

# Playground Strategy 2017-2022





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# Draft Playground Strategy 2017-2022

February 2017

## Introduction

**The Draft Playground Strategy has been prepared to facilitate the strategic development of playgrounds in County Wexford.**

This strategy maps the current playground provision in the County and includes in this process both Local Authority and non Local Authority Playgrounds. This mapping exercise has illustrated provision, overlaps and gaps in the play opportunities available in County Wexford. The strategy sets out a framework for the future development of play provision in the County by enabling local communities to develop and manage play facilities at a community level.

Play is essential to the social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional development of the child. Play is recognised as a way in which children learn about their world. The developmental nature of play makes it even more vital for children with disabilities.

The strategic focus of any future playground development will be in areas of the County that lack playground provision, hard to reach communities, and those areas experiencing social exclusion and marginalisation. This strategy has been prepared by Wexford County Council to provide a five year plan that identifies the provision requirements and delivery mechanism for playground development across the County in a cost effective and strategic manner.

## Vision

The Council's overarching vision is "to improve the quality of life of the people of Wexford by representing the interests of citizens and providing services to meet their needs". This vision, as applied to playgrounds, is reflected in the County Development Plan 2013-2019.

It is our vision that all children will be given the opportunity to play together in challenging and fun environments, irrespective of their social backgrounds or level of ability.

## National Policy

### Ready Steady Play: The National Play Policy for Ireland

The National Play Policy is about creating better play opportunities for children. Its overall objective is to plan for an increase in public play facilities and thereby improve the quality of life of children living in Ireland through the provision of more play opportunities. The policy is an example of how the Government recognises the importance of play by making a commitment to ensure that play is facilitated for all children.

Wexford County Council recognises the importance of public play areas and how they can contribute to quality of life for children, young people, parents and grandparents, helping to improve mental and physical health, co-ordination and learning.

Play is a fundamental human right. The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of The Child states that every child *“shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.”* Wexford County Council supports this right by providing playgrounds and other recreation facilities that enable children to develop, learn, grow and have fun. Wexford is fortunate to have many outstanding parks and a large number of playgrounds distributed throughout the County.

### Relevant Council Policy

The Council has established policies regarding playgrounds and due regard and consideration has been given to these policies in the development of the Draft Playground Strategy.



Fethard on Sea, New Ross



Gort na Silíní, Enniscorthy



Ferns, Enniscorthy

## Policy 1 - County Development Plan 2013-2019

|   |
|---|
| Objective RS08  |
| To maximise the range of play opportunities available to all children, particularly children who are marginalised, disadvantaged or who are disabled. |

|   |
|---|
| Objective RS09  |
| To ensure that high quality play and recreation facilities are incorporated into new housing developments over 75 dwellings. Play facilities may include playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, hurling walls or other facilities considered appropriate to the Council. This standard may be modified in any particular cases where there are significant reasons for doing so. Criteria may be taken into account include the existing geographical distribution of play facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. |

|   |
|---|
| Objective RS10  |
| To encourage the use of Multi User Games Areas (MUGA) at appropriate locations in the County and ensure that new community facilities and public open spaces are designed to allow flexibility. |

## Policy 2 - 'Towards a Play-full County Wexford 2006'

Published by the County Development Board in 2006 sets out a number of goals as outlined below in Table1.

Table1

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Goal Number 1   | - To give children a voice in the design and implementation of play policies and facilities  |
| Goal Number 2   | - To raise awareness of the importance of play   |
| Goal Number 3   | - To ensure that children's play needs and interests are met through the development of a child friendly environment.                  |
| Goal Number 4   | - To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to children who are marginalised or disadvantaged or have a disability. |
| Goal Number 4.1 | - To ensure social inclusion in publicly funded play   |
| Goal Number 4.2 | - To ensure adequate play facilities in childcare settings   |
| Goal Number 4.3 | - To promote the importance of play in schools   |



## Current Position

At the end of Quarter 4 of 2016, it is noted that Wexford County Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of a total of 33 playgrounds within public open spaces; a further 5 playgrounds are available for public use across the County (owned by community organisations or the state sector).

