

18/11/2024

A Chara,

We wish to make a submission/ objection to The Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025:

The Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025 is not a sustainable plan and shall put an ever-increasing pressure on the already over stretched local infrastructure and services. The main problem of the plan is that there is a huge imbalance between the ongoing and proposed residential developments and the infrastructure and services available in the Wicklow-Rathnew area.

In the last couple of years, the Wicklow/Rathnew area has experienced an unprecedented level of residential developments. The imbalance between recent unprecedented level of residential developments and the existing infrastructure and services are already being felt in the local area, especially in the areas of public transport, the traffic chaos occurring at peak school and commuter hours - especially around junction 16 exit/access to the M11 motorway. The consequences of this can be seen in increased volumes of traffic, longer commutes and longer journeys locally – all resulting in higher emissions of carbon pollution.

It is submitted that there has been no effective future proofing of the proposed draft plan in respect of a growing and more diverse population and the facilities required to maintain it. This has already been felt with the strain on local health services and local public transport systems. It is felt throughout the local educational services, ranging from early years to secondary schools. This can be seen in a lack of Creche/Montessori places as well in the increasing demand for secondary school places. There also appears to be little thought given to sporting facilities for the youth and playgrounds for the very young. Where is the inbuilt capacity in this draft plan to cope with needs of the population, if you build houses – you need schools and services. In short, this draft plan

provides for the sprawl of residential development without the corresponding social infrastructure so vital for a growing population.

The submission/ objection points are:

1. The Rathnew Inner Relief Road (RIRR) is a flawed scheme ending at a traffic light junction bottleneck meeting traffic coming and going from the Wicklow-Rathnew and surrounding areas. At this junction, this traffic meets the Rathnew to Junction 16 traffic. As mentioned above, the Wicklow County Council's Draft Wicklow Town and Rathnew Local Area Plan-Transport Assessment 2025 states, "Junction 16 (Wicklow North-Rathnew) is the primary entry/ exit point to/ from the M11 from the Wicklow- Rathnew area". Junction 16 to Rathnew is already a heavily trafficked and congested route. This will only worsen the ongoing traffic chaos in the area. It is to be noted there is a future 80 residential units being currently built on the Newcastle Road opposite the Wicklow Campus. Without doubt, the future occupants of those houses will seek to join the M11 via the roundabout beside ALDI Rathnew. It is to be noted that this roundabout is presently barely able to cope with the constant traffic using it. The notable increase in house so close to this roundabout will only make the congestion worse, leading to gridlock. Due to the increasing volume of traffic here, it has to be expected that some of the local traffic will seek to use the road from Hunters Hotel to Ashford to join the M11, resulting in a higher level of traffic. The same will probably happen on the Killoughter road. The increasing traffic will result in traffic rat runs on these dangerously narrow rural roads.
2. The future plan to extend the RIRR in the Wicklow County Council's Transport Assessment 2025 is extremely vague. Three options are shown in the Transport Assessment, with no detailed plans, no details on how the extension of the RIRR would alleviate traffic as traffic volumes continue to increase. There is no completion date for the extension of the RIRR.
3. Wicklow Town needs its own relief road at Junction 17 to ease the traffic volumes and congestion at Junction 16. I see nothing in the Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025 to upgrade Junction 17 relieve the congestion in the area, apart a recent plan for a minor widening the Rocky Road.

4. The infrastructure and services in the Wicklow-Rathnew area are currently running at or above capacity. The ongoing and proposed residential developments in The Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025 will put an unsustainable pressure on the infrastructure and services in the Wicklow-Rathnew area.

5. It is clear also that little consideration has been given to the effect of global warming and the projected increase in water levels along the Wicklow coast – in particular the coastline north of Wicklow Town to Newcastle. Areas of exposure include the Broad Lough and the adjacent farmlands. It is clear from the OPW projected flooding maps (www.floodinfo.ie) that much of this area is at risk of significant flooding in the next ten to thirty years if the coastal defences are not developed. Therefore, one would have to consider the wisdom of granting planning for residential developments close to areas that may be at risk in the near future. It also appears that there has been little thought given to the safeguarding of vital infrastructure such as roads and rail lines with regard to probability of rising water levels – please refer to the OPW flood maps (www.floodinfo.ie).

6. If The Draft Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025 goes ahead without significant revisions and amendments with regard to transport infrastructure and services, it will have serious detrimental effects on the quality of life of people living in the Wicklow-Rathnew and surrounding areas.

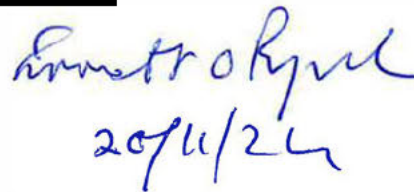
Regards,



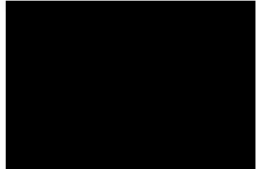
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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
20 NOV 2024
PLANNING DEPT.