuous active agricultural use for over 150 years.

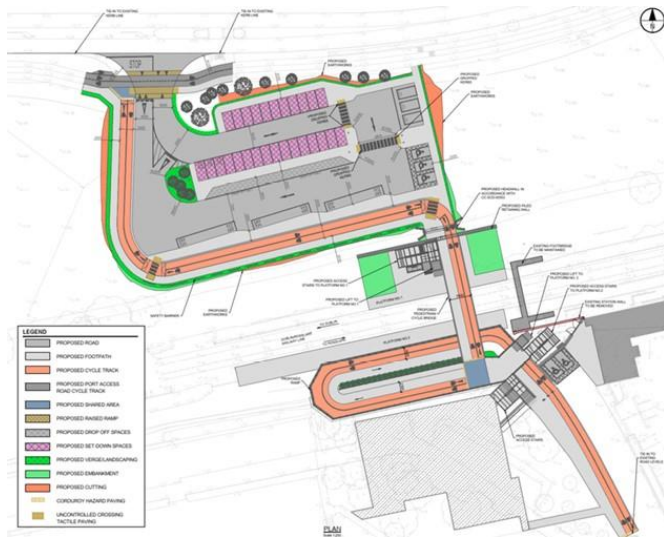
There is no risk of flooding, as the lowest point of the field is approximately eight meters above the high-water mark, ensuring natural resilience to rising water levels.

Mature trees along the embankment provide a clear and definitive boundary with they effectively delineating and protect the nearby adjacent SAC and Broadlough estuary area.

The existing topography, with all areas of the land situated at least eight meters above the high-water line, inherently safeguards local biodiversity and habitats.

A further enhanced safeguard can deliver with the looped greenway and strategic landscaping of a proposed perimeter buffer. This buffer would create a permanent, segregated green zone serving as a natural barrier, improving the area's aesthetic appeal while respecting the integrity of the SAC. Positioned entirely outside the SAC boundaries, this buffer would ensure the continued protection and preservation of the surrounding environment.

Wicklow County Council have purchased lands from our client marked "X" coloured Gray on the above map. A portion of this site is subject to a current Part 8 application Reg Ref 24/407 if granted it will provide "a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Dublin to Rosslare Line, including access lifts and stairs to the station, and the provision of a new carpark and set-down area to the north of the station, alongside all associated landscaping and site works"



By establishing a direct and accessible pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Dublin to Rosslare Line, the project will complete a critical loop to the town centre.

This will improve access to primary and secondary schools, supermarkets, retail shops, childcare facilities, churches, restaurants, and public bus connections all within a short and manageable walking distance from the Port Lands. This new pedestrian and cycle bridge, complemented by access lifts and stairs to the station, represents a transformative enhancement to the connectivity of all lands adjacent to the Port Road. With the planned electrification of the DART service extending to Wicklow Town within this decade, the proximity of my client's lands to an existing transportation hub becomes even more significant.

The enhancement of public transport infrastructure will significantly increase the accessibility and appeal of the area, perfectly aligning with national policies promoting sustainable and public transit-oriented development. This improved connectivity will not only benefit residents but also reduce reliance on cars and foster a more sustainable and vibrant community

This approach aligns seamlessly with current government initiatives, including the *Housing for All* strategy, which prioritizes sustainable growth and compact urban development. Additionally, the policy directive to encourage higher residential densities within a 500-meter radius of transport hubs underscores the strategic importance of situating residential development within this area.

By doing so, the potential of this site can be fully realized, enhancing accessibility and seamlessly integrating public transport into the urban fabric, supporting both local and national planning objectives.

This proposal also draws direction from SLO4-Bollarny North concepts and aims to deliver the following:

Area "F" (0.65 HA) – Access Route and Carpark (Minimum 50 Spaces):

A dedicated access route serving all remaining lands north of the Port Road. The carpark can include bicycle parking and picnic areas within a public utility zoning, this ensures that road access can be established and, in time, both road and carpark transition to public ownership.

