



Castleblayney: Active Travel Town

Walking and Cycling Strategy

November 30th 2012



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QM

Issue/revision	Issue 1	Issue 2
Issue/revision		
Remarks	Draft	Final
Date	19/11/2012	04/12/2012
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File reference	2012P022	2012P022

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Contents

1	Vision and Objectives	1
2	Strategy Development	2
3	Background Information	3
4	Targets, Monitoring and Evaluation	10
5	Proposed Actions	11
6	Implementation	16

Appendix A: Maps



1

Vision and Objectives

1.1 VISION

A town that people of all ages and abilities feel is a safe and enjoyable place to walk or cycle.

The walking and cycling strategy for Castleblayney will help to develop the town with a network of safe and convenient walking and cycling routes that will improve the quality of life for everybody in the community by prioritising walking and cycling for travel to work, education, shopping and day to day business in the town whilst also providing high quality routes for leisure and fitness activities.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

Consultation undertaken as part of this strategy has demonstrated the strong sense of community within Castleblayney and the pride in the existing facilities and potential future facilities in the area around Lough Muckno. There was a clear desire for improved walking and cycling provision for leisure and recreation and for access to key destinations such as the local schools and it was evident from the consultation that a multi-agency group consisting of local and countywide bodies should be developed to assist with the implementation of the strategy and to build relationships that will help promote walking and cycling within the town and identify future measures to contain the ongoing promotion of walking and cycling.

Castleblayney Walking and Cycling Strategy Objectives

- Build and strengthen the existing community spirit within Castleblayney.
- Ensure that needs of people of all ages and abilities are taken into consideration in the design development of walking and cycling facilities within Castleblayney.
- Enhance local walking and cycling facilities to facilitate more trips by walking and cycling.
- Promote walking and cycling as the primary means of travel for shorter trips.
- Sustain and enhance the local economy and environment
- Provide improved facilities for recreational walking and cycling and maximise the potential from facilities provided by Lough Muckno

These objectives will be delivered through a number of actions that form part of the Department of Transport's 'Active Travel Town' initiative, which are as follows:

Active Travel Towns

- The provision of safer routes for people to travel by bike or on foot
- A reduction in short-distance car journeys through the availability of good quality travel information and alternative infrastructure
- Community involvement
- Improved walking and cycling access to public transport
- Tie-in with schools/colleges and workplace plans both through existing programmes and new linkages.

2 Strategy Development

The development of the strategy was based on the following assessment methodology:

Inception

During the inception period important information such as mapping, contact details and information on complementary strategies and policies was collated and reviewed with the Council. Background information, such as Development Plans and Census data, was reviewed.

Base Network Review

The existing road and street network was assessed, both on the ground and through desktop mapping and photography, in terms of suitability for walking and cycling. This assessment, combined with feedback from the Consultation process, provided a clear overview of the current key issues relating to walking and cycling on the road and street network.

Identification of Trip Attractors and Main Residential Areas

The locations of all key residential areas was mapped utilising census data. All key trip attractors including schools, health facilities, retail centres, public buildings, sporting and recreational amenities were identified and mapped using various databases and map bases and on the ground assessments. Key routes and desire lines between the residential areas and these trip attractors were then confirmed.

Consultation

Consultation was carried out with the general public, businesses and schools. The purpose of the consultation was two-fold. Firstly to understand the travel habits on the town and identify specific improvements to the walking and cycling network. The second purpose was to formally notify the various groups of the Active Travel Town Strategy and initiate engagement with the stakeholder groups for the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

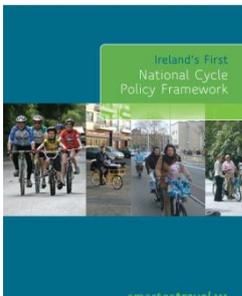
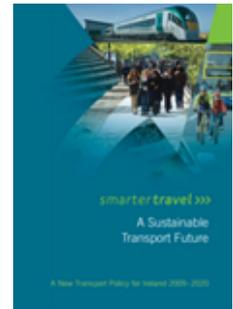


3 Background Information

3.1 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1.1 National Policy

The SmarterTravel policy was adopted by the Department of Transport in 2009 and forms the primary policy context for the Walking and Cycling Strategy. Smarter Travel has brought sustainable travel to the forefront of public policy and represents a new paradigm in Transport policy for Ireland which, for the first time, places walking and cycling at the centre of transport policy and infrastructure delivery.



As part of the policy, the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) was developed; this sets a national target of 10% of all trips being made by bike in 2020 and a vision to create a strong cycling culture in Ireland. Achieving these targets will require, in particular, road and cycleway improvements within the urban areas, including revisions to speed limits, junction improvements and the reallocation of road space to safely accommodate cyclists. Educational and marketing programmes aimed at promoting the health and economic benefits of walking and cycling will help encourage the mindset shift required to achieve this aim.

Following on from the Smarter Travel policy in early 2012 the Government announced the Active Travel Towns 5 year multi-annual funding support program. The scheme is principally for the strategic development of strategies and infrastructures to support walking and cycling in towns outside the Greater Dublin Area. The Government recognises that to achieve its target of 10% of all trips being made by bike and the overall modal shift noted within Smarter Travel will require a focus on population and employment centres. The principal objective of Active Travel Towns is to achieve modal shift from car to either walking or cycling. This objective will be delivered through the following:

Active Travel Town Objectives

- The provision of safer routes for people to travel by bike or on foot
- A reduction in short-distance car journeys through the availability of good quality travel information and alternative infrastructure
- Community involvement
- Improved walking and cycling access to public transport
- Tie-in with schools/colleges and workplace plans both through existing programmes and new linkages.

The Smarter Travel policy and the Active Travel Town program is about changing unsustainable habits in travel patterns and reducing the health and environmental impacts of current travel patterns. Achieving the vision and goals of the policy and program will lead to improved communities, a more efficient economy, a healthier and more active population and improved quality of life for all. The Walking and Cycling Strategy for Monaghan is a direct response to the Active Travel Town program and the strategy is based on providing both infrastructural improvements and initiatives to change personal travel behaviour to achieve a modal shift away from car usage to the more sustainable modes of walking and cycling.



Infrastructural improvements should be delivered in a focussed way that improve the existing network by removing barriers , improve the connectivity of the network and provided quality links connecting the communities to key destinations. These should be delivered per the 'Hierarchy of Solutions' as noted within the NCPF. Initiatives should not just focus on travel for school, work or shopping purposes, but should also link into and encourage active travel for leisure and recreational purposes. Lapsed cyclists are more likely to begin cycling again for leisure purposes than for commuting, and once they begin cycling for leisure it is more likely people will cycle for everyday usage.

3.1.2 Regional policy

The Border Regional Authority Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 has a specific policy, NPF13, to promote and support cycling and walking within the Region, particularly within the urban areas.

3.1.3 County Policy

TRO5 of the draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2013 makes it a clear objective of the County Council to promote and facilitate the use of cycling and walking as alternative sustainable modes of transport.

