



Planning Ref: FP2022-026

(Please quote in all related correspondence)

24 May 2022

Director of Services – Planning
Wicklow County Council
County Buildings,
Wicklow Town,
Co. Wicklow
A67 FW96

Via email: plandev@wicklowcoco.ie

Re: Notification under Article 28 (Part 4) or Article 82 (Part 8) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

Proposed Development: Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028
--

A chara

I refer to correspondence received in connection with the above. Outlined below are heritage-related observations/recommendations co-ordinated by the Development Applications Unit under the stated headings.

Nature Conservation

Chapter 18 Green infrastructure (AMENDMENT V1 – 74)

‘CPO 18.11 To support the development of greenways, blueways and other access routes along natural corridors while ensuring that there is no adverse impact on the flora and fauna, biodiversity or water quality of natural assets. Wicklow County Council prioritises environmental protection in our design and construction of routes and surface selection. In particular, to support the development of existing and examine the feasibility of new walking, and cycling, horse riding and water based routes and trails along the following routes:

The development of a coastal route from Bray to Arklow as well as links between this potential route and the coast road;’

With regard to the amendment of Objective CPO 18.11 (highlighted in Italics above), the Department has the following comments to make:



The Department notes the material amendment to Objective CPO 18.11 *'to support the development of existing and examine the feasibility of the development of a coastal route from Bray to Arklow as well as links between this potential route and the coast road'*.

Existing natural ecological corridors and natural habitats such as coastal habitats are often considered the most obvious location for greenways, blueways and other access routes, but in some cases the environmental constraints make these locations unsuitable. For all proposed access routes the first step should be the 'Corridor and Route Selection Process', similar to that conducted for road developments. This process is outlined in the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (2021) Code of Best Practice National and Regional Greenways¹.

The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region (EMRA) notes, *'Careful routing and design is needed to ensure that greenways do not impact negatively on ... the biodiversity value of natural ecological corridors such as rivers and canals or on coastal habitats'*. The Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (the Strategy), published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DoTTS) in July 2018 states that *'Greenways should be designed to take into account, and avoid where necessary, the sensitivities of the natural heritage.'*

The Department notes that Buckroney – Brittas Dune and Fen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 000729 and Magherabeg Dunes SAC 001766 lie along the coastal strip between Wicklow and Arklow. The Department recommends that these international important conservation sites should be avoided in any route selection process.

You are requested to send further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at referrals@housing.gov.ie where used, or to the following address:

The Manager
Development Applications Unit (DAU)
Government Offices
Newtown Road
Wexford
Y35 AP90

Is mise, le meas

Edel Griffin
Development Applications Unit
Administration



ⁱ <https://www.tii.ie/news/press-releases/code-best-practice-greenways/Code-of-Best-Practice-for-National-and-Regional-Greenways.pdf>