
NEWCASTLE VILLAGE

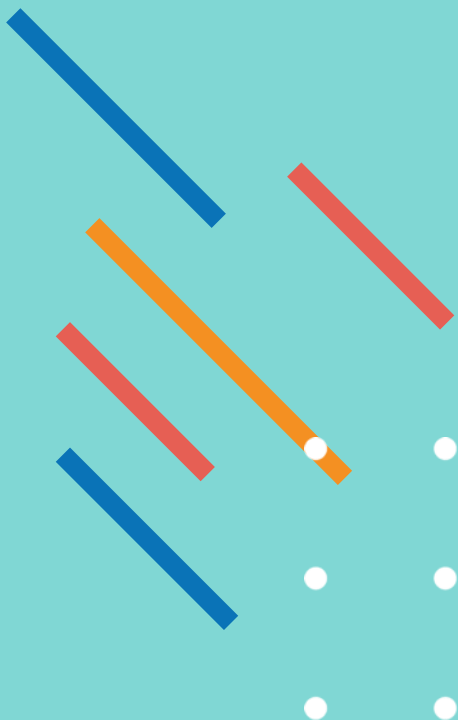
HEALTH CHECK REPORT

July 2019

REPORT CONTENTS

Section 1: Introduction	3
1.1 General overview & context	4
1.2 The Newcastle Village Health Check	6
Section 2: Methodology	9
Section 3: Findings	10
3.1 Socio-Demographic mapping	11
3.2 Public consultation	15
3.3 Town Analysis	26
Section 4: Recommendations	34
Section 5: References	38

Introduction



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General overview

Newcastle is a small village and townland (current population ~1000 people) established during bronze age settlements, located on the Eastern coastal plain. The village takes its name from the castle constructed after the Norman invasion of 1169. The Wicklow mountains dominate the topography to the west of the village and The Irish Sea lies less than 2 kilometres east of the village centre ¹.

The **Newcastle Residents' Association** (NRA) is a long-established group (founded in the 1960s) of local residents whose aim is to improve the area in which they live. Standing as an important node in the broader network of groups in Newcastle, the NRA interacts with many different agencies, stakeholders, and authorities in the course of its operations. In 2017, the Newcastle Residents' Association, along with the Bray Area Partnership, hosted a consultation meeting to identify key priorities

for the development of their 4-year strategic plan (2017 – 2022), ‘**The Opportunity of a Generation: 20:20 vision**’ ².

The outcome of this consultation, as well as a resident survey in 2016, have contributed to the current **NRA Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022**. Its aims with the broader **Wicklow County Development Plan (2016 – 2022)**³, which sees local area objectives established for Newcastle and plans for renovation of road infrastructure, provision of public lighting, a linear landscaped park, and regulatory measures for future development, as well as many more. It is in this context that an assessment of the ‘health’ of the village was commissioned.



The Wicklow County Council

Development Plan³ refers to the ‘second town centre’ which has been the focal point of growth in Newcastle since the 1970s, located around the junctions on regional road R761 and Sea Rd. Identified in the county development plan are Newcastle specific local objectives centred around developing infrastructure where it is either lacking or not to a suitable standard. For example, there is awareness of the unsafe nature of pedestrian activity along Sea Rd. due to the lack of public lighting. Newcastle comprises a ‘**Level 6**’ town, which are the smallest ‘towns’ in the county, recognising their intrinsic rurality and more restricted capacity for significant growth.

The **Newcastle Village Design Statement (2018)¹**, the production of which was an objective of the **Newcastle Residents Association Strategic Plan (2017 – 2022)²**, outlines a clear vision for the attainment of heritage village status in the context of the town’s cultural and historic assets.



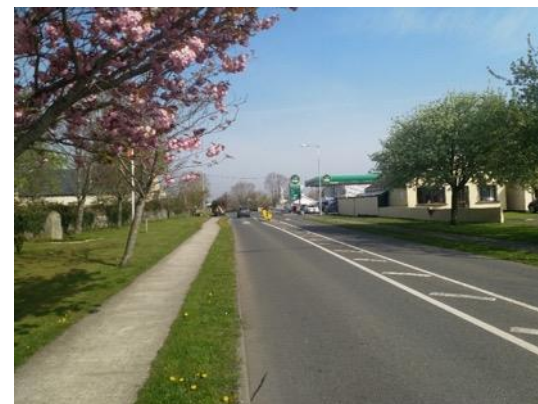
*“We must as a village seize the chance to make a **happier, sustainable** community with control over our village’s **future**. Newcastle Village needs you, **we need each other**”*

1.2 Newcastle Village Health Check

An outcome of the consultation process undertaken by the NRA in recent years was the development of a **walking route**. This route incorporates the main street of the village as a main route and then branches off westward in the southern part of the village to loop around what is currently a field surrounded by hedgerow and a dirt-road on its west side. In considering this and other proposals, the NRA and **Wicklow County Council** concluded that a broader village **'Health Check'** was needed in order to take a holistic view of the current state of Newcastle and how this project, as well as other identified opportunities, could improve the village for all.

Building on the ground-work of the NRA and other community organisations in articulating a clear **Village Design Statement** for Newcastle, M.CO were commissioned to

undertake a Village Health-Check on behalf of the NRA in April 2019. Using M.CO's cultural mapping methodology, baseline research was carried out, site observations, and stakeholder consultation throughout May 2019. The study area for Newcastle village and the location of the proposed walkway were confirmed with the NRA. The focus of the health check revolves around mapping people and place in the context of the 'second' town centre in Newcastle – the primary hub of development since the 1970s and the identified area for further development by Wicklow county council.



When considering 'health' in the context of any settlement, there are many indicators of a "healthy" town, village, or city. For example, are people happy to live in this place? Is it a place where people can access all that the place has to offer them? Does it operate in a

sustainable manner? Is it safe? Does it have the amenities and infrastructure to support community development or is it in decline and facing increased vacancy? Are there spaces which promote individual and community wellbeing both physically and

mentally? A healthy village should contain all of the strengths which allow it to develop and maintain a stable, vibrant economy and community.



Figure 1 – Proposed walkway for Newcastle ^{4,5}



Figure 2 – Newcastle Settlement Boundary ^{4,6}

Methodology



2. METHODOLOGY

Our analysis falls broadly under two headings: **people** and **place**. By ‘mapping’ both of these, we use a holistic approach to assessing how Newcastle is performing both with regard to the built and natural environment, as well as the social and intangible community aspects. By using surveys, semi-structured interviews, stakeholder consultation sessions, as well as desk research, a mixed-methods approach was taken.



PEOPLE

- Mapping **population** and **socio-economic** profile, drawing on census and other data
- **Public engagement** through a pop-up event (May 4th) in the Community Centre and accompanying **online survey**. 98 surveys were completed in the pop-up event and online.
- Interviews with key stakeholders.

The aim was to ascertain:

- What the locals think about Newcastle and its surrounds – what they like about it and what improvements can be made
- How many people use the village centre
- What activities are people engaged in
- What are peoples hopes and concerns regarding future development of the village.

