



Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First

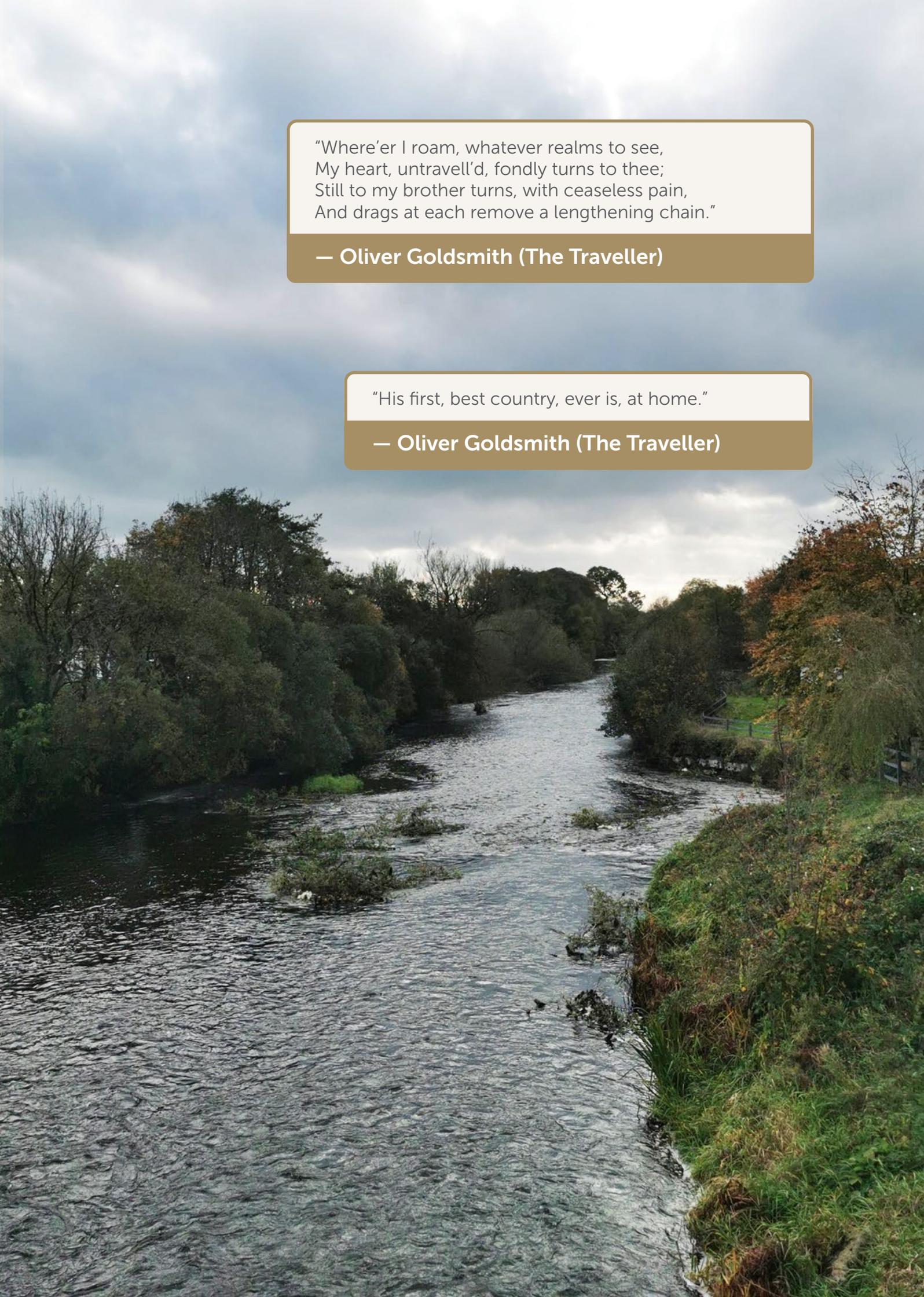


Comhairle Chontae An Longfoirt
Longford County Council

CONNECTED
People • Place • Opportunity



Ballymahon Town Centre First Plan Longford County Council

A wide river flows through a lush, green landscape. The water is dark and rippled, reflecting the overcast sky. The banks are lined with dense trees and bushes, some showing autumnal colors. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds, with a hint of light breaking through near the horizon.

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."

— Oliver Goldsmith (The Traveller)

"His first, best country, ever is, at home."

— Oliver Goldsmith (The Traveller)

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The Ballymahon Town Centre First (TCF) Plan sets a shared, community-led vision to revitalise Main Street and its hinterlands, tackle vacancy and dereliction, enable town-centre living, and make it safer and easier to walk, cycle and spend time in Ballymahon. The plan aligns with national TCF policy and complements National, Regional and local frameworks.

Our Vision

Ballymahon's town centre will grow as a welcoming economic, educational and cultural heart – championing local enterprise, creative spirit, and strong community identity through high-quality spaces where everyone feels they belong.

The case for change

- A busy, historic Main Street with generous width but dominated by traffic and perpendicular parking: crossing is difficult, especially between the library and the Post Office.
- Vacancy is relatively low overall, yet conspicuous long-term dereliction harms confidence and investment.
- Two post-primary schools (approximately 1,200 students) create peak-time pressure; approximately 15 buses currently queue at the western end of the town at school pick-up times, affecting safety and flow.
- Strong natural and cultural assets (River Inny, Royal Canal, Newcastle Woods, Oliver Goldsmith heritage) remain under-connected to the town centre economy.

Goals

1. Tourism, Culture and Identity
2. Enterprise, Economy and Education
3. Town Centre Living and Regeneration
4. Public Realm, Movement and Sustainability
5. Cross-cutting: Climate Action and Social Inclusion

Executive Summary

Top Priority Actions (first 18 months)

1. **Delivery of off street car park**
2. **Greenway to Newcastle Woods**
3. **Pobal le Cheile – construction commenced**

Priority Actions (first 36 months)

1. **Public Realm and Movement Plan:** design and Part 8 for Main Street crossings, footway upgrades, junction calming, and a school-time bus management scheme.
2. **School Mobility Programme:** safe routes, designated bus layover off-street, and new zebra/toucan crossings at desire lines.
3. **Backlands Masterplan (Phase 1):** building on the delivery of the car park, a masterplan for the north eastern backlands will be developed, creating a second street with mixed-use plots, permeability links and older people's housing.
4. **Vacancy and Dereliction Blitz:** complete survey, contact owners, apply levy, progress targeted CPOs, and enable Croí Cónaithe conversions.
5. **Pobal le Chéile – Governance and Fit-Out:** finalise governance model; complete construction stage and parallel programming for youth, seniors and new communities.
6. **Tourism Linkages Strategy:** Ballymahon-as-hub repositioning with signage, digital presence, and packages (Canal-Inny-Woods-Center Parcs-Lough Ree).
7. **Shopfront and Meanwhile Use Scheme:** grant and design guide and permissive licensing for pop-ups; focus on western end gap sites.
8. **Digital Town Roadmap:** uplift from readiness 2.2 via Wi-Fi hotspots, digital skills, e-commerce mentoring, and open-data town dashboard.
9. **Annual Town Centre Health Check:** repeat vacancy counts, footfall and mode share; publish dashboard and adjust delivery.

Expected outcomes by Year 3

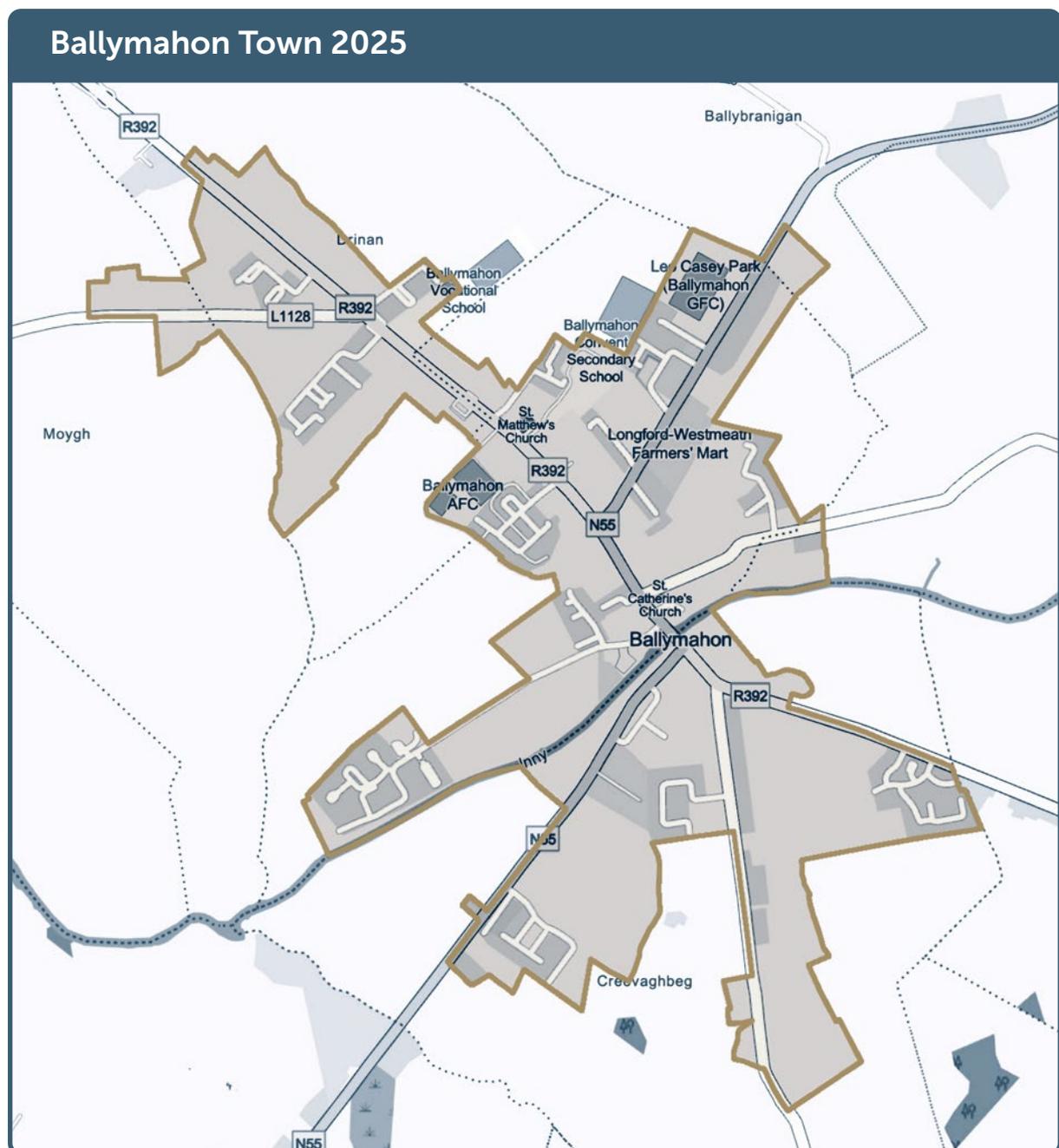
- Safer crossings and reduced school-time congestion; increased footfall on Main Street.
- 3-5 derelict buildings advanced to reuse; at least 2 over-the-shop homes commenced.
- New greenway section delivered or under construction; increased dwell time by visitors.
- Phase 1 backlands plots ready with serviced access; new urban links opened.
- Pobal le Chéile operating model in place; increased participation by new communities.



Introduction

This Town Centre First (TCF) Plan aims to develop a vision for the future development of Ballymahon. It has a focus on tackling dereliction and vacant properties and making the town centre a more attractive place to live, work, socialise, visit and run a business.

The study area for this project is defined by the Main Street which forms the core of the town and is represented in the map below:



Introduction

A Town Centre First Policy

The National Planning Framework and Our Rural Future set out a vision to develop thriving Irish Towns which are integral to national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. This vision is built on the interdependence of urban and rural areas, and recognises the diversity of individual towns, the centrality of people, the importance of vibrant and lived-in places and the potential to create quality jobs and sustain our shared environment.

