



Draft Wicklow Town – Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

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Topic

Overall Vision and Strategy of LAP Submission

The N11 has already been significantly impacted by congestion due to the increasing number of houses in the Wicklow area. This has led to a noticeable rise in traffic from Wicklow Town through Rathnew as vehicles merge onto the N11. The installation of traffic lights at the Tinakilly entrance has worsened the situation, causing traffic jams that extend back to the bridge. However, the proposed relief road in the current plans fails to address these issues. Instead, it will only increase traffic flow onto the N11 at the Ashford roundabout, without alleviating congestion in the affected areas. Moreover, the planned road is located in a high-risk flood zone.

There are already two existing roads—the Rocky Road and the Marlton Road to Beehive—that bypass Rathnew and provide direct access to the N11 from Wicklow Town. Widening these roads and encouraging traffic to use them offers a far more effective solution than the proposed relief road. This approach would divert traffic away from Rathnew and eliminate the bottleneck at the Ashford roundabout.

Lower Rathnew, classified entirely within Flood Zones A and B, faces a high risk of flooding. Current and proposed developments, including roads and housing, are either directly within or adjacent to these flood-prone zones. The expansion of impermeable surfaces exacerbates flooding risk through increased surface runoff and reduced water infiltration. Although planning documents acknowledge these risks, a waiver of responsibility has been included, absolving developers and planners of accountability for future flooding impacts. This raises significant concerns about the long-term sustainability and safety of the area. While plans reference the construction of a pump house for flood mitigation, its proposed sites are themselves within flood-prone zones, rendering its effectiveness questionable. Without a comprehensive and well-executed flood mitigation strategy, the area remains vulnerable to severe flooding events.

Infrastructure issues are already evident across the region. Primary and secondary schools have long waiting lists that will only worsen with population growth. Train services are operating at full capacity, with trains to Wicklow Town often full by the time they arrive. Furthermore, the single train line is at risk of being lost to coastal erosion within a year or two, and there is no double line to extend DART services to the town.

Local amenities for children are inadequate, with no new playgrounds or sports facilities planned for Rathnew or Ashford.

Access to healthcare is equally strained, with waiting lists for doctor and dental appointments extending 4-6 weeks.

Increasing electrical outages, overwhelmed water and sewage systems, and heightened risks of flooding and ecological damage to local rivers, lakes, and the sea further compound the area's challenges.

Despite these issues, a significant number of new houses currently under construction have not yet been occupied. Additional development must be halted until infrastructure in Wicklow Town and its surrounding communities—Rathnew, Ashford, and Glenealy—is upgraded to support the growing population. Without

these necessary improvements, continued development will only exacerbate existing problems and compromise the region's long-term viability.

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