PLACE

Based on **ground data** gathered by site visits and utilising **GIS** (Geographical Information Systems), we analysed the village environments, including:

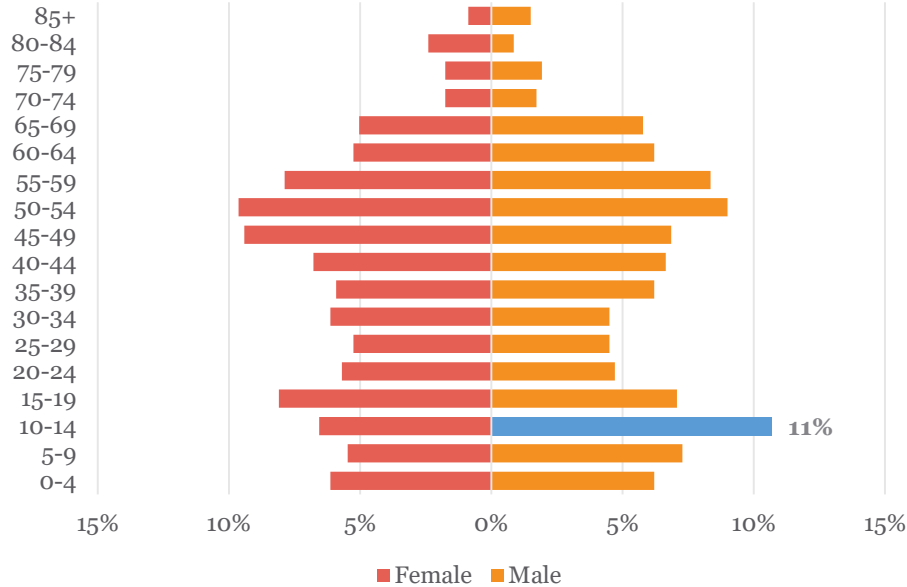
- Building use
- Accessibility and connectivity
- Traffic and parking
- Signage
- Vacancy
- Natural environment
- Built heritage

Findings



3.1 Socio-Demographic mapping

Newcastle Population Pyramid



National Population Pyramid

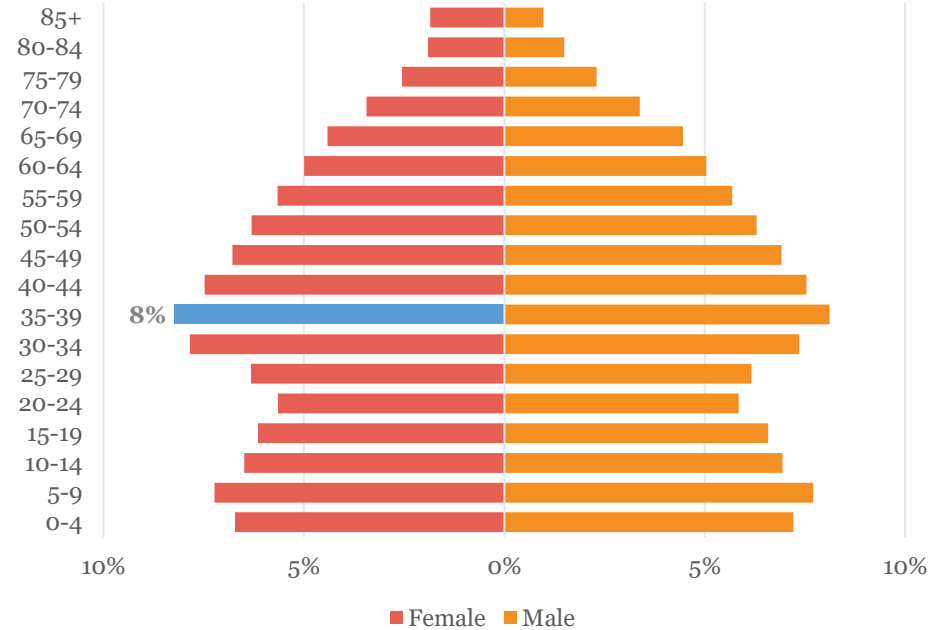


Figure 3 – Newcastle Population Pyramid (Census 2016) ⁸

Figure 4 – National Population Pyramid (Census 2016) ⁹

Considering the structure of the population in Newcastle, Figure 3 shows quite a contrast in shape to Figure 4, the national population. There is evidence of older age groups making up more of the total population than at the national scale. This is showing in the bulges around the 50-54 age group. However, there is also a distinct youth population evident with the peak in the 10-14 and 15 – 19 age groups. The middle-age groups make up relatively smaller proportions of the village population.

3.1 Socio-Demographic mapping

Newcastle & National Population Structure

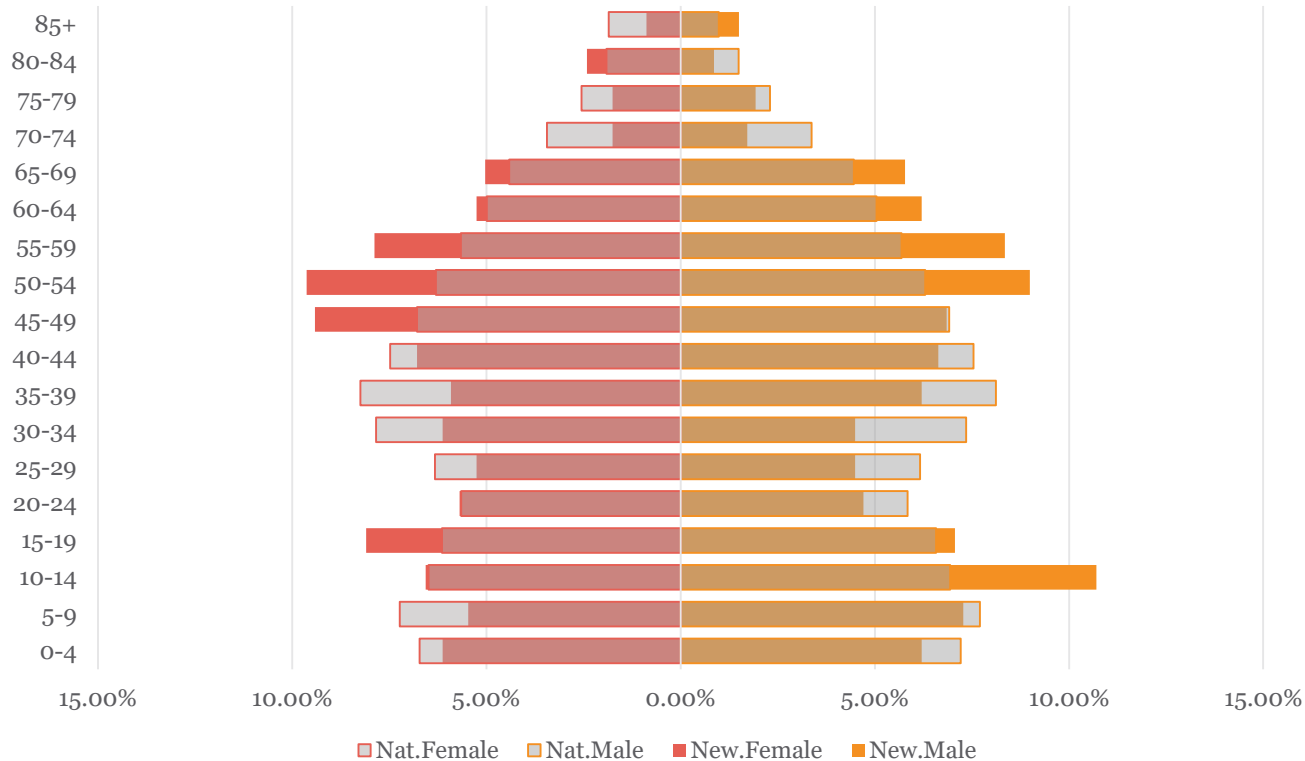


Figure 5 – Newcastle & National Population Pyramid Overlay (Census 2016) ^{8,9}

Figure 5 (to the left) shows Newcastle population pyramid with the national distribution overlay (shaded in grey).