The Town Centre First policy seeks to support the delivery of this vision and complement a wide range of Government policies impacting on towns in Ireland. It provides a cross-cutting and collaborative framework for central government, local authorities, public and private sector stakeholders, and especially communities, to build sustainable vibrant town centres.

Towns impact on quality of life and should be attractive places for people of all ages, abilities and social backgrounds to live in. There remains a focus on enhancing work and enterprise, with new opportunities now presented by remote working. Towns also service the needs of visitors and tourists, as well as being an important source of community character and identity.

Town Centre First Mission Statement:



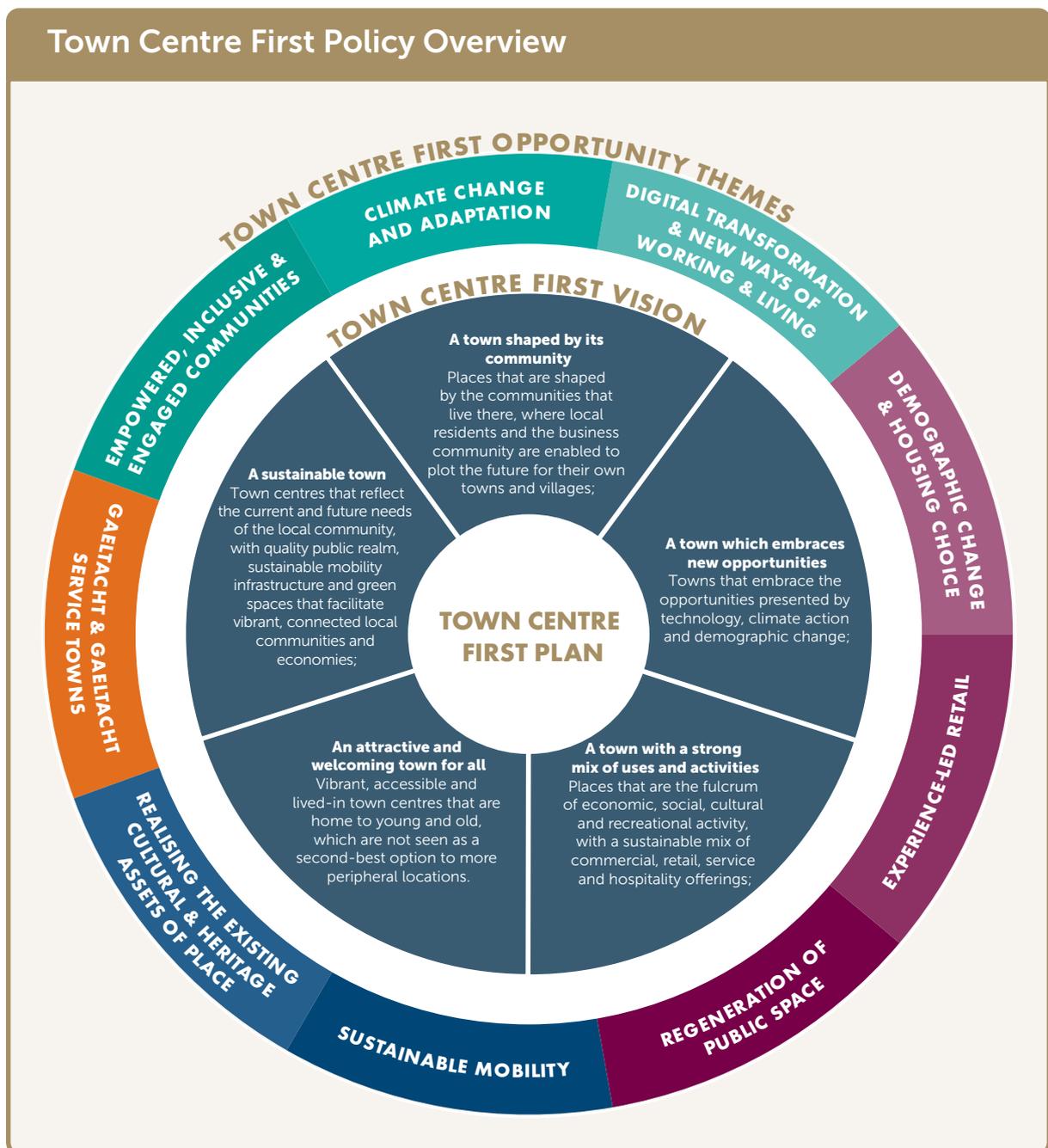
Town Centre First

“The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.”

Introduction

The Town Centre First (TCF) plan policy will facilitate that response by ensuring that town centres can function as the sustainable and vibrant heart of the communities they serve, in ways that are adaptable and appropriate to twenty-first century needs.

The diagram below outlines an overview of the Town Centre First policy, with an emphasis on the policy’s vision for a successful town centre and a number of key policy themes.



Introduction

National, Regional and Local Planning Context

The Ballymahon Town Centre First Plan has been developed within the national, regional and local policy context and therefore aligns with these planning policy documents. The key policy documents are set out below. The Plan is an evidence based, non-statutory document and does not form public policy. The Plan has been developed in collaboration with the Ballymahon Town Team, the elected members,

the local community and other stakeholders within the community. The following map illustrates the current land use zoning map for Ballymahon, as set out in the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 with the indicative regeneration area outlined. The actions proposed in this plan align with the zonings and policy objectives of the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

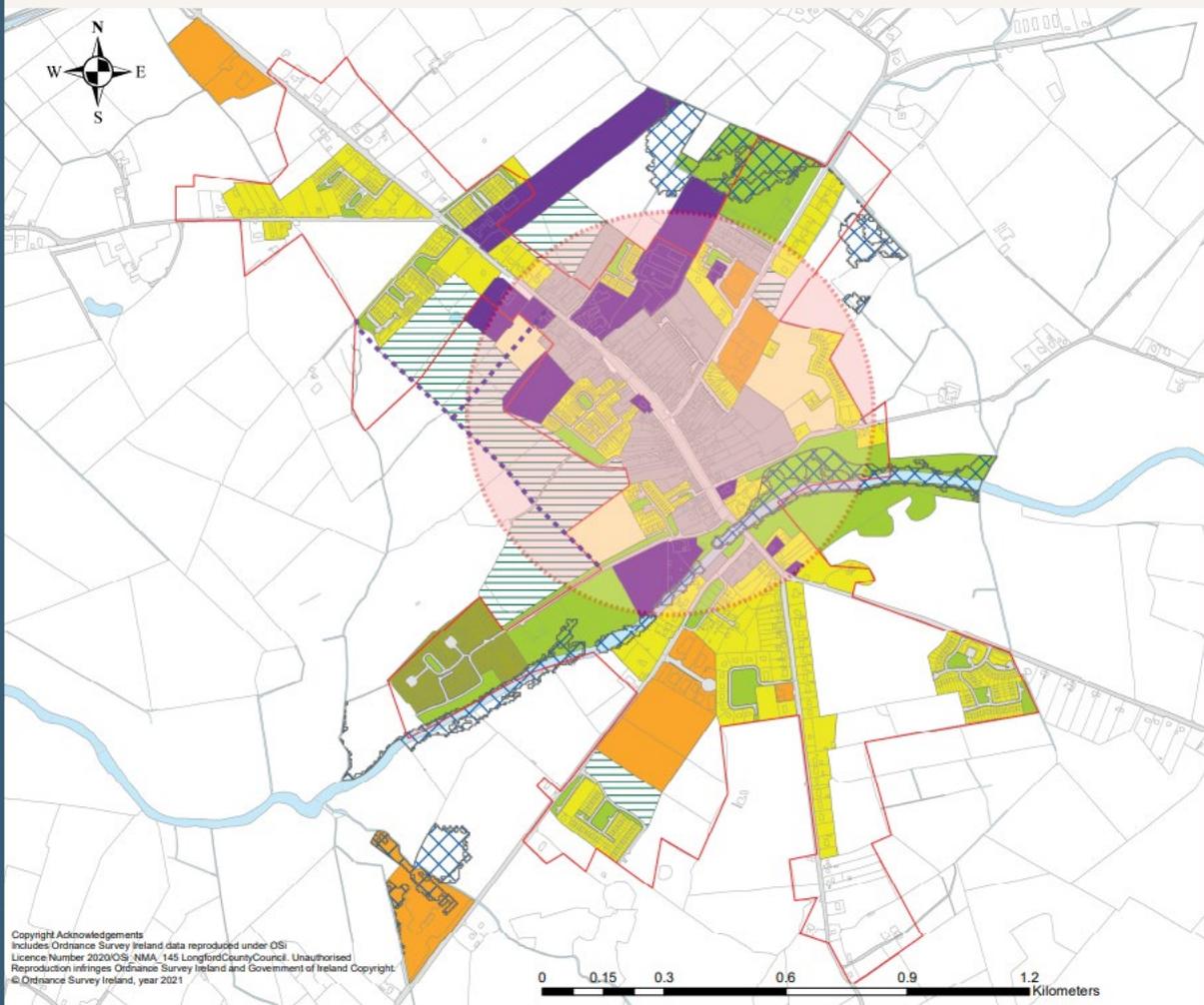
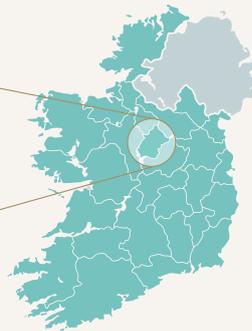


Introduction

Ballymahon Indicative Regeneration Area (County Development Plan 2021–2027)



Ballymahon Town



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- Legend**
- Indicative Regeneration
 - Residential
 - Strategic Residential Reserve
 - Industrial/Commercial/Warehousing
 - Residential/Community Services/Medical Centre
 - Town Core
 - New Residential
 - Social/Community/Education/Public Utility
 - Proposed Road
 - Recreation/Amenity/Green Space
 - CSO Boundary
 - Area of Constrained Land Use

1. Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration are central to delivering a successful Town Centre First plan, ensuring that the vision for Ballymahon is shaped by the people who live, work, and invest in the town. A coordinated approach – linking local residents, community groups, businesses, public agencies, and elected representatives – creates the foundation for shared understanding, transparent decision-making, and collective ownership

of the plan’s actions. Strong communication channels help keep stakeholders informed and engaged, while ongoing collaboration ensures that ideas, expertise, and local knowledge are harnessed to drive meaningful change. By embedding these principles throughout the process, the plan supports a unified effort to revitalise the town centre and deliver long-term, community-led regeneration.

Public Consultations

- 30th April 2024
- 28th May 2024
- 11th February 2026

Internal Working Group

- 6th June 2024

Student Engagement

- Ballymahon Vocational School 21st January 2025
- Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon 24th January 2025

Walkability Audit

- 16th September 2024

Town Centre Health Check

- 4th October 2024

Vacancy Assessment

- 6th November 2025

TU Dublin Student Project

- 19th February 2025/ 19th July 2025

UR Impact Project

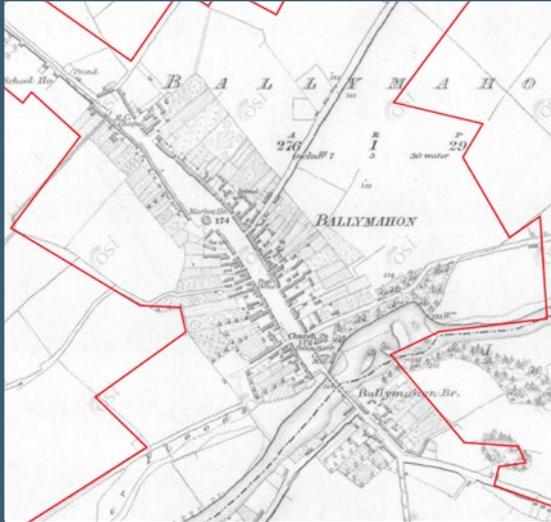
- August 2023 – December 2025

Town Team Meetings

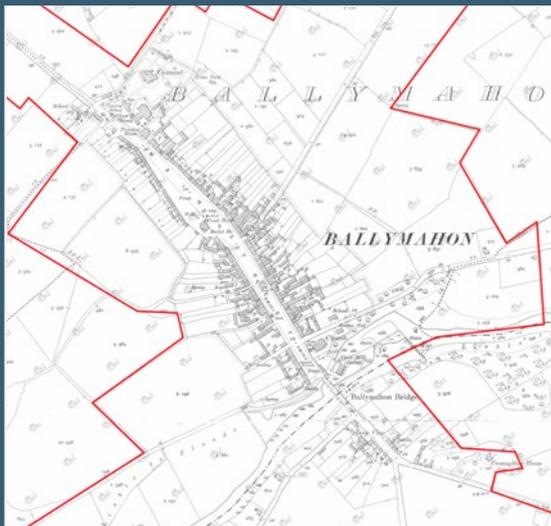
- Monthly throughout the plan development period



Ballymahon Town Core 6-inch Historical Map (1829-1969)



25-inch Historical Map (1863-1924)



OSI Base Map (2025)



2. Understanding the Place

“The process of understanding a place involves consulting with a wide range of people and collecting and collating data/information on the characteristics of the town centre and its surrounding context.”

