



MONAGHAN

Destination Town







EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Monaghan Destination Town Plan was commissioned by Monaghan County Council in partnership with Fáilte Ireland in 2019. It sets out a vision for tourism growth over the next 5 to 10 years and is based on a comprehensive process of engagement across the town.

The clear issue is that Monaghan town is not performing as a visitor destination - evidenced by the relatively low share of the visitor market and the low visitor dwell time in the town centre.

In 2018, Monaghan welcomed 1% of the 9,609 million overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending <0.5% of the €5,217bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland.

Irish residents took 220,000 trips to Monaghan and Louth (2% of the 10,918 million domestic trips in 2018) spending €29mn (1% of domestic tourist spend)

(FI 2017 County stats indicate 60,000 Overseas visitors delivering €25M revenue compared to our neighbour Cavan - 107,000/€48M).

During the research and public consultation for this Destination Town plan for Monaghan, several strengths were identified and these included:

- **Attractive town centre with historic monuments (e.g. Rossmore & Dawson monuments)**
- **Diverse range of assets including Ulster Canal Greenway, Rossmore Park, Garage Theatre**
- **Committed future investment in projects of €30m**
- **Established reputation for events**

However, the consistent message that came through was that whilst Monaghan town had some good activity products (Greenway, Rossmore Park), interesting culture & heritage attractions (monuments, county museum), and a number of well-established festivals (Harvest Blues, Country Music), there was no cohesive visitor experience strong enough to act as a significant attractor for tourists nor was there any arrival point in town from which visitors can be orientated to discover its associated culture and heritage.

With a visitor proposition of 'Deeper Encounters' and firmly set within the context of Ireland's Ancient East, The Monaghan Destination Town Plan aims to:

- **Capitalise on the town's unique spaces and associations**
- **Place the cultural heritage of the destination at the heart of the visitor experience**
- **Deliver a high quality food and drink experience that captures the very best of what the destination has to offer**
- **Make Monaghan a place of celebration throughout the year**





The plan's 21 Actions set out a broad range of opportunities for creative interventions across the town centre. Responding to the objectives and proposition, these include initiatives to:

- **Improve first impressions and sense of arrival of the town**
- **Enhance the town's unique central core and its sense of place**
- **Encourage the visitor to explore through clearer orientation**
- **'Reawaken' key spaces like the Ulster Canal and Convent Lake**
- **Support and grow the town's reputation as a venue for events**



Priority projects for short term delivery are identified in the accompanying Action Plan. The first of these will be a new Central Hub Events Space to be located within the heart of Monaghan. This attractive addition to the townscape will help strengthen the role of Monaghan as a popular venue for year around events. It will be accompanied by works to enhance the eye-catching monuments located through the town. Other short term priority actions focus on further developing existing assets, namely Rossmore Forest Park and the Ulster Canal Greenway, so increasing their ability to attract and sustain visitor numbers, while also enhancing these valuable spaces for local people.

These diverse initiatives, together with other live plans for investment, will help to transform the visitor experience in Monaghan and drive forward its appeal as a place to stay and explore. These outcomes will be measured by Key Performance Indicators, including increased footfall, business, event participation and visitor perceptions.

Through the continuation of a collaborative approach between Monaghan County Council, Fáilte Ireland, other agencies and the towns businesses and residents, an exciting potential is presented to comprehensively enhance the visitor experience and economy in Monaghan Town.

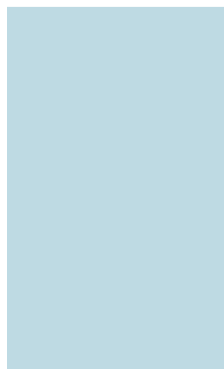




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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the strategic plans of Monaghan County Council for the development of Monaghan as a Destination Town.

Monaghan is the most northern County Town to feature in “Ireland’s Ancient East”, the tourism initiative launched in 2016 by the national tourism development authority, Fáilte Ireland. It aims to share with the visitor “5000 years of European history, lush green landscapes and stories told by the best storytellers in the world” and its strategic objectives include driving growth in international visitors, creating more overnight stays and better spreading of the benefits of Ireland’s visitor economy across the country.

To help realise these objectives, the Junior Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Brendan Griffen TD launched the Destination Towns investment scheme in 2019. In doing so, he and Fáilte Ireland recognised the vital role Ireland’s towns must play in providing good quality accommodation, attractions and services to the visitor. This has led to a substantial funding commitment to bring forward projects across the country.

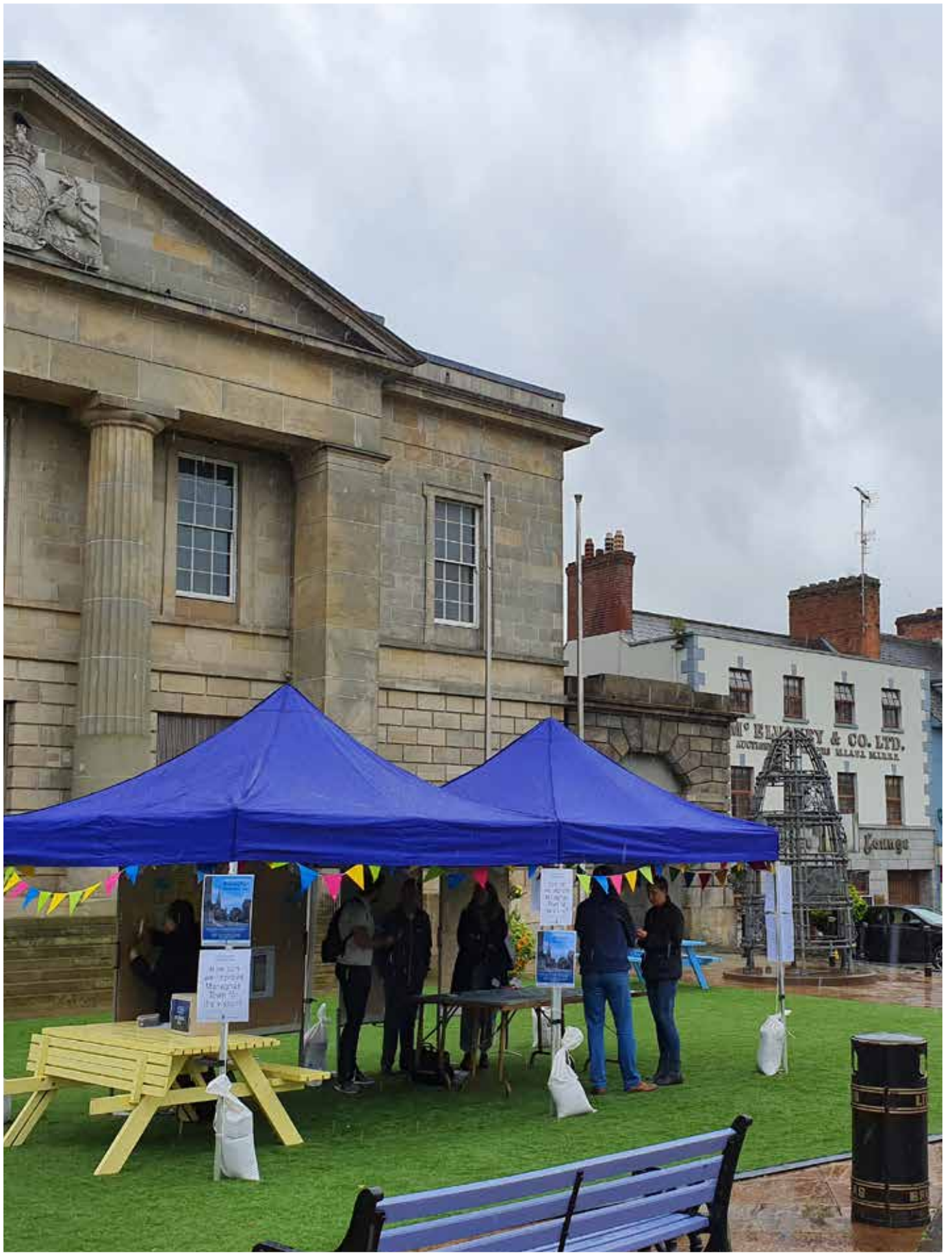
Local authorities like Monaghan County Council are central to this scheme and the development of tourism more widely. Working closely with Fáilte Ireland, their tourism remit involves the development of tourism attractions, investment in innovation and infrastructure and the promotion of tourism locally, including events and festivals.

It is no secret that Monaghan Town does not currently attract high numbers of visitors compared to other well know destinations, except perhaps during its popular annual music events. However, as this report will illustrate, Monaghan has a lot to offer including a uniquely attractive town centre, an array of destinations within easy reach and good quality infrastructure.

Growing the Visitor Economy is a strategic priority of Monaghan County Council and as a result, some exciting steps have been made to invest in both attractions and infrastructure. These include the Ulster Canal Greenway, Rossmore Forest Park, a new Peace Campus to house a greatly enhanced county museum and other attractions.

This document sets out the next chapter for tourism in Monaghan Town, to fulfil its objectives as a Destination Town. It outlines the current situation with regards tourism in Monaghan, before presenting a Vision and Visitor Proposition for tourism. This is followed by an ambitious yet highly achievable Action Plan, with actions for delivery over the next 5 to 10 years.

“A tourism destination town is a town in which a visitor can spend an overnight, and in which a cluster of products, services, activities and experiences are offered. It incorporates various stakeholders and intangible elements, such as its character, image and identity, and can function as a touring base for visitors”.
Fáilte Ireland, 2019.



PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This Destination Town Plan for Monaghan was developed in 2019 through a collaborative process involving Monaghan County Council, Fáilte Ireland, appointed consultants The Paul Hogarth Company and stakeholders from across the town. The Council and its team are sincerely grateful to all those who took time to participate in this process, helping ensure that the plan accurately reflects the ambitions of local people for their Destination Town.

