



# Kilcoole Residents & Community Development Association (K.C.D.A)

Kilcoole Community Centre  
Registered Office

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Company No: 304849 | Charity No: 16610

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

30 AUG 2021

26 August 2021

PLANNING DEPT.

A Chara,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Kilcoole Community Development Association (KCDA). Please find attached our submission on the Draft County Development Plan 2021-2027. The attached submission outlines our recommendations for further consideration to be given to Kilcoole in the County Development Plan 2021 -2027 in key strategic areas such as Public Transport, Tourism, Recreation, and Coastal Zone Management. We look forward to hearing from you.

Le dea-ghuí

Mary Keddy (Secretary KCDA)

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL  
CUSTOMER SERVICE

30 AUG 2021

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### **Submission by Kilcoole Community Development Association on Draft County Development Plan 2021-2027**

Kilcoole is a vibrant rural coastal community in North Wicklow which is included in the list of Ireland's top 100 towns, following Clonakilty, Co Cork, in population size (CSO). As of 2016, Kilcoole is the sixth most populous settlement in Wicklow behind Bray, Greystones, Arklow, Wicklow Town and Blessington. It is an ancient settlement going back to pre-Christian times, but it is believed that the monks of Abbot Comgall who lived in Co Down in the sixth century, later established a monastic cell close to the Rock of Kilcoole. It is mentioned in papal documents dating from 1179. Kilcoole is a very important employment hub in County Wicklow with a network of four vibrant business/enterprise parks on its southern and south-western fringes.

On account of the soft low-lying coastline, now prized for its natural heritage assets, settlement developed historically on higher ground around and above the Rock. The urban area today suffers from poor public realm infrastructure, such as the traffic-clogged Main Street, lack of public seating, no cycle lanes to schools, no footpath for the last section of Sea Road to the coast and the Railway Station and no significant public spaces apart from the beach and flat dunes along the coast and the childrens' playground. In addition, it is being left to the private sector to develop any form of town centre.

Kilcoole is widely used for recreation and leisure with a long tradition of walking, birdwatching, sea swimming and sea-angling along the coastal belt and by 1995 had seven golf courses within a five km radius (R Jennings, 1998, Kilcoole). Druids Glen is a renowned tourism and recreation hub, surrounding St. Patrick GAA Club just south of Kilcoole.

The Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole Local Area Plan 2013-2019, includes the following objectives for Kilcoole's town centre;

*Provide a high standard of urban design that is reflective of its historic and traditional rural character. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring that the character and setting of the terrace of protected structures along Main Street is protected. In order to maximise the efficient use of town centre zoned lands, buildings in Kilcoole should generally aim to be approximately two storeys in height, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

Wicklow Local Community Development Committee funded consultant Siobhán Geoghegan to undertake a community health-check assessment of Kilcoole in the years

2018/2019 and the subsequent report 'Kilcoole Health Check Assessment' (KHCA) resulted following public consultation. A list of Recommendations for Potential Public Authority Projects from this Assessment report is included in the four page Annex included with this submission. The Annex also contains the front page of the report and its table of contents.

Among the issues raised in the KHCA report is the need for quality community space for a growing population in Kilcoole, such as the upgrading of St. Patrick's Hall (Forrester's Hall) to provide further community space for all sectors of the community. It points to the need for provision of more facilities for young people in the locality, such as playing/sports courts and a skate-park.

The tourism potential of Kilcoole on Ireland's Ancient East route is referred to in the Health Check Assessment Report and could be enhanced further in carrying out development work in the area of the Rock – Lott Lane and improved walkways. It also recommends improved infrastructure for access to schools: Kilcoole and Newtownmountkennedy are in the key catchment area for attendance of young people at both Coláiste Chraobh Abhann and Greystones Community College. The report stresses the importance of promoting positive mental-health and activity for young people. This could be facilitated by the provision of cycle lanes from Newtownmountkennedy to Kilcoole and further improvement of cycle lanes from Kilcoole to Greystones.

In contrast to Kilcoole, its near neighbour Greystones, which in 1837 was described as a small fishing hamlet (greystones.ie), developed in the nineteenth century along the rocky shore and now enjoys very good public realm infrastructure. Earlier habitation had occurred north of Greystones around Rathdown Castle. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the growth of Greystones has been considerable, and it now has five times the population of Kilcoole and has become merged with Delgany. Greystones-Delgany, which is included within the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, MASP (RSES 2019-2031 – Map page 36) and its suburbs have extended and continue to extend close to the Kilcoole urban area which is not in the MASP area. Apart from the central strip of shops, cafés and restaurants, and the new Harbour development, Greystones-Delgany, unlike more rural Kilcoole, has no significant local industry to date.