— **Town Centre First Policy, 2022**

Ballymahon Overview

The town of Ballymahon is a traditional market town characterised by a wide main street with the former Market House located in the centre of the town. The earliest documentary evidence of Ballymahon is from the year 1578, when lands in the area were granted to the Dillon family. By 1654, the Down Survey shows Ballymahon as a group of houses situated at the southern end of the present town, on the right bank of the River Inny.

Two main families, the Shuldham family of Moigh House and the King-Harman family of Newcastle House, developed the town in the mid-nineteenth century. The buildings in the town are of late Georgian architecture, with two and three storey gabled houses, colour-washed and in rows of three and four.

2. Understanding the Place

Its characteristic wide Main Street is reputed to be the third widest main street in Ireland and is a feature that the local community are very proud of. This unique main street is currently dominated by cars as it serves as a national road. However, it presents numerous opportunities for the current generation to further enhance and develop Ballymahon as a vibrant, sustainable, viable, attractive location for people to

live, work and visit, supported by all necessary social, cultural, recreation services and facilities.

Located centrally within Ireland, Ballymahon is approximately 20km from Longford, Athlone and Mullingar. The town is bounded to the east by the River Inny and to the west by the Royal Canal. Ballymahon is located approximately 4km from Newcastle Forest, a large forest area with woodland walks and

Environment and Assets

- Between **River Inny** and **Royal Canal**
- Close to **Newcastle Woods, Center Parcs, Lough Ree**
- **Important amenities:** river walkway, kayak club, playground (but poorly located)

The map shows the geographical context of Ballymahon. The River Inny flows from the west towards the east, passing through the town. The Royal Canal runs parallel to the river, also flowing east. Ballymahon is situated between these two water bodies. To the east of the town is Newcastle Wood Walk, and further east is Center Parcs. To the west, the map shows Lough Ree. The town of Ballymahon is highlighted in a brown box, and the water bodies are shown in shades of blue and green.

2. Understanding the Place

approximately 8km at its nearest point from Lough Ree with boat access as far as Red Bridge along the River Inny, approximately 5km from Ballymahon.

A Digital Town Blueprint study was carried out in 2025 to understand the current digital readiness of the town and to stimulate stakeholder engagement on digitalisation. This study assessed digital readiness under a number of headings, including infrastructure for connectivity, digital business, digital public services, digital education, digital civil society, digital tourism and governance of digital initiatives.

This study found Ballymahon to have a digital readiness score of 2.2, indicating that digital readiness is ad hoc and mostly not documented.

As part of the data gathering exercise for the town, A Town Centre Health Check was carried out, including a study visit on 4th October 2024 by Queen's University, Belfast. The overall impression of the authors of the report was that Ballymahon's foundational amenities and public realm improvements reflect a welcoming town with strong potential for enhanced connectivity and further development. On the

Digital and Economic Snapshot



2.2/5

Digital Readiness Score
(ad hoc, limited documentation)

Growing demand
for enterprise space
→ community request
for a **business park**

Town Centre Health Check (2024)



9% vacancy on the day (low), but long-term dereliction holds back investment

Strong foundations:

- Library
- Arts
- Heritage
- Shops

Need For More:

- Active Travel
- Seating
- Family-Friendly Spaces

2. Understanding the Place

day of the assessment, the vacancy rate was noted at 9%, which was indicated to be relatively low. However, there is evidence of some very long term vacancy, with units falling into a state of severe dereliction, detracting from the overall town centre.

The Main Street is made up of a of the section of the N55 National Secondary Road and R392 Regional Road. In relation to the movement of people in the town, it was noted that the current pedestrian crossings on Main Street are inadequate due to the heavy vehicular traffic and not in the most appropriate locations for people

to access the services they want, e.g. between the library and post office or to cross the Edgeworthstown road, which makes crossing it challenging. Perpendicularly parked cars densely line the street, obstructing visibility and making it difficult to see oncoming vehicles.

Despite the wide Main Street, the street is visually dominated by vehicles. The key on-street parking observation relates to the town's Main Street, with a row of perpendicularly-oriented car parking spaces. This parking along Main Street is the preferred parking and most heavily utilised.

Community Insights (Place Standard)

Strengths:

- Safety
- Natural Spaces
- Local Economy
- Identity and Belonging



Weak Areas:

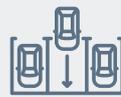
- Play/Recreation
- Traffic/Parking
- Care and Maintenance
- Youth Spaces



Movement and Streets



Main Street: one of Ireland's widest high streets



Streetscape dominated by heavy traffic and perpendicular parking



Difficult crossings, esp. Library → Post Office



≈1,200 secondary students, ≈15 buses → major school-time congestion

Walkability Audit:

wide footpaths but poor surfaces, speeding, and no cycle network

2. Understanding the Place

Landmark buildings in Ballymahon town core. (See page 24 for details of buildings included in the Record of Protected Structures.)



2. Understanding the Place

Town Profile

The town is centred along its Main Street, which offers a variety of conveniences, including food and drink establishments, retail stores, three schools, two churches and other essential services such as a post office and a bank. Some vacancy and mostly commercial dereliction are evident throughout the town. The library on the Main Street, which is located in the former Market House, acts as the town's focal point, while public art installations, particularly those honouring writer and poet, Oliver Goldsmith, add cultural interest to the public realm. Ballymahon's car-dominated environment is noticeable, with on-street parking impacting visual appeal and pedestrian accessibility. While the wide pavements encourage walkability, inconsistencies in their quality and limited pedestrian infrastructure in some areas can pose challenges. Green spaces, such as the Inny River walkway and playground, contribute to the town's community feel.

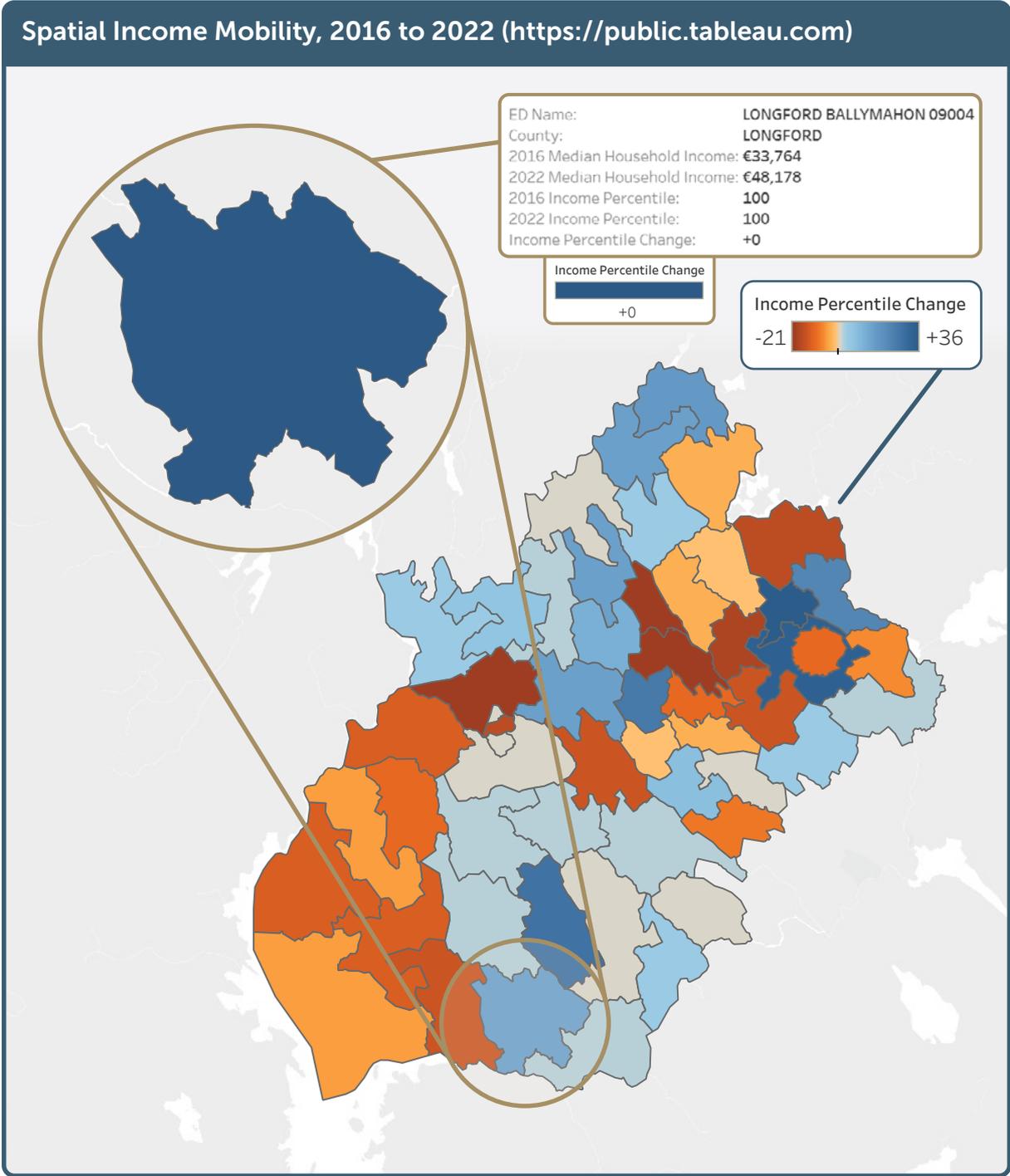
Some businesses attempt to spill into the street by the introduction of outdoor seating. However, these efforts are limited in success due to the dominance of vehicular traffic and on-street parking along Main Street. Public realm improvements

are evident through the addition of outdoor furniture, such as benches, tables and shelters. However, this could be improved through the addition of seating on the western end of the town.

A walkability audit was carried out on 16th September 2024, which included 30 participants from different sectors of society, including older people with reduced mobility, people with low vision and young people. Some of the positive points noted on the day were that the town is very clean and litter free, with wide footpaths. The proximity to the river and the community park were noted as well as age friendly seating and planters and flowerbeds at estate entrances and on Main Street. There are also nice walkways close to the town. However, people also noted that there were poor road/footpath surfaces in areas of the town, vehicles were travelling at excessive speeds and there was very heavy traffic and congestion at the junctions. Users of the town find it very difficult to cross the road, particularly between the library and the Post Office due to the width of the road and the heavy traffic volumes. There was found to be a lack of bike routes within the town, particularly connecting the residential areas and schools.

2. Understanding the Place

The graph inset below illustrates the percentile change on income distribution, 2022 v 2016, demonstrating there was no change on relative income distribution in Ballymahon, when compared to the county wide change below, with notable changes in Ballinalee, Granard Urban Area and south western part of the County.