## Objectives of Playground Strategy

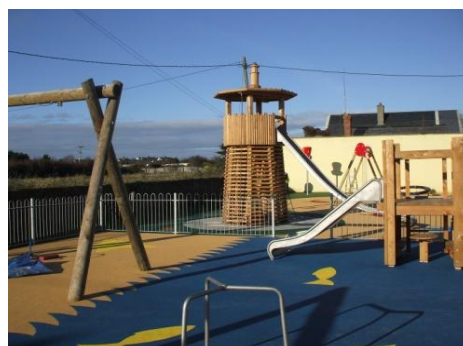
The strategic objectives (SO) of this strategy are set out in Table 2 below. These objectives recognise the challenges of limited and finite funding set against the need for sustainable community development in County Wexford. The objectives are a measured response to this challenge and will significantly contribute to the quality of life for children and families in County Wexford.

Table 2

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| SO1 | Develop a strategic framework to deliver and manage playgrounds in a sustainable manner                               |
| SO2 | Analyse current distribution of playgrounds, their age, quality and identify any gaps or over provision of facilities |
| SO3 | Provide a framework for the provision of playgrounds across the County based on identifiable need and sustainability  |
| SO4 | Set out general Design and Play Value Objectives for playgrounds in County Wexford                                    |



*Gort na Silini, Enniscorthy*



*Fethard on Sea, New Ross*



*Fethard on Sea, New Ross*

## Strategic Policy 1

**This strategy sets out the framework for three categories of playground based on location, use and size of playground.**

### Destination

Large Municipal Public Playground located in a centre of population with access to toilets and accessible car parking, serving a population radius of 20km. A larger space or facility which children and young people will have to travel longer distances, where they can enjoy informal recreation with their peers and access a wide range of play experiences. The distance of the play area from car parking facilities including accessible car parking spaces and other facilities such as WC's with accessible toilet facilities to be considered. Wexford County Council intends to develop a new destination playground as part of the overall new town park scheme at Min Ryan Park, Clonard/Ballynagee, Wexford Town.

### Community

Community/Village Playground serving a population radius of 10km. A larger space for children beginning to travel independently or with friends and with pathways for adults with young children to walk with ease.

### Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood Playground serving population radius of 1km. A local space where young children, accompanied by an adult, can play safely.

All existing Playgrounds in the County have been categorised in line with the above classification and are outlined in the table overleaf.



*Garran Beatha, Wexford*



*Duncannon MUGA, New Ross*



*Kilmore Quay, Wexford*



Table 3

| Destination Playgrounds            | Community                         | Neighbourhood                    |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Gorey Town Park & Gorey Skate Park | Rosslare Playground               | Clonattin Village Playground     |
| New Ross Town Park                 | Kilmore Quay                      | Ferndale Park                    |
| The Promenade, Enniscorthy         | Wellingtonbridge                  | Wolfe Tone Villas                |
| Redmond Park, Wexford              | Ferns                             | The Grant, New Ross              |
| JFK Arboretum (OPW)                | Taghmon                           | Belvedere Grove / Windmill Hills |
|                                    | Courtown                          | Cluain Dara, Enniscorthy         |
|                                    | Ferrybank                         | Maudlintown Outdoor Gym & Green  |
|                                    | Fethard                           | Ferndale                         |
|                                    | Davidstown                        | Garran Beatha, Newtown           |
|                                    | Coolgreany                        | Enniscorthy Library Playground   |
|                                    | Marshallstown                     | Assumption Terrace               |
|                                    | Gorey Civic Centre                | Mount Carmel                     |
|                                    | Duncannon                         | Raithin Cuilinn, Gorey           |
|                                    | Blackwater (Community Group)      | Fairgreen, Enniscorthy           |
|                                    | Askamore (Community Group)        | Gort na Silíní, Enniscorthy      |
|                                    | Templeudigan(Community Group)     | Woodbine Close, New Ross         |
|                                    | Rosslare Harbour Community Group) |                                  |

The quality, size and popularity of public play areas varies, from small equipped sites such as Belvedere Grove in Wexford Town through to large destination play sites such as New Ross Town Park which has a large well equipped play area and toilets.

All children's play areas in County Wexford managed by Wexford County Council are currently gated and a programme of ensuring all equipment is surrounded by safety surfacing, where appropriate, to comply with current Standard BSEN. 1176 commenced in 2003. The Council inspects all playgrounds on a weekly basis with an annual inspection carried out to ROSPA standards.

It is recognised by the Council that public play areas can contribute significantly to quality of life for children and young people. How we think about, and design, public play areas is now changing. More thought is being given to the spaces between play equipment, and the use of a variety of natural materials and natural spaces, to create adventurous and stimulating environments for imaginative play.

