





The Vision for Community Wellbeing sets out how the member groups of
Westmeath PPN wish to see their communities being
“The best that it can be for this and future generations”



Large print version of this booklet is available on request
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Foreword

Westmeath Public Participation Network (WPPN) is an independent network of Community and Voluntary Organisations across County Westmeath. Our Vision for Community Wellbeing is an all-encompassing vision that the member groups of Westmeath PPN have for County Westmeath.

Although we often think about wellbeing in terms of good physical and mental health, it can also describe the wider conditions we need as individuals and communities to have a better quality of life, healthier environment and increased prosperity.

Our vision has been developed through a bottom up process with member groups and is the mandate for Westmeath PPN Representatives as they represent Westmeath PPN membership on decision making bodies across the county.

Our vision has an overarching Vision for County Westmeath. Within this overarching Vision we set out what we want to see under 6 wellbeing "domains" or aspects. These wellbeing domains are:

- Values, Culture & Meaning
- Environment & Sustainability
- Health (physical & mental)
- Economy & Resources
- Social & Community Development
- Participation, Democracy & Good Governance





WPPN wishes to express its sincere gratitude to everyone who helped and contributed in any way to the creation of this Community Wellbeing Vision for Westmeath; all those who participated in our wellbeing consultation workshops, the online consultation, through the feedback process on the draft document, through to this final document. *This has truly been a piece of ground up consultation and is, we believe, a true reflection of the Vision for Community Wellbeing as envisaged by the members groups when they describe their county as "the best that it can be for this and future generations".*

Yours sincerely
WPPN Secretariat

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To find out more about how this vision was developed please see our website – **www.westmeathppn.ie**





Overarching Vision for Community Wellbeing in County Westmeath



“Westmeath is a flourishing community with a thriving economy where we live and work sustainably. It is a welcoming and safe place which values and respects all people. We enjoy a beautiful and healthy natural environment and celebrate our rich heritage. Each of us has the freedom to live the life we choose and have a say in decisions that affect us. We all participate in our communities making them vibrant places where no-one is left behind. We are all supported to be the best that we can be.”



What is Community Wellbeing

Wellbeing is an increasingly common term that can describe wider conditions than good physical and mental health, which we need as individuals and communities to have a better quality of life, a healthier environment and increased prosperity. Some of these are things that we can easily measure, like the number of school places, or the speed with which an ambulance can get to a sick person. Others are less easily measured, such as our pride of place, our heritage and the way in which we all look after each other. All aspects of wellbeing are connected to each other. So, for example, if our natural environment is poor, it will affect our mental and physical health as well as our economy. In other words, all the parts of our community wellbeing are interconnected. That said, one thing everyone agreed on is that we would like our community to be the very best it can be.

Although we often think about wellbeing in terms of good physical and mental health, it can also describe the wider conditions we need as individuals and communities to have a better quality of life, healthier environment and increased prosperity.

Considering all the aspects of community wellbeing together helps us to identify actions that can be undertaken by communities alongside local and national governments.

During workshops & consultations with WPPN Community Groups; Community Wellbeing was considered and assessed under 6 Headings (**aligned to The Sustainable Development Goals SDG – see over**)





Social & 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?

Environment & 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?

Work, Economy & 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 used effectively and sustainably without causing harm to social and environmental sustainability?

Health - 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?

Values, Culture & Meaning - What is needed to ensure that everyone both 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?

Participation, Democracy & 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?



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

In September 2015, Ireland was one of the 193 Members States of the United Nations (UN) who adopted these goals. The Goals interconnect and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030.

Governments have primary responsibility for implementing the SDGs, but the Goals do not belong solely to governments. The Goals belong to everyone, in every community, in every country across the world. To achieve the SDGs, governments, businesses, communities and individuals will all have to work together. Everyone can contribute to that work, from businesses adopting sustainable corporate strategies, to communities working together to improve their local environment, to the individual choices we all make as consumers.

For this reason Westmeath PPN have identified how Our Vision links with the shared goals and have identified for each wellbeing “domain” or aspect which, Sustainable Development Goal is being progressed with the vision. A summary of this overlay is shown overleaf.