2. Understanding the Place

Population

- The population of Ballymahon is 1,714 according to the 2022 census.
- 40.67% of the population of Ballymahon are not originally from Ireland.
- 11.25% of those speakers of foreign language speak English not well or not at all.
- 10% of families are lone parent families.

Deprivation

- 21.8% of households are rented from Local Authority/Approved Housing Bodies.
- 14.7% are unemployed or unable to work.

HP Deprivation is Ireland's most widely used social gradient metric in terms of affluence or disadvantage. Ballymahon has a varied Pobal HP Deprivation Index, ranging from 'very disadvantaged' in the town core to 'marginally above average' in the areas surround it.

Vacancy

- 14% of buildings were indicated to be vacant on census night.

Population & People



1,714

residents
(Census 2022)



41% not originally from Ireland → diverse, multilingual community



11% report limited English → need for language-friendly services



10% lone-parent households



22% social/affordable rental households

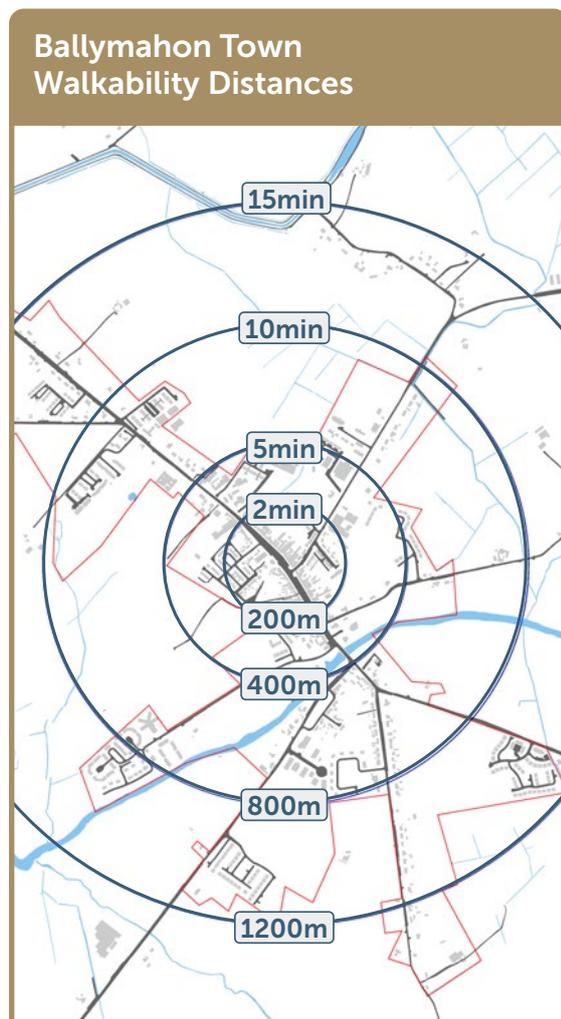
2. Understanding the Place

Public Realm

The Walkability Audit assessed various elements of the public realm in terms of accessibility, sense of safety in using the town centre and facilities and amenities in the town centre. Some issues were highlighted during the walkability audit, including the need to improve provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving at junctions and enhancing the connectivity between the Main Street and existing housing estates to make it safer and encourage greater number of local people to walk and cycle into the town, particularly into the local primary and secondary

schools. A lack of seating around the town, particularly towards the western end of the town was noted.

There are two secondary schools in the town, with approximately 1200 students between them. As a result, there are approximately 15 school buses serving those schools. In the afternoon, the buses currently park across the western end of the town, causing traffic congestion and raising concerns about safety for students crossing the road, due to a lack of road crossings at appropriate locations.



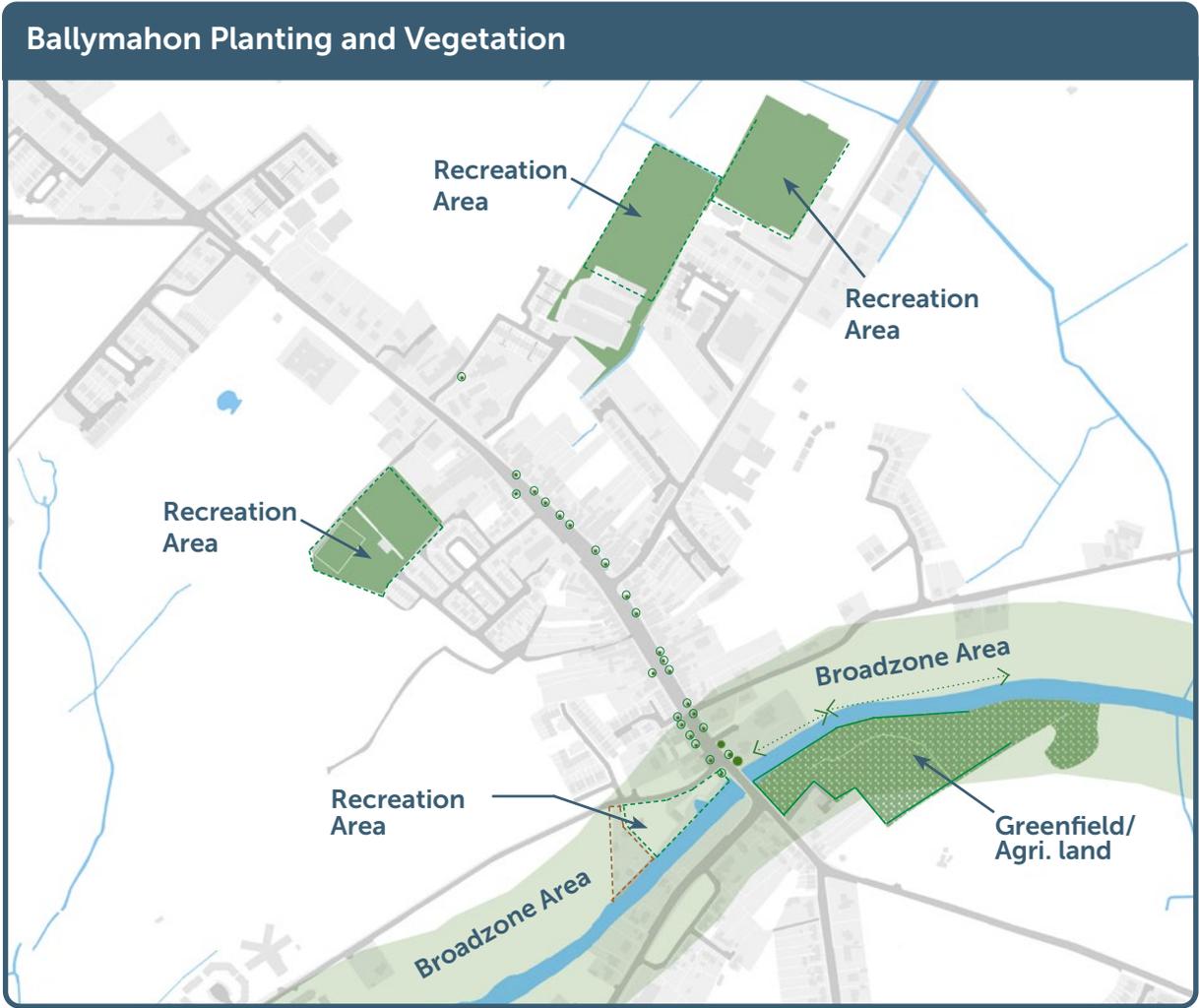
2. Understanding the Place

Amenities and Facilities

There is a playground in the town. However, its current location is away from the town core, behind the kayak building and alongside the sewerage treatment plant and as such, the community have concerns regarding the current playground. Its location means it has become an easy spot for anti-social behaviour with littering, vandalism and broken glass often present. The proximity of the sewerage treatment plant can release strong associated odours making it less attractive for parents and children to visit.

There is a kayak club within the town, located on the banks of the River Inny, with steps down into the River from the car park area. The River Inny in Ballymahon and in particular the stretch from Newcastle Woods to Ballymahon is considered to be a very good river for kayaking and is an important amenity for the town.

Bus and rail provision in Ballymahon is limited. The nearest train station is located in Edgeworthstown, approximately 20km from Ballymahon Town. The town is serviced by Bus Eireann on one route from Athlone



2. Understanding the Place

to Cavan, travelling 6 times a day and by the M4 Direct private bus from Ballymahon to Dublin 4 times a day. The Local Link bus provides a very good service to the local area, linking up rural areas of the county with the main towns. Generally, each route is serviced once a week. A key issue with the bus service includes the poor bus stop facilities, with only seating at one stop and no seating or shelter at the other bus shelter.

Pobal le Chéile

Pobal le Chéile is a community-driven initiative designed to strengthen social connection, support local social services, and build a more inclusive and resilient Ballymahon. It was developed as a result of the identified need by the community for the enhancement of the social supports for the community, as well as tackling vacancy and dereliction in the western end of the town. It aims to bring the former convent back into use, as a redesigned and extended space to accommodate the Bridgeways Family Resource Centre and Convent Day Care Centre, along with a number of other users, including Tidy Towns, CE scheme and other social support services. It also aims to redevelop the Old Boy's School to accommodate a youth centre and Men's Shed and upgrade the Dean Egan library to provide additional supports to the young people. As part of the development of this project, the local community became involved in a European

project alongside the Local Authority under the URBACT programme to ensure that social impact is embedded in urban regeneration projects. The delivery of the Pobal le Chéile project remains a priority for the local community and local authority.

UR Impact

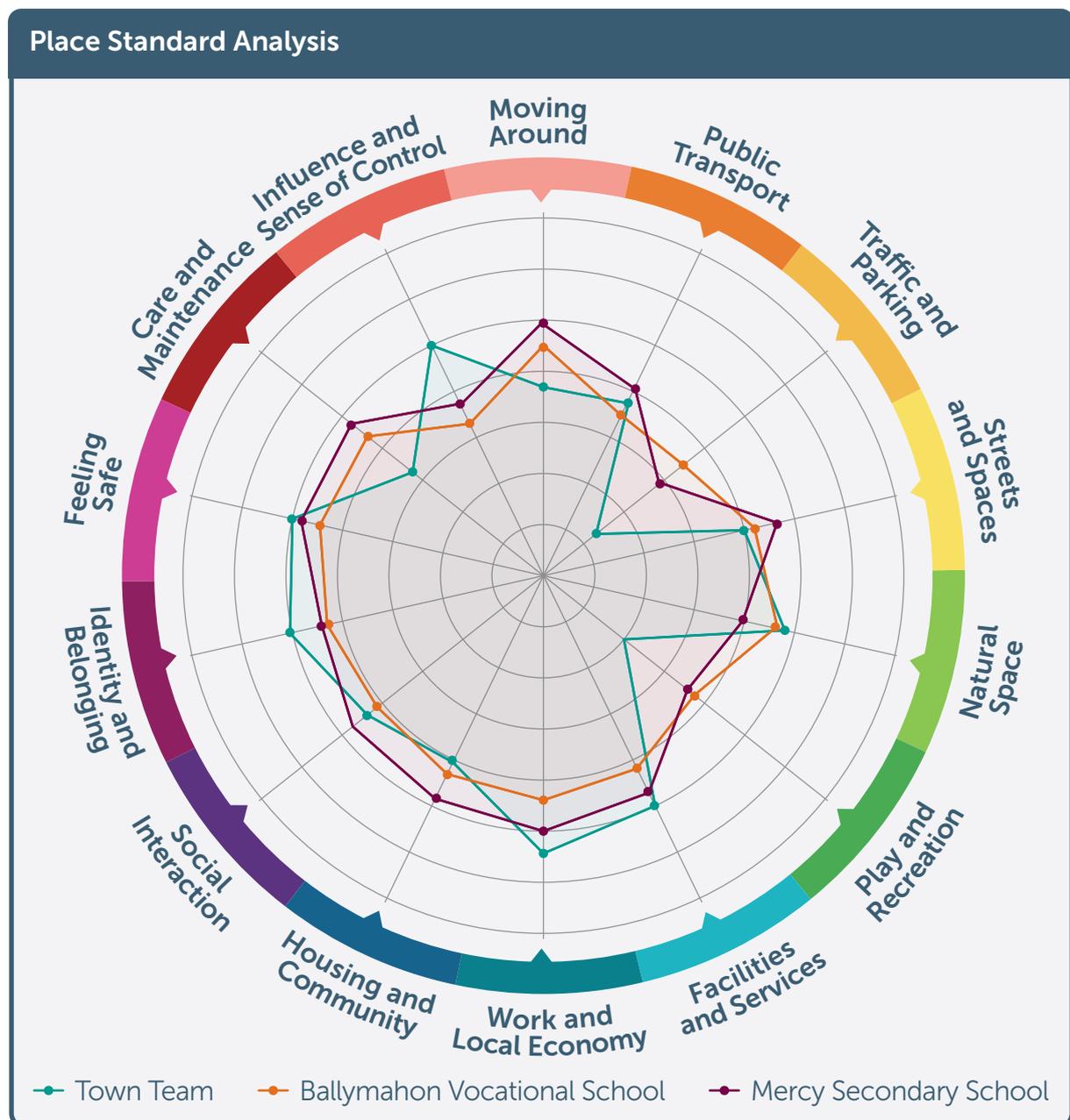
The Ballymahon community, under the guidance and support of Longford County Council, were involved in the URBACT UR Impact Action Planning Network over 2 years from 2023 until 2025. This project aimed to support communities to embed prioritisation of social impact in urban regeneration projects, supporting the development of connected and sustainable communities. The particular focus of this project in Ballymahon was the Pobal le Chéile project, which aims to redevelop the former convent building to provide enhanced space for the Bridgeways Family Resource Centre and Convent Day Care Centre, as well as a standalone community building and provide additional space for the young people in the town, as well as the opportunity for the Men's Shed and Hen's Sheds to become established in the town. This resulted in the preparation of an Integrated Action Plan identifying a number of priority actions to support the delivery of this aims in relation to the Men's Shed/Hen's Shed and youth facility.

