

**SUBMISSION FOR THE DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE VILLAGE BOUNDARY OF GLENEALY  
TO ALLOW THE EXPANSION OF THE VILLAGE CENTRE**



**AUGUST 2021**

This submission is based on previous reports and proposals lodged with the Council in relation to reasons for expanding the village boundaries in order to create a village centre and revitalise Glenealy.

In 2014 a Conceptual Masterplan was submitted highlighting lands that could be developed and possible proposals to create a unique village centre. The report and Concept Plan are included in the Appendix of this submission. Both documents highlight the points for proposing to extend the village boundary in more detail and have been altered slightly to take into account lands that are not now in the client's ownership.

In 2016 a reduced Conceptual Plan was submitted to the Council seeking to extend the village boundaries in the form of a pre-planning enquiry. This submission was based on four sites that included two housing developments, the reinstatement of the former hotel and a Centre for Excellence for Cycling. The Conceptual Masterplan mentioned above has been altered to suggest that the Centre for Excellence for Cycling and possible opportunity for a connected Outdoor Pursuit Centre could be located within any new village centre. We see this as a tourism generator for the village.

In 2020 a submission was made in relation to The Core Strategy which is included overleaf for your convenience. This is included in its entirety as it further explains the attempts and reasoning for requesting an extension to the village boundary and summarises past submissions made.

In conclusion we are seeking to extend the village boundaries of Glenealy for the many reasons listed in the attached previously submitted reports and would hope that the Council will understand our reasonings for this submission. We would also hope that after referring to the report and plan, the Council would accept that the location of Glenealy lends itself to becoming a commuter town but has the opportunity to expand without losing the essence and sense of place associated with Glenealy itself.

**ENCLOSURES – referred to above and in the submission overleaf.**

- Letter from Irish Water – Doc 01
- Conceptual Masterplan for Glenealy Drawing 2014 (Amended 2021) – Doc 02A
- Conceptual Masterplan for Glenealy Report 2014 (Amended 2021) – Doc 03A
- Conceptual Plan for Residential Development, Hotel and Centre of Excellence for Cycling 2017 Drawings – Doc 04 & 05
- Pre-planning Report for Residential Development, Hotel and Centre of Excellence for Cycling 2016 – Doc 06
- Response to Pre-planning Submission for Residential Development, Hotel and Centre of Excellence for Cycling Drawing 2017 from the planning authority. – Doc 07

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY IN THE CORE STRATEGY OF THE NEW COUNTY WICKLOW DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO INCLUDE GLENEALY AS A CATEGORY LEVEL 5 – SMALL GROWTH TOWN**

**Settlement Hierarchy**

Fundamentally, we are applying to propose that changes are made to the settlement hierarchy in **The Core Strategy** so that Glenealy is moved from a Category Level 7 Large Village to a Category Level 5 – Small Growth Town.

We have submitted proposals in relation to the development of Glenealy in the past to the planning department without success, with lack of services cited as the main stumbling point.

We have been in lengthy discussions with Irish Water in relation to the services that could be provided in Glenealy and they have now agreed, in principle, that both the water and foul sewer connections could be upgraded and extended, if a developer is willing to make contributions towards the extended scheme. We attach a letter from Irish Water to this effect.

There are extensive lands around the village that are available for development, particularly to the northern side of the railway line. Glenealy is in a unique situation where lands are available to help the growth of the village by extending the existing boundaries. In 2014, a Conceptual Master Plan was commissioned for the whole village by a private client. We have attached the Plan and Report for your convenience, should you wish to refer to it for the scope and possibilities that extending the boundaries could bring and the concepts behind the proposals. The original proposals included a public park, library, civic space as well as a school campus and retail, residential and tourist opportunities to allow the village to grow to become self-sufficient and sustainable. The master plan included lands on which the former railway stop for the village is located and if redeveloped, would allow the connection to be re-established for the convenience of the villagers. This would be a very valuable addition in providing a sustainable infrastructure plan for the village. The above-mentioned report goes into greater detail showing the type of development that could be catered for and shows just some of the extensive lands that could be developed. The report/ design strategy relates to and is based on the Glenealy Village Design Statement (VDS), published in July 2005.