How our Vision for Community Wellbeing in County Westmeath links with the SDGs



Health (physical & mental)



Environment & Sustainability



Work, Economy & Resources



Values, Culture & Meaning



Social & Community Development



Participation, Democracy & Good Governance



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How did we create the Vision of Community Wellbeing in County Westmeath



1

Workshop

PPN Members were invited to attend Community Wellbeing workshops.

At these workshops the Community Wellbeing concept was presented.



2

Asset Mapping

Working in groups, attendees then highlighted the “assets” and aspects of their community that they wish to preserve and protect for current and future generations.



3

Wellbeing vision

Using the 6 Community Wellbeing headings, attendees shared what they (and the organisations they work for) considered to be important for their community's wellbeing.



4

Consultation

Following the workshop, an online consultation was shared with members who were unable to attend the workshops.

They were provided the opportunity to answer the same questions asked at the workshop.



5

Draft Vision

The PPN resource workers and secretariat members then analysed the responses from the workshop and online consultation.

They then produced the draft wellbeing statements.

Overarching Vision for Community Wellbeing in County Westmeath

“Westmeath is a flourishing community with a thriving economy where we live and work sustainably. It is a welcoming and safe place which values and respects all people. We enjoy a beautiful and healthy natural environment and celebrate our rich heritage. Each of us has the freedom to live the life we choose and have a say in decisions that affect us. We all participate in our communities making them vibrant places where no-one is left behind. We are all supported to be the best that we can be.”

The above overarching Vision for Community Wellbeing in County Westmeath was created by bringing together the separate Visions developed for Athlone and Mullingar Municipal Districts.

Each of these Municipal District Visions was developed by reviewing and analysing the responses from the workshops and consultation; then distilled/translated these into “high-level” statements.

Note: As these are high level visions - specific issues mentioned are not included in the statement but these will be shared with WPPN Reps working on Local Committees/Boards.





Athlone Municipal District Vision for Community Wellbeing



Overall Athlone Municipal District Vision

Athlone Municipal District has a flourishing community and thriving economy where we live and work sustainably in a rich environment. It is a safe place where each of us has the freedom to live the lives we choose and respects the diversity within our community. Everyone participates actively in our society and no-one is left behind.

Values, Culture and Meaning

In Athlone Municipal District we recognise, protect and actively enjoy our unique natural assets and built heritage. We celebrate our Irish culture, heritage and traditions while welcoming and respecting other cultures in our community.

- We value our unique Irish and local heritage, preserve this and pass all aspects of it on to future generations.
- All our citizens are supported to access and enjoy our natural environment and amenities.
- We actively participate in an outdoor and sporting culture.
- Our community is enriched by the contribution of all cultures and diversity. We understand and respect one another's cultures and recognise the freedom of the individual.



Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

We live in a safe place, where we all participate in effective democracy that is transparent and accountable. We are well-informed and our community groups are supported and resourced.

- All citizens' views are valued, we are consulted and involved in decision-making and have effective and accountable representatives.
- Athlone Municipal District has good governance that is diverse and democratic throughout education establishments, community groups, workplaces and local government. Education is provided to support this.
- All our citizens are well-informed through good communication and education which supports their participation in democracy and working together.
- Community groups are informed and supported to access available funding and resources sufficient for their activities.
- We have a range of transport services and infrastructure that can be used flexibly to meet the needs of communities and individuals.
- We have effective policing and feel and are safe in our local areas.

Environment and Sustainability

In Athlone Municipal District we live and work sustainably. We actively protect and enhance our rich natural environment and built heritage through use of best practice.

- We value and respect all living things and natural resources and use best practice to protect these for future generations.
- All citizens and businesses are committed to eliminating waste and we have facilities to handle any unavoidable waste in ways that minimise impacts on our natural environment.
- We have comprehensive and integrated transport infrastructure and services and communications that allow is to reduce the impact of our travel on our environment.
- Environmental sustainability is at the forefront of our thinking and decision-making. Individuals, communities, businesses and organisations are encouraged and supported in this.
- We use renewable energy sources and our planning and design systems deliver optimum energy efficiency in all buildings, transport and production.



Social and Community Development

Ours is a diverse community which is safe and accessible, provided with good infrastructure and services, and has well-resourced community groups. We are all active, informed and included.