3.2 EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

3.2.1 Walking and Cycling Route

Castleblayney town and environs has an existing population of approximately 3,500 people. The third largest town in the County, it serves a wide hinterland. Recently bypassed by the new N2 much of the through traffic in the town has been removed offering opportunities to provide for safer movement of pedestrians and cyclists. The national secondary route (N53) links the town to Dundalk, the gateway for the region. The town benefits from its strategic location between Monaghan (24kms), Dundalk (27 kms) and Carrickmacross (17kms) and Armagh City (27 kms).

Castleblayney functions largely as a market/service centre for its rural hinterland, which extends in to County Armagh and whilst the Town has been impacted by a decline in agriculture and the closure of key industries in recent years the town has developed as a residential centre and new commercial and retail developments have strengthened the town's economic base.

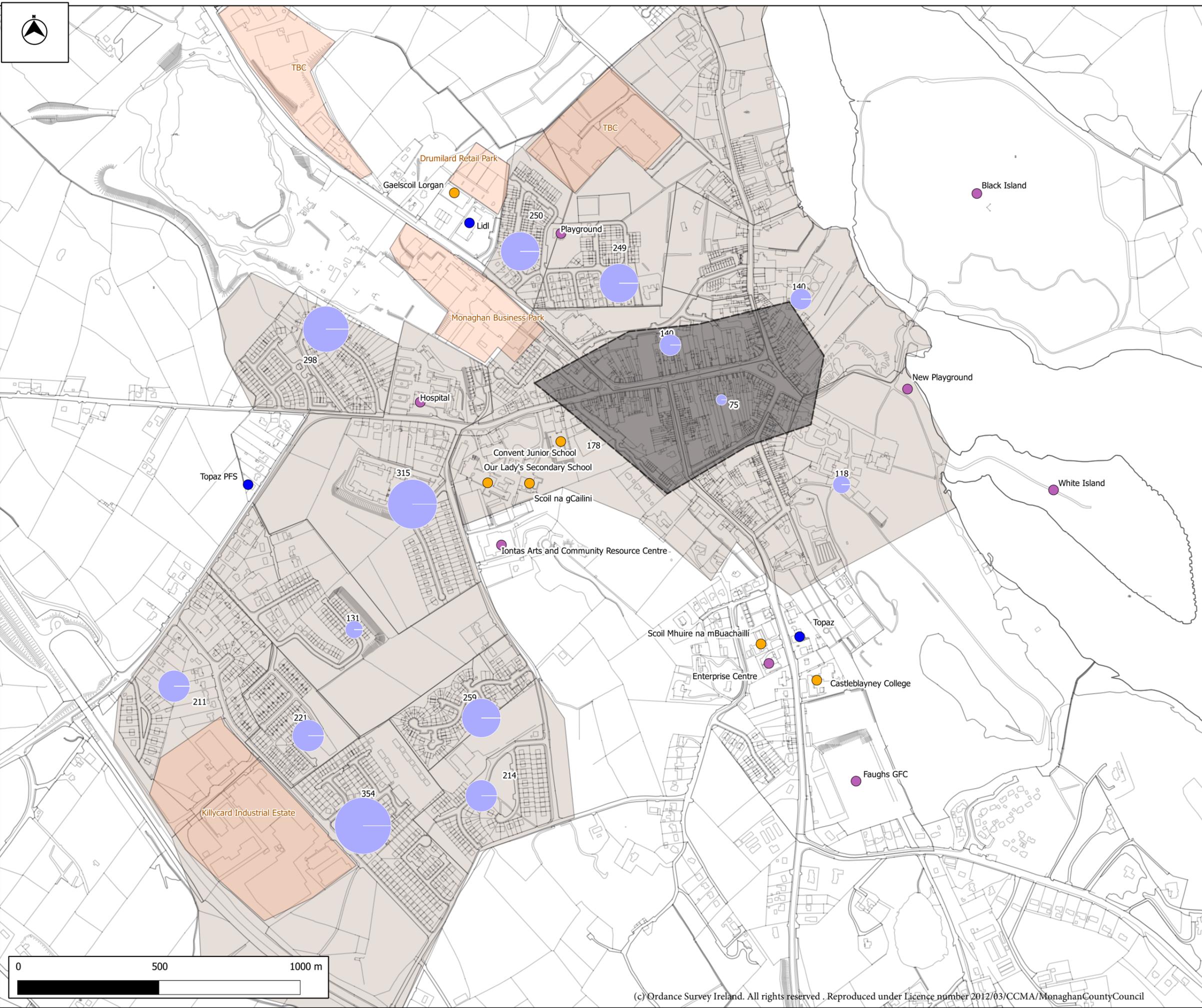
Castleblayney plays an important educational function for the town and its hinterlands with approximately 1,400 children attending schools in Castleblayney. There are four national schools and two secondary schools in the town, the two secondary schools having a combined total of 900 pupils.

Lough Muckno is the by far the largest and most important stretch of public open space within the town. Lough Muckno provides excellent opportunity for recreational walking and is the focal point for recreational use in the town. At present the Council are in the process of developing an adventure playground in Lough Muckno park, which will strengthen the existing importance of this area in terms of recreational activity in the town.

The primary walking and cycling routes within the town are shown on Map 1. These routes are shown in the context of the main residential population areas in the town together with the main trip attractors for walking and cycling. The key trip attractor locations include the town centre, schools, employment, public buildings and sports and recreation facilities.

In general terms the town presents opportunities to develop an improved walking and cycling network. Although the topography off the town is characterised by the typical south Ulster drumlins, the main routes are generally flat to moderate with the exception of the route along Conabury Hill and a portion of Shercock Road. However the presence of the drumlins does prevent the provision of direct routes from some of the residential areas in the southwest to the schools on Dublin road and on Bree Road, in some cases almost doubling the travel distance compared to the direct route.

In distance terms the maximum travel distance across town is of the order of 2.5km which determines that all key trip attractors in the town are within comfortable cycling distance and reasonable walking distance of the town's population. The maximum distance to the town centre is of the order of 1.5km which implies the town centre is highly accessible in terms of walking distance for the whole of the town's population.



Legend

- Community**
 - Sports, Community Centres, Playgrounds, Leisure, Health
- Retail**
 - Local Shops, Foodstores
- Town Centre**
 - Community, Doctors, Doctors, Employment, Shopping
- Employment Areas**
 - Main Employment Areas
- Schools**
 - Primary and Secondary
- Residential Population**
 - Population with Area

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Castleblayney Walking and Cycling Strategy
Main Residential Population and Location of Key Trip Generators

Map 1



The largest concentration of the residential population in the town is located at the southwest side of the town with close to 1,500 residents living in this area. The next largest concentration of the residential population is on the north side of the town with a further 500 people living in this region.