2. Understanding the Place

Place Standard Analysis

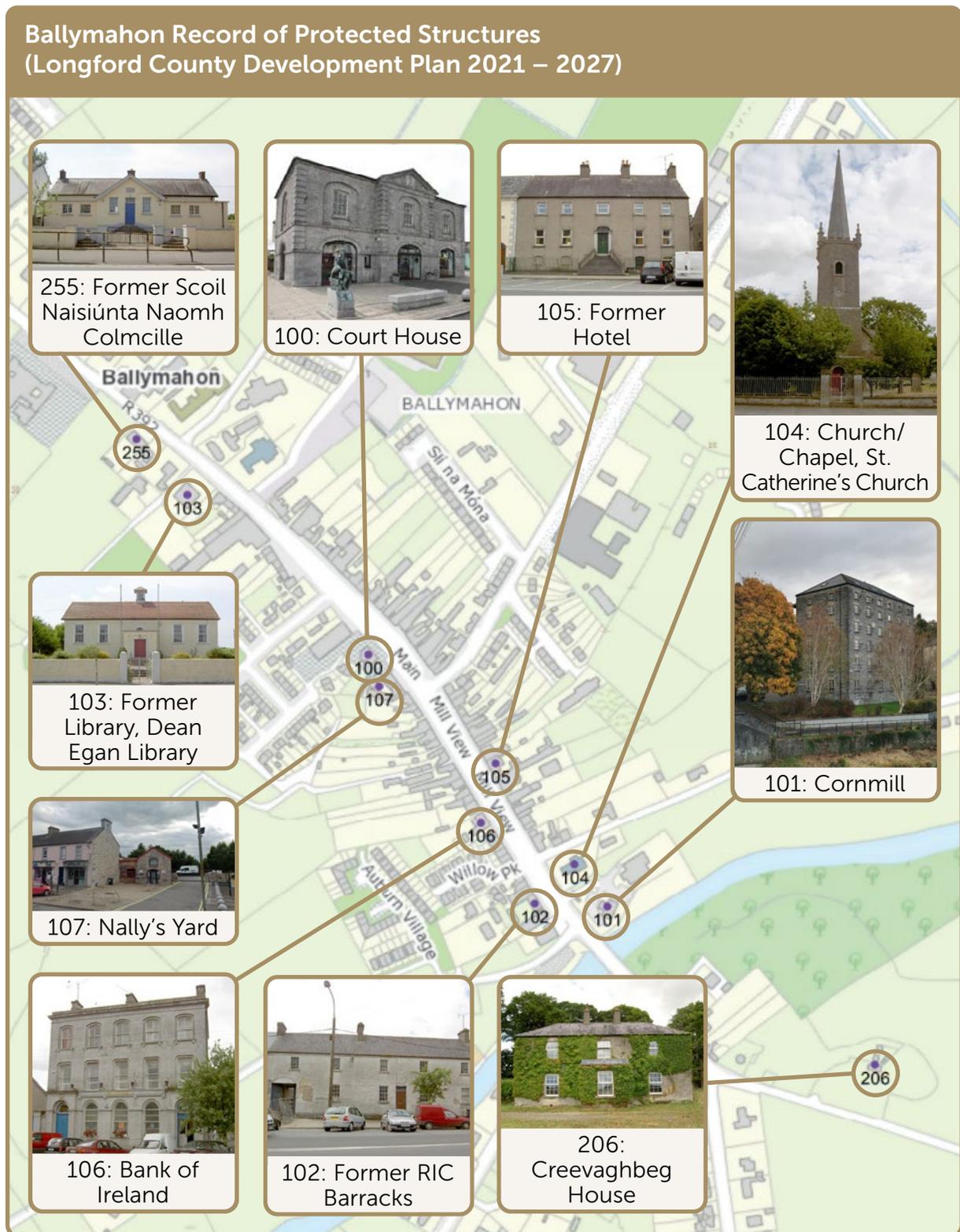
A Place Standard Analysis was undertaken with students from both secondary schools, as well as with the Town Team. The findings of those analysis are detailed below. It can be seen from the results that play and recreation scored low on all three, as well as traffic and parking. The Town Team found care and maintenance to

be an issue, while both schools felt that they had a low level of influence and sense of control. However, all groups found work and local economy to be quite positive, as well as natural spaces. It is positive that all three groups indicated that they felt safe and that identity and belonging scored relatively high.



2. Understanding the Place

Buildings on the Record of Protected Structures



2. Understanding the Place

SCOT Analysis

It is through these series of studies on key attributes of the town centre and community that the following overview of strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats has been derived (SCOT).

Strengths



- Busy town centre
- Renovated library
- Nature and open-air recreation
- Well-connected, central location
- Play and Recreation
- Intact historic buildings
- Historically wide street
- Sense of Safety

Opportunities



- Proximity to Center Parcs
- Sports and watersports opportunities
- Tourism Enterprise
- More investment in child-friendly infrastructure
- Increased interest for town centre living

Challenges



- Car-centric planning and traffic
- Lack of spaces for younger people
- Need for broader retail options
- Deteriorating shopfronts
- Active travel limitations
- Lack of quality urban space
- Management of maintenance of public spaces, streetscape, litter management

Threats



- Economic stagnation
- Climate change and biodiversity collapse
- Lack of cohesion
- Increased traffic without upgraded infrastructure
- Lack of capacity in sewerage treatment plan
- Dereliction of several key buildings in the town
- Poor presentation of characteristic street architecture
- Town centre residential population decline

3. Defining the Place

“The process of analysis and appraisal will set the basic ‘building blocks’ for a responsive TCF Plan that provides a holistic response that builds upon existing assets, directly addresses pressing issues and identifies future challenges”.

— Town Centre First Policy, 2022



3. Defining the Place

Vision

"Ballymahon's town centre will grow as a welcoming economic, educational and cultural heart – championing local enterprise, creative spirit, and strong community identity through high-quality spaces where everyone feels they belong."

What objectives underpin this vision?

Theme 1: Tourism, Culture and Identity



- 1. Strengthen Ballymahon's tourism offer** by enhancing connections to the River Inny, the Royal Canal and nearby attractions, creating a coherent visitor experience that encourages longer stays and repeat visits.
- 2. Celebrate and expand cultural life** by supporting arts, heritage, festivals, and community-led initiatives that express Ballymahon's identity.
- 3. Foster a strong sense of belonging** by ensuring that improvements reflect community needs, encourage participation, and create spaces where all sectors of the community feel welcome.

Theme 2: Enterprise, Economy and Education



- 4. Support and grow local enterprise** through improved shopfronts, dedicated business park, flexible commercial spaces and initiatives that make the town centre an attractive place to start and sustain a business.

Theme 3: Town Centre Living and Regeneration



- 5. Unlock backland development opportunities** to support the promotion of town centre living and the expansion of the town in a sustainable manner.

Theme 4: Public Realm, Movement and Sustainability



- 6. Create high-quality public spaces** that are safe, accessible, and inviting, encouraging social interaction, outdoor activity, and year-round use.
- 7. Enhance connectivity and movement** with better walking, cycling, and public-transport links that connects the main assets of the town and makes the town easy and enjoyable to navigate.
- 8. Promote sustainable growth** through environmentally responsible design, biodiversity improvements, and climate-resilient public realm interventions.

3. Defining the Place

Climate Action



Climate action underpins every element of this Town Centre First plan, shaping how Ballymahon grows, moves and thrives in the years ahead. The plan recognises that reducing emissions, strengthening climate resilience, and protecting natural assets are not standalone goals but principles that must guide all decisions – from public realm upgrades and mobility improvements to community development and economic activity. By prioritising compact growth and town centre living, enhancing active travel networks, integrating green infrastructure, and promoting energy-efficient design, the plan supports a transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient town centre. This approach ensures that investment today contributes to long-term environmental sustainability, safeguards the wellbeing of future generations, and positions Ballymahon as a leader in climate-responsive rural regeneration.

Social Inclusion



Social inclusion as an underlying theme of the Town Centre First Plan aims to ensure that Ballymahon's regeneration benefits everyone, regardless of age, background, ability or circumstance. The objective is to create a town centre that is welcoming, accessible, and supportive, where all members of the community can participate fully in social, economic, and cultural life. By embedding inclusion into decision-making, design, and service delivery, the plan seeks to reduce barriers, strengthen community cohesion, and ensure that the town centre reflects and serves the diverse needs of its people.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 1: Tourism, Culture and Identity

Action 1: Strengthen the connections between Ballymahon and Newcastle Woods

Ballymahon’s close proximity to Newcastle Woods and from there the Royal Canal Greenway and River Inny, as well as Center Parcs Longford Holiday Village and Newcastle House Hotel, is one of its strongest natural assets, offering immediate access to an extensive forest amenity that attracts walkers, families, and outdoor enthusiasts from across the region. Despite this advantage, the connection between the town centre and the woods is currently indirect and car-dependent, limiting the potential for seamless movement between the two destinations.



Action Name

Greenway links to Newcastle Woods



Expected Results

Direct link between Ballymahon and Newcastle Woods, Center Parcs and Newcastle House Hotel



Lead Actor

Longford County Council



Key Partners

- Ballymahon Town Team
- Landowners
- Center Parcs
- Fáilte Ireland



Outputs

A greenway linking Ballymahon with Newcastle Woods



Resources

- Land availability
- Funding
- Part 8 permissions



Timescale

- 18 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €50,000 for Part 8
- €400,000 for construction

4. Enabling the Place



Context

A dedicated off-road link would transform the relationship between the town and Newcastle Forest by creating a safe, attractive, and accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages. Such a connection would strengthen Ballymahon's identity as a gateway to nature, support local businesses through increased footfall, and encourage healthier, low-carbon travel. It would also knit the town more closely into its landscape, making the woods feel like an extension of everyday life rather than a separate destination. This proposal would involve acquiring Part 8 permission and subsequent funding for the construction of approximately 2.4km of walkway from Ballymahon to Newcastle Woods, including signage at both ends to encourage users to use the amenity. The provision of the greenway will encourage visitors to Center Parcs and Newcastle House Hotel to visit Ballymahon and create an amenity attraction for people visiting Ballymahon. Funding has been secured for the preparation of the Part 8 and required environmental reports.