Key stages of the plan development process were as follows:

DESKTOP ANALYSIS – All relevant policies, plans and strategies pertaining to Monaghan Town and its tourism function were studied for the purposes of this plan. These included the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, County Monaghan Tourism Strategy and Monaghan Local Economic & Community Plan. Future plans for sites within the town were also studied so to ensure that the plan takes full account of anticipated developments in the years ahead.

SITE APPRAISAL – Monaghan and its town centre were independently studied by the consultancy team with the use of mapping, photographs and on-site assessments. This urban design and public realm study was used to help identify the unique strengths of the town, as well as some of the challenges it faces.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AND WORKSHOP – One-to-one meetings and a group workshop were conducted with key stakeholders from the town and within Monaghan County Council. These included representatives of the town's hotels and local business owners, as well as elected members of Monaghan Municipal District.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION – A public consultation event was held on the 21st of August 2019, taking place in a marquee located for the project in Church Square in the heart of Monaghan Town Centre. Members of the public and local business owners were invited to share their views with members of the team and to complete a short informal survey.

VISITOR SURVEY – A survey of out-of-state visitors to Monaghan town also took place during the period of plan development. The surveys were conducted at Monaghan Visitor Information Centre and during the Harvest Blues Festival, when many visitors descend upon the town.

CURRENT SITUATION

The town of Monaghan is situated in the north of the county along the N2 road corridor, the former route of the Ulster Canal and 7km from the border with Northern Ireland. It has a population of 8,000 and draws upon a county and regional catchment for local services and retail.

The following section outlines key findings of the research process under the Destination Town headings:



1. VISITOR PROFILE

The clear issue for the Council is that Monaghan town is not performing as a visitor destination - evidenced by the relatively low share of the visitor market and the low visitor dwell time in the town centre.

In 2018, Monaghan welcomed 1% of the 9.6 million overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending <0.5% of the €5,217bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland.

Irish residents took 220,000 trips to Monaghan and Louth (2% of the 10,918 million domestic trips in 2018) spending €29mn (1% of domestic tourist spend)

While specific data is not available for Monaghan Town itself, evidence would suggest that the majority of international visitors to the town arrive in association with friends or family, or to participate in one of the town's larger annual events – the Harvest Blues Festival and the County Music Festival.

2. VISITOR OFFER

Monaghan has several visitor attractions located within its centre. These can be summarised as follows:

MONAGHAN COUNTY MUSEUM – Award winning and fully accredited museum that celebrates the history and culture of the County. Permanent and temporary exhibits are complemented by an energetic programme of events and outreach initiatives.

MARKET HOUSE ART GALLERY – Set within a beautiful heritage building, the art gallery hosts a diverse range of exhibitions and events, including music recitals and talks.

ARCHITECTURE AND HERITAGE TRAIL – The town centre is home to a rich collection of historic buildings, monuments, streets and squares, each with their story to tell about the civic, industrial and social life of Monaghan and its people. The walking tour, self-guided or accompanied, invites the visitor to explore and learn.

ULSTER CANAL GREENWAY – This 19th Century Canal originally passed through the centre of Monaghan Town. Now a 4km stretch of the canal has been opened up as a foot and cycle path through the centre of the town, providing a place for recreation, exercise and wildlife watching, as well as links to Rossmore and other attractions.

ROSSMORE FOREST PARK – The historic estate and its 2000 acres of woodland is a place of nature on the doorstep of Monaghan Town. Its walks, trails and lakes provide a place to escape for residents and visitors alike. Events throughout the year and recent investments, including a large natural play area and huge sculptural giants, help to make Rossmore an ideal family destination.

GARAGE THEATRE – Operating since 1993, the 300 seat Garage Theatre (in a new, purpose-built facility) has become a cultural hub of the County, with an extensive programme of performances from music to drama, comedy and film.

EVENTS VENUE – Monaghan has developed a reputation for hosting events of international quality and significance. Most notably these include the Monaghan Country Festival (July) and Harvest Blues Festival (September), drawing international acts and visitors to the town each year. Other important events include the Taste of Monaghan food festival and the Rossmore Forest Park Haunting.

3. ACCESS

Monaghan Town is located on the N2 dual carriageway as it charts a course northward from Dublin to the border with Northern Ireland and onwards to Letterkenny, County Donegal. It is also connected westwards by the N54 which leads to the towns of Clones and Cavan, before reaching destinations along the western seaboard. The town centre is accessed from roads arriving from the N2 to the north and south and the Clones Road (N54) to the east. There they meet in the town's 19th and 20th century road network and series of large town centre car parks situated to the 'rear' of the historic core.

While the last train left Monaghan in 1959, the town is well served with bus connections to Dublin. Local services are less frequent, which combined with the town's rural catchment, leads to high levels of car usage. The bus station is located on the northern edge of the town centre.

Importantly, Monaghan Town provides a point of access to the wider county. Its relatively central location makes it well suited as a departure point for destinations such as Glaslough and Sliabh Beagh, as well other larger towns of Clones and Castleblayney.

4. ORIENTATION

Orientation for the visitor is provided by signage and occasional maps located in parts of the town. While Monaghan has some striking landmarks like the St. MacCartan's Cathedral, a combination of its topography, urban layout and extensive one-way road system, present challenges to visitor orientation, especially outside of the central hub. As a consequence, it will be required to improve the way in which visitors navigate their way around the town and explore its various attractions.

5. SIGNAGE

A wide range of signage is present in Monaghan Town, with a dominance of road signage owing to the nature of its road network. The council has been relatively successful however, in 'decluttering' the town centre of signs, linked in part to its investment in the public realm. Pedestrian finger posts can be found in some town centre locations but are absent from many areas, so giving the visitor only limited assistance while on foot.

6. ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE TOWN

Monaghan is an attractive town, especially within its historic centre. This can be attributed to its network of narrow streets opening out into a series of interlinked urban squares. These spaces, such as The Diamond and Church Square are studded with landmark buildings and monuments, giving them a strong sense of place and an air of grandeur to be associated with the former wealth of this Ulster trading town. Other attractive aspects of Monaghan Town include its many churches and hilltop cathedral, as well as some of green spaces, most notably Peter's Lake and Rossmore Forest Park on the southwestern edge of town.

Like all towns however, Monaghan's attractiveness is affected by a number of different factors. Twentieth century development beyond the central core is varied in style and quality, noticeable, in particular upon some of its drumlin hills. Road infrastructure such as Broad Street along the town centre's southern edge, lacks the qualities of its traditional streets, flanked by car parks and buildings of lesser quality. Traffic and parked cars tend to dominate much of the town centre, which circulates extensively due to the one-way system in operation there.

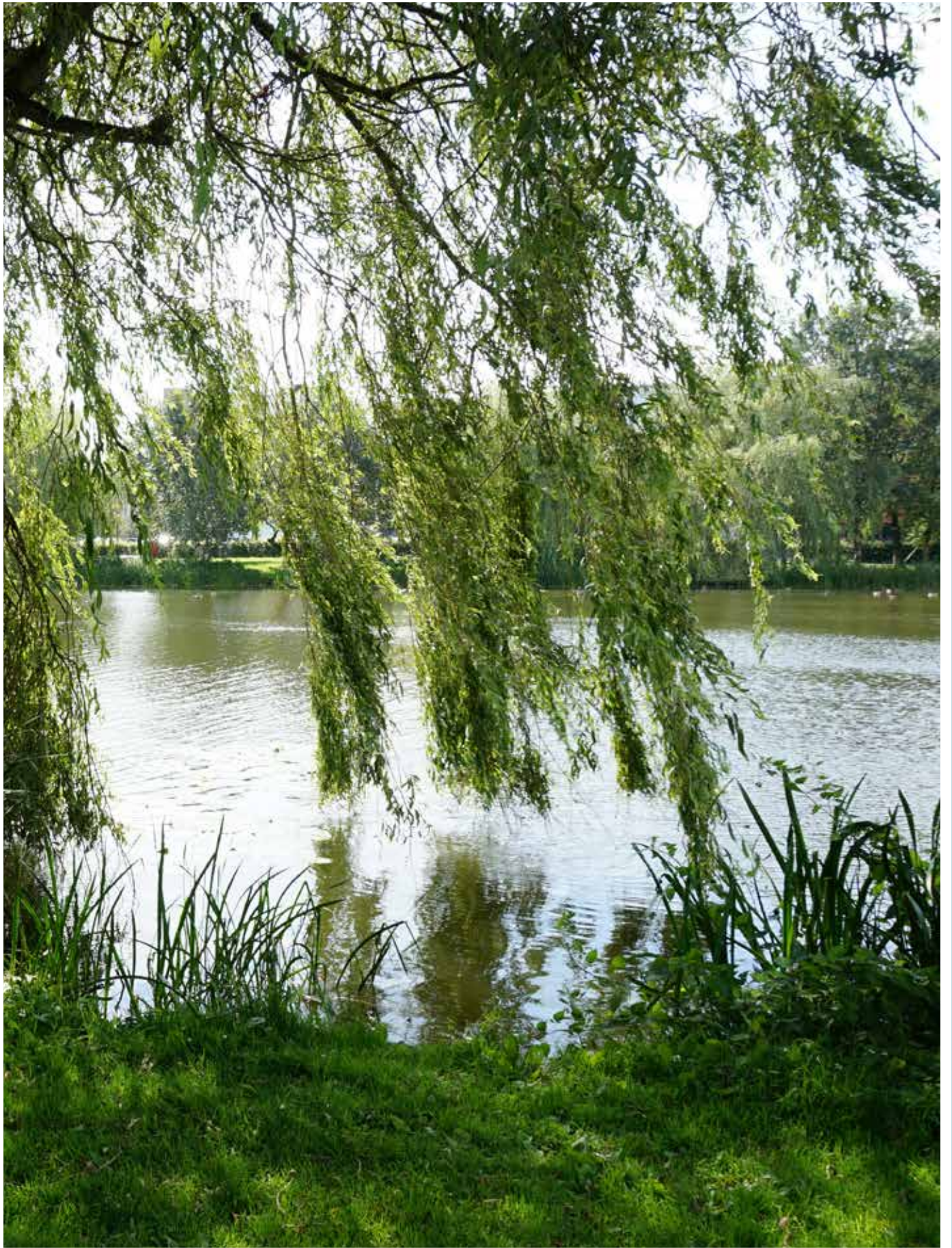


7. PUBLIC REALM

Investment in Monaghan's Public Realm has taken place periodically, most recently within the Diamond, where an attractive stone landscape greets the locals and visitors alike. Much of the town centre is surfaced with concrete pavements which provide a good quality walking surface, although have a tendency to look tired and dated. Similarly, street furniture is varied in style and character, where more contemporary benches and bollards found alongside neo-heritage street furniture more commonly used in the 1980s and 90s.