**The treatment of Kilcoole in this Draft County Development Plan is deficient in many ways and the report needs significant adaptation on account of the near 'invisibility' of Kilcoole in several strategic areas, especially as regards, public transport, tourism and the location of Kilcoole in the coastal zone.**

The ranking of Kilcoole in Chapter 3 – Core Strategy, as a Level 4 Core Region Self-Sustaining town is appropriate but the descriptor for this category 'weak employment base' is not accurate in the case of Kilcoole as mentioned above.

**Key issues:**

▪ **Public Transport**

The KHCA report indicated that 27% of respondents believed there was inadequate public transport for Kilcoole and this was a negative aspect of life for the community. The report further states that frequency and timetabling do not meet current demand. Small changes like stopping all existing trains in Kilcoole would improve the lives of people living in the community and reduce carbon emissions by making people move

away from cars. The second morning train is usually full, on arrival and provides standing-room only, for the hour's journey to Dublin. **There is also a lack of connecting bus links to/from the DART in Greystones.** For a short period in the past the bus to Kilcoole/Newcastle met the DART; it lasted for about a year – allowing one to leave central Dublin on the 6pm, 7pm and 8pm DART service and arrive in Kilcoole in one hour and 15 minutes. Such connecting services are no longer available although three mainline trains do stop at Kilcoole station on weekday evening at hourly intervals (at 30-minute intervals from the times of the previous DART/bus option arriving in Kilcoole).

The Draft County Development Plan proposes a modal shift to public transport linked to climate- change adaptation but shows a lack of joined-up thinking in relation to not including Kilcoole Railway Station for improvement of parking facilities and bus links at or near it. The nearest bus stop is quite close, two-thirds the way down the length of Sea Road at the entrance to the cul de sac. All other railway stations in the county are included for such improvements under CPO 12.20 (pages 270/271) in Chapter 12 Transport. This is not consistent with the next objectives, CPO 12.22 and 12.23, dealing with improvement of mainline train and DART service into Wicklow, which speaks of increasing rail capacity along the coastal route south of Greystones and improvement of the Dublin-Rosslare line. In contrast, in Chapter 5 – Placemaking, a new pedestrian and cycle link between Kilcoole centre and the train station is proposed along the full length of Sea Road. This goes beyond RO14 of the Local Area Plan 2013-2019:

**RO14 Improvement of Sea Road, Kilcoole, including the development of a footpath from Main Street to Kilcoole Train Station.**

A pedestrian and cycle link would indicate widening of the Sea Road to the extent that buses could stop nearer the Station.

**It is recommended that Kilcoole bus service be improved and that the Railway Station be included with other Stations for the above improvements. Facilities for public transport users also need to be improved at the station, including the provision of a shelter, ticket machine, tag-off facility as outlined in the Kilcoole Health Check Assessment report in addition to items recommended below under Coastal Zone Management/Marine Spatial Planning (Chapter 19).**

▪ **Tourism and Recreation**

“Kilcoole has a lot to offer visitors, to date this potential remains untapped. Its coastal location hosting Ireland’s largest nature reserve, its rich tapestry of history, wealth of biodiversity, its rural village vibe with its friendly people coupled with its proximity to the capital renders it a very attractive eco-tourism proposition. However, to maximise opportunities in this area and grow market share, strategic thinking and planning is required. Any such developments will need to be sensitive to the environment and ensure protection of the natural biodiversity and unique ecosystems”. (Direct quote from page 4 of the Kilcoole Health Check Assessment report).

Despite its strategic location in the ‘East Coast Maritime’ outdoor recreation hub (page 246) and having one of the counties four existing Integrated tourism/recreational/leisure complexes, to be supported under CPO11.20 (page 252) adjoining it (Druids Glen Golf Club, Woodstock Demesne), Kilcoole is not mentioned in relation to tourism and recreation, whereas nearby Greystones is to be one of six key settlements to be developed as visitor hubs on page 245.

There is reference on page 243 to the planned 'Greystones –Wicklow Coastal Route, whereas page 255 refers to an overlapping coastal route from Bray to Arklow. Kilcoole is strategically located along both of these.