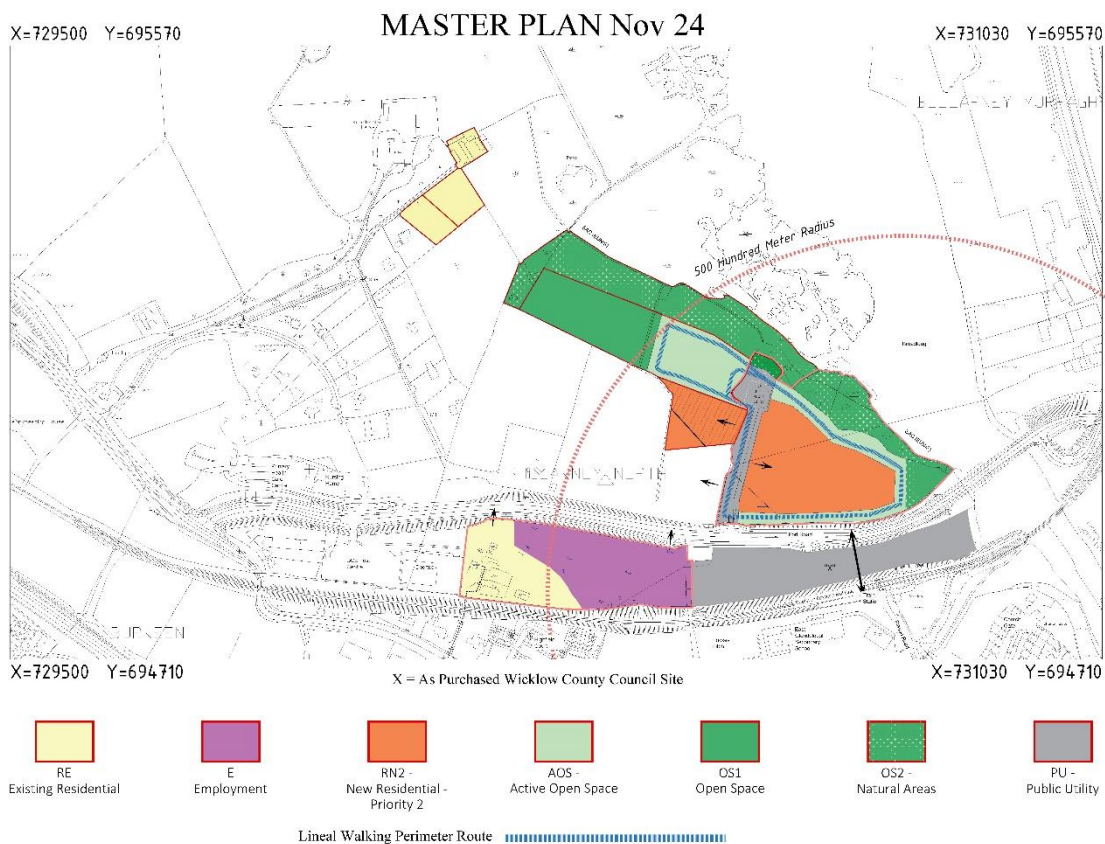
Area "D" (1.15 HA) – OS2: Natural Areas:

My client fully acknowledges the importance of protecting areas associated with the Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This proposal advocates for a balanced approach that protects critical natural areas while aligning with sustainable development objectives, rather than retaining all lands under consideration for rezoning. The mature trees and embankment are natural protectors of the established natural area and will remain to protected and provide a clear definitive boundary outside the SAC designation.

Area "E" (0.9 HA) – AOS: Active Open Space (Walking Loop):

In tandem an additional linear buffer is proposed between development and the entire perimeter of the 2.25 hectares of RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2 lands. The buffer could include a loop trail for walking, cycling, and jogging, enhancing recreational opportunities. This feature is intended to complement the suggested uses for adjacent lands under the ownership of Thérèse O'Rourke, as detailed in a separate submission.

For further context, see below a Master Plan graphic for the combination of the land in the ownership of T O Rorke & N Heatley. Providing a continuous area of OS2 Natural open space off the SAC in line with the Lap objectives.



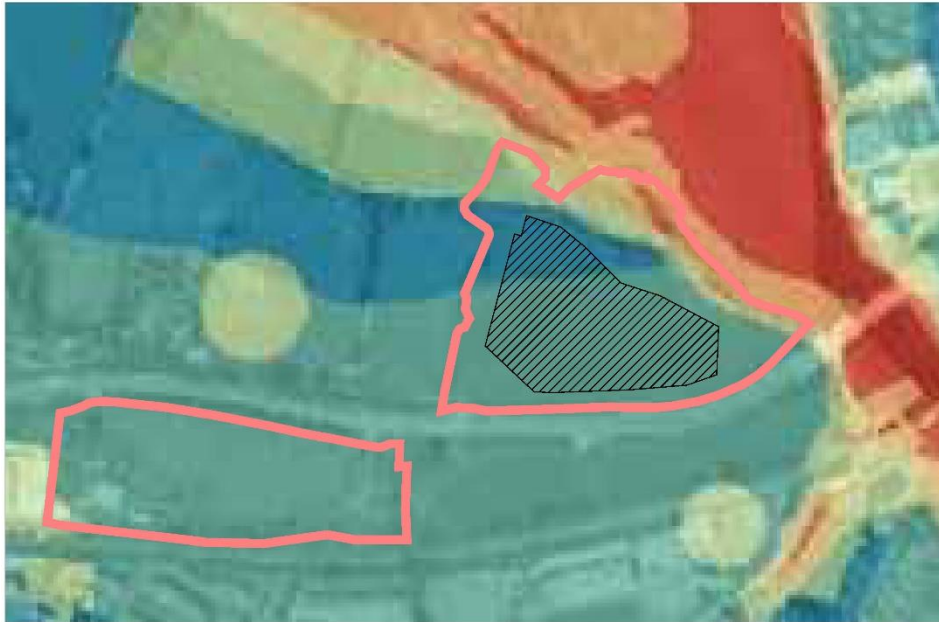
As indicated above This proposal advocates for a balanced approach that protects critical natural areas while aligning with sustainable development objectives.

