

# **Newtown2050 + Newtown and District Forum**

---

*working together as*

## **Team Newtownmountkennedy**

---

**This Submission in relation to Transport Strategy as part of County Development Plan for Co. Wicklow and Newtownmountkennedy area.**

### **Newtownmountkennedy.**

We refer to the NMK section of the CDP and comment below on its contents.

The references to the infrastructure serving NMK are largely descriptive of existing measures originally planned between 2002 and 2006 under the Wicklow Hills Development.

This has allowed for a major relief route to be overlaid on the existing road into the village from the N11 and will be required to service Wicklow Hills Development and apparently all future development.

As the town layout is mostly skewed, the village is overburdened in its development to the west.

This puts a very heavy traffic load on the main route to the village from centre to the Ballyronan Interchange.

There was a muted attempt to bridge the NMK valley adjacent to Coillte in the 2006 LADP plan. This was to relieve pressure created by the concentrated development to the west.

This was argued at the time as the means to relieve traffic concerns brought about by this unprecedented scale of development.

Now this proposal has been withdrawn and the town will be left with what seems like the worst possible scenario.

The CDP plans that development to the west be increased to allow for the final stage of the ring road to serve the developments to the west.

This development is now already subject to a preliminary SHD consultation with An Bord Pleanála WCC and Developer.

The ring road terminates at the Season Park / Glendarragh Road. This road is so small it does not even have a white line down the centre.

The CDP is proposing that zoning be allowed for this SHD developer (presently Dwyer/ Nolan) to increase the amount of housing in the village in return for completing the ring road which terminates on the Season Park road or more accurately 'Lane'.

To this effect the village/ town is being asked to accept that all the Northern Section of the Western Wicklow Hills Development be allowed to drain into the Fishers Junction and onto the Ballyronan interchange.

This is then compounded by the remainder of the WHD (Wicklow Hills Development) when completed, draining into the same junction.

On top of this there are three developments currently in planning that will also be served by the Fishers Junction, mostly main street or adjacent developments.

These are Church Road Development, Dwyer Nolan Main Street Apartment Development, Druids Well Site, and Springmount development on the southern entry to the village.

These have a total of 190 new units that will pour more traffic onto a main street which is already becoming choked with vehicles from the western developments.

The Dwyer / Nolan site on main street is designed to have traffic lights to accommodate a totally substandard entrance and substandard site that is not suitable for development.

This increases the traffic delays on Main Street with additional traffic lights at the appallingly designed Dunnes Stores junction (again by Dwyer/ Nolan), and then another set of lights at what is a village feature at Fishers Junction. If the main street development is given permission (21/731) there will be another set of traffic lights.

All this is being developed in our village/town, and is greatly reducing the quality of life and health of all existing residents and potential residents.

We want a planned town that people want to live in and raise children in a happy safe environment. What is being proposed is a main street choked with traffic and feeder roads endanger existing housing and create an unsustainable infrastructure that is condemning the town to an unhealthy carbon dependent future.

We have tried to illustrate this in Fig1 below.