Perhaps more clear now is the marked contrast between the national and Newcastle structure.

Newcastle shows higher relative proportions of school age children and teenagers. From ages 50 – 69, it consistently shows a higher proportion of population being made up of these ages.

From ages 20 – 44 in both sexes, there is a consistent smaller make up of the population accounted for by these age groups.

Also, there seems to be slightly less 0 – 9 year olds (young children and babies) in Newcastle as of 2016.

This structure suggests a local economy which may have a high dependency ratio that may again reduce in the future before increasing again. This has implications for services, infrastructure, and amenities required now and into the future.



POPULATION

924

people made up the total population recorded in the 2016 census, down from 951 in 2011.



CAR OWNERSHIP

2

is the most common number of cars owned by households in Newcastle, as opposed to 1 being the most common nationally.



INDUSTRIES

54%

of persons at work are involved either in commerce and trade or professional services, mirroring the two most common industries nationally.

NEWCASTLE PROFILE



HEALTH

90%

Of people in Newcastle rated their health as 'very good' or 'good' in 2016.



MEANS OF TRAVEL

3%

of the population aged 5 or over walk to school, work, or college. Opposed to 13% nationally.



WORK STATUS

56%

of the population aged 15 years or older are at work, slightly above the national average of 53% in 2016.



EDUCATION

32%

Of people in Newcastle have an Ordinary Bachelors Degree or higher. A further 37% have completed some form of secondary education



INTERNET ACCESS

82%

of people have internet access, with 77% of households having a personal computer.



RELIGION

66%

of people are followers of the Catholic religion, with 21% stating 'other', and 12% with 'no religion'.

NEWCASTLE PROFILE



BIRTHPLACES

85%

Of people in Newcastle were born in Ireland, with 92.3% citing Irish as their nationality. However, over 14% of the population were born outside of Ireland.



MARITAL STATUS

49%

of the population are single in Newcastle, with 41% married. 4% are widowed. 3% are divorced.



IRISH SPEAKING

37%

of the population aged 3 and over are able to speak Irish, nearly exactly matching the 38% proportion at national scale

3.2 Public Consultation

M.CO hosted a public consultation session in Newcastle in order to identify the hopes and concerns of residents, as well as identify areas of the town where residents saw opportunities for improvement or an alternative use altogether.

A consultation session was hosted in the **Community Centre** to coincide with the popular weekly country market. The engagement consisted of conversations, surveys and post-it based exercises. It was complemented by supplementary information about Newcastle and the surrounding area, such as maps of locations of architectural sites. Lastly, an interactive mapping activity closed the session. People unable to attend the consultation event were invited to complete an **online** version of the survey through *SurveyMonkey*.



A number of questions were posed during the consultation:

- **What do you like about Newcastle?**
- **What can be improved in and around Newcastle?**
- **What are your hopes for Newcastle?**
- **In relation to the future development of Newcastle, what are your concerns?**



3.2 Public Consultation



What do you like about Newcastle?

There is a huge appreciation for the attractiveness of the **heritage** and **built environment** of the village and the surrounding countryside. One resident in the survey considered it the “nearest place to heaven”! The surrounding natural environment was also much praised, with particular assets such as the coast, bird sanctuary, stream and hedgerows highlighted.

Many times, the fact that the village has seen **no big development** and has remained **small** was seen as a positive. Good communal infrastructure was also quoted. The **character** of the town in combination with the **close-knit community**, comes through as one of Newcastle’s biggest strengths.



3.2 Public Consultation



What can be improved in and around Newcastle?

Two dominant themes emerged in the consultation : **safety** and **environmental** concerns. With regards to **pedestrian safety**, foot paths were deemed either lacking along prominent routes (Sea Road.) or in need of improvement (Main St: village entrance).

Speeding and inappropriate speed limits were also a concern to be addressed, as well as changes in lighting scales.

Environmental issues featured prominently among the suggested areas of improvement for Newcastle residents. Issues such as **litter** were mentioned, as was the presence of **invasive plant species** too.

Flooding also was a concern, considering the vulnerability of Sea Rd.

and the village in this regard.

However, the potential for Newcastle to lead the way on environmental issues was an expressed wish of one resident, as well the hope that it be a model for sustainable living.

Transport infrastructure deficits also featured in the consultation. The village is served by the No. 84 Dublin Bus route which goes through Greystones. This is a reliable and valued service, however it is relatively infrequent. The Bus Eireann route 133 does not serve the village directly, the closest stop being Newtownmountkennedy



3.2 Public Consultation



What are your hopes for Newcastle?

1.

Protecting and enhancing the village character

3.

Infrastructure

2.

Community development & controlled, planned development

4.

Sufficient level of amenities

SUMMARY:

It is clear from the survey that the residents cherish and value to **character** of the village, and wish to see its preservation. The biggest perceived threat to the village character was **over-development of the village**. At the same time, there was an expressed desire for **affordable housing** and improved **infrastructure**, particularly in order to improve accessibility and in turn, residents' safety.

Foot-paths and **speeding limits** were some examples suggested to make the town more **pedestrian** friendly. **Amenities** featured prominently too. They often were referred in either one of two contexts: in relation to the **current needs** of the village, and when considering the **future needs** of the village. Another hope was that the community itself would **develop** both **economically** and **socially** – with sustainable development of new housing allowing businesses to flourish,

Other emerging themes:

- In-migration
- Wellbeing
- Environmental protection
- Sustainability
- Social cohesion
- Cultural heritage
- Housing
- Transport

more local employment, more visitors, developing on its architectural merit and cultural heritage, and for more projects and participation from residents in **community events**. There are few retail opportunities within Newcastle Village and only one vacant commercial unit. Enhancing the existing **retail** offer was a hope expressed by a number of survey participants.

3.2 Public Consultation

1. Maintaining village character and cultural heritage

The prevention of the loss of its **village character** and its “lovely country feel” as a result of future development in the village was by far the largest hope. Often mentioned alongside the village character and rural feel was the small **size** of the village and the hope that this would be retained. Aside from the close knit community, these appear to be two key aspects which give Newcastle its unique sense of place. Some residents saw the character as something that has the potential

to be developed itself alongside any physical development, and that should not necessarily stay static.

Attaining recognition as a **heritage village** in accordance with **Heritage Council** advice was also seen as a strategic development option for enhancing the town’s cultural heritage and character. The castle featured prominently in this idea.

Hope was expressed that future generations

be equipped to sustain the strength of the character of Newcastle village. It was clear that **people** were seen to be at the centre of what makes Newcastle the place it is. There are hopes that future generations (children of residents), as well as new residents, will continue to have the amenities and resources to live in Newcastle and keep the community closeness that exists today.