Through the considerable efforts of Monaghan Municipal District and Monaghan Tidy Towns, the town's public realm is clean and well presented, with countless floral displays that inject splashes of life and colour. Some attractive trees are also to be found in Monaghan Town Centre, most notably in the vicinity of Peter's Lake – one of the town's centres few green spaces. The newly opened Ulster Canal Greenway also provides good access to green space and nearby neighbourhoods, managed primarily for wildlife and therefore perceived by some as untidy.





8. STORYTELLING AND ANIMATION

Monaghan has a fascinating history associated with its role as a trading town, its strong links to the rural economy and industrial heritage, including large estates and the Ulster Canal. The role of Monaghan on the border plays an important part in its story through trade, conflict and friendship.

The primary means of interpretation in the town centre is the Monaghan Heritage Trail, which makes its way through the centre as either a self-guided or guided tour. Small signs showing historic photographs and footpath plaques populate the route, augmented by information available from the Tourism Office and County Museum.

Monaghan is however, relatively underserved by interpretation, leaving many of its stories untold to the visitor. Numerous opportunities exist to help communicate the significance and interest of the place and its people.

Animation across the town is driven mostly by the retail and hospitality sector, generating healthy footfall on many central streets. Seasonal events play an important role in injecting further activity into the town, while more recently, small successful events have been facilitated by Monaghan County Council and others in Church Square.

9. THINGS TO SEE AND DO DAYTIME

As outlined in Section 2: Visitor Offer, Monaghan Town Centre has a number of attractions best visited by day. These include the County Museum and Market House and the green spaces of the Ulster Canal and Rossmore Forest Park. Shopping and dining are also popular activities in the town, which plays an important role in increasing town centre dwell time at present.

10. THINGS TO SEE AND DO EVENING

Like most Irish towns, the evening economy of Monaghan revolves primarily around its food and drink offer. It is fortunate to be home to several well-established town centre pubs and restaurants, which generate significant activity on the weekends in particular. Other evening activities in Monaghan are associated with various events, small and large, as well as the programme of the Garage Theatre located on the northern edge of town. Considerable scope exists to augment the evening experience of Monaghan through activities and the use of lighting.

11. ACCOMMODATION

Monaghan Town's bed stock has been confirmed by Fáilte Ireland as 1238 bed spaces over a total of 460 rooms. The bulk of these are provided across the town's three hotels, the Westenra, Four Seasons and Hillgrove, as well as a small number of guest houses in the town. Further accommodation is provided nearby in the town of Glaslough, made famous by the Castle Leslie Estate. Consultation with hotel operators has reported strong occupancy levels, but with a reliance on events such as weddings. The Council is working to grow and diversify accommodation by promoting the FI Quality Assurance programme with existing businesses and supporting new investment.

12. FOOD AND DRINK

Monaghan has developed a strong reputation as a destination for great food and drink, culminating in the Taste of Monaghan festival held each year. The town is also proud to have consistently featured as a finalist in the Foodie Destination competition operated by the Restaurants Association of Ireland. This reflects the high calibre of food and drink offerings in the town and wider county.

13. RETAIL

Shopping has long been associated with Monaghan Town and today it is fortunate to have retained a relatively extensive offering for its size. Large multiples such as Tesco and Dunnes Stores sit alongside a range of independent stores located along the principal thoroughfares of Glaslough Street, Dublin Street, Market Street and Dawson Street. The Monaghan Shopping Centre also provides an anchoring role to the south of the town centre.

The challenges of a changing retail sector, including the rise of on-line shopping, have had an effect on Monaghan, with vacant units in existence on the edges of the retail core.

14. FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Monaghan has developed a reputation for hosting events of international quality and significance. Most notably these include the Monaghan Country Festival (July) and Harvest Blues Festival (September), drawing international acts and visitors to the town each year. Other important events include the Taste of Monaghan food festival and the Rossmore Forest Park Haunting. There is a farmers market each Friday and during the Summer of 2019 a 'pop up' events space was developed in one of the central squares in the town – Church Square – to host a diverse range of events including outdoor cinema projections.



15. PAST AND FUTURE PROJECTS

Several important investments have taken place and are planned for Monaghan Town Centre and it's important that these are taken into consideration when thinking about its future of the town. These are summarised in the table below.

	€	DETAILS/NATURE OF SPEND
PAST INVESTMENT	€1m	Ulster Canal Greenway – 4.2km foot and cycle path along the route of the Ulster Canal, which passes through the centre of Monaghan.
	€1m	Rossmore Forest Park – New high quality natural play area, sculptural giants, signage, entrance way and car park.
	€2.2m	Public Realm improvements in the Town Centre
FUTURE INVESTMENT PLANS	€10m	South Dublin Street Regeneration Project – procurement underway for an integrated design team to progress a transformational project in Monaghan Town Centre. This will create new streets and squares, opening up backlands for mixed use development.
	€15m	Peace Campus with Border Museum – major project for a state of the art facility in Monaghan Town Centre, comprising a new museum, exhibition space and community facilities.
	€5m	22km Extension of Ulster Canal Greenway
	€10m	Roll out of Destination Town Projects investing in and linking existing assets, while adding to the visitor offer 2019-2029

ANALYSIS CONCLUSION AND OPPORTUNITIES

Having assessed a range of factors that combine to influence the visitor experience in Monaghan, it is now possible to draw some important analysis conclusions as follows:



ANALYSIS CONCLUSION	DESCRIPTION	OPPORTUNITIES
Relatively low share of visitor market	Underperformance as a visitor destination at present, with much scope for growth compared to nearby locations.	Tourism development, promotion
Attractive town centre & heritage	A wealth of architectural assets and characteristic urban spaces, giving the town a unique sense of place.	Architectural conservation, lighting, planning, public realm, interpretation.
Committed investment in major projects	Significant plans for the future which will positively impact upon the town centre.	Project management, inter project coordination.
Lack of attractions and low town dwell time	A limited visitor offering during the day and after dark, affecting the length of time spent in the town centre.	Attraction development and diversification.
No cohesive visitor experience	The lack of 'go-to' experience in the town strong enough to act as a significant attractor for tourists.	Coordination of attractions, long term planning. Development of an attraction of scale
Absence of a clear arrival point	No one location that is the natural starting point for the visitor, from which they can be orientated to discover its associated culture and heritage.	Planning, public realm, way-finding and signage.
Poor connectivity between assets	Difficulties of orientation, inconsistent signage and areas of low-quality built form interrupt visitor flows and inhibit exploration.	Way-finding, signage, interpretation.
Strong performing hotel sector, but traditional markets	Successful town hotels with solid reputations, but a need to diversify the accommodation offer and active markets.	Business development, marketing, investment proposition.
Established reputation for events	Large events for which Monaghan Town is known, greatly animating the town centre at specific times of the year.	Event development, promotion.
Reliance on voluntary effort (sustainability)	A strong ethos of volunteering and community spirit across the town, but a need for support to ensure sustainability and the growth of events and other activities.	Capacity building, resources.
Uncertainties of Cross Border arrangements	Vulnerability to the potential impacts of Brexit and political impasse in Northern Ireland, with scope to affect the economy, exchange rates and visitor movements.	Horizon scanning, responsive actions.



A number of challenges clearly exist for Monaghan to fulfil its ambition of attracting more visitors to the town, especially in a competitive marketplace with other towns and cities. It is evident therefore that a long term strategy is required to steadily transition the town towards a more visitor oriented trajectory. The series of investments planned by Monaghan County Council and their partners form a strong point from which to embark upon this journey.

The primary focus of this strategy should not however be 'fixing problems'. Rather it will be more effective to shape an approach that builds upon the considerable existing assets of the town and its people, including Monaghan's built and cultural heritage, its strengths in the hospitality and the wider agri-food sector and its proven track record as a venue for events.

