

**General comments:**

There is a general dearth of community facilities and space for their development in Newbridge. Whether that be facilities for young people, community space for groups to meet and work,

There is an over reliance on the private sector to meet those needs, including provision of sports and leisure facilities.

The town continues to grow apace, helping to meet severe housing needs, site to key industrial developments in the county, but is suffering from a substantial gap in social and environmental infrastructure.

This Plan must ensure that every possible measure is taken to address this imbalance and ensure that infrastructure and investment is delivered where it is most needed if we are to have a sustainable approach to the development of the largest town in the county.

**Comments by CDP Chapter:**

**5. Sustainable Mobility & Transport**

We support measures to enhance active transport infrastructure both within and between our towns and villages. In Newbridge we need a significant modal shift from private vehicular transport towards active transport modes. We need safer routes to schools and more pedestrian-friendly layouts for junctions and routes to further prioritise this alternative in an already congested and continuously growing urban environment.

We would urge Kildare County Council to consider the designation of Transport Orientated Development (TOD) zones at or close to public transport nodes. This would allow specific and appropriate density development aided by sustainable transport options. In the case of Newbridge suitable areas would include the surrounds of the train station and its car parks (is that capacity of parking a requirement in the longer term?) and Main Street as a central bus corridor.

We would welcome the development of safe cycling and walking links between the town and popular amenities such as The Curragh Plains, Pollardstown Fen, Canal bank walks at both Milltown and Corbally Harbour (LR051). The latter could be incorporated into a network which would link the town centre with Great Connel (via Connell Ford area) and even continue to Naas resulting in a valuable additional amenity for residents and visitors to the area. Properly mapped and promoted this would be a very interesting addition to the visitor offering in the area and a natural extension to developments around the Blueway, Peatlands Park and The Curragh Plains.

**8. Urban Centres and Retail**

We would welcome a more proactive approach to the management of our large urban town centres. We note the retail policy objectives outlined for Newbridge in 8.7.1.2 and suggest that this could be strengthened by the creation of a resourced town centre manager role. There is also an opportunity to resource partner groups - be they business groups, other community groups, Town Teams - to carry out this role in a coordinated manner.

We would welcome a more nuanced approach towards influencing the retail/service make up of the town centre (RET 082). We urge adoption of a policy of facilitating ‘meanwhile use’ where central retail space is vacant and opportunities to showcase initiatives of community groups, artists or social enterprises could help mitigate the negative impact of that vacancy.

The standard of the public realm in the town centre is also a critical element to elevating the experience of the shopper and visitor to the town, encouraging prolonged dwell time and spend per capita. We need to strive to create a town centre that is pleasant to visit. There should be a programme of entertainment and other attractions, art displays and cultural elements which would further enhance the visitor experience and offer a broader scope to attract footfall to the Main St, especially the Northern end. There is also a continuing lack of pedestrian connectivity between the Main St, Whitewater SC and NewbridgeSilverware. This axis needs to be enhanced, the pedestrian experience prioritised with safer junctions, wider footpaths, wayfinding infrastructure and measures to address the oppressive car congestion that is a feature of both Military Rd and Main St itself.

Re RET 0878 we would encourage the engagement of local communities and social enterprises in the management and development of the market sector in town centres across the county.

**11. Built and Cultural Heritage**

There is an opportunity to include an objective regarding the protection and promotion of the Sligh Dala at Great Connell, via Connell Ford and beyond, as a significant historical and heritage location for the town of Newbridge and the wider area. Can we explore opportunities to link this with Dun Ailline, Kilcullen and The Curragh.

We would like to see protections extended to what is left of the Barracks structure in Newbridge - Barrack Gate Athgarvan Road, The Watering Gates and walls in the vicinity, Bord na Mona HQ building.

**12. Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure**

We note there are no Tree preservation orders (TPO) listed in Newbridge. This suggests that they are being under-utilised as an important means to protect the many mature trees in the town that are under threat from development trends. Examples include trees at Ryston, Bord na Mona, Newbridge College, College Park, Moorefield Crescent, Moorefield Park and many more. We would like to see a proactive plan for inclusion of these trees in protections.

We would also welcome stronger protection for the existing trees and hedgerows in lands zoned for residential and industrial development, rather than simply replying on replacement as a matter of principle. Replacement cannot fully compensate for the natural assets lost.

**13. Landscape, Recreation & Amenity**

We urge Kildare County Council to include a specific objective towards the development of the proposed Linear Park in Newbridge from Tankardsgarden to Walshestown.

We would also welcome enhanced cycling connectivity between Newbridge and Athgarvan, increased access to riverside amenity areas along this route.

**15. Development Management Standards**

We would welcome an approach where more Development Levies were ring-fenced to deliver specific essential infrastructure and community facilities in the area where they are collected. Special Development Contributions should be collected where appropriate. Community gain proportionate to the size of the development in question needs to be a standard expectation for local communities. We would especially like to see green space amenity areas delivered to compensate that lost to development.

Newbridge in particular badly needs lands centrally located allocated to the development of public leisure facilities. There must be a policy of appropriately zoning lands and also bringing them into public ownership. Zoning alone is not sufficient to protect the integrity of the land use for community facilities.