

## **Ratoath Municipal District**

# **Vision for Community Wellbeing 2020**

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## **Workshop Input Report**



## **RATOATH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

### **VISION FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING**

We live and work sustainably in a safe and clean environment. Everyone has full access to, and awareness of, health services, infrastructure, community facilities, public amenities and open spaces, which support our ideal quality of life.

#### **Participation, Democracy and Good Governance**

There are manageable administration requirements and limited costs for our community and voluntary groups. We have a strong culture of volunteering with good supports and recognition for this work.

The Local Authority and Councillors engage proactively with all groups in the community to hear their views and involve them in decisions that affect them. Community groups and individuals have clear structures that allow them to raise issues and track how these are addressed. There is good two-way communication between the Local Authority, Councillors and the community. The Local Authority operates transparently and follows through on decisions with actions, for which it is fully accountable. Our Local Authority delivers coherent strategic planning that ensures infrastructure, services, facilities and open spaces are delivered at the same time as development takes place.

We have long-term strategies to support communities in rural areas and we all actively support our local economy.

#### **Environment and Sustainability**

In Ratoath we have learned from international best practice and have the necessary infrastructure in place for environmentally sustainable and safe modes of transport. There are generous public green spaces provided to allow the community to plant and care for their environment and to grow food. There is ample support for green community action. We use a variety of sustainable energy and resource options such as solar power and effective water management e.g. rainwater harvesting. The Local Authority works closely with the community to provide a clean and well-maintained environment. We have affordable local recycling facilities and safe disposal of waste with good management and reporting procedures.

#### **Social and Community Development**

In Ratoath we have well-resourced and supported community services through which we build positive relationships between citizens and local government and have our voices heard. We all engage in volunteering and there are systems to recognise and support this. We have a sustainable local economy with well-planned development that ensures flexible, well-maintained, open spaces, community facilities and amenities that cater for all groups are provided throughout our area. We have excellent integrated public transport services and infrastructure to facilitate

travel locally and on arterial routes and which support our cyclists and pedestrians. Visible and effective local policing and access for emergency services ensure this is a safe place to live.

### **Health (Physical and Mental)**

In Ratoath we have good local access to primary healthcare and emergency services, with specialist care provided as close to the community as possible. We are well-informed and have access to excellent mental health facilities for both children and adults. We are all aware of the services that are available in our area and how to access them.

Our older and retired citizens are closely involved in the community and all generations mix well. This is supported through community facilities that are truly multi-purpose and accessible to all. Our voluntary groups work well together and share resources.

We have outstanding, public, indoor and outdoor social and leisure facilities that are maintained and managed by the community and Local Authority working together. The community uses the Public Participation Network (PPN) structure to represent its voice.

### **Work, Economy and Resources**

Our community has a thriving, sustainable and local green economy with good communications and transport links within the locality and further afield. Ratoath has an excellent traffic management plan providing safe access for all in an attractive and well-maintained environment. We have diverse local training and education supports, flexible working conditions, and good job opportunities. We have access to affordable community facilities and amenities to support our wellbeing, education and economy.

We have planned for our local green economy with infrastructure for e-transport, local renewable energy and best practice in water management.

### **Values, Culture and Meaning**

In Ratoath we celebrate diversity respect one another and share our different cultures. We know where to access information on all community activities and related supports. We are proud of our Irish identity, language and heritage, and recognise the importance of this living tradition.

Through education and joint activities across generations, abilities and cultures we can share and develop our identity. We work and live side by side in integrated communities that are well planned and have excellent facilities.

## **Workshop Input Report – Ratoath Municipal District**

Workshop held 5<sup>th</sup> 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
- Park and Ride for Ratoath to cater for rat-run commuters
- Bus service must service M3 park ride
- Remove HGVs passing through village
- Improved footpaths at centre of Ratoath Village
- Pedestrian lights not being respected

#### **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

#### **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 PN – a nuisance. Consequence is a lack of engagement by public

- Dedicated volunteer support and services
- Offer large insurance schemes to PPN members
- Lack of consultation by council . For example, traffic calming put on Millform Estate (Dunboyne) but residents association not asked or consulted before hand.
- 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
- Full-time Garda and fire stations in Ratoath MD. Population demands it.
- More visible Garda presence in expanding village

#### **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
- Better bus services Ratoath MD to Dublin, Navan
- Speed of traffic through our village – plan for traffic calming

### Training and employment supports

- Springboard course promotion and awareness
- To facilitate gig economy; deskilling 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
- Create industrial estate at M3 Parkway junction
- Broadband still an issue for some around Batterstown

**Sustainable planning & services**

- Electric Vehicles – more car 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)
- Population of Ratoath MD has grown: nothing electrical has!!

## 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

### Celebrating diversity

- Sharing and developing new cultures
- 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
- 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
- Lack of GPs (only 2 for 11000 people)
- X-Ray (avoid travel to Dublin)
- Lack of medical centres

### 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
- More space for GAA and soccer in Dunboyne
- No public swimming pool
- Volunteer centre
- Park and green space
- Lack of a facilities in rural areas (Batterstown)
- Playgrounds
- Swimming pool

### 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
- Close Ratoath village to traffic at the weekends i.e. safe for children to cycle and walk

### 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

### 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
- A recycling centre like that in Swords, Navan, Coolmine in Ratoath MD

### Maintaining built environment

- Collect dog licence funds to clean streets

### 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

### 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