Key Activities

- ✓ Appoint consultant to undertake environmental assessments and prepare drawings and reports for Part 8 process.
- ✓ Liaise with landowners
- ✓ Secure Part 8 permission
- ✓ Apply for funding under ORIS Measure 3
- ✓ Appoint contractor to build walkway

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 1: Tourism, Culture and Identity

Action 2: Strengthen the links to tourism assets surrounding the town

Ballymahon's unique character is shaped by its location between the River Inny and Royal Canal, creative energy with strong literary and cultural background and strong sense of community. Strengthening tourism, culture, and identity means building on these assets to create a town centre that feels alive, expressive, and inclusive of all sectors of the community. This theme focuses on elevating the town's profile as a destination, enriching cultural life, and ensuring that the town centre reflects the pride and personality of its people.



Action Name

Ballymahon as a Tourism Destination



Outputs

A feasibility study of tourism assets near the town and how they can be better linked to the town



Expected Results

Growth in number of tourists visiting and spending longer in Ballymahon



Resources

- Information
- Funding



Lead Actor

Ballymahon Town Team



Timescale

- 12 months



Key Partners

- Longford County Council
- Tourism providers
- Fáilte Ireland



Estimated Total Cost

- €30,000 for Feasibility Study

4. Enabling the Place



Context

Ballymahon is very well placed, located between the River Inny and the Royal Canal and in close proximity to Center Parcs Longford Holiday Village, Newcastle House Hotel and Lough Ree. However, the town does not currently benefit to its full potential from its location. Corlea Bog Walk, Maria Edgeworth Centre, Red Bridge as well as Center Parcs, Newcastle Woods, Newcastle House Hotel and the Royal Canal Greenway are some of the tourism amenities in proximity to the town. However, the town does not promote itself as a tourism destination and build on those existing amenities. A key proposal to carry out a feasibility study, consisting of a review of all existing tourism amenities in proximity to the town would provide the baseline for what they can tap into. It would then be proposed that a plan is developed of different means of connecting those amenities back to the town, through signage, promotion, website, etc.



Key Activities

- ✓ Secure funding to carry out feasibility report
- ✓ Appoint consultants to undertake feasibility analysis of existing tourism amenities, including engagement with tourism providers in the area and Fáilte Ireland and Longford County Council Tourism Office.
- ✓ Develop strategy for enhancing connections through signage, promotion, website, etc.
- ✓ Apply for funding to deliver on actions identified.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 1: Tourism, Culture and Identity

Action 3: Support the development of Ballymahon as a cultural destination

Ballymahon has a small but active arts scene and is very fortunate in having a theatre in the town, Bog Lane Theatre. There is also a strong creative sector in the town, dating back to Oliver Goldsmith who was born not far from the town, with festivals throughout the year, including Goldsmith Festival in June and the Ballymahon One Act Festival in November and community events bringing people together throughout the year. Culture and arts can also act as a great means to engage the new communities in the town and helping them feel more part of the town. Ballymahon's literary links, artistic traditions, and riverside setting all feed into a growing sense of creative identity, with public art, local makers, and cultural groups adding colour and energy to the town.



Action Name

Ignite Ballymahon's Arts Scene



Outputs

A year round programme of community cultural and arts events



Expected Results

Increase in number of cultural events held in Ballymahon throughout the year



Resources

- Volunteers
- Funding



Lead Actor

Bog Lane Theatre



Timescale

- 12 months



Key Partners

- Ballymahon Town Team
- Longford County Council
- Arts Office
- Arts/Cultural organisations



Estimated Total Cost

- €20,000 to carry out feasibility study and develop a programme of events

4. Enabling the Place



Context

Arts and culture can play an important role in developing a sense of belonging in a town and can be especially important in helping new communities integrate into the town. Ballymahon has a small but active arts scene and the presence of Bog Lane Theatre in the town is an advantage that is not available in most towns of its size. The festivals that are held in the town during the year bring visitors into the town and showcase the town and what it has to offer. It is also an opportunity for the new communities living in the town to be more active in the town life.



Key Activities

- ✓ Establish an arts and culture sub group in the Town Team, bringing in new members that are involved in arts/culture.
- ✓ Carry out an audit of existing amenities and facilities for the cultural/arts sector.
- ✓ Identify gaps in the current programme.
- ✓ Work with arts/cultural/ community groups to identify potential events/festivals that could be held during those gaps.
- ✓ Establish a year-round programme of monthly events.
- ✓ Support each community group in the running of those events.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 1: Tourism, Culture and Identity

Action 4: Delivering Pobal le Chéile

The development of the Pobal le Chéile project emerged from a growing recognition of the need to strengthen community cohesion, local partnership, and shared identity within Ballymahon and its surrounding areas. As the town experienced demographic change, new investment, and evolving social needs, local stakeholders identified a gap in coordinated supports that could bring people together, empower local groups, and enhance wellbeing. In response, community leaders, voluntary organisations, and the local authority collaborated to shape the Pobal le Chéile project as a unifying initiative focused on supporting the social needs of the town. The project was built on extensive engagement with residents who highlighted the importance of accessible services, stronger social networks, and opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect. The Pobal le Chéile project will also enhance the accessibility of the area through the widening of the laneway leading to the vets and soccer grounds to the rear. This is an important element of the project to enhance the safety of this area of the town, improving access to important services and amenities.



Action Name

Supporting the implementation of Pobal le Chéile



Outputs

Upgraded convent building to accommodate enhanced social and community infrastructure



Expected Results

Transformed social services in the town meeting the growing needs of the community



Resources

- Land availability
- Funding
- Consultants



Lead Actor

Longford County Council



Timescale

- 24 months



Key Partners

- Ballymahon Town Team
- Bridgeways
- The Convent Day Care Centre
- Other potential users, e.g. Tidy Towns



Estimated Total Cost

- €15m for capital delivery

4. Enabling the Place



Context

Delivery of Pobal le Chéile will strengthen the social infrastructure and social cohesion within the town. The development of a strong governance model alongside the capital delivery will ensure that the project meets the needs of the community and the various agencies that will use it. Within the Pobal le Chéile project, it was indicated that works would be undertaken to widen the road from the Main Street to the Tara Soccer Club grounds and the River Inny Veterinary practice. The widening of this roadway would improve the safety of this area for vehicles accessing the amenities to the rear of Main Street but could also act to further open up the potential of the backlands area at this location.



Key Activities

- ✓ Tender and procure contractors to delivery the capital infrastructure project on the convent redevelopment.
- ✓ Procure a facilitator to support the community in the development of a strong governance model.
- ✓ Engage the end service users to ensure fit out meets their requirements.
- ✓ Identify additional sources of funding to redevelop the Old Boy's School and Dean Egan Library to provide additional community space, in accordance with the UR Impact Integrated Action Plan.
- ✓ Upgrade the Old Boys School to accommodate a youth café/Men's and Hen's Sheds.
- ✓ Upgrade the Dean Egan library to meet additional needs of the community.
- ✓ Deliver the widening of the roadway to the side of the Dean Egan library leading to the soccer grounds and vets.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 1: Tourism, Culture and Identity

Action 5: Build on the recreational and amenity facilities

The community engagement with the people of Ballymahon has highlighted Ballymahon's growing population, changing demographics, and increasing demand for high-quality family amenities. This includes the need to relocate the existing playground and enhance the town's recreational offer. The current facility is limited in size, accessibility and visibility and no longer meets the needs of a community with more young families, visitors and active users than ever before. Its location also restricts opportunities for expansion, integration with other amenities, and safe, convenient access. Relocating the playground to a more central, connected, and spacious site would allow for modern, inclusive play equipment, improved safety, and stronger links to community facilities. This action forms part of a wider ambition to create a vibrant, family-friendly town centre where high-quality amenities support wellbeing, social interaction, and a strong sense of place.



Action Name

Strengthening Local Recreation and Community Amenities



Expected Results

Relocation of existing playground to more appropriate location and enhanced access to amenities.



Lead Actor

A New Playground For Ballymahon Action Group



Key Partners

- Longford County Council
- Ballymahon Town Team
- Landowners
- Sporting/cultural organisations



Outputs

Relocated and improved playground, enhanced access to water and recreational facilities for the local community



Resources

- Funding
- Land



Timescale

- 18 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €400,000 For land acquisition and development of site(s)

4. Enabling the Place



Context

The existing playground is located to the rear of the kayak club, beside the sewerage treatment plant. The proximity to the sewerage treatment plant is not the most suited location for a playground and the proximity to the neighbouring properties and the River Inny does not allow for expansion. Also due to the secluded location, it is not visible to visitors to the town or attractive to vulnerable users due to the lack of overlooking and potential anti-social behaviour. The town's proximity to the River Inny and Royal Canal Greenway offers the potential for greater access to amenities. However, the potential of these resources is not fully embraced by the town.



Key Activities

- ✓ Identify appropriate alternative site for playground
- ✓ Engage with landowner to lease/acquire land.
- ✓ Secure funding for design and delivery of playground.
- ✓ Procure and appoint contractors to deliver playground.
- ✓ Carry out audit of existing amenities in the town.
- ✓ Procure and appoint consultants to carry out feasibility study to enhance recreational and amenity infrastructure in the town centre.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 1: Tourism, Culture and Identity

Action 6: Redevelopment of former swimming pool site for community use

Ballymahon town was very fortunate for the time in having an outdoor swimming pool in the town along with tennis courts, where most of the local people learned to swim and spent many long summer days. However, the former swimming pool site is now a long-standing derelict and underutilised property that detracts from the visual amenity, vibrancy and overall perception of the town centre. The site was in the ownership of a community trust. However, the trust was dissolved a number of years ago and the site contributes little to the social or economic life of the town and presents ongoing challenges in terms of maintenance, safety and passive surveillance. Its prominent location and historic role as a community facility, however, present a significant opportunity for reactivation. The redevelopment of the former swimming pool site offers the potential to address dereliction, consolidate existing town-centre assets and deliver a high-quality public amenity that supports placemaking, community wellbeing and increased footfall. Re-purposing the site for an accessible, inclusive use would align with national Town Centre First objectives and the statutory requirement to proactively address derelict land, while transforming a negative legacy site into a positive focal point for the town and its wider hinterland.



Action Name

Activation and Redevelopment of the Derelict Former Swimming Pool site



Lead Actor

- Trust group for Swimming Pool Site



Expected Results

Redeveloped former swimming pool site to create new community opportunities



Key Partners

- Longford County Council
- Ballymahon Town Team
- Landowners
- Sporting/cultural organisations
- A New Playground for Ballymahon Group
- Fáilte Ireland

4. Enabling the Place



Outputs

- New use identified for former swimming pool site and site developed to meet needs of the community



Resources

- Funding
- Community input



Timescale

- 24 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €30,000 for feasibility study
- €600,000 for site clearance and remediation, professional fees and statutory processes, construction and amenity development, depending on final use and contingency



Context

The former swimming pool site is located close to the town centre, on a long-vacant brownfield site that currently contributes little to the social, economic or recreational life of the town. Since the closure of the facility, the site has remained underutilised and presents ongoing challenges in terms of visual amenity, safety and passive surveillance, detracting from the overall quality and attractiveness of the town centre. Notwithstanding its current condition, the site occupies a prominent location close to the town centre and has a historic association with community use, presenting a significant opportunity for regeneration. The redevelopment of the former swimming pool site would enable the reactivation of a key community asset, address long-standing dereliction and support the delivery of a high-quality community amenity that aligns with Town Centre First principles.