The Ordnance Survey Ireland 6-inch Map Series (revision date: 31-Dec-1908) illustrates the presence of fields on the subject lands, indicating intensive agricultural use for over 100 years. This historic usage underscores a well-established pattern of activity on lands north of the Port Road, demonstrating a longstanding segregation from the surrounding natural environment.

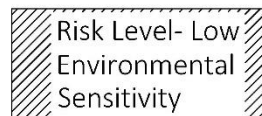
This rationale is further supported by the environmental sensitivity mapping provided in Appendix 5 of the draft 2025 LAP documentation (*SEA Environmental Report*). The mapping clearly identifies lands within the estuary as red, signifying a higher level of environmental sensitivity.

In contrast, the full extent of the proposed 2.25-hectare area to be redesignated as RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2, located north of the Port Road on my client's lands, is marked in light green/blue.

This classification indicates the lowest level of environmental sensitivity, reinforcing the suitability of these lands for residential development.



PROPOSAL SUBMISSION
2.25-hectare area as
RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2



In conclusion

The Draft Local Area Plan (LAP) states, *“The purpose of this plan is to put in place a land use framework that will guide the future sustainable development of the Wicklow Town–Rathnew area.”* It also highlights that it is no longer *“a stand-alone policy document”* and that, *“with the dissolution of the town councils, Wicklow County Council is now the planning authority for Wicklow Town, and therefore the provisions of the Wicklow County Development Plan now apply directly in the area covered by the previous Town Development Plan.”*

Additionally, the Draft LAP asserts that, *“This Local Area Plan is consistent with the objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan. The County Development Plan sets out the overall strategies, objectives and standards for the county. The strategies, objectives and standards set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan apply directly in this settlement and shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Local Area Plan.”*

The **National Planning Framework (NPF)** serves as Ireland's long-term strategy for spatial development, providing a roadmap for sustainable growth and investment through 2040. The NPF emphasizes principles of compact growth and sustainable development, aiming to balance regional development while addressing the specific needs of high-growth areas. On Ireland's east coast, where significant population increases are anticipated, the strategic identification and development of suitably located lands will be critical to addressing housing and infrastructure demands.

Complementing the NPF, the **national housing strategy, *Housing for All***, is a targeted response to Ireland's housing crisis. It aims to deliver over 300,000 new homes between 2025 and 2030, with annual housing delivery scaling to approximately 60,000 units thereafter. The core objective of *Housing for All* is to ensure that everyone in Ireland has access to affordable, high-quality housing, aligned with the needs of diverse communities while fostering sustainability and inclusivity.

These two overarching government initiatives are interconnected but inherently fluid, as they must adapt to evolving trends in population growth and inward migration. Projections indicate that demographic pressures, driven by both natural growth and increased migration, will intensify the demand for housing and associated infrastructure.

The **Wicklow Town–Rathnew Local Area Plan** is set to run for six years, from its adoption in 2025 through to 2031. However, my concern is that the reference to the County Development Plan, adopted in September 2022, has already resulted in the Draft LAP being outdated before its formal adoption. This creates a risk of the LAP failing to effectively address future challenges.

The forward-planning objectives within the 2025 LAP must be genuinely *“forward-looking”* and sufficiently flexible to respond to changing circumstances, ensuring the delivery of sustainable, well-integrated communities.

Please consider the following points:

1. **Adjoining Landowner Submission “Removal of Existing RN2 Designation:”**

An adjoining landowner is seeking to remove 2.45 hectares of lands currently designated as RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2, located north of the Port Road.