## Strategic Policy 2

### Playground Locations

Wexford County Council promotes a universal and inclusive design approach for playgrounds where the design and composition of a chosen site including the equipment style, choice and layout offers the greatest practicable opportunity for access for all.

The ratio of playgrounds to population in County Wexford = 1 per 3815 of the population.

The ratio of playgrounds to children in County Wexford = 1 per 1107 of the population.

Playgrounds are located throughout the County and are indicated on maps (Fig 1-4). The mapping exercise uses the principal of catchment areas.

- Destination Playgrounds have a catchment area of: 20km
- Community Playgrounds have a catchment area of: 10km
- Neighbourhood Playgrounds have a catchment area of: 1km

A number of locations illustrated on the map are already in the pre-development stage and will over the life of this strategy proceed to the playground development stage.

A number of locations have been identified that would be considered eligible to move to the pre-development stage as these locations match an identified gap in provision.



*Belvedere Grove / Windmill Hills*



*Gort na Silíní, Enniscorthy*



*Ferns, Enniscorthy*

## Strategic Policy 3

### Future Playground Provision

Table 4 identifies areas at the pre-development stage and areas of potential for playground location over the lifetime of this strategy. The maximum support available from the Council under the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy will be up to a maximum of 49% of the total agreed capital cost, subject to a maximum overall contribution of €25,000.

**SP 3.1** The Council will cease to develop community and neighbourhood playgrounds. The Council will contribute to the development of such playgrounds through the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy. Play areas will be designed to suit the site in which they are to be developed or refurbished.

Table 4

| Pre Development   | Potential    |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Bridgetown        | Adamstown    |
| Our Lady's Island | Kiltealy     |
| Oylegate          | Monamolin    |
| Camolin           | Kilanerin    |
| Clonroche         | Castlebridge |
| Kilmuckridge      | Riverchapel  |
|                   | Ballycullane |
|                   | Bunclody     |

Provision of the playgrounds outlined will see a child to playground provision of 1 per 875 in County Wexford.

Wexford County Council advocates the procurement of goods and services, in a manner, to ensure at all stages of the development and / or retrofit of playgrounds that accessibility and equality (access and equality for end user) is accounted for. In this regard and in line with Disability and Equality Legislation, Wexford County Council will require that all future playground developments and / or retrofits will be disability proofed at the design stage. Responsibility for the provision of adequate insurance cover and on-going repair and maintenance of any playground funded through the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy will rest with the community group retaining ownership of the playground.

The Council recognises the importance of playgrounds adhering to the relevant standards, currently ROSPA, or any such standards that are applicable during the lifetime of the document. It is expected that any such playgrounds supported by Wexford County Council would adopt this requirement.

### SP 3.2

The Council will focus on the four Destination Playgrounds within its own control. A rolling programme of refurbishment and upgrade will commence in 2017 and will be completed in 2022. This process will involve a whole of site approach, and will involve refurbishment and enhancement works including incorporating natural play facilities.

### SP 3.3

The development of natural play areas (playscapes) will be encouraged, particularly where consideration is given to the inclusion of natural play features such as planting, trees, water, grass and landscape.



*examples of Playscapes*

## Strategic Policy 4

### General Design and Play Value Objectives

**All new playgrounds and improvement/renewal works to existing playgrounds should strive to meet the following objectives.**

**SP 4.1 Accessibility** - Wexford County Council is committed to the principles of inclusive and accessible design. Space to be accessible for children and young people with disabilities, sensory impairments or other specific requirements. Site to be accessible to buggies and pushchairs via good pathways to the site offer an alternative to uneven ground and steps. Entrances and sudden changes in levels are easily identifiable.

**SP 4.2 Involvement of children and young people** - Local children and young people to be consulted and encouraged to participate actively in the design and development process.

**SP 4.3 Informal oversight** - Site to have a good level of informal oversight by adults, for eg. views in/out are unobstructed, site is in an area with people frequently passing by or through it or in view of local housing or community buildings.

**SP 4.4 Getting there** - Children to be able to travel to the site easily, safely and independently without facing significant hazards. Safe access to the site to be provided via footpaths or cycle routes.

**SP 4.5 Personal safety and security** - Site and access routes feel safe at all times and have good exit routes. Site to be located away from or/and adequately protected from busy roads.

**SP 4.6 Meeting other children and young people** – Site to be located where there is a very high likelihood of other children and young people passing by and joining in play e.g. on the way to and from school or local shops.