*“That it retains it's small village character and doesn't get taken over by new housing developments, retail units etc.”,
“For Newcastle to maintain its rural character while developing it's amenities and community spirit.”*

3.2 Public Consultation

2. Planned & controlled development of the village

A major hope expressed was that future development does not ruin the village character. Worries about the consequences of over-, or uncontrolled-, development were huge, especially concerning the potential impact this could have on the sense of place in Newcastle. Housing development, undertaken in a way which overwhelms amenities or dilutes the strong identity of Newcastle as a ‘small village’, specifically, was referred to.

It is hoped that any development will take place in a **sustainable** and **regulated**



manner. The lack of **affordable housing** was mentioned by a number of survey respondents. This indicates that many residents are not opposed to the concept of the village developing, but are cautious that it is done in a manner which does not create unintended social and environmental consequences. Newtownmountkenedy and Kilcoole were cited as examples of excessive and poorly-planned development.

Respect and protection for the natural environment, existing green spaces and

heritage of the town was seen as a prerequisite for any development which could also fuel economic growth and social vitality in the future.

Many residents welcomed the idea of new **retail opportunities** and saw it as a potential component of a holistic approach to development and ensuring residents’ wellbeing. However, excessive Retail development was also mentioned when it came to concerns about development.

“That Newcastle will develop in a way that allows the people who live in it have a good quality of life. That it retains the beauty and allows expansion in a planned way.”

3.2 Public Consultation

3.

Infrastructure

Hope was expressed for improved **foot-paths**, green spaces, and cycle tracks, along with the provision of new ones to improve connectivity and to alleviate fears around pedestrian safety. It was felt that these could contribute positively to community wellbeing and activity with improved connectivity for pedestrians to access to local amenities. It was also hoped that **roads** infrastructure could be improved. Safety for vehicle drivers and pedestrians was at the forefront of this issue. There was also opportunity for **speed limit**



changes and traffic calming measures to improve this situation.

Many hoped that **Sea Road** could be made more pedestrian-friendly by improving the road surface and extending the footpath to the beach. However, some concerns were expressed about the impact of an extended footpath on the natural environment. Other roads issues which residents referred to included the narrow width of the road to Newtownmountkenny.



Many residents were concerned that a lack of economic opportunity, amenities, and **affordable housing** may lead to their children not being able to live in the village in the future.

An upgrade of the Community Centre for the village was proposed. Improving it as an amenity would enhance social cohesion and community development, while adding to the village infrastructure.

“Improved path access to the north of the village and down the sea road”

3.2 Public Consultation

4. Amenities

Closely linked with discussion of infrastructure and development was the provision of amenities in the town. One specific concern around amenities was accessibility for all ages. However, there seemed to be identified opportunities for improving activities in the community with the existing facilities.

With regard to new activities, many residents wished to see the provision of more **sports** opportunities for all ages and



associated improved facilities. Increased provision of activities for children and teenagers was mentioned often. Improved **after-school care** is also ought for Newcastle. Currently St Francis N.S. only provides after school care for its pupils.

Having enhanced local facilities and amenities would allow for increased economic activity within the town and contribute to local development.

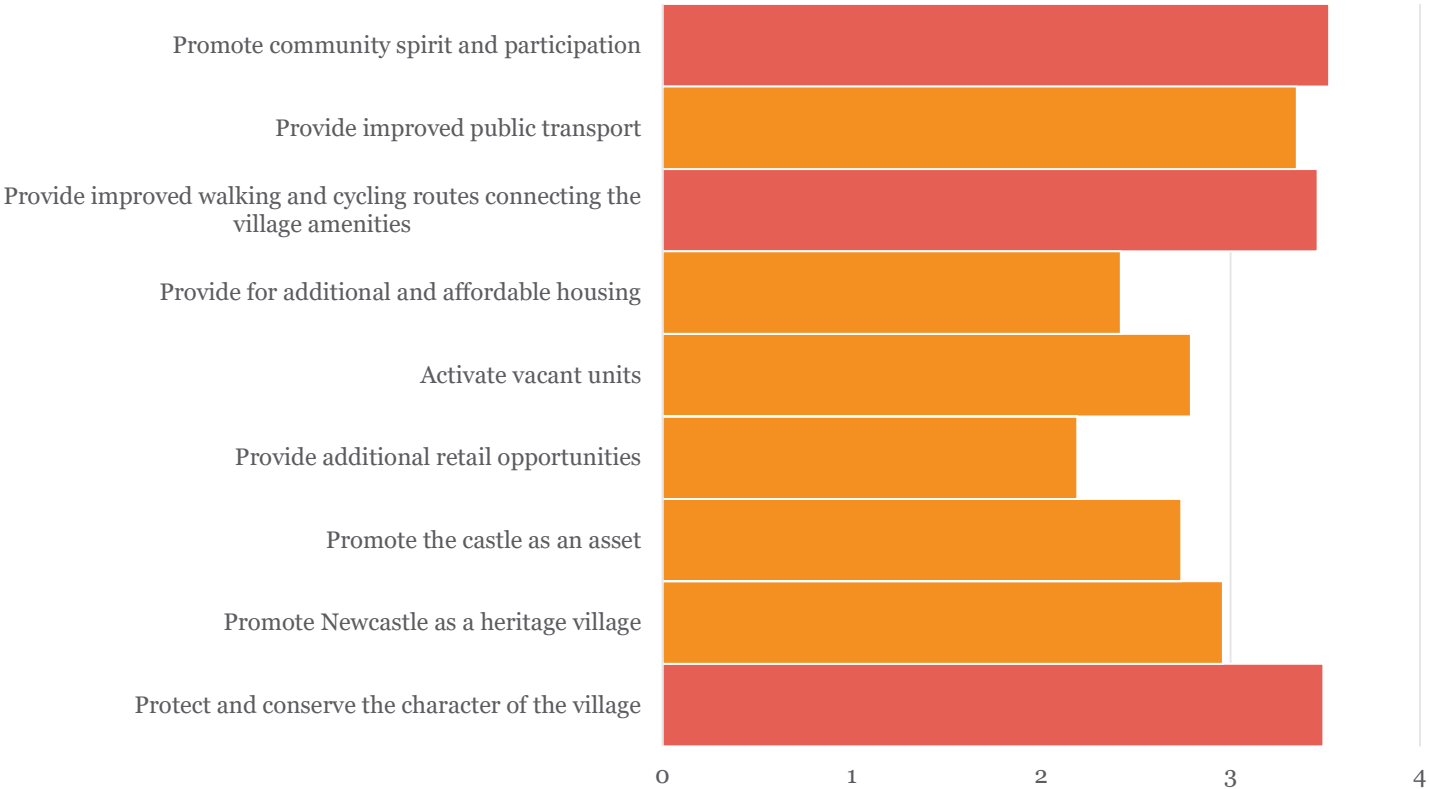
When it came to hopes around the services available in Newcastle, **transport** services stood out as having huge potential for improvement. This was often mentioned in the context of village development and a necessary area to address in order to ensure village vitality.

“More open and youthful community spirit for young people/families relocating to the village. More evening and weekend activities for all ages in the excellent facilities and centres that we have.”

3.2 Public Consultation



In your opinion, how important is it for Newcastle to...