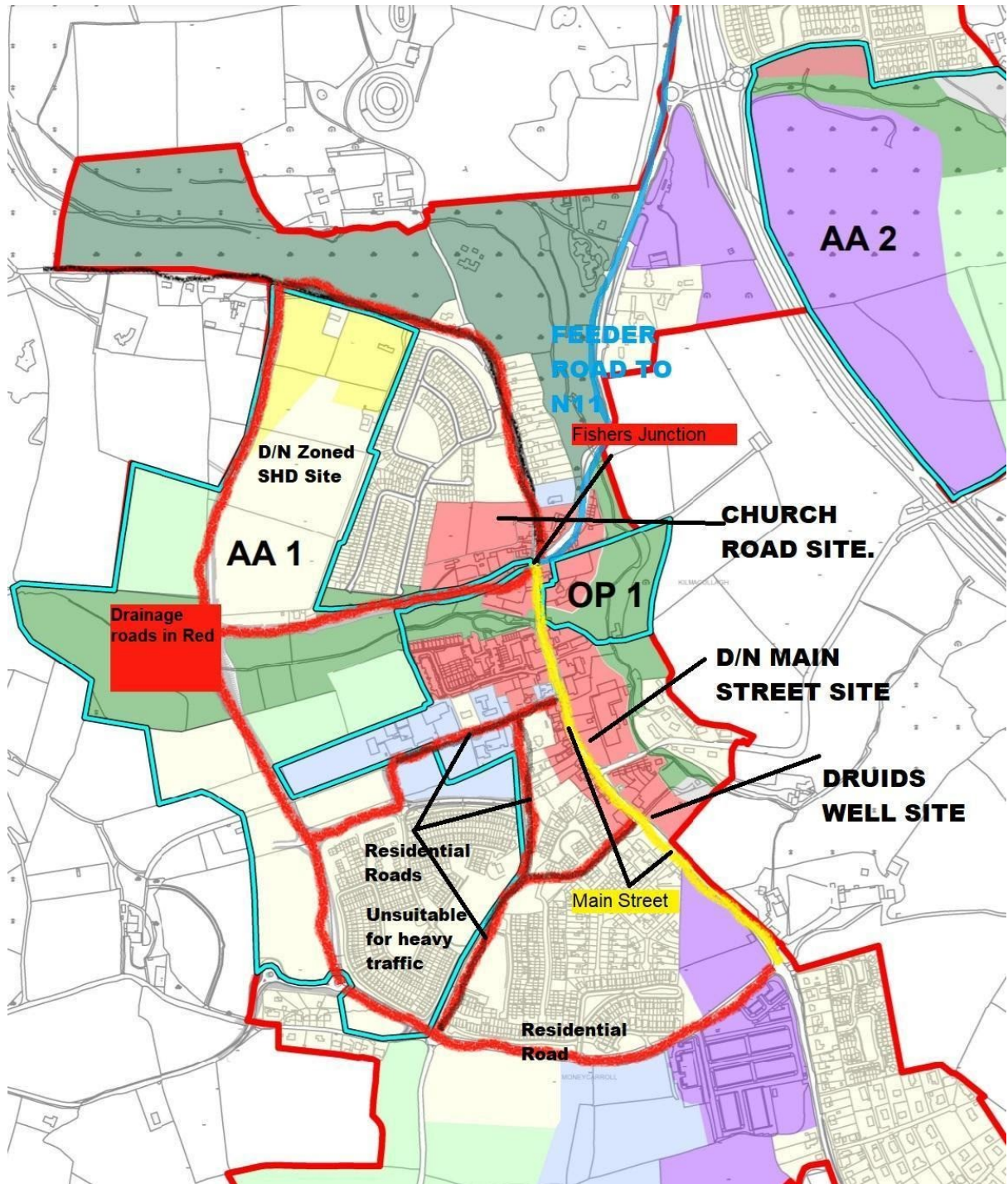


Fig. 1

***At first do no harm.*** *We live in a peaceful and beautiful place. It affords us a quality of life comparable with some of the best on the globe. The preparation of a new county development plan is an opportunity to confront the reality of the survival of our planet.*

*The whole gig has changed. What is called for is some ambitious thinking not merely a repetition of what has been written before.*

We are trying to become a carbon neutral town; we are trying to find ways to live safely and happily in our town within a climate and biodiversity crisis as declared by our own County Council.

Some of these developments can be accommodated but they have to have a function in our town that is positive and not form a detrimental barrier to an inclusive, safe prosperous town.

It has not been proven to us that any of this development is of benefit to us and in our interests.

Our Village/ town is not for the sole profit of developers who offer development in their own interests on the sole qualification that they have bought zoned land in our village/town.

We do not see how the proposed infrastructure outlined by this CDP can possibly prepare us for the coming ten years of development.

There are proposals within these developments that offer a joined up planned cycle network providing a safe alternative route through the village to school or any public use destination. It is piecemeal and contains no overall integrated planning.

Community facilities and Greenways/ cycle lanes were offered as part of Wicklow Hills Development in 2006. We as a village have had to fight tooth and nail to get even the 'playing fields' properly built.

What faith can developers and council offer the village that the proposed zoned lands will be any different.

**We propose that lands marked AA1 be de-zoned immediately until such a time that a proper infrastructure plan is developed that all residents, council and developers can buy into and understand what are each parties' obligations under it.**

**We also include in this the SHD presently in discussion and we understand planned for the land adjacent to AA1**

In relation to other infrastructure issues, we are not clear as to how the Fishers Junction is to be constructed as none apparently are on file after many enquiries.

The nature of the junction and especially the underground main water pipes from Varty reservoir indicate a very delicate construction project.

Given that the last time the mains water pipes were touched it flooded the village and lower properties, we are very concerned that this may end up causing havoc in the village and beyond given the extent of the supply of these pipes.

The design and drawings associated with this junction are very elusive and a method statement as to how the project is to be carried out has not yet been designed/ published to our knowledge.

This junction, although already given planning permission, will effectively cut the town in two parts. This is not desirable in a growing town.

What solution can WCC and developers offer to ensure a growing town integrates its new residents after being cleaved in two, much as what happened to Donnybrook in the 1980's.

One element of new applications that has to be addressed is that each application only seems to examine traffic volumes of the site in itself. It does not address the overall issues of introducing additional traffic volumes and controls on the main street or link road to the N11.

Each traffic plan when included in a proposed development seems to be tailored to suit each development.

We ask WCC to consider each application in the context of overall traffic impact on in particular main street and the Fishers Junction.

We ask that a construction traffic plan be put in place and a planned cycle network in the village/ town be designed through all these new developments.

**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 logic here may be flawed. The desire is that traffic volumes from the western development do not arrive at a single junction. Our argument is that the traffic volumes of AA1/ SHD and most of the western development AND the volume of traffic from all existing developments in the village AND planned new development on the sites shown in Fig1 are all planned to converge on the Fishers Junction. This is one junction. The logic to open up AA1 for development is to complete the ring road to join L1037.

