

6 | Community



6.1 Vision

To promote a sustainable and socially inclusive community, whereby every individual has equal opportunity to citizenship rights, such as education, employment, health, housing, leisure and social services.

6.2 Context

- Outlook: The Ten Year Strategic Plan for County Wicklow (Wicklow County Development Board, 2002)
- Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoELG, 2001)
- Wicklow County Childcare Committee Strategic Plan: 2002-2006
- County Wicklow Arts Plan: 2003-2006
- Wicklow County Council Library Development Plan: 2002-2006
- Sharing in Progress: National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997)
- Opportunities, Challenges and Capacities for Choice (The National Economic and Social Council, 1999)
- Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland (DoE, 1997)
- Local Authorities and Sustainable Development: Guidelines on Local Agenda 21 (DoE, 1995)
- Making Ireland’s Development Sustainable (DoELG, 2002)
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020
- Bray Family Childcare Needs Analysis, 2004
- The National Children’s Strategy-Our Children-Their Lives, 2000

6.3 Strategy

Despite the increased economic prosperity enjoyed in recent years, the disparities between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ in society have increased, rather than decreased. The most disadvantaged members of our society find it increasingly difficult to access basic citizenship rights, such as education, housing, leisure and basic social services. The National Economic and Social Council in ‘Opportunities, Challenges and Capacities for Choice’ (1999) stated that:

“Citizenship rights encompass not only the core civil and political rights and obligations but also social, economic and cultural rights and obligations which are embedded in our political culture and which underpin equality of opportunity, and policies on access to education, housing and social services.”

Barriers to inclusion in society are most readily felt by disadvantaged groups, such as the long term unemployed, homeless people, refugees and asylum seekers, people with disabilities, substance mis-users, older people and lone parents. These groups experience difficulties in participating in the labour and housing markets and in accessing basic healthcare, childcare, training and educational services. Their resultant marginalisation from society contributes to disadvantage, exclusion and deprivation, which stagnates community development and social progress and reduces overall levels of quality of life.

Promoting the development of a sustainable and socially inclusive community is about enabling people to play a role in shaping the society of which they are part. It works towards assisting individuals and groups to identify needs and to express viewpoints, which will influence the policies, services and processes that affect their lives. It is also about ensuring that there is an adequate provision of services and facilities, such as public transport, housing, health care, telecommunications, waste disposal, leisure and educational opportunities, and that these are affordable and accessible, so that every individual has the means and capability to access them.

6.4 Policy

6.4.1 County Development Strategy

It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the implementation of the Wicklow County Development Board's 'Outlook: The Ten Year Strategic Plan for County Wicklow'

The Wicklow County Development Board was established to co-ordinate the plans and activities of public sector organisations in County Wicklow. The Board's strategy for the social, economic and cultural development of the County over a ten year period from 2002 is presented in 'Outlook'. The implementation of this strategy is required for the betterment of the people of the entire County, including Bray.

The Bray Development Plan and County Development Strategy shall operate in parallel to one another to ensure the creation of sustainable communities. While 'Outlook' assesses the needs of the County and provides actions to address these needs, the Bray Development Plan provides specific development policies for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

6.4.2 Community Development

It is the policy of the Council to support the development of a diverse and representative range of community groups and organisations. The Council will develop additional and improved community centres to accommodate community based development programmes and activities.

It is recognised that community based projects, such as women's groups, arts projects, youth projects and education projects have a key role to play in the rejuvenation of local communities.

The planning and development of all community centres shall be carried out in consultation with the members of the community, in particular young people and relevant interest groups, which that facility will serve.

The long-term management and operation of community based facilities will not be the responsibility of Bray Town Council. However, the Council will remain involved, through the provision of strategic management and guidance.

Where appropriate, it is a policy of the Council to encourage the use of existing community facilities for multi-purposes, so that these facilities can be used by a wide number of relevant interest groups for different community related activities.

The Council will support the development of a Volunteer Bureau to match volunteers to prospective voluntary agencies.

6.4.3 Childcare

It is the policy of the Council to encourage the provision of purpose-built crèches and playschools in residential areas, places of employment, educational establishments, neighbourhood centres and in locations convenient to public transport facilities. The Council will permit the conversion of part of existing dwellings to such uses, where the bulk of the building remains in residential use, subject to residential amenity and traffic considerations.

It is the policy of the Council to require all new residential developments to provide one childcare facility per 75 dwellings. In addition, the Council will require large commercial, industrial and retail developments to provide childcare facilities in appropriate locations. The threshold for provision will be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of local areas.

In recognition of the role that childcare provision plays in addressing social disadvantage and exclusion, there is a need to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services. The provision of childcare facilities has an important economic role in terms of providing direct employment and in terms of promoting equality of access to employment facilities.

In dealing with planning applications, the Council will have regard to 'Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities', issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 2001. In particular, regard will be paid to the location and accessibility of a proposed childcare facility, and the private open space associated with it. Facilities should be designed and located so that they will not cause nuisance to existing or future residents, and that customer vehicles can turn without causing a traffic hazard or congestion. Regard will also be paid to the provision of adequate parking for staff and customers.

So that all children will have access to a range of high quality childcare that will nurture their development, the Council will support the strategic objectives of the Wicklow County Childcare Strategic Plan 2002-2006, issued by the Wicklow County Childcare Committee.

In conjunction with the relevant authorities and interest groups, the Council will seek to develop community childcare facilities at Little Bray and the Southern Cross. Funding for the development of this scheme shall be provided in part from Class 3 of the 'Bray Town Council Development Contribution Scheme' for the period 2004-2016.