3.2 Public Consultation



What are your concerns in relation to future development of Newcastle?

Over-development

Again, the biggest concern by far was over-development in Newcastle. In this context, the fear of mass development without respecting local heritage was prominent. The village 'drowning' in retail or housing was quoted and many referred to overdevelopment of Kilcoole and Newtownmountkennedy. Appropriately sized and paced housing development was welcomed, however.

Loss of village character

The concern of loss of village character also was raised in the context of development. Becoming too large of a town, or large development was seen as largely incompatible with the small, rural character that has defined the village for so long and continues to do so today – "It getting too large a town, losing it's character and charm".



Development planning process

Many of the concerns around how development would take place and the planning behind it revolved around the strategic locations and designs of any new housing and who would 'drive' the development. References to 'developer-lead clumps of housing' and 'building projects at unacceptable standards and design' were cited.

What came through most in this regard was the acute worry that new housing and the resulting population increase would overwhelm current infrastructure and amenities, and that these should be in place prior to any housing development. These worries centred around the planning and development process, as well as governance.

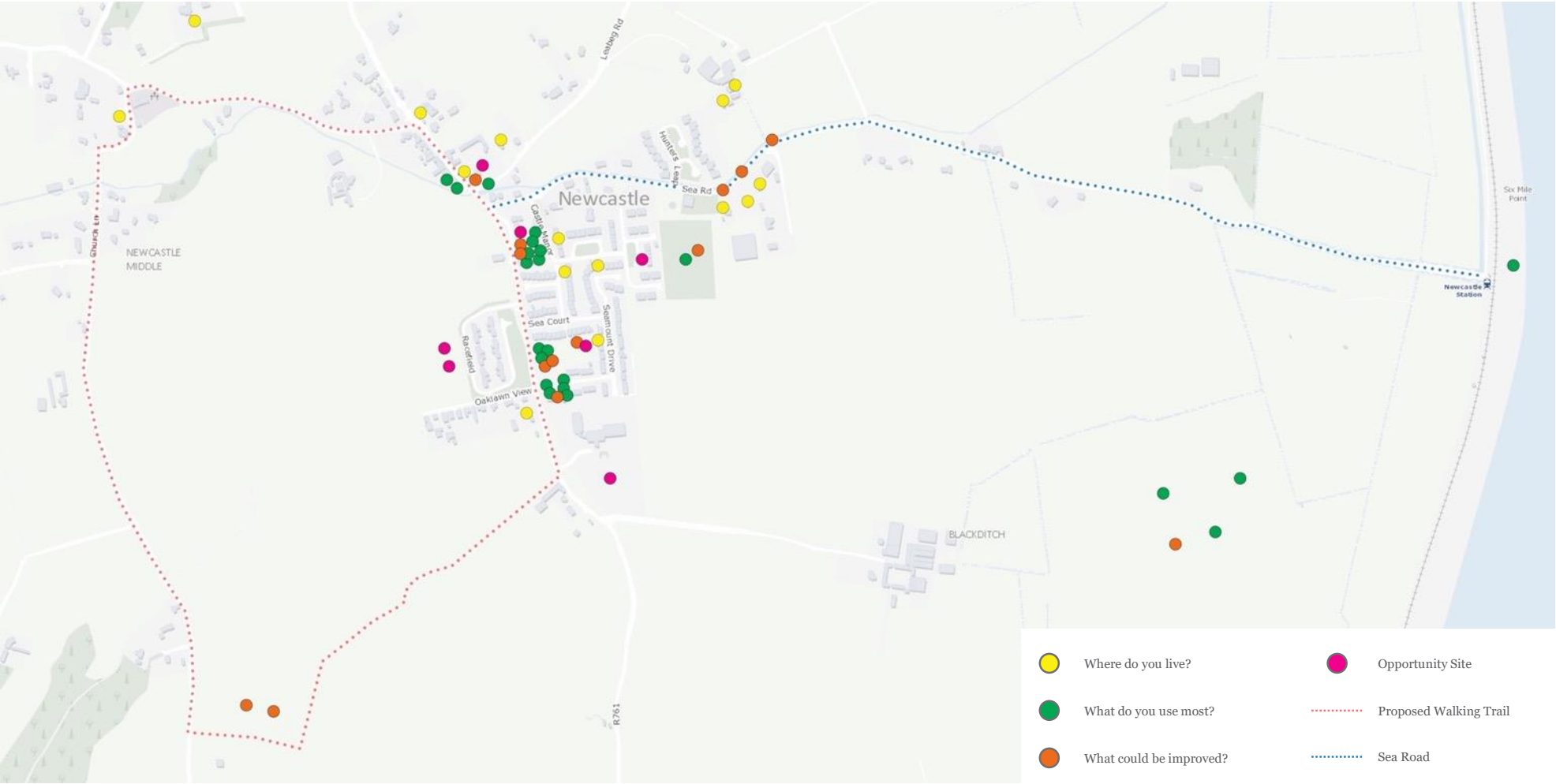
Environmental concerns

During the public consultation, environmental concerns emerged as a central issue for residents. What came through more strongly in survey responses than in the public consultation was the awareness and concern surrounding the threat of flooding, particularly on Sea Rd. Preservation of the village environment, as well as other issues such as litter and dog fouling were also mentioned. Light pollution worries and invasive species were also raised.

3.2 Public Consultation



How do you currently use Newcastle?



