

Ashbourne Municipal District

Vision for Community Wellbeing 2020

&

Workshop Input Report



Ashbourne Municipal District

Vision for Community Wellbeing

In Ashbourne the local community works with the Local Authority and other agencies to create a safe and attractive place to live. Integrated and strategic planning in which we have a say is central to developing and maintaining a built environment and infrastructure that supports our thriving economy and vibrant community. We live and work sustainably and there is a strong spirit of volunteering. Our culturally rich community celebrates diversity and is well provided with facilities and services that meet our diverse needs.

Social and Community Development

Ashbourne is a safe, secure and clean environment that is well-managed and maintained. We have excellent planned provision of recreational spaces, sports amenities and open green areas, as well as facilities for community activities and services. Volunteering is widespread in our community, actively promoted and well-supported. Costs and regulation requirements for our community groups are limited and allow us to undertake our voluntary activities. Our Local Authority staff and elected representatives have a close and positive working relationship with community groups and the Public Participation Network (PPN) with real results for our community. We have safe, well-planned and extensive public transport infrastructure and services, locally and to Dublin. There is a vibrant small business economy in the area.

Work, Economy and Resources

In Ashbourne we have flexible local employment which is supported by good training and continued education opportunities. Outstanding integrated planning ensures a wonderful environment for our community and economy to thrive. There is an excellent, comprehensive and integrated transport system. We have fully accessible and sufficient medical, recreational and community facilities to support our workforce and wider community. We all know about the resources available to us and make full use of them. We are a sustainable energy community; with locally sourced renewable energy used in all houses and businesses.

- There is an extensive, flexible, feeder transport system that links all outlying areas into the main transport infrastructure.
- There is good public transport to and from the Greater Dublin Area and sustainable traffic management,
- We have excellent infrastructure for walking and cycling to support access to work, school and recreational amenities.

Culture, Values and Meaning

In Ashbourne diversity is embraced and valued and we all learn from and about each other. We celebrate and share our different cultures, understand our different beliefs and values, and respect one another whilst encouraging knowledge of our unique Irish heritage. It is easy to access full information on the activities and events that are taking place and we have good local facilities to accommodate these. We use our skills to support our community with well-resourced opportunities to meet, share and learn across different cultures, age groups, abilities, gender and so on. We have strategic long-term planning to ensure local development delivers places where everyone is fully included, and communities can thrive.

Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

Our community is well-supported by our community leaders, Local Authority staff and elected representatives who work to deliver our vision for a vibrant local community and economy. We have coherent planning that is fair and transparent and where consultation allows communities to influence decisions taken which affect our area. Communication on decision-making processes in local government in our locality are open to everyone. We have easy access to a structured referral system where we can make suggestions and raise issues of concern, trace progress on these, and obtain a clearly explained outcome. All groups within our community are actively consulted by the Local Authority on issues and activities that may affect them. The voices of all groups are heard.

Volunteering is supported and thriving in Ashbourne Municipal District; it is simple and rewarding and adds to the quality of life of volunteers and the community.

Health (Physical and Mental)

In Ashbourne we have an excellent range of services to support physical and mental health, delivered locally wherever possible, and good access to specialist care. All of us know that services exist and how to access them. There is a wide variety of outdoor sports and leisure amenities and facilities for indoor recreation available to all. Our community groups work well together and the voice of the community is well represented by the Public Participation Network (PPN). Older citizens have great access to recreation opportunities and socialise with all ages.

Environment and Sustainability

We carefully manage our natural resources and provide attractive green space in urban areas. We use these to involve all residents in promoting nature. There is good support for community and voluntary groups to create an attractive and eco-friendly environment. We have appropriate facilities and recycle wherever possible. Waste disposal is controlled to ensure no damage to the environment. We are a Sustainable Energy Community with locally generated surpluses feeding into the National Grid. There is a variety of integrated sustainable transport options.

Workshop Input Report – Ashbourne Municipal District

Workshop held on 5th February 2020

The inputs collected in this report were transcribed directly from the written contributions of workshop participants. Any factual errors which may have arisen should be considered in the context of the creative and spontaneous process of the workshop to generate ideas for use in shaping the vision statement

Social and Community Development

How can we be an inclusive community where we support each other and ensure no one is left out? What are the important social services and facilities we need to live well from childhood to old age?