- Our community groups have the facilities, resources and support to enable them to function effectively. The wide variety of community activities meet the needs within the community and enhance our lives.
- Our towns, villages and all public areas are fully accessible, providing a safe and enjoyable experience for all.
- We have good provision of different types of housing and accommodation that are appropriate to individual needs.
- We have good, accessible healthcare services that help us to live well.
- We have an excellent public transport system and all our transport facilities and infrastructure support healthy lifestyles.

Work, Economy and Resources

Athlone Municipal District has a thriving economy and is a great place for our people to live and work sustainably. We recognise the value of all types of work, paid and unpaid. There are great education, training and practical supports that enable all of us to contribute positively to our community, economy and society.

- Diverse types of enterprise are supported throughout their development and operate conscientiously in relation to their workers, the community and the natural environment.
- Citizens of all ages can avail of excellent, flexible training, education and skill sharing opportunities, allowing them to fulfil their individual potential and aspirations.
- Good infrastructure supports a variety of different work practices (e.g. working from home, flexi-time, etc.), an inclusive workforce, and a good quality of life.
- We assist all citizens seeking employment and those in difficulties with practical supports, with dignity and respect.
- All our citizens have access to suitable affordable homes.



Health (Mental and Physical)

In Athlone Municipal District all our citizens are supported to live the life they choose; with well-resourced, locally accessible services and facilities that support our health and wellbeing.

- We have creative and flexible transport and communication options that meet community needs.
- There are excellent and accessible recreational facilities for all generations and abilities, and we all engage in the wide choice of activities that are open to us.
- All of our citizens have access to high quality and affordable health care services and facilities, good mental health supports and effective responses to addiction.
- We value the role of carers and provide necessary and just supports to them and those they care for.
- There are practical supports for wellbeing and independent living for all citizens through all life stages.
- All our public buildings and spaces are fully accessible.





Mullingar Municipal District Vision for Community Wellbeing



Overall Mullingar Municipal District Vision

Mullingar Municipal District is a welcoming and safe community which is inclusive and values all people. Our communities are vibrant and supported and we have a say in decisions that affect us. We live and work sustainably in a beautiful and healthy natural environment and we celebrate our rich heritage. We are all supported to be the best that we can be.

Work, Economy and Resources

Mullingar Municipal District supports and facilitates successful, sustainable enterprise, both social and commercial. Supports are provided for those working, for those not in work, and for volunteers.

- There is a range of education, training and learning opportunities available to meet individual, community and business needs.
- There is excellent infrastructure that enables good living and working environments.
- Our economy is powered by renewable energy and uses green technology.
- The ways we work support the natural environment, a high quality of life and thriving communities.
- All members of our community contribute and share their skills and experience and we value both new and traditional ways of working.
- We have strong cohesive local communities where we support one another and make sure no-one is left behind.



Health (Mental and Physical)

All citizens in Mullingar Municipal District are safe, accepted, valued and treated with respect and dignity. We are educated across all generations to lead healthy and mindful lives. We have excellent health services, sport and recreation facilities, and necessary supports for everyone to live their best lives.

- Timely, appropriate medical and psychological supports are available and accessible to all.
- People of all ages and abilities have good access to transport, facilities and public spaces.
- Individual citizens are able to make decisions and are supported to live the lives they choose across all ages and abilities.
- We have high quality health education tailored to communities needs.
- Diverse, well-resourced sports and recreation facilities are accessible and available throughout the community.

Values, Culture and Meaning

Mullingar Municipal District is a welcoming place that celebrates and embraces the cultures of “locals and new locals”. We appreciate, protect and preserve our rich natural environment and built heritage. Our wealth of traditional Irish heritage is important to us as is our ability to be our individual selves.

- We are proud of our Irishness and actively preserve all the different elements of this (for example, our turns of phrase, stories, sport, traditions, language, games and literature),
- Through learning we all understand, respect and value the different cultures and diversity within our community.
- We celebrate our unique natural and built heritage and actively engage our citizens and visitors, imparting knowledge, understanding and appreciation of our heritage, history and traditions.
- There is a rich culture of arts and music in our communities.