3.2.2 Trip Attractors

The main trip attractors are illustrated on Map 2. With the exception of the Gaelscoil, the schools are located in two main locations. Castleblayney College and Scoil na mBuachailí are located just off Dublin Road on the southern side of the town. The other three schools, Scoil na gCailíní, Convent Junior School and Our Lady's Secondary School are all located between Shercock Road and Bree Road to the immediate west of the town centre.

The main employment locations are the Town Centre, the Killycard Industrial Estate and the industrial and commercial areas on Monaghan Road at the north side of the town. At present there are no larger employers, with over 100 members of staff, however there are number of medium size employers, such as Kingspan, the Hospital and the Glencairn Hotel.

Retail activity is primarily located in the town centre, but there is also a discount retailer on the north side of town, just off Monaghan Road. The petrol filling stations on Dublin Road and on Shercock Road also act as the local shops for the population in the immediate vicinity.

The other main trip attractors in the town are associated with active and passive recreation, with the Lough Muckno area being a key destination for passive recreation and the two GAA clubs being key destinations for active recreation.

3.2.3 Census Data

The 2011 Census data on Travel to Work/School/College has been reviewed to determine the current modal split for such travel. The census shows that the majority mode of travel is by car use with car driver at 43% and car passenger at 22%. Walking plays an important role with 22% of trips being made by this mode, however it is less than what is experienced in other towns of similar size. Levels of cycling within the town are low, with a modal share of close to 0%.

Although the 2011 Census doesn't provide actual journey distance, the journey duration is a good indication of the number of journeys within walking and cycling distance. Journeys of less than 15 minutes are likely to be under the 10km, and these journeys represent the greatest opportunity for achieving a modal shift from car driver/passenger towards walking and cycling. The majority of trips made (56%) from Castleblayney are in 'under 15 minutes' duration. Based on the very low cycling mode share and the high percentage of shorter distance trips there is an apparent potential to significantly improve the cycling mode share and also to improve the walking mode share.

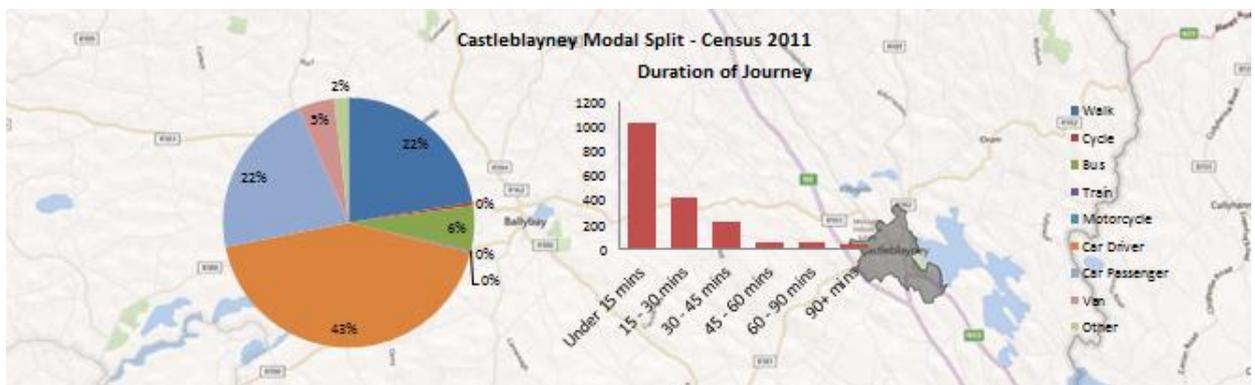
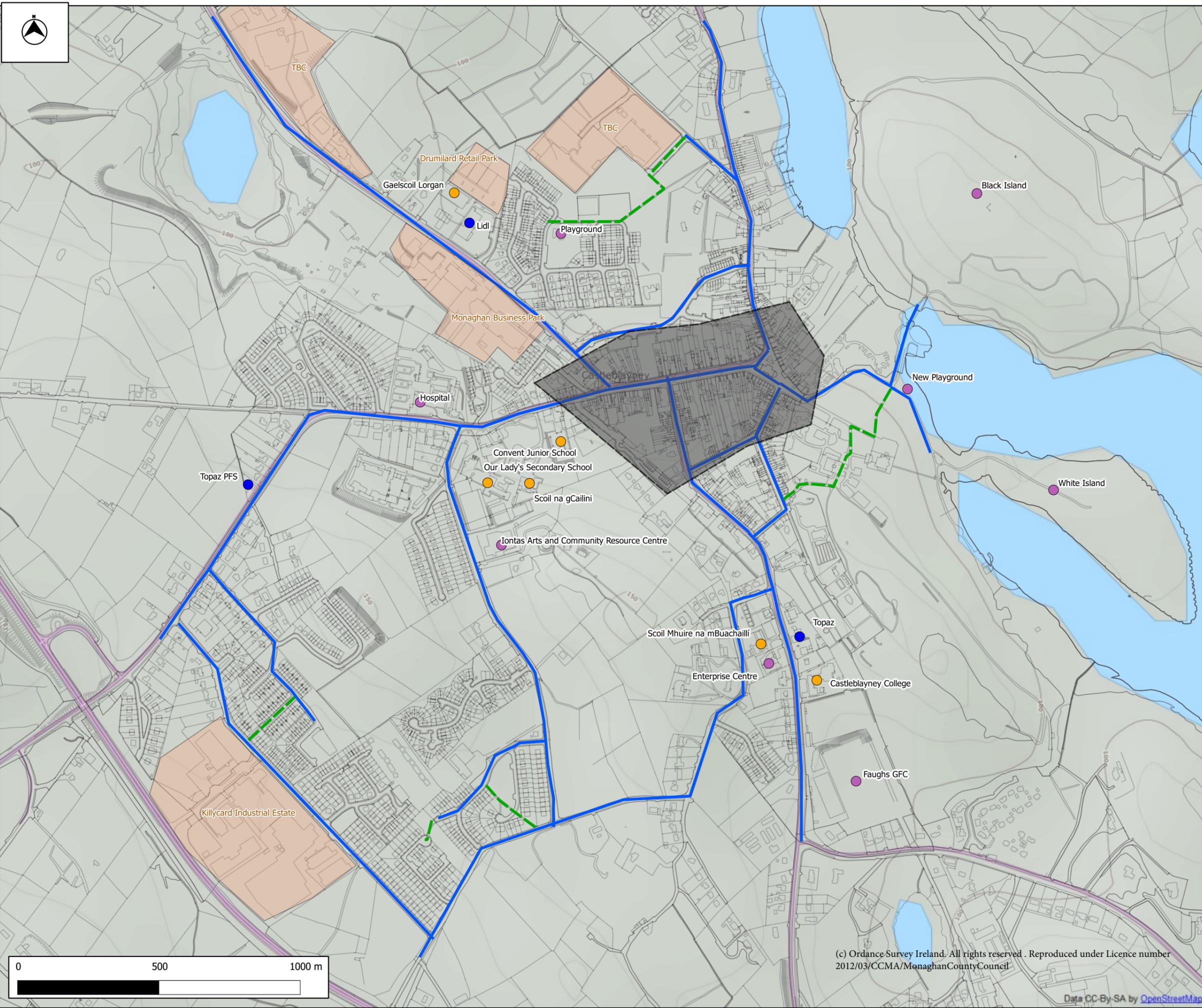