VISION

The ambition for Monaghan Town may be summarised as follows;

- **To capitalise on the town's unique spaces and associations and fully exploit its location as an ideal base from which to explore not only the town itself but also the wider destination.**
- **To place the cultural heritage of the destination – both its historic significance as well as its contemporary appeal - at the heart of the visitor experience and to use this to drive visitors to the town and grow the short break market.**
- **To deliver a high quality food and drink experience that captures the very best of what the destination has to offer and capitalises on the area's reputation for local produce, artisan produced food, food/farmers' markets, new and emerging craft breweries and the prospect of events that will showcase the provenance, heritage and quality of the food offer.**
- **To make Monaghan a place of celebration throughout the year, led by a high-profile events and a festival programme that attracts visitors from home and abroad.**



ENERGISED



DEEP ENCOUNTERS

ENRICHED ENGAGED

PROPOSITION

DEEPER ENCOUNTERS

REVEALING THE TOWN'S SENSE OF PLACE, PURPOSE AND PROMISE

The aim is to bring Monaghan's sense of place to the attention of visitors by creating a more immediate, positive and cohesive offer of value that responds to their needs and aligns well with the town's ambitions for its future development. In defining the compelling proposition for Monaghan – its distinctive value proposition – three key motivational drivers have been identified. These not only describe how we want visitors to feel about their visit – before, during and after – but also best reflect the town's sense of itself – its natural assets, its cultural attributes and the spirit of its people. The promise is that visitors to Monaghan will be:

ENERGISED – with opportunities to actively experience the outdoors and encounter nature up close. Activities: walk, run, cycle, explore, play. Places: Ulster Canal Greenway, Rossmore Forest Park.

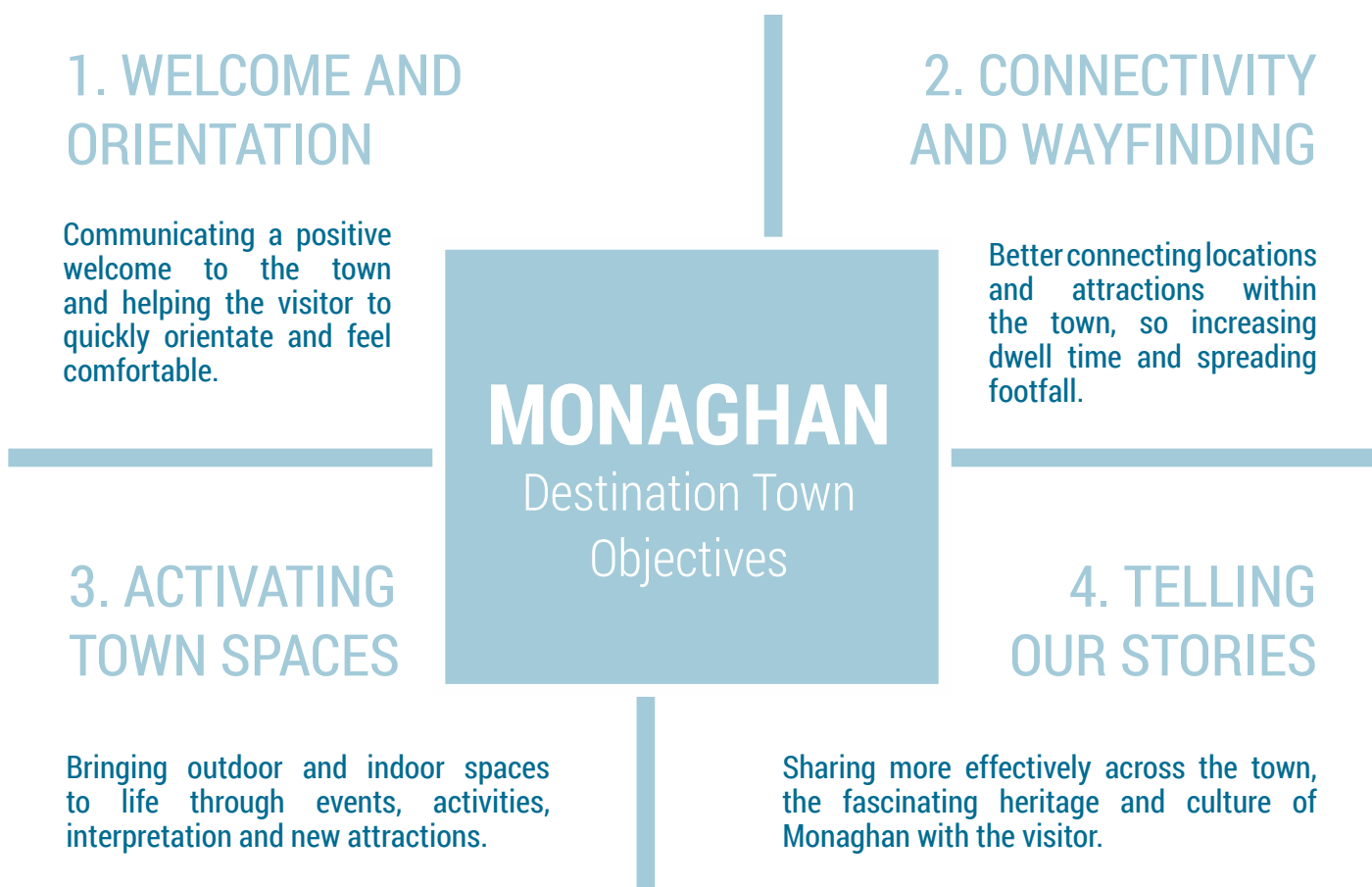
ENRICHED – with opportunities to connect with the richly layered story of this place through encounters with its iconic story keepers – its monuments, historic places and significant associations. Places: Rossmore & Dawson Monuments, Market Square, the Diamond, Peter's Lake, Monaghan County Museum, St. Patrick's Church, The Garage Theatre, Monaghan County Library, Peace Campus (future).

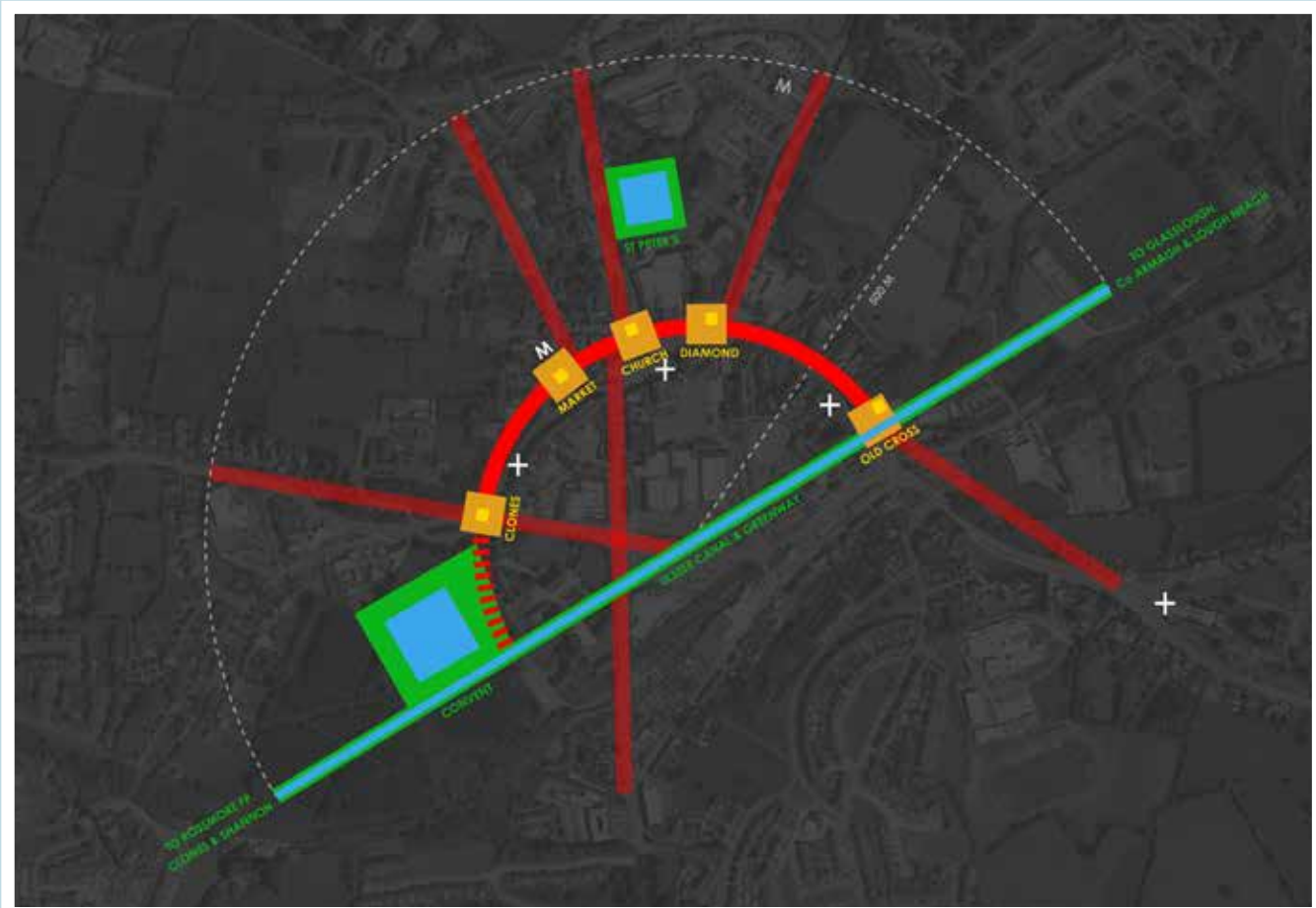
ENGAGED – with opportunities for creative encounters and moments of celebration – through events, festivals, music, storytelling, art and great food. Activities: Harvest Blues Festivals, Town County Music Festivals, Farmers Markets, Taste of Monaghan, lighting events, film festivals, sporting events, cultural & music events.