Environment and Sustainability

In Mullingar Municipal District we enjoy a beautiful and diverse natural environment with sympathetic development, thoughtfully planned to meet community needs with minimum impact. We are all well-informed about our environment and supported to live sustainably and safely, valuing and respecting nature. All citizens, groups and organisations actively protect, conserve and promote biodiversity and natural resources.

- We have sustainable food production and consumption.
- We use best practice renewable energy sources and maximise efficiencies in energy use.
- We have outstanding public transport infrastructure and services with minimal environmental impact. We are thoughtful about the journeys we make and use the most environmentally friendly forms of transport.
- We minimise waste production and have great facilities that enable us to maximise environmental benefits from waste management.
- We have wonderful and diverse green spaces for the benefit of nature and the enjoyment of all.

Social and Community Development

We celebrate diversity and everyone is valued as a member of our community. Our community is a vibrant, safe and accessible place, able to accommodate the varied needs of individuals through a range of facilities, services and infrastructure.

- Everyone has safe, affordable, accommodation that meets their needs.
- We recognise and meet the specific needs identified by groups within our communities.
- We have a comprehensive range of locally accessible services.
- Our communities are well connected via integrated transport and communications infrastructure.
- Resources are made available to sustain resilient communities and provide locally based facilities.

Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

All organisations and representatives have received appropriate training, work transparently, communicate well and are fully accountable. Decision-making is shown to be well-informed and takes account of all views. All citizens actively participate; their views are sought, and they have the opportunity to influence outcomes. Our community groups are fully supported. All individuals are included, valued and free to be themselves. We have good provision of diverse, high quality outdoor public amenities.

- All communication opportunities are used effectively to:
 - o Keep citizens informed
 - o Enable open discussion
 - o Support meaningful engagement
- We have good access to education and training and to appropriate services as needed within the community.
- Local government has authority and resources support our thriving Municipal District.





About Westmeath Public Participation Network (PPN)



Westmeath Public Participation Network (PPN) is an independent network of not-for-profit volunteer-led groups spread across County Westmeath. Groups include community & voluntary, environmental, and social inclusion groups active within the county.

Westmeath PPN is run by a volunteer committee, the Secretariat, elected by the membership whose responsibility is to oversee the development of the network. Westmeath PPN has two full-time members of staff- the PPN Resource Worker (RW) and Support Worker (SW), who assists the Secretariat in the day-to-day running of the PPN and in its development.



There are three main objectives for PPNs:

Informing

Provide information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sector and acts as a hub around which information is distributed and received.

Developing

Strengthen the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion, community & voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate.

Representing

Facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sectors on decision making bodies.

Westmeath PPN is co-funded by Department of Rural & Community Development and Westmeath County Council.



An Roinn Forbartha
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For more information Contact:



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Vision for Community Wellbeing in County Westmeath

“Westmeath is a flourishing community with a thriving economy where we live and work sustainably. It is a welcoming and safe place which values and respects all people. We enjoy a beautiful and healthy natural environment and celebrate our rich heritage. Each of us has the freedom to live the life we choose and have a say in decisions that affect us. We all participate in our communities making them vibrant places where no-one is left behind.
We are all supported to be the best that we can be.”

Acknowledgements

WPPN wishes to express its sincere gratitude to everyone who helped and contributed in any way to the creation of this Community Wellbeing Vision for Westmeath; the community group members who participated in our wellbeing consultation workshops, the online consultation, through the feedback process on the draft document, through to this final document. Dr Harriet Emerson who guided the process and added her invaluable knowledge. The members of WPPN Secretariat, who attended the training, helped facilitate consultation workshops and helped draw all the inputs into this final document. WPPN Resource Worker Brigid Geoghegan and Support Worker Margaret Egan who organised and facilitated the consultation workshops; online consultation and worked to help draft and bring the consultation process to this final document. Westmeath County Council & Department of Rural & Community Development who fund and support this and all the work of WPPN. To Ruth Murray of Westmeath County Council who did such a wonderful job in graphic designing this document. This has truly been a piece of ground up consultation and reflective of how you want your county to be “The best that it can be for this and future generations”



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Department of Rural and
Community Development



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