

NEW ROSS

MAIN REPORT 2023

NEW ROSS TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN



New Ross Town Centre First Plan

“Turning the Corner”

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For:

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Preface

The making of the Town Centre First Plan for New Ross has been a collaborative exercise with the community of New Ross, the New Ross Town Centre First Team, elected representatives, officers and advisers, all committed to making New Ross, and its town centre a better place to live in, work in, visit and enjoy. The authors recognise the success of previous initiatives. This Plan has been initiated by the National Town Centre First Policy, and the subsequent tender procurement by Wexford County Council to select a suitable team for this multi-disciplinary task.

The chosen team, consisting of Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Land Planning and Design, Optimize Demographic & Socio-Economic Advice, Howley Hayes Cooney Architecture & Built Heritage, Tobin Consulting Engineers, and A Playful City Community & Stakeholder Engagement, has developed this Town Centre First Plan for the entire New Ross Community, with the invaluable support of its active, creative, committed and ambitious Community, the Town Team, and Wexford County Council.

We would like to thank all of the New Ross Town Centre First Team members, Chair Cllr. Anthony Connick, Cllr Michael Sheehan, Mick McCormack (Town Regeneration Officer), Alan Fitzhenry, Mary Browne, Seán Connick, Tomas Kavanagh, Pat Rossiter, Kevin Burke, Patty Murphy, Ruth McGuinness, Sinead Cashin and all stakeholders, interest groups, and most of all, the local community and members of the public who took great interest in the project.

We would also like to thank the New Ross Municipal District Councillors, Chief Executive Tom Enright, Director of Service Liz Hore, Senior Planner Diarmuid Houston, Director of Service Eamonn Hore and all of staff of Wexford County Council who assisted in the completion of this document.

This Town Centre First Plan is a reference document to advise on future sustainable development in New Ross. This plan is better for you and is for you and a better town - it would have been impossible without you!

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The Appendices A – D are available as separate documents.

*Who, What,
Where, How,
and Why*

This Town Centre First Plan is the first of its kind for New Ross. It is driven by the Town Centre First initiative, where effective and deliverable urban regeneration plan has a holistic approach, comprising all aspects of local community, economy and environment, to truly promote

Sustainable Development. The multi-disciplinary team of Cunnane Stratton Reynolds, Optimize, Howley Hayes Cooney, A Playful City and Tobin has assisted the New Ross Town Team and Wexford County Council to develop this plan as a **Reference Document**, to be used as planning and design guidance for future development in the town.

The key to this document, the delivery of proposals and actions, and the sustainable and successful regeneration of the town centre is Community and Stakeholder Engagement. A key outcome that the team intend to generate is more and continuous Community and Stakeholder Collaboration. This plan would have been impossible to produce without the engagement of the community and key stakeholders, and it will be impossible to deliver without the ongoing iterative and open-ended process this consultation has initiated. The conclusion is simple: **The Community is the expert when it comes to the urban regeneration of your streets, places, spaces, parks and buildings.**

*Where we
started
from*


The team visited the town several times, surveyed and engaged with the local community and key stakeholders. This process has been essential to develop a **Baseline Understanding** of what is there, what needs changing, why and how.

An historic hollowing out effect on the town centre, as in many cases throughout the State, has contributed to a Vicious Cycle of low footfall, suppressed socio-economic activity, vacancy and dereliction. No town is perfect, and every town is different, but every town including New Ross has potential. What became clear in the process is what truly unique and valuable heritage New Ross possesses, what potential the town has, economically and culturally, and what an enthusiastic, committed and creative community, including elected representatives and officers, the town is based on!

The making of this plan helped everyone involved to form and strengthen a 'Vision for a Better New Ross'. We consider the term 'Turning the Corner'

*Where we
wanted to go*

very suited to express the transition from New Ross today into a **vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible town for residents and visitors** alike. This positive **transition towards a Virtuous Cycle**, rather than a Vicious Cycle, will be supported by physical 'turning' of key town centre areas such as Quay Street, North Street and South Street into vibrant locations, and it will be supported by a multitude of community and public projects. Furthermore, **reintroducing the River Barrow** as an active and inviting element of the town while **redistributing streetscape** to accommodate active travel (walking and cycling), safe use and socialising are parts of a clear and realistic Vision for the town's community.




**How we
got there**

We provide a consensual Strategy to realise the Vision that the community and key stakeholders have expressed for their town. This Strategy is a plan of pragmatism, optimism, encouraging and embracing change, through a holistic approach, setting out an ongoing process instead of imposing a finite and complete masterplan. The following strategy objectives are set:

- Create a Virtuous Cycle – a Safe & Attractive Town Centre
- Apply Place Making & form a Sense of Place
- Reimagine the Town's Heritage
- Reinvent the Port for Living & Recreation
- Strengthen Community Arts, Activities & Education
- Provide for a Digital New Ross
- Promote Tourism & activate the Hinterland
- Make Transport sustainable – the 10 Minute Town
- Introduce Green – Blue Infrastructure maximising the opportunity presented by the South East Greenway

The community and key stakeholders have developed a large amount of very interesting feasible projects which they propose to make New Ross better. The team has organised and structured these Projects into deliverable, prioritised and fully policy supported **Action Plan**. While each individual project makes a positive contribution to the Sustainable Development of New Ross, it adds to the holistic plan approach of balanced and fair distribution of resources and funding.



**What we have
planned to do,
and when**

A total of **54 Projects** have been included in the action plan. These are structured in six Themes:

- Environment (9 projects)
- Heritage (10 projects)
- Economy (8 projects))
- Placemaking & Movement (11 projects)
- Local Community (8 projects)
- Tourism (8 projects)

The action plan assigns each project a **Priority**, a **Timeframe** (short term / medium-term / long-term), a **Responsibility**, and a **Funding** source to guide the public and private sector for future development.

The emphasis of this plan is on the **Process of evolving and potentially changing ideas** how to improve New Ross for everyone who lives, works and socialises, and for everyone who visits, as *“You are never finished...”*