



Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	
Name:	KWETB Youth Officer
Email Address:	[REDACTED]
Reference:	GDKLAP-160015
Submission Made	January 31, 2024 4:01 PM

File

KWETB Submission to Greystones Delgany Kilcoole LAP 2024.docx, 0.03MB

Submission Title: Proposal for the Establishment of Youth and Community Facility in Greystones-Delgany

Submitter's Name: Fiona Creedon, KWETB Youth Officer for Co. Wicklow

Date of Submission: 31st January 2024

Contact Information:



Executive Summary:

This proposal has been compiled to demonstrate the need and to support the appeal for the development a youth and community-based facility to be included in the Greystones Delgany Kilcoole Local Area Plan.

Introduction:

My name is Fiona Creedon, I am the KWETB Youth Officer for Co. Wicklow. The role of the youth officer is to support, develop and monitor youth services in their remit area, to engage directly with youth organisations in order to provide support and guidance. The youth officer identifies gaps in youth service provision and this gap analysis forms the basis for service provision by youth services.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth requested that KWETB Youth Work team carry out an Area Profile Needs Assessment in 2023. This involved gathering census data and consultations with local community and voluntary services. The data collected became evidence of the need for youth work provision in the Co. Wicklow area.

A youth service in Greystones-Delgany would offer young people a safe space in their local community to come together to mix with their peers, giving them a sense of belonging in their community and evidence has shown in other areas of that county that the provision of a youth service has positive benefits including the reduction of anti-social behaviour among young people.

The recent edition of 'Young Ireland: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (0-24) 2023-2028' is informed by a rights-based agenda stemming from Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – access to services is a right for all children and young people. The document states 'one important way in which (Irish) Government supports young people to thrive, to achieve their potential and to live fulfilling lives now and in the future is through the provision of youth work.'

The research carried out as part of the Area Profile Needs Assessment proved that there is an urgent need for a youth work service in central Greystones, however the lack of a community/youth premises prevents any application from moving forward.

Statement of Need:

In population terms Greystones is the youngest LEA in Co. Wicklow which itself is a young County.

Greystones has a high proportion of its population under 25, the highest of all LEAs in Co. Wicklow - 34.4% compared to 32.6% for the County or 32.2% for the State. 10,487 people aged under 25 live in Greystones. Additionally it has the highest proportion of its population under 18, 28.7% compared to 26.3% for Co. Wicklow and 25% for the State. As an indicator of future demand for youth services, whilst Greystones is not the most populous LEA in Co. Wicklow it has the highest number of 5-12 year olds in the County – 4001 and the second highest number of 0-4 and 13-18 year olds. Whilst other LEAs have seen a decrease or slow growth in the numbers of people aged under 25 between 2011-2022, Greystones youth population has grown 17.6%, much faster than the County (6.4%) or the State (6.2%).

Greystones has seen its population rise by 20 per cent since 2016, the population of young people in Greystones grew 18% between 2011 and 2022, these figures are 3 times that of Wicklow or the state. Last year in Greystones-Delgany area there were 4,555 young people aged between 12 and 24 who could avail of a youth service intervention if a provision were in place. In addition, there are a further 5,932 children aged between 0 and 12 years who will avail of this service immediately if it were in place or would be in the not too distant future.

A recent article in the Irish Times newspaper highlighted the challenges faced by the community in Greystones, residents expressed concerns about oversubscribed amenities, including schools, sports clubs and medical care. The article drew attention to the necessary collaboration among schools to address the rising demand for education, with some schools even considering the need for additional facilities. (<https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/housing-planning/2023/06/19/is-greystones-at-capacity-there-is-a-genuine-concern-that-the-town-cant-cope/>)

Consultations carried out with a number of locally based services also demonstrated the need for a designated youth and community space. Greystones Family Resource Centre have been campaigning for additional facilities for some time and have been linking with KWETB, Co. Wicklow CYPSC, Crosscare and Foroige to encourage a youth service to the area, however without a facility the prospect of this is extremely challenging. Since 2002, Greystones Family Resource Centre has been working with individuals and families in the wider Greystones area to provide both Family Support Services and Community Development Programmes. Their community programmes include: children and youth programmes, an annual summer project, a women's group, senior's Programme and a wide range of community education classes. The family support services include: low cost counselling, Rainbows support programme for children around bereavement or parental separation, play therapy, a domestic violence service and information and advocacy on rights and entitlements. They have been providing this invaluable support in spite of unsuitable and inaccessible premises. This organisation is the only professional community support service in the area and would be the ideal candidates to manage a youth and community facility in the area.