Key Activities

- ✓ Work with the trustees to reform the Trust and set out key objectives for the site
- ✓ Secure funding to carry out a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the site with appropriate uses
- ✓ Work with consultants and stakeholders in relation to feasibility of potential uses on the site
- ✓ Secure funding to redevelop site in line with outcomes of feasibility study
- ✓ Carry out redevelopment of site.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 2: Enterprise, Economy and Education

Action 7: Develop a business park in Ballymahon

The survey of land use carried out as part of the Town Centre Health Check shows that Ballymahon has a relatively strong offer in terms of the retail and service sector but that greater diversity is needed to strengthen the overall appeal of the town. There is also a lack of space for business development, in particular small businesses in a business park type setting. The local community have identified the need for a small business park to be developed to facilitate the growth and development of the town. As the sewerage treatment plant is upgraded in the coming years, housing developments will grow in the town. There is a need to provide a space for businesses to grow alongside that to facilitate people to live and work in Ballymahon.



Action Name

- Driving Ballymahon as a business destination



Expected Results

- Growth in the number of new businesses becoming established in Ballymahon



Lead Actor

Longford Local Enterprise Office



Key Partners

- Longford County Council
- IDA
- Entrepreneurs
- Ballymahon Town Team



Outputs

- Business Park with serviced sites for purchase by interested businesses



Resources

- Available Land
- Funding



Timescale

- 24 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €50,000 for Feasibility Study
- €1.5m for purchase of land and for servicing site

4. Enabling the Place



Context

Ballymahon is very centrally located, between Athlone, Mullingar and Longford and serves a wide rural hinterland, as evidenced by the number of children attending the primary and secondary schools in the town. The catchment area for the town is quite wide. However, the town does not currently have any identified space available for businesses to start and grow. As the population of the town grows, the aim is to provide opportunities to also work locally, rather than commuting out from the town. It also offers an opportunity for the young people to see that Ballymahon offers them potential to work and raise a family in Ballymahon.



Key Activities

- ✓ Secure funding to carry out site selection and feasibility study for business park in Ballymahon
- ✓ Appoint consultants to undertake feasibility study, including site selection, business plan, engagement with stakeholders, including LEO, IDA, Longford County Council, business people
- ✓ Secure planning permission for development of site
- ✓ Apply for and secure funding for development of business park.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 2: Enterprise, Economy and Education

Action 8: Integrated Retail Support and Shopfront Enhancement Programme

Small retail businesses play a vital role in sustaining town-centre vitality, local employment and day-to-day services for communities. However, many independent retailers face ongoing challenges arising from rising operating costs, changing consumer behaviour and competition from online and out-of-centre retail. A Small Business Support Scheme would provide targeted assistance to help locally based retailers adapt, remain competitive and invest in their premises and operations. The scheme would complement a Shopfront Enhancement Scheme by supporting internal improvements, digital capability, marketing and merchandising, ensuring that external visual upgrades are matched by viable, well-presented and resilient businesses. By strengthening existing retailers and encouraging the reoccupation and active use of ground-floor units, the scheme would contribute directly to vacancy reduction, increased footfall and the long-term economic sustainability of the town centre.



Action Name

Small Retail Business Support and Shopfront Improvement Scheme



Expected Results

Growth in the number of new businesses becoming established in Ballymahon



Lead Actor

Longford Local Enterprise Office



Key Partners

- Longford County Council
- Ballymahon Traders Association
- Entrepreneurs
- Ballymahon Town Team



Outputs

Increased number of businesses operating in Ballymahon and upgraded shopfronts presenting a positive impression of Ballymahon



Resources

- Funding
- Resources to manage the schemes



Timescale

- 18 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €150,000 for shopfront enhancement scheme
- €100,000 for small retail business support scheme

4. Enabling the Place



Context

Small independent retailers are essential to maintaining active, vibrant town centres but continue to face pressures from rising costs and changing consumer behaviour. A Small Retail Business Support Scheme provides targeted assistance to help existing businesses remain viable, complement shopfront enhancement measures and support the sustained occupation of ground-floor units, contributing to reduced vacancy and increased footfall.



Key Activities

- ✓ Design and launch a small retail business support scheme, including eligibility criteria, funding thresholds and assessment process
- ✓ Engage with town-centre retailers to identify priority needs and encourage uptake of the scheme
- ✓ Provide targeted financial supports to assist with internal fit-out improvements, digital capability, marketing and operational upgrades
- ✓ Coordinate delivery with the Shopfront Enhancement Scheme to ensure internal business improvements complement external visual upgrades
- ✓ Work in partnership with the Local Enterprise Office to provide business advice, mentoring and signposting to wider enterprise supports
- ✓ Promote the scheme to support the retention of existing retailers and encourage the reoccupation of vacant ground-floor units
- ✓ Monitor uptake and impact of the scheme, including changes in vacancy levels and business sustainability outcomes.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 3: Town Centre Living and Regeneration

Action 9: Unlocking the Backland potential

Ballymahon is primarily based around one long, wide Main Street, with little development off that Main Street. Town centre living and regeneration in Ballymahon present a major opportunity to reshape the heart of the town into a more vibrant, compact, and people-focused place. Much of this potential lies in the underused backland areas behind Main Street. By unlocking these backlands for mixed-use development, car parking, new homes, courtyards and pedestrian links, Ballymahon can expand its town centre footprint without altering its historic streetscape. This approach supports sustainable growth, encourages more people to live close to shops and services, and helps activate quieter parts of the town. Regenerating these areas also creates opportunities for high-quality public spaces, improved permeability, and new commercial or community uses, all of which contribute to a more lively, resilient, and future-ready town centre. The use of the backlands to provide a new off-street car park will support the sustainability and expansion of the economy of the town, taking some of the cars currently parked all day on the street off the street, allowing space available for those that want to visit a business in the town.



Action Name

Open up Ballymahon's Hidden Spaces



Expected Results

Opening up of backlands to accommodate car parking, housing and new retail opportunities



Lead Actor

Longford County Council



Key Partners

- Landowners
- Ballymahon Traders Association
- Ballymahon Town Team



Outputs

Second street behind Main Street, opening up land for housing, car parking, retail expansion



Resources

- Available Land
- Funding



Timescale

- 24 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €50,000 for Design and Feasibility Study
- €3m For land acquisition and site development

4. Enabling the Place



Context

Opening up the backland areas in Ballymahon represents one of the most transformative opportunities for the town's future, enabling a shift toward a more vibrant, walkable and lived-in centre. By unlocking the backland areas for new homes, including housing for older people, car parking, mixed-use development, and high-quality public spaces, Ballymahon can expand its town centre footprint without compromising its traditional character. The creation of a second street running parallel to Main Street would introduce new routes, courtyards, and commercial frontages, improving permeability and offering fresh opportunities for business and community activity. Integrating well-designed car parking within these backlands will address many issues facing the town around car parking.



Key Activities

- ✓ Secure funding to carry out a masterplan of the backlands.
- ✓ Procure and appoint consultants to carry out masterplan of the backland areas, including stakeholder engagement with landowners, businesses, community groups and statutory agencies, identifying phases of development.
- ✓ Secure Part 8 permission for the delivery of the masterplan.
- ✓ Secure funding for delivery of the first phase of the project.
- ✓ Tender and appoint contractors for the delivery of phase one of the project.
- ✓ Continue with subsequent phases of the project until all phases are complete.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 3: Town Centre Living and Regeneration

Action 10: Tackling vacancy and dereliction in Ballymahon

Addressing vacancy and dereliction in Ballymahon has become increasingly important as the town seeks to strengthen its role as a vibrant service centre and an attractive place to live, work and visit. While the town has many strong assets – its historic streetscape, river setting, and growing population – long-term vacant buildings and underused sites weaken the overall appearance and functionality of the town centre. These properties can discourage investment, limit opportunities for new housing or businesses, and undermine community confidence. With national supports now available for reuse and regeneration, there is a clear opportunity to bring empty buildings back into productive use, restore heritage structures, and create new spaces for living, enterprise, and community activity. Tackling vacancy and dereliction is therefore essential to revitalising Ballymahon’s core, supporting economic resilience, and ensuring the town centre remains a lively and welcoming destination.



Action Name

Revitalising Ballymahon:
Tackling Vacancy and
Dereliction



Outputs

Reduced levels of vacancy and
dereliction in Ballymahon Town
core



Expected Results

Reactivation of vacant and
derelict properties



Resources

- Technical staff resources
- Funding



Lead Actor

Longford County Council



Timescale

- 24 months



Key Partners

- Landowners



Estimated Total Cost

- €700,000 For land acquisition

4. Enabling the Place



Context

Vacancy and dereliction in Ballymahon's town centre undermine the vitality of the main street, in particular long-term vacant and derelict properties, limiting opportunities for new homes and businesses, and detracting from the town's overall appearance. National supports from the Government offer a timely opportunity to restore heritage structures, reactivate vacant sites, and reinforce Ballymahon's role as a vibrant and welcoming service centre. Under the CPO Activation Programme, there are supports available, such as the Croí Cónaithe grant to support landowners to bring these properties back into active use.



Key Activities

- ✓ Carry out vacancy survey of Ballymahon.
- ✓ Make contact with relevant landowners to make them aware of grants available for bringing vacant and derelict properties back into active use.
- ✓ Where there is no engagement, put property on Derelict Sites Register, where relevant.
- ✓ Apply Derelict Sites Levy, as appropriate.
- ✓ Acquire property by compulsory purchase where owner does not engage and move it to bring it back into active use.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 4: Public Realm, Movement and Sustainability

Action 11: Reimagining Streets and Spaces for Ballymahon's future

Ballymahon's future depends on a town centre that is vibrant, connected, and resilient. This Town Centre First plan sets out a shared ambition to strengthen the heart of Ballymahon as a place where people and community life come first. The goal is to create a public realm that celebrates local identity, supports safe and accessible movement, and drives long-term environmental sustainability. By enhancing the streets and spaces that link the River Inny, the Royal Canal, the Main Street and surrounding neighbourhoods, the town centre will become easier to navigate on foot, by bike and by public transport. Investment in green infrastructure, high-quality public spaces, and low-carbon mobility will help Ballymahon grow in a way that protects its natural assets and strengthens its social and economic vitality. This vision positions Ballymahon not just as a place to pass through, but as a place to gather, explore, and thrive. Future redesigns of the streetscape and traffic operation should consider how vehicles use the town, considering the location along the N55 National Secondary Road and R392 Regional Road and the junctions within the town connecting the town to Athlone and Mullingar to ensure that the traffic flows freely while supporting people to be able to safely walk and cycle around the town. This action should be read in conjunction with Action 11. The walkability audit carried out as part of the baseline study for this Plan identified a number of areas of concern in the public realm, which should be taken into account in any public realm design plan, including upgrades to footpaths, enhanced street lighting facing both the carriageway and the footpaths.



Action Name

Reimagining Streets and Spaces for Ballymahon's future



Expected Results

Improved public realm with enhanced accessibility for all sectors of the community and modes of transport



Lead Actor

Longford County Council



Key Partners

- Ballymahon Town Team
- TII
- Business owners
- Residents



Outputs

Improved mobility in the town for all modes of transport and pedestrians through an enhanced public realm along Main Street

4. Enabling the Place



Resources

- Funding
- Consultants
- Walkability Audit



Timescale

- 60 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €50,000 for Design and Feasibility Study
- €2.5m for development



Context

Improving the public realm and accessibility in Ballymahon is rooted in the town's evolving role as a growing service centre for south Longford and its wider rural hinterland. The town centre has strong assets – its historic Main Street, proximity to the River Inny and Royal Canal, and a compact urban form – but these strengths are currently undermined by heavy through-traffic, limited pedestrian priority, and fragmented public spaces. As Ballymahon continues to develop, particularly with increased residential growth and tourism linked to Center Parcs and the river corridor, the quality and usability of its streets and public spaces become even more critical. Enhancing accessibility, improving traffic flow, adding new crossings, and creating more welcoming, people-focused spaces will support local businesses, encourage active travel, and strengthen the town's identity, making the town centre safer, more inclusive, and better connected for residents, visitors and future generations. The improved circulation of traffic around the town would also serve to address safety, creating alternative routes for people to move around the town and should be considered as part of the traffic management plan for Ballymahon, in line with the indications in the County Development Plan for example for a road from the Thomond Hall road towards Moyvale and with a connection to the new car park at the school. The undergrounding of overhead wires and streetlight improvements, including enhanced lighting along the River Inny bridge will contribute to the enhancement of the public realm. Within the public realm improvements, consideration should be given to the development of a designated plaza area to act as a meeting area for the people of the town to encourage inclusion, integration and an enhanced sense of place.