THE DESTINATION PLAN

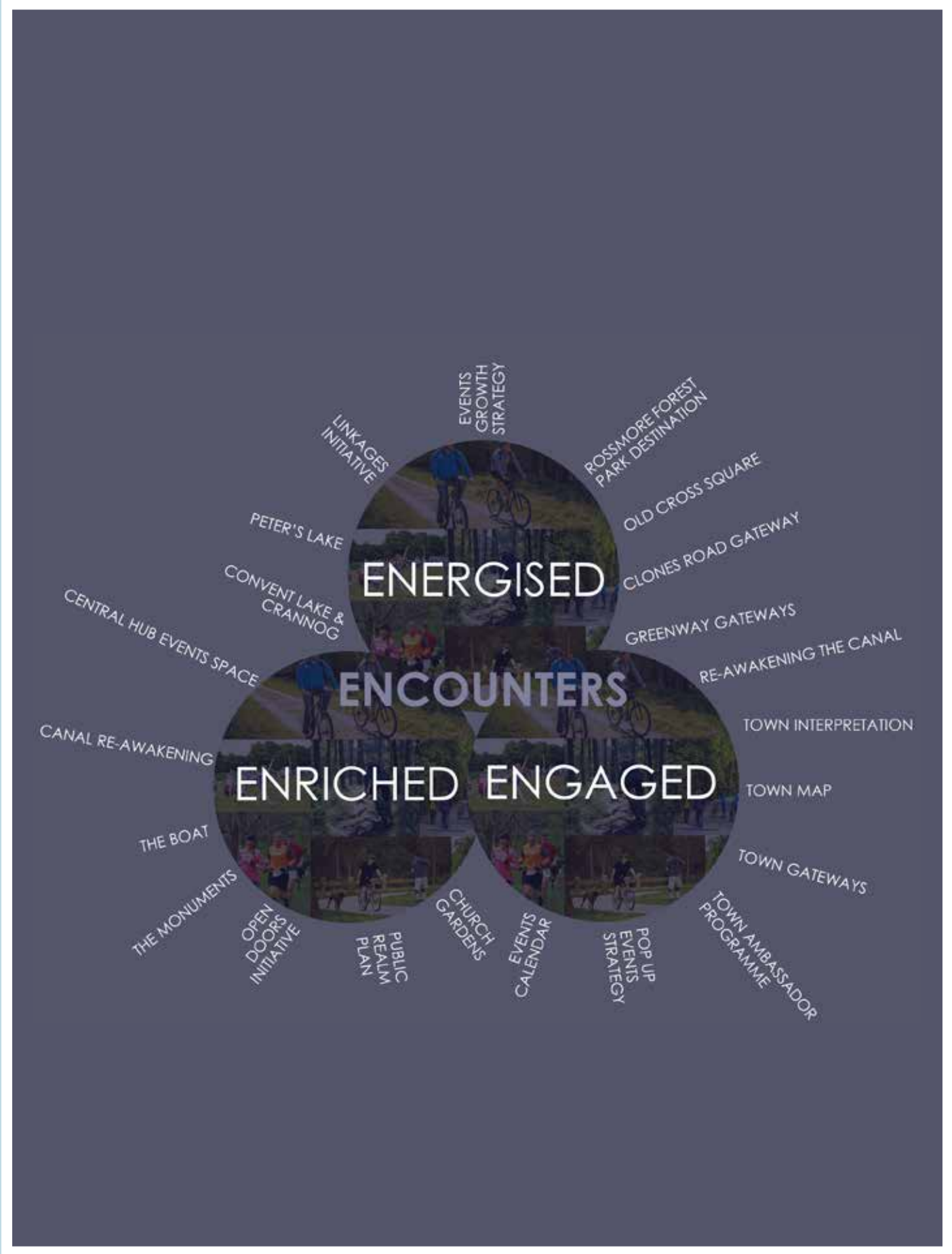
The Destination Plan for Monaghan Town comprises a total of 21 Actions for delivery over the next 5 – 10 years. The action projects vary in scale and character, yet all seek to respond to the identified Issues and Opportunities present within the town and to fulfil the Vision and Visitor Proposition as outlined in the previous section.

The Actions have been developed to respond to 4 overarching objectives for the Destination Town as follows:





A physical concept plan of Monaghan Town Centre has also been developed. This marks a first step in improving orientation and a general understanding of the town's unique urban layout. It also serves to identify linkages between assets, be they long established or future potential attractions.



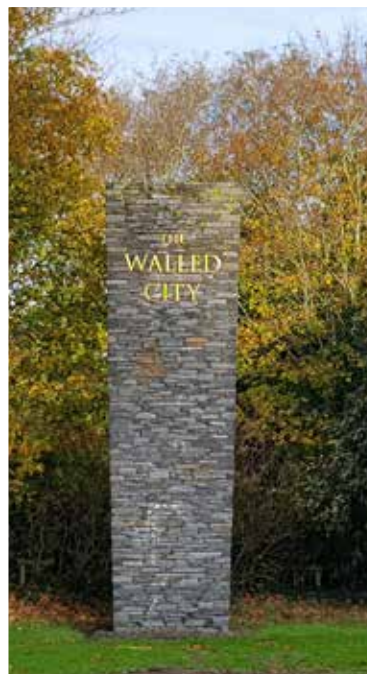
The following section outlines each of the plan’s 21 Actions, with a short description and considerations given to their impacts and deliverability. Images are illustrative to show the potential look and feel of actions, each to be designed uniquely for Monaghan.

MONAGHAN TOWN TOURISM DESTINATION PLAN PROPOSED ACTIONS

1	Town Gateways	11	Greenway Upgrade & Management Plan
2	Town Map	12	The Boat
3	Clones Road Gateway	13	Old Cross Square
4	Canal Re-Awakening	14	Rossmore FP Destination
5	Canal Feasibility Study	15	Events Strategy
6	Linkages Initiative	16	Evening Economy Strategy
7	Public Realm Plan	17	The Monuments
8	Church Gardens	18	Convent Lake and Crannog
9	Peter’s Lake	19	Town Interpretation
10	Central Hub Events Space	20	Town Ambassadors
		21	Open Doors Initiative

Each action has been shaped to align with the Vision of Deep Encounters and with one or more the Motivational Drivers of the proposition – Energised, Enriched and Engaged.

OBJECTIVE 1: WELCOME AND ORIENTATION



ACTION 1: TOWN GATEWAYS

DESCRIPTION

Sculptural welcome markers defining and improving the welcome to Monaghan Town.

How and where does Monaghan Town welcome the visitor? An important answer to this question lies at the main arrival points to the town and especially at the large roundabouts and junctions that lead off the regional road network.

Here an opportunity exists to create attractive gateway markers that welcome the visitor and stir their interest to explore the town. Much different to standard road signage, the sculptural forms must be of a high quality and unique to the town, reflecting the town's visitor proposition, its heritage and culture.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Installation of Artwork and EI Improvements		
RESOURCES	National and EU Funding, Road Improvements		
COST	Capital € € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	First Impressions, Reputation, Marketing		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2 ✓ 3x 4✓	Motivational Drivers	Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



* Indicative Cost Parameters

€ = 0-50k,

€ € = 50k-500k,

€ € € = 500k-1m,

€ € € € = +1m

ACTION 2: TOWN MAP

DESCRIPTION

Clear and concise visitor map of Monaghan Town Centre for use online, on paper and on signage.

Monaghan Town currently lacks a good, accessible map of its town centre attractions and nearby destinations. This simple initiative will involve the creation of a high quality maps to assist the visitor in planning and conducting their visit. Attention should be paid to the quality of graphic design used in this publication, avoiding the temptation to clutter the document with advertisements. The map will also be for use on-line, requiring seamless interfaces with hand-held devices and social media.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Publication of map online, on paper and on signage		
RESOURCES	Tourism funding		
COST	Capital -	Revenue €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Improved orientation, wide audience, marketing		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2 ✓ 3✓ 4x	Motivational Drivers	Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, Strategic Importance		



ACTION 3: CLONES ROAD GATEWAY

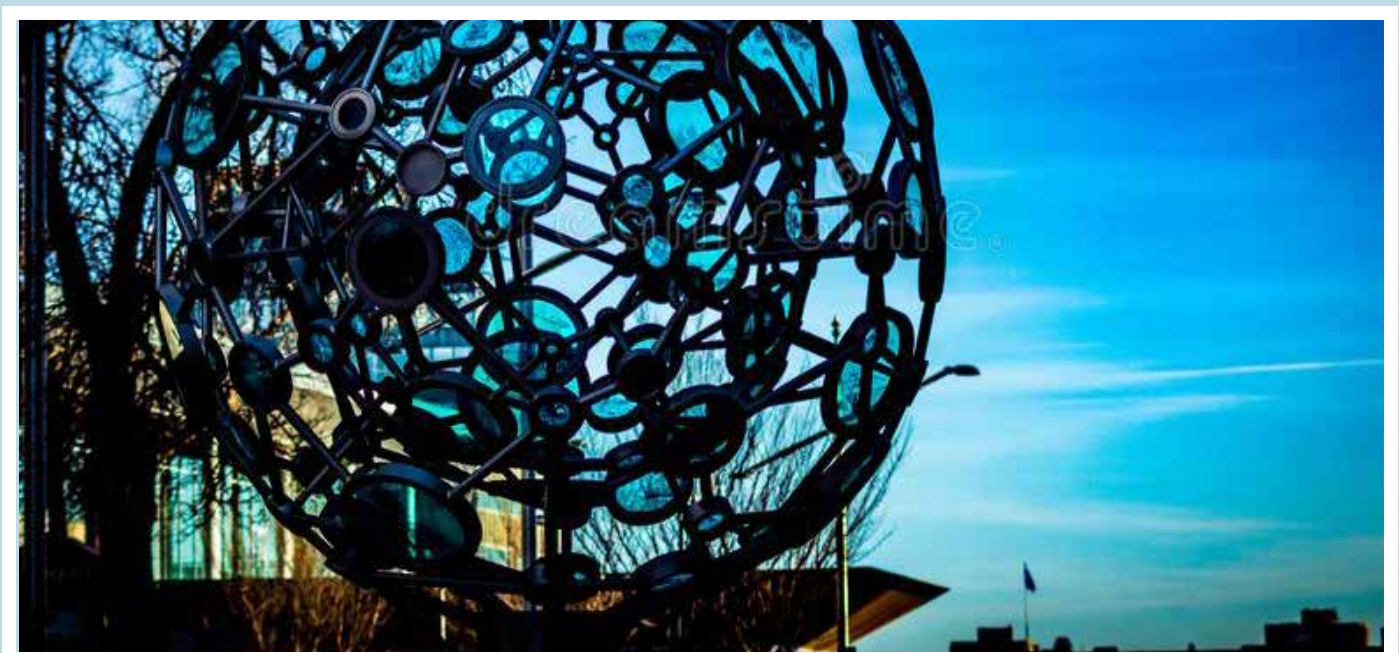
DESCRIPTION

Public art, signage and lighting to strengthen role of Clones Road as a gateway to the town centre.