While the concepts for the above-mentioned report refer to creating a new village core, the ideas could equally be conveyed and transferred into creating a new small town centre.

It is not the intention of this submission to push any of the proposals contained in this report or to base any proposals for extending the village boundary for the benefit of any sole individuals. The reference to the report is merely to show the extent of available lands that could be developed. These would be in addition to other sections of land also available for possible development around the village allowing the village to grow extensively and therefore allow the village to be upgraded to a Category Level 7 Large Village to a Category Level 5 – Small Growth Town.

### **The Core Strategy & Settlement Hierarchy**

The following submission was made to the Council when invitations were made to for consultation purposes for *the Core Strategy & Settlement Hierarchy*:

Within *the Core Strategy & Settlement Hierarchy* it states the following -

#### **Compact Growth**

*“An efficient use of land is essential for sustainable development. The National Planning Framework (NPF) acknowledges that the physical format of urban development is one of our greatest national development challenges and identified compact growth as one of the National Strategic Outcomes. This entails delivering a greater proportion of residential development and other development within existing built-up area of settlements and moving away from a reliance on greenfield development to meet our development needs. Creating more compact development has been traditionally more difficult to achieve than a continuous process of pushing development onto Greenfield locations.” 1*

Glenealy is traditionally a long linear village and is spread out along the main route through it. At present the village is dissected by the railway line and does not have an obvious centre. We would suggest that by allowing the village to grow and radiate out from this main arterial route rather than extending it further either end would allow for the concentration of services and infrastructure with the possibility of creating a centre unique to Glenealy. We believe that this would be in keeping with allowing development in an existing built-up area as stated above.

Taking the questions as set out in **The Core Strategy & Settlement Hierarchy**, consultation section we have attempted to answer the questions in relation to Glenealy specifically.

- **What is the best designation for your town?**

We believe that Glenealy should be designated as a Level 5 category as it is in a prime location to become a commuter town. Access to an existing railway connection could potentially allow rail users to commute to Dublin and reduce traffic on the N11. Also, the close proximity of the village to the N11 could potentially mean that there are opportunities to provide a sustainable transport link/ system to surrounding towns as well as Dublin. There are opportunities to develop and expand the village based on the existing main route through the village and existing infrastructure allowing the village to grow into a small growth town without disturbing the existing fabric of the area.

- **What towns and villages should be promoted for population growth?**

Glenealy has a unique opportunity for growth as a great deal of the surrounding lands along the main route through the village are available for development. The main focus would be that all interested parties would work together to develop a strategy for the good of the village as a whole and how to rectify the sprawling nature of the current layout without losing its uniqueness.

- **Do you think your town has the capacity to sustain more housing growth? If so, why?**

We believe that Glenealy has the capacity to sustain more housing growth with the appropriate extension to existing services and infrastructure. As noted previously, we have been in discussions with Irish Water and options now exist to extend the water and foul sewer services. Due to the linear nature of Glenealy there are ample opportunities to create links to the main road infrastructure, therefore centralising the village and allowing for compacted

growth. This would allow for new residential developments as well as associated services within a new core area without further elongating the village.

- **Do you think that the level of housing development in your town has been matched by adequate infrastructure and services?**

Due to the limited capacity of services within Glenealy there has been very little development in the way of housing for a number of years. Lack of investment and development has seriously affected growth. Locals are having to move out of the village due to lack of residential opportunities and this in turn has eroded village life, with many of the amenities having had to shut down. The village has become stagnant and we believe that new residential development will be the main driving force for bringing energy and spirit back into the area. As noted above, we believe there is ample opportunities and potential to extend the existing infrastructure and services to cater for increased residential development.