Crosscare Bray Youth Service manage the recently expanded New Directions Youth Diversion Project. Greystones was an area identified as in need of the GYDP due to the increasing levels of anti-social behaviour in the Greystones area, including Charlesland. The manager of Crosscare BYS was unable to fully implement the project in Greystones due to the difficulties in being able to access suitable “youth friendly” premises. Commercial rents were prohibitive, or accessibility was unsuitable or unsafe. The project has managed to acquire some slots in the premises of another community service on a pilot basis, for six months. Lack of security of tenure has over the years, hampered, and continues to hamper the development of youth work provision in the Greystones Municipal District area.

The impact of a youth and community facility on the Greystones area can be multifaceted, affecting individuals, the community, and the broader social fabric. Here are some potential positive impacts:

1. *Youth Development:*
 - Skill development – these facilities provide a space for young people to engage in recreational, educational, and skill-building activities. This can include sports, arts, workshops, and mentorship programs, contributing to the overall development of youth.
 - Empowerment – by offering a supportive environment, these facilities empower young people to express themselves, build confidence, and develop a sense of responsibility and leadership.
 - Social integration – youth facilities provide a platform for social interactions, helping young individuals form connections with peers, mentors, and community members. This can reduce feelings of isolation and promote a sense of belonging.
2. *Community Building:*
 - Social cohesion – the presence of a youth and community facility fosters social cohesion by bringing diverse groups of people together. This can strengthen community bonds, enhance communication, and reduce social isolation.
 - Networking and collaboration – these facilities often serve as hubs for various community organisations, enabling collaboration and coordination of services. This can lead to a more efficient use of resources and a more unified community approach to problem-solving.
3. *Crime Reduction:*
 - Prevention – engaging young people in constructive activities through these facilities can contribute to crime prevention. By providing alternatives to negative behaviours, such as substance abuse or anti-social behaviour, communities can experience a reduction in crime rates.
 - Community policing – the presence of a community facility can encourage positive interactions between the Gardai and the community, fostering a sense of trust and cooperation, particularly at this time when the Gardai are stretched to capacity.
4. *Health and Well-being:*
 - Mental health – providing a supportive and inclusive environment can positively impact mental health by offering a space for stress relief, counselling services, and community support networks.

In summary, a well-designed and effectively managed youth and community facility in Greystones could contribute significantly to the social, economic and cultural vitality of an area. It can empower individuals, strengthen community ties, and create a positive environment for growth and development.

Proposal Details:

The proposed youth and community facility based in Greystones would work towards addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by the young population and the extended community, fostering personal growth, community engagement and overall wellbeing. Building on the work already carried out by Greystones Family Resource Centre, the youth service aspect would provide urgently needed youth supports.

In addition to the previously mentioned benefits of a community space to an area, the Greystones Youth & Community facility would meet the following objectives:

1. Provide a safe and inclusive space -
Create a safe and welcoming environment that promotes inclusivity, where individuals of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities feel comfortable and respected
2. Youth Development and empowerment -

- Facilitate programmes and activities that empower young individuals by enhancing their skills, promoting leadership, and fostering a sense of responsibility within the community
3. Education and skill development –
Offer educational support services, workshops, and training programmes that help young people acquire new skills and prepare for future career opportunities
 4. Health and wellbeing –
Provide resources and services that address the mental health needs of youth, including counselling, support groups and awareness campaigns to promote overall wellbeing e.g physical activity, healthy food programmes etc.
 5. Community engagement and social interaction –
Organise events, projects and activities that encourage community members, especially young people, to actively participate and engage with one another, fostering social bonds and a sense of community.
 6. Cultural and recreational opportunities –
Create opportunities for cultural enrichment and recreational activities, promoting a healthy and balanced lifestyle among youth and community members.
 7. Support for vulnerable populations -
Implement initiatives that specifically cater to vulnerable or marginalised populations, providing targeted supports and resources to address their unique needs.
 8. Youth leadership and civic engagement –
Foster youth leadership through training programmes and projects that encourage active participation in community affairs and civic responsibilities
 9. Collaboration with local organisations –
Establish partnerships with local schools and businesses to maximise resources and provide a comprehensive range of services for the community
 10. Environmental sustainability and community pride –
Promote environmental awareness and sustainability practices within the community, instilling a sense of pride and responsibility for the local environment.
 11. Family support and parental involvement –
Provide resources and programmes that support families and encourage parental involvement in the activities of the facility.