3.3 Town Analysis

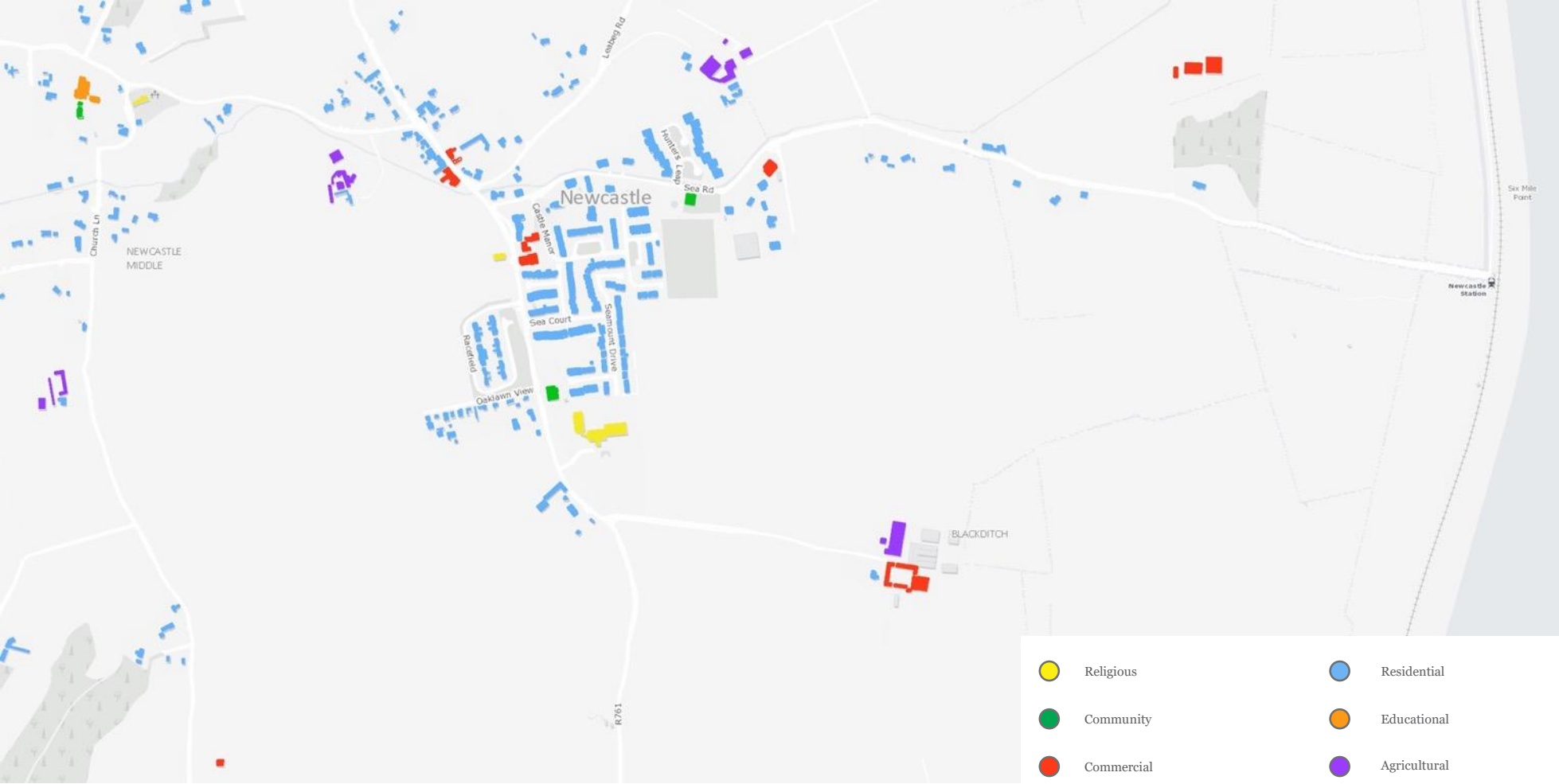
Settlement Environment

The coastal settlement of Newcastle is situated 2km to the east of the N11 route on the R761 Regional Road, 4km south of Kilcoole, 4km from Newtownmountkennedy and 12km north of Wicklow Town. Historically the town centre developed around the Church of Ireland, graveyard, rectory, St Francis N.S. and the ruined castle. In the nineteenth century a 'second' town centre developed further east around the junctions on regional route R761 and Sea Road, with the link road back to the historic centre. The second town centre contains a shop and petrol station, a hairdresser, a public house, bus stops, and a storage unit. In the 1970s the first large housing estates were built immediately south of the second town centre, followed by the community centre, GAA club, a Catholic Oratory, religious institution (Jehovahs Witness) , playground and by another residential estate. These are all sited to the southern side of the second town centre, with some larger houses constructed to the north of this centre.



3.3 Town Analysis

Primary Building Uses



3.3 Town Analysis

Accessibility and Connectivity

Newcastle is located on the R761, and is approximately 8 km from the town Greystones and 12 km from Wicklow Town. It is 2km from the N11 which connects it to Dublin, approximately 40km to the north. The village is served by the number 84 Dublin Bus route, which departs approximately every hour, connecting the town, via Greystones, to Dublin. The village centre is within 3km of the 133 Bus Eireann route, which serves Wicklow town to the south and Dublin airport to the north (via Dublin City Centre). The town is bordered on the east by the Dublin-Wexford rail line, but is no longer served by a station. The closest railway stations in use are Greystones and Wicklow town.

Pedestrian infrastructure in the town has improved in recent years, but there remain opportunities for further improvements to both pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.

Traffic and Parking

The limited public transport infrastructure has generated a reliance on the private car as the primary means of transport. Traffic was not observed as a major issue for the village itself, with congestion occurring outside the boundary of the study area (predominantly around connection to the N11 to the north-west of the town.) Parking was observed as sufficient for the primary amenities within the village centre, however consideration should be given to parking to serve ancillary attractions such as the beach and the bird sanctuary to the east of the village.



3.3 Town Analysis

Signage

Signage leading people into Newcastle is generally adequate, as is signage directing people to destinations outside of Newcastle. Signage to town amenities is generally adequate, however, there is no sign for the airfield and bird sanctuary. A visitor information sign is well-located in the centre of the village, providing information on local history and heritage. There are opportunities to apply a consistent aesthetic to signage around the town, potentially taking advantage of the branding identity of *Ireland's Ancient East*.



Vacancy

Overall, the village was observed to be well occupied, with low vacancy rates across both commercial and residential property. This observation is reinforced by the CSO statistics which indicate a 6.6% rate of vacancy across households. This is well below the national average of 12.3%. The only vacant commercial property observed to the north of the village settlement was for sale at the time of this study.



3.3 Town Analysis

Natural Environment

The surrounding land is a mix of tillage and grassland, supporting dairy, beef and sheep farming. The fields are bounded by natural hedgerows and native broadleaved trees. The Little Vartry River runs east/west through the village. Blackditch Wood features as part of Birdwatch Ireland's wildlife conservation area and is located between the village and the sea.

The area is part of the Eastern coastal plain, with the Irish Sea to the east and the Wicklow Mountains overlooking the village from the west. The terrain rises gently from the sea to about 60m at the N11. The coastal strip is part of the Murrrough wetland system, designated an area of Special Conservation as well as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and is protected from erosion by the Dublin-Rosslare railway sea defences.

There are plans to develop walking trails that take advantage of both the river and the surrounding farmlands.



