

Heather Cooke

From: Adrienne Michel-Long <[REDACTED]@[REDACTED]>
Sent: 21 January 2019 09:54
To: RSES
Subject: Observation on the Draft Regional Spacial & Economic Strategy
Attachments: Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy.docx

Dear Regional Assembly,

Here are my observations on your draft.

Kind regards,

Adrienne Michel-Long

[REDACTED]

20th January 2019

Dear Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly,

Here are my thoughts on your Draft Regional & Economic Strategy.

First I welcome such a constructive plan. While one has great intentions in laying out a plan like this, it is worth nothing if the proposed plan is not put into action. I say this because there have been plans before, but when it comes to acting out such plans the old ways seem to seep into being and logic and sustainable planning go by the wayside.

An example of this is the recent Development of Greystones. There are housing estates popping up all over the place and with that an increase in population, yet we are still left with a transport system that does not meet the needs of all these new settlers. We have a Park and Ride that is full by 7.30 am. We have a very poor bus service which runs on a half hour basis and we only have one DART line. The recent transport changes have actually made our service worse.

The transport system in Greystones is not given any priority over further developments, which are constantly given permission by Wicklow County Council. The levy monies that are presently being generated by the excessive building in Greystones is NOT going into the infrastructure around Greystones or the building of a second DART line. It is all going into building roads in Wicklow Town. What sort of planning is that?

Fortunately we have schools now to facilitate the extra numbers, but these were constructed after many housing developments were built. There was such a pressure on the existing schools these new schools were fast tracked. Again they were the after thought.

Before these new schools were built, I had to drive my two children into Dundrum and Blackrock as there were no places for them in any of our local schools.

Wicklow County Council planning Department don't seem to take heed to any plan other than creating more houses before infrastructure, schools and employment are

created. 70% of people in Greystone commute into Dublin. The A11 is impossible in the mornings and the tail back goes sometimes as far as Ashford. What sort of Planning is that?

If you look at the aerial shot of Greystones on Google you will see one housing estate after another. We have no Park. London has an exemplary amount of parks, which were carefully planned before any developments. Wicklow County Council are ghettoizing Greystones with the approval of more developments.

We have a development which has been approved behind where I live in Delgany Glen. One of the proposed "Green Spaces" of this development is a round-a-bout. What three year old is going to play on a round-a-bout?

I propose that there should be TWO green spaces in every Developer's planning application

1. Green space, kerbs, round-a-bouts etc
2. **Play areas** – That are overlooked by the proposed housing and big enough for children to play a game of football, not just a small green.

You talk of supporting 'the health and wellbeing of our people' but presently there are developments approved by Wicklow County Council with NO adequate Play spaces. A very recent development called Glenheron, has no large play space for the children to play a game of football. What sort of planning is that?

When I suggested to a recent planner that the site behind Delgany Glen should be made into a park and I was laughed at. Why is there no large park like you would see in London here for people to go to? Merrion Square was built for a reason, as was Fitzwilliam square. Bray Peoples park and Cabinteely Park are also fine examples. Greystones will soon be made up of one huge housing estate with no green park near by for children and people to go to.

We are very fortunate here in Delgany Glen as we have a green space large enough for children to play football and safe enough because the houses overlook it. The downside of this is that we have tiny back gardens so this green space is very precious. But this proposed development behind Delgany Glen plans to strip our play area to create an access into the Development behind us. So not only does this proposed development behind us have no proper play area of its own, it also intends to strip our play area and threaten the safety of our children by allowing this access through our cul-de-sac and bringing in with it all the added traffic. If a child gets hit by a car because of this new access who is responsible? Is the developer? Is Wicklow County Council. In the 90's we planned housing around cul-de-sacs to protect children's safety. Why are we now putting the children of Delgany Glen at risk?

As you see it's all very well to have a plan, but what is the point when you have organisations like Wicklow County Council not adhering to them and carrying on as they have always done, building developments that have no safe play areas and no infrastructure and no employment to meet their needs.

As I have stated we now have new schools, but we have no proper third level institution. The one third level college is the Bray College of Further Education (BIFE). This is an excellent college, but it is under threat because there are plans for a secondary to be built on its grounds. This leads to a serious question...

1. What is your vision to expand third level education in Wicklow?

BIFE is a college that caters for students who want to study skill based courses and it has an excellent programme of subjects to choose from. Unlike universities it lacks some sport and other extra curricula activities due to funding restrictions.