**SP 4.7 Designed for the site** - The play space to be an attractive place in its own right, with a distinctive and welcoming character, and located with regard to its setting.

**SP 4.8 Enticing to children and young people to play** - Space to be child friendly and appealing. Signs and other messages to support active play (such as ball games, etc.) to be displayed.



**SP 4.9 Opportunities for disabled children and young people** - Features to be designed for a range of abilities and behaviours. Disabled and non-disabled children and young people to be able to use the space together. It is important that all children, regardless of their level of ability, and their families feel welcome in the playground.

**SP 4.10 Dog Control Policy** prohibit dogs within ten meters of children's play equipment.

**SP 4.11 Smoke Free Playground Policy**

Seek to encourage healthy and active lifestyles for residents of County Wexford through dedication of parks and reserves as smoke free areas. This is promoted in all Wexford County Council parks and, in particular, within 20 meters of play equipment.



*Ferns, Enniscorthy*

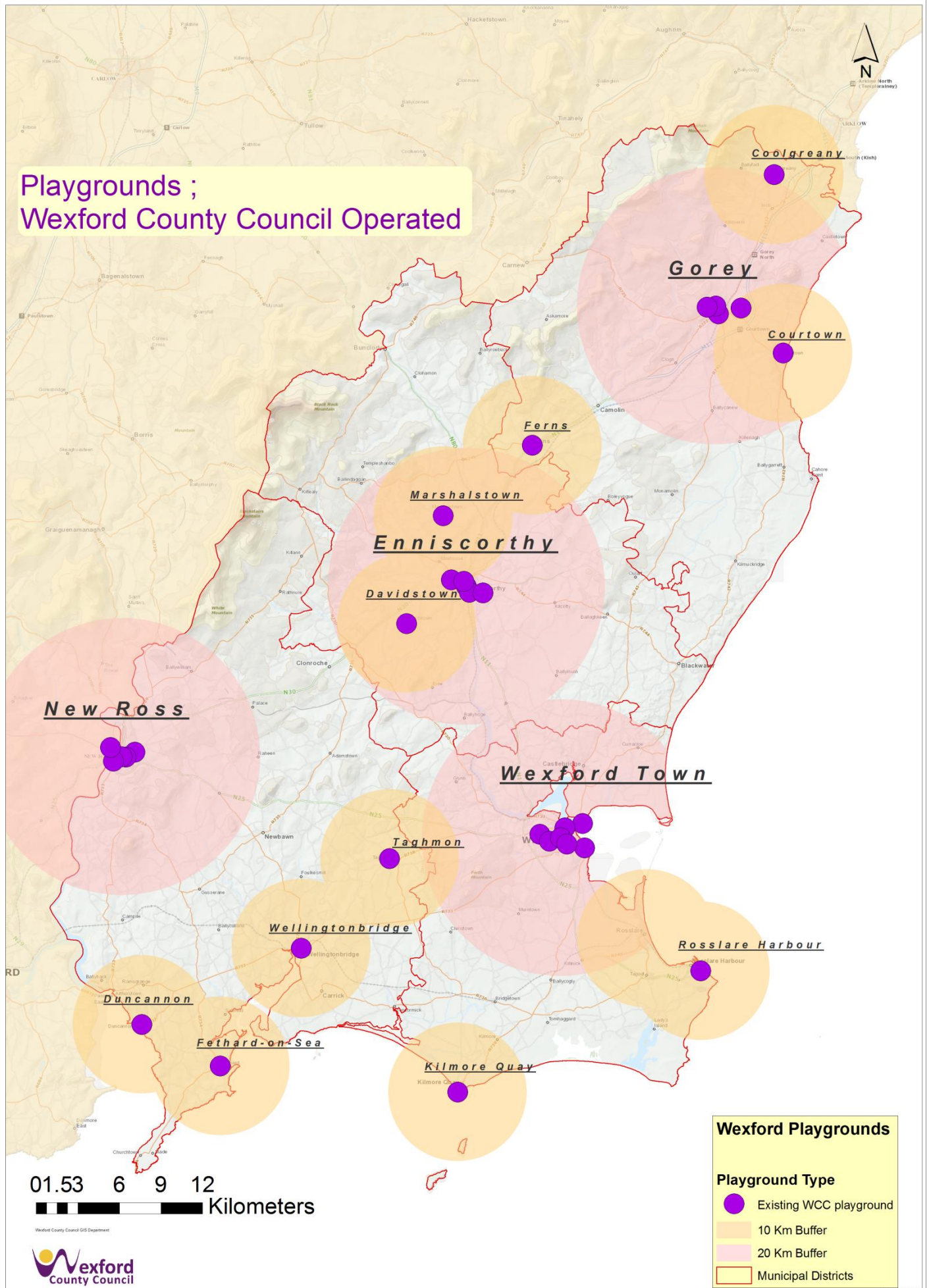