The Clones Road meets Monaghan Town Centre at an attractive location, with stone terraced houses and St Joseph’s church nearby. The site is also close to the Convent Lake with potential for future access as part of a loop around the town centre.

Consequently, it is proposed to enhance the significance of this location through public art, signage and lighting. The intervention will help detract from the heavy traffic passing through the space, help to positively influence impressions of the town centre and play a part in telling the stories of Monaghan.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Installation of Artwork and EI Improvements		
RESOURCES	National and EU Funding, Road Improvements		
COST	Capital € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	First Impressions, Reputation, Marketing		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2 ✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



OBJECTIVE 2: CONNECTIVITY AND WAYFINDING

ACTION 4: ULSTER CANAL RE-AWAKENING

DESCRIPTION

High impact artworks, signage and lighting to emphasize the presence of the Ulster Canal as it passes through the town centre, with eye-catching physical interventions that announce points of access onto the Ulster Canal Greenway.

The Ulster Canal is a major asset that passes through Monaghan Town Centre on its way north to Lough Neagh and west to the Shannon. However, its 'footprint' is modest at present, especially in the vicinity of Broad Street and its town centre stretch, as well as key points of access throughout the town.

It is proposed to greatly increase the visual impact of the canal in this town centre location through the use of creative artworks (such as banners), signage and lighting. This will help to reconnect Monaghan Town with its canal heritage, while also signposting the visitor to follow its route and explore further.

It is also proposed that sculptural pieces are commissioned and placed at all main access points to the greenway. These bespoke structures will celebrate the significance of the canal and greenway, while acting as beacons that help orientate people, raise awareness and encourage further use. The interventions must be sensitive to the built and natural heritage of the canal and be made from durable materials that age with grace.

* Indicative Cost Parameters

€ = 0-50k, € € = 50k-500k,
€ € € = 500k-1m, € € € € = +1m



5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Installation of markers at Greenway access points, and elements along route of Canal		
RESOURCES	Greenway and Canal Funding		
COST	Capital € € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Awareness of Greenway, Increased Use, Marketing		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2 ✓ 3✓ 4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact, Complements Investment, Strategic Importance		



ACTION 5: CANAL FEASIBILITY STUDY

DESCRIPTION

Study to futureproof the town centre for the proposed re-opening of the Ulster Canal.

Re-opening the Ulster Canal to boat traffic is both a national and county-wide strategic priority. While it will take many years to achieve. Monaghan would stand to benefit greatly from such investment, bringing many more visitors to the town centre. As the largest settlement along its route, Monaghan would also be ideally suited to act as hub along the canal, with overnight stays and moorings.

While delivery of this infrastructure is some time away, it is recommended that initial planning is undertaken now to ensure that the canal will physically interact with the town in the best possible manner. Such futureproofing would help to inform policy and planning decisions and prevent development inadvertently compromising the potential impact of this exciting tourism project.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Publication of Study, Delivery of Phase 1		
RESOURCES	Greenway and Canal Funding		
COST	Capital -	Revenue €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Futureproofing major tourism asset		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Strategic Importance		



ACTION 6: LINKAGES INITIATIVE

DESCRIPTION

Identification and development of strategic foot, cycle and public transport links between assets.

While Monaghan Town Centre has a number of attractions of interest to the visitor, it also has many more located on its doorstep. Strategic planning is now required to ensure that links between these assets and the town are as easy as possible for the visitor, be they travelling on foot, bicycle or public transport.

An opportunity exists to implement infrastructure – such as cycle links to Rossmore Park – that improve circulation and connectivity around the town and county, while also creating a visitor attraction and experience in their own right.

A need has also been identified to provide coach parking within the town centre suitable for tour groups to explore the town. This should be in a central and convenient location, while sensitively placed so as not to deflect from key attractions.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Publication of Study, Delivery of Phase 1		
RESOURCES	Transport Funding		
COST	Capital -	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Sustainability, Futureproofing major tourism assets		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2 ✓ 3✓4x	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Strategic Importance		



ACTION 7: PUBLIC REALM PLAN

DESCRIPTION

Comprehensive strategy to guide the design of town centre public realm, including a materials palette.

Monaghan Town has an attractive and unique townscape characterised by interlinked urban squares and impressive landmark structures. Recent public realm investment in the Diamond has demonstrated the impact that high quality public realm can have on the setting and functionality of the town centre. A strategic plan is now needed to guide future public realm works in the town centre so that they are coordinated in design and character.

Like most town centres, Monaghan must use this process to assess the balance between pedestrian and vehicles. By creating a more 'people friendly' network of streets and spaces, the visitor experience will be greatly improved, so increasing their dwell time in the centre.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Publication of Plan, Delivery of Phase 1		
RESOURCES	Regeneration Funding		
COST	Capital -	Revenue €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	First impressions, Supports economic activity		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact, Complements Investment		



OBJECTIVE 3: ACTIVATING TOWN SPACES

ACTION 8: CHURCH GARDENS

DESCRIPTION

New town centre garden in the grounds of St Patrick’s Church of Ireland.

There are relatively few public green spaces in the centre of Monaghan, with the exception of Peter’s Lake and the Ulster Canal Greenway. Yet right in the heart of the town sits an area of grass within the grounds of St Patrick’s Church of Ireland.

In partnership with the church and at timing of their choosing, it is proposed to create an attractive garden in this location, accessible to visitors and members of the public. The design would require it to be sensitively handled, so as not to detract from the heritage of the building or its grounds. However, an excellent opportunity exists to create a small oasis in this location that offers the visitor a place to relax, learn about the church, the town and to come into contact with nature in an otherwise urban setting.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Installation of gardens		
RESOURCES	EU Funding, Private / Charitable Donation		
COST	Capital € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2 ✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



ACTION 9: PETER'S LAKE

DESCRIPTION

Redesign of lake and adjacent car parking to improve the lake area as a venue for events. Also assess feasibility of linkages to proposed Peace Campus.

Peter's Lake is a somewhat unique green space located in Monaghan Town Centre. It currently provides an attractive place to walk and sit during the day, largely used by locals familiar with its relatively 'tucked-away' location.

This action seeks to add to Peter's Lake some appropriate infrastructure enabling it to be used for the hosting of events. In conjunction with large areas of car park alongside, measures should include creating a stage performance area, lighting and flexible spaces for seating, marquees and the like. Exciting possibilities exist to physically engage with the water itself as well as scope for added fountains and lighting as appropriate. The use of Peter's Lake for low impact water sports such as water polo, swimming and canoeing should also be explored.

With plans to develop the Peace Campus at nearby Plantation Road, Peter's Lake becomes a strategically more important location in the town for the visitor. Investment should therefore also seek to develop improved physical connections between the campus, the lake and the town centre.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Installation of Events Infrastructure		
RESOURCES	EU Funding		
COST	Capital € € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time, Supports Econ.		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2 ✓ 3✓ 4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact, Complements Investment		





ACTION 10: CENTRAL HUB EVENTS SPACE

DESCRIPTION

State-of-the-art outdoor events space located in the central hub of Monaghan Town Centre.

Monaghan is an established venue for large events including the Country Music Festival and Harvest Blues. Investment is needed to ensure these and other town centre events can grow sustainably in a manner that helps increase visitor numbers, spend and overnight stays. This action is to create an enhanced events space in the central hub of Monaghan (in the vicinity of its central squares). The space would incorporate a suitably designed canopy shelter – be it permanent or temporary – that would increase the usage of the space throughout the year and during inclement weather. The action would also involve equipping the space to support a range of events, including the provision of sound, audio and Wi-Fi connections. Sensitivity to the built heritage of Monaghan would form a key part of the design and planning process for this action.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Installation of Events Space		
RESOURCES	EU / National Funding		
COST	Capital € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time, Supports Econ.		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2 ✓ 3,4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



ACTION 11: GREENWAY UPGRADE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

DESCRIPTION

Environmental improvements along the Ulster Canal Greenway

Excellent progress has been made to open up the Ulster Canal as a greenway for pedestrians and cyclists. Further work is now required to continue improvements along the route, making it even easier, safer and more attractive to use for the visitor and local alike.

The action will involve water quality management measures, new planting, improved habitats, surfacing, seating and where appropriate, lighting. It will also be carried out in conjunction with Action 4: Canal Reawakening, to improve on signage and interpretation.

The Environmental Improvements and Management Plan will be required to carefully balance a number of needs.

These include canal heritage sensitivity, biodiversity, community safety and active travel requirements. Through effective design and management, the greenway should play an increasingly important role in the life of the town and its appeal to the visitor.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Improvements Implemented		
RESOURCES	Greenway and Canal Funding		
COST	Capital € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2 ✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



ACTION 12: THE BOAT

DESCRIPTION

Installation of a restored canal barge on the canal to serve as visitor and events venue.