6.4.4 The Arts

It is a policy of the Council to support the development of local arts. In particular, the Council will encourage the advancement of public art throughout the town. The provision of appropriate works of art and/or arts projects will be required within public places as part of large development proposals (this shall be conditioned as part of planning applications). The Council will support the work of the Mermaid Arts Centre and all other relevant interest groups that are involved in the development of the arts.

The Council will support the implementation of the key policy objectives included in the 'County Wicklow Arts Plan: 2003-2006', issued by Wicklow County Council.

The policy objectives of the County Wicklow Arts Plan 2003-2006 are:

- to support and develop individual arts practice;
- to enhance arts provision for artists and the community through the provision of, and assistance to, organisations and venues;
- to encourage and increase access to and participation in the arts;
- to develop a vibrant and imaginative Public Art Programme.

The Council will encourage the development of suitable murals on appropriate walls and public walkways throughout the town. The development of murals will require planning permission.

Funding to support the work of the Mermaid Arts Centre shall be provided in part from Class 3 of the 'Bray Town Council Development Contribution Scheme' for the period 2004-2016.

6.4.5 Festivals

It is the policy of the Council to support the development of festivals and to encourage the establishment of new festivals that celebrate community creativity and identity.

6.4.6 Libraries

It is the policy of the Council to support the expansion of the library service.

The Council will support the implementation of the Library Development Plan: 2002-2006, issued by Wicklow County Council. Funding for the implementation of this Plan, as relevant to Bray, shall be provided in part from Class 3 of the 'Bray Town Council Development Contribution Scheme' for the period 2004-2016.

6.4.7 Social Inclusion

It is the policy of the Council to create a more inclusive society and to promote every individual's full participation in social, community and economic life, irrespective of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief or membership of the Traveller community. This involves the removal of barriers that contribute to social exclusion and the active promotion of opportunities to increase access to core citizenship rights.

Social exclusion is described as cumulative marginalisation from production (unemployment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision making and from an adequate quality of life.

6.4.8 Equality Proofing

It is the policy of the Council to incorporate the Equality Authority's equality proofing guidelines in reviews and in the preparation of future plans, strategies and policies.

Through the alleviation of poverty and building an inclusive society, multiple benefits will be yielded by reducing the direct cost of social exclusion, improving the quality of life generally and allowing people to contribute to the wealth of the town and share in the benefits of economic and social development.

6.4.9 The Disabled

It is the policy of the Council to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities. Bray Town Council will proof its services, policies and procedures to ensure that not only do they not impede the lives of people with disabilities but that they proactively assist and enable them. It is the policy of the Council to support and be involved in the implementation of the Barcelona Declaration Project through the Wicklow County Implementation Plan.

Bray Town Council adopted the Barcelona Declaration Project in 2001. The Council will develop an implementation plan for the Barcelona Declaration Project. This underlines the Council's commitment to the promotion of greater access to services by people with disabilities.

In addition, Bray Town Council will establish an Access Promotion Committee involving local people with disabilities and their advocates to advise and support the Council in considering accessibility and adaptability issues relating to new developments in the town.

Specific policies and guidelines relating to improved access in the public realm for people with disabilities are included in Section 7.4.10 of 'Chapter 7: Transport' and Section 12.17 of 'Chapter 12: Development Control Standards and Guidelines'.

6.4.10 Public Participation and Consultation

It is the policy of the Council to improve consultation with local communities and to improve their participation in public initiatives that affect their physical, social and economic environment.

The Council will support the preparation and implementation of the 'Citizen's Charter', under the authority of Wicklow County Development Board which will draw up a model of good practice and guidelines, regarding the conducting of public consultations by all public bodies.

The Council will promote and use the widespread use of user-friendly language in all public documents.

The Council will improve the information and services provided on the local authority website.

6.4.11 Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

It is the policy of the Council to work with relevant authorities to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

It is the policy of the Council to continue to promote the usage of CCTV cameras along the main streets in the town centre, in appropriate locations.

An environment of natural surveillance can be created in new residential and commercial development, through the use of appropriate design provisions. Applications for planning permission will have to demonstrate that the physical layout of any proposed development will achieve such an environment.

6.4.12 Education and Health Services

It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with relevant State authorities and voluntary/community groups in the provision and development of quality educational and health services in the town. All facilities must be built to the highest standard of design.

It is the policy of the Council in conjunction with other relevant authorities to promote the establishment of a special second chance school for early school leavers.

It is the policy of the Council to support lifelong learning. The Council will facilitate the establishment of an IT centre at an appropriate location in the town.

Where lands are zoned for educational use, the Council will facilitate proposed developments for a mix of educational (primary, secondary, third level and adult education) uses. Where land is zoned for employment use, the Council will facilitate the development of training facilities that are ancillary to the main development.

The development of educational and health facilities will only be permitted at appropriate locations where:

- adequate provision has been made in terms of access, parking and servicing requirements; appropriate set-down facilities are provided; pedestrian and road safety is not compromised; and the existing road network can satisfactorily accommodate any additional traffic from the proposal;
- there is no significant damage to the amenity of the area in terms of noise, nuisance and general disturbance;
- the proposal is of a high quality design and layout, and appropriate landscaping/open space is provided.

6.4.13 Burial Grounds

It is the policy of the Council to improve the visual appearance of burial grounds in the town.

6.4.14 Development Contribution Scheme

It is the policy of the Council to implement the Bray Development Contribution Scheme to provide for the development of community and recreational infrastructure projects.