In other parts of Europe, especially Germany skill based colleges are treated equal to universities. There are even Government funded programmes to entice students to study skills as they are seen as an integral part of the country's contribution to the future economy.

Why therefore do we not hold the same vision? If a secondary school is built on the BIFE site it will completely strip the college of further expansion.

Colleges of Further Education also offer a very important niche of courses for students who cannot attain the points to get to university. If we do not support these students the same way that we support university going students, how does that reflect on us supporting diversity in our educational system?

BIFE gives these students opportunities to study third level courses where they might otherwise be left unskilled and unable to contribute to the work force.

There are new Housing Developments and schools popping up everywhere in Wicklow, especially in Greystones. Where do we envisage these students to carry on their education into third level? Is it our plan that they will **all** have to commute into Dublin? BIFE caters for students who commute from Gorey and Coolock. BIFE needs to expand to cater for these growing numbers of students who will be leaving schools in the following years.

Ireland's environmental progress is so slow and has so little vision. We continually make allowances and we make quick fixes to problems without any vision for the future.

If BIFE were to be supported in its growth, imagine the environmental impact that that would have in the years to come?

Regarding your plan to address Employment. What is the actual plan for Greystones? What is actually happening to attract businesses? How can we even begin to attract any real business when our infrastructure and public transport options are so poor? Therefore there should be no more building in Greystones until there are new employment options and a second DART line. These need to be in place first before more houses are built. 70% of commuters traveling into Dublin from Greystones does not fit into any Climate action plan so if you are suggesting a plan it needs to be followed up with action or you will find Greystones choked with developments and suffocating in unsustainable commutes.

The water in Greystones is loaded with chlorine and difficult to drink. I have had to install an EWT filtration system to filter my water as it is undrinkable. We should get

a list of ingredients of the contents in our water. I do not want to drink chemical fluoride and I do not want to drink fluoride in my water.
No more houses should be built until it is law that grey water systems are fitted in all new houses.

There is no continuous cycle route from my house to Greystones. It is dangerous now to cycle due to all the added traffic on our roads. I have stopped driving on Chapel Road as it is hazardous. I don't walk my dog on the sea front any more as there is no free parking as the Park and Ride is always full.

There is no LUAS connection from Greystones so taking the LUAS into Dublin is not an option.

You talk of areas rich in heritage should be supported and we should be developing sustainably. *Wicklow is called the 'Garden of Ireland' and this should be a philosophy that is carried into every planning decision by Wicklow County Council.* But it is not the case.

One should not be laughed at by suggesting to a planner that a field should be a park and not a housing estate. A natural wildlife and green space would attract tourists and visitors. In this way it would bring an income to Greystones. It would support Greystones' selling point as a tourist attraction. A lot of people come here to enjoy the outdoors. Why not add a nature wildlife space to our portfolio of beaches, forest walks and cliff walks. Wouldn't an educative environmental experience sit well with what we have already?

People might argue that we have the Wicklow Mountains but we have to drive there. Why can't we have a nature reserve/park on our own doorstep?

Your vision statement can only be effective if Wicklow County Council change their ways. Many objections went in to stop the new Harbour being built in Greystones. Wicklow County Council went ahead and if you look at what they build it is akin to WW2 bunkers right where an old fishing harbour was. They paid no heed to the natural heritage of the harbour. It was development driven.

With all your good intentions how are you going to effect the actual protection of our heritage? Do you put in sanctions? How do you force developers and councils to protect our heritage and environment? How do you get them to develop sustainability? How do you make them develop to create places where people will want to live and work and where infrastructures are in place?

The truth is they get 'Independent Experts' that say what they want them to say. Here is an example for the development behind Delgany Glen (Reference Number: 16-1301) In the Scott Cawley Report under the heading 'Existing Habitat Loss Pressures' it states that there would be '*no potential hazards to existing habitats during this development.*' - It is clear from the proposed plans that all the present wildlife habitats would be completely covered in concrete, so this statement has no foundation yet it was taken on board by the developer and by Wicklow County Council. There are three species of bats that have been detected in the area, there are hawks and a large selection of birds.

Which leads to my final question, how are you going to monitor this plan that you propose. How will you monitor the protection of our wild life and our environment, because without sanctions or monitoring Wicklow County Council will carry on as they have always done.

Yours sincerely,

Adrienne Michel-Long

