

Newtown2050 + Newtown and District Forum

working together as

Team Newtownmountkennedy

Please find below Team Newtownmountkennedy's submission on behalf of the community on the draft plans specific objectives for Newtownmountkennedy.

Overall Vision and Development Strategy

The community is in agreement with the proposed vision and development strategy as set out in the draft plan to ensure a high quality living environment for existing and future residents. We would like to see Nature extending through our Main Street and Sustainable Growth being referred to in the vision and strategy for our town. People in this community are worried about climate change and believe that a County Development Plan should deliver Climate Action. That the Council and the elected representatives will provide leadership - a plan for how resources are going to be coordinated, not simply another plan about where houses are to be built.

There are people in this community calling for blue sky thinking and who believe that the ingredients are here in Newtownmountkennedy for it to become a 'model' town; a test bed for other towns in Ireland that aspire to becoming carbon neutral.

We are lucky to have a forestry so close to our Main Street and appreciate that the Draft Plan is supporting the development of a "Green Spine" centrally in the town. This is an important characteristic of our town and it should be noted on the overall vision that the future development strategy should incorporate and prioritize nature along with development.

Newtownmountkennedy due to recent large development has a young population. High on our priority of aspirations is to become more carbon neutral. The community is part of the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities scheme and is currently working on our Energy Masterplan. We would like to see the vision "Facilitate a transition to a low carbon settlement" prioritised, moved up the list and be extended to *Facilitate a low carbon settlement through incentivising sustainable enterprises and supporting sustainable infrastructure.*

Residential Development

The community welcomes the proposed adjustment and reduction in the residential zoning as part of this plan. We note the comments of the Regional Authority to this draft and support the submission by Dr. Bishop both of which argue that the target population for Newtownmountkennedy is too high; that, if our town plan is to comply with the national strategy, the number of new units that can be built in the next ten years is less than stated. It is very concerning to discover that permission has already been granted for our entire allocation of units up to 2031

The focus on development around the Town Centre to generate economic activity is welcome but threatens the function of the Main Street . Any new Town Centre development will require access and our Main Street is overloaded with junctions and parking. A Main Street Plan needs to be agreed with the residents and property owners as part of the County Plan, which we understand is *'guided by three Strategic Principles' - Healthy Placemaking, Economic Opportunity and Climate Action.*

One of the main concerns that we have concerns traffic. We understand the logic to the RN zoned lands in AA1 but are concerned that the additional increase in traffic this will put on the Fishers Junction will require phasing restrictions until the capacity of the junction has been established. This junction is currently congested in peak times and we are unsure as to how the junction will be refurbished and function once opened to Wicklow Hills. This junction will potentially have to cater for the entire town to filter out to the N11. Any additional burden on this junction will need to be considered in this context.

Economic Development and Employment Objectives

We are supportive of the the following objective but believe that it should have higher priority

1.1.3 Economic and Employment Objectives

Support a shift towards low carbon and climate change resilient economic and enterprise activity, reducing energy dependence, promoting the sustainable use of resources and leading in the Smart Green Economy;

We ask that **NK2 Moneycarroll** be adjusted to “facilitate the development of sustainable employment or sustainable enterprise development” and to include a high percentage of tree planting as part of any development to reflect the natural landscape at the other entrance to the town. We propose the following amendment to NK2

NK2 Moneycarroll: To encourage and facilitate the development of lands zoned E1 at Moneycarroll (north and south of the existing business park) for employment and enterprise development. Given the prominent, 'gateway' location of the E1 lands to the north of the existing business park located on the regional road, **development will need to be phased; lands to the south being developed first.** Any development of these lands shall be of the highest architectural quality.

It is important that all entrances to the town are attractive. It would detract from the objective of healthy placemaking if an industrial style development was allowed to pop up on this site. By restricting the development to sustainable enterprises it would support the towns aspirations to become carbon neutral and also likely to be a less industrial style development.

