

31 MAR 2025

PLANNING DEPT.

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Objection to Proposed Material Amendments 1 & 26 to the Wicklow-Rathnew Local Area Plan – Glebe / Fernhill Lands

I wish to submit my strong objection to **Proposed Material Amendments 1 and 26** in relation to SLO-9 and the Glebe / Fernhill lands. My concerns are outlined below:

1. Rezoning of Community/Education Lands to Residential Use

I strongly oppose the rezoning of land previously zoned entirely as **Community/Education (CE)**. These lands were intended to support essential public infrastructure such as schools, youth services, and other community needs.

Changing this to residential use — even when linked to the regeneration of Fernhill House — would **permanently reduce the amount of land available for public benefit**, at a time when Wicklow is experiencing rapid population growth and serious school capacity issues.

There is no clear justification for this rezoning, and I am concerned it would set a damaging precedent for how public land is managed in the county. The CE zoning should be **retained in full**.

2. Proposed Connectivity Between Friarshill and the R750 via Glebemount Estate

While I support sustainable transport in principle, the suggestion that pedestrian or cycling connectivity could be routed **through Glebemount Estate** is deeply concerning and raises several serious issues affecting safety, privacy, and residential amenity. There is no direct access between Friarshill and the R750, the only way is through the private estate of Glebemount, which is outside the control and ownership of the landowners, the Delahunt family. There has been no consultation with residents regarding pedestrian access which is a requirement of WCC proposed amendment no. 2.

A. Glebemount Is Not Designed for Through-Traffic

Glebemount is a quiet, long-established residential area made up of cul-de-sacs and narrow roads designed for local access only. Introducing a public route would:

- Increase non-residential footfall and cycling traffic past private homes
- Disrupt the peaceful, family-oriented character of the estate

- Result in loss of privacy and increased noise and disturbance

B. Safety Risks for Children, Elderly Residents, and Vulnerable Road Users

The estate is home to many young families and older residents. A through-route would significantly increase unpredictable movement and pose safety risks:

- At blind corners and driveways not suited to frequent traffic
- On streets lacking dedicated pedestrian or cycling infrastructure
- Especially during peak times such as school runs

C. Parking and Traffic Congestion

Glebemount already experiences **serious parking pressure**, with many homes relying on on-street parking. A new public route would:

- Strain limited road space
- Risk displacement or damage to parked vehicles
- Create regular conflict between residents and pass-through users

D. Impact on Amenity and Property Values

Turning the estate into a public corridor would undermine its residential nature, affect quality of life, and potentially reduce property values — particularly for homes adjacent to any proposed access points.

3. Inappropriate Scale and Density – Opposition to Three-Storey Housing

I understand that the landowner is proposing a **three-storey, high-density residential scheme** (142 Delahunt family) including apartments, duplexes, and houses. I strongly object to this proposal — particularly as it would directly adjoin long-established homes in Glebemount.

This form of development is **entirely out of character** with the surrounding low-density neighbourhood, which is made up primarily of two-storey and bungalow family homes with private gardens. Any developments would need to be at least 10 metres away from the rear boundaries of existing adjacent bungalows and two storey houses.

The proposed scale and intensity of three-storey development would:

- **Overlook and overshadow** existing rear gardens and homes, resulting in loss of privacy and residential amenity
- **Visually dominate** the surrounding built environment
- Introduce an **abrupt and inappropriate transition in building height and scale**, which conflicts with the

principles of proper urban design

- **Overload local infrastructure**, especially traffic, access roads, and parking capacity

Such a proposal **fails to respect the established character, pattern, and scale** of existing housing — a core requirement of good planning under the **County Development Plan, Wicklow Rathnew LAP** and national policy. Introducing three-storey units at the edge of a mature residential estate would represent **overdevelopment of the site** and would not constitute proper planning or sustainable development.

4. Protection of Natural Areas (OS2) and Environmental Concerns

I welcome the commitment to protect lands zoned as **OS2** and covered by a **Tree Preservation Order (TPO)**. However, to maintain the ecological integrity of the area, I believe the following safeguards are essential:

- Any recreational development should be **strictly low-impact** and subject to a full **ecological assessment**
- The area should continue to function as a **wildlife corridor and natural buffer** between development and residential zones
- Any increased human activity in this area should be managed carefully to avoid long-term damage to biodiversity

Conclusion and Requests

I urge Wicklow County Council to consider the long-term impact of these amendments — particularly on existing communities, the loss of public-zoned land, and the incompatible scale of the proposed development.

The current proposal for high-density housing is wholly out of keeping with the area. It would result in overlooking, overshadowing, loss of privacy, and a significant erosion of amenity for nearby residents. Such overdevelopment on a constrained site next to an established neighbourhood would represent a serious departure from good planning practice.

I respectfully request that:

- **Glebemount Estate be explicitly excluded** from any proposed pedestrian or cycling connectivity routes
- The **rezoning of Community/Education lands be reversed**, and the original CE zoning retained
- The proposed **three storey high-density** scheme be **rejected**, and future development be limited in **scale, height, and density**, and at least 10 metres from Glebemount boundaries to ensure compatibility with the surrounding built environment.
- Any future proposals be subject to **comprehensive public consultation, robust safety and environmental assessments**,

and a **community-led design approach**
Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

Margaret Delaney