- **What are the service shortfalls in your area?**

In recent years the village has lost the main employer, Kerry Foods and this has a huge negative impact on the village. The only public house in the village has limited opening hours and the village has only one small convenience store. We believe the village needs community, retail, tourism and employment opportunities and that the village needs to be developed to allow for all of these services in order to serve any residential development.

## **Town and Village Centres & Retail**

### **Town Centre Renewal**

*“It is a policy of the National Planning Framework to target the reversal of decline in the core of towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes. Town and village centres throughout the county need to be dynamic and able to evolve to accommodate new uses. This is essential for their continued vitality. The reuse and regeneration of vacant buildings is an essential catalyst to transform the capacity and potential of our smaller towns and villages.”*

As mentioned earlier the closing of Kerry Foods had a huge detrimental effect on the village. The factory was purchased with the view of trying to entice another major employer and all the associated benefits that would bring back into the village. Unfortunately, despite many attempts to rent out the property, the factory remains closed. There is an opportunity for the lands on which these vacant buildings stand to be developed and be incorporated into the village boundary with more appropriate usages. (The attached Conceptual Master Plan shows an example of how the lands could be developed, should you wish to refer to it.)

## **Tourism and Recreation**

### **Ireland’s Ancient East**

*“Ireland’s Ancient East has been developed by Fáilte Ireland as a branded visitor experience encompassing the rich heritage and cultural assets that the Mid-East has to offer. This presents a significant opportunity for Wicklow to tap into and harness the potential of cultural tourism. Wicklow Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan 2018 – 2023 sets out the County’s vision for tourism and identifies priorities and actions to ensure the County is successful in realising its tourism potential. The Strategy recognises that Wicklow is performing well but has enormous untapped potential arising from*

*its natural and built assets and proximity to large markets. The Strategy identifies five priority actions:*

- *Develop new accommodation;*
- *Develop Wicklow, Bray, Greystones, Enniskerry, Blessington and Arklow as visitor hubs;*
- *Masterplan for Glendalough;*
- *Grow thematic experiences;*
- *Develop a common narrative.”*

In 2017, plans for a unique tourism opportunity on lands that are adjoining Carrick Mountain in Glenealy were submitted as part of a pre-planning query. Carrick Mountain is where the World Mountain Biking Championships – Enduro takes place. Enduro attracts the best bike riders in the world and we believe that there is an opportunity to tap into more of this tourist market. The proposals submitted included residential development, a hotel and a Centre of Excellence for Cycling along with the ancillary services required and accommodation opportunities. This was submitted based on providing a stand-alone treatment facility to cater for the proposals. We have attached the submitted report and drawings and the reply from the planning authority for your convenience, again, should you wish to refer to it.

In theory, the response from the planning authority was positive in terms of the Centre of Excellence for Cycling. If the centre was combined with an outdoor pursuit centre where the facility could be used all year, then this may further tap into the full potential of Carrick Mountain and its relationship with the village.

The response to the proposed submitted residential developments from the planning department quoted indicative growth targets up to 2022 based on existing services facilities. Proposals for the possibility of extending these services could now become a reality which would open up an opportunity for greater growth. Hence the request to upgrade Glenealy to a Level 5 Small Growth Town.

It was thought that a Centre of Excellence for Cycling alongside accommodation opportunities for both the participants and huge number of spectators that come to Glenealy every year could, in turn, bring further employment opportunities to the town in terms of providing services in the food and accommodation industry. As the Enduro is known worldwide, perhaps there is an opportunity to develop the link into the common narrative being developed for Ireland’s Ancient East and grow a unique thematic experience with the possibility of an interpretive centre within a Centre of Excellence for Cycling. There also may be an opportunity to link the cycling theme in with any Greenway proposals.