Figure 3.1: 2011 Census Data – Travel to School/Work or College for trips from Castleblayney



Legend

Community

- Sports, Community Centres, Playgrounds, Leisure, Health

Retail

- Local Shops, Foodstores

Town Centre

- Community, Doctors, Doctors, Employment, Shopping

Employment Areas

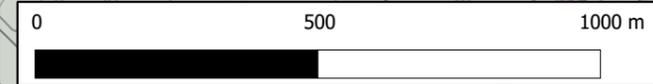
- Main Employment Areas

Schools

- Primary and Secondary

Main Routes

- Formal Route
- Informal Cycle / Walking Route



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Castleblayney Walking and Cycling Strategy
Existing Main Walking and Cycling Routes and Trip Generators

Map 2



3.3 CONSULTATION

3.3.1 Overview

Consultation took place via on-line and direct surveys with the general public, businesses and schools. These consultations served two purposes. The first was to gain a deeper understanding of travel habits in the town and to identify specific improvements that would encourage more walking and cycling. The second purpose was to create the first formal notification of the Active Travel Town initiative for the town and to act as the precursor for on-going active community involvement in the Active Travel strategy.

The business surveys focused on the mode of travel chosen by commuters every day, the types of facilities available within the company as well as asking for feedback and suggestions for improvement of walking and cycling. The public survey focused on walking and cycling habits, asking how many times they walk or cycle a week, the main reasons why, where they walk/cycle and what improvements are required within the town. The school survey focused on the modal splits for students as well as teachers.

3.3.2 Public Consultation

Public consultation for the strategy was undertaken in two ways. An initial on-line public consultation questionnaire was published, this was promoted through the Community Forum, social media, local press and through the Council's own website. The on-line survey received a high response rate, with close to 40 responses from people interested in walking or cycling in Castleblayney. In addition to the on-line survey a focus group meeting with interested groups and individuals from the town was also held. Some of the key findings from the on-line are summarised below.

3.3.3 Walking

At present walking within the town is predominately a recreational based activity. When asked why people generally walk, the majority of the respondents (68.2%) said that they either walk for leisure or for fitness. The majority of walking trips made within the town fall within the 2km to 5km band. The main destinations for walkers were the local parks, including Lough Muckno, the town centre shops or to local shops.

Within the survey it was asked what would encourage people to walk more often. These are shown in Figure 2. Public feedback indicates that 78% of people said they wanted better footpath provision. They indicated that some footpaths are not wide enough and are uneven. The other two key items that people identified was slower traffic speeds and the provision of better signage/information.

The most popular walking routes in the town are around Black and White Island whilst the loop around Bree, Conabury Hill, Dublin Road, Main Street and Sherccock Road is also popular. There were also requests for improvements to facilities for walking in Bree and for extension of the footpath and lighting provision to the Blackhill GAA club. Cleanliness of walking routes, in particular regarding dog fouling, was something that was also identified as needing improvement.

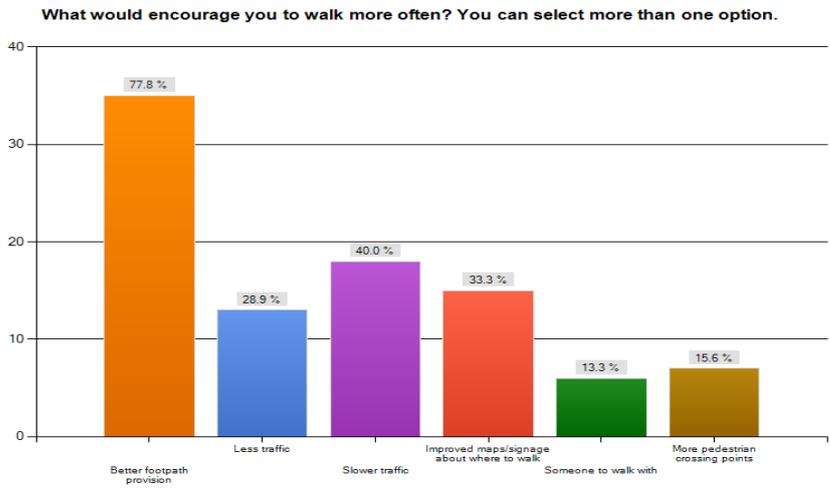


Figure 2: Results from public consultation

3.3.4 Cycling

The surveys indicated that cycling is not widely used as a form of travel within the town. When people do cycle, they tend to cycle for leisure and fitness purposes with most respondents cycling long distances of 10km to 20km+ per week. When asked what would encourage people to cycle more often, the majority of people said that proper cycle lane facilities were needed. Provision of more leisure cycle routes was another common option that people chose. Lough Muckno and park, around Black Island and Bree are the main areas where people would like to see improvements made.

3.3.5 Business Consultation

Responses were received from seven businesses within the town, representing close to 150 employees. The modal split for employees in these businesses is illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 3. The majority mode of travel is a car use (by self), with 83% of employees using this mode to travel to/from work. Walking and cycling are not widely used amongst employees with only 6% walking and 6% cycling.

When asked in the survey, would you consider walking or cycling to work as an alternative to car use, 82% of people said 'yes'. This represents an extremely high proportion of employees willing to walk or cycle to work, given the right level of encouragement.

Modal Split for Castleblayney Businesses

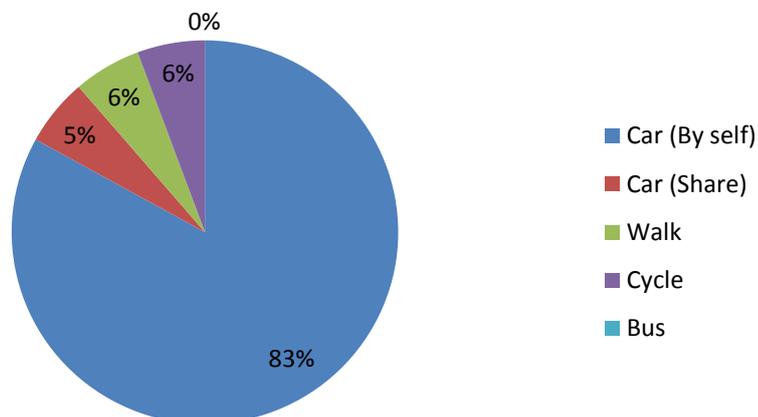


Figure 3: Modal Split from surveyed businesses



Attitudes towards walking and cycling within Castleblayney however are cautious. When asked what the barriers are to walking and cycling to work, the main worries were lack of lighting on the roads, no cycle lanes and safety on the roads. These barriers need to be addressed in order to provide more sustainable forms of travel for people as well as providing safe routes to and from work, school etc. Every business that was surveyed said that this strategy would have a positive impact on business and some noted that they would be happy to work in partnership with Monaghan County Council to encourage staff to walk and cycle more.