By aligning the facility's activities with these objectives, the youth and community facility can play a vital role in creating a positive and enriching environment that contributes to the overall wellbeing and development of the local community.

The ideal Greystones Youth & Community Facility should be centrally located; accessible to wheelchair users; include a large multi-purpose meeting space for the community; a designated large space for young people; a community garden space; a number of office spaces and rooms for one to one support; a technology centre; and a kitchen area. It should also include toilet and shower facilities, safety and security features and be environmentally sustainable.

The Project for Public Spaces states that successful public spaces have four main qualities

- They are accessible
 - People are engaged in activities
 - The space is comfortable and has a good image
 - It is a sociable place, on where people meet each other.
- (<https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat>)

This is the aspiration for a Greystones Youth & Community facility.

Partnership and Community Engagement:

KWETB Youth Work team have compiled this submission to support local services such as Greystones Family Resource Centre and Crosscare Bray Youth Service in their campaign for a suitable youth and community facility for the area. The need for a youth service has been identified and evidence of this need has been provided by census data and by the consultations with the local community which form part of the work of the aforementioned services.

We envisage that Greystones FRC would be the anchor tenant of the Greystones Youth & Community Facility, and that Crosscare BYS would provide the youth service support. Once the facility has been agreed upon KWETB will link with the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth to seek funding for professional youth workers to meet the needs of the young people in the area.

I understand that Greystones Family Resource Centre and the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force area also presenting a submission on the same issue.

A youth and community facility for Greystones lends itself to a number of local, national and international policy documents. 'Good health and wellbeing is identified as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring healthy lives and promoting the wellbeing for all at all ages is recognised as being essential for sustainable development.' (Pg. 21 Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028)

The following relevant policy documents are also cited in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028:

- The National Planning Framework notes that 'planning affords an opportunity to facilitate and deliver a more socially inclusive society through better integration and greater accessibility at all stages of the life cycle. (Pg 159)
- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy recognises that social infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities. (Pg. 159)
- The Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 sets out a number of goals, many of which are directly relevant to the provision of a Youth & Community Space in Greystones, namely:
 - Develop community capacity in disadvantaged communities
 - Promote active citizenship and public participation
 - Develop high quality integrated services available to all communities, in particular, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups

The impact and effectiveness of a Greystones Youth & Community Facility would be evaluated on an ongoing basis by systematic exploration of the following:

- Attendance records at events, workshops and community meetings
- Surveys, feedback and observations by participants in development programmes and stakeholders
- Liaison with local Gardai to analyse levels of anti-social behaviour
- Identify indicators of increased collaboration, communication and a sense of belonging among community members
- Measure contribution of facility to environmental sustainability e.g. community gardens, eco-friendly practices and awareness programmes
- Evaluate the extent to which the facility serves as a hub for various community organisations
- Evaluate the facilities levels of accessibility and inclusion
- Collect and document success stories or case studies that highlight positive outcomes

- Access the facility's sustainability over time, its ability to adapt to a changing community and to provide a continued positive impact

Conclusion:

This submission highlights the need for a Youth & Community Facility in the Greystones area. The proposal is informed by a comprehensive Area Profile Needs Assessment which gathered data from the 2022 Census and local consultations. The assessment demonstrates a significant demand for youth services, particularly given the significant increase in the population of young people in the area (18%).

Despite the evident need, the lack of a dedicated facility hinders progress. The proposed facility aims to address this gap by providing a safe and inclusive space for youth development, community building, and health and wellbeing supports. The multifaceted impact includes skill development, empowerment, social cohesion and a reduction of health inequalities.

Partnerships with organisations like Greystones Family Resource Centre and Crosscare Youth Service strengthen the proposal. The facility aims to be centrally located, accessible and equipped with diverse spaces, including meeting areas, offices, a technology centre and a kitchen.

The proposal aligns with local, national and international policy documents. It supports goals in the Wicklow County Development Plan, National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan.

The submission expresses the intent to collaborate with local organisations, seek funding, and position Greystones Family Resource Centre as the anchor tenant. The proposed facility aims to contribute significantly to the social, economic, and cultural vitality of the Greystones area, promoting community wellbeing and development.

The provision of a Greystones Youth & Community Facility supported by Greystones Family Resource Centre, Crosscare Youth Services in conjunction with Wicklow County Council sends a clear message to the community, in particular the vulnerable and isolated members of the community, that is that each individual within the community holds significance, actively contributing to its collective wellbeing, that every person's role is vital, and their unique contributions are valued.