As noted above, there are also opportunities to create outdoor recreational amenities in connection with Carrick Mountain in terms of outdoor pursuits. This could be linked to the cycling aspect and the mountain biking trails be used as training facilities etc. This could also create unique accommodation opportunities for courses etc. which could be linked back into the village by extending and developing woodland walkways and roads etc.

### **Retail Development**

*“Retail is a fundamental element of town vitality and it is important that town and village centres retain retailing as a core function. The Development Plan must outline the level and form of retail*

*activity appropriate to the various level of settlement and define by way of a map the boundaries of the core shopping areas. In accordance with national policy guidance, the County Development Plan promotes a sequential approach to retail development. This means that the overall preferred location for retail development is within town centres.”*

Again, as noted previously, Glenealy has a unique opportunity for expanding the village centre centrally as there are extensive lands surrounding it available for development. It is clear that the village is lacking in retail opportunities and this issue needs to be addressed if the village is to grow. The problem does not lie with vacant premises in Glenealy but the lack of any retail centre and shop units. Again, referring to the Enduro and what tourism it could bring in as well as keeping local spending within the village, retail opportunities may exist in the form of such things like a bike shop, cafe/bookshop, chemist, off licence, food outlet, hairdresser etc. In other words, there is an opportunity to create a village/ small growth town centre on existing infrastructure and along an established main route. We believe that this could be done in a sensitive nature without taking away from the unique character of the existing village.

### **Community Development**

*“The provision of social infrastructure in the form of buildings, facilities, clubs and the means of accessing and using services, is necessary for the development of sustainable communities. A wide variety of facilities are required including:*

- *Education – Primary, Secondary, Third Level, Training Centres;*
- *Care Facilities – health care services, nursing homes, childcare, special needs care;*
- *Leisure and recreation – community / youth centres, indoor halls, dancing studios, playgrounds, playing pitches and courts;*
- *Cultural – arts centres, theatres, libraries, burial grounds and places of worship.”*

Glenealy has a very strong heritage in terms of sport, particularly hurling. There are current plans to move the existing GAA club in order to further develop the potential of these sporting facilities. The relocation of the club would fit in with and enhance the concept of creating a new village/ small growth town core.

As part of the previous proposals in the Conceptual Masterplan it was suggested that there would be lands available to move the current school to a new facility that would allow a campus for further development and secondary education.

The majority of the community facilities listed above were also incorporated into this Conceptual Master Plan, again, with the view of creating a unique and all-inclusive village/ small growth town centre.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Glenealy is Unique**

- Essentially there is an opportunity to start with a blank canvas as there are extensive lands available for development adjacent to and around the existing main infrastructure.
- There is an opportunity to expand the services to the village by Irish Water and a party interested in helping to facilitate this in terms of negotiated contributions. This will not only allow for expansion but will also help with the current problems facing existing housing schemes in terms of water and sewage facilities.
- There is a large stakeholder willing to work with the appropriate authorities and interested parties to help the village to grow and develop as part of a masterplan for the entire village in the medium and long term.
- There is no real existing village core, so any design is not hindered or complicated by existing buildings or infrastructure, allowing.
- The location lends itself to becoming a commuter town but has the opportunity to expand without losing the essence and sense of place associated with Glenealy.

We see Glenealy as being unique in terms of how it could be developed and the scope and potential it has to offer. Therefore, we are asking the council for Glenealy to be upgraded to a Category Level 5 – Small Growth Town status.

### **ENCLOSURES**

- Letter from Irish Water – Doc 01
- Conceptual Masterplan for Glenealy Drawing 2014 (Amended 2021) – Doc 02
- Conceptual Masterplan for Glenealy Report 2014 (Amended 2021) – Doc 03
- Conceptual Plan for Residential Development, Hotel and Centre of Excellence for Cycling 2017 Drawings – Doc 04 & 05
- Pre-planning Report for Residential Development, Hotel and Centre of Excellence for Cycling 2016 – Doc 06
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