**It is recommended that Kilcoole, in its own right, be added to the list of six key visitor hubs in 11.1.4 second indent on page 245 and to the list of eight significant tourism hubs whose development is to be supported on page 246.**

### **Coastal Zone Management and Coastal Cells under Chapter 19 – Marine Spatial Planning and Coastal Zone Management**

A bizarre aspect of the draft plan is the exclusion of Kilcoole from the series of 12 proposed Coastal Cells. The logical one for the coastal community of Kilcoole to be part of would be Cell 5 Greystones to Kilcoole (Ballynerrin). For some unexplained reason Kilcoole is in fact excluded and its settlement boundary is the limit of this and the next cell, Cell 6 Kilcoole to Wicklow Town (The Murrough). By contrast Delgany, which is further inland, is within a coastal cell. **It is recommended that all of Kilcoole be included in Coastal Cell 5.**

This Chapter on its first page (p 411), with reference to Chapter 2, points to ensuring access to coastal areas for active and passive users to support physical and mental health and wellbeing within the community. The current access to the coast at Kilcoole is currently restricted due to the level crossing with a turnstyle-type gate leading from Sea Road. In addition, on the seaward side of the level crossing steps up and down have to be navigated before reaching the beach. The lack of access for disabled, infirm and buggies is not in keeping with RPO 9.12 (page 16) of the draft plan which stresses the need to cater for all levels of disability, through the appropriate mitigation of the built environment, and in particular for the needs of an ageing population. **It is recommended that the plan include reference to improving access to Kilcoole beach over the railway line via an overpass, which would improve the safety of the rail corridor while recognise the increased interest in sea swimming and other coastal activity. This summer Greystones is provided with five separate public conveniences (WC facilities), four along the coast (two temporary) and one in the town. Kilcoole has no such public convenience. On account of the increase in swimming it is recommended that Wicklow County Council continue to monitor water quality, identify the beach as bathing water and assess its suitability for Green Flag or Blue Flag designation. It is also recommended that Kilcoole be provided with a public convenience. A coastal location is recommended for this to facilitate the increasing number of leisure users of the coast and also the station users.**

Kilcoole Community Development Association is grateful to have this opportunity to participate in the public consultation on the Draft County Development Plan 2021-2027. While the Association is aware that Kilcoole will be treated in detail in the future Local Area Plan for the Municipality of Greystones-Delgany and Kilcoole, it believes that the points raised, and recommendations made in the submission are also relevant at macro level for the future County Development Plan.

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Mary Keddy

Mary Keddy Secretary KCDA

# Annex to Submission by KCDA on Draft County Development Plan



/2019





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*Siobhán Geoghegan Consulting*

## 20. Recommendations

### Potential Public Authority Projects

#### **Development & Implementation of an appropriated Village Design Plan for Kilcoole**

- Develop an overall Regeneration Plan /Village Design Statement for Kilcoole, including improved public realm, development of a 'village centre'/Civic Space/Green Spaces/Ornamental lighting/visual enhancements/sensitive/environmental planting and appropriate signage) that is sensitive to Kilcoole's village

#### **Improve Access to Key Services and Amenities**

- Develop a footpath with appropriate lighting to Kilcoole Train Station and beach (Sea Road)
- Potential to develop village square/civic square at junction of Lott Lane/Sea Road/Main Street
- Address derelict sites/buildings (potential for community facilities)
- Introduce more green spaces /protect wildlife
- Develop a traffic management plan for certain areas particularly in school/church area
- Increase number of bins and improve anti-littering awareness
- Lower Green re-surfacing and maintenance plan development
- Develop cycle lanes in particular -Kilcoole to Newtown, Kilcoole to Greystones

#### **Local Businesses & Services**

- Lobby to have public transport services and frequency increased. Potential for shuttle bus.
- Address capacity of local schools as priority and lobby appropriately for expansion and development as planned
- Support for local businesses – promote local employment and good mix of businesses, reduce commuting
- Develop additional facilities/activities for Kilcoole's aging population
- Seek a reduction in rates

#### **Tourism & Heritage**

- Development works at Kilcoole Rock/St Mary's for locals and visitors as a major attraction/amenity



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- Develop footpath linking village to coast/beach
  - Development of sensitive coastal greenway with services
  - Ensure future community & recreational developments at Darraghville House (Lisne Centre)
  - Introduce new walking routes and preserve mass paths
  - Develop a 'Pilgrim Path' and promote under Ireland Ancient East Brand
  - Appropriate signage. Interpretation and access to heritage sites and places of interest to tell Kilcoole's 'story'

#### **Youth Focus**

- Develop new facilities/activities/amenities for young people – sporting and non-sporting in line with the interests of young people (survey and identify needs)
- Develop and promote youth Arts initiatives
- Develop programmes/activities that seek to nurture the wellbeing of Kilcoole's young people
- Promote Garda involvement with TY student programmes/initiatives/engagement

#### **Safety**

- Introduce CCTV cameras in areas most at risk (train station/etc)
- Seek more community Garda presence