2. **Redesignation Proposal:**

This submission proposes to redesignate and relocate a 2.25-hectare area to my client’s lands closer to the Port Road Bridge as RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2. This adjustment ensures that the overall quantum of RN2 lands remains unchanged.

3. **Enhanced Connectivity:**

The planned new pedestrian and cycle bridge to the station represents a transformative improvement in connectivity for all lands adjacent to the Port Road. Coupled with the planned electrification of the DART service to Wicklow Town within this decade, the proximity of my client’s lands to an existing transportation hub will significantly enhance their strategic value.

4. **Environmental Sensitivity:**

The environmental sensitivity of the proposed lands is low, and robust, effective measures can be implemented to protect and segregate the surrounding natural areas, including the SAC and Broadlough.

5. **Unique Opportunity:**

My client’s lands present a unique, once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver a sustainable and strategic residential development in a highly advantageous location.

6. Alignment with Government Policy:

This proposal aligns seamlessly with current government initiatives, including the *Housing for All* strategy, which prioritizes sustainable growth and compact urban development. Moreover, the policy directive encouraging higher residential densities within a 500-meter radius of transport hubs underscores the strategic importance of situating residential development within this area.

My client and I believe this represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver meaningful urban placemaking in Wicklow Town. We strongly urge the Forward Planning Section of Wicklow County Council to seize this opportunity.

Due to their elevated topography and historic use, these lands are well-positioned to withstand the impacts of climate change, offering a resilient and sustainable option for future development.

Previously deemed suitable for residential use, the lands north of the port road remain a strategic location that aligns with long-term planning objectives and can once again serve as a key resource for addressing housing needs while supporting climate adaptation efforts.

However, if no action is taken, there is a significant risk that this opportunity will be lost forever, particularly if these lands are unnecessarily designated as open space.

We respectfully request that the Forward Planning Department of Wicklow County Council, as part of this Local Area Plan review, reexamine our client's lands. We urge you to consider our proposal to adjust the zoning to better align with the Wicklow Town's development needs and future potential.

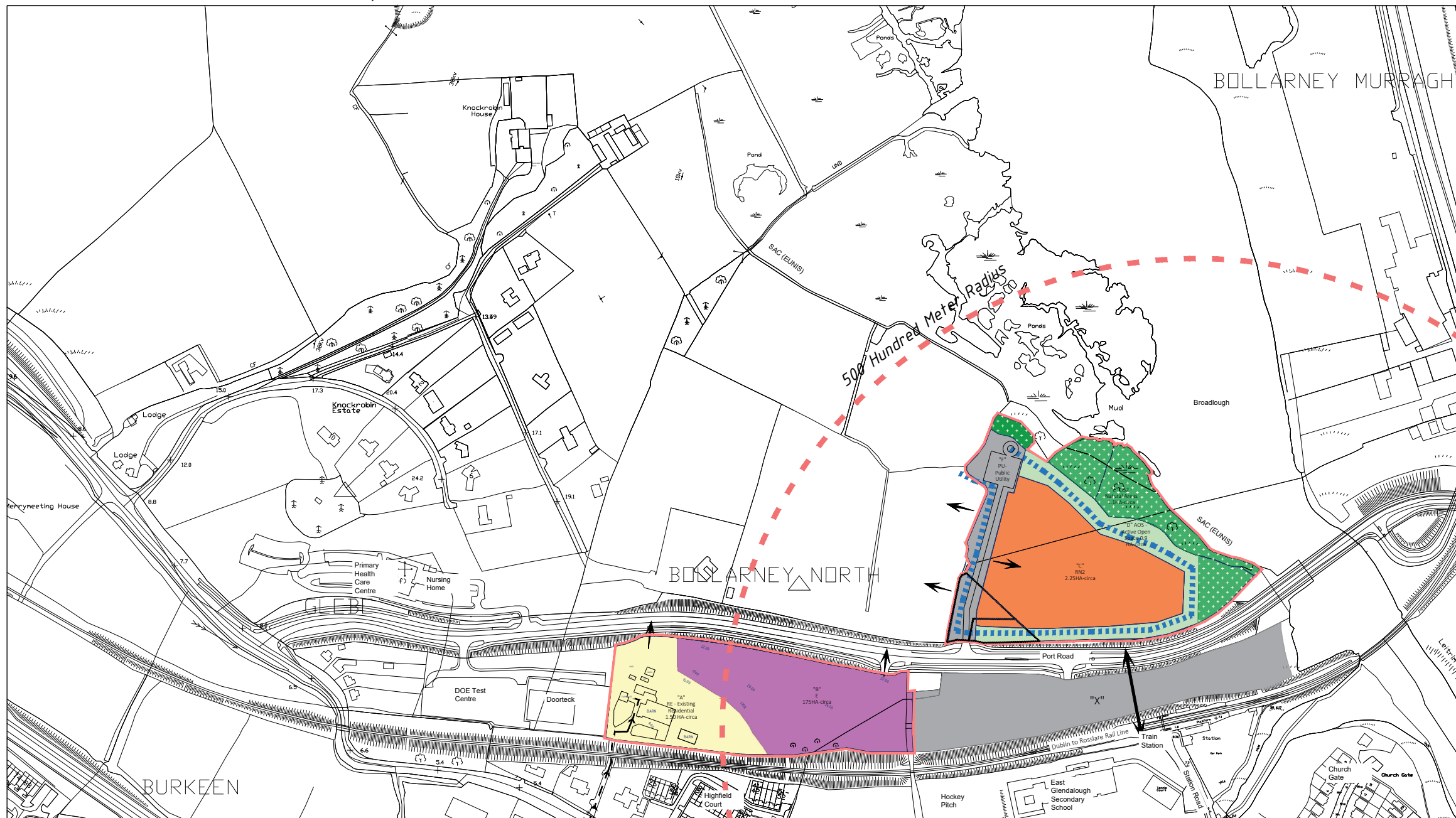
I trust the enclosed information meets with your requirements however should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at 086 0794813.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Niall O'Connell' followed by 'URIAI' in a smaller font.