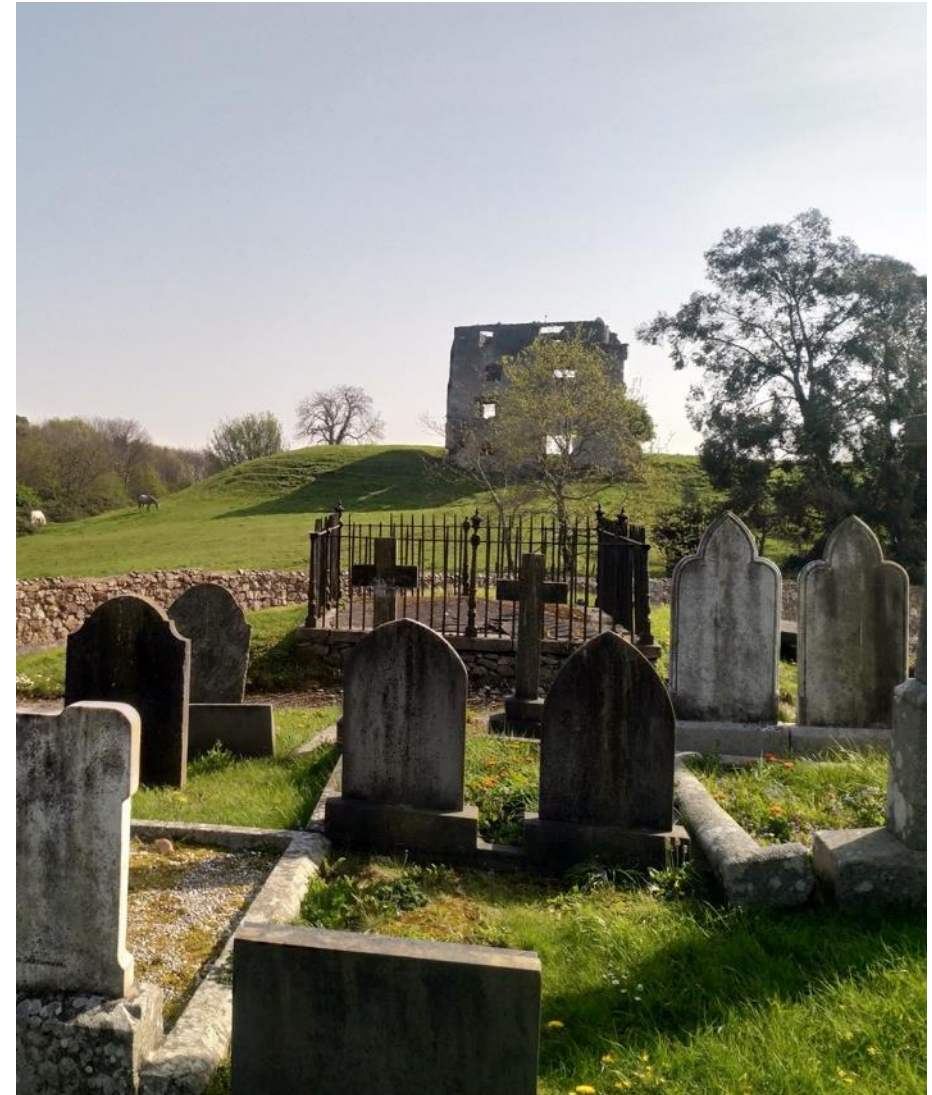
3.3 Town Analysis

Built Heritage and Historical Significance

Newcastle was once a successful medieval town, and has its origins in the first castle that was built close to the town between the years of 1177 and 1184 by Hugh De Lacey, then Governor of Ireland under Henry II. There were only two royal castles at that time, one in the city of Dublin and the other in Newcastle. The royal castle in Newcastle was known as Novum Castrum McKynegan. It was subsequently destroyed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and rebuilt as a gatehouse. The ruins are on the edge of a motte with an unusually large and flat summit some 69m in diameter and 4.8m high.

Other buildings of historical and architectural significance include:

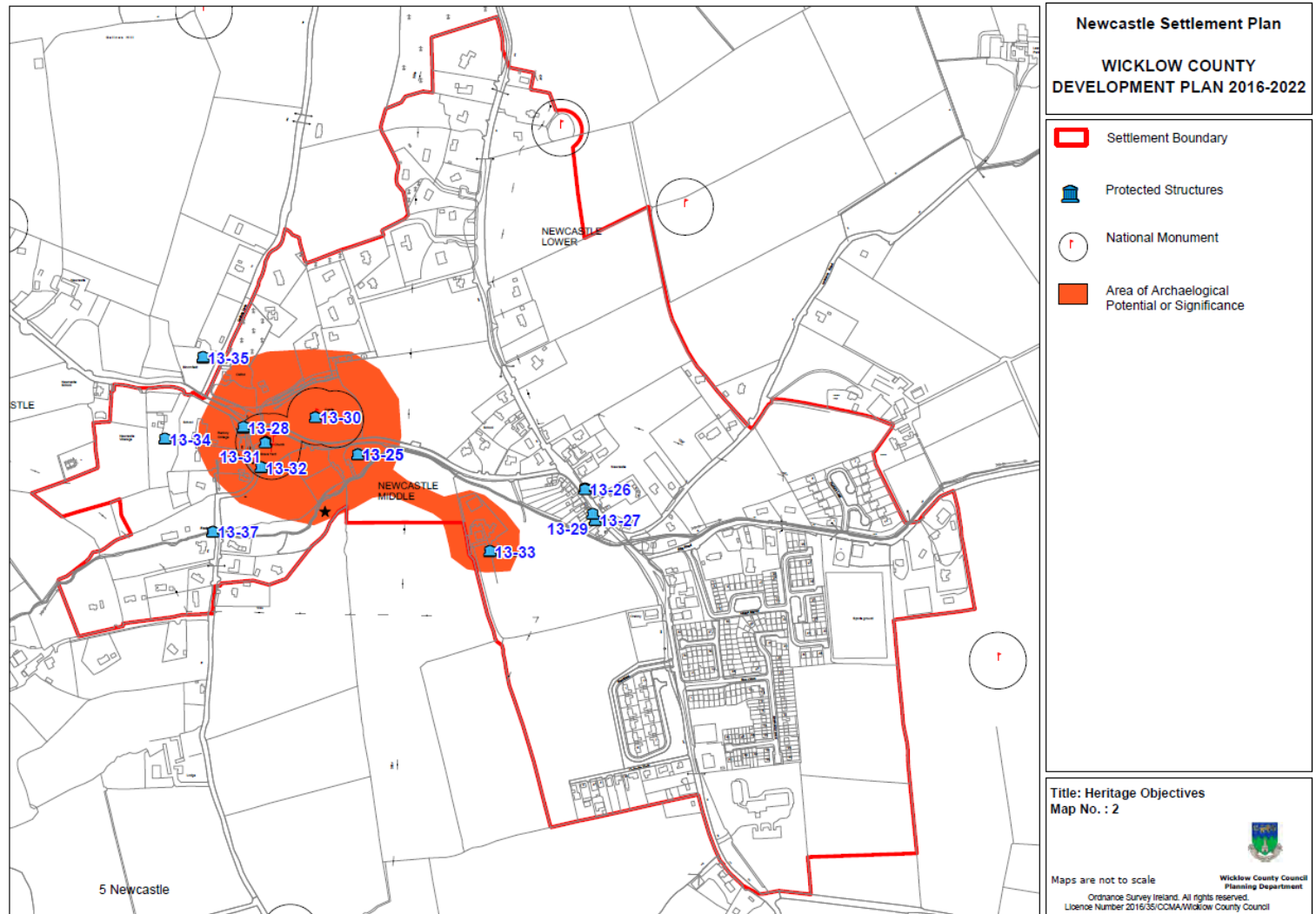
- a late 18th century cottage (which was originally a forge) that occupies the corner of the Main Street and the Sea Road
- The original 1855 D&WR Stationmasters House at the end of Sea Road
- The remains of the Telegraph Cable Relay Station, where the telegraph connection to Wales was established in 1886
- The Castle Inn, a mid-19th century building that occupies the site of an earlier 17th century inn
- The Norman Church which dates back to 1788
- A number of post-famine single-storey cottages on both sides of Main St.
- A fine example of a late 19th century shopfront (adjacent to the Castle Inn)



3.3 Town Analysis

Built Heritage and Historical Significance

Newcastle and its environs boasts a large collection of protected structures and national monuments, enhancing its historical value to locals and visitors alike. These are identified in the Newcastle Settlement Plan (Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022)



Recommendations



4. Key Recommendations

Theme 1:

Protect and Enhance Village Character

1. Building on the *Newcastle Village Design Statement*, identify Heritage assets and develop a built heritage plan - consider heritage in its broadest sense, from medieval ruins to more recent buildings, shopfronts, natural heritage and intangible heritage, such as a music or folklore tradition.
2. Develop looped walk which highlights heritage assets (including the castle).
3. Newcastle community to work with Wicklow County Council to promote sustainable development of the village (see Theme 2) that protects the village character.
4. Newcastle community to proactively engage with Wicklow County Council as they prepare the next County Development Plan (2023-2029) to ensure that their views, hopes and concerns, are captured.