We ask that **NK5** *"To improve, as funding allows, the principal access routes and junctions linking Newtownmountkennedy town centre to strategic transport corridors and surrounding tourist attractions."*

Be amended to:

NK 5 To improve the principal access routes and junctions linking Newtownmountkennedy town centre to strategic transport corridors and surrounding tourist attractions in a **phased way in line with development.**

As a community we have grave concerns as we notice the traffic on our Main Street becoming more and more congested. This draft plan has removed the proposed link road through the forest to the north of the town which would have taken a burden of traffic from Wicklow Hills and the road from Roundwood out onto the N11. From what we can see from this [extract](#) from the Newtownmountkennedy LADP of 2002, a link road was originally planned as it was recognised at the time that the Fishers Junction would not be able to accommodate the volume of traffic the approved development Wicklow Hills would generate.

Extract from Draft CDP. AA1. P.53.

*This action area plan shall be developed in accordance with the following criteria: ♣ The new distributor / access road shall continue to be developed as permitted (unless alterations in route and / or phasing are approved by way of a revised permission) between the Roundwood Road and the L1037. **This road shall be for the purpose of opening up this development parcel and to ensure that the traffic movements generated by the proposed uses on these lands are not channelled onto a single junction.***

The reasoning is that traffic volumes from the western development should not arrive at a single junction. This 2021 plan proposes that traffic from all existing developments in the village AND planned new developments AND traffic from Roundwood will converge on the Fishers Junction. This junction is what gives the town its character; its 'Unique selling point', a critical factor in placemaking. It is bounded on either side by protected structures and to compound that, two large water mains are located under the triangle. We do not believe that It is possible to construct the junction as per the plans on application 06/6106.

The logic to open up AA1 for development appears to be driven by an objective to complete the ring road to join L1037. We cannot agree with the logic here. To zone more land for housing that will generate more traffic, in the expectation that the developer will pay for a road, which will add further to the congestion at Fisher's Junction defies logic. It simply shoves the problem onto a heavily burdened main street, increasing the traffic congestion and undermining a key principle of the County Development plan - **to prioritise good placemaking**. It also detract from the commercial success of main street.

We consider Area Action 1 (AA1) and the SHD application for additional housing to North West NMK should not be considered until an **independent** full impact assessment of traffic volumes has been undertaken. We are convinced this will prove that Fishers Junction and Main Street cannot handle the volumes of traffic planned as was identified as part of the previous LADP. When all the developments are added together including 5 active applications it is clear this junction cannot deal with the traffic loads.

As part of the new CDP we need to see phasing conditions put on developments to ensure the infrastructure is provided before units are occupied. Most particularly in AA1.

As for AA2; this land was zoned to include industrial development in 2002. In the 19 years since then the uptake of land for industrial development has been a fraction of that zoned. The evidence is there for all to see - this land is no longer needed for industrial development and should be dezoned. Another mechanism for funding a road from Kilcoole to the N11 needs to be found; this one hasn't worked.

NK6 "To support and facilitate, in cooperation with relevant bodies and landowners, the provision of amenity routes around the town, as well as to adjoining towns/ villages."

We strongly support this objective. A pedestrian/ cycle link to and from Kilcoole is vital for our school going children. Bus places are limited and there is no direct public transport link between the two villages. There is no bus to cater for after school sports and as a result Collaiste Craobh Abhann has a very low uptake on after school activities. The only alternative to the school bus is going to school by car. This is not in keeping with objectives to reduce car journeys or promote more active living.

Newtownmountkennedy and Kilcoole have a combined youth club, events are hosted in alternative locations. As there is no direct public transport between the villages, if a parent isn't home to give a lift then the kids are missing out on planned activities.

We need to see the provision of a walk/ cycle route between Newtownmountkennedy and Kilcoole prioritised as part of this plan. Newtown2050 has submitted its feasibility study for the Mountains to Sea Greenway that illustrates the need for this section of the route.

Town Centre and Retail

The community supports the objectives laid out in **NK8, NK9, NK10** and **NK11**.

The majority of existing retail units in the town centre are of similar size and design which are best suited to cafes, takeaways, hairdressers etc. Recent planning applications which contain commercial units have applied for similar size units as part of their developments i.e. Dwyer Nolan 21/731 and Papaver 21/534. As part of the sustainable development of Newtownmountkennedy we need to see larger size units available to support alternative enterprises such as a restaurant.

We ask that an additional objective be added to require TC development to provide for larger scale alternative commercial units.

Within this scale we see a need for live/ work units where small businesses can buy and live above. This could introduce a varied and stable town centre which most shoppers now seek out. We would request that WCC consider a rates reduction for any business with a sustainable mandate being accommodated anywhere in Newtownmountkennedy be able to avail of a 50% reduction in rates for 3 years. This should apply to existing and future commercial development.