Transport

- Regular non-arterial public transport
- Paths and cycleways off public roads
- Train service
- Traffic calming measures
- Planning for the area improved

Community facilities

- Meath CC to establish a Parks Dept to assist and develop free play areas – basketball, tennis courts etc
- Another community centre with handier spaces!
- Playgrounds to be part of housing estate as part of planning permission. Other facilities such as glass recycling
- Service for teenagers
- More crèches and pre-school facilities
- Football pitches
- Skate park
- Playgrounds
- Space for park run
- More green space for sports clubs in Ashbourne to match population growth
- Public park in Ashbourne
- Linear park to be realised

Maintaining places

- Collect all dog licences and use funds to provide a mechanical sweeper to clean footpaths weekly
- More dog bins and collected by MCC

Supports for community & volunteer work

- Reduce rates charges to clubs and societies to bring costs of membership and insurance down

- Give certain amount of CAO college points for community work
- Regular community meetings between all councillors and residents groups, Men's Sheds etc. Once a quarter or twice a year. Feedback both ways
- Attitude of executive to PPN – a nuisance. Consequence is a lack of engagement by public
- Dedicated volunteer support and services
- Offer large insurance schemes to PPN members
- Need for a broader sweep of people to run volunteer groups

Safer communities

- Fire brigade and ambulance access to housing estates by controlling on-street parking
- Garda patrolling

Open space

- Public open space – not linked to any specific group
- Non-formal education

Sustainable economy

- Sustainable small business – vibrancy

Work, Economy and Resources

How can our communities thrive economically, with good jobs, and supports for enterprise, business and for people not in work? What resources do we have and are they use effectively without causing harm to social and environmental sustainability?

Transport infrastructure

- Links to train service
- Train/tram connections
- Better infrastructure :cycle lanes, footpaths, bins, plants
- Better local bus service: local links for elderly and disadvantaged
- Bus service out of hours to outer Dublin areas
- Local link buses within towns
- Good pedestrian access to shops, homes, schools and services
- Traffic management – parking in cycle lanes
- Cycle routes to City Centre
- Bicycle stands
- Ashbourne Bike scheme like Dublin Bikes
- Traffic management plan:
 - Kilmoon and N2 blocked in mornings and evenings due to traffic lights on N2.
 - Ashbourne Town Centre blocked up between 12 and 3pm due to congestion. Huge affect on business
- Improved roads/footpaths to schools from outskirts of Ashbourne
- Expansion of bus services from Ashbourne to Dublin, East Point and Dublin area
- Non-arterial public transport e.g. bus from Ashbourne to Dunboyne train station

Training and employment supports

- Springboard course promotion and awareness
- To facilitate gig economy; re-skilling resource, e.g. access to training facility locally
- Child care costs are too expensive

Community facilities

- Community medical centre, primary care
- Better communication of what is available to community
- Community facilities
- Public swimming pool and leisure centre, publically accessible
- Public leisure centre and open air exercise equipment
- Scout den

Local economic growth

- Regional offices i.e. banking sector, colleges, third level.
- Start up hubs
- Work from home
- Promote local employment opportunities
- Industrial estates: tidy up, invest to a high standard
- Remote working - hub/hot desks in public facilities
- Access to legal and accountancy facilities
- Ashbourne Smart town pilot

Sustainable planning & services

- More Electric Vehicle chargers e.g. supermarkets
- All new houses are fitted with electric car points and solar panels
- Water management - always broken down
- PV farm: possibility for local people to buy shares in photovoltaic company (lightsource)
- Better planning for Ashbourne before building houses

Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

What is necessary to ensure that our local government structures support the wellbeing of our community for this and future generations? What is necessary to ensure that we have a voice in the decisions that affect us, and that all voices are being heard?

Planning

- Coherent planning
- Lack of water and sewerage support services.
- Accountability and transparency

Local government engagement with communities:

- Discriminate based on village size and location with regard to initiatives
- More links, stronger links with MCC/local council
- Better management and follow through
- Council very slow to take estates in charge
- Local councillors while good can only do so much due to the system
- Attitude of executive to PPN – constructive sabotage

Consulting communities

- Lack of consultation with residents associations when work is being by the council in their estate
- Regular meetings between councillors and residents associations. Feedback both ways
- Advocacy for marginalised groups – children, new communities, disabilities, etc

Supporting community work & volunteering

- Reduction of red tape that inhibits volunteerism
- Incentives for community groups to be formed and participate
- Central insurance scheme for local groups
- Support for volunteer i.e. admin, financial support
- More free facilities as cost can be an issue
- Work life balance
- Encouraging more volunteers to become involved through better recognition and incentives

Support for smaller villages

- Lack of house building means young people leave
- Lack of local services for older people
- Commuter traffic through villages in morning and evening time
- Councillors and TDs do not listen
- Bus services have been lost
- Shops and post offices have closed

Communicating with communities

- Establish a council for a united opinion based on community groups who then go to the council
- Online suggestion/issues register
- Online issues register
- Have a central point of information for all the facebook admins in locality to help push information out

Support local economy

- Shop local – support business community, less air miles for food products
- Shop local campaign - vouchers

Culture, Values and Meaning

What is needed to ensure that everyone feels, and actually is, included and valued, and that our different values and cultures are respected and nurtured? What are the important parts of our culture that we want to hand on to future generations?