3.3.6 Facilities on Site

Businesses were asked in the survey what types of facilities are available for them if they wanted to walk or cycle to work. Figure 4 shows that the majority of businesses do not have the facilities necessary to encourage walking and cycling to work. The majority of employers said that if they had the funding for these facilities, they would provide them within their companies. Among the companies that were surveyed, 57% of them said that they did not participate in the Bike to Work Scheme, with some noting that they were not away of the scheme.

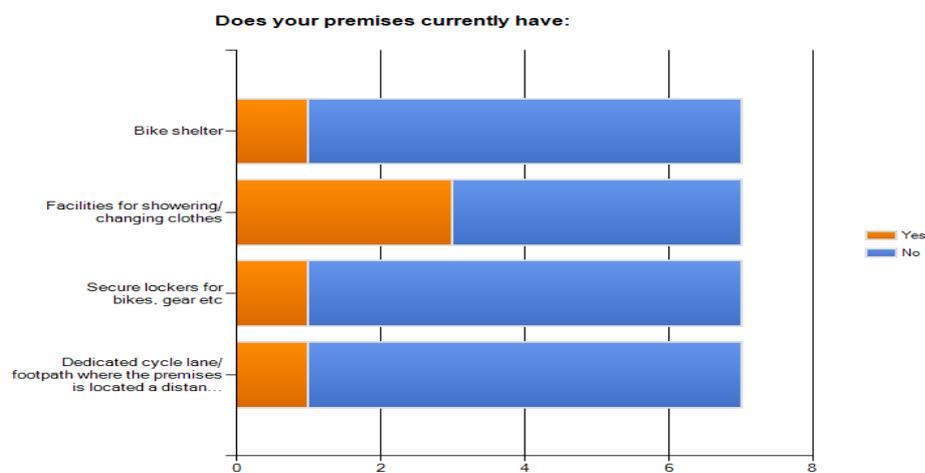


Figure 4: Facilities Available for Employees

3.3.7 School Consultation

All of the schools in the town were canvassed and asked to undertake a short survey as part of the development of the Strategy. The two secondary schools, Castleblayney College and Our Lady's Secondary returned surveys.

Responses were received from a broad age group, with responses from 1st year through to 6th year. The modal split for both schools is heavily reliant on car use. For students in Castleblayney College, 57% of them said they come by car in the morning with 36% getting the bus. Only 7% of students walk to school while no students cycle. Our Lady's School has a similar modal split. 51% of students arrive by car with 37% using the bus. Again, walking and cycling are at very low percentage rates. Only 12% walk to school with no pupils cycle. Our Lady's School has completed the Green School Travel programme.

Of the 243 students that were surveyed, not one of them cycled to school any day of the week. With 52% of students from Castleblayney College and 50% of students from Our Lady's School living within 5km of their schools, cycling could provide a more sustainable alternative mode of travel for car use for these students. When asked what the main barriers were for not walking and cycling, the main responses from both schools were the weather, inadequate footpaths, inadequate cycle lanes, too much to carry to school and the distance.



Students in Castleblayney College also said that they would want facilities within their school that would accommodate them cycling to school. For example, they suggested bike stands, lockers, cameras to keep the bikes safe as well as hair dryers and facilities for the girls changing rooms.

A teacher survey was also carried out in each school with 28 teachers participating in Castleblayney College and 50 teachers in Our Lady's. The modal splits for both schools were predominantly car use. In Castleblayney College all teachers drive to the school. That percentage does not include car sharing. 15% of teachers are living within 1 - 5km of the school with 64% living within 5 – 10km of the school.

In Our Lady's School, almost all teachers drive with one teacher walking, however, the overwhelming majority of teachers live more than 10km from the school. In order to attract more of them to walking and cycling, the teachers have suggested that facilities within the school such as showers and changing rooms are necessary as well as having safe cycle lanes on the roads.



4 Targets, Monitoring and Evaluation

A number of specific targets have been developed in line with the objectives of the national policy and the strategy as follows:

Castleblayney Walking and Cycling Strategy Targets

- To increase the cycle mode share for journeys to work, school and education from 0% to 5% by 2017.
- To increase the overall mode share for walking and cycling from 22% to 30% by 2017.
- All schools within the town to have a school travel plan in place by 2014.
- To create a Workplace Travel Network group and to have Workplace Travel Plans in operation at two of the main businesses within the town by 2014.

The mode share targets will be evaluated through census data from the 2016 censuses and will determine the overall evaluation of the Active Travel Town strategy. In addition counts and surveys will be carried out to monitor the strategy on an on-going and annual basis as follows:

- **Electronic Counters:** Electronic cycle counters will be installed at three locations on the main radial routes to the town centre. In addition traffic speed counters will be installed that will both advise drivers of their traffic speed and will log traffic speed and flow data. These data sources will provide on-going data in relation to cycling and vehicular traffic.
- **Manual Counts:** Manual counts will be carried out for a period of one week each year at two key junctions in the town in order to quantify pedestrian, cycling and vehicular traffic movements at these junctions.
- **Education Travel Surveys:** Surveys will be carried out on an annual basis in all the schools within the town.
- **Workplace Travel Surveys:** These will be carried out on an annual basis with the main objective of recording and monitoring the mode of travel to work and identifying the impact of any improvements to facilities or provision.



5

Proposed Actions

The proposed actions for the Walking and Cycling Strategy are divided into two different groups:

A. Infrastructure Improvements: Actions that provide for safer routes for people to travel by bike or foot or provide improved infrastructure.

B. Softer Measures: Actions that increase awareness and provide better information, actions that promote community involvement and actions that tie-in with existing school/college and workplace plans.

In addition to these measures there are a number of potential leisure/recreational routes along with connections to the National Cycle Network that were identified during the development of this Strategy. These are outlined in more detail below.

One of the key actions of this Strategy will be the creation of an Active Travel Town Committee Group which will help to implement this strategy and will provide a forum for people from different interest bodies and groups to share ideas and distribute information. Further details of this group are given within the implementation section of this Strategy.

5.1 PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Map 3 outlines the main walking and cycling infrastructure recommendations which are summarised in Table 5.1 below. Table 5.1 outlines the recommendations for interventions for each of the main walking and cycling links identified on Map 3.

These recommendations are designed to provide a primary walking and cycling network for Castleblayney that will provide significantly improved walking and cycling links between the residential areas of the town and the key trip attractors. The recommendations are based on the locations of the key trip attractors in the town together with the feedback from the consultation process.