Town Centre Opportunity Site

The community welcomes the zoning proposed for the **OP1** site.

Newtownmountkennedy is in need of a public park central in the town. The proposal to link the Parkview Plaza functionally and visually with the OP1 site is supporting the communities vision of a town with a central "Green Spine" to nurture physical, social and mental health for all ages in our community. There is enormous potential to link this park along the river to both the small woods by Coillte and further down the Kilcoole Road.

Social and Community Development

The community welcomes the additional zoned CE lands. Newtownmountkennedy's feeder school is in Kilcoole and is over subscribed every year. Local primary schools in Newtownmountkennedy and Roundwood have numbers enrolled which could fill a three stream secondary school for the foreseeable future. We hope the Department will soon recognise this and allocate a secondary school for Newtownmountkennedy.

NK12 To require the delivery of new parks and open spaces, including sports grounds as part of major developments in AA1 and 2.

The analysis as part of this draft plan identifies the chronic shortage of active open space and community facilities in Newtownmountkennedy to cater for the existing residents and future planned residents of our town. The community has been highlighting this for years and has also been feeling the consequences through additional pressure on its clubs and volunteers.

The AOS as part of **AA2** could address this shortfall if it had greenway access. Potentially children from Rossmore, Mountain View and Wicklow Hills would have to travel along the Main Street and out towards the Garden Village to access this space. In reality this is not feasible. For this AOS to be functional it will be reliant on greenway access from the Main Street. Without it use of the space will be reliant on car journeys.

The community has seen no activity with this site in recent times that would indicate it may be developed in the near future. The communities' needs as identified through this draft plan are urgent and we do not feel that these lands represent the solution.

The town needs to see community amenities realised phased inline with development so that needs are met and we have the means to build a healthy happy community. Whilst there are permissions granted to construct an additional 600 homes there is currently no plan in place which will provide for community amenities. We need to see central lands identified, purchased and a plan in place to provide amenities which will be constructed in line with development.

Southern approach to NMK.



Fig 1

This area indicated in Fig 1 is one of the last green open spaces left in the approaches into the town; this could be a better location for AOS use.

Previously we had a strong open space and fields upon entry into the town. As a solution this area could be de-zoned for commercial use.

We suggest that both southern and Northern entry areas be protected as AOS or Agricultural for the future.

The development by the council of open space in the Mountain View Drive area has denuded the area of open space available to adults and children.

This area in particular should be made available visually on entry into the village and to residents of the older estates O'Neills Park, Springfield etc. There is a lack in Wicklow Hills of adequate space for open play. A healthy community needs large play areas to enjoy open sports.

We still are an agricultural village. We are dominated by woodland and farmland. That should be celebrated in how we enter the village and not be dominated by business parks at both Northern and Southern Approaches.

Services Infrastructure Objectives

Two recent planning applications 21/731 and 21/534 have reports from Irish Water stating that the pumping station in Newtownmountkennedy is at capacity. Concerns from residents surrounding the pumping station regarding foul smells would support the fact that the station is at capacity.

No further development should proceed until this pumping station is upgraded to carry the capacity required into the future.

Any development of AA2 lands should be conditioned to provide a permanent sewerage station for the Garden Village Residents. This should be outlined on the plan.

1.1.6 Service Infrastructure Objectives. Pg 4 of Part 2 Level 4 towns

- to support and encourage actions to address through traffic on the main street and squares, in particular the provision of mechanisms to slow traffic through the centres and give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport; where possible the development of alternative routes through the towns, particularly from existing or planned new residential areas that avoid the need to use the main streets and squares to access essential services and to enter / exit the towns; the development of alternative car parking arrangements around the town cores;

[kk1]Open to misinterpretation. Could be taken to mean in the cores or it could be interpreted to mean around the periphery. Which does the planner mean?

NK16 under the provision of local routes the community would like the plan to assess the viability of a one way road from the school road to the Wicklow Hills entrance road. If a one way road was built running along the boundary of the Junior school it would create a one way system along the school road and allow for pedestrianisation of the school road from the junior school past the playground to the pedestrian crossing leading to the Church.