Awareness & Information

- Knowledge of what's out there - groups, cultures, etc
- Access and knowledge of facilities available
- A Hub for information, signposting
- Skills register (updated) to support community activity

Values

- Inclusivity as a principle in social planning
- No social housing estates, more focused on integration. Purchasing in estates already built or at planning stage. Integration not segregation
- Fairness – re-evaluation of housing allocation need
- Long-term perspective for cultural facilities e.g. Tesco car park as public square

Celebrating diversity

- Sharing and developing new cultures
- Annual mult-cultural festival in Ashbourne
- Organise inter-cultural events to be inclusive of diversity
- Inclusive events - 20% non-Irish population
- Sharing of cultural talents by running regular events
- Celebrating not just Christmas but other holidays, ethnic religions
- Culture night in Ashbourne – miscellany, narratives
- Street Feast events in communities
- Ratoath MD Special Olympics group to promote inclusivity and celebrate ability

Community supports

- Grants to celebrate/promote ethnic minorities
- Use of library in Ashbourne as a theatre /cultural centre
- Open sports arena with no restriction to sporting games e.g. cricket, rounders to cater for new ethnic members
- Promote free outreach programmes of state services – Garda horse squad, ESB

Support for culture

- Appreciation of history, languages, arts
- Irish language festivals to encourage use of the language
- Grassroots Gaeltachts - Clondalkin model

Space to meet and learn

- Involve various generations through schools, community groups, senior citizens
- Non-formal education - Scouts

Health (Physical and Mental)

How can all members of our community enjoy the best possible physical and mental health? What about people with special needs, older people and carers?

Health service availability

- Lack of palliative care
- Lack of specialised autism treatment for kids
- Better ambulance service – could wait for 1-2 hours
- Have to make an appointment for a GP
- Lack physio
- Lack of children's medical services (scoliosis) ; must go to Dublin
- No Hospice

Service information

- More information on what exists where under Health
- Directory of services (online)
- AEDs directory of availability

Mental health services

- Mental health facilities
- Mental health promotion
- Mental health facilities for children in particular

Services for older people

- Lack of activities for retired people
- Lack of intergenerational link ups – address disconnection between generations
- More places to socialise for retired people
- Alzheimer's cafe

Social and leisure facilities

- Internal places for kids
- Public green space
- Public leisure centre
- No Men's Shed in rural areas
- No public swimming pool
- Volunteer centre
- Park and green space
- Playgrounds
- Facilities for sports, Scouts and Girl Guides

Community involvement

- PPN to facilitate input into Development Plan : health, parks, green spaces
- NO central equivalent to of central council to push for communities
- Volunteer group coordination and sharing of resources

Environment and Sustainability

How do we value our natural environment and man-made heritage? What can be done to conserve, protect and restore these? How can we interact with the environment in a sustainable way and hand it on to the next generation in a better state?

Sustainable transport

- Cycle lanes and cycle parking
- Shared pedestrian/vehicle zones e.g. Ballymahon?
- More electric points for electric cars “fast chargers”
- More bus shelters at bus stops
- Bring back good examples from Netherlands and Copenhagen – cycle lanes, shelters
- Outskirts of Ashbourne to schools: proper pedestrian facilities – lighting, footpaths, speed limits

Use of green space

- Public green space and allotments
- Get developers to plant modest trees when building estates (no cherry trees)
- Plant trees for use by future generations to share and enjoy
- Grow your own i.e. carrots. Grants for residents associations ie. Allotments
- Free bulbs, seeds, plants etc for residents associations
- Maintain green space in Ashbourne between GAA club and the town
- Keep green spaces in the centre of Ashbourne

Waste management

- Local recycling
- Management and reporting of illegal burning and dumping
- Recycling facilities
- More bottle bank recycling centres
- Reduce charges to make (disposal) it affordable in rural area – fly tipping issue

Maintaining built environment

- Collect dog licence funds to clean streets
- Power hose paths of Ashbourne town

Protecting natural resources

- River upgrade and create wetland resource on Broadmeadow River
- Drainage from the Newtown into Breadmeadow

Supporting communities

- MCC must provide better help for Tidy Towns groups: ie skips for annual clean up
- Grants for residents associations i.e. allotments
- Assist residents association with eco friendly plans, i.e. planting, bug hotels, etc
- Open area in town: no cars. Public space. Seating in main square

Sustainable energy use

- More solar public bins and street lights
- If you have PV panels. Government to allow you to connect to grid and get paid for it
- Communities to join SEC - Sustainable Energy Communities

Sustainable resource use

- More incentives for water treatment groups?
- All farm sheds should have to take rain water from the roofs