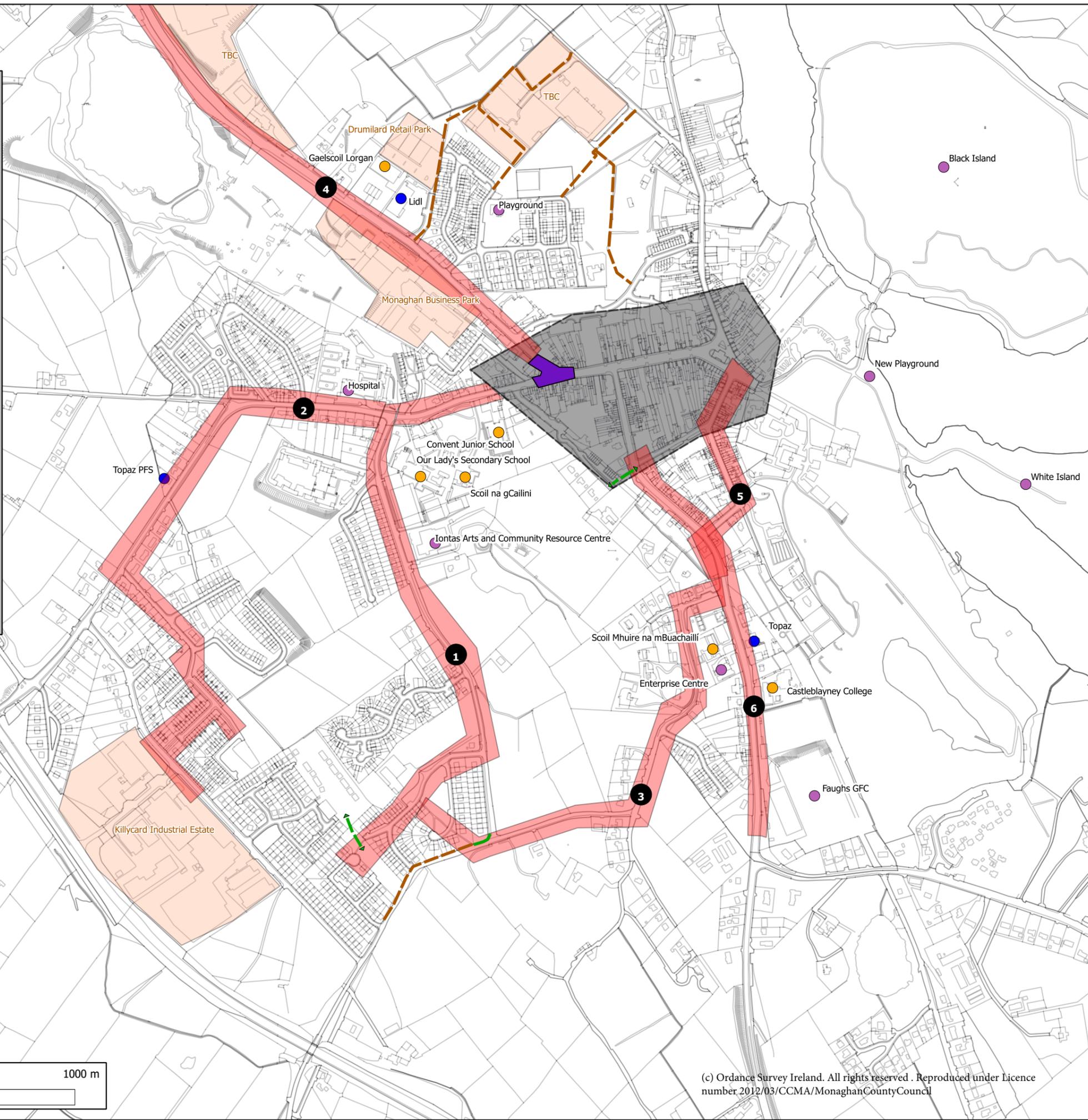
The implementation of these improvements should be designed so that they are accessible and usable for people of all ages and abilities, as an Age Friendly County there are a number of specific initiatives that should be progressed as part of strategy. In principle designs in the urban area should be developed so that they :

- i. Provide adequate street and park furniture: benches, resting places that provide appropriate shelter and shade.
- ii. Are visually appealing – have good landscaping incorporated within them.
- iii. Have simple and easy to understand signage for streets and businesses
- iv. Provides good lighting
- v. Use of non-slip pavements and have junction crossings that are in accordance with disability requirements with adequately timed time for green men.



Cycle Network Improvements:

- 1. Route to Schools and Town Centre.**
Provision of off-road cycle track along the west side of Bree Road.
- 2. Route to Schools and Town Centre.**
Provision of off a shared cycleway and footway along the southern side Shercock Road.
- 3. Route to Schools and Black Island/ White Island.**
Speed reduction and safety improvements on route.
- 4. Route to Employment Zone.**
Provision of on-road cycle lanes on both sides of Monaghan Road.
- 5. Alternative Route to Town Centre and Route to Black Island / White Island**
Provision of improved signage.
- 6. Route from Town Centre to Schools and Faughs.**
Provision of on road cycle lanes along section of route.



Legend

Community

- Sports, Community Centres, Playgrounds, Leisure, Health

Retail

- Local Shops, Foodstores

Town Centre

- Community, Doctors, Doctors, Employment, Shopping

Employment Areas

- Main Employment Areas

Schools

- Primary and Secondary

Key Routes for Improvement

-

Footpath Network Improvements

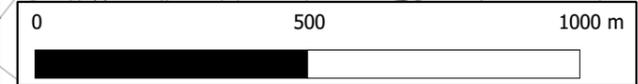
- Short Term
- Long Term

Junction Improvements

- Upgrade junction to Signals

Future Links

- Future Pedestrian / Cyclists Linkages



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Castleblayney Walking and Cycling Strategy
Walking and Cycle Network Route Improvements

Map 3



Table 5.1: CASTLEBLAYNEY WALKING AND CYCLING LINK RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific Route Improvements