We cannot agree with the logic here as it compounds the problem with more development. It then shoves the problem onto a heavily burdened main street, thus increasing the dangerous nature of traffic and undermining the commercial success of main street.

It introduces a huge amount of pollution and stress onto the main street business and users.

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.



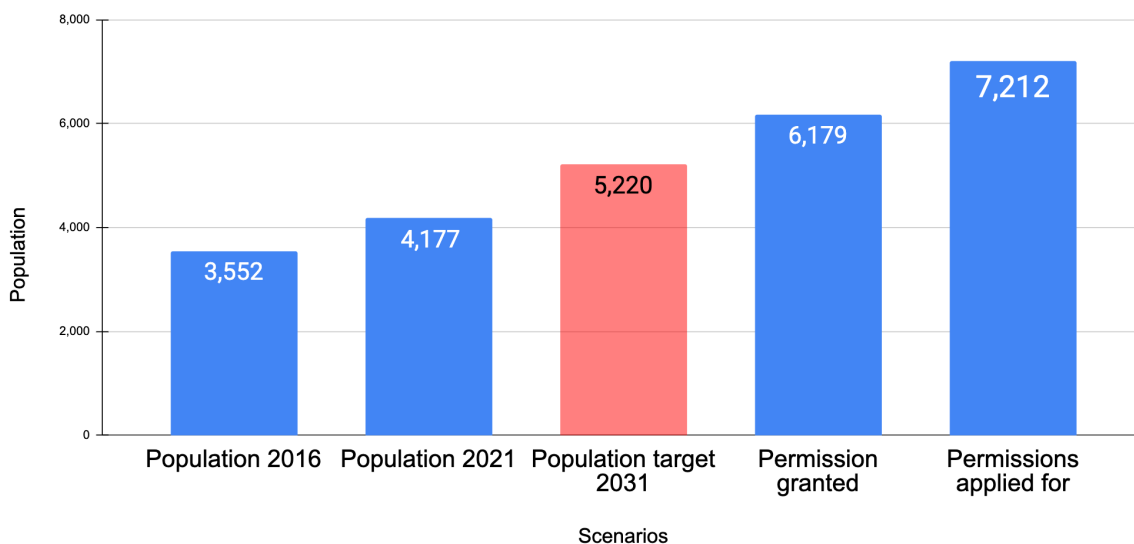
Newtownmountkennedy is designated as a level 4 self-sustaining town, a dormitory town in which the strategy is to consolidate. Many new houses have been built in recent years and now what's needed is compact growth and regeneration of the core. Attracting businesses to the area and balancing the house building with this is part of the strategy. The settlement strategy suggests a 25% increase in population in self-sustaining towns over the next 10 years.

The proposed plan:

1. A population increase is well above the target recommended by central and regional authorities<sup>1</sup>

### Population of Newtownmountkennedy

Population targets based on permissions granted and applied for. August 2021



There are already outstanding planning consents in place and more in the pipeline that would allow the population to exceed the 2031 target. Several more applications are in the pipeline - some of which would contribute to regenerating the town core and 'placemaking'. Taken together, these would see the population increase still further - potentially a 100% increase in population from the 2016 baseline

We had planned to propose pedestrianisation of the main street as part of the long-term development of the town. This would be nigh on impossible without the traffic drainage of the Northern link road routes being properly considered.

<sup>1</sup> The population figures are **based on a physical count of the number of houses** in the town at the end of July 2021 and have relied on the National Census (small area statistics) 2016 that states that the number of residents per dwelling for the town is 3.02

How can these planned targets be achieved when the existing infrastructure is under such pressure and the proposed solutions as far as we can see compound the problem. Even given the 'headroom allowance there seems to be an overconcentration of housing planned for a level 4 town.

We welcome the inclusion of addressing parking on main street and looking to protect the commercial core of main street. The addition of cycle lanes is genuinely welcomed however it has to be planned with how to join up new cycleways within the new developments.

We would also welcome WCC looking at pedestrianising the route from main street to school campus and the children's playground.

We welcome the provision of charging points in the village and the exploration of a framework to ensure we will be in future considered as a carbon neutral town.

As WCC may be aware we entered the EU wide Smart Village competition to assist in a transition to a smart town economy. We would like WCC to recognise this ambition and move to assist us in this ambition. We aim that this may help reduce the amount of Northbound traffic in the town.

The plans for NMK within the CDP do not reflect this.

Climate change and carbon sequestration are major challenges to the county.

We are an agricultural town, with a business park and a Coillte HQ. We are being forced to be a service town for Dublin and Bray.

We wish to reverse this trend and seek ways to make the town have long-term sustainability. The present plan presents problems and no solutions for NMK.

Our infrastructure planned section needs to include much more advanced thinking than zoning for houses that do not benefit the village and put extreme pressure on already limited resources.

We would also like to see the council develop a policy that all new applications have an integrated cycleway plan as well as footpaths to allow a cycle network to develop in the town as it grows. This should also be supported at main street level and connect to existing and planned pathways and Greenways.