Key Activities

- ✓ Secure funding to carry out public realm and traffic management plan for Ballymahon
- ✓ Procure and appoint consultants to undertake public realm and traffic plan for Ballymahon
- ✓ Engage with the local community on needs, preferred options, etc.
- ✓ Develop preliminary design plans for Part 8 for the public realm/traffic management of Ballymahon town
- ✓ Submit Part 8 proposals
- ✓ Develop detailed design plans of public realm proposals
- ✓ Secure funding to deliver the public realm upgrades.
- ✓ Tender and appoint contractors for the delivery of the upgrades to the public realm.

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 4: Public Realm, Movement and Sustainability

Action 12: Enhanced accessibility through provision of a footbridge across River Inny alongside the current bridge

Ballymahon's position along the River Inny creates both a natural focal point and a physical barrier within the town, making the river a defining feature of its landscape and daily life. Developing a new footbridge across the Inny would significantly strengthen the connections between the Athlone and Mullingar Road areas and the town centre, improving access between residential areas, the town centre, and nearby amenities such as Newcastle Woods and local schools. A well-designed pedestrian and cycle bridge would provide a safe, attractive and accessible crossing point, reducing reliance on vehicular routes and encouraging active travel. Beyond its functional role, the bridge has the potential to become a landmark structure that enhances the town's riverside setting, supports tourism, and reinforces Ballymahon's identity as a place closely connected to its natural environment.



Action Name

Delivering a new pedestrian and cycle footbridge across the River Inny



Outputs

- New pedestrian/cycle bridge linking the Athlone Road with the Main Street



Expected Results

Improved accessibility from Athlone Road/Mullingar Road into town centre



Resources

- Funding
- Consultants



Lead Actor

Longford County Council



Timescale

- 36 months



Key Partners

- Residents of town
- Ballymahon Town Team
- Business owners
- TII
- Environmental groups



Estimated Total Cost

- €100,000 for Design and Feasibility Study
- €500,000 For development

4. Enabling the Place



Context

There are large residential areas on the Athlone and Mullingar Roads of Ballymahon. The Main Street of the Town is also a national primary road, that carries heavy volumes of traffic. The schools are located at the western end of the town. However, these areas are not currently well connected. A footbridge over the River Inny alongside the existing vehicular bridge would strengthen the town’s internal connectivity and also serve to unlock the potential of the riverside setting. The river is a defining natural feature, but it also creates a barrier between neighbourhoods, amenities and key destinations such as Newcastle Woods, schools and the town centre. A dedicated pedestrian and cycle bridge would provide a safe, direct, and attractive crossing point, reducing reliance on cars and encouraging more active travel. Enhanced lighting along the bridge would also enhance the safety and accessibility of this area of the town.



Key Activities

- ✓ Secure funding to carry out a feasibility study for a footbridge across the River Inny alongside the current bridge
- ✓ Appoint consultants to undertake feasibility study of footbridge
- ✓ Engage with all stakeholders, including TII, environmental groups, local residents and businesses to identify key opportunities and constraints around the bridge
- ✓ Subject to outcome of feasibility study, secure funding for preliminary design of bridge, appoint consultants and secure Part 8
- ✓ Prepare and submit funding application for funding to construct bridge
- ✓ Appoint contractors to construct bridge

4. Enabling the Place



Theme 4: Public Realm, Movement and Sustainability

Action 13: Consider implementation of paid parking and CCTV in Ballymahon

Paid parking and enhanced CCTV have emerged as important tools for improving how town centres function, feel, and is experienced by residents, visitors, and businesses. Experience in Ballymahon has shown that some people park on the Main Street and leave their car there for the day, whether they are working in a business in the town or car sharing with someone else to another destination. This impacts on the availability of parking within the town for people wishing to visit the town and use the services and amenities available within it. The introduction of paid parking will help to ensure that spaces are used efficiently and remain available for those who need them most. At the same time, installing CCTV in the town core strengthens public safety, supports crime prevention, and contributes to a more welcoming environment, particularly in busy public areas. Together, these measures form part of a wider effort to create a well-managed, safe, and attractive town centre that supports economic activity and enhances overall quality of life.



Action Name

Enhanced accessibility and safety in town centre



Expected Results

Improved parking availability and turnover in the town centre and enhanced safety and security for residents, businesses and visitors



Lead Actor

Longford County Council (including Data Protection Officer)



Key Partners

- An Garda Síochána
- Ballymahon Town Team
- Business owners
- Residents and community groups



Outputs

A managed parking system on the Main Street and enhanced CCTV coverage to improve traffic flow, support town centre turnover and strengthened public safety

4. Enabling the Place



Resources

- Funding
- Car parking audit
- Resources – technical, IT



Timescale

- 18 months



Estimated Total Cost

- €200,000



Context

Paid parking and the introduction of an expanded CCTV network play an important role in creating a safer, more accessible, and better-managed town centre in Ballymahon. As activity in the town grows, unmanaged parking can reduce turnover and limit access to local services, while gaps in surveillance can leave key public areas feeling less secure. Introducing a structured parking system helps ensure that spaces are used efficiently and remain available for shoppers, visitors, and service users. The introduction of paid parking will compliment the delivery of new car parking spaces in Ballymahon, considering various options in consultation with the local businesses and local community such as 2 hour free parking and free off-street options to encourage those parking all day to use the off-street car parks. CCTV will support the paid parking in terms of observing areas where there are challenges with parking, as well as enhancing the sense of safety and security in the town.



Key Activities

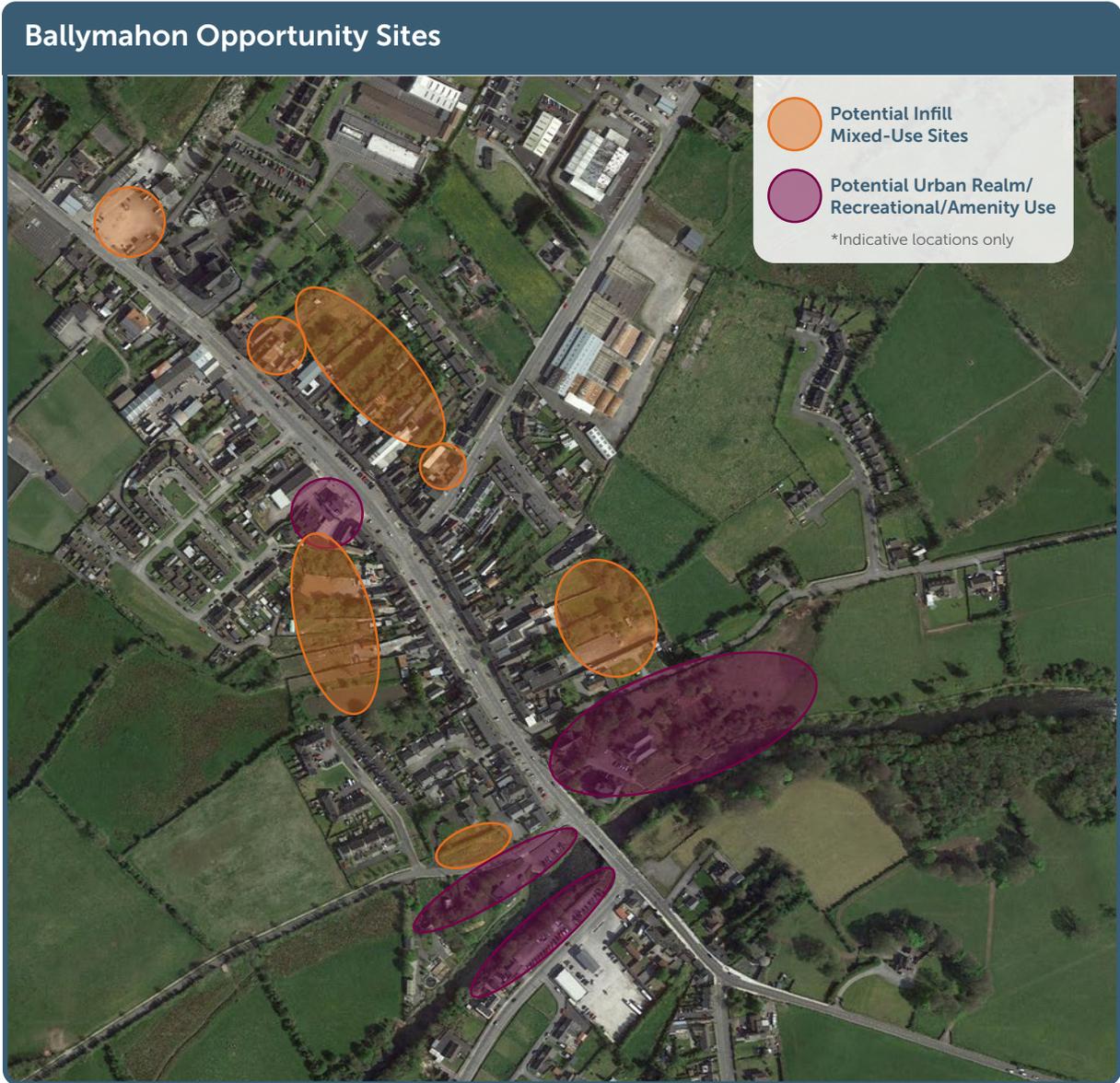
- ✓ Carry out detailed consultations with the local community and businesses on the opportunities for paid parking.
- ✓ Design an appropriate scheme to ensure that it continues to encourage people to shop and spend time in Ballymahon while offering alternatives for all-day parking.
- ✓ Work with An Garda Síochána, Data Protection Officer and local community on the design of a CCTV scheme to support the sense of safety and security in the town.
- ✓ Implement the paid parking and CCTV.

4. Enabling the Place

Opportunity Sites

A number of underutilised, vacant and brownfield sites within the town centre present key opportunities for redevelopment and regeneration. These opportunity sites, including backlands, vacant buildings and strategically located plots, have the potential to accommodate a mix of residential, commercial, community and public-realm uses that can strengthen town-centre living and economic activity. Targeted

redevelopment of these sites would help address vacancy and dereliction, improve connectivity and permeability, and support compact, sustainable growth in line with Town Centre First principles. By bringing opportunity sites back into active use, the town can maximise the value of existing infrastructure, reinforce the vitality of Main Street and create new spaces that support enterprise, community life and high-quality placemaking.



4. Enabling the Place

Monitoring and Communication

Implementation of the Town Centre First actions will be led by the Longford County Council Town Regeneration Officer in partnership with the Town Team and relevant internal and external stakeholders. Delivery will be phased and prioritised, focusing initially on low-cost, high-impact actions while progressing more complex projects through feasibility, design and statutory processes. Ongoing community and business engagement will underpin implementation, ensuring that actions remain responsive to local needs and aligned with the shared vision for the town. Progress will be supported through coordinated funding applications, regular monitoring and review, and alignment with national, regional and local policy frameworks to ensure effective sustainable delivery.

Monitoring and communication are essential to ensuring the Town Centre First plan for Ballymahon remains active, transparent, and accountable. Regular progress reviews – supported by clear indicators, updated action tracking, and ongoing stakeholder input – will help measure what is working well and identify where adjustments are needed. Open communication with the community, local businesses, and public agencies will keep people informed and engaged, reinforcing shared ownership of the plan. Through public updates, local forums, and collaboration with the Town Team, Ballymahon can maintain momentum, celebrate achievements, and ensure that regeneration efforts stay aligned with local needs and long-term goals.