*Courtown, Gorey*



*Fethard, New Ross*

# Playgrounds ; Wexford County Council Operated



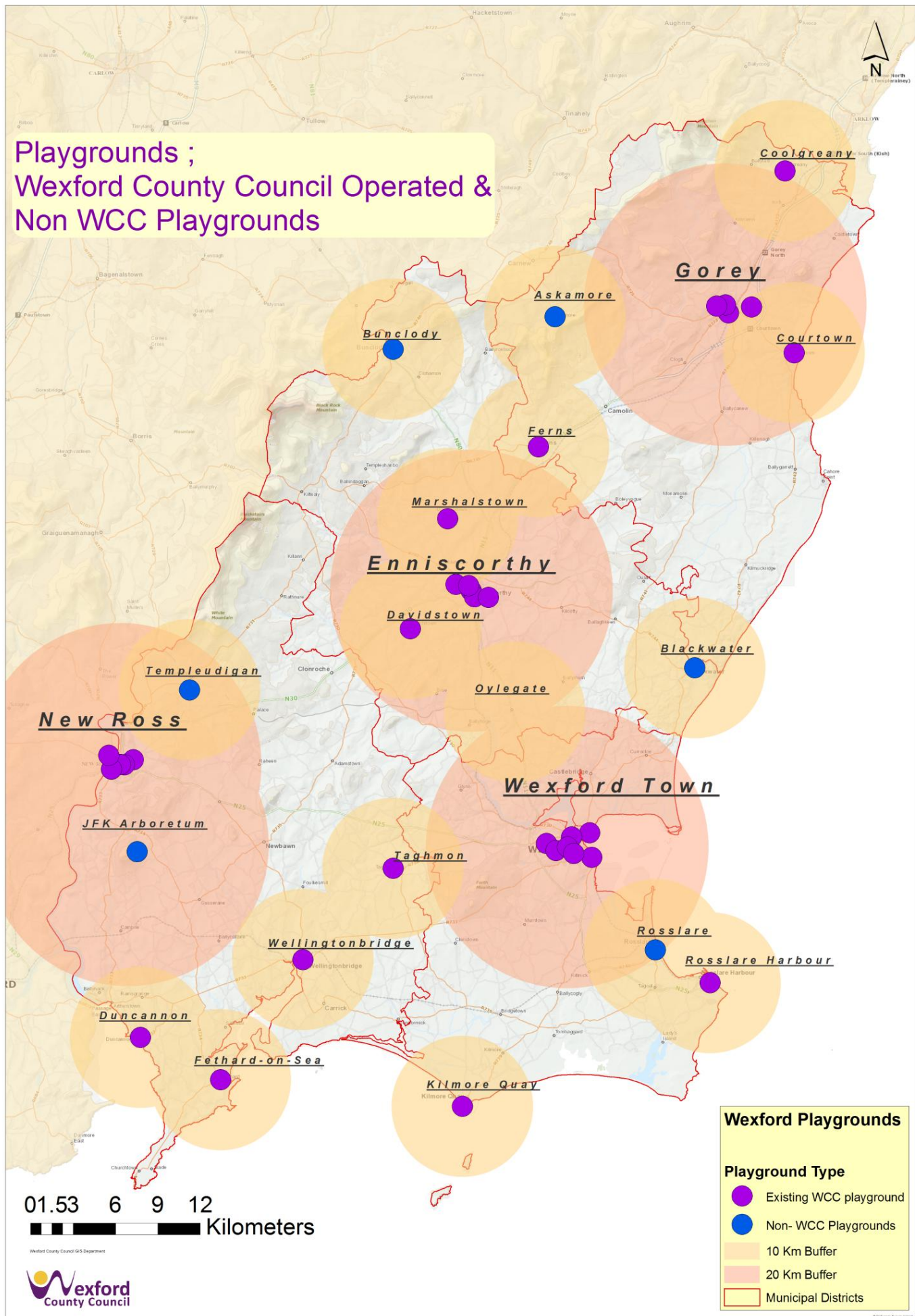
**Wexford Playgrounds**

**Playground Type**

- Existing WCC playground
- 10 Km Buffer
- 20 Km Buffer
- Municipal Districts

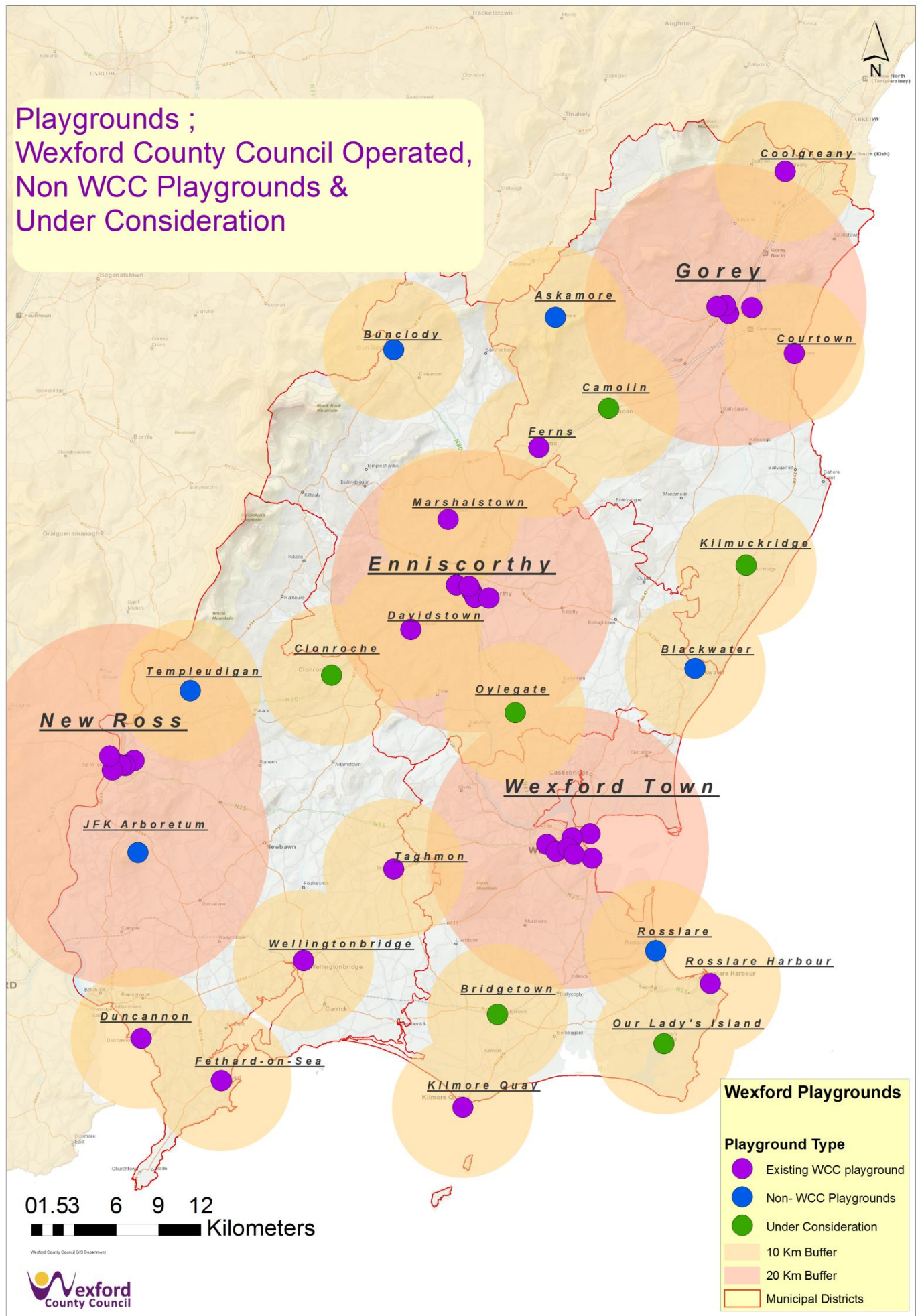


# Playgrounds ; Wexford County Council Operated & Non WCC Playgrounds





Playgrounds ;  
Wexford County Council Operated,  
Non WCC Playgrounds &  
Under Consideration



Playgrounds;  
Wexford County Council Operated,  
Non WCC Playgrounds,  
Under Consideration  
& Potential Sites