Theme 2:

Promote Sustainable Development

1. Promote appropriate, sustainable development that respects the Village character, while providing for affordable housing, amenity and retail provision. Development should strictly adhere to the guidance set out in Section 2 of the Development And Design Standards - Rural Settlements (Levels 6-9, County Settlement Hierarchy).
2. Building on the (2016-2022) *Level 6 Settlement Plan for Newcastle*, develop a Local Area Plan, town renewal plan or development masterplan for the village in collaboration with Wicklow County Council to address future development. *Note that Wicklow County Council will commence preparation of the next Development Plan in 2020.*
3. Collaborate with Wicklow County Council to develop a proposal for *Rural Regeneration Development Fund* (A maximum of 80% funding will be considered where community contributions form a significant element of the match-funding) and *Town and Village Renewal Scheme*.
4. Work with SEAI to establish a Sustainable Energy Community and access *Better Energy Community* funds.

4. Key Recommendations

Theme 3: **Infrastructure**

1. Promote pedestrian safety through improved footpaths and physical measures to limit vehicle speed.
2. Improve pedestrian access to the bird sanctuary and coast. Explore measure such as extending the footpath or the creation of a speed restricted 'shared surface'.
3. Provide additional car parking for the beach and the bird sanctuary that is sensitive to the protected status of these sites, in collaboration with Birdwatch Ireland and Wicklow County Council.
4. Enhance existing community infrastructure such as the Community Centre (see Theme 4).

Theme 4: **Amenities**

1. Upgrade the Community Centre to make it more inviting, flexible for use and energy efficient.
2. Community Centre to collaborate with Birdwatch Ireland to develop visitor information area within the Centre.
3. Improve sporting facilities in the village, including tennis courts and Multi Use Games Area.
4. Provide additional car parking and toilet facilities for beach and bird sanctuary in a manner that is sensitive the protected status of these sites, in collaboration with Birdwatch Ireland and Wicklow County Council.

4. Key Recommendations

Theme 5:

Community Development and Engagement

1. Promote wider participation in community groups activities such as Tidy Towns, Newcastle Residents Association, with additional focus on younger and new residents.
2. Leverage existing assets and resources to develop cultural events (music, visual arts) and programmes to promote activity in the village, for both existing residents and visitors.

Theme 6:

Branding and Marketing

1. Promote Newcastle Village as a Heritage Town in accordance with Heritage Council guidance documents and supports.
2. Collaborate with land-owner and Wicklow County Council to promote access to the Castle.
3. Develop consistent visitor information (signage, leaflets, website) to promote Newcastle village. Provide additional signage for the bird sanctuary and the airfield (with Wicklow County Council).
4. Leverage and avail of Falite Ireland's *Ireland's Ancient East* tourism campaign and branding (*ref. Ireland's Ancient East Path to Growth* strategy document)



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Appendix



What do you like about Newcastle?

Below, each of the post-its are transcribed and emerging themes were determined by coding each of the responses:

What you said:



- *Charming*
- *Small population. No big development.*
- *Market. Bird sanctuary. Beach. Community atmosphere.*
- *Natural beauty.*
- *Small/intimate atmosphere. Community hall and spirit.*
- *The sea and sky.*
- *People and community. Good neighbourhood. County marker.*
- *Nearest place to heaven.*
- *Good communal infrastructure.*
- *Has remained small while all developed around us.*
- *It's a beautiful village and community.*
- *The people – common purpose.*
- *Still feels like country even though close to city.*



Emerging themes:





What can be improved in and around Newcastle?

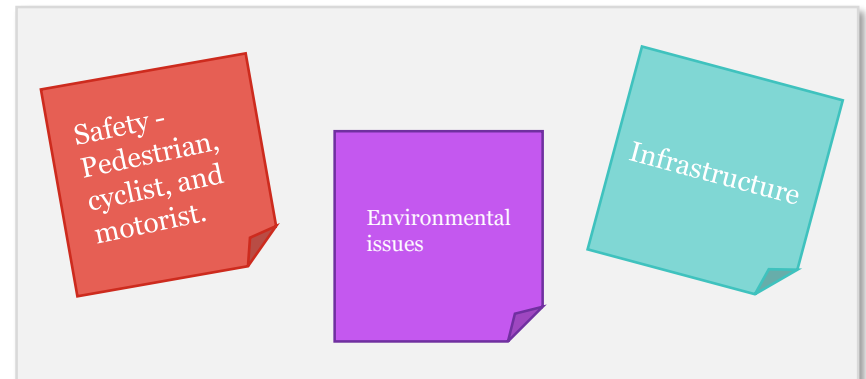
What you said:



- *Change/reduce street lighting to human scale.*
- *Promote the wearing of high visibility clothing when walking the roads!*
- *Dangerous turning at Blackditch (Five Mile Point).*
- *Path to coast (pavement) to meet planned Greenway.*
- *Dog poo, tennis club, speeding, rubbish.*
- *Path from village to Five Mile Point junction (Blackditch).*
- *Upgrade playground*
- *I would love to see Newcastle leading the way on environmental issues.*
- *There are a lot of people with horses – can't really ride on roads anymore – too dangerous.*
- *Dog dirt (especially on beach), lack of bins, buses parked on roundabouts.*
- *No use of weed killer around playground.*
- *Too many early/late buses – double deckers.*
- *Mains sewerage.*
- *Safer foot paths on both sides of main road at village entrance.*
- *Traffic calming on main street and sea road.*
- *Disconnect – people not mixing – different ages, mixed housing.*
- *Green and sustainable living – could be flag bearers.*

- *Flooding threat to village and sea road.*
- *Flooding.*
- *Flooding – natural flow has been disturbed.*
- *Develop the walking trail and sea road/coast walk.*
- *Getting county council involved.*
- *Airfield development without proper planning or control.*
- *Speed limit on lower sea road too high.*
- *No paths – dangerous!*
- *Safety – speeding or racing at night time.*
- *Train stop at 5 or 6 mile point.*
- *Cycle + foot paths*
- *Winter heliotrope*
- *Architecture, art, design elements to connect, inspire, and create identity.*

Emerging themes:



As a concluding question, residents were asked if there were any **further thoughts** they had. Below, some of the comments given are listed.

“Not enough people are engaged in the village and it's welfare.”

“Lived here all my life and 40 plus years and would never want to live anywhere else. Beautiful village. Very lucky to live here.”

“Keep up the good work. Tree planting and tidy towns effort is great! Proud to live in Newcastle.”

“The people of Newcastle are what makes this place special. People's needs should be at the core of any future plans...”

“I'd like to see *all ages catered for in Newcastle*. I'd like to see *childcare arrangements for the working parents, enough footpaths for buggies, a big enough national or national schools for all the children of Newcastle to go to school in their own village, youth clubs and activities for the early teens, affordable housing for young couples, networks (including social media) to help newcomers settle in, communications to help people who work elsewhere to keep up to date with what's happening, opportunities for people to volunteer at whatever level they want to and activities for elderly people.*”





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