Bringing the Ulster Canal 'back to life' requires creativity and imagination until such time it is used once again for the passage of vessels. It is therefore proposed to permanently moor a canal barge in the centre of Monaghan, so to act as a canal visitor centre and a venue for small events. Emulating projects like 'The Industry' on Belfast's Lagan Canal (pictured), the boat would raise the profile of the canal, while creating a new visitor destination in part of the town not currently frequented by the tourist.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Installation of boat		
RESOURCES	Greenway and Canal Funding, Private / Charitable Don.		
COST	Capital € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2 ✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



ACTION 13: OLD CROSS SQUARE

DESCRIPTION

Re-design of the square to emphasise its history and improve the space as an events Venue.

Of Monaghan’s Town Centre Squares it is arguably Old Cross Square that has become the most overlooked. Today the space is a busy vehicular thoroughfare and car park for adjacent businesses. Yet not so long ago, the square was Monaghan’s principal point of contact with the canal and space busy with traders and the comings and goings of town life.

This action would seek to re-establish Old Cross Square again as an important public space in the town centre. While still required to accommodate vehicles, the action would seek to create a more attractive space for people while celebrating its fascinating history through interpretation. The action should also examine the potential role that Old Cross Square could play as an occasional venue for events, helping to drive footfall and visitor activity in this particular part of the town.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Plans published and ready for implementation		
RESOURCES	Regeneration Funding		
COST	Capital € € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2 ✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	High Impact, Strategic Importance		



ACTION 14: ROSSMORE FOREST PARK DESTINATION

DESCRIPTION

Delivery of initiatives identified in the Rossmore Forest Park Masterplan.

Rossmore Forest Park is a large public space on the immediate outskirts of Monaghan Town. Owned by Coilte, but now operated by Monaghan County Council, the park has recently undergone something of a resurgence, fuelled by the development of a masterplan in 2016. A new natural play area, pathways and 'giant sculptures' have succeeded in attracting more visitors to the park, which is also an increasingly popular venue for sports and cultural events.

It is therefore important that delivery of the Rossmore Forest Park Masterplan is continued to further the role this asset plays in attracting visitors to the town and wider county. Proposals include an enhanced entrance way to the park, a restored walled garden and an eco-building that welcomes the visitor, providing a café, toilets and educational spaces.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Delivery of Several Initiatives		
RESOURCES	EU and National Funding		
COST	Capital € € € €	Revenue € € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2x 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		





ACTION 15: EVENT STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

Strategy to ensure the sustainability and guide the managed growth of town events, from major regional events to small pop up activities.

Successful events can bring significant direct economic and societal benefits while also providing a major opportunity to create a positive impression of the area, that can have far reaching consequences for the wider tourism industry. An Events Strategy will be developed to provide an enabling context for the curation, planning and coordination of all events across the destination. This will enable the strategic role played by each type of event to be assessed, so that its organisation, promotion and content can be shaped for optimal impact. Events and festivals that align with the vision and proposition of the destination will be supported and promoted. The value of such events is such that they not only have the capacity to generate overnight stays, footfall and commercial activity but that they can also reinforce a positive sense of place and identity.

The sustainability of events, including how voluntary efforts are supported and complemented, will be a key focus of the strategy.

This strategy would also seek to underpin a sustained programme of pop-up events around the town centre, attracting visitors and encouraging them to spend longer in the town. Pop-up events work well when they are:

- EXCLUSIVE – stay a limited time and then disappear, building anticipation.
- EXPERIENTIAL – different, informal, can be a novelty or are out of the ordinary.
- UNEXPECTED – staged in unusual locations can attract the curiosity of passers-by.

* Indicative Cost Parameters

€ = 0–50k, € € = 50k-500k,
 € € € = 500k-1m, € € € € = +1m

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Coordinated programme of pop-up activities		
RESOURCES	Regeneration and Arts Funding		
COST	Capital -	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increased Dwell Time, Footfall, Storytelling & Arts		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact, Strategically Important		



ACTION 16: EVENING ECONOMY STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

Growing and diversifying a sustainable evening and nighttime offer.

Monaghan has a good reputation for its bars and restaurants, especially at the weekends and during events. To further develop as a Destination Town and a base from which to explore the town and region, it will be necessary to develop the evening and night time offer. Working closely with local businesses, this will involve extending opening hours to encourage those visiting during the day to stay longer. It will also involve the encouragement of new businesses, investors and other evening cultural events and activities that help to generate and sustain evening footfall. The strategy will also present an opportunity to work with business and agencies, including An Garda Síochána, to help ensure that the town is widely perceived as a safe and friendly environment after dark.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Increased evening footfall and trade		
RESOURCES	National Funding and Private Investment		
COST	Capital -	Revenue €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increased Dwell Time and Overnight Stays		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2x 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Strategically Important		



OBJECTIVE 4: TELLING OUR STORIES

ACTION 17: THE MONUMENTS

DESCRIPTION

Restoration and interpretation of the town's Monuments, to include masonry, lighting, fountain, lighting and artworks.

An attractive and noticeable feature of Monaghan Town Centre are its monuments. Visiting the town, it is hard to miss the Rossmore Monument, the Dawson Monument or the Market House. Yet these iconic landmarks have potential to play a greater part in the experience of visiting Monaghan. Through carefully crafted public realm, lighting, artworks and interpretation, the stories of these monuments can be brought to life for the visitor, like portals to the past. Importantly, the monuments are linked with other destinations in the town and can be used to encourage greater exploration and linkage between attractions.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Restored, lit and interpreted monuments		
RESOURCES	EU / National Funding, Heritage Funds		
COST	Capital € € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	First Impressions, Reputation, Marketing, Dwell Time		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1✓ 2✓ 3✓ 4✓	Motivational Drivers	Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Strategic Importance, High Impact		



ACTION 18: CONVENT LAKE AND CRANNOG

DESCRIPTION

Project to explore and deliver public access to the convent lake, with associated improvements, with potential development of the Crannog as a visitor attraction.

The largest green space in Monaghan Town Centre is the privately owned Convent Lake. The body of water and surrounding woodlands are full of history and intrigue, including the remains of an ancient crannog in the centre of the lake. It is also understood to be a valuable wildlife habitat.

In conjunction with its owners, it is proposed to explore how the Convent Lake could begin to play a role in the visitor experience of the town. This could be through occasional access for special tours or events, or in time, more regular access that enables the visitor and residents to enjoy this natural space.

The position of the lake along the Ulster Canal gives it greater strategic importance in the town, with potential to create new future linkages, as well as educational and interpretative opportunities.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Managed public access to the lake		
RESOURCES	EU / National Funding		
COST	Capital € € € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increases Use, Increased Dwell Time		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Strategic Importance		



ACTION 19: TOWN INTERPRETATION

DESCRIPTION

High quality artworks and signage to augment the heritage trail.

The Monaghan Heritage Trail is an established route that guides the visitor around the centre and through its five centuries of history. The trail can either be self-guided or followed as part of an organised walk.

This action aims to enhance the trail through carefully crafted artworks and signage. Such interventions would help to increase the popularity of the route among visitors, while also engaging more people with the stories of the town as they pass-by its various locations.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Co-ordinated series of interventions		
RESOURCES	Tourism, Heritage and Arts Funding		
COST	Capital € €	Revenue € €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increased Use, Increased Dwell Time, Storytelling		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2 ✓ 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Energised, Enriched
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, Strategic Importance		



ACTION 20: TOWN AMBASSADORS

DESCRIPTION

Training of people across the town to welcome and guide the visitor more effectively.

Monaghan’s friendly welcome is an asset of the town and its people have a central role in helping the visitor to engage and explore. This programme would increase existing efforts to upskill local people and business employees to positively engage with visitors, provide them assistance and information. The initiative can bring many benefits to the individuals concerns, as well as collectively, supporting the shared goal of enhancing the local visitor economy.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	An established team of Town Ambassadors		
RESOURCES	National and Tourism Funding		
COST	Capital -	Revenue €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increased Dwell Time, Improved Orientation		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2 ✓ 3x 4 ✓	Motivational Drivers	Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



ACTION 21: OPEN DOORS INITIATIVE

DESCRIPTION

Programme to develop visitor potential of heritage buildings across the town.

With a plethora of attractive heritage buildings, Monaghan has dormant potential to offer more to the visitor experience. This initiative would involve working with the owners of heritage buildings in and around the town centre to explore the potential role they could play in contributing to the visitor experience. This could involve talks, tours and small events taking place in properties, either on a stand-alone initiative, or as part of a town wide 'open doors' initiative. This initiative could form part of a future FI 'Local Experts' programme.

5 YEAR TIMEFRAME	Network of new locations opened to the visitor		
RESOURCES	EU / National Funding, Heritage Funding		
COST	Capital -	Revenue €	
OUTPUTS, IMPACTS & BENEFITS	Increased Dwell Time, Interpretation, Storytelling		
DESTINATION TOWN OBJECTIVES	1x 2x 3✓4✓	Motivational Drivers	Enriched, Engaged
REASONS FOR INCLUSION	Deliverable, High Impact		



* Indicative Cost Parameters

€ = 0-50k, € € = 50k-500k,

€ € € = 500k-1m, € € € € = +1m

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS

		Vision				Proposition / Motivational Drivers			Plan Objectives			
		<i>Unique spaces and associations</i>	<i>Historic significance as well as its contemporary appeal</i>	<i>High quality food and drink experience</i>	<i>A place of celebration</i>	<i>Energised</i>	<i>Enriched</i>	<i>Engaged</i>	<i>Welcome and Orientation</i>	<i>Connectivity and Wayfinding</i>	<i>Activating Town Spaces</i>	<i>Telling Our Stories</i>
Actions												
1	Town Gateways	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
2	Town Map	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
3	Clones Road Gateway	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Canal Re-Awakening	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Canal Feasibility Study	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Linkages Initiative	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
7	Public Realm Plan	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Church Gardens	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Peter's Lake	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Central Hub Events Space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
11	Greenway Upgrade & Management Plan	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
12	The Boat	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
13	Old Cross Square	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
14	Rossmore FP Destination	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓
15	Events Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
16	Evening Economy Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
17	The Monuments	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Convent Lake and Crannog	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
19	Town Interpretation	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
20	Town Ambassadors	✓	✓					✓		✓		✓
21	Open Doors Initiative	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The following table summarises the action and proposed outcomes of the Destination Town Plan. This document should be regularly monitored and updated with key partners, ensuring delivery of actions over a phased period, subject to approvals and the availability of funding.