This would also stop traffic exiting Wicklow Hills through the school road and make it a safer space for the school children.

NK16 It is an objective to ‘Develop orbital roads around the town centre’ Our comments concerning Fisher’s Junction above and the need for a northern orbital road pertain:

We propose the following amended objective:

In particular, to require the provision of the following new roads in conjunction with the development of Action Areas 1 and 2:

- **Newtownmountkennedy western distributor route with east-west connections orbiting the town centre and connecting to the R772 Dublin Rd opposite the garda station. (Road Objective R01)**

NK17 The community would see the lands around the Texaco garage as a suitable location for a park and ride. The community would like to see an Electric Bus running from here through Kilcoole to Greystones Dart station on a loop.

3.8 Built and Natural Heritage:

Built Heritage

We support the planners views on maintaining the structures of historical merit and would like to draw their attention to the Old Flour Mill downstream from the Kilcoole Road bridge. We also seek protection for the old mill in Valle Pacis upstream from this mill. Newtownmountkennedy had originally 4 mills. These are the two remnants of this.

While some historical structures in the town are well maintained, many others continue to fall into ruin, such as the old mill at Valle Pacis^[kk1]. Structures like this form part of the town’s built heritage and history, but are hidden away from public view and somewhat forgotten.

^[kk1]And the Flour Mill south of the Kilcoole Rd

Natural Heritage

The aspirations of the planners in this section we wholeheartedly support and would like to suggest this small addition to the final paragraph:

..... It is an objective of this plan to support the development of riverine walks along these watercourses to form a linked network of routes connecting the town centre park to Coillte to the north-west, Kilcoole to the north-east and Newcastle to the south [and to support Tree Preservation orders along these water courses with the aim of maintaining a continuous wildlife thoroughfare from the sea to the uplands national park.](#)

We also wish to extend the protected views all along main street to the east.

NK23 To promote the development of a series of open spaces and recreational areas linked by green corridors in the Newtownmountkennedy area:

There are popular loop walks around the town that should be identified and developed as part of the green corridors. From the Main St through the small woods, through the big woods and exiting on to the road at Cooladoyle. From here people need to walk on the road back towards Church Road. This section of road has no path, no road markings and is shaded with trees making visibility poor. As this walk is an established popular walk we would see the need to develop it so that it is safe for users. A pathway inside the boundary of the forest along the roadway would be a very simple solution. This loop walk should be identified for development as part of the plan.

The second loop walk is from Rossmore by the GAA pitch, around by Trudder and back by Gregory's Garage. Again once past the GAA pitch the road is narrow, there is no pathway or road markings and visibility is poor. The community would like to see development of this loop walk noted on the plan for development.

Kilmurry wood is a popular walking route for the community. It passes Kilmurry Church, a heritage site that should be incorporated into any walking route. It is encouraging to see that there is so much support for continuing the riverine walk up along the river from the Park View. We would like to see another link from the Wicklow Hills green corridor lead up to Kilmurry Wood as an objective of this plan.

We would like to see **CPO 11.37** *To protect and enhance existing and support the development of new, walking cycling routes / trails , including facilities ancillary to trails (such as sign posting and car parks) and the development of linkages between trails in Wicklow and adjoining counties. In particular, to encourage and facilitate:*

To include Horse Riding Trails as part of the listed infrastructures

In conclusion,

The planners have done an excellent job in listening to our community's concerns and have made some very positive adjustments to the zoning of our town. Our above suggested amendments or additions have been drawn up from a local knowledge of how our town works and what we feel needs to be contained in the CDP to safeguard the town's future.

Our primary concerns are over Fishers Junction and how it will affect the flow of the Main St. and providing enough community facilities to keep our residents engaging locally. We are also concerned about the effect the development of the TC lands will have on traffic. As part of this an overall traffic study of the whole town needs to be undertaken.

Our community is focused on becoming more sustainable and feel that this should be emphasised in the overall vision and strategy for the town. We are fortunate to have nature surrounding us and also running through the centre of our town. The draft OP1 zoning could really enhance this feature of our town and gives a strong footing to develop green corridors and link existing popular walking routes back to the centre of town.

You will note our submission on tourism. We consider Newtownmountkennedy has major growth potential in green and sustainable tourism.

It has been a pleasure to contribute our views on the draft plan.