Route ID	Road No.	Road Name(s)		Proposed Improvements
1		BREE ROAD	From Rosevale to the junction with Shercock Road.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrade of link between Knocktornagh housing estate and Rosevale estate to include public lighting and some landscaping. 2. Provision of an off-road cycle track along the western side of Bree Road from Rosevale junction to the junction with Shercock Road. The cycle track should crossover to the eastern side of the road just north of Bleaberry Estate junction. Where width permits, the cycle track should be a minimum width of 2.0m, at more constrained sections a shared footway/cycleway can be provided, with a desirable minimum width of 3.0m and an absolute minimum width of 2.0m for limited sections. Some road realignment and/or third party agreements will be required to facilitate this provision. 3. The provision of a speed radar sign on the approach to the school. 4. A raised junction crossing should be provided at the junction of Bree Road and Shercock Road
2	R181	SHERCOCK ROAD	From junction with Bree Estate to the Convent Junior School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrade of existing link into Bree estate to include public lighting and improved landscaping. 2. Provision of an off-road cycle track along the southern side of Shercock Road from Bree junction to the Convent Junior school. Where width permits, the cycle track should be a minimum width of 2.0m, however on the uphill sections the width should be increased to 3m. At more constrained sections a shared footway/cycleway can be provided, with a desirable minimum width of 3.0m and an absolute minimum width of 2.0m for limited sections. Existing public lighting columns should be repositioned to the back of the footpath. Some local road realignment and reallocation of road space will be required to facilitate this provision.
3		CONABURY HILL ROAD	From Bree Road to the junction with Dublin Road.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide for speed radar sign along this route. 2. Provide a raised junction at the existing priority junction at the top of the hill. 3. Provide shared cycle symbols on the downhill lane(s).
4		MONAGHAN ROAD	From Main Street junction to the junction of R183	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extension of 50 kph speed limit. 2. Provision of on-road cycle lane, minimum width of 1.75m. These lanes should be mandatory lanes. The provision of these lanes will require reallocation of road space and the removal of the existing central hatching and right turning lane.
5		BEECH CORNER AND CHURCH STREET	From Dublin Street to Courthouse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of improved signage informing of route to Lough Muckno.
6		DUBLIN ROAD	From Faughs GFC to junction with Thomas Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of on road cycle lanes along both sides of the road, lanes should be minimum width of 1.75m. Care should be taken to incorporate the on-street parking provision at the Church and at the school.



Other Initiatives

Reference	Proposed Recommendation
Junction of Main Street / Monaghan Road	Upgrade of existing junction from a roundabout provision to a signalised junction, incorporating ASLs and controlled pedestrian crossing provision.
Improved Signage	Provision of improved walking and cycling signage provision.
Improved Cycle Parking	Provision of improved cycle parking facilities at key destinations and within the town centre.
Specific Footpath Improvements	Short term : Provision of new footpath provision and public lighting linking to Blackhill GFC, new footpath provision at Conabury Hill, footpath provision on Bog Road to Drumillard estate. Long Term : Urban footpaths as detailed on Map 3.
Increased Permeability	Provision of future linkage from Coill Darach estate to Knocktornagh estate. Provision of future linkage from Dublin Road at the Scout's Den. In addition, it is noted that the provision of a future linkage from McGrath Road to the Main Street would future improve permeability within the town centre.
Age Friendly Initiatives	Support Monaghan Age Friendly Alliance in the undertaking of a Walkability Audit for the town.

5.2 POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL ROUTE IMPROVEMENTS

As part of the strategy a number of potential walking and cycling recreational routes were identified. Specific recommendations with regard to some of these routes are contained within this report. Other routes will require future study and review, however as part of this strategy it is recommended that the development of these routes should be supported and encouraged.

The specific recommendations that were identified as part of this Strategy are as follows:

- In conjunction with the local GAA clubs, seek to develop of GAA Slí na Sláinte routes at Blackhills GFC and Faughs GFC.
- Develop a Slí na Sláinte walking route incorporating the existing loop walk around Bree and Conabury Hill, with a longer loop linking into Lough Muckno. This has been included within the implementation plan and cost estimate for the Strategy.
- In co-operation with Coillte, extend the existing new pathway so it loops back to the main pathway.
- Upgraded the existing facilities (i.e. provide a more suitable surfacing) on White Island to accommodate cycling.
- Develop a looped walk through the old Golf Course which will link to the Old Coach Road at the rear of the chapel. This walk can be linked to the N53 by re-opening the traditional right of way at the South East corner of the old golf course exiting at Dr Roaches and thereby linking to the existing Monaghan Way trail.
- Develop a heritage walk in line with the recommendation contained within the draft Historic Landscape Character Study for Castleblayney.
- Examine further the potential for the development of a 21 km looped cycle trail along the lake road.
- Undertake a further study into the opportunity of using the three old railway lines, i.e. the old Castleblayney – Armagh section to the north of the town, Castleblayney to Ballybay section to the west and the Castleblayney to Dundalk section to the south.



All of the above trails and routes should be developed in accordance with the latest design guidance from the National Trails Office and where possible should be accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities.

5.3 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CYCLE ROUTES

At present there is no strategy available for the development of a regional cycle routes in the area or for connecting to regional cycle routes in Northern Ireland. The National Cycle National for Ireland does indicate a route from Monaghan Town to Castleblayney and a further link from Castleblayney to the north-south National Cycle route at Dundalk. The presence of the Castleblayney – Dundalk old railway line could form a quality linkage to Dundalk and could be developed as part of the National Cycle Network, however further study is required into the appropriateness of this route.

The linkage from Castleblayney to Monaghan, will also require further study and route selection, however it would appear the opportunity provide by the old N2 could provide a suitable corridor to take the route as far as Clontibret. The other two old railway lines also provide an opportunity to develop quality regional cycle routes connecting to and from Castleblayney, and it is noted again that the opportunity provided by these lines should be explored in more detail.

5.4 SOFTER MEASURES

These measures will focus on providing better information, increasing awareness of the benefits of walking and cycling and promoting community involvement.

5.4.1 Promotion of Walking and Cycling Within the Community

This strategy recommends that the ongoing promotion of walking and cycling within the town and the linking up with existing initiatives and events. This promotion should focus issues such as the health benefits and social benefits of walking and cycling rather than mentioning modal shifts and government targets for modal shares etc. The formation of the Active Travel Town Committee will assist in identify opportunities for the promotion of Active Travel within the town and allow the group to identify synergies with other initiatives.

5.4.2 School Travel Plans

School travel plans are seen as a key initiative to encourage behavioural change among schoolchildren. Effecting behavioural change at an early age will have a major impact on long term travel behaviour. It is a key objective of the strategy to develop a culture of travel to school by walking and cycling amongst all schoolchildren that live within walking and cycling distance of their local school. In addition the school travel plans will aim to incorporate various initiatives that will engender parental involvement in terms of education and encouragement of sustainable travel to school.

It is anticipated that the development of the travel plans will also determine specific infrastructure improvements that can be implemented in the vicinity of schools to improve access and provide for a safer routes to schools. These specific measures will complement the improvements to the primary walking and cycling network set out in this strategy.

The school travel plans will be developed in the context of the Green Schools Travel Programme. All schools in the town will develop a school travel plan regardless of whether or not they are involved in the Green Schools Programme. Schools can avail of the significant database of information on the Programme to develop their bespoke travel plans that will incorporate walking and cycling initiatives together with initiatives to develop more sustainable travel for those who need to travel by car. The latter would include car-pooling, car sharing and park and stride opportunities. The plans should be coordinated between schools to ensure, in particular, that any infrastructural improvements derive the maximum benefit for all schools.



5.4.3 Workplace Travel Plans

The business surveys undertaken for the strategy indicate an appetite for increased walking and cycling to work in Castleblayney. Workplace travel plans will be a cornerstone of behavioural change in the town and will be developed on two levels. Larger employers will be encouraged to develop stand-alone travel plans and all employers with a workforce of fifty or more employees would be included in this category.