KEY

PARTNERS

MCC	– Monaghan County Council
FI	– Fáilte Ireland
TiTo	– Monaghan Tidy Towns
ToTe	– Monaghan Town Team
Co	– Coillte
TII	– Transport Infrastructure Ireland
WI	– Waterways Ireland

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPI (VF)	– Key Performance Indicator: Visitor Facing
KPI (PF)	– Key Performance Indicator: Public and Private Sector Facing

COST PARAMETERS

€	- €0 - €50,000
€ €	- €50,000 - €500,000
€ € €	- €500,000 - €1m
€ € € €	- Over €1m

DESINATION TOWN ACTION PLAN

WELCOME & ORIENTATION

NO	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	KPI (VF)	KPI (PF)	COSTS Capital	COSTS Revenue
1. Town Gateways	Sculptural welcome markers defining and improving the welcome to Monaghan Town.	MCC, TII	Medium Term	% of visitors who rate their first impressions of arriving in Monaghan Town as good or excellent.	% of local tourism providers / traders expressing satisfaction with Gateway interventions .	€ € € €	€ €
2. Town Map	Clear and concise visitor map of Monaghan Town Centre for use online, on paper and on signage.	MCC	V. Short Term			-	€
3. Clones Road Gateway	Public art, signage and lighting to strengthen role of Clone Road as a gateway to the town centre.	MCC, TII	Medium Term			€ €	€ €

CONNECTIVITY & WAYFINDING

NO	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	KPI (VF)	KPI (PF)	COSTS Capital	COSTS Revenue
4. Canal Re-Awakening	High impact artworks, signage and lighting to emphasize the presence of the Ulster Canal as it passes through the town centre. Eye-catching physical interventions that announce points of access onto the Ulster Canal Greenway.	MCC, WI, TiTo	Medium Term	% of visitors who rate their first impressions of arriving in Monaghan Town as good or excellent. % of visitors who include the canal bank walk as part of their exploration of the town.	% of local tourism providers / traders expressing satisfaction with Gateway interventions . % of local tourism providers / traders making positive recommendations about the quality of the experience.	€ € € €	€ €
5. Canal Feasibility Study	Study to futureproof the town centre for the proposed re-opening of the Ulster Canal.	MCC, FI, WI, TII	Short Term			-	€
6. Linkages Initiative	Identification and development of strategic foot, cycle and public transport links between assets.	MCC, TII, Co	Short Term	% of visitors who rate the quality and coherence of wayfinding around Monaghan Town as good or excellent.	% of local tourism providers / traders reporting an increase in footfall.	-	€ €
7. Public Realm Plan	Comprehensive strategy to guide the design of town centre public realm, including a materials palette.	MCC, TiTo, ToTe,	Short Term			-	€

ACTIVATING TOWN SPACES

NO	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	KPI (VF)	KPI (PF)	COSTS Capital	COSTS Revenue
8. Church Gardens	New town centre garden in the grounds of St Patrick's Church of Ireland	CoI, MCC	Medium Term	% visitors more than satisfied with the range and quality of things to do in the destination. % visitors more than satisfied with the appeal, range and quality of events on offer.	% of local tourism providers reporting an uplift in event related business; increase in overnight stays.	€ € €	€ €
9. Peter's Lake	Redesign of lake and adjacent car parking to improve the lake area as a venue for events. Also assess feasibility of linkages to proposed Peace Campus.	MCC, FI	Medium Term			€ € € €	€ €
10. Central Hub Events Space	State-of-the art outdoor events space located in the central hub of Monaghan Town Centre.	MCC, FI, ToTe	V. Short Term			€ € €	€ €
11. Greenway Upgrade & Management Plan	Environmental improvements along the Ulster Canal Greenway	WI, MCC	V. Short Term			€ € €	€ €
12. The Boat	Installation of a restored canal barge on the canal to serve as visitor and events venue.	MCC, FI, WI	Medium Term			€ € €	€ €
13. Old Cross Square	Re-design of the square to be emphasise its history and improve the space as an events Venue.	MCC, TII	Medium Term			€ € € €	€ €
14. Rossmore FP Destination	Delivery of initiatives identified in the Rossmore Forest Park Masterplan.	MCC, Co	V. Short Term			€ € € €	€ € €
15. Events Strategy	Coordination of small pop-up events, building successes in the town.	MCC, FI, ToTe	Short Term				% of local tourism providers in delivering the events programme.
16. Evening Economy Strategy	Growing and diversifying a sustainable evening and nighttime offer.	MCC, FI, ToTe	Short Term	% visitors more than satisfied with the range and quality of things to do in the destination in the evening.	% of local tourism providers / traders reporting an increase in town centre footfall.	-	€

TELLING OUR STORIES

NO	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	KPI (VF)	KPI (PF)	COSTS Capital	COSTS Revenue
17. The Monuments	Restoration and interpretation of the town's Monuments, to include masonry, lighting, fountain, lighting and artworks.	MCC, FI,	Medium Term	% of visitors who rate the overall legibility and quality of the heritage experience as good or excellent.	% of new businesses / existing businesses providing walking tour-based activities.	€ € € €	€ €
18. Convent Lake & Crannog	Project to explore and deliver public access to the convent lake, with associated Improvements, with potential development of the Crannog as a visitor attraction.	MCC, Priv	Medium to Long Term	Increase in no of visitors visiting the newly interpreted sites. Increase in number of visitors booking/participating in guided walks.	% of local tourism providers / traders reporting an increase in town centre footfall. % of local tourism providers / trade reporting uplift in business as a result of increased footfall.	€ € € €	€ €
19. Town Interpretation	High quality artworks and signage to augment the heritage trail.	MCC, ToTe	Short Term	Increase in the length of time spent, as reported by visitors, in Monaghan Town as a result of interventions.		€ €	€ €
20. Town Ambassadors	Training of people across the town to welcome and guide the visitor more effectively.	MCC, FI	Short Term	% of visitors who register the visibility/presence of Town Ambassadors during the course of their visit. % of visitors who rate the quality of their engagement with Town Ambassadors as good or excellent.	No of Town Ambassadors recruited and trained.	-	€
21. Open Doors Initiative	Programme to develop visitor potential of heritage buildings across the town.	MCC, ToTe	Short Term	% of visitors who rate the quality of their experience as a result of the Open Doors Initiative as good or excellent.	No of premises participating in the Open Doors Initiative.	-	€

APPENDICES



A. PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT & SURVEY

A public consultation event for the purposes of this plan was held outside in Monaghan Town Centre on 22 August 2018. It was aimed at members of the public and key stakeholders, such as local business owners, with a view to engaging them about their ideas of Monaghan's visitor offer. The 4 hour 'drop-in' comprised a short survey, a large plan of the town for marking and post-it note SWOT analysis, as well as the opportunity to discuss with members of the consultancy and client teams. Despite heavy rain, the event was well attended and publicised on local radio. A total of 37 surveys and 144 post-it ideas and comments were collected on the day.

A summary of the findings can be found below.

77% of responses visited Monaghan Town Centre every day

73% visiting once a week

10% once a month

The majority of visits were for:

*shops, work,
socialising, cafes,
restaurants*

The highest scoring response for the towns strengths were :



The main weaknesses were concerns over :

Attractions Safety Night
Streets Antisocial-behaviour Appearance
Buildings Lack Tourist
Run-down Information

The highest scoring suggestions for improving Monaghan town for a visitor were related to :

tourism, activities,
events

These included more things for teenagers, developing the squares for events and packaging activities and assets for tourists.

B. STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AND WORKSHOP

A summary of the findings can be found below.

Strengths

- central location
- compact
- distinctive character
- history
- events & festivals

Weaknesses

- dominance of traffic
- unsightly back-lands
- loss of heritage
- poor linkages
- lack of things to do

Opportunities

- peace campus
- ulster canal greenway
- dublin street
- rossmore forest park
- convent lake + wood

Threats

- sustainability of events due to:
 - weather
 - limited capacity
- brexit

C. VISITOR SURVEY

The visitor survey aimed to capture a broad range of visitor opinions and experiences of Monaghan, primarily targeting 'out of state' visitors. They were conducted at the Tourist Office, Four Seasons Hotel and in the Diamond during the Harvest Blues Festival.

Of the total number of visitors surveyed (38), 24 were out of state and 14 were domestic.

The key responses of the out of state visitors can be found below.

The highest number of visitors were from :



UK & USA*

Other visitors from Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Libya

*(UK includes Northern Ireland, England, Scotland)

Most visited locations :

town center,
tourist office
shopping center/shops

Followed by museum, pubs and the Cathedral.

private car

was the predominant form of travel.
Followed by public transport (bus/
coach) or hired a car.

The following would further prompt
visits to the town or local area :

Maps
Social-media
Online
Website Signage
Brochures

Ways to encourage a longer and
more enjoyable stay :

Longer Shops
Accommodation
Organised Events
Routes
Signage Bigger
Festivals
Online Information



MONAGHAN

Destination Town