PACC: RIAI Registered Practice 23015
Unit S2 Wicklow Enterprise Park,
Box 8, The Murrough Wicklow.
Phone 0404 64078 – 086 0794813
Email: info@pacc.ie

Folio's: WW1761, WW1762, WW1425, WW969, WW8052
 Proposed Areas: North of Port Road Circa 4.95 Ha. South of Port Road Circa 3.2 Ha
 X=729500 Y=695570 X=731030 Y=695570



X=729500 Y=694710 X = As Purchased Wicklow County Council Site X=731030 Y=694710

- "A" RE** 1.20 HA-circa (circa)
 Submission to change Zoning FROM E - Employment TO RE - Existing Residential (Existing Farmhouse Out-buildings)
- "B" E** 2.0 HA-circa
 Retain E - Employment As Shown DRAFT LAP 2025
- "C" RN2** 2.14 HA-circa
 Submission to change Zoning FROM OS2 - Natural Areas (1.08HA-circa) OS1 - Open Space (1.18HA-circa) TO RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2
- "D" OS2** 1.15 HA-circa
 OS2 - Natural Areas
- "E" AOS** 0.9 HA-circa
 AOS - Active Open Space (0.9 HA-circa)
 Lineal Walking Route
 Active Open Perimeter Walking Loop Route Modified from DRAFT LAP 2025
- "F" Pu:** 0.65 HA-circa
 PU - Public Utility
 Carpark (min 50 Spaces)
 Access Route to Public Park
 Walking Loop



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DRAFT LAP SUBMISSION

X=729500 Y=695570

X=731030 Y=695570



X=729500 Y=694710

X = As Purchased Wicklow County Council Site

X=731030 Y=694710

- "A" RE** 1.20 HA-circa (circa)
Submission to change Zoning FROM E - Employment TO RE - Existing Residential (Existing Farmhouse Out-buildings)
- "B" E** 2.0 HA-circa
Retain Submission to change Zoning FROM E - Employment TO RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2
- "C" RN2** 2.14 HA-circa
Submission to change Zoning FROM OS2 - Natural Areas (1.08HA-circa) TO RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2
- "D" OS2** 1.15 HA-circa
OS2 - Natural Areas (1.15 HA-circa)
- "E" AOS** 0.9 HA-circa
AOS - Active Open Space (0.9 HA-circa)
- "F" Pu:** 0.65 HA-circa
Public Utility Carpark (min 50 Spaces) Access Route to Public Park Walking Loop
- 1-2-3 RE** Submissions to change Zoning TO RE - Existing Residential (Development Sites Existing Farmyard outbuildings)
- "G" RN2** .06 HA-circa
Submission to change Zoning FROM OS1 - Open Space (0.6HA-circa) TO RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2
- "H" AOS** 1.07HA-circa
AOS - Active Open Space (1.07HA-circa)
- "I" OS1** 1.4HA-circa
OS1 - Natural Areas (1.4HA-circa) All existing Hedgerows Maintained and improved
- "J" OS2** 2.2HA-circa
OS2 - Natural Areas (2.2HA-circa)



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DRAFT LAP SUBMISSION