The second level of workplace travel planning would be among smaller employers below fifty staff. In order to encourage participation in the programme a workplace travel network would be established that would include both larger and smaller employers with the main objective of informing and encouraging the smaller employers to become part of an overall workplace travel plan for the town and the network would facilitate employers to identify the opportunities and measures that would be applicable to their size and type of business. This would be developed in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce.

The development of the workplace travel plans would be informed by the smarter travel workplaces initiative and this will be the main source of information that would initiate workplace travel planning in the town. Similar to the school travel plans the workplace plans will be complemented by the infrastructural improvements that will provide safer and more convenient routes for travel to work.

5.4.4 Measures to Promote Walking and Cycling – Changes to Development Plan

At present the draft Monaghan Development Plan 2013 does not make any specific reference to the requirement for Travel Plans for large employers, and it only requires cycle parking for commercial and retail development. Furthermore it does not give any specific ratios or requirements for this provision of cycle parking. It is recommended that either the County Development Plan, or at a minimum the Castleblayney Town Development Plan be changed, to address these issues.



6 Implementation

6.1 MANAGEMENT

An Active Travel Town Committee will be set up to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Active Travel Town Strategy. This committee will be made up of key stakeholders including representatives drawn from the community forum, schools, employers, sporting organisations, the tourism sector and the health sector. Whilst the role of the committee will be to guide the implementation of the strategy and to devise and implement further initiatives and recommendations, the key function of the committee will be in developing relationships between interested bodies and assist with engagement with the wider public. The multi-sectoral approach will assist in helping to identify opportunities and draw down of funding.

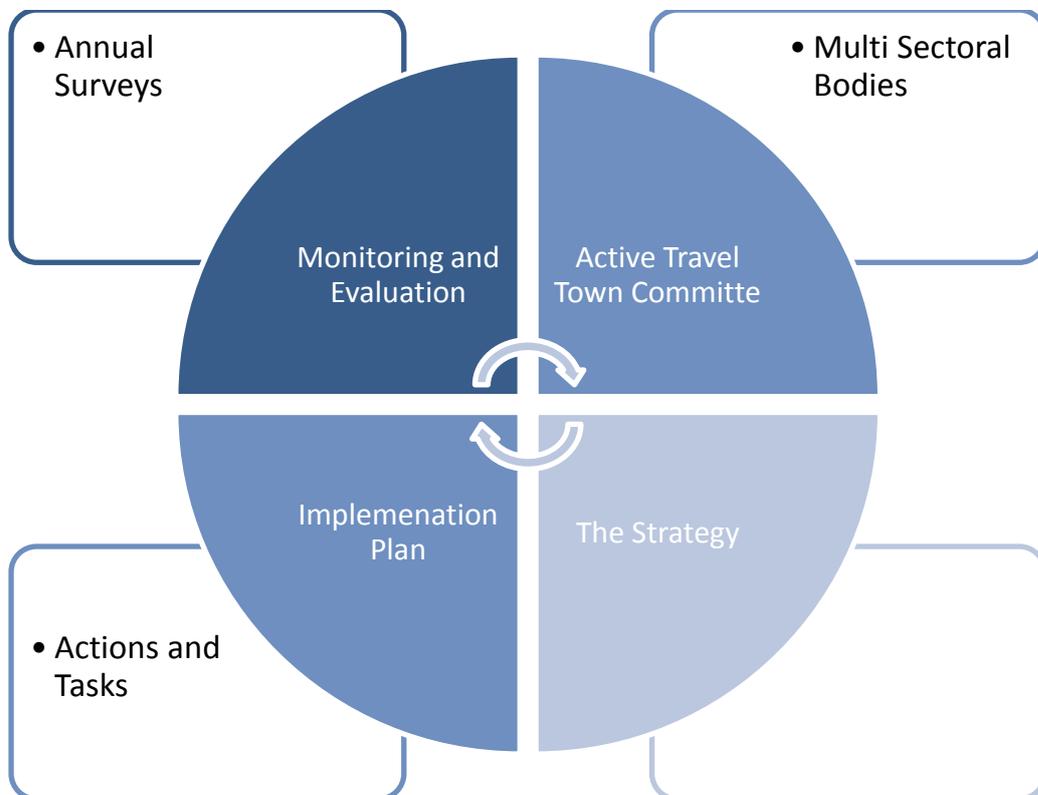


Figure 5.1 : Strategy Implementation Structure



6.2 IMPLEMENTATION COST AND PHASING

The infrastructure projects set out in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 have been prioritised in terms of delivery and cost estimates have been applied to each project. Each project has been assigned a priority 1 or 2 classification. Priority projects would be delivered in the short to medium term with construction or implementation to commence next year. Priority 2 projects would be completed in the medium to longer term with projects to be delivered from three years hence and onwards. All costs are preliminary and are subject to review. More detailed costing will be developed as the scheme designs are advanced.



Photo: White Island, Lough Muckno – showing recently constructed fishing areas and trail (source : Monaghan County Council website)

Given the importance of Lough Muckno to the local residents combined with the recently constructed fishing areas, and the soon to be constructed adventure playground, the first project will be to upgrade the existing access trail around White Island from an unbound finish to a bound flexible surface finish. This will make an ideal location for people to cycle with their children and provide an opportunity for people to rediscover their cycling skills in a safe and attractive environment. The upgrade works will be provide a platform for Monaghan County Council to build on a flagship project to help increase awareness of the Active Travel Town program within the general public.



Table 5.1: CASTLEBLAYNEY WALKING AND CYCLING LINK RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific Route Improvements

Route ID	Road No.	Road Name(s)		Priority	Preliminary Cost Estimate (Ex VAT)
			White Island	1	80,000
1		BREE ROAD	From Rosevale to the junction with Shercock Road.	1	100,000
2	R181	SHERCOCK ROAD	From junction with Bree Estate to the Convent Junior School	2	122,000
3		CONABURY HILL ROAD	From Bree Road to the junction with Dublin Road.	1	16,500
4		MONAGHAN ROAD	From Main Street junction to the junction of R183	2	120,000
5		BEECH CORNER AND CHURCH STREET	From Dublin Street to Courthouse	1	Included in signage proposal.
6		DUBLIN ROAD	From Faughs GFC to junction with Thomas Street	2	100,000
Other Initiatives					
Reference		Proposed Recommendation			
Junction of Main Street / Monaghan Road		Upgrade of existing junction from a roundabout provision to a signalised junction, incorporating ASL's and controlled pedestrian crossing provision.		2	150,000
Improved Signage		Provision of improved walking and cycling signage provision.		1	20,000
Improved Cycle Parking		Provision of improved cycle parking facilities at key destinations and within the town centre.		1	10,000



Specific Footpath Improvements	Short term : Provision of new footpath provision and public lighting linking to Blackhill GFC, new footpath provision at Conabury Hill, footpath provision Bog Road to Drumillard